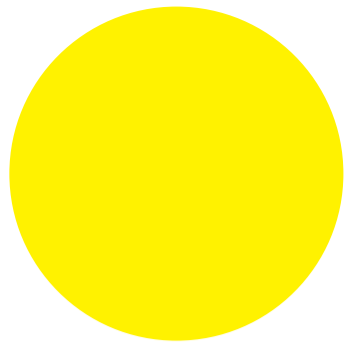


**Iran's FM: Insecurity in Syria will only benefit Israel, terrorist groups**

2 >



# Iran Daily

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IranDailyWeb

## Leader: Bullying powers' insistence on talks aimed at imposing own demands

2 >

### Gaza cease-fire deal shrouded in uncertainty



By Abolfazl Salehinia  
Mideast affairs expert

#### PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

With the first phase of the Gaza cease-fire agreement wrapped up, the implementation of the second phase remains up in the air due to Israeli foot-dragging and deliberate roadblocks—an outcome many saw coming. Israel's track record of going back on its word and sidestepping commitments has long been part of its diplomatic playbook.

A range of scenarios is now on the table, from a return to all-out war to an extension of the first phase or even hammering out a new framework acceptable to both sides. In a bid to break the deadlock, Washington has reached out to Hamas for direct talks aimed at securing the release of Israeli-American captives, reportedly offering to twist Israel's arm into resuming negotiations in return.

The cease-fire agreement was built on three phases. The first involved a halt to hostilities, a partial Israeli withdrawal, and a prisoner swap: 33 Israeli captives—women, children, and elderly civilians—were exchanged for Palestinian prisoners at a 30-to-1 ratio, while captured female soldiers were swapped at 50-to-1. Moreover, displaced Gazans were allowed to return home. Humanitarian aid, including food, fuel, and temporary housing units, was meant to flow into Gaza.

Israel had also agreed to gradually scale down its military presence along the Philadelphia Corridor and, after the last prisoner release in this phase, complete its withdrawal within a week. Furthermore, once all female Israeli soldiers were freed, the Rafah border crossing was to be reopened for Palestinian civilians and the wounded, with travel and trade restrictions lifted.

However, in practice, Israel dragged its feet on multiple provisions of the first phase, particularly the agreed-upon aid deliveries. Far fewer supplies were allowed in than promised, and prefabricated housing units were blocked entirely. Hamas, in response, temporarily put the prisoner exchange on ice and warned that the cease-fire deal was hanging by a thread.

Under the deal, talks on phase two—set to establish a permanent cease-fire and see the release of all remaining captives in exchange for a full Israeli withdrawal—were supposed to get underway by day sixteen.

Under the second phase, a permanent cease-fire is to be declared, Hamas is to release all surviving military and civilian captives, and Israeli forces are to withdraw fully from Gaza. The third phase would involve the exchange of remains after identification and the launch of a three-to-five-year Gaza reconstruction plan overseen by international bodies, including Egypt, Qatar, and the UN. Additionally, border crossings would be reopened.

Nevertheless, with the first phase concluded, Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to enter second-phase talks has thrown the future of the cease-fire into limbo. Israel appears to be angling for an extension of the first phase, prolonging prisoner exchanges—including those deceased—as a bargaining chip to weaken Hamas's leverage.

Page 8 >

## \$17b worth contracts for gas compression in South Pars

**Pezeshkian: Major gains expected in energy sectors**  
**Minister hails pressure boosting deals as new era for SP**

3 >



Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Hamid Bovard (R) signs a document during a ceremony, attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian, to hand over a project to boost pressure at the South Pars gas field to several local firms in Tehran on March 8.  
president.ir

### Lack of logic in Fidan's claims

#### Why is aiding regional gov'ts wrong for Iran, justified for Turkey?

**PERSPECTIVE** Why is Iran criticized for aiding regional governments while Turkey is applauded for doing the same? In a striking double standard, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan accuses Iran of meddling in Syria, yet Ankara itself has intervened militarily across the region, from Libya to Iraq. Iran's policy, rooted in stability and legal governance, mirrors its past support for Turkey during the 2016 coup attempt. Meanwhile, Turkey frames its actions as justified security measures, even as it backs groups with ideological and territorial ambitions. With mounting contradictions in Ankara's rhetoric, the question remains: Who is truly shaping the region's future? [See page 4 >](#)

#### Koozeh-Shekani; a cultural heritage of cleansing and hope

Koozeh-Shekani, the ancient Persian ritual of pot-breaking, is more than just tradition—it's a symbol of renewal, hope, and cleansing. Practiced on the eve of Nowruz in South Khorasan, this nearly forgotten custom represents casting away misfortune and welcoming prosperity. Families would place charcoal, coins, and salt inside the pots—each carrying a deeper meaning—before smashing them from rooftops. Over time, the ritual even took on a romantic twist, sparking love and marriage proposals. Once a key part of Persian heritage, Koozeh-Shekani now faces obscurity. Can this rich cultural legacy be revived, or will it be lost to history? [See page 7 >](#)



#### First transit sugar shipment crossing Iran reaches Afghanistan

3 >



#### End of PKK's armed activities carries significant regional implications

**INTERVIEW** 5 >



#### Iran Paralympic Committee receives IPC recognition on Int'l Women's Day

6 >



#### 'They' to compete at US WILDsound film festival

8 >



# Leader: Bullying powers' insistence on talks aimed at imposing own demands

## International Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the insistence of some bullying powers on negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program is aimed at imposing their demands, stressing that the Islamic Republic will not accept their expectations.

Addressing a number of Iranian officials in Tehran on Saturday, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "The insistence of some bullying governments on negotiations is not aimed at resolving issues, but rather [aims] to assert and impose their own expectations," he said.

"Definitely, the Islamic Republic will not accept their expectations," Ayatollah Khamenei added.

The Leader also hit back at the criticisms leveled by the European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which have claimed that the Islamic Republic has not fulfilled its nuclear commitments, saying, "You say that Iran has not fulfilled its nuclear commitments. Well, did you fulfill yours? You did not comply [with your obligations] from the very beginning."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that after the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in 2018, Europeans vowed to compensate but repeatedly broke their promises.

Before the Leader's speech, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also addressed the meeting and called for unity among officials to overcome problems facing the country.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei meets with Iranian officials in Tehran on March 8, 2025.  
● khamenei.ir

He said that the country is able to overcome all problems caused by sanctions, stressing that no power can defeat a "united country."

"We must not give in to the enemy's threats," he underlined.

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.

The US unilateral withdrawal from the agreement and re-imposition of sanctions removed under the deal left the future of the JCPOA in limbo.

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.

In recent months, the US president has repeatedly expressed his interest to reach an agreement with Iran.

However, his language of threats and imposition of sanctions against Iran have made Iranian officials skeptical of negotiations with the US administration.

Trump last month restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran which includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero.

## OIC rejects Trump's Gaza plan as ethnic cleansing, crime against humanity Muslim nations endorse reconstruction proposal



## International Desk

Foreign ministers from Muslim nations on Saturday rejected widely-bashed calls by US President Donald Trump to forcibly displace Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and backed a plan for an administrative committee of Palestinians to govern and reconstruct the war-ravaged territory.

The foreign ministers gathered in the Saudi city of Jeddah for a special session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address the situation in Gaza.

In a statement put out Saturday, the gathering threw its support behind a plan to rebuild Gaza put forward by Egypt and backed by Arab states aimed at countering Trump's call.

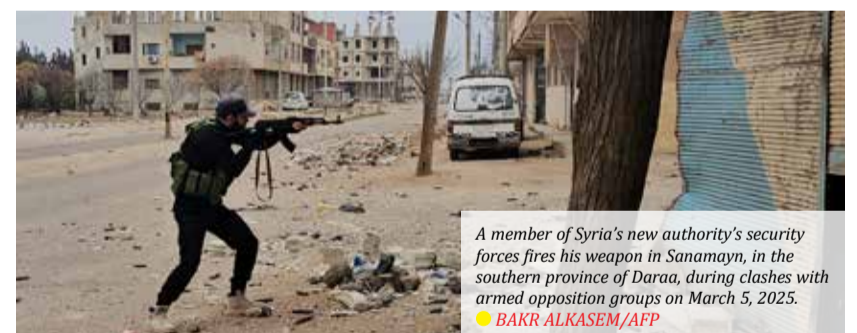
The ministers said they rejected "plans aimed at displacing the Palestinian people individually or collectively ... as ethnic cleansing,

a grave violation of international law and a crime against humanity." They also condemned "policies of starvation" that they said aim to push Palestinians to leave.

Trump triggered global outrage last month when he suggested the US "take over" Gaza and turn it into the "Riviera of the Middle East," while forcing its Palestinian inhabitants to relocate to Egypt or Jordan. Speaking on Friday at an extraordinary meeting of the OIC foreign ministers, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi strongly rejected the US bids "to forcibly relocate the population of Gaza," calling it a "clear violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention."

He stressed that any attempt to alter the "demographic and cultural fabric of the occupied Palestine" is inadmissible and contrary to the principles of justice and international law.

## Iran's FM: Insecurity in Syria will only benefit Israel, terrorist groups 340 Alawite civilians killed by Syrian security forces, allies, monitor says



A member of Syria's new authority's security forces fires his weapon in Sanamayn, in the southern province of Daraa, during clashes with armed opposition groups on March 5, 2025.  
● BAKR ALKASEM/AFP

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi expressed concerns about "dangerous developments" taking place in Syria, emphasizing the responsibility of the Arab country's new rulers to ensure the security of all Syrians.

Araghchi made the remarks in a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan on the sidelines of a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Countries in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Iran's top diplomat underlined that insecurity and instability in Syria will only benefit the Israeli regime and would cause terrorist and extremist groups taking advantage of the unstable situation.

A Syria war monitor reported on Saturday that more than 300 civilians from the Alawite minority have been killed in recent days by security forces and

their allies, as authorities clash with militants loyal to the former government of Bashar al-Assad.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on Saturday that "340 Alawite civilians were killed in the coastal regions of Syria and the Latakia mountains by security forces and allied groups" since then.

The Observatory indicated they were killed in "executions" carried out by security personnel or pro-government fighters and accompanied by "looting of homes and properties."

The civilian deaths bring the overall toll to 553 people, including 93 members of the new government's security forces and 120 pro-Assad fighters, data from the Observatory shows.

The killings followed clashes sparked by the arrest of an individual by security forces in a predominantly Alawite village, the Observatory reported.

Date: 1403/12/19 - No.: 55/03/30184

**INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER**

**First Announcement**

**AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY**

**The Agricultural Support Services Company**, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Jihad-Agriculture of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of **3×35000±10%** MTS of **Granular Triple Super Phosphate** through one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Sunday** dated **09/03/2025** until Saturday dated **15/03/2025** (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30-character identification code of 33903978226350065000000000000000

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Monday** dated **21/04/2025** (During official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8th floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on **Tuesday** dated **22/04/2025** at **14:00** with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9th floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

1- The bid bond value should be at **€ 420124** or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the Telegraphic Transfer rate of the basic and essential commodities on CBI's ETS website [www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir](http://www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir), on **01/3/2025** for each lot of 35000 MTS ± 10% in bank guarantee.

2- The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 35000 MTS ± 10% will be **IRR 124,537,278,296** which must be only submitted by the bidders.

3- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

For more information, you may refer to our website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir),  
and <http://lets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.

**Public relations and international affairs of agricultural support services company**

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# \$17b worth contracts for gas compression in South Pars

*Pezeshkian: Major gains expected in energy sectors*

Minister hails pressure boosting deals as new era for SP

## Economy Desk

A contract for the pressure boosting project of the South Pars gas field was signed on Saturday in the presence of the Iranian president and senior oil industry officials, with four domestic companies taking the lead.

The project, aimed at compensating for pressure decline, maintaining maximum gas production, reducing gas and gasoline imbalances, and preventing gas migration to Qatar, will involve engineering, procurement, construction, transportation, installation, and commissioning of pressure boosting platforms.

The project will include the construction and installation of 420,000 tons of equipment and structures—twice the current offshore equipment in the South Pars field—and the laying of 600 kilometers of subsea pipelines.

It is expected to create at least 17,000 direct jobs as well as 50,000 indirect jobs, while also enhancing the knowledge and capabilities of Iranian companies and supporting domestic production.

Estimates indicate that the project will require an investment of approximately \$17 billion, with projected revenues reaching \$780 billion by the Iranian year of 1430 (2051).

The contract is divided into seven sections and will be executed with the participation of four major companies in the oil industry. Petropars will handle hubs 1 and 7 with a total investment of \$4.798 billion, Oil Industries Engineering and Construction (OIEC) will manage hubs 2 and 5 with \$4.767 billion, Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters will oversee hubs 3 and 6 with \$4.931 billion, and Neyr Perse, a subsidiary of MAPNA Group, will take on hub 4 with an investment of \$2.367 billion.

## Major gains expected

During the signing ceremony, President Masoud Pezeshkian stated that the on-

going projects and large-scale initiatives will lead to significant transformations in the electricity, oil, and gas sectors.

He highlighted efforts to optimize energy consumption, such as preventing gas flaring in Khuzestan, where nearly 40 million cubic meters of gas have been captured in one phase and another 40 million cubic meters in a second phase. He expressed hope that an additional 40 million cubic meters would be controlled by May.

Pezeshkian emphasized the impact of these measures on reducing pollution and increasing efficiency, noting that if this trend continues, gas flaring, which causes widespread pollution and national capital loss, will be eliminated by the end of next year. He praised the efforts of those working tirelessly in the energy sector, which have led to increased production of crude oil, natural gas, diesel, and gasoline.

The president stressed the need to reform consumption patterns and optimize energy resources, stating that moving away from traditional methods and increasing efficiency are essential for a sustainable future.

He pointed out that a significant portion of energy resources is currently consumed inefficiently, but with proper investment and the development of new technologies, this trend can be corrected. Pezeshkian also highlighted government programs to reduce energy waste, particularly in the oil and gas sectors, where measures are being taken to prevent the loss of national capital.

He noted that millions of cubic meters of gas, previously flared, are now being recovered and utilized efficiently. This trend is expected to continue, ultimately eliminating the burning of valuable resources.

The president emphasized the importance of developing renewable energy, stating that increasing the use of clean energy is a fundamental way to enhance efficiency.

Plans are underway to generate 30,000 to 40,000 megawatts of energy through solar and wind power plants, he added, noting that optimizing domestic consumption and reducing reliance on fossil fuels will allow Iran to export oil and gas under better conditions, increasing foreign exchange earnings and contributing to economic stability.

Pezeshkian called for cooperation across all sectors to achieve these goals, expressing determination to pursue development with a scientific and forward-looking approach.

He criticized the lengthy decision-making processes in the country, urging faster administrative procedures and quicker decision-making to avoid delays in project implementation.

## New era for South Pars gas field

Prior to the president's remarks, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad provided a detailed report on the signed contracts, describing the pressure boosting project as a significant step toward realizing a long-standing goal for Iran's oil industry. He stated that the \$17 billion investment marks a new era for the South Pars gas field, the largest gas field in Iran.

Paknejad emphasized that the project is crucial for achieving the targets set in the Seventh Development Plan (2024-28), which aims to increase the country's natural gas production to 1.34 billion cubic meters per day.

He noted that developing gas fields and implementing production maintenance plans are essential to prevent production decline.

The minister estimated that the development and maintenance of production capacity will require an investment of approximately \$75 billion, with \$53 billion allocated to new gas field development and \$22 billion to production maintenance projects, including the South Pars pressure boosting project.

He stressed the need for precise planning



Head of the National Iranian Oil Company Hamid Bovard (R) shakes hands with the representative of MAPNA company after signing a pressure boosting contract in Tehran on March 8, 2025. **SHANA**

and the optimal use of financial resources, including the National Development Fund and investments from energy-intensive industries and petrochemical companies.

Paknejad highlighted that the South Pars gas field accounts for 70% of Iran's gas production, supplying households, small and large industries, and power plants. He noted that after three decades of joint extraction by Iran and Qatar, the field is experiencing pressure decline, which could reduce production.

The minister warned that Qatar's pressure boosting efforts, expected to be operational within two years, could divert some of Iran's gas due to pressure differentials. He estimated that without pressure boosting, Iran could lose the equivalent of one phase of South Pars production by 2027 and 1.5 phases by 2029.

Paknejad also pointed out that 40% of Iran's gasoline is produced from South Pars gas condensates, and failure to implement the pressure boosting project could exacerbate gasoline shortages. He recalled that four preliminary contracts were signed during the previous administration to familiarize contractors with the project, but no funds were spent.

The minister expressed hope that the project would enhance Iran's technological capabilities, particularly in the design and construction of heavy pressure boosting platforms.

## Expediting financing for project

Paknejad emphasized the need to expedite the finalization of the financing agreement with the National Development Fund and its approval by the Economic Council to accelerate the project's implementation.

He expressed hope that the project's goals would be achieved within the specified timeline, contributing to national interests, the prosperity of the oil and gas industries, job creation, and improved public welfare.

Following the minister's remarks, Hamid Bovard, Deputy Oil Minister and CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company, signed the pressure boosting contracts with Petropars, Khatam al-Anbiya, OIEC, and MAPNA on behalf of the ministry.

With the signing of these contracts, Iran's oil industry enters a new phase of sustainable exploitation of the world's largest gas field, playing a crucial role in ensuring stable gas supply and economic development.



## First transit sugar shipment crossing Iran reaches Afghanistan

### Economy Desk

The director-general of the Eastern Railway of Iran announced the transportation of the first transit shipment of sugar from Bandar Abbas to Afghanistan via the Shamtigh rail border.

Ali Hokami-Qassemi announced the above stating that the shipment,

consisting of 20 railcars and 40 containers carrying sugar, was transported by the Sepahan Rail Rasa Forwarding Company and sent to Afghanistan via the Shamtigh border, Mehr News Agency reported.

Highlighting the significance of the shipment, he added that the arrival of this train not only demonstrates the high capacity of the Eastern

Railway of Iran network in transporting transit goods but also marks an important step in expanding trade relations between Iran and Afghanistan.

The official emphasized that this operation has enabled the movement and unloading of railcars carrying food supplies to Afghanistan, which could lead to an increase in the vol-

ume of essential goods transit via the rail route from Iran to Afghanistan.

Hokami-Qassemi also stressed that the development of rail transport along this route will not only reduce transportation costs but also accelerate the transfer of goods and enhance economic interactions between the two countries.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran, Turkmenistan establish economic consortium to increase trade

### Economy Desk

The head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce announced the formation of a specialized economic consortium aimed at boosting exports and trade between Iran and Turkmenistan. The consortium, supported by the joint chambers of both countries, seeks to strengthen economic cooperation.

Ramezan Bahrami, speaking on Saturday, stated that the establishment of the Iran-Turkmenistan Economic Consortium has been widely welcomed by economic stakeholders, IRNA reported.

He emphasized that the consortium provides a valuable opportunity to organize trade, facilitate investment,

and remove trade barriers between the two nations.

Bahrami highlighted the consortium's role in fostering sustainable trade relations, describing it as an effective tool for increasing exports, attracting investments, and easing economic interactions.

He added that the consortium offers a cohesive platform for targeted economic activities in the Turkmenistan market and will create new opportunities for expanding bilateral cooperation.

Bahrami noted that the new mechanism, launched with private sector participation and within the framework of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber, is expected to increase trade volumes, reduce commercial



costs, and enhance regional economic interactions.

He welcomed the active involvement of economic stakeholders in the initiative, stating that the participation of Iranian companies in the consortium will pave the way for sustainable growth in bilateral trade and facilitate entry into Central Asian markets.



## Lack of logic in Fidan's claims

# Why is aiding regional gov'ts wrong for Iran, justified for Turkey?

## PERSPECTIVE

While Turkey's foreign minister sought to portray his government as concerned about the Syrian people and the country's future — and in doing so, pointed fingers at Iran — he should be asked: Which regime is occupying Syria's Golan, bombing parts of the country, and advancing into its territories? Is it Iran threatening Syria's territorial integrity, or Israel?

Relations between Iran and Turkey, as neighboring civilizations, have a long, complex history characterized by wars and peace. Over the past four decades, these ties have been shaped by various variables, yet both nations have strived to uphold neighborly principles while preventing external interference and misunderstandings from undermining the relationship. Recent regional developments following the October 7, 2023 attack by the Hamas resistance group on Israel have accelerated these variables so rapidly that many officials, analysts, and media in the region have been left with little time to comprehend events, make informed decisions, or comment on them. However, the pace of developments should not distance regional leaders from the logic of events, lead them into contradictions, or — like Hakan Fidan, Turkey's Foreign Minister — result in analytical and strategic miscalculations.

## Fidan's remarks, Iran's response

In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera Arabic on Feb. 26, Turkey's foreign minister discussed regional developments and leveled accusations at the Islamic Republic and Tehran's regional policies, prompting a response from Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson. Responding to claims that Iran supports Syrian Kurds, Fidan asserted, "If this is Iran's policy in Syria, I do not think it is correct. If you try to create unrest in another country by supporting a group there, another country might support a group in your country to create unrest for you. 'Nothing can remain hidden in today's world. The capabilities you have, others also possess. Therefore, if you do not want stones thrown at your window, you should not throw stones at others' windows.'" Fidan also addressed Iran's regional policies, claiming, "Iran has paid a price exceeding its gains to maintain its influence in Iraq and Syria and has learned major lessons from recent developments."

These remarks drew a sharp response from Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, who emphasized in a statement, "Over the past five decades, Iran has pursued no regional ambitions. Our sole concern has been supporting the Palestinian people and their cause in resisting occupation, aggression, and preventing Israel's domination over the region. We were the first country to oppose and counter the coup against Turkey's government. We were among the first to welcome the PKK's disarmament, considering it a vital step to-

ward enhancing security in our neighbor Turkey. We remain steadfast in our principled positions and do not shift policies day to day."

## Contradictions

The Turkish foreign minister's half-hour interview with Al Jazeera, particularly the sections addressing Iran, contains a series of contradictions that warrant careful scrutiny.



Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members march while holding the group's flag and photo of one of the group's founding members, Abdullah Öcalan. [irandiplomacy.ir](https://www.irandiplomacy.ir)

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran, guided by its policy of neighborliness and regional security cooperation, views the stability of all neighboring countries as integral to its own stability. Tehran believes that insecurity, terrorism, and war within any Middle Eastern nation affect the entire region, with instability spilling over borders. Iran considers the legitimate government of a country as the rightful guardian of its territorial security. Thus, when Syria's legal government requested advisory assistance to protect its sovereignty, Iran did not hesitate to respond and has maintained a presence in the country while adhering to its principles. This mirrors its actions in 2016, when Iran supported Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's call for help during the illegal coup attempt, leading to the coup's failure.

This policy of aiding legitimate regional governments remains consistent. Yet, the Turkish foreign minister condemns Iran's support for Syria's legal government while deliberately overlooking Turkey's own request for similar assistance. This contradiction raises a critical question: If supporting a legitimate government is commendable, why should Iran be criticized for it? If not, why did Ankara seek Tehran's help in 2016?

2. The Turkish Foreign Minister's accusation against Tehran over backing resistance groups reeks of hypocrisy—a classic case of 'do as I say, not as I do.' Turkey openly supports ideological groups (e.g., the Muslim Brotherhood), ethnic factions (e.g., Turkic groups), and protest movements in Libya as part of its doctrine. Covertly, there are allegations of Turkish financial and even military aid to terrorist groups

like Jabhat al-Nusra. This hypocrisy begs the question: If Ankara proudly supports groups like Jabhat al-Nusra (now Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham), why oppose Iran's backing of resistance factions (even if it exists)? If such support is legitimate, why deny Iran? Conversely, if it is illicit, how can Turkey's leadership justify their family's financial ties to groups like Hamas and Tahrir al-Sham? This duality epitomizes the adage: 'Do as I say, not as I do.' The core fallacy here lies in framing resistance groups as Iranian proxies — a narrative pushed by the West due to its failure to grasp Iran's relationship with these factions. Iranian officials have repeatedly clarified that the Islamic Republic and regional resistance groups share ideological and geopolitical principles, not a patron-client dynamic. Tehran rejects the notion of "proxy forces," viewing such labels as disrespectful to both sides.

3. Over the past four decades, Iran has been recognized by regional states as the foremost force combating state terrorism (the Zionist regime) and group terrorism (Daesh, Al-Qaeda, Tahrir al-Sham, etc.). By historical and statistical accounts, Iran itself is the greatest victim of this phenomenon. Dismissing Iran's efforts against Daesh as mere self-interest ignores realities that will ultimately haunt the dismissers. Tehran, dubbed Tel Aviv's "greatest enemy," has consistently framed the Palestinian issue not as an Arab-Jewish conflict but as a humanitarian crisis, opposing Israeli occupation with all means — even military confrontation.

While Israel attacked Iran's defense systems, Turkey adopted a hypocritical stance toward Gaza's genocide. Despite Erdogan's loud rhetoric against Netanyahu, Turkey-Israel trade relations remain unscathed. Iran's counterterrorism record over the past decade is too clear to be reduced to territorial interests. Iran lost top commanders in this fight — These sacrifices cannot be measured by any expedient logic —

the very kind Fidan espouses. 4. The Turkish foreign minister attempted to portray Turkey as concerned for Syria's people and future, while blaming Iran. Yet the critical question remains: Which regime occupies Syria's Golan Heights, bombs its territories, and advances into its land? Is it Iran threatening Syria's sovereignty, or the Zionist regime? Ignoring Israel's occupation and the US-Israeli role in regional instability—as Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson noted — is a grave error. Accusing Iran while the primary source of insecurity (Israel) remains unchecked is a miscalculation whose consequences will emerge once the "honeymoon" between Golan's occupiers and Ankara ends.

5. Turkey's foreign minister accuses Tehran of 'throwing stones at their neighbors' windows' — but if we're talking about hypocrisy, who here truly lives in a glass house? But who is the real stone-thrower? Has Iran spent billions meddling in Egypt or Libya's internal affairs? Has Iran occupied parts of Syria under the pretext of countering Kurdish groups or bombed Iraqi soil? Has Tehran launched Turkish-language media networks to sway Turkish public opinion? Has Iran funded or supported separatist groups in Turkey?

6. Fidan claims Iran's support for resistance groups has "failed," yet a shrewd politician like him — likened to a fox in his own country — should have foreseen the phoenix of resistance rising from the ashes of



Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. [REUTERS](https://www.reuters.com)

Gaza and Lebanon. He must answer: If Iran's strategy has truly failed, why does Israel still negotiate with Hamas for prisoner swaps? Why did thousands in Beirut mourn the Hezbollah secretary-general? And if resistance is futile, why is Ankara anxious?

## Regional cooperation

As Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson stressed, Iran's neighborhood policy is rooted in steadfast adherence to principles, not shifting stances. Based on this logical framework, Tehran opposes any hegemony over regional states, including Turkey, while advocating cooperation for shared security, prosperity, and stability. Iran emphasizes that blaming regional states — while Trump and Netanyahu escalate adventures like displacing Gazans — amounts to rolling out the red carpet for their domination. Tehran remains committed to self-sustaining security through regional partnerships and expects the same approach from neighbors. Policymakers in Iran's neighboring states should assess their actions toward Tehran not through the lens of recent months but through historical context and an unpredictable future — and shape their policies accordingly.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



People move to stop tanks controlled by putschists, Ankara, Turkey, on July 16, 2016. [AP](https://www.ap.com)



Iran considers the legitimate government of a country as the rightful guardian of its territorial security. Thus, when Syria's legal government requested advisory assistance to protect its sovereignty, Iran did not hesitate to respond and has maintained a presence in the country while adhering to its principles. This mirrors its actions in 2016, when Iran supported Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's call for help during the illegal coup attempt, leading to the coup's failure.



# End of PKK's armed activities carries significant regional implications

**INTERVIEW** Abdullah Ocalan, founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), recently called on the group's members not only to lay down their arms but to dissolve the organization entirely. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described this message as a "historic opportunity." However, it did not halt Turkey's ongoing airstrikes against PKK positions. Many figures close to the Turkish government argue that now that the PKK's leader has demanded its dissolution, the group must disarm and end its conflict with Turkey. Turkey on Thursday insisted the PKK and all groups allied with it must disarm and disband "immediately", a week after the historic call by the Kurdish group's jailed founder. Ismail Bagheri, spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, welcomed Ocalan's message, calling the disarmament a "significant step toward renouncing violence" and expressing hope for its positive regional effects.

IRNA interviewed Siamak Kakaie, a Turkey researcher and international relations scholar, on the motivations and implications of Ocalan's decision. Below is a segment of the discussion:

## What recent developments led to Ocalan's statement?

Ocalan's message urging members to lay down arms and dissolve the PKK has resonated widely in political and media circles globally. While the core theme of abandoning armed struggle is not entirely new—Ocalan has previously emphasized democratic solutions for Kurdish issues in Turkey—the current focus stems from several factors.

Three months ago, Devlet Bahçeli, leader of Turkey's Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), a far-right ally of Erdogan's ruling party, proposed in Parliament that Ocalan should personally announce the PKK's dissolution there. This proposal, framed as a potential amnesty, aimed to foster dialogue among Turkey's political and social factions.

Erdogan endorsed this idea, marking the first official effort to explore avenues for Ocalan to issue a statement ending armed conflict. Concurrently, Turkey's government facilitated meetings between Ocalan (imprisoned on Imrali Island) and representatives of the pro-Kurdish Equality and Democracy Party (a legal parliamentary group). These discussions culminated in Ocalan's explicit call for disarmament. He further urged current PKK leaders—based in northern Iraq—to convene a congress to formalize the group's dissolution.

## Why did Ocalan demand disarmament now, after decades of armed struggle?

Similar appeals have emerged before. For instance, during Turkey's 2011–2012 Kurdish Opening initiative, taboos around direct talks between Ankara and the PKK were broken. At the time, Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) spearheaded negotiations, leading to a cease-fire from 2013 to 2015. However, tensions reignited in 2015 after pro-Kurdish parties gained unprecedented electoral influence, depriving Erdogan's party of a parliamentary majority and triggering snap elections. A security crackdown in southeastern Turkey followed, alongside renewed clashes with the PKK.

Meanwhile, Kurdish groups in Syria capitalized on the Syrian conflict, establishing semi-autonomous zones after Syrian forces withdrew. This development alarmed Ankara, which viewed it as a threat to its territorial integrity. Between 2016 and 2020, Turkey launched cross-border operations (Olive Branch, Peace Spring) to create buffer zones in northern Syria, explicitly opposing Kurdish self-rule. Ankara fears such autonomy could embolden Kurdish aspirations within Turkey.

The Turkish government has welcomed Ocalan's message on disarmament, but the critical question is: Does Erdogan's government now believe the situation is different this time?



A Syrian Kurdish woman waves a flag bearing a picture of the founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party Abdullah Ocalan, as people gather in the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli in northeastern Syria to listen to a message from the jailed leader, Feb. 27, 2025.

● DELI SOULEIMAN / AFP

Yes, the Turkish government has welcomed Ocalan's message and declared that it awaits its results. However, Turkey harbors serious doubts about the likelihood of the PKK's disarmament and has explicitly stated that it expects concrete outcomes from this process. In other words, they believe the PKK must surrender completely and in an organized manner. The Turkish government has framed this situation in a way that underscores the difficulty of implementing such a plan.

Turkey's support for Ocalan's decision, and the prior efforts to disseminate such a statement from him, stem from its perspective on Kurdish issues. Particularly when considering the PKK's nearly 50-year history, Turkey's sustained military campaigns against the group since the 1980s—especially in northern Iraq and parts of Syria—have failed to eliminate it. Consequently, this has become a major predicament for Turkey, as the government designates the PKK as a terrorist group.

In many media circles, the situation of Kurds in Turkey has been analyzed or even addressed through the lens of PKK activities. But what is the overall status of Kurds in Turkey, and what is the perspective of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government toward them?

Over its 22-year rule under Erdogan, Turkey has achieved notable progress for Kurds, including expanded cultural and civil rights and a more inclusive approach toward legal Kurdish political parties. However, these gains coexist with restrictions: Kurdish mayors have faced dismissal, dozens of prominent Kurdish figures have been detained or imprisoned by judicial

authorities, and government pressure persists. Despite these challenges, significant openings for Kurds in Turkey have emerged.

Turkey's ruling coalition leaders—Erdogan and Devlet

To what extent could the issue of US support for Syrian Kurds influence Turkey's envisioned outlook toward Syrian Kurds?

The ambiguity surrounding the future of the Kurdish situation in Syria is also tied to US policies,

engaging with Kurdish matters in the country.

What priorities drive the Syrian government's engagement with Kurdish factions today?

The current Syrian government seeks the disarmament of weapons held by Kurdish groups and strongly emphasizes Syria's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Ahmad al-Shara has referenced upcoming negotiations with Syrian Kurds. While meetings have occurred between Kurdish leaders and representatives of the current Syrian government, including al-Shara, the prospects of Damascus and the Kurds reaching an agreement that would also satisfy Turkey remain unclear.

It is critically evident that Turkey categorically opposes any federalization or creation of an autonomous region for Syrian Kurds. Turkey desires Kurdish participation in Syria's political process; however, this stance explicitly excludes groups like the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and the People's Defense Units (YPG). Turkey adamantly rejects these groups' involvement in Syria's political processes and simultaneously demands an end to Kurdish armed activities in Syria. Nevertheless, doubts persist over whether Ocalan's message can meaningfully impact the broader Kurdish situation in Syria. After all, Syrian Kurds have maintained a semi-autonomous status for roughly 12 years, compounded by relative US support for these factions—a reality deeply concerning to both Damascus and Ankara, further complicating the issue.

It appears that Syrian Kurds do not consider themselves bound to follow Ocalan's directives, as evidenced by their stance toward his message. Under these circumstances, how do you predict Turkey's approach will evolve?

There is no doubt that the situation of Kurds in Syria and Turkey is shaped by the PKK issue, but the response of Syrian Kurdish factions to Ocalan's message is noteworthy.



Politicians and lawmakers from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party), with a picture taken in Imrali Island prison of the jailed Kurdish PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in the background, attend a press conference in Istanbul, Turkey, on February 27, 2025.

● UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS

Mazlum Abdi, known as Mazlum Kobani and a commander of Kurdish groups in Syria, has stated that they welcome Ocalan's decision and regard it as historic. However, he emphasized that this message pertains solely to Turkish Kurds and the PKK, with no relevance to Syrian Kurds. This stance will sustain Turkey's anxieties, and it can be inferred that the Kurdish issue in Syria remains contingent on US policies and the Syrian government's current approach to

While Ocalan's move has received significant regional attention, do you believe the skepticism or doubt within Turkey regarding the implementation of this order is also notable at the regional level?

An examination of Turkey's domestic stance, as well as regional and global positions toward Ocalan's message, reveals that all parties have welcomed it. There is support for the PKK ending its armed activities, laying down its weapons, and even dissolving the party. However, when scrutinizing the operational realities, it becomes clear that the conditions for ending the armed struggle of a group that has been engaged in militant activities for over four decades will not be straightforward. As noted earlier, PKK forces and



Siamak Kakaie

their military leaders in northern Iraq are uncertain about the logistics of disarmament. Will the Turkish government welcome them? Has the social and political climate in Turkey opened up for this group's political participation? These are pressing questions tied to this issue.

If we dissect the essence of Ocalan's directive, the critical question is whether this approach signifies a metamorphosis in his ideological framework or is merely a tactical maneuver.

Conceptually, Abdullah Ocalan's message is being analyzed as a historic move, emphasizing the end of a political movement and group that he, as the founder of the PKK, now believes has outlived its original purpose and existential nature. From this perspective, yes, this represents a transformation in the PKK's operational concept. However, the Turkish government's final decision to terminate the PKK's activities and implement Ocalan's call for dissolution and disarmament depends on a set of conditions and factors that must lead to the operationalization of this process. This means both sides must reach a shared perspective and a degree of mutual trust: the PKK must lay down its arms, and Turkey's political and social environment must open to accepting their integration into civil and political processes. Ending violence in any form would be an effective step. The fact that both Erdogan and the Nationalist Movement Party's leader have taken the first steps to advance this issue suggests that subsequent actions have been somewhat anticipated.

This implies a shift in attitudes toward accepting PKK members, elements, and affiliates within Turkey. Otherwise, if the call for the PKK's dissolution and disarmament remains purely a political statement, the process will stall at the declaratory stage.

Previous actions demonstrate that Turkey's approach to this issue has not broadened significantly, and securing full disarmament by the PKK will face steep challenges. This does not render the process impossible—the order to execute it has been issued, and its steps are technically feasible. However, implementing this directive, coupled with Turkey's shifting perception of the PKK's nature and its move toward domestic peace and ending terrorist activities, requires broader measures. These include Turkey's sustained commitment to this path and the PKK's compliance with Ocalan's messages.

A dialogue-driven process could forge consensus on ending the PKK's armed activities, paving the way for their acceptance within Turkish society and civil institutions. Thus, entering a new political cycle in Turkey demands a fresh, reciprocal vision—one embraced by both the Turkish government and domestic actors—to achieve a sustainable peace.



# Iran Paralympic Committee receives IPC recognition on Int'l Women's Day

## Sports Desk

The National Paralympic Committee of Iran (NPC) was among the three winners of the International Paralympic Committee's 2025 International Women's Day Recognition Awards.

The NPC Iran received the IPC recognition for "initiating leadership, impact and effective change to promote and support equality and inclusion of women in sport."

"NPC I.R. Iran not only believes in gender equality but also provides enhanced privileges, services, and support tailored for women with disabilities. Through this vision and diligent oversight of its implementation, it has created a supportive and empowering environment for women with disabilities," NPC President Gafour Kargari said on the recognition of the Iranian governing body in the Membership category of the annual awards.

The winners were chosen by members of the IPC Governing Board following nominations by IPC member organizations.

"Since its establishment in 2000, women have been at the core of the NPC's strategic plans and decision-making processes, with a



focus on enhancing participation in key areas such as national and international competitions, leadership roles, and educational programs," read the IPC statement.

"Iranian women made their

Paralympic debut at the Barcelona 1992, with four athletes competing in a single sport. At Paris 2024, the number of female athletes had increased to 12 across five sports, with seven medals won (an increase of 33.3

per cent in participation). Today, over 60,000 athletes are supported by the NPC in sports for all, with more than a third of them being women.

"Well-known Iranian Paralympians who inspire other women

in the country include four-time Paralympic champion Sareh Javanmardi, and three-time Paralympic champion Zahra Nemati who serves as a UN ambassador.

"NPC Iran has one female vice president and 40 percent representation of women in board meetings, including two athlete representatives. In 2002, the NPC initiated activities to promote the development of female athletes, coaches, and officials. By 2024, a total of 44 workshops had been held, benefiting over 205 participants."

Joining the NPC Iran on the winners' list are Afghan taekwondo Paralympian Zakia Khudadadi and the director of sport at the British Paralympic Association, Penny Briscoe CBE.

Khudadadi won the Emerging Leadership category for "advocating for women's rights in Afghanistan, particularly the right to participate in sports."

Briscoe, chef de mission for ParalympicsGB at Paris 2024, won the Leadership prize, which recognizes her "sustained and consistent leadership over a period of time, advocacy, overall contributions, and impact promoting and supporting women in sport."

"The quality of nominations this year was exceptional, and I congratulate Penny, Zakia and NPC Iran. It is my pleasure and honor to know you and work with you," IPC President Andrew Parsons said.

"Leaders like Penny, rising stars like Zakia and committed members like NPC Iran show us that anything is possible in the Paralympic Movement, reminding us that greatness knows no limits and that representation is key in shaping a more inclusive and equal future.

"Change starts with sport, and we believe that sport has the power to break down barriers and foster inclusion, creating opportunities for all. For women with disabilities, sport is not only about competing on the global stage; it's about empowerment, visibility, and equal access. Through sport, we honor strength, resilience, and the fundamental truth that every individual, regardless of their abilities, has the right to participate, excel, and inspire others." The Awards, which have been running since 2013, recognize women in the Paralympic Movement who inspire and emulate the Paralympic ideals and serve as positive role models.

## Persian Gulf Pro League:

# Dursun on target to lead Persepolis to hard-fought win at Chadormalou

## Sports Desk

Turkish striker Serdar Dursun bagged his second goal in four top-flight games to help Persepolis come away with a massive 1-0 win at Chadormalou in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Friday.

Flying high after last week's derby triumph over Esteghlal, the Tehran Reds started right on the front foot at the Shahid Nasiri Stadium and took the lead 15 minutes into the game, with Dursun tapping in Mohammad Khodabandelou's low cross on the near post.

The home side was awarded a spot kick right before the half-hour mark when Ecuadorian fullback Segundo Portocarrero was brought down in the box by Ayoub El Amloud, but the refer-

ee's decision was overturned by the VAR.

Beaten only once in 10 home games prior to Friday's fixture, Chadormalou pushed forward for an equalizer in the second half, but it was the visiting side which created the better of the chances, with the host's Brazilian goalkeeper Edson Mardden producing fine saves to deny Ali Alipour, Omid Aalishah, and Am-loud.

The hard-fought win saw Persepolis - chasing an eighth league crown in nine seasons - close the gap on Tractor and Sepahan to a single point on top of the table, with Chadormalou dropping to ninth on 24 points.

While Tractor had its trip to Foolad Khuzestan postponed due to engagement in the AFC Cham-

pions League Two quarterfinals, Sepahan was held to a 1-1 draw at home by Esteghlal Khuzestan on Thursday.

Sepahan skipper Mohammad Karimi broke the deadlock from the spot in the 52nd minute, only to see French striker Thievy Bifouma draw the visitors level 13 minutes later.

Es. Khuzestan had to finish the game with 10 men after midfielder Mohammad Abshak was shown his marching order for a second booking in the 90th minute.

The stalemate was still enough to send Sepahan level on 45 points with league leader Tractor, while Esteghlal Khuzestan is 11th with 24 points.

The bad news for Sepahan was a knee injury for Mahdi Limouchi six minutes into the game, which

saw the league's joint leading marksman substituted and could keep him out of action for several weeks, if not the rest of the campaign.

Elsewhere on Thursday, Mahdi Tikdari scored in the 14th minute and Amirmohammad Razaqinia found the net deep into stoppage time as Golgozar Sirjan defeated Khaybar FC 2-0 at home to remain fifth in the table with 35 points.

In the battle of two relegation-threatened clubs, Shams Azar came out on top against Mes Rafsanjan 3-1 in Qazvin.

Ehsan Mahrouqi scored twice either side of a Jalaloddin Alimohammadi's equalizer before a Houman Rabizadeh's 89th-minute strike sealed all points for Shams Azar.



Persepolis striker Serdar Dursun (R) celebrates his goal with Ali Alipour during a 1-0 win against Chadormalou SC at the Persian Gulf Pro League in Yazd, Iran, on March 7, 2025.

MNA

A first win in seven games lifted Shams Azar to 14th in table with 21 points - two clear of Nassaji Mazandaran, which dropped into the relegation zone after a 1-0 loss at Malavan.

A Qaem Eslamkhan's 93rd-minute spot kick secured a fourth

win in a row for the home side ahead of next week's visit to the Tehran Reds for an encounter with Persepolis at the Azadi Stadium. In Arak, Amin Kazemian and Rahman Jafari scored in each half to steer Iralco to a 2-0 victory over Zob Ahan at home.



GETTY IMAGES

## World Grand Prix:

# Iran's Vafaei beaten by world No. 1 Trump in quarterfinals

## Sports Desk

Iranian snooker sensation Hossein Vafaei missed out on a place in the World Grand Prix last four after suffering a comprehensive 5-0 loss to English world number one Judd Trump in Hong Kong on Friday.

Trump started the last-eight contest with a break of 145 then added efforts of 108 and 115 before knocking in a 146 in the final frame. A 146 is not seen very often at all, as per TNT Sports commentator Dave Hendon it was only the 37th in professional snooker history and the

first Trump has made.

Vafaei - 33rd in the Johnstone's Paint One-Year Rankings - was only given a place in the 32-man draw on the eve of the competition, after seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan pulled out of the event for medical reasons.

The 2022 Shoot Out champion had come out victorious over Chinese duo Si Jiahui and Xu Si to set up a quarterfinal with Trump, but had revealed prior to Friday's game that he had been struggling with an excruciating pain at the prestigious event due to a slipped disc in his

upper spine.

"I am playing with one hand, I am in so much pain with my neck and shoulder, but I am always fighting for my fans and I'm delighted for them to win," the Iranian told World Snooker Tour official website.

"If I pull out, what would I do, sit and watch the others? I want to try. When I sit in my chair, my hand is shaking, my left arm is completely numb and I don't have any feeling on the shot. Last week I was in Chengdu and I went to hospital there but I didn't have time for an MRI scan."



# Koozeh-Shekani; a cultural heritage of cleansing and hope



● borna.news

The *koozeh-shekani* (pot-breaking) ceremony of South Khorasan Province represents a nearly forgotten tradition that once thrived during *Charshanbe Suri*, the last Wednesday of the Iranian year. Celebrated alongside customs like bonfire jumping and the *Dehqan* (peasant) Festival, *koozeh-shekani* stands as an ancient and cherished ritual in this region of Iran.

Symbolically, the *koozeh-shekani* ceremony echoes the spirit of Nowruz (Persian New Year). It embodies the replacement of the old with the new, the past with the present, and the hopeful transition from hardship to prosperity. This ritual signifies a fresh start and the shedding of negativity.

In earlier times, it was common practice in many cities throughout South Khorasan Province for people to break old pots and jars on the last Wednesday of the year. These were typically vessels that no longer kept water cold or had become contaminated with algae. To imbue the ritual with deeper meaning, families would often place specific items inside the pots: a piece of charcoal to symbolize bad luck, coins to attract wealth and abundance, and salt to ensure keen vision.

Before the breaking, the pot would be passed around, circling the heads of each family member. Finally, the woman of the house would take the pot to the rooftop and cast it down, shattering it on the ground below. Sometimes, grains such as barley, wheat, or beans, staple crops of the region, were added to the pot, providing a treat for birds after the vessel broke.

On the eve of the last Wednesday before Nowruz, families would gather firewood on their rooftops and fill the designated pot with water. A portion of

this water would then be poured into each of the rooftop's four corners. With the stage set, the pot was hurled from the rooftop, breaking upon impact. As the pot shattered, participants would recite verses such as:

"Go sorrow, come joy; Go hardship, come sustenance."

This practice stemmed from the belief that by breaking the pot and releasing the misfortunes and calamities it contained, happiness and blessings would follow. Additionally, the daily use of unglazed pots for drinking water and food storage led to the understanding that using such a pot for more than a year could become unhygienic, potentially causing illness due to the absorption of impurities into the pot's walls.

Some historians suggest that *koozeh-shekani* contributed to the flourishing of pottery in South Khorasan Province. The widespread use of pottery in daily life meant that the ritualistic breaking of old pots created a continuous demand for new ones for food and water storage. Following the *koozeh-shekani* ceremony, people would fill their clean, new pots with fresh spring water from the *qanat* (underground water channel), joyfully bringing it home to adorn their *haftsini* table, a traditional centerpiece of the Persian New Year celebration.

Tradition holds that *koozeh-shekani* originated in the Qajar era. During this time, a romantic dimension was added to the ritual. Families with daughters of marriageable age would tie a handkerchief to the pot's handle and have the girl throw it from the rooftop into the alley.

If a young man was in love with the girl of that house, he would pick up the handkerchief from the alley and come to propose to her with it. While the practical purpose of the ritual was to encourage the use of uncontaminated pots, this romantic element enhanced its appeal. Within days, the suitor, accompanied by his family, would arrive with the handkerchief, sweets, and a new pot, formally proposing to the girl whose pot he had broken.

The *koozeh-shekani* ceremony is a vibrant and enthusiastic ritual, rich in symbolism and history. Recognizing its cultural significance, the ceremony has been registered on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Iran.



● kojara.com

● visitiran.ir

## Restoration underway in shrine of Pirmorad in Bafq

### Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Bafq, a city in Yazd Province, announced the commencement of restoration and organization operations for the shrine of Pirmorad in Bafq. Leili Ranjbar stated, "The restoration and organization of the shrine of Pirmorad, one of the historical and religious sites of the city, has restarted after numerous follow-ups."

The building's architecture indicates that it was constructed during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras. Historically used for religious purposes, it continues to serve that function.

The shrine has been listed in Iran's National Heritage List, is located on Pirmorad Boulevard, [chtn.ir](http://chtn.ir) wrote.

Notably, Pirmorad serves as one of the Zoroastrian pilgrimage sites, where community members gather for worship and meetings.

In recent years, the Cultural Heritage,

Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Bafq, in collaboration with the Endowments and Charity Affairs Department, has undertaken restoration efforts for this significant structure. However, due to budget constraints and other challenges, these efforts were not completed.

Moving forward, the restoration of this shrine will proceed with assistance and support from the Bafq governor's office. The current phase aims to enhance the tomb structure and its surrounding area.

Ranjbar emphasized that the shrine of Pirmorad is built with adobe and mud featuring strong and sturdy columns, hallmark traits of the local architectural style.

It has been recognized as a site of cultural importance, having been registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

Bafq has a semi-arid climate characterized by hot summers and mild winters. The region experiences limited rainfall, making it an ideal place for those who enjoy warm, dry weather. The summer temperatures can reach up to 40°C, while winter temperatures typically hover around 5°C to 15°C. These climatic conditions contribute to the distinct landscape, dotted with desert features and historical

treasures that reflect the region's rich cultural heritage.

In addition to the shrine of Pirmorad, Bafq offers several attractions that highlight its historical and cultural significance.

Visitors can explore traditional mud-brick architecture and the narrow winding streets of the old town, which provide a glimpse into the past. The nearby Bafq Mountains offer opportunities for outdoor activities and hiking,

enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Moreover, the region is known for its unique handicrafts, including intricate textiles and pottery, which serve as a testament to the local artisans' skills and creativity.

Overall, Bafq not only serves as a site of religious importance but also stands out as a destination rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, making it an intriguing place for both pilgrims and tourists alike.



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# Mosque cultural centers pioneers of reform, dynamism: Minister

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, hailed the country's mosque-based cultural and artistic centers as the "flag-bearers of development", stressing their pivotal role in fostering community engagement and artistic growth.

In a message marking the National Day of Mosque Cultural and Artistic Centers, Salehi pointed to the significance of the 28,000 centers operating across the country, describing them as a "precious asset" that bridges the past and the present, IRNA reported.

"The mosque has long stood as a beacon of guidance, a sanctuary where spirituality and society come together," Salehi said. "It is a place where the human soul, in its pursuit of truth, finds solace, and the light of wisdom is kindled in hearts."

He added that these cultural and artistic hubs have a crucial role to play in keeping the nation's religious and cultural heritage alive.

"If these institutions reach their full potential, they can serve as an inclusive and grassroots platform for public education and cultural development," he noted.

With social, cultural, and media shifts increasingly shaping the lifestyles and identities of young people, Salehi urged mosques to harness the unique potential of these centers to provide a "dynamic and inspiring space for intellectual growth, creativity, and artistic expression" – all within the framework of Islamic values.

He highlighted the centers' potential to act as a bridge between younger generations and their cultural roots, saying, "They can pave the way for rekindling young people's



connection with mosques, transforming these houses of worship into thriving hubs of cultural and artistic influence."

The minister also extended his congratulations to those involved in managing and promoting the centers, particularly as this year's anniversary coincides with Ramadan, the month of the Qur'an and prayer.

The National Day of Mosque Cultural and Artistic Centers, celebrated annually on March 8, serves as a reminder of the enduring role of mosques not only as places of worship but also as vibrant spaces for artistic and cultural enrichment.

# Gaza cease-fire deal ...

Meanwhile, other stakeholders are scrambling to find common ground to prevent the situation from spiraling out of control. Reports indicate that Egypt and Qatar are working on a compromise formula that would facilitate the release of part of the living captives. Their approach seeks to strike a balance between Hamas's demands and Israel's conditions so that neither side feels it has capitulated to the other. While Israel's stance on this proposal remains unclear, it seems Netanyahu is digging in his heels, unwilling to take any step that might be perceived as an admission that the war is over. His political survival depends on sustaining a war footing. Netanyahu's threat to resume the war if Hamas refuses to extend the first phase aligns with this strategy. With Trump offering Netanyahu unconditional backing, the Israeli leader may feel emboldened. However, reigniting full-scale war in Gaza is unlikely to yield decisive gains. At most, Israel might launch limited strikes or commit further atrocities to intimidate Hamas and pressure the resilient population of Gaza—but an all-out war on the scale seen before the cease-fire appears improbable. Hamas's strategy during the first phase has left no doubt: Israel has failed in its goal to eradicate Hamas. Despite the heavy toll of the war and a relentless propaganda offensive, Hamas has not only rebounded militarily but has also managed to expand its recruitment base while maintaining—and even strengthening—public support. On the other hand, Netanyahu finds himself in a tight political corner. Domestically, his ruling coalition is plagued by fierce internal disputes—particularly over the conscription of ultra-Orthodox Jews, an issue that has pushed his government to the brink of collapse. To navigate this crisis, he is weaponizing the ongoing war, using it as leverage to maintain balance between his ultra-nationalist allies, such as Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who insist on conscription, and ultra-Orthodox factions that fiercely oppose it. However, he cannot be certain that resuming the war will lead to the liberation of the captives, just as he was unable to achieve this during the conflict and was forced to accept a cease-fire and negotiate an agreement with Hamas for an exchange. It is also possible that renewed fighting could result in the deaths of more captives and create new complications. At the same time, Netanyahu faces mounting hostility in the Knesset, where opposition parties have accused him of exploiting the war for personal gain. Heated confrontations have become the

norm in parliamentary sessions, with Netanyahu branding his opponents as traitors weakening Israel in wartime, while they, in turn, accuse him of clinging to power at the nation's expense. Public sentiment is also turning against him. According to Israel's Channel 12, a recent poll found that 60% of respondents believe that Netanyahu should step down. Against this backdrop, his threats to reignite the war appear more like a psychological warfare tactic—aimed at unnerving Hamas and breaking the spirit of Gaza's resilient population, who are already enduring unimaginable hardship. Israeli media outlets have eagerly amplified this fear-mongering, with Channel 12 reporting that the military is preparing to resume hostilities within ten days—with the exact timing hinging on the appointment of Zamir as IDF chief of staff and the arrival of Trump's envoy in Israel. Zamir himself struck an aggressive tone at his inauguration ceremony, issuing direct threats of war against Hamas and Iran. Trump, too, has thrown his weight behind Netanyahu. Even as his envoys negotiate with Hamas, he has taken to social media to demand the immediate release of all captives, dead or alive, warning that failure to comply will result in the destruction of both Hamas and Gaza's civilian population. This rhetoric of intimidation, aligned with Israel's threats, is clearly intended to create an atmosphere of terror and coercion. Despite all this, Netanyahu appears to have no viable path to securing the captives' release except through negotiation—whether by proceeding with the second phase of the cease-fire or by brokering an alternative deal. Hamas, for its part, will not bow to Israeli coercion and deception. What Tel Aviv failed to achieve through war and unspeakable atrocities, it cannot hope to obtain now through breaches of agreement and empty threats. In this context, the direct US-Hamas contacts—offering Israeli-American captive releases in exchange for US pressure on Israel to move forward with second-phase talks—may be an attempt to break the deadlock Netanyahu has manufactured for personal gain and keep the door open for a diplomatic solution. The coming days will likely see an escalation in psychological warfare, with heightened threats of renewed conflict and possibly some limited military operations. However, Hamas and the Palestinian resistance are unlikely to cave in to such tactics. Gaza's fate will not be dictated by intimidation and inhumane pressure—captive negotiations will proceed only through dialogue and a mutually agreed framework.

Page 1 >

# 32nd Int'l Holy Qur'an Exhibition's children's section inspires learning with interactive programs



Arts & Culture Desk

The 32nd edition of the International Holy Qur'an Exhibition has drawn widespread praise for its well-organized layout and engaging programs, particularly in the children and adolescent section, according to a senior cultural official.

Abdolhossein Khosropanah, secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, toured the exhibition and expressed his appreciation for the thoughtful arrangement of the various sections, ISNA reported. "At first glance, it is evident that the exhibition is meticulously structured, and we are witnessing an overwhelming response from families and different segments of society," he told reporters on the side-

lines of the event.

On the exhibition's embrace of modern advancements, Khosropanah noted that this year's event has stepped up its use of cutting-edge technology, creative industries, and artificial intelligence to promote Qur'anic concepts.

"This is a commendable step forward," he said, acknowledging the efforts made to bring religious teachings closer to younger audiences in an engaging manner.

One of the standout features of this year's exhibition, he emphasized, is the dynamic and thriving presence of the children and adolescent section. "A variety of interactive workshops tailored for younger age groups have truly brought the exhibition to life," he said.

Khosropanah also pointed out that the inclusion of Qur'an-inspired artworks and handicrafts has struck a chord with visitors. "These artistic expressions have caught the eye of many attendees and serve as a testament to the deep-rooted connection between art and spirituality," he remarked.

Summing up his observations, the senior official underscored the exhibition's overall improvement in content and its strategic use of modern tools to spread Qur'anic culture. "This edition has taken a meaningful step toward reinforcing religious values in society," he concluded.

# 'They' to compete at US WILDsound film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Morteza Sabzeqaba's short film 'They' will compete at the 8th WILDsound International Film Festival in the United States.

The festival, which runs from March 10 to 20 in Los Angeles, aims to promote storytelling through cinema, showcasing top short films and documentaries worldwide, ILNA reported.

'They', written and directed by Sabzeqaba, has previously won the Best Film Award at Taiwan's 'Three Acts of Goodness' International Film Festival and the Special Prize in the Mediterranean section of Italy's 'Tracce Cinematografiche' Film Festival.

This marks the film's 21st festival appearance. The 15-minute short, produced by Khuzestan's Art Bureau and



filmed in Dezful, features a team including cinematographer Amir Alivaisi, editor and sound designer Farid Daghaghaleh, production designer Hamid Nourabadi, and a cast led by Alireza Khodadad, Azim Sabzeqaba, Mehdi Sharifi, and Fatemeh Sayah-Tarfi. The WILDsound festival will screen its competition films online.

**Notice of tender for export sale No. Z/1403/32**

**Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company**

Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 140.000 metric tons of Iron Ore Concentrate (%Fe:66.50 ave) on basis of F.O.B at Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: www.geg.ir. All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 09:00 A.M. on 16. Mar.2025 to Golgohar complex in sirjan (50 km in shiraz road). Bidders are invited to the transactions commission department of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 09:00 A.M. on 16.Mar.2025 at the office of the Seller.

Analysis %		
Fe%	66.50	Ave
FeO%	Min 24	Min
	Max 28	Max
P%	0.05	Max
S%	1	Max
SiO2%	3.0	Max
Al2O3%	0.7	Max
CaO%	0.9	Max
MgO%	2.50	Max
Moisture%	7.00	Max
Size ave	80%<0.15 mm	

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