

IAEA chief urged to avoid political remarks about Iran's nuclear program

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America's perceived soft power on decline

By Gholamreza Mansouri
Political expert

O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E

After decades of domination, challenges facing liberalism gave rise to a new school in international relations in recent decades: neoliberalism. However, a critical issue that liberalism and even neoliberalism could never solve was war. Despite the terrible results of World Wars I and II, liberal experts predicted that the world would experience long-lasting peace and joyous days, but surprisingly, wars spread across the world.

Although the two main blocs, the West and the East, were in a Cold War situation, wars were still raging in various parts of the world. One of the most long-standing of them was the war imposed by Iraq on Iran in the 1980s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US government won the Cold War. Neoliberals predicted that global interdependence would permanently put an end to wars. But the prediction was wrong, and the world once again witnessed various wars. At least war now seems inevitable.

In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, America's superior political position generated both strategic advantages and social capital—a hegemonic ability to govern the world or regulate international relations whenever and wherever it wanted. While it did not mean that America was able to do what it wanted, it fostered a global perception that America had the power to resolve any conflict at will. It is worth noting that America projects the ideals of liberalism and neoliberalism more in rhetoric than in practice.

This is the core of the concept of soft power, formulated by Joseph Nye, who introduced this concept in 1998, distinguishing between two types of power. As mentioned above, neither liberals nor neoliberals have been able to offer a solution to the problem of war in the modern world. As both schools declared, no democracy will fight another. But the Russian invasion of Ukraine has shown that this claim was wrong, too.

Soft or hard power?

Nye, born in 1937, differentiates between two types of power. Hard power is "the ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences and strategies." This is the ability to coerce through threats and inducements. Also, soft power is the ability to get "others to want the outcomes that you want." In other words, soft power relies on a leadership position in the minds of nations. Although the United States is the self-proclaimed leader of the world, under Donald Trump, the White House appears unwilling to lead the world, instead using its position to secure American national interests.

Other nations would find such an approach hypocritical and categorically reject America's so-called leadership. This might erode the hegemonic power of America in the minds of nations. On the other hand, Trump has repeatedly emphasized that he will keep the United States out of war due to its high costs.

It has become evident that the statements made by international relations experts about America's ability to prevent wars through its soft power are unfounded, and the reality is that today, the whole world suffers from wars. One of the reasons for this is that the US government benefits from the proliferation of global conflicts. This is the best way for America to sell weapons and exploit other nations' wealth for its own benefit. Trump's solution, peace through power, is not to secure global peace but to secure America's national interests.

This situation illustrates the decline of America's perceived soft power on the global stage.

No talks with US under 'maximum pressure' policy:

Iran FM

Trump claims he sent letter to Tehran to negotiate nuclear deal

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Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks to AFP during an interview at the Iranian Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on March 7, 2025.
● AMER HILABI/AFP



Exports to Eurasian countries post 22% uptick:

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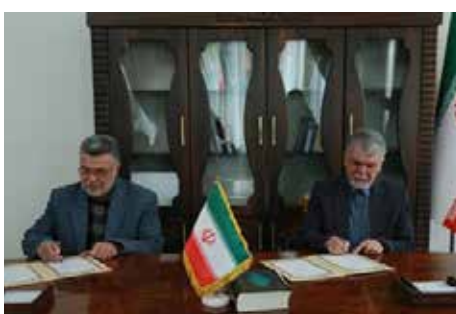
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Cultural, diplomatic mystique of Nowruz

SPECIAL ISSUE
EXCLUSIVE

Nowruz is not just about ringing in the new year—it is a powerful thread weaving together nations, cultures, and histories. Celebrated across 16 countries, this ancient festival has stood the test of time, offering more than just tradition; it is a golden ticket for cultural diplomacy and global solidarity. In a world riddled with division, Nowruz has the potential to break down barriers, open doors for international cooperation, and turn over a new leaf in global relations. Can this age-old celebration be the glue that binds nations together? Discover how Nowruz is stepping up as a beacon of unity in uncertain times.

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No talks with US under 'maximum pressure' policy: *Iran FM*

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Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks to AFP during an interview at the Iranian Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on March 7, 2025.
● AMER HILABI/AFP

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated Tehran's position on talks on its nuclear program, saying that the Islamic Republic will never enter any direct negotiations with the US under pressure and threat.

"We will not enter any direct negotiations with the US so long as they continue their maximum pressure policy and their threats," Abbas Araghchi told AFP on the sidelines of an Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting in the Saudi city of Jeddah.

Iranian officials have frequently said that negotiations under pressure are not meaningful.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said in February that talks with the US were "not smart, wise, or honorable."

"Negotiating with America is neither smart, wise, nor honorable. It will not solve any of our problems. The reason? Experience!" Ayatollah Khamenei said. In 2015, Iran reached a nuclear deal with Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and China, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US quit the

agreement in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as US president, and Iran began moving away from its nuclear-related commitments under the deal.

However, Iran has been trying to revive the JCPOA during the past years and has held several rounds of talks with the European parties to the deal, which their non-compliance to the agreement had a great impact on the implementation of the agreement.

There have been speculations on new negotiations between Tehran and Washington on Iran's peaceful nuclear program in recent months, especially after Trump's return to power in January.

However, Trump's language of threats and imposition of sanctions against Iran have made Iranian officials skeptical of negotiations with the US. Trump last month restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran which includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero.

He has also repeatedly expressed his interest in negotiations with Iran on Tehran's nuclear program.

Trump said on Friday he wants to negotiate a nuclear deal with Iran

and sent a letter to its leadership on Wednesday, saying he hoped the Islamic Republic would agree to talk. Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations rejected Trump's claim, saying that Iran has not received such a letter. "I said I hope you're going to negotiate, because it's going to be a lot better for Iran," Trump said in an interview with Fox Business Network broadcast Friday.

"I think they want to get that letter. The other alternative is we have to do something, because you can't let another nuclear weapon."

"There are two ways Iran can be handled: militarily, or you make a deal," Trump said. "I would prefer to make a deal, because I'm not looking to hurt Iran. They're great people."

Russia has offered to mediate between the US and Iran, a source briefed on discussions told Reuters on Tuesday, as the Kremlin vowed to do everything possible to facilitate a peaceful solution to tensions over Tehran's nuclear program.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov also discussed international efforts to resolve the situation around Iran's nuclear program with Iranian Ambassador Kazem Jalali, the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Friday.

Trump has upended US foreign policy since taking office in January, adopting a more conciliatory stance towards Russia that has left Western allies wary as he tries to broker an end to Moscow's three-year-old war in Ukraine. The Kremlin also said on Wednesday that future talks between Russia and the US would include discussions on Iran's nuclear program; a subject it said had been "touched upon" in an initial round of US-Russia talks last month.

Tehran summons UK envoy over 'biased positions, baseless claims'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned UK's Ambassador to Tehran Hugo Shorter to protest repeated "baseless claims" by British officials against the Islamic Republic.

The Foreign Ministry said the ambassador was summoned after British officials accused Tehran of attempting to interfere in the internal affairs of the United Kingdom.

Hugo Shorter was summoned by Director General for Western Europe Affairs at Iran's Foreign Ministry Ali-reza Yousefi.

"The biased positions and baseless claims of British officials against Iran are contrary to the principles of the international law and diplomatic norms and will intensify the Iranian nation's distrust of British policies towards Iran and the West Asian region," Yousefi told the British envoy. Britain said on Tuesday that it would require the Iranian government to register everything it does to exert political influence in the UK, subjecting Tehran to an elevated tier of scrutiny in light of what it said was increasingly aggressive activity, Press TV reported.

Addressing parliament on Wednesday, UK security minister Dan Jarvis announced that he would put Iran's state, its security services and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps into the enhanced tier of an upcoming registration scheme designed to protect against covert foreign influence.

Earlier on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei also refuted British officials' accusations, saying they blame the Islamic Republic for something they "excel in and master".

"It is absurd to blame Iran for something you excel in and master: illegal interference in other nations' internal affairs!" Baqaei responded in a post on X Thursday.

Baqaei touched on UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's remarks in November that he did not believe Israel was committing genocide in Gaza and Britain's role in the 1953 coup against Iran's democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh.

"UK government seems to be doubling down on its irrational hostile mentality regarding Iranians only to deflect from their own culpability, both as 'genocide denier' and as sup-



porter of anti-Iran terrorism (tracing back to 1953 coup against Iran's democratically-elected gov't for which UK's guilt never disappears).

"However, this is no longer the 19th century; any government that makes unfounded accusations and takes hostile actions against the Iranian nation shall be held accountable," he said.

Iranians generally blame Britain for the "Great Famine and Genocide" of 1917-1919 in Iran where approximately 2 million people and by some accounts 8-10 million out of a population of 18-20 million died of starvation and disease.

The famine took place after Iran, despite declaring neutrality during World War I, was occupied by British and Russian forces.

IAEA chief urged to avoid political remarks about Iran's nuclear program



International Desk

The National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Parliament in a statement urged chief of the UN atomic agency to focus on technical matters and avoid political remarks about Iran's nuclear program.

According to Article 4 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), all member countries have an inviolable right to research, develop, produce, and utilize nuclear industry, the statement said.

The committee's statement came after the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi claimed on Monday that Iran has significantly increased its supply of near-weapons-grade uranium in just three months, highlighting Iran's unique position as the only non-nuclear weapon state enriching to such levels.

"Iran's stockpile of uranium enriched up to 60% U235 has increased to 275 kg, up from 182 kg in the past quarter," Grossi told the agency's Board of Governors.

"Iran is the only non-nuclear weapon State enriching to this level, causing me serious concern," Grossi added.

He also raised other issues in his address to the agency's Board of Governors.

The committee's statement pointed to Grossi's remarks about Iran not implementing the additional protocol of the NPT, clarifying that its implementation has been voluntary for the Iran and not obligatory. The implementation of the additional protocol under the Iran 2015 nuclear deal was also conditional upon the lifting of sanctions by Western countries; therefore, the director general of the IAEA should

compel the totalitarian countries of the world to fulfill their commitments under the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The committee also asserted that the source of Grossi's claims regarding Iran's nuclear activities at undeclared sites is the Israeli regime, adding all of Iran's nuclear activities are under the supervision of the agency and are entirely peaceful.

Additionally, the statement addressed Grossi's concerns regarding outstanding issues related to Iran's nuclear program, noting that Amano (former IAEA's director general) explicitly stated in a report that the agency's questions regarding these outstanding issues have been fully resolved and that there are no further questions.

In 2015, Iran agreed to curb its peaceful nuclear work as a confidence-building measure in exchange for the removal of Western sanctions.

That deal was derailed in 2018, when the United States left and reinstated all the bans suspended under the accord.

In 2019, Iran stopped implementing part of its commitments under the JCPOA in response to Washington's withdrawal and the failure of the European parties to compensate for this pullout.

Iran later took certain more limiting measures in response to the Western-sponsored anti-Iran resolutions at the IAEA and the country's dissatisfaction with the agency's handling of the nuclear issue. Those measures included deactivating some surveillance devices used to monitor its nuclear program and barring certain inspectors amid fears of Western espionage targeting Iran's nuclear facilities.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pezeshkian calls for reform in agricultural, livestock farming methods

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the need to reform farming and livestock practices in the country, stating that current methods are unsustainable. Speaking at a meeting with agricultural and livestock sector players from Pardis, Damavand, and Firouzkuh of Tehran Province on Thursday, the president highlighted the significant gap between Iran's agricultural productivity and that of leading agricultural nations.

"We must reform our farming and livestock practices, including planting, cultivation, and harvesting methods. Continuing on this path will lead us nowhere," Pezeshkian said.

He noted that while farmers in the region harvest 40 tons of produce per hectare, global standards with similar resources yield 200 tons per hectare. "We must balance our resources and consumption to achieve sustainable growth," the president added.

Pezeshkian, who shared his personal experience in farming and livestock, stressed the importance of proper resource management. "I once considered buying a farm for retirement to start gardening, but my responsibilities didn't allow it. I understand the challenges you face," he said and warned that overexploitation of resources could lead to irreversible crises, urging a shift toward sustainable practices.

The president also criticized past interventions in agriculture, citing the example of Zabol, where

farmers previously managed irrigation channels effectively until the government took over, leading to inefficiencies. "When responsibilities are returned to the people, problems are resolved," he said. Pezeshkian called for collaboration between the Agriculture Ministry, Energy Ministry, and provincial governors to address water and resource management issues.

"We must plan meticulously to ensure sustainable development," he said, pledging government support for farmers and producers.

Focus on tech-based solutions

Earlier in the day, Pezeshkian met with technology-based experts at Pardis Science and Technology Park, emphasizing the need for a shift from short-term, regional decision-making to a comprehensive, global perspective.

"Development at the cost of resource depletion is not progress; it is destruction," he said.

The president highlighted the importance of leveraging global solutions to local problems, stating, "There is no problem without a solution. The challenge lies in finding skilled individuals with the motivation to implement these solutions."

He criticized the country's bureaucratic stagnation, calling for decentralization and empowerment of mid-level managers to drive change.

Pezeshkian also addressed urban planning challenges, warning against haphazard development.



President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a meeting with agricultural and livestock sector officials from Pardis, Damavand, and Firouzkuh of Tehran Province on March 6, 2025.
● president.ir

"We must have a comprehensive plan for the future of our cities, considering resources like water and energy," he said, stressing the need for scientific planning to prevent environmental degradation and ensure sustainable growth.

Support for coastal development

The president highlighted the potential of coastal regions like Makoran and the Persian Gulf for economic development, citing easier access to resources and trade opportunities.

However, he warned against unsustainable investments without proper infrastructure planning. "We must ensure that basic needs like water, electricity, and gas are met before developing these areas," he said.

Pezeshkian also advocated for the creation of free economic zones in the south, emphasizing the need to attract domestic and foreign investments.

"These zones can accelerate development, but they must operate under clear regulations that benefit the country," he said.

Healthcare reforms

Reflecting on his experience in the healthcare sector, Pezeshkian criticized inefficiencies in the system and called for a comprehensive overhaul. "We must design a healthcare system where no Iranian worries about access to quality medical services, no matter where they are," he said. The president pledged government support for reforms to improve the quality of healthcare nationwide.

Backing NTBFs

In the meeting, Hossein Afshin, the vice president for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, reiterated the government's commitment to supporting new technology-based firms (NTBFs).

"The future of the country lies in NTBFs," he said, announcing plans to establish an insurance fund to protect their products.

Afshin highlighted advancements in quantum technology, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology, predicting significant progress in cutting-edge technologies over the next two years.

The meeting concluded with a call for greater collaboration between the government, private sector, and academia to drive innovation and sustainable development.

Minister casts addressing energy deficit as top priority for gov't

Economy Desk

Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi stated that addressing the energy shortages is a top priority for the government, emphasizing that high-consumption customers should procure their excess electricity through the energy exchange.

During a visit to East Azarbaijan Province on Thursday, Aliabadi conveyed the president's greetings to the people of the region and underscored the importance of advancing infrastructure and development projects in the energy sector, ILNA reported.

Highlighting population growth since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Aliabadi noted that while Iran's population has increased 2.3 times, electricity consumption has surged 22-fold.

The minister stated that Iran's nominal electricity production capacity stands at 93,000 megawatts, but the rise in consumption has disrupted the balance between supply and demand.

He acknowledged that electricity supply challenges persisted at the end of the previous administration, adding that late president Ebrahim Raisi had made significant efforts to address these issues. The current administration, he said, is prioritizing the resolution of the electricity deficit.

Referring to the country's rainfall levels, Aliabadi pointed out that this year's precipitation has been less than 60% of previous years, underscoring the need for improved water resource management.

Measures such as water recycling and unconventional water production are being implemented to ensure sustainable water supply.

The minister also stressed the importance of securing sustainable water supplies in urban development plans, emphasizing that new cities must prioritize sustainable water provision.

Aliabadi said the electricity shortage was exceeding 20,000 megawatts, attributing much of it to inefficient consumption.

He warned that without proper management, the imbalance would worsen. Aliabadi underlined that the incumbent administration aims to resolve this issue by the end of its term.

One proposed solution is to make the electricity market and economy more attractive. Aliabadi explained that with private sector involvement in the electricity industry, high-consumption customers could procure excess electricity through the energy exchange.

The minister outlined two main strategies for developing the electricity industry: maximizing the use of thermal power generation capacity and increasing renewable energy capacity.

He expressed optimism that the upcoming summer would see improved conditions and hoped for a winter without electricity supply issues, provided the public cooperates.

Exports to Eurasian countries post 22% uptick: TPO

Economy Desk

Iran's exports to member countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) increased by 22% in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025) compared to the same period last year, according to Akbar Godari, director general of Central Asia, Caucasus, and Russia at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO).

In an interview with IRNA, Godari stated that Iran's total exports to these countries reached \$1.631 billion during this period, up from \$1.338 billion in the same timeframe last year. Meanwhile, imports from EAEU countries fell by 22%, totaling \$1.274 billion compared to \$1.627 billion last year.

Russia and Armenia were the largest recipients of Iranian exports, with \$889 million and \$402 million, respectively. In contrast, exports to Belarus and Kyrgyzstan were the lowest, at \$17 million and



● IRNA

\$95 million, respectively. On the import side, Russia and Kazakhstan were Iran's primary suppliers. Russia accounted for \$1.154 billion of imports, while Kazakhstan's share was \$47 million.

Godari also highlighted Iran's trade trends with Eurasian countries from the Iranian year of 1400 (ended March 20, 2022) to 1402 (ended March 19, 2024).

In 1400, Iran's exports to the region stood at approximately \$1.165 billion, rising to \$1.517 billion in 1401 and \$1.702 billion in the Iranian year of

1402. Over the past three years, imports from Eurasian countries totaled around \$5.433 billion. He emphasized that the implementation of a free trade agreement with the EAEU would reduce tariffs, facilitate trade, and increase Iran's share in the Eurasian market.

Meanwhile, Russian Ambassador to Iran Aleksey Dedov said on Thursday that the free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran will soon be implemented.

"The free trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran was approved by

Iran on March 2, 2025. Thanks to this, we can talk about the start of its implementation in the very near future," noted the envoy.

The EAEU today is a market of 190 million people with a preferential regime for Iran for importing goods, simplified customs procedures and simple technical regulation, he added, noting that the same goes for the Iranian market for exporters from EAEU countries. This is an absolutely mutually beneficial subject that meets the interests of the population, Dedov stated.

Over 540m tons of cargo transported nationwide in 11 months: Official



● IRNA

Economy Desk

The director of the freight transportation office at the Roads Maintenance and Transportation Organization announced that more than 545 million tons of cargo were transported via the country's road network over the past 11 months (March 20, 2024-Feb. 18, 2025), marking a 4% increase compared to the same period last year.

According to ILNA, Mehrdad Hamdollahi highlighted the operation of 82 active freight terminals and transport hubs across the country, stating that from the beginning of the year (March 20, 2024) until the end of Bahman (February 18), 545.4 million tons of goods were transported through the national road network.

He noted that during this period, 21 million tons of essential goods were moved from the country's ports and distributed to various destinations via road

transport.

The official added that over the 11-month period, a total of 104 million tons of agricultural, livestock, and food products, as well as more than 182.8 million tons of construction and mineral goods, were transported across the country's transportation routes.

Hamdollahi emphasized that currently, more than 460,000 freight vehicles with an average age of over 18 years are operational in the road transport sector.

He also pointed out that to support this sector, over 565,000 drivers and 5,561 companies and institutions are actively engaged in freight transportation across the country's provinces. The official added that 243,573 pickup trucks with an average operational lifespan of over 13 years are licensed by the Roads Maintenance and Transportation Organization and are currently active in cargo transportation.

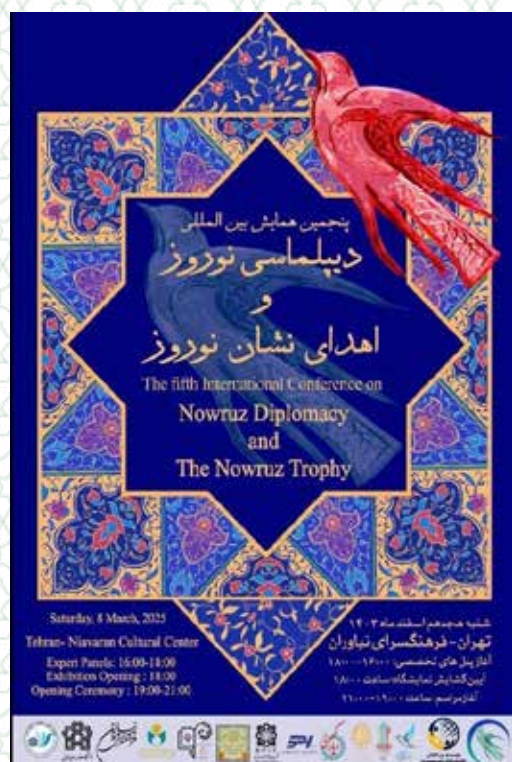


Cultural, diplomatic mystique of Nowruz



EXCLUSIVE Nowruz, celebrated by millions across continents, stands as a vibrant symbol of humanity's shared heritage and enduring spirit. This ancient festival, deeply tied to the rhythms of nature and the cycles of life, has become a cornerstone for fostering understanding and unity among diverse cultures. Beyond its cultural richness, Nowruz opens doors to innovative partnerships between governments, nations, and non-governmental organizations in areas like energy, trade, and environmental sustainability, offering a pathway to address shared challenges. As the world grows more interconnected, Nowruz serves as a reminder of the power of tradition to inspire dialogue, strengthen bonds, and create opportunities for collective progress. In this collection, scholars and experts offer unique perspectives on how Nowruz can shape a future defined by connection and shared purpose.

Surrounded by people celebrating the start of the calendar New Year (Nowruz), musicians play wind instruments at Hafezieh, the burial site of the great Persian poet Hafez, in the historical city of Shiraz, southern Iran, in March 2024.
● IRNA



The photo shows the poster of the fifth International Conference on Nowruz Diplomacy and the Nowruz Trophy, which is scheduled to be held on March 8, 2025, at the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Center in Tehran, Iran.
● BORNA

Why rereading Nowruz's narrative matters



By **Abed Akbari**
Secretary of Nowruz
Trophy Conference

OPINION

The foundational philosophy of International Relations as a discipline lies in studying the causes of war and the means to achieve peace. From its inception, this field has been built on the normative approach of "viewing war as evil and peace as good," and its evolution over the past century has adhered to this same principle. However, the dominance of Western authors in shaping the discipline's literature has led to a reproduction of Western thought on war and peace, leaving little room for non-Western societies to propose indigenous ideas for "preventing war and promoting peace." While the second decade of the 21st century has seen nascent efforts to advocate for non-Western theorization in International Relations, these remain marginal. Undoubtedly, one source of inspiration for indigenous theorization lies in drawing theoretical templates from the ideas of intellectual and cultural luminaries within each society. Just as Western International Relations theories rely on the intellectual

frameworks of figures like Immanuel Kant, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, non-Western societies must also return to their own cultural and intellectual giants to articulate alternative or complementary perspectives on "preventing war and promoting peace." The Nowruz civilizational sphere, as an intellectual domain spanning Central Asia, the Iranian Plateau, the Caucasus, and Anatolia, is rich with historical figures, and a return to and a rereading of their works and ideas could serve as resources for indigenous theorization. Yet, modern inheritors of this sphere have adopted a reductionist approach to these figures in recent decades. On one hand, influenced by the "territory-centric ontology" dominating mainstream International Relations theory, they have attempted to recast historical intellectuals as "modern citizens" labeled with national adjectives like "Iranian," "Turk," "Afghan," "Tajik," or "Azerbaijani." On the other hand, shaped by the "dualist ontology" of mainstream International Relations — which rigidly separates "the domestic" from "the foreign," idealizing the former while viewing the latter with suspicion as

a tool of external enemies — they have restricted the dissemination of certain historical thinkers' ideas. For example, when Nizami Ganjavi is portrayed as "Azerbaijani," the modern Azerbaijani state censors his Persian-language writings, reproducing only his works in Azerbaijani Turkic. Such reductionism, politicizing historical figures, has obscured the "ideas and philosophies of inspirational luminaries" in this sphere. In practice, due to this politicization, rare attempts to introduce these figures focus solely on their cultural aspects, seldom exploring the theoretical implications of their foundational ideas. Today, the countries of the Nowruz civilizational sphere are arguably trapped in their own historical narratives of shared traditions and culture — particularly Nowruz. This entrapment stems from political rivalries, national ambitions, and at times, extraterritorial interference. In an era of global regionalism, this captivity has inflicted significant harm, especially through missed opportunities for cooperation and convergence. Crafting a strategic narrative of Nowruz is now an urgent imperative

for these countries. -If their shared history and geography, through dialogue among their elites, are transformed into a strategic narrative, it could pave the way for this ancient culture to exert global influence. Nowruz's narrative should be seen as a powerful tool to shape a favorable image of these nations regionally and internationally. This necessity will help expand their effective influence, construct a shared understanding of the past, present, and future among all Nowruz-celebrating nations. These countries possess unparalleled potential in terms of human resources, economic opportunities, and socio-political prospects. One pathway to consolidating these strengths into effective regional agency is initiating dialogues among elites rooted in shared historical and cultural foundations. However, this opportunity is not indefinite. The elites of Nowruz nations must act with greater resolve to lay the groundwork for such collaboration in an increasingly Westernized world — a fleeting chance, like spring itself, as Nizami reminds us: "Cherish this spring today, for Not every dawn brings Nowruz anew."

Nowruz; A global symbol of solidarity



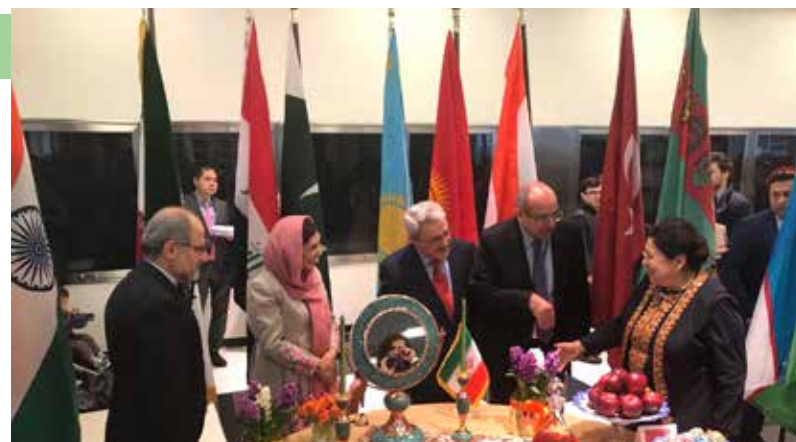
By **Mohammad Reza Pakravan**
Former diplomat

OPINION

Nowruz, undeniably one of the world's oldest and most enduring traditions, not only commemorates the arrival of spring and the rejuvenation of nature but also embodies a shared cultural heritage. Beyond its symbolic resonance, it creates opportunities for nations to cultivate and reinforce ties across cultural, artistic, political, and economic spheres. Originating in the ancient history of Iran and the civilizations of Central Asia, Nowruz has expanded its reach over millennia. Today, its observance spans vast regions — from its heartlands in Central Asia and the Middle East to communities in Eastern Europe and North Africa. At its core, Nowruz symbolizes renewal, peace, and solidarity — both national and international. These universal values serve as a bridge for fostering global connections and enhancing relations in the modern era, a time when cultural

diplomacy holds unprecedented significance in international affairs. As a shared cultural heritage, Nowruz unites diverse nations and regions, including Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, Turkmenistan, and communities in Iraq and Syria. This vast cultural sphere mirrors the historical and identity-based commonalities among these societies. Such a common heritage lays the groundwork for collaborative cultural initiatives and the strengthening of goodwill between nations. In 2010, the United Nations designated Nowruz as "International Nowruz Day," elevating it to a global event and affirming its status as a shared human heritage. This acknowledgment underscores Nowruz's potential to foster solidarity and serve as a platform for cross-cultural dialogue. In today's world — marked by political tensions, economic disparities, and climate crises — Nowruz offers a unique opportunity for cultural diplomacy. Joint celebrations, artistic collaborations, and international events centered on Nowruz could strengthen solidarity

and expand cultural exchanges. Nowruz also holds significant economic promise. Its vibrant festivals and exhibitions attract international tourists, showcasing regional cultures and transforming Nowruz into a compelling cultural brand. Additionally, promoting handicrafts and traditional arts linked to the celebration could boost local economies while enhancing the global image of host nations. To fully harness Nowruz's diplomatic and cultural potential, closer coordination among celebrating countries is essential. Establishing a "Permanent Secretariat or International Organization for Nowruz" could streamline program management, position the festival as a forum for international cooperation, and promote it worldwide. This body could leverage digital tools — social media, virtual events, and immersive technologies — to engage younger generations and preserve the tradition's relevance. Youth engagement is critical: innovative approaches like virtual reality experiences, narrative films, and interactive social media content could revitalize Nowruz for future eras. However, chal-



The countries celebrating Nowruz hold a food festival in the United Nations at the suggestion and coordination of Iran's mission in March 2019.
● IRNA

lenges persist, including political and cultural differences among nations, funding gaps for international programs, and divergent interpretations of the festival. Addressing these requires collaborative efforts — financial and advisory support from international institutions, cultural exchanges, and dialogues to align visions of Nowruz. As a final point, Nowruz transcends a seasonal ritual; it reflects timeless human values — reverence for nature,

unity, and peace. In an era of instability, it offers a universal language to bridge divides and foster mutual understanding. By embracing coordinated strategies, nations that celebrate Nowruz can amplify its message of friendship and sustainability, ensuring it benefits not only their societies but the world at large. Nowruz is an invitation to reimagine global cooperation, rooted in shared heritage, to build a more harmonious and resilient future for all.

Nowruz; A heritage of global peace, solidarity



By Mona Rahmani
CEO of Int'l Farda
Development Activists
Association

OPINION

Nowruz, beyond being a national tradition, is a shared and eternal heritage for humanity. Celebrated in over 16 countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, it carries a message of peace, coexistence, and friendship with nature. This celebration is rooted in ancient Iranian culture but offers boundless potential for fostering cultural connections among nations and facilitating dialogue between civilizations. In this context, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can step up to bridge the communication gaps, turning Nowruz into a tool for lasting peace. By holding educational workshops on Nowruz traditions, ancient stories, and the philosophy of loving nature, NGOs can keep this heritage alive in the hearts of communities. Campaigns such as “Green Nowruz,” which invite people to plant trees and manage waste, not only align with the nature-loving spirit of Nowruz but also bring about a global message of solidarity with the Earth and humanity. Moreover, collective events like Nowruz bazaars and handicraft exhibitions strengthen the bond between

urban and rural areas and improve the livelihoods of artisans and villagers. Civil society, through joint Nowruz festivals and artistic projects in countries within the Nowruz cultural sphere, can transform this celebration into a symbol of mutual understanding and friendship among nations. For instance, a collaboration between Iranian NGOs and their counterparts in Tajikistan and Afghanistan to showcase the music, dance, and stories of Nowruz reinforces a shared identity. Nowruz diplomacy is a powerful tool at the disposal of these organizations to promote Nowruz as a model of global peace through campaigns at the United Nations or UNESCO, just as its global registration marked the beginning of this journey. In a world filled with tension and conflict, NGOs, through networking, creativity, and leveraging the soft power of Nowruz, can turn this celebration into a dynamic movement for peace and solidarity. Nowruz is a unique opportunity to demonstrate the power of culture against division. NGOs, by representing local communities, reflect the needs and aspirations of people through this tradition. Undoubtedly, with public participation and civil efforts, Nowruz will evolve into a richer and more meaningful experience, planting the seeds of peace in the heart of the world.

Nowruz diplomacy; A path to economic integration



By Abdollah Razavi
Faculty member at PUT

OPINION

Nowruz, beyond being an ancient celebration, represents a cultural and civilizational asset that can serve as a foundation for the development of economic diplomacy and regional integration. In a world where regionalism has emerged as one of the most significant political and economic approaches, the countries within the Nowruz civilization can leverage this shared heritage to forge a new path for economic, energy, and financial cooperation. This region, stretching from Central Asia and the Caucasus to the Middle East and parts of South Asia, possesses immense potential in energy, trade, and communications — a potential that remains largely untapped. One of the key opportunities that Nowruz diplomacy could create is collaboration in the energy sector. The countries in this region are among the largest producers of oil and gas globally; however, their reliance on traditional transit infrastructures, geopolitical rivalries, and a lack of coordination in energy policies have hindered the full utilization of this potential. In

such circumstances, integrating the Nowruz-celebrating countries through shared infrastructure development, coordinated export policies, and investments in clean energy projects could enhance their global market position and strengthen regional energy security. Nevertheless, Nowruz diplomacy should not be confined to energy cooperation alone. Due to cultural, historical, and linguistic commonalities, this region has significant capacity for forming an economic bloc. The experience of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has demonstrated that regional collaborations can only succeed when backed by strong cultural and economic foundations. By establishing trade agreements, developing shared transportation corridors, and facilitating cross-border commerce, these nations could advance economic integration. A civilizational-based economic union might further foster common markets, reduce trade tariffs, and boost productivity. One of the most pressing challenges facing these countries is the disruption of financial and trade flows caused by economic sanctions and banking restrictions. Creating a common financial system — including a regional development

bank, the use of local currencies in trade, and an independent payment mechanism — could reduce dependence on the international financial system and bolster economic autonomy. Successful models from other regions offer actionable insights for countering external pressures and enhancing resilience. Beyond economics, Nowruz diplomacy can strengthen neighborhood ties and mitigate regional tensions. Many Nowruz-celebrating nations grapple with political and territorial disputes that obstruct cooperation and sustainable development. By drawing on their shared heritage, they could establish mechanisms to deepen diplomatic dialogue, resolve conflicts, and expand cultural collaboration. History shows that culture and economy can synergize to drive integration and stability. As the world shifts toward regional blocs and multilateralism, these countries must seize this historical opportunity. Harnessing their shared heritage could lay the groundwork for sustainable collaboration, fostering regional economic progress while elevating their global standing. Nowruz is not just a celebration; it has the potential to become a bridge to a brighter future in the region.

Preserving Iran’s final say on Nowruz needs vigilance



By Ehsan Movahedian
Faculty member at ATU

OPINION

With a 7,000-year civilizational history and a 3,000-year written history, Iran is among the countries possessing a rich and unique cultural heritage. The ancient celebration of Nowruz and its associated traditions are among the factors that have sustained the unity of the diverse inhabitants of the Iranian plateau, preserved solidarity among its peoples, and enabled our country to withstand foreign invading forces. Throughout history, these foreign invaders have consistently sought to dominate Iran and plunder its abundant resources, aiming to undermine the foundations of national and religious cohesion in Iran. That is why Shi’ism on one hand, and the traditions respected by all inhabitants of Iran on the other, have been under constant attack by those hostile to Iran. In recent years, some neighboring countries, particularly Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan, guided by the Zi-

onist regime, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have made every effort to diminish the strength of these unifying bonds within Iranian society. Consequently, we are witnessing the formation of rival civilizational and identity alliances around Iran, especially by Turkey. While Turkey has little linguistic, civilizational, or cultural connection with Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Erdogan government, driven by economic, political, and security goals — which are implanted by Israel and NATO — is striving to strengthen so-called Turkic nations, create a Turkic NATO and a Turkic Silk Road, and take other similar initiatives to establish a cultural and civilizational authority in its name and then compete with Iran. Iran’s cultural and political influence extends to the heart of these regions naturally due to its civilizational, identity-based, and historical ties with the inhabitants of the Caucasus and Central Asia, without needing to resort to such measures. Neglecting Iran’s civilizational,

identity-based, and historical capacities and leaving defenders of the Persian language and Iranian traditions like Nowruz undefended in the Caucasus and Central Asia is a grave and irreparable mistake. This has confined Iran within its current borders and will force us in the future to defend Nowruz, the Persian language, and other rich cultural treasures not in cities like Samarkand, Bukhara, Baku, Dushanbe, and the Fergana Valley, but in Tabriz, Ardabil, Urmia, Zanzan, Qazvin, and elsewhere. While a significant portion of the historical and ancient books in these regions are written in Persian script and language, the rulers of Baku and Turkey, by presenting Latin books containing historical forgeries to universities and cultural centers in their countries, are attempting to fabricate a false identity. They are trying to make Turkish the standard and reference language for all Azeri-inhabited regions of Iran, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. They are trying to forge cultural, identity-based, civiliza-

tional, historical, and religious solidarity between the inhabitants of these regions and Turkey. Meanwhile, this solidarity naturally exists with Iran. Turkey, which until a few years ago prevented Kurds from celebrating Nowruz, now, alongside Baku, claims Nowruz as its own celebration and even fabricates non-Persian roots for the word “Nowruz”. Meanwhile, leaders of some Western countries, particularly the United States, send Nowruz greetings to the president of Baku and overlook Iran, attempting to strip Iran of its civilizational final say over Nowruz and attribute the festival to countries that have been politically independent for no more than four decades. The Islamic Republic of Iran must recognize this significant threat and step up its efforts to foster convergence among Nowruz-celebrating countries. This will prevent nations with no history or civilization to boast about from seizing the opportunity to forge and steal Iran’s identity-based and civilizational achievements. There are strategies that will help



Uzbeks gather in front of their Nowruz table arrangement and local foods to celebrate the New Year.
● MEHR

revive and strengthen cultural Iran and prevent Central Asia and the Caucasus from becoming the backyard of Iran’s enemies and rivals; Among such strategies are strengthening cultural ties with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, teaching Persian to the younger generation in these countries, enhancing media activities in the region using the internet to counter anti-Iranian narratives by rival and hostile nations, promoting the discourse of the Islamic Rev-

olution with an emphasis on Shia-Sunni unity and respect for local beliefs, employing soft political language through cultural initiatives (such as poetry nights, literary gatherings, art workshops, and screening Iranian films and series) to avoid provoking political and security sensitivities in these countries, positively portraying Iran’s scientific and technological advancements in recent decades, and expanding healthy and purposeful economic presence and activities in these countries.

Common Nowruz rituals of Iran, Armenia



By Isak Unanesian
Cultural researcher

OPINION

The cultural relations between Iranians and Armenians date back 28 centuries, with deep cultural roots tying the two peoples together: The land of Armenia is an extension of the Iranian plateau. Both peoples set out from the original homeland of the Aryan tribes and settled in their current territories. The Armenian lan-

guage shares an inseparable bond with Persian; Ancient Armenian names are derived from Achaemenid and Parthian names. Iranians and Armenians shared a common religion during the Achaemenid and Parthian eras. Both peoples celebrate shared festivals with a history of 2,700 years, and today, Armenians observe these festivals within the framework of Christianity. No nation or people are as close to Iranians as the Armenians, and in fact, they form a single family.

Since ancient times, Iranians and Armenians have celebrated many shared festivals, inspired by antiquity. Among these are Barqandan for Iranians (Barekendan for Armenians), Tigran (Vardavar), Sadeh (Trndez), and Nowruz (Navasard). The Barqandan (Barekendan) festival is one of the shared celebrations of Iranians and Armenians, respectively, which, in addition to having similar names, also share similar customs and traditions. This festival was held before the arrival of the Great Lent (the Great Fast),

and both peoples celebrated it. In the Armenian language, Barekendan signifies a good life, joy, happiness, and abundance. This festival dates back to pre-Christian Armenia and was celebrated simultaneously with the Navasard festival. Armenians still celebrate Barekendan on the day before the start of the Great Lent. Those who intend to fast prepare a more elaborate and colorful dinner table than usual and gather with relatives and friends to celebrate.

In ancient Armenia, the first month of the year was called Navasard (meaning New Year), which coincides with the Iranian Nowruz (meaning New Year) festival, both signifying the arrival of the New Year. This is one of the most important festivals of the Aryan peoples. Although the fire-lighting festival now commonly brings to mind the Iranian Chaharshanbe Suri festival (celebrated on the eve of the last Wednesday of the calendar year), it also refers to the Iranian Sadeh and the Armenian Trndez

festivals. While Armenians celebrate Trndez on February 13 in the courtyards of churches or their homes, roughly around the same time, Iranians celebrate Sadeh in late January and Chaharshanbe Suri in mid-March. The Iranian Tigran and the Armenian Vardavar festivals are among the oldest shared festivals of the two nations and it is also known as the water-splashing festival. Vardavar is celebrated in the summer, during which Armenians splash water on each other.

Iran beaten by Brazil in futsal friendly



FFIRI

Sports Desk

Iran suffered a 5-2 defeat against world champion Brazil in a first outing in futsal friendly tournament in Curitiba, Brazil, on Thursday. Charuto gave the host a seventh-minute lead, only to see his goal canceled out by Salar Aqapour's superb finish a minute later.

Arthur restored the lead for the Selecao from the second spot in the 17th minute, and young Brazilian Neguinho doubled the advantage as it finished 3-1 at halftime.

The home side started the second half on the front foot but it was Vahid Shamsaei's side which found the net against the run of play, with prolific Hossein Tayyebi scoring on a rebound, though it proved to be a costly strike for the Asian powerhouse as Aqapour was substituted after being injured in the buildup to the goal.

Marcelo restored the two-goal cushion with a sizzling strike in the 25th minute, and there was further misery for Shamsaei's men after Tayyebi received his marching order for a second booking three minutes later.

Iranian keeper Saeid Momeni pulled off a string of saves to keep his side in the contest, but Charuto netted his second of the night with five minutes left on the clock as Shamsaei's side got off to losing start in the tournament.

A second match for Iran will come against Greenland today.

Greenland was beaten 5-4 by Afghanistan in their opening game earlier on Thursday.

Iranian duo among IWUF annual winners

Sports Desk

Two Iranian wushu practitioners picked up the prize in their respective categories in the IWUF Athlete of the Year 2024.

The winners were decided through a voting by the wushu fans on the official website of the international governing body of the sport.

Iranian girl Zahra Kiani was

named the Female Talou Athlete of the Year, after grabbing a maiden talou gold for the country in last September's Asian Wushu Championships in Macao, China.

A two-time silver medalist at the Asian Games, Kiani scored 9.686 points to beat opponents from Hong Kong and Vietnam to the ultimate prize in the women's jianshu form.

Meanwhile, Amirhesam Mo-

hammad was voted the Sanda Rising Star of the Year.

The Iranian prodigy defeated Genea Elyos Silaban of Indonesia in the final showpiece to walk away with the gold medal in the boys' junior 52kg contests to help the country win the sanda team title at the 9th World Junior Wushu Championships in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, last September.



iranwushufed.ir

Iran drops to 68th in FIFA Women's Ranking



FFIRI

Sports Desk

Iranian women dropped by one spot to sit 68th in the latest FIFA World Ranking – released on Thursday.

A total of 1381.9 points saw the Iranian national team stand 12th among the AFC member states, with Japan (2001.9pts), North Korea (1944.23), and Australia (1845.91) – a semifinalist at the 2023 World Cup on home soil – completing

the top three in the continent.

Iran played Puerto Rico – 81st in the latest ranking – in a friendly double-header on the Caribbean island in late February, losing the first game 2-0 before sharing the spoils in a 1-1 draw.

China, South Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Myanmar followed the top three in the AFC list.

USA retained the top spot in

ranking with 2069.06 points, with the chasing pack, reigning world champion Spain (2020.6), Germany (2014.73), and England (2008.98) remaining unchanged. Japan moved up by three spots to sit fifth – overtaking Sweden, Canada, and Brazil – thanks to three successive victories over USA (2-1), Colombia (4-1), and Australia (4-0) in a title-winning run at the 2025 SheBelieves Cup in the United States.

Chelsea's 2024 squad most expensive ever in Europe, says UEFA report

REUTERS – Chelsea's squad at the end of the 2024 financial year was the most expensive ever assembled in Europe in terms of transfer fees, according to a report released by governing body UEFA.

The "European Club Finance and Investment Landscape" report said Chelsea spent 1.656 billion euros (\$1.79 billion) on combined transfer costs.

That comfortably surpassed the value of Manchester United's squad in 2023, which cost 1.42 billion euros to assemble, and the 1.33 billion euros spent by Real Madrid, which was the highest squad cost in 2020.

Chelsea have signed 41 players since Todd Boehly and Clear-

lake Capital bought the club in 2022, but the west London club's big-money transfers have not translated to significant on-field success, as Chelsea finished sixth in the Premier League last season and are currently fifth.

According to the report which analyses all of Europe's top divisions, Real Madrid (1,073 million euros), Manchester City (854 million euros), Paris St Germain (808 million euros), Manchester United (771 million euros) and Bayern Munich (765 million euros) had the highest revenues in 2023.

The Premier League had nine teams among the top-20 earning clubs, with an average revenue of 357 million euros and approxi-

mate aggregate revenue of 7.15 billion euros.

Spain's LaLiga was second with revenues of 3.7 billion euros, with Germany's Bundesliga (3.6 billion euros), Italy's Serie A (2.9 billion euros) and France's Ligue 1 (2.4 billion euros) rounding out the top five.

The top 20 clubs have been relatively stable across the last decade, with all of the current top 20 featuring in the top 25 in 2014. English clubs reported just over 7.1 billion euros of revenue in 2023, but the size of the top clubs meant the mean club revenue (357 million euros) is considerably higher than the median (10-11th) club revenue of 245 million euros.

"This 'typical' median English club revenue has 60% more reve-

nue than the typical German club and three times the revenue of the typical club in Italy and Spain, principally due to the large TV revenue distributions enjoyed by all top division clubs in England," the report said.

Europe's 700-plus top-division clubs recorded aggregate revenue of 26.8 billion euros in 2023, with England's 20 top-flight clubs reporting almost double the revenue (97% more) than either the second and third highest leagues in 2023, Spain and Germany.

England and Germany have by far the largest attendance figures, which is reflected in their median gate revenues of 29.1 million euros and 23.7 million euros, respectively.



HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

Arsenal (153 million), Manchester United (129), Tottenham (123), and Liverpool (108) were among the

eight European clubs that reported more than 100 million euros in gate revenue in 2023.

Exploring Kermanshah’s historical treasures

Iranica Desk Kermanshah, the capital city of Kermanshah Province, stands as one of the most significant and largest Kurdish cities, steeped in a history that stretches back millennia. This land is rich with remnants of our ancestors, each artifact and site whispering a unique story. To comprehensively introduce all of these treasures in a single report would be an immense undertaking. Therefore, this report aims to provide a concise introduction to a carefully selected array of some of the Kermanshah’s most notable historical and cultural landmarks. When contemplating a visit to the historical sites within Kermanshah Province, the iconic Taq Bostan and the monumental Bisotun Rock Inscription often spring to mind. However, it’s essential to recognize that this region boasts a wealth of other captivating destinations, each offering a distinct glimpse into its rich past, IRNA wrote.

Old tekiyehs

Tekeyeh is a place in which religious ceremonies are held. Within Kermanshah, the Beyglarbeygi and the Moaven-ol-Molk *tekiyehs* stand out as must-see destinations for both tourists and residents alike. The Beyglarbeygi *Tekeyeh*, a testament to the Qajar era, was commissioned by Abdullah Khan Farrash Bashi, who held the title of Beyglarbeygi. Registered as a national heritage site on December 19, 1996, the *tekiyeh* is not only of architectural significance but also features exquisite mirror work and plaster decorations that enhance its allure. Among the various sections of the old monument, one finds the Zagros Paleolithic Museum, the first of its kind in the Middle East, and the Museum of Calligraphy and Writing, both established within its walls. These museums offer valuable insights into the region’s ancient past and artistic heritage. The Moaven-ol-Molk *Tekeyeh*, another remarkable structure dating back to the Qajar era, served primarily for religious ceremonies during that period. Its distinctive tiling showcases a complete embodiment of Iranian art and culture, manifested through its stunning architecture and intricate decorations. Located on Hadad-e Adel Street in Kermanshah, still known by its old name, Abshuran, among the locals, the Moaven-ol-Molk *Tekeyeh* represents a fascinating fusion of Iranian and Islamic architectural traditions with Western influences that emerged during its construction. The magnificent structure earned its place as a national heritage site in Iran on December 1, 1975. The unique tiles adorning the structure were crafted using colors derived from 100% natural materials. Each tile contributes to the artistic value of the *tekiyeh*, narrating stories and reflecting the cultural ethos of the time. The building’s beautiful and commendable architecture cannot be overlooked, as it weaves together fragmented pieces of Iranian identity through carefully chosen images and motifs, presenting them to both present and future generations.

Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah

The Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah functions as a “city within a city,” a vibrant confluence of history, economy, and culture. Each alley and *timcheh* (a roofed, commercial space) within the bazaar echoes with unique narratives. Preserving this invaluable heritage demands more than mere restoration of buildings; it necessitates the revival of traditional professions, the education of younger generations, and the intelligent integration of new technologies with the historical fabric of the market to ensure its continued vitality into the third millennium. With its ancient roots and intricate structure, the bazaar stands as an outstanding example of architecture and urban economy in western Iran. More than just a center for commercial exchange, it forms the pulsating heart of the city’s social, cultural, and religious life. The bazaar’s layout follows the pattern of linear-network markets prevalent in Iran, featuring a network of alleys and *timchehs*, each carefully designed to serve a specific function. The alleys are divided into main and secondary sections, guiding the flow of commerce and social interaction.



Beyglarbeygi Tekeyeh
● visitiran.ir



Beyglarbeygi Tekeyeh
● IRNA



Moaven-ol-Molk Tekeyeh
● IRNA

Within the Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah lie other notable places, including its historical caravanserais. The *timchehs* within the bazaar are also significant attractions. One *timcheh*, distinguished by its brick dome and strategically placed skylights, historically served as a gathering place for dry fruit wholesalers and another was once the center for minting local coins during the Zand and Qajar dynasties, highlighting the bazaar’s economic importance. **Enduring crafts** During the Zand and Qajar periods, the bazaar served as a hub for the trade of exclusive products. Carpets and rugs, renowned for their geometric designs, were crafted using natural dyes derived from sources like madder and walnut husks. Leather production has long been established in the bazaar and continues to be practiced today. The crafting of *giveh* (a type of traditional shoe) and saddles from locally tanned leather remains an

art passed down through generations of artisans who continue to work and earn their livelihoods within the market. **A crossroads of trade** The bazaar’s strategic location along the north-south road in Iran and the east-west road contributed significantly to its prosperity. Its position on these major trade routes facilitated the exchange of imported goods, such as silk fabrics from Bukhara, Indian spices, and Yemeni coffee. Exported goods included carpets, tanned leather, and tobacco, destined for the Ottoman Empire and Russia. Even today, a number of long-standing merchants maintain shops selling tobacco and carpets, preserving their traditional livelihoods. **Challenges** One of the challenges faced by the Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah following the Iran-Iraq war was the renovation and reconstruction of damaged



Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah
● tebyan.net



Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah
● tebyan.net



Moaven-ol-Molk Tekeyeh
● IRNA

sections using modern materials that often clash with the bazaar’s traditional architecture. The bazaar endured bombardment during the war, leading to the destruction of portions of the coppersmiths’ alley and the Haj Shah-baz Khan Caravanserai. Other threats confronting the market include the challenges of modernization. The replacement of traditional shops with electronics and ready-to-wear clothing stores, coupled with the declining demand for handicrafts due to the influx of inexpensive Chinese goods, pose serious challenges to the bazaar. Unfortunately, in recent years, the rise of new industries has led to the decline of numerous trades and professions within the bazaar. Coppersmithing, for example, is becoming increasingly rare, with only a few workshops continuing to employ old methods to produce copperware. Woolen weaving, another diminishing industry, involves artisans using sheep’s wool to create traditional cov-

erings. Pottery workshops also face a struggle for survival, as they compete with mass-produced plastic ware. The Traditional Bazaar of Kermanshah was officially recognized for its cultural and historical significance when it was registered as a national heritage site in Iran on June 7, 2000. **Untapped potentials** The sheer wealth of historical and cultural assets within Kermanshah Province is undeniable. With 4,200 registered national sites, three UNESCO World Heritage sites, and numerous other tourist attractions awaiting formal recognition, Kermanshah possesses immense untapped potential within the tourism sector. By strategically investing in preservation, promotion, and sustainable tourism initiatives, Kermanshah can solidify its position as a premier destination for cultural heritage enthusiasts, both domestically and internationally, ensuring that the stories of its past continue to resonate for generations to come.

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● Editorial Dept. Tel
● Address
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+98 21 84711411
208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran
+98 21 88548892-5
+98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com
www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir
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‘No to Accidents’ campaign to curb fatalities

Minister: Culture, media key to reducing road collisions

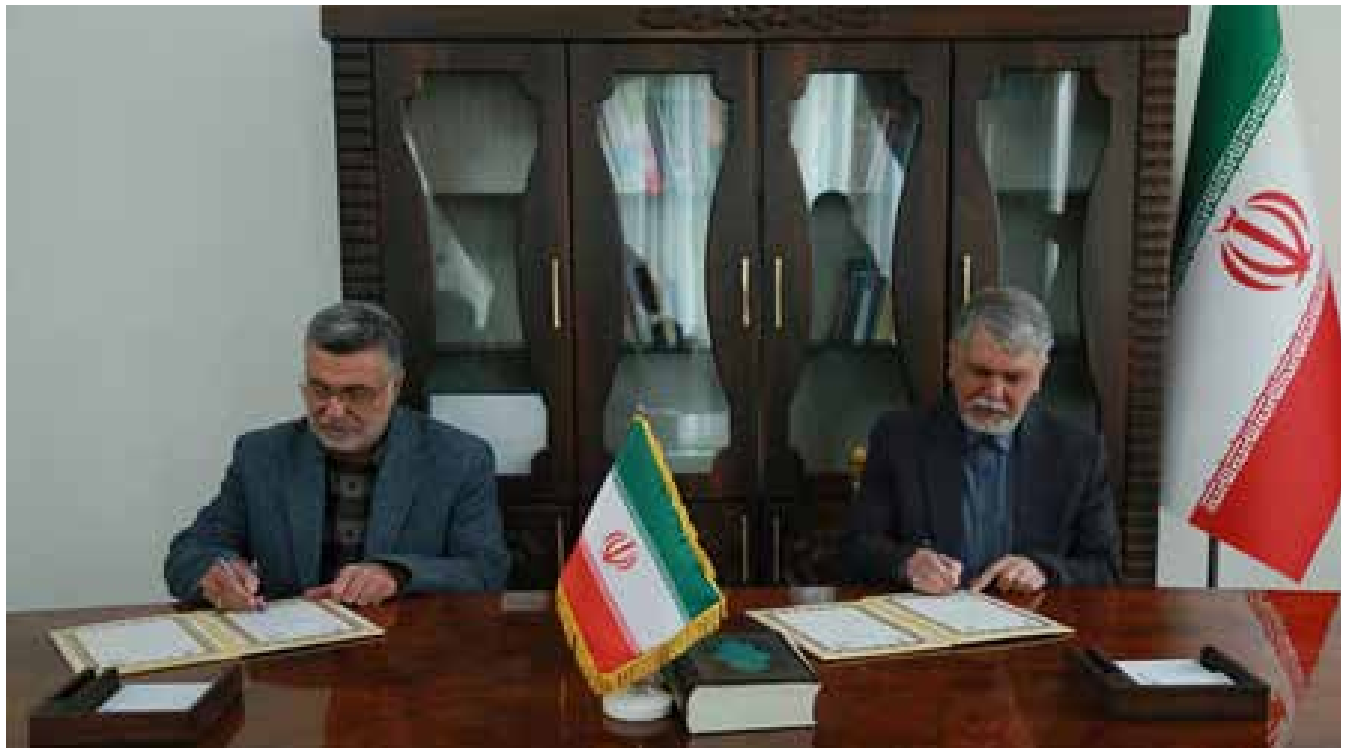
Social Desk



Iran’s Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, stressed the role of artists and media in raising public awareness to reduce road accidents, as the government ramps up efforts to curb traffic fatalities ahead of Nowruz, the Persian New Year. Speaking at the signing ceremony of a cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Salehi added that utilizing cultural and media resources to support the national campaign “No to Accidents,” is of high significance. “Our country not only suffers from the loss of valuable human resources due to road accidents but also bears significant economic costs,” Salehi said, adding that awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in mitigating these issues. The agreement, signed by Salehi and Health Minister Mohammad

Iran’s Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi (R), and Minister of Health and Medical Education Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi sign a cooperation agreement to help curb road accidents in Tehran on March 6, 2025.
● behdasht.gov.ir

Reza Zafarghandi, aims to leverage artistic and media platforms to promote road safety. Salehi said that artists, given their social influence, can contribute by advocating for safer driving practices, while media outlets affiliated with the Culture Ministry can enhance the campaign’s reach. The “No to Accidents” campaign comes as Iran prepares for the busy travel period of Nowruz, a time when road accidents typically surge. Salehi expressed hope that the campaign’s efforts will continue beyond the holiday season, leading to a sustained reduction in traffic fatalities and losses.



Tourism Ministry pushes for urgent UNESCO recognition of southern Jiroft civilization



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, reiterated efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for the ancient Jiroft civilization, a little-known but significant archaeological site in southern Iran. Speaking to reporters upon arrival in Jiroft on Thursday, Salehi Amiri described the region as a

“radiant gem” in Iran’s history. “Jiroft does not need an introduction; it shines like the sun in the historical landscape of our nation,” he said. His visit aims to further archaeological research, promote global recognition, and address preservation efforts. “Following this trip, we must actively pursue its global registration. Also, I will listen to local concerns and raise them within the government,” he added. Jiroft, located in Kerman province near the Halil River, hosts several ancient sites, including Konar Sandal, the Islamic city of Daqyanous, and the Mahdatabad cemetery. Excavations at Konar Sandal, led by archaeologists such as Yousef Majidzadeh and later Mansour Seyyed Sajjadi, have uncovered a ziggurat, a fortress, and artifacts dating back to the late third millennium BCE. Experts believe Jiroft could be home to one of the earliest known civilizations, with inscriptions possibly representing an undeciphered script.

Tehran, Tashkent focus on shared cultural heritage to strengthen ties

Iran and Uzbekistan featured their shared historical and cultural ties as a foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation, particularly in the economic sphere, during a recent meeting between officials from both countries. Ali Najafi, the Iranian Deputy First Vice-President for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation, met with Fariduddin Nasriyev, the ambassador of Uzbekistan to Iran, to discuss ways to boost economic relations, IRNA reported. The two sides emphasized the importance of leveraging their historical and cultural commonalities to foster stronger ties. The discussions focused on establishing mechanisms to increase trade volume and facilitate smoother economic exchanges between the two nations. Furthermore, both officials highlighted the significance of high-level visits and the convening of the Joint Economic Commission



Iranian Deputy First Vice-President for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation Ali Najafi (R) meets with Fariduddin Nasriyev, the ambassador of Uzbekistan to Iran, on March 6, 2025.
● ISNA

between Iran and Uzbekistan as key steps in reinforcing their partnership.

‘He’ from Iran nominated for Malaysia’s KLIFA film festival



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ali Hayati’s short film ‘He’ was selected to compete at the second edition of the Kuala Lumpur International Film Awards (KLIFA) in Malaysia on November 7-8.

Shot in the southwestern cities of Ahvaz and Shushtar, ‘He’ follows the story of a woman striving to free her husband from prison, only to find herself entangled in unforeseen challenges. The film stars Leila Ghotbeddin, Fardin Arfa, Khadijeh Babadi, and Mohammad Ghadirzadeh, IRNA reported. Hayati not only directed but also wrote and edited the film, with Reza Teimouri as the cinematographer, Alireza Shirali as the sound recordist, and Arash Qasemi handling sound design. KLIFA aims to promote cross-cultural exchange and honor films that reflect universal human values. The festival presents awards

in various categories, including Best Feature Film, Best Short Film, Best Documentary, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and Best Actor and Actress. Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi is among the official advisors of the festival. ‘He’ has previously been nominated for Best Film at Colombia’s INCLUCINE International Film Festival and has been screened at several global festivals, including Flowers Against Bullets (Austria), TopShot (Poland), Lift-Off Sessions (UK), Kalakari (India), South Italy (Italy), SWIFF (USA), Bioscope (India), and Bilbao International Documentary and Short Film Festival (Spain).

Iran’s Nat’l Orchestra welcomes spring with year-end concert

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s National Orchestra of Iran marked the arrival of spring with a special concert, ‘Welcoming Spring,’ at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on March 6. Led by conductor Hodayoun Rahimian, the performance featured a repertoire of Iranian classical compositions, ISNA reported. The orchestra performed works by renowned Iranian composers, including Rouhollah Khaledi’s ‘Rangarang 1,’ Darvish Khan’s ‘Polka’ and ‘March in Mahur,’ and Hossein Dehlavi’s ‘In Memory of Saba’ and ‘Lighthearted’. Pieces by Abolhasan Saba, Aminollah Rashidi, and Behzad Abdi were also included in the program. Soloists Mojgan Mohammad-Hosseini (qanun), Maziar Zahireddini (violin), Amir Nazari Salari (violin), and Shima Shah-Mohammadi (ghaychak) accompanied the orchestra in selected pieces.



The concert concluded with ‘Nowruz Festival,’ a celebratory composition by Behzad Abdi, as the orchestra bid farewell to the year and welcomed the Persian New Year.