

Iran's non-oil trade with neighbors up by 21% last year: **IRICA**

Tehran-Riyadh commerce registered historic 6,483% leap



# Iran Daily

Vol. 7805 • Sunday, April 13, 2025 • Farvardin 24, 1404 • Shawwal 14, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



[irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir)

[newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

[IranDailyWeb](http://IranDailyWeb)

## Iran, US conclude talks in 'constructive atmosphere'

Both sides agree to reconvene next week **2**



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd L) speaks with members of the Iranian delegation during a visit to Muscat, Oman where he held "indirect" talks with US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff on April 12, 2025. **ENTEKHAB**

### Breakthrough deal could breathe new life into Iran's economy



By **Mostafa Shirmohammadi**  
Editor-in-chief

#### OPINION

The first round of talks between Iran and the United States wrapped up in Muscat, Oman, in what Tehran described as a "constructive atmosphere based on mutual respect." The two sides agreed to pick up negotiations again next week. The Iranian economy was quick to respond as the rial gained significantly against the US dollar.

Iran's economic recovery seems partly tied to lifting the US cruel sanctions that were reimposed after President Donald Trump walked away from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, in 2018 and have since been retched up. Tehran's number-one priority in the ongoing negotiations is to break the nuclear stalemate and, eventually, get sanctions lifted. Trump, in justifying his withdrawal, once said at the time that the US was not benefiting economically from the JCPOA, unlike other signatories such as France that secured major deals with Iran including in its auto industry. Now doubt, economic gain for the US could now shore up a new agreement.

**Page 2**

### A new horizon for FDI?

#### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) holds the key to Iran's strategic advancement, addressing economic challenges and bridging technological gaps, while creating job opportunities for its young population. FDI is not just about bringing in money; it is about injecting advanced technology and opening doors to global markets, acting as a catalyst for economic growth and international competitiveness. Attracting investment, especially from developed nations, can strengthen Iran's geopolitical position and provide a buffer against external pressure. The involvement of American investors could shift the risk perception, making it easier for European and Asian investors to step in, despite sanctions concerns. However, such a strategy calls for careful planning and robust legal frameworks to ensure technology transfer and alignment with national interests.

**See page 4**

### Thousands flee as Israel seizes Rafah in new Gaza 'security zone'



**2**



### Persian Gulf Pro League: Tractor held as Sepahan, Persepolis given title lifeline

**6**



### Yasuj; a paradise for nature lovers and adventurers

**7**



### Lost Achaemenid quarries unearthed in Western Iran

**8**



# Iran, US conclude talks in 'constructive atmosphere'

Both sides agree to reconvene next week



## International Desk

Iran and the United States concluded the first round of long-awaited negotiations on Tehran's nuclear program, during which the two sides exchanged their positions "in a constructive and mutually respectful atmosphere."

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei in a post on his Telegram account said that Iran and the US agreed to continue the negotiations next week. Baqaei said that after nearly two and half hours of talks, the two countries' top negotiators had a brief direct conversation in the presence of Oman's Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad al-Busaidi.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a key

architect of the 2015 nuclear accord, led the Iranian delegation while US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, a real estate magnate, headed the US team.

In an interview after the talks, Araghchi said the two sides showed their commitment to advance the talks to reach an agreement that is desirable for both parties.

"I think we came very close to a basis for negotiations", the Iranian foreign minister said.

"At our next meeting, if we can finalize that basis, we will have gone a large part of the way."

"Neither party wants fruitless negotiations and prolonged talks," Araqchi underlined.

Araghchi said that Iran has the determination necessary to reach an agreement, adding that "progress in these negotiations will not be easy and requires the will of both parties."

Oman's top diplomat, who mediated the talks, said they were held in a "friendly atmosphere" and launched a quest for a "fair and binding agreement."

The negotiations in Oman are aimed at resolving a dispute once settled nearly a decade ago under the 2015 nuclear agreement from which Washington withdrew later – a move that has created a political row between Iran and the West since then.

## National interests

Before the negotiations, Baqaei said Iran has one "very clear" objective in the talks and that is to secure its national interests.

He noted that prior to the negotiations, Araghchi outlined Iran's positions during a meeting with his Omani counterpart, which were to be communicated to the American side.

"We are giving diplomacy a genuine and honest opportunity so that through these negotiations, we can advance not only the nuclear issue but more importantly for us, the issue of lifting sanctions," Baqaei said.

After the talks with his Omani counterpart, Araghchi said Iran intends to reach a fair and honorable agreement with the US.

"Our intention is to reach a fair and honorable agreement from an equal position, and if the other side also comes from the same position, then hopefully there will be a chance for an initial understanding that will lead to a path of negotiations," Araghchi said.

## Ready for compromise

The American negotiator Witkoff told The Wall Street Journal earlier that "our position today" starts with demanding that Iran completely dismantles its nuclear program – a view held by hardliners around Trump that few expect Iran would ever accept.

"That doesn't mean, by the way, that at the margin we're not going to find other ways to find compromise between the two countries," Witkoff told the newspaper.

"Where our red line will be, there can't be weaponization of your nuclear capability," he added.

Ahead of the talks in Oman, Trump, who revealed the negotiations on Monday, said that, "I want Iran to be a wonderful, great, happy country, but they can't have a nuclear weapon".

## Trump's threats

Trump last month sent a letter to Iran's Leader via the United Arab Emirates, saying he wanted a deal to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to avert possible military strikes by the US and Israel.

Iran insists its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful and it will never seek to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.

Trump has warned the US would use military force if no deal was reached and Iran has repeatedly said it won't negotiate under pressure.

Iranian military officials and Armed Forces have repeatedly underlined the country's preparedness to defend the country.

## Will US firms enter Iran's economic scene?

Major US companies are closely watching the events in Muscat today. For nearly five decades, the United States has been engaged in a push-and-pull battle with Iran. This has resulted in a freeze in the economic relationship between the two countries.

The last time the two sides attempted economic cooperation, former US president Bill Clinton ordered a major oil and gas contract canceled. That contract was snatched away by France's Total.

Times have changed. Unlike Clinton, Trump has no appetite to leave any economic benefit from a deal with Iran to Europe.

## Thousands flee as Israel seizes Rafah in new Gaza 'security zone'

Israel announced on Saturday that its military had completed the takeover of a new corridor in southern Gaza, advancing its efforts to seize large parts of the war-battered Palestinian territory.

The military also announced a sweeping evacuation order for tens of thousands of residents of Khan Yunis and surrounding areas in southern Gaza ahead of a planned strike after projectiles were fired from there earlier in the day.

The seizure of the "Morag axis" came while Hamas expected "real progress" towards a cease-fire deal to end the war in Gaza, an official from the group told AFP, with senior leaders from the Palestinian movement scheduled to hold talks with Egyptian mediators in Cairo later on Saturday.

"The IDF (military) has now completed its takeover of the Morag axis, which crosses Gaza between Rafah and Khan Yunis, turning the entire area between

the Philadelphi Route (along the border with Egypt) and Morag into part of the Israeli security zone," minister of military affairs Israel Katz said in a statement addressed to residents of Gaza. "Soon, IDF operations will intensify and expand to other areas throughout most of Gaza, and you will need to evacuate the combat zones."

"In northern Gaza as well — in Beit Hanoun and other neighborhoods — residents are evacuating, the area is being taken over and the security zone is being expanded, including in the Netzarim corridor," he added.

Since a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas collapsed in mid-March, Israel's renewed offensive in Gaza has displaced hundreds of thousands of people while the military has seized large areas of the war-battered territory.

Top Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have repeatedly said that the ongoing assault aims to pressure Hamas into

freeing the remaining 58 hostages held in Gaza. Hamas said the offensive not only "kills defenseless civilians but also makes the fate of the occupation's prisoners (hostages) uncertain."

In a separate announcement, the military ordered residents of Khan Yunis and surrounding areas to evacuate after the air force intercepted three projectiles fired from south Gaza earlier in the day.

The United Nations had warned a day before that expanding Israeli evacuation orders were resulting in the "forcible transfer" of people into ever-shrinking areas, raising "real concern as to the future viability of



Palestinians as a group in Gaza." Gaza's health ministry said on Friday that at least 1,563 Palestinians had been killed in Israeli attacks since March 18 when the cease-fire col-

lapsed, taking the overall death toll since the war began to 50,933. Dozens of these strikes have killed "only women and children," the UN human rights office said Friday.

## Breakthrough deal could ...

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in The Washington Post on Tuesday that Iran was "open to welcoming businesses from around the world" and stressed it was the US, not Iran, that "kept American enterprises away from the trillion-dollar opportunity" in its economy.

A day later, President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed that the Leader "has no objection to foreign investment, even from American investors, provided it is not accompanied by plots, subversion, or wrong policies."

Years of sanctions have scared away foreign investors and left many sectors crying out for capital. For instance, the petroleum industry alone, which is seen as the backbone

of Iran's economy and main foreign currency cash cow, would need \$125 billion in investment, according to the oil minister, over four years in order to reach the targets stipulated in the country's Seventh Development Plan. Such a hefty sum seems out of reach domestically.

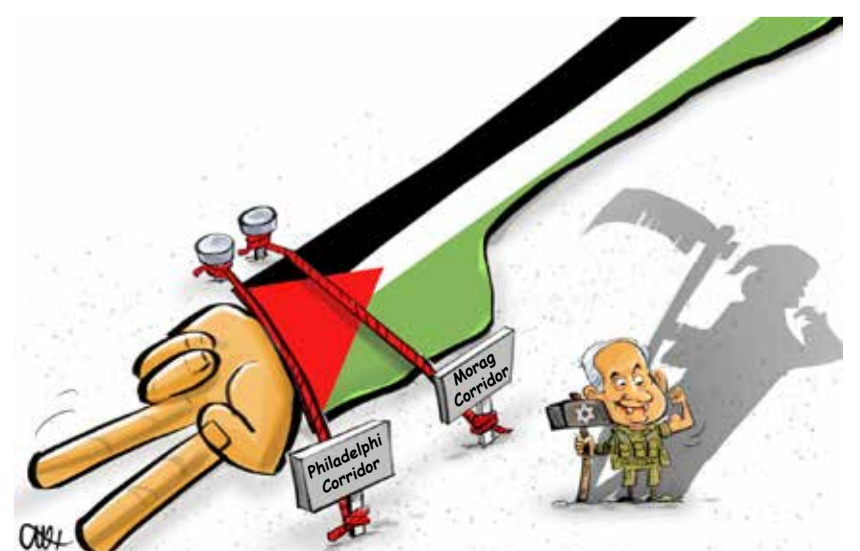
Sanctions have also pushed up production and export costs by making it harder to get hold of raw materials and essential equipment. The weakened rial has only piled on the pressure, threatening Iran's edge in global markets. Iran's disconnection from global banking has held up export revenues, with some funds wasted in attempts to get around sanctions. Any deal that clears the way for sanctions removal and opens the door to foreign capital, including those of US

companies, could breathe life back into Iran's production and exports. It could also help revamp crumbling infrastructure that has long suffered from underinvestment.

Sectors like oil and gas, petrochemicals, power generation, renewables, automotive and tourism could be lucrative for foreign investors as they are all in dire need of sizable investments to stay afloat and scale up.

To hit its 8% economic growth target over the next four years, Iran has no choice but to bring in foreign capital and modern technologies. If Iran's negotiators in Oman can stand their ground and seal a win-win deal that lifts sanctions and brings investment back, it could go down in history as a turning point where Iran's economy would start to blossom.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





# Iran's non-oil trade with neighbors up by 21% last year: IRICA

Tehran-Riyadh commerce registered historic 6,483% leap



## Economy Desk

Iran's non-oil trade with its 15 neighboring countries surged by 21% in the last Persian calendar year, 1403 (began on March 20, 2024), reaching \$74.317 billion. Among these nations, Saudi Arabia recorded the highest growth rate.

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Foroud Asgari announced that the total weight of non-oil trade with these countries stood at 112.813 million tons during this period, marking a 16% year-on-year increase, Mehr reported.

"The UAE accounted for the largest share of Iran's non-oil trade with neighboring states at \$29.183 billion, followed by Turkey (\$19.363 billion), Iraq (\$12.508 billion), Pakistan (\$3.129 billion), and Afghanistan (\$2.479 billion)," he stated.

Regarding value-based growth, Asgari noted, "In 1403, Iran's non-oil trade with Saudi Arabia grew by 6,483%, Turkey by 63%, Qatar by 46%, and Afghanistan by 28% compared to the previous year, representing the highest increases among neighboring nations."

He added, "Trade with Saudi Arabia in 1403 totaled 61,000 tons, valued at \$25 million."

Breaking down the figures, Asgari highlighted that Iran's non-oil exports to the 15 neighbors amounted to 89.384 million tons worth \$36.012 billion, while imports totaled 23.429 million tons valued at \$38.305 billion.

"Non-oil exports to these countries rose by 22% in weight and 26% in value year-on-year," he explained. "Imports, meanwhile, remained stable in weight but increased by 17% in value during the same period."

## Communications Ministry, NDFI sign AI development agreement

### Economy Desk

The National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI) and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on smart governance and AI-driven economic initiatives.

The agreement was formalized on Saturday by Communications Minister Sattar Hashemi and Mehdi Ghazanfari, CEO of the National Development Fund, IRNA reported.

The MoU aims to synergize efforts by facilitating financing for high-speed processors, boosting ICT sector investments, and developing an inclusive digital economy and AI ecosystem. It further focuses on advancing the space industry, postal services, and logistics through digital transformation, smart technologies, and innovation, while expanding markets for knowledge-based, creative, and tech-driven products and services — all in compliance with NDFI regulations.

### Saving \$25b in energy

Prior to the signing, Hashemi emphasized the need



for nationwide tech modernization to enhance industrial productivity, saying, "By implementing smart technologies nationwide, we could boost productivity by 15% to 25%, equivalent to \$25 billion in savings."

Hashemi underscored technology's transformative role across sectors and said, "Innovation profoundly impacts education, healthcare, services, and the economy. However, Iran ranks 60th globally in AI readiness, trailing region-

al peers like Saudi Arabia (14th) and the UAE (20th)," highlighting stark investment disparities, he added, "Saudi Arabia has invested approximately \$20 billion in AI and smart technologies, while the UAE allocated \$1.4 billion. In contrast, Iran's investments total under \$50 million."

The minister stressed urgent action to close this gap, stressing, "Prioritizing ICT investments — led primarily by the private sector — will help achieve our ministry's goals within a



Communications Minister Sattar Hashemi (R) shakes hands with CEO of the National Development Fund Mehdi Ghazanfari after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on smart governance and AI-driven economic initiatives in Tehran on April 12, 2025.

● MOHSEN VANAIE/IRNA

reasonable timeframe and support this year's national development priorities." "These partnerships will amplify the ICT sector's critical role in driving economic growth and industrial production," he said.

## Oil minister to visit Iraq for deals as ties in energy remain 'strong'



### Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Oil Mohsen Paknejad announced plans to travel to Iraq in the coming days, stating his country has established "strong relations and cooperation with Iraq across various sectors, particularly in the oil industry and joint oil project implementation."

In an interview with SHANA, Paknejad said that he will visit the neighboring country at the invitation of its oil minister, Hayyan Abdul Ghani, adding, "Previous collaborative frameworks between the two countries have already been discussed."

The oil minister expressed hope "to finalize and sign memorandums of understanding in the energy sector during this trip."

Paknejad previously met with Ziad Ali Fadel, Iraq's minister of electricity, in March 2024 at Iran's Ministry of Oil. Both sides stressed the need to expand

cooperation in oil, gas, petrochemicals, and electricity.

Iraq relies on direct electricity imports from Iran for 4-10% of its domestic demand for power while natural gas imported from Iran is responsible for some 43% of the electricity generation in the Arab country's power plants.

The United States announced in early March that it had revoked a waiver from its Iran sanctions that allowed Iraq to pay for electricity imports from its eastern neighbor.

The move was in line with US President Donald Trump's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran which seeks to force the country into political and military concessions by piling pressure on its energy sales.

Paknejad has consistently advocated for strengthening Iran's international energy partnerships, particularly with neighboring nations, under a globally oriented strategy.

## Tayebnia tops list for Economy Ministry nomination

### Economy Desk

Ali Tayebnia was named as a proposed candidate by the government to Parliament for the Ministry of Economy and currently tops the list of nominees, as announced by the executive vice president.

"After expert evaluations and extensive consultations, we

have presented the president with a list of qualified candidates to lead the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, with Ali Tayebnia at the forefront," Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah said on Saturday. The announcement follows the impeachment of former Economy minister Abdolnasser Hemmati on March 2, 2024, which

passed with 182 votes in favor of removing and 89 against the motion. Rahmatollah Akrami was subsequently appointed as acting minister, ISNA reported. Iranian lawmakers voted to remove Hemmati from office over economic problems and the sharp devaluation of the national currency. On the free market at the time, rial was

trading at more than 920,000 against the US dollar, compared with approximately 580,000 in mid-2024.

Under parliamentary rules, the president has a three-month window from the impeachment date to submit a nominee for the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance to Parliament.

Tayebnia, 65, served as Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance from 2013 to 2017 under the 12th Iranian administration.

In the current (14th) administration, he was appointed as Senior Advisor to President Masoud Pezeshkian in August 2024 and remains active in this capacity.



Ali Tayebnia



# A new horizon for FDI?

*Iran explores welcoming foreign capital, including from US*



By Navid Kamali  
Foreign affairs expert

**OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE**



As the primary architect of the most complex and inhumane sanctions regime against Iran, the US has played, and continues to play, a decisive role in shaping the psychological climate and risk calculations of other international investors. Breaking this atmosphere by potentially facilitating the presence of prominent American investors, within the framework of possible future agreements, could act as a key to unlocking the psychological and operational barriers for many other European and Asian investors hitherto deterred by the fear of US secondary sanctions. Such a move would effectively weaken the sanctions architecture from within, paving the way for a new wave of capital, technology, and management expertise into the country.

Recent remarks by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian during the National Nuclear Technology Day ceremony have displayed hopeful signs of a new strategic approach within Iran's political and economic landscape. This emerging perspective addresses one of the most critical components of sustainable development: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The explicit statement that there is no fundamental obstacle to attracting legitimate investment from other countries, including even the United States, carries added significance, particularly as it came on the cusp of a new round of dignified dialogue between Iran and the US government in Muscat. President Pezeshkian, referencing the viewpoint of the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei that there is no opposition to legitimate investment, even by American economic actors, drew a clear line between constructive economic cooperation and what is deemed conspiracy, subversion, and destructive interventionist policies. This distinction, while emphasizing the preservation of national principles and security, opens the door to leveraging international capacities to address accumulated shortcomings and accelerate the nation's development.

Prior to this, comments from a seasoned figure like Dr. Ali Larjani, an advisor to the Leader, regarding the possibility of defining mutual economic interests with the US and noting the business acumen of individuals like Donald Trump, already indicated a potential rethinking of economic engagement models at the country's highest levels of decision-making. This relative alignment at senior levels suggests a deeper understanding of contemporary economic necessities and geopolitical imperatives. It could serve as a launching point for formulating and implementing an active, targeted economic diplomacy aimed at attracting productive and sustainable foreign investment — something increasingly viewed not merely as an option but as an undeniable necessity for Iran's future. The strategic importance of FDI for Iran is multi-faceted and vital, considering the economy's structural challenges, the urgent need for technological modernization in key industries, the necessity of creating sustainable employment for a young and educated populace, and the imperative to strengthen Iran's regional standing in a volatile and competitive environment, particularly with neighbors potentially seeking to weaken and fragment the country.

A historical review of FDI attraction in Iran, especially since the Islamic Revolution, reveals a checkered and often inadequate path. As both domestic studies and international reports, such as those by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), confirm, Iran — despite possessing significant comparative advantages like a large domestic market, rich natural resources, a geostrategic location, and a young, educated workforce — has failed to attract substantial and sustained FDI flows commensurate with its potential. Comparing the volume of FDI inflows to Iran with neighboring and rival countries in West Asia starkly illustrates this reality: Iran's share of the global investment pie has been negligible. We have not sufficiently utilized this powerful tool to bridge the development gap created over the past decades by factors such as the imposed Iraqi war against Iran, cruel sanctions, and, at times, domestic mismanagement. Slow capital accumulation, deteriorating infrastructure in critical sectors like energy (oil, gas, and electricity), and technological backwardness in many industries all underscore the urgent need for injecting financial resources, technical expertise, and know-how from abroad.

It must be noted that FDI is not merely a financial flow; it is a package that brings with it new technologies, advanced management standards, access to global markets, and enhanced productivity. It can act as a powerful catalyst, driving the wheels of the national economy and increasing Iran's international competitiveness. Beyond purely economic dimensions, attracting FDI, especially from developed countries and reputable multinational corporations, carries significant geopolitical implications and benefits that should not be overlooked. The presence of major international investors in a country creates an intertwining of economic interests that can function as a defensive shield against political pressures and external threats. History attests that countries hosting substantial foreign capital naturally enjoy a greater margin of security in international relations as the economic interests of investing nations incentivize them to support the host country's stability and security. In the turbulent West Asian region, where geopolitical rivalries and efforts by some regional and extra-regional actors to isolate Iran have always existed, attracting foreign capital can serve as an effective tool to neutralize these efforts and strengthen Iran's eco-

economic and political ties with the outside world. Welcoming investors from diverse geographical origins can improve perceptions of investment risk in Iran and contribute to the normalization of the country's economic relations. Within this context, mentioning the United States as a potential investor holds particular weight. As the primary architect of the most complex and inhumane sanctions regime against Iran, the US has played, and continues to play, a decisive role in shaping the psychological climate and risk calculations of other international investors. Breaking this atmosphere by potentially facilitating the presence of prominent American investors, within the framework of possible future agreements, could act as a key to unlocking the psychological and operational barriers for many other European and Asian investors hitherto deterred by the fear of US secondary sanctions. Such a move would effectively weaken the sanctions architecture from within, paving the way for a new wave of capital, technology, and management expertise into the country. Of course, welcoming foreign investment, especially from a country like the United States, requires prudence, careful consideration, and the establishment





of very robust legal and technical frameworks. As implicitly and explicitly stated in official remarks, investment must be “legitimate” and aligned with national interests and security. This means investment contracts must be structured to yield maximum benefit for Iran and prevent potential risks. A crucial requirement is mandating technology transfer within contracts. The mere entry of capital and profit generation by foreign firms is insufficient. We should make sure that

up-to-date technical knowledge is brought in, particularly in industries where Iran suffers from technological lag — such as oil and gas (in areas like enhanced oil recovery, advanced drilling technologies, and LNG production) and the power sector (high-efficiency power plant technologies, smart grids, and renewable energy). This technology transfer should not be limited to equipment delivery but must encompass design, engineering, manufacturing, operation, and maintenance knowledge. Another vital condition is the requirement for participation in upgrading the country’s infrastructure. Foreign investors

should commit to contributing to the improvement and modernization of related infrastructure alongside their projects, ensuring the benefits of the investment are sustainable and long-term. A third key requirement involves training and developing human resources. Contracts must include specific, well-defined programs for training Iranian personnel at various technical and managerial levels. This aims to create employment while enhancing the skill level of the domestic workforce, thereby reducing future dependence on foreign expertise. This approach aligns with studies

showing that the effectiveness of FDI in boosting economic growth significantly depends on the host country’s absorptive capacity, particularly its education levels and human capital. Therefore, FDI should be directed in ways that contribute to strengthening this absorptive capacity. Alongside these contractual requirements, success in attracting sustainable and productive FDI necessitates creating and reinforcing a conducive and predictable domestic business environment. This demands modernizing laws and regulations and continuously improving

development indicators. Efforts to attract sustainable foreign investment must, therefore, be coupled with fundamental efforts to transform Iran into an attractive and reliable destination for global capital. These reforms benefit not only foreign investors but primarily domestic economic actors and the general public, contributing to a more dynamic and efficient national economy. Global experience shows that countries succeeding in attracting FDI by creating stable, transparent, and competitive environments have reaped benefits in the form of higher economic growth, increased job creation,

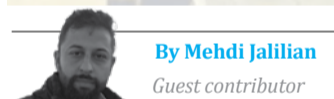
export diversification, and technological advancement. It is hoped that the emerging political will to open new pathways for economic engagement with the world will be accompanied by meticulous planning, active and targeted diplomacy, and modern approaches to governance in economic and social spheres. May this significant development, in turn, usher in a fruitful chapter of economic development and strengthen Iran’s international standing in the current Persian calendar year, officially designated as the year of “investment for production”.

## Industrial research centers spur Iran’s growth & employment



The photo shows a view of a laboratory of the Petrochemical Research and Technology Company, established by the Iranian National Petrochemical Company in 2002.

● npc-rt.ir



By Mehdi Jalilian  
Guest contributor

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In an era when the competitive advantage of countries is determined by innovation and technology, research is more critical than ever before as the bedrock for sustainable development. Even though Iran has enormous academic potential and professional human resources, there is a huge gap between industry and academia. Industrial research centers in such a scenario can be a critical bridge between the two as drivers of employment generation and national development across the country.

One of the most significant features of industrial research centers is their capacity to suit the comparative advantage of every area. In contrast to centralized one-size-fits-all models, these institutions have the capacity to be located within specialized clusters of different provinces and cities, suiting technology development and job provision to

local conditions.

For instance, in Yazd, ceramic and refractory research centers, utilizing the long-existing capacities of the region, can create new materials, upgrade the quality of products for export, and localize manufacturing technology.

In Khuzestan, with gigantic oil, gas, and petrochemical complexes, industrial research centers dedicated to downstream technology and recycling with oil could reverse the trend of resource consumption, create added value, and form specialized labor markets.

In East Azerbaijan, research centers for automotive and high-tech auto parts manufacturing will be used to reduce import reliance by localizing the development of technology, thus making the country’s own automobile industry more competitive.

Kermanshah Province, due to its geographical location and abundant agricultural and petrochemical resources, is the ideal location for the establishment of agro-industrial processing and light industrial machine-building research centers. For example, an

industrial research center in the Islamabad-e-Gharb Industrial Zone can specialize in the development and production of advanced packaging machinery for local produce such as chickpeas, wheat, and oilseeds. This will not only improve production efficiency but also provide employment opportunities for mechanical, electrical, and automation engineers.

Besides, since it is situated near the Iraqi border and has high export potential, Kermanshah could benefit from R&D on export-oriented packaging technology and thereby create Iranian brands in adjacent markets.

Long-term unemployment of university graduates — particularly those in engineering and technical fields — is one of the most pressing problems of Iran’s economy. The majority of graduates, having studied, are isolated from the labor market. Industrial research centers can be “work-and-learn” places, linking this human capital with real industrial projects.

Think of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad or Isfahan University

of Technology. With research institutes focused on manufacturing technologies, robotics, and industrial automation, project work can be commenced that directly and indirectly involves engineers, technicians, and applied researchers.

One of the most important barriers to Iran’s sustainable industrial growth is the over-centralization of decision-making and the lack of a regional development approach. Industrial research centers, if mission-oriented and sensitive to local environmental and economic conditions, can contribute to a more balanced and geographically equitable model of development.

For example, mining technology research centers in Kerman, Zanjan, and Hamedan provinces can localize advanced extraction and processing techniques, prevent raw material exports, and hire individuals along the value chain. To realize this vision, a major overhaul of Iran’s industrial and scientific policymaking is necessary. The Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade,

and the Ministry of Science must work together to develop a national roadmap for industrial research centers by establishing an intelligent, integrated system of these centers across the country. This network — backed by universities, technology parks, and domestic industries — can be a catalyst to sustainable development, extensive employment, and a solid international competitive advantage in innovation and production.

Iran is a country of maximum climatic, industrial, and human diversity. By making use of this diversity in a distributed network of industry research centers, it can be a model for successful regional development, sustainable employment, and industry acceleration. Provinces like Kermanshah, with their own strengths, are ideal models for that potential.

It is time to take research out of the ivory towers and onto the factory floor. Industrial research institutes are not a choice — they are a survival imperative for the industrial economy of Iran in the future.



One of the most significant features of industrial research centers is their capacity to suit the comparative advantage of every area. In contrast to centralized one-size-fits-all models, these institutions have the capacity to be located within specialized clusters of different provinces and cities, suiting technology development and job provision to local conditions.



Board members of an Iranian company visit the Mineral Processing Research Center of Fakoar Sanat Tehran in Shahriar, Tehran Province, Iran, on January 2, 2024.

● madanews.ir



● pseez.ir



## Persian Gulf Pro League:

## Tractor held as Sepahan, Persepolis given title lifeline

## Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League leader Tractor was held to a 2-2 draw at Chadormalou on Friday, while the chasing pack Sepahan and Persepolis claimed narrow victories against relegation strugglers to boost their slim title hopes with four rounds of matches remaining.

Hadi Habibinejad produced a moment of brilliance midway through the first half at Yazd's Shahid Nasiri Stadium to put Chadormalou in front with a superb solo strike, before Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh's header drew the visitors level right before the break.

Mohammadreza Hosseini's 56th-minute own goal put Tractor on its way to a fourth successive league victory, but Reza Mahmoudabadi bagged the equalizer for the home side six minutes later, sending goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand the wrong way from the spot.

The draw left Tractor, which has a game in hand at fourth-placed Foolad Khuzestan, on top of the table with 55 points – two points clear of Sepahan. Sepahan had a Javad Aqa-eipour's sixth-minute header to thank for a hard-fought 1-0 win at home against Mes Rafsanjan. Mes was unlucky to leave the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium



Sepahan players celebrate their goal during a 1-0 victory over Mes Rafsanjan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on April 11, 2025.

● MORTEZA SALEHI/TASNIM

empty-handed – hitting the woodwork twice through Reza Jabireh and Issa Moradi – though the visiting side still remained three points above the relegation zone after Nassaji Mazandaran – second from

bottom in the standings – suffered a 1-0 loss to Persepolis at home. Making only his second start of the campaign, academy product Alireza Enayatzadeh netted his first goal in the Persepolis

colors, heading home Milad Mohammadi's cross in the 65th minute. Both sides finished the game with 10 men, with Nassaji's Alexander Merkel and Persepolis substitute Mohammad Khodabande-

lou receiving their marching orders after a VAR review for reckless challenges. The VAR again intervened deep into stoppage time to give the home side the opportunity for a last-gasp

equalizer, deeming Persepolis fullback Yaqoub Barajeh to have handled the ball in his own box. However, French fullback Kevin Yamga's effort from the spot hit the post as Nassaji remained in the

bottom two with 21 points, while Persepolis moved to within four points off Tractor.

Persepolis will host Sepahan in a crunch Iranian classico on Friday, with Tractor welcoming Malavan to the Yadegar-e Imam Stadium in Tabriz.

Elsewhere, Malavan defeated Khaybar 3-0 at home, courtesy of goals from Reza Ja'fari, Omid Nourafkan, and Mehdi Abdi, while Golgozar and Iralco played to a goalless stalemate in Sirjan.

Shams Azar and Zob Ahan shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in Qazvin.

The home side's Navid Komar bagged a 90th-minute strike to cancel out Pedram Qazipour's opener for the visitors on the hour mark.

Bottom club Havadar was on the verge of a third win on the bounce – through Dariush Shojaeian's second-half strike – but was left heartbroken by Brazilian Kaina's 95th-minute equalizer for Esteghlal Khuzestan as it finished 1-1 in Ahvaz.

## AFC U17 Asian Cup:

## Iran crashes out after Tajikistan humiliation

## Sports Desk

A 3-1 loss to Tajikistan saw Iran finish bottom of the Group D table at the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia.

Both teams needed victory to stand a chance of progressing to the last eight, and Tajikistan took it to Iran from the get-go, finding the net in the 12th minute through Mehrubon Odilzoda, who drilled in a shot that took a deflection before going past a hapless Abolfazl

Khalilian. Champion in 2008 and a semifinalist in the previous edition, Iran was given a lifeline seven minutes after the break, when Omid Qarechomaqlou found space on the right before slotting home past Tajik keeper Abubakr Rahmonqulov. Ahmadjon Shoev restored the lead for Tajikistan in the 67th minute, and Abduullo Ibragimzoda put the match beyond doubt when he picked up the ball on the edge of the

box and sent a low shot past a rooted Khalilian in the 89th minute. "We didn't have a good start," said Iran head coach Abbas Chamanian. "We drew level and then tried our best to get back into the game but Tajikistan scored when we were on the offensive." "The tournament has ended but not for our players because football doesn't stop," he added. "They've gained experience here which will help them in the future,

which I think is the philosophy of this tournament." Iran began its campaign with a 1-1 draw against North Korea and then suffered a 3-2 defeat against Oman. North Korea, which beat Tajikistan 3-0 in their second outing, shared the spoils with Oman in a 2-2 draw to finish behind the Central Asian side in the table, while Oman joined Iran in missing out on a place in November's U17 World Cup in Qatar.



Iran's Mahan Beheshti (18) and Tajikistan's Nazrullo Ashuralizoda challenge for the ball during a game at the AFC U17 Asian Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on April 11, 2025.

● AFC



● IWFIR

## IWF World Youth &amp; Junior Championships:

## Iran names squad for Lima visit

## Sports Desk

Iran named 14 weightlifters for the upcoming IWF World Youth & Junior Championships – starting April 30 in Lima, Peru.

Amirmohammad Rahmati, Iliya Salehipour, Hamidreza Zarei, Amirhossein Sepah,

Amirmohammad Soleimani, Abolfazl Zare', Farhad Qolizadeh, Alireza Nasiri, Taha Nemati-Moqaddam, and Hamidreza Mohammedi will represent the Iranian men's team across different junior weight classes, as the country will be looking to build on

a title-winning campaign in last December's Asian Championships.

Hossein Yazdani will be the only Iranian weightlifter in the men's youth contests, with Ghazaleh Hosseini, Zahra Hosseini, and Rayhaneh Karimi taking part in different women's events.



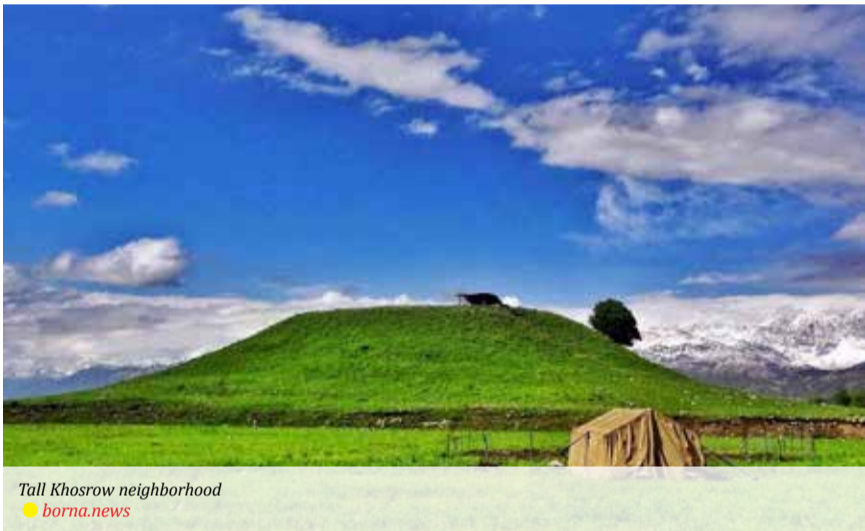
# Yasuj; a paradise for nature lovers and adventurers



Yasuj Waterfall  
● pelykan.ir



Kakan Ski Resort  
● IRNA



Tall Khosrow neighborhood  
● borma.news



Mehrian Gorge  
● IRNA

## Iranica Desk

Yasuj, the capital of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, is nestled in a mountainous and cold climate. However, the abundance of natural attractions within the city and its surrounding areas has transformed this region into a memorable destination for Nowruz (Persian New Year) tourism. Yasuj is famously located at the foothills of Mount Dena, the highest peak in the Zagros Mountains. It boasts beautiful attractions such as the Bashar and Maherian rivers, the Yasuj Waterfall, Shah Qasem Dam Lake, numerous springs, and lush oak forests, all contributing to its title as the capital of nature in Iran.

## Spring tourism

The Yasuj Waterfall serves as the main tourist attraction of the city. Located just two kilometers from the city center in the northern part of Yasuj, it captivates visitors with its scenic beauty. The Yasuj Waterfall, situated near the city center, leaves a lasting impression on travelers, especially at night and in the early morning, thanks to its lush forest surroundings. The pleasant air, winding water streams, fruit or-

chards, and green pastures offer a stunning view of the 10-meter Yasuj Waterfall. Along this picturesque recreational area, rest spots have been established, featuring gazebos that highlight local traditional culture and artistry from Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. Additionally, the Yasuj Waterfall is located within a forest park that spans eight hectares, making it another attractive summer destination in the region.

The Kakan Ski Resort, situated at the base of Mount Dena, is approximately 18 kilometers from Yasuj, near the village of Kakan. What sets this ski resort apart is that it is the only one in the country that benefits from urban gas. With the first snowfall in late autumn and continuous flurries throughout winter, the resort becomes entirely blanketed in white snowflakes.

Another prominent attraction is the Beach Park (Park-e Saheli) along the Bashar River, located at the entrance of Yasuj. This recreational area covers 10 hectares and is one of the most diverse and beautiful spots in the city. In addition to the attractions within Yasuj, there are other scenic areas in Boyer-Ahmad that are well worth the jour-

ney for their pristine natural beauty, IRNA wrote.

The Tall Khosrow is a neighborhood hosts several tourist attractions, allowing visitors to enjoy a delightful mix of historical exploration, village tours, and water activities all at one location. Travelers to this region can immerse themselves in the customs and traditions of the villagers residing in Tall Khosrow while visiting this historical site. The presence of a water park near Tall Khosrow neighborhood, featuring amenities such as swimming pools, a children's pool, therapeutic pools, salt baths, massage rooms, a serene river, and various water slides, significantly enhances the appeal of this area.

## Beautiful gorges

Mehrian Gorge is located in a village of the same name within the central district and the Sarroude-e Shomali rural district. This area, situated between the Mehrian River to the east and the Dena Mountains to the north, hosts a diverse array of trees, including poplar, oak, maple, plane tree, pine, wild grapes, and pistachio. Mehrian Gorge, a notable tourist attraction situated 10 kilometers northwest of Yasuj, boasts a pleasant cli-

mate with a clear river and is enveloped by forests, captivating the eyes of tourists in both spring and summer. Meanwhile many visitors relish unforgettable moments in the shade of the oak trees in the Tamoradi Gorge area, appreciating its tranquil environment. The presence of several waterfalls and surrounding heights makes this area a prime destination for hiking enthusiasts. At the entrance of Tamoradi Gorge, near the village of Hosseinabad, stands a crypt and tomb from the Achaemenid era, drawing the attention of culture aficionados.

## Souvenirs

Mojtaba Amir Hosseini, the director of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, remarked that Yasuj, with its unspoiled nature and a variety of natural and artificial attractions, caters to tourists with diverse tastes. He noted that the city, featuring local products such as wild plants, traditional handicrafts, and food items like *kashk* (a curd made from sheep's milk), local oil, and honey, can be a remarkable destination for travelers.

## Architecture and history of Kushk-e Ardeshir in Bushehr

### Iranica Desk

Kushk-e Ardeshir, also known as the Palace of Ardeshir, is situated in the Poshtpar hills, near a village of the same name, and enjoys pleasant weather. It is part of the Eram region in Dashtestan, about 150 kilometers east of Bushehr and southeast of Kazerun. This ancient monument dates back to the reign of King Ardeshir I, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, and it shares many architectural similarities with the Ardeshir Palace in Firuzabad, which was also constructed by him. Kushk-e Ardeshir is listed as part of

Iran's national heritage. During the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods, Dashtestan was part of Fars Province, which is home to numerous historic monuments from these eras. Notably, Gur Dokhtar, a sixth-century tomb, and Tang-e Eram are considered some of the most significant sites. New archaeological discoveries continuously emerge in the area, including the 2016 discovery of two urns during renovations for a bridge in the Poshtpar region.

The structure of Kushk-e Ardeshir is built from stone and *sarooj*, a type of water-resistant mortar. Its

design follows a cross plan (*chalipa*) and features barrel vaults. Currently, two *ivans* remain on the north and southeast sides, with rooms covered by arching roofs adjacent to them.

Atop the structure, there remains a stone column believed to have been used for fire signaling, communication, or as a lookout point. Additionally, a vaulted pathway, stretching six meters from southeast to northwest, can be found. Tragically, in 2011, parts of this Sassanid building were damaged due to high humidity and moisture, coupled with a lack of maintenance for this national monument.



● wikipedia.org



● mrbilit.com



# Lost Achaemenid quarries unearthed in Western Iran

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian archaeologists uncovered the long-lost quarries that supplied stone for Darius the Great's palace in ancient Susa, solving a mystery that had persisted for over two millennia. The discovery was made in Abdanan, located in Ilam Province, and has been described as "astonishing" by Mohammad Ebrahim Zarei, head of Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, ISNA reported. During his visit to oversee archaeological excavations in Abdanan, Zarei revealed that the quarries were the primary source of limestone and ironstone used in constructing the Apadana Palace, one of the most magnificent structures of the Achaemenid Empire. The site, nestled in the Kabir Kuh mountain range, may correspond to "Abiradush," a location mentioned in Darius's inscriptions but whose exact whereabouts had remained unknown until now. The breakthrough was made possible

through a combination of field surveys, satellite imagery analysis, and geological studies conducted by a team led by archaeologist Loqman Ahmadzadeh Shohani. The discovery was initially suggested by Mohammad Heydari, a local teacher credited as the quarry's finder. Researchers identified evidence of extensive quarrying operations, including stone-cutting tools, remnants of extraction activities, and deposits of iron ore likely used for creating metal clamps in Achaemenid architecture. Zarei emphasized that this unprecedented find could rank among the most significant archaeological discoveries in recent Middle Eastern history. It offers critical insights into resource management, transportation networks, and architectural techniques employed during the Achaemenid era. The quarries are estimated to be approximately 150 kilometers from Susa, with evidence suggesting that stones were transported via a combination of mountain roads and waterways along

the Karkheh River. The Apadana Palace at Susa was a cornerstone of Achaemenid imperial architecture. Its construction required vast quantities of high-quality stone, which Darius himself referenced in inscriptions. The rediscovery of these quarries not only resolves a historical enigma but also opens new avenues for understanding ancient engineering and logistics systems. Zarei likened this discovery to finding the marble quarries used for Athens' Parthenon—a revelation with profound implications for global architectural history. Archaeologists hope this discovery will lead to further research and potentially secure UNESCO World Heritage status for the site. This is not the first time Achaemenid quarries have been unearthed. About a decade ago, Iranian archaeologists identified limestone and sandstone quarries near Pasargadae—the first capital of the Achaemenid Empire. Those sites revealed sophisticated stone-cutting techniques and trans-



portation methods involving large carts and draft animals like oxen. The latest discovery adds another layer to our understanding of how monumental projects were executed during one of history's most influential empires.

Further details about the newly discovered quarries remain under study, with additional images and findings yet to be released by Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism.

## Over one million tourism destinations identified in Iran

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, announced the identification of more than one million tourist destinations across the country. Speaking at a ceremony honoring contributors to the nation's Nowruz travel initiatives on April 12, he attributed Iranians' enthusiasm for travel to the country's inherent allure and diverse attractions, IRNA reported. Salehi Amiri expressed gratitude to the 1.2 million individuals involved in organizing Nowruz trips, including local officials from various levels of government and representatives from 28 agencies. He remarked, "The government is fully committed to serving the people of Iran, prioritizing their comfort and well-being above all else." He emphasized that fostering a sense of security among citizens is even

more crucial than providing services. Reflecting on this year's coordination efforts, the minister noted that challenges were minimal compared to previous years, resulting in heightened public satisfaction. "This demonstrates that the government views its role as solely serving the people," he added. During the Nowruz holiday season, over 36 million Iranians boarded on trips, underscoring the vibrancy of domestic tourism. Salehi Amiri highlighted Iran's appeal as a travel destination, citing its historical and natural diversity. He said foreign tourists often describe Iran as "beautiful, rich in civilization, and home to significant historical and natural elements." Salehi Amiri concluded by emphasizing Iran's rich heritage, with 23,000 historical sites accessible to travelers through 1,000 Nowruz events across 530 cities.

## Iranian photos on display in Budapest

### Arts & Culture Desk

A group exhibition featuring the works of independent Iranian photographers is being held at the FUGA Budapest Center of Architecture, supported by the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. Titled 'Ordinary Moment,' is displaying the creations of 18 Iranian artists and began on April 10 and will be held through May 4, ILNA reported. The showcase is the culmination of two years of research and continuous exploration centered on a shared theme. Mansour Forouzes, who has curated and selected the photographs for this exhibition, elaborates on the topic that unifies these works: "Just as the diverse climates of Iran reflect its multifaceted society, 'Ordinary Moment' captures this richness through a carefully curated selection of photographs. This exhibition offers a glimpse into the everyday narratives and simple events that shape life in Iran. By featuring the works of emerging and independent Iranian artists, it presents authentic and meaningful images of daily life, revealing intimate moments from the heart of Iranian society."



Among the photographers participating in the exhibition are Amir Masoud Arabshahi, Arash Tavakoli, Bita Kahnemui, and Fatemeh Salehi.

## Iranian short film wins top prize at Dutch festival



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian short film 'Shooti,' directed by Shiva Taheri and produced by Arash Shirvani, won the Best Film Award at the 8th Holland MENA Film Festival, held in The Hague on April 5-6.

The festival aims to foster cultural exchange between the Middle East, North Africa (MENA), and Europe, spotlighting independent cinema from these regions, Mehr News Agency reported. Previously recognized with an honorary diploma at the MikroFAF in Belgrade, 'Shooti' continues to garner international acclaim. At the Holland MENA Film Festival, the jury lauded the film's innovative approach and realistic themes, highlighting its exceptional cinematography and meaningful silences that convey a powerful message. The jury's statement praised Taheri's ability to narrate her story through a visually poetic language. The film features performances by Mohammad Ali Ghavidel, Mahin Sisizadeh, Danial Mahmoudnia, Fardin Rahmanpour, Afshin Bakhshesh, Pouria Fallahpour, and child actors Mohammad Sozaei and Navid Bandari.

## Tehran named guest of honor for 2026 Baghdad book fair



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has been officially invited as the guest of honor at the 2026 Baghdad International

Book Fair, marking a significant milestone in cultural collaboration between the two nations. The announcement was made by Ebrahim Heydari, spokes-

person and deputy director of the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, during discussions with Abdul-Wahab Al-Radi, head of Iraq's Publishers Union, IRNA reported. Heydari revealed that final arrangements are underway to allocate space for Iraqi publishers at the upcoming Tehran International Book Fair, which is set to take place from May 7 to May 17, 2025, at Imam Khomeini Mosalla under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran." During a meeting with Iraqi delegates, including Al-Radi, it was agreed that Iran would host a dedicated pavilion at the 2026 book fair.