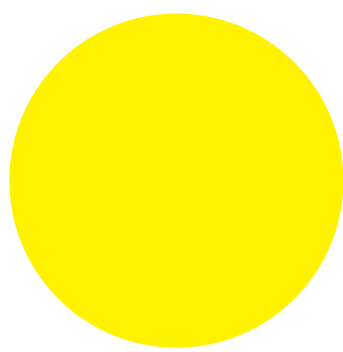


Pezeshkian calls for inclusive, transparent cultural strategy

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Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with a number of commanders and officials of Iran's Armed Forces in Tehran on April 13, 2025.

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127,000 tons of honey produced per year; 30,000-ton surplus

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Iran holds line on Oman talks with US



By Fathollah Tavassoli
Iranian lawmaker

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The first round of indirect talks between Iran and the US got underway in Muscat, Oman, on Saturday, and was described as "constructive and positive." Yet to properly size up any negotiation, four factors should be weighed: the subject, the venue, the format, and the negotiating team. According to Iranian officials, each of these was carefully thought through. As the Leader himself has emphasized, the decision to enter negotiations was made by the Establishment, and that the talks must be strictly confined to the nuclear issue. [Page 2 >](#)

Price crisis, demand recession plague Iran's housing market

ANALYSIS
EXCLUSIVE

Iran's housing market is going through a tough time, marked by recession and sky-high prices, shifting from consumer ownership to asset preservation. Over the past decade, Tehran's housing prices have shot through the roof, driven by speculation and inflation, far outpacing income growth. The purchasing power of the rial has taken a nosedive, making homeownership a distant dream for many. The lack of effective mortgage programs has left genuine buyers on the sidelines, giving investors the upper hand. While rising construction costs might justify current prices, the disconnect between high prices and low demand raises eyebrows. With real estate liquidity drying up, the market is caught in a limbo, between potential recovery and a looming deadlock. Check out page 4 for more. [See page 4 >](#)



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Leader urges Armed Forces to maintain 'maximum preparedness'

National Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called on the country's Armed Forces to maintain their "maximum preparedness" to fulfill their national responsibilities. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks during a Sunday meeting with commanders and officials of Iran's Armed Forces on the occasion of the Persian New Year. He described the Iranian Armed Forces as the nation's "shield and a refuge" for the people in the face of any aggressor. The Leader criticized the contradictory stance of bullying powers, who have armed themselves with the most advanced and lethal weapons, yet consider the defensive advancements of others as unacceptable.

Ayatollah Khamenei also said ill-wishers are furious with Iran's increasing advances, urging the country's officials to counter their propaganda. "They (ill-wishers) present their desires as news and reality," the Leader said, emphasizing the importance of formulating strategies to combat such propaganda. He highlighted that the Islamic and independent nature of Iran's government is the main reason behind the enemies' hostility towards the nation. "What irritates the enemy is not the name 'Islamic Republic,' but the determination of a country to be Muslim and independent, with a distinct identity of its own," the Leader said. Ayatollah Khamenei further said that what angers the enemy is the notion that the Islamic Republic refuses to rely

on others for its dignity. The Leader also acknowledged certain shortcomings in the country, including in the economic sector, and called for intensified efforts to address these issues. At the start of the meeting, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, discussed developments in Iran and the West Asia region. He praised the global awakening regarding the Palestinian issue and the historic resistance of the people of Gaza and Lebanon against the Israeli regime's crimes. Baqeri affirmed that the Iranian Armed Forces, supported by the nation, are fully prepared and will not allow the enemies to achieve "their ominous goals."



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with a number of commanders and officials of Iran's Armed Forces in Tehran on April 13, 2025.

● leader.ir

Israeli strike destroys last fully functional hospital in Gaza City



An Israeli air strike early Sunday heavily damaged one of the few functioning hospitals in Gaza, drawing condemnations from several countries. Since the outbreak of war, tens of thousands of Gazans have sought refuge in hospitals, many of which have suffered severe damage in the ongoing hostilities. The strike on Al-Ahli Hospital in northern Gaza – also known as the Baptist or Ahli Arab Hospital – caused no casualties, but came a day after Israeli forces seized a key corridor in the territory and signaled plans to expand their campaign, AFP reported. "The bombing led to the destruction of the surgery building and the oxygen generation station for the intensive care units," Gaza's civil defense rescue agency said. The blast left a gaping hole in one of the hospital's buildings, with

iron doors torn from their hinges. Patients, relatives and medical personnel evacuated the Al-Ahli hospital in haste following the military's warning. Many found themselves stranded in the surrounding streets. The Israeli military claimed that Hamas fighters were operating "a command and control center" inside the hospital compound. Hamas condemned what it described as a "savage crime" committed by Israel "with blatant US cover and complicity", dismissing the claim that the facility was a used militarily. Qatar also denounced the strike as "a heinous crime". Hospitals, protected under international humanitarian law, have repeatedly been hit by Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas on October 7, 2023.

Iran: Talks with US to focus solely on nuclear issue, lifting sanctions

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that negotiations with the United States would solely focus on the nuclear issue and lifting of sanctions as the two countries have begun a diplomatic process to resolve disputes over Iran's nuclear program. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a televised interview on Sunday that the talks would only focus on "the nuclear issue and the lifting of sanctions," and that Iran "will not have any talks with the American side on any other issue." "If we consider the letters that were exchanged between the two sides and the process that led to the beginning of the indirect talks in Oman as the basis for the negotiations, we just focused on the nuclear issue in that correspondence", Baqaei said. On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff held talks in Oman's capital of Muscat, marking the highest-level Iran-US nuclear negotiations since the collapse of a 2015 accord. They agreed to meet again in days.

Venue of next talks still unknown

Baqaei also said the negotiations will

continue to be indirect, adding that Oman will remain the mediator, but we are discussing the location of future negotiations.

Iran and the US separately described Saturday's discussions as "constructive." Iran said the talks were held indirectly with Oman's foreign minister acting as an intermediary. Another round of talks will be held on Saturday, April 19.

Asked about the talks, Trump told journalists aboard Air Force One, "I think they're going OK. Nothing matters until you get it done."

After the conclusion of the talks in Oman on Saturday, Baqaei said that the two sides exchanged their positions "in a constructive and mutually respectful atmosphere."

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.

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," Araghchi underlined.

The American negotiator Witkoff had said that "our position today" starts by demanding that Iran completely dismantle 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.

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.

Iran holds line ...

Iran's goal is to reassure the world it is not pursuing nuclear weapons and continues to seek peaceful use of nuclear technology, something it considers an inalienable right.

If, however, the other side tries to chip away at Iran's peaceful capabilities or push for restrictions, the Iranian delegation will draw a hard line. Any deal that whittles down the country's nuclear strength or involves such concessions crosses a red line and will be rejected outright.

Other issues frequently dragged into negotiations by Washington—missile capabilities, regional influence, the Resistance Front, human rights, and drones—are seen as strengths by Iran. Including them in the talks is a

non-starter and would only serve to play into efforts to weaken Iran's regional standing and therefore should be avoided.

As for Muscat, the venue was no accident. Oman has long maintained a neutral stance in regional politics and stayed on good terms with Iran. It was the right call to settle on Oman, given its history of honest intermediation.

The format—indirect talks through Omani mediation—also stems from Washington's track record of hostile behavior over the past decades. Iran believes the US has not yet created the conditions for a direct meeting, especially after years of economic, political, and security pressure.

Before the talks even began, the US had rattled its sabers,

attempting to dictate terms, even pushing back against Muscat as the location. Iran stood firm, insisting that the talks be held in Oman. It also made it clear that threats have no place at the table.

If the US steps out of line, Iran has warned it will hit back hard, making it clear it possesses the military capabilities to do so if provoked. But that is not the route Tehran seeks. Talks must remain on track, focused solely on the nuclear file.

Hopefully, efforts by Zionist lobbies, some regional rivals, and Iran's adversaries will not derail the process. Regardless of the outcome, Iran has entered negotiations with dignity and strength and has made it clear that it will never bow to pressure or sign off on anything under threat.

Tehran condemns terrorist attack on Pakistanis in Sistan and Baluchestan

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a terrorist attack in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, in which eight Pakistanis were killed.

Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei described the killing of innocent people as a criminal act that contradicts all Islamic principles and humanitarian norms.

He also offered condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of Pakistan and assured that Iran's authorities will spare no effort to identify the perpetrators of the crime.

The attack happened in the province's city of Mehrestan. Pakistan has been battling a de-

cade-long insurgency in its impoverished Balochistan Province, which militant groups claim is being exploited by outsiders, with wealth from its natural resources syphoned off with little benefit to the local population.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday condemned the "brutal killings of eight Pakistanis," calling on Tehran to "immediately arrest the culprits, give them appropriate punishment, and make the reasons behind this brutal act public."

The Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA), a Pakistani separatist group, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The eight men killed were from Pakistan's most populous province, Punjab, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan. Armed separatists in the area



have in recent months intensified attacks on workers from other provinces, particularly Punjabis who are viewed as having strong links to the military.

Iran's embassy in Pakistan also confirmed the death toll and condemned the attack as "terrorism", calling, like Islamabad, for "joint efforts" to combat the violence. Nine Pakistanis were also killed in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province in January 2024.

Iran’s rial posts significant gain against US dollar after Muscat talks

Economy Desk

Iran’s currency and equity markets surged in tandem on Sunday, as the rial rallied nearly 10% against the US dollar amid renewed optimism over nuclear talks, while the Tehran Stock Exchange’s main index climbed 2.21% to a record 2,908,647.67 points, signaling investor confidence in potential sanctions relief.

The Iranian rial surged by approximately 10% against the US dollar traded at 870,000 rials on Sunday, following talks between the Iranian and US representatives regarding Tehran’s nuclear program and sanction relief.

The going rate for US dollar on Sunday reflected a 90,000-rial drop compared to the previous day’s rate of 960,000 rials per dollar.

The main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange also rose by 2.21%, reaching 2,908,647.67 points.

Gold market shock

Despite global gold markets being closed on Sunday and international prices holding steady

at \$3,238 per ounce, Iran’s domestic gold and coin markets saw sharp declines due to the US dollar’s steep drop in the unofficial currency market.

Influenced by positive outcomes from indirect Iran-US talks in Oman, the unofficial forex and gold markets continued their downward trend on Sunday. 18-karat gold traded at 6,867,900 tomans (\$71.54) per gram, marking a 646,220-toman (\$6.73) decline compared to Saturday’s prices.

On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Steve Witkoff, the US president’s special envoy for Middle East affairs, led the first round of indirect talks in the Omani capital of Muscat.

Both sides described the talks as positive and constructive, with Araghchi saying that the next round is expected to take place on April 19 at the same level.

Gold prices reflecting global reality

Emphasizing the significant decline in domestic gold and coin prices on Sunday, Head of the Tehran Jewelry Union Nader Ba-



IRNA

zafshan analyzed that despite a \$200 increase in global gold prices over the past 10 days, the domestic market has followed

an inverse trend, with prices now aligning closer to reality. “Today, the gold coin market witnessed a 10-million-Tomans

drop, and there is currently no ‘speculative bubble’ in domestic prices compared to global rates. The current conditions are de-

scribed as transparent and reliable for public transactions, marking an opportune time for trading.”

Beekeepers and Honey Producers Association of Iran: 127,000 tons of honey produced per year; 30,000-ton surplus

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

The Beekeepers and Honey Producers Association of Iran emphasized that the Islamic Republic is among the three largest honey-producing countries in the world, saying, “Last year’s honey production in the country was satisfactory, with 127,000 tons of honey produced domestically.”

In an interview with Iran Daily, Abdolreza Bigonah said, “Iran, alongside China and Turkey, is one of the largest honey producers globally. Iran’s diverse climate and four-season geography foster an exceptionally rich variety of flora, giving the country a unique position worldwide. Typically, the finest and highest-quality honey is produced here.”

Highlighting Iran’s high honey consumption, Bigonah explained, “Iran has one of the highest per capita honey consumption rates globally, with

each Iranian consuming over one kilogram of honey annually.”

He further stated, “Due to the substantial honey production in the country and its widespread availability, honey prices in Iran are very low. It can confidently be said that Iran has the lowest honey prices among countries worldwide.”

Referring to Iran’s honey production conditions, the head of the association said, “Honey production in the country is closely tied to climatic conditions. If rainfall is adequate in a given year, honey production naturally improves. However, if the country faces drought or sandstorms, and dust settles on flowers, honey production will decline.”

“Accordingly, last year’s rainfall levels yielded favorable honey production, and we hope rainfall continues this spring to sustain increased honey output,” he said.

“In dry, low-rainfall years, national honey production does not exceed

80,000 to 90,000 tons. The truth is, as I mentioned, our honey industry hinges on climate. Reduced rainfall would harm beekeeping, causing losses for producers,” Bigonah said.

According to the association head, “Many Iranian beekeepers migrate seasonally for honey production.”

He said that despite high domestic honey consumption, there is typically an annual surplus of 20,000 to 30,000 tons of honey in the country, which creates significant export potential. “Conversely, if export channels are blocked, beekeepers and honey producers will face greater losses, and the beekeeping industry will be harmed.”

Citing national beekeeping statistics, Bigonah said, “According to the latest official figures, there are 92,122 licensed apiaries nationwide, totaling approximately 11 million beehives across various regions. Globally, there are 91 million beehives.”



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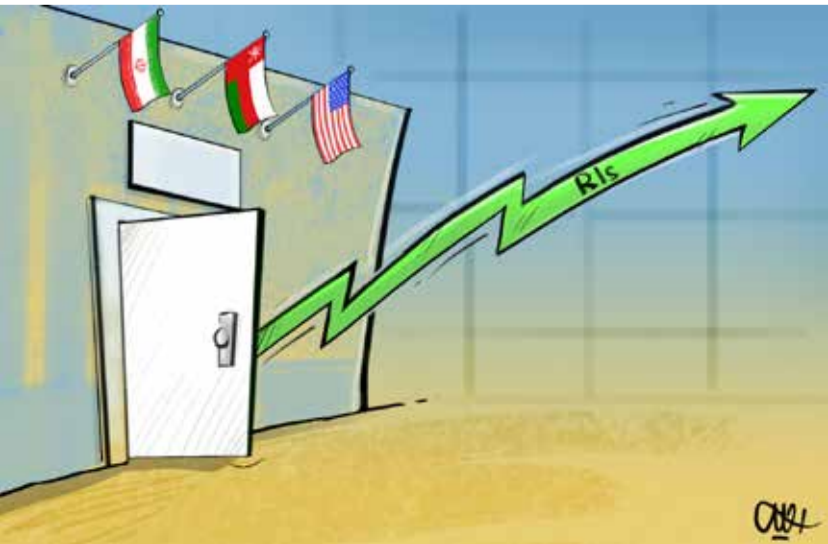
Abdolreza Bigonah

“Despite its challenges, the beekeeping and honey production industry is highly profitable and economically valuable — provided the government facilitates exports to both nearby and distant markets,” he added.

“Due to sanctions and difficulties in

conducting banking transactions with distant countries, our current exports to continents and far-off regions like Europe are limited. Most Iranian honey is exported to neighboring countries, including Azerbaijan, Russia, Syria, Iraq, and some Persian Gulf states,” he concluded.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran’s upcoming oil expo as gateway to int’l energy collaboration: Deputy minister

Economy Desk

An official with the Iranian Oil Ministry highlighted the importance of energy diplomacy, stating, “The Tehran international oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical exhibition offers unparalleled opportunities to expand global collaboration in this industry.”

During a briefing session on Sunday for the 29th International Iran Oil and Gas Expo, Ali Mohammad Mousavi, deputy for international affairs and commerce at the Oil Ministry, underscored the event’s historic significance, noting, “Scheduled from May 8-11 in Tehran, the event is not only the largest commercial energy hub in West Asia but also a recognized platform for exchanging ideas and shaping the future of the global energy landscape.”

“Over nearly three decades, this exhibition has served as a cornerstone of energy diplomacy, fostering practical cooperation and political dialogue. As a leading nation in oil and gas reserves, Iran stands ready to attract foreign investment and modernize its energy infrastructure,” he said.

Referring to recent efforts by the Oil Ministry to adopt advanced technologies across upstream, midstream, and downstream sectors, Mousavi emphasized, “Our goal is to establish a transparent and stable environment for international investors to execute key projects, such as developing oil and gas fields under modern financial frameworks like IPC (Integrated Petroleum Contracts) contracts.”

The deputy minister outlined the specialized sessions at the exhibition, stressing

their pivotal role in presenting investment prospects and technical collaborations.

He further remarked, “Iran is investing in cutting-edge energy domains such as petrochemicals, renewables, and hydrogen technologies, positioning itself as a reliable global partner.”

A bridge for int’l collaboration Mousavi affirmed the intrinsic link between energy diplomacy and policy, declaring, “This exhibition is a platform for fostering mutual understanding and sustainable partnerships that align economic and environmental objectives.”

In closing, he invited all energy sector stakeholders, such as governments, companies, and research institutions to “join this landmark event and play an active role in defining the future of global energy.”

Price crisis, demand recession plague Iran's housing market



The photo shows a view of half-constructed buildings in the new town of Pardis in 2021. Pardis is located 17 km northeast of Tehran Province.
● HASHEM SHAKERI/LENS CULTURE

By Amin Shojaei
Economic researcher
ANALYSIS EXCLUSIVE

Iran's housing market entered the calendar year 1404 (March 2025–March 2026) with clear signs of a deep recession accompanied by an apparent price increase. Over the past decade, housing has transformed from a consumer good for households into a tool for preserving asset value against inflation. This fundamental shift has changed the structure of demand and turned homeownership for the middle class into a distant dream. The more than 20-fold increase in housing prices in Tehran over the past 10 years — compared to an approximately 10-fold increase in the inflation index — shows that the market has grown not only due to general price trends but also as a result of speculative behavior and inflationary expectations. In 1402 (2023–2024), the average price per square meter of housing in the capital exceeded 81 million tomans, a figure comparable — based on purchasing power parity (PPP) — to major global cities. However, this pricing exists in an economy with rial-based incomes significantly below international standards.

Affordability Index* (1293 = 100)	PPP Conversion Factor (IRR per \$ Int'l)	Year (Lunar)
100	9,800~	1393
120	10,700~	1395
160	20,000~	1397
210	50,000~	1399
240	75,000~	1401
300–250	90,000~	1403

Table 1 – Trend of average housing prices in the Iranian capital city of Tehran and annual inflation rate

Analysis of Table 1: The significant increase in housing prices, surpassing the rate of inflation, reflects the pressure of inflationary expectations, speculative activity, and the shift of capital from other markets into real estate.

Collapse of purchasing power, income-price gap
Housing price increases have occurred without a matching rise in household incomes. The price-to-income ratio has deteriorated severely during the 1390s (2011–2021), to the point where estimates suggest that by the end of 1403 (March 2025), purchasing a 75-square-meter apartment in Tehran would require several times a middle-class household's annual income. Even if prices remain stable, this trend will continue to deepen the accessibility crisis. In the absence of meaningful income growth or effective mortgage programs, a large portion of the population has been excluded from the consumer housing market. Genuine buyers have been replaced by investors and owners of multiple properties. In such a structure, consumer demand is severely suppressed, while investment-driven demand plays the main role in maintaining price levels.

Year (Lunar)	Avg. Tehran Price (M toman/m²)	Annual Inflation (%)
1393	~3.9	15.6
1395	~4.3	9.0
1397	~8.24	31.2
1399	~29	47.1
1400	~35.1	46.2
1402	~81.4	~40.7

Table 2 – Housing affordability index and domestic purchasing power (PPP) in Iran

Analysis of Table 2: Over the span of 10 years, the purchasing power of the rial has declined by approximately nine times, and the affordability index has worsened by about 3.5 times. These figures clearly illustrate the growing gap between housing prices and household incomes.

Role of inflation, weakened rial
Another fundamental factor is runaway inflation, which triggered unprecedented shocks in the housing market in the second half of the 1390s. Since 1397 (2018), with the return of sanctions, depreciation of the national currency, and rising inflation expectations, the annual inflation rate has never fallen below 40%. As a result, housing — like other assets — has become a safe haven for capital. Official PPP data shows that the domestic purchasing power of the rial in 1403 was nearly nine times lower than in 1393 (2014–2015). In other words, if 10,000 rials could buy the equivalent of one dollar in 1393, the same item would cost 90,000 rials in 1403. This clearly reflects the severe devaluation of the rial and the direct pressure on household purchasing power.

Are current prices realistic?
Given the stark gap between prices and incomes, the question arises: are today's housing prices realistic and sustainable, or are they inflated and speculative? The answer is a mix. On the one hand, rising construction costs (materials, wages, land) nominally justify current prices. On the other hand, the absence of consumer demand and declining transactions indicate this price level is unsustainable in the long term. In other words, housing in Iran has reached a point where it is too expensive for end-users and illiquid for investors. In this situation, investment returns are unsatisfactory, and hopes of homeownership for the middle class have faded. The market is drifting toward a slow but persistent recession.

Mortgage bonds market: missed opportunity
Mortgage financing instruments, particularly housing bonds (known as "Tessah"), have emerged as a significant phenomenon in the past decade. However, their extreme price volatility has become a barrier for buyers. While these bonds were intended to facilitate loan access, their purchase cost in some cases has exceeded 70 to 80 million tomans just to qualify

Given the stark gap between prices and incomes, the question arises: are today's housing prices realistic and sustainable, or are they inflated and speculative? The answer is a mix. On the one hand, rising construction costs (materials, wages, land) nominally justify current prices. On the other hand, the absence of consumer demand and declining transactions indicate this price level is unsustainable in the long term.

macro-trends, as explained in the prior section.

Will 1404 bring stability?
The answer depends on macro-economic and policy factors. In the baseline scenario, inflation is projected to range between 30% and 40% in 1404. Under such conditions, nominal housing price growth is expected to be around 10% to 25%, which lags behind inflation. In other words, real prices (adjusted for inflation) may remain flat or even decline. Real demand is expected to remain weak, and transaction volumes will likely stay low. Meanwhile, despite initiatives like the National Housing Movement, supply is unlikely to affect the market in the short term. Thus, the market may remain in a state of suspension — neither a booming recovery nor a sharp collapse.

Alternative scenarios: risk, hope
In a pessimistic scenario, if inflation worsens due to factors like subsidy cuts or further rial depreciation, housing prices could surge again — possibly outpacing inflation. Conversely, a credit crunch or banking crisis could also restrain investment demand, pushing the market into a deadlock. In an optimistic scenario, a reduction in political tensions and improved international relations could strengthen the rial and control inflation. Such changes could reduce real housing prices and improve purchasing power. However, this scenario is unlikely in the short term and requires structural economic reforms.

Unprecedented market compression
At the start of 1404, Iran's housing market was in a contradictory state. Prices, from the seller's

for a full loan in Tehran. The experience of recent years — rising to 180,000 tomans per bond in 1400 (2021–2022) and falling to 100,000 tomans in 1402 — demonstrates unstable credit policies and the sensitivity of demand to inflation expectations and purchasing power. Put simply, even when housing loans are available, the upfront cost of purchasing bonds is unaffordable for many.



Figure 1 – Tehran Housing Prices vs. Inflation (1393–1402). Red line = avg. Tehran price (M toman/m², left axis); Blue bars = inflation rate (%; right axis). Note the surge in prices after 1397, aligning with higher inflation years.

(The right panel of Figure 1 is not shown here in text format.) The chart and tables collectively underscore a few takeaways: (a) Housing prices remained relatively flat (in real terms) in the early 1390s when inflation was moderate, then exploded in nominal terms once inflation spiked; (b) Cumulative inflation severely eroded the rial's value, but housing managed not only to keep up but to exceed inflation after 1397, resulting in real price gains for property owners; (c) The volatility in specialized markets like housing bonds (not shown in figure) also correlates with these

perspective, continue to rise, yet from the buyer's point of view, homeownership is virtually impossible. The lack of effective financing tools, weak credit policy, and severe income inequality have all intensified the crisis. In this context, a sudden price surge is unlikely, but a continued recession — with slight nominal growth and falling purchasing power — is the most probable outcome for 1404. The housing market has reached a point of stagnation that will not be resolved without macroeconomic reform.

Lifting of sanctions, future of Iran's economy

Why is sustainable improvement not easily achievable?

By Pourya Zarshenas
Expert in renewable energy economics

A N A L Y S I S

Iran's economy has, in recent decades, been affected by international sanctions, inefficient management, heavy reliance on oil revenues, and a failure to attract foreign investment. Despite these challenges, many hope that the lifting of sanctions could lead to a quick improvement in economic conditions. However, the historical experience of countries like Cuba shows that merely lifting sanctions, without deep structural reforms, cannot guarantee sustainable growth. In 2015, as diplomatic tensions between the US and Cuba eased, trade restrictions were partially lifted, direct flights were set up, and hopes for Cuba's economic revival grew. Yet, after a few years, the impact of these changes on Cuba's economy remained very limited as the lack of modern infrastructure, inefficient bureaucracy, and the absence of steady foreign investment flows prevented real transformation. This report analytically examines why Iran's economy may also face similar challenges even after the sanctions are lifted. From dependence on oil revenues to weaknesses in adopting cutting-edge technologies, the following analysis shows that without fundamental reforms, sustainable economic improvement will remain out of reach.

Comprehensive technical-economic analysis

1. Dependence on oil and Iran's role in the global energy market: Iran's economy has historically relied on oil revenues, which account for over 60% of the government's budget and a major portion of the country's exports. However, due to sanctions, Iran has lost its share in the global oil market, reducing



● DIÁLOGO

its position to that of a "marginal adjuster".

- **Challenges of returning to the oil market:** Even if sanctions are lifted, Iran's return to the global oil market will face technical and capital barriers.
 - **Outdated technology:** Many of Iran's oil fields rely on outdated technology and require massive investment in modern techniques (such as horizontal drilling and secondary recovery) to boost productivity.
 - **Foreign investment risks:** After experiencing sudden sanctions and difficulties in countries like Russia and Venezuela, international companies are less willing to make long-term investments in Iran.
- 2. Weak economic and industrial infrastructure:** One of the main reasons why lifting sanctions alone cannot save Iran's economy is the severe weakness

of its industrial and production infrastructure.

- **Obsolete industries:** Many Iranian factories operate with decades-old machinery and cannot compete with global production.
- **Lack of investment in technology:** Without adopting advanced technologies — such as AI, industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), and renewable energy — Iran's industries will not be able to compete in international markets.
- 3. Inefficient bureaucracy and structural corruption:** Even if sanctions are lifted, Iran's complex administrative system and financial corruption could hold back foreign investment and economic development.
- **Ease of doing business index:** Iran ranks poorly in the World Bank's rankings, indicating administrative hurdles for investors.
- **Systemic corruption:** Accord-

ing to Transparency International, Iran is among countries with high financial corruption, reducing investor confidence.

4. Cuba's experience, lessons for Iran: Cuba is a clear example of a country that, despite a partial lifting of sanctions in 2015, failed to achieve sustainable economic growth. The main reasons for this failure include:

- **Lack of market reforms:** The Cuban government refused to liberalize the economy, preventing the private sector from playing an effective role.
- **No steady foreign investment:** Despite restored diplomatic relations, major US and European companies were reluctant to invest heavily in Cuba.
- **Dependence on foreign aid:** Cuba's economy remained dependent on aid from countries

like Venezuela and failed to become self-sufficient.

5. Possible scenarios for Iran's economy after sanctions are lifted:

- **Optimistic scenario:** If sanctions are lifted and structural reforms (privatization, financial transparency, technology adoption) are implemented, Iran's economy could achieve 3–4% annual growth.
- **Probable scenario:** Lifting sanctions without fundamental reforms would only lead to short-term growth (1–2 years), after which the economy would fall back into stagnation.
- **Pessimistic scenario:** If sanctions are lifted but economic policies remain unchanged, Iran's economy will stay trapped in oil dependence and high inflation.

The article first appeared in Persian on Asia News Iran.

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In 2015, as diplomatic tensions between the US and Cuba eased, trade restrictions were partially lifted, direct flights were set up, and hopes for Cuba's economic revival grew. Yet, after a few years, the impact of these changes on Cuba's economy remained very limited as the lack of modern infrastructure, inefficient bureaucracy, and the absence of steady foreign investment flows prevented real transformation. This report analytically examines why Iran's economy may also face similar challenges even after the sanctions are lifted.



FIBA West Asia Super League:

Tabiat hold on late to edge Sageesse in thriller

FIBA – Tabiat Basketball secured a second-place finish in Group A of the FIBA West Asia Super League after escaping past Lebanese champion Sageesse SC, 75-73, at the Stade Nouhad Naufal Saturday night.

The defending Iran Basketball League champions almost squandered a lead as big as 14 points when the opposition got to within one, 74-73, with 25.1 seconds left, but the breaks of the game went in their favor. Perry Petty got fouled by Shabazz Muhammad near mid-court with 19.8 seconds left and went on to give his side a bit more breathing room with a split from the line, settling as well what would be the final count. A missed layup by Jad

Khalil after an attempt to take matters in his own hands just before time expired was all that Tabiat needed to come away with the victory, leaving the Green Castle settling for third.

“We are happy we got second place in this tournament,” expressed head coach Mehran Shahintab as the club secured another top two finish for Iran in the pan-regional competition’s Sub-Zone League.

A total of five players finished in double figures in the victory, with Croatian big man Ivan Buva leading the balanced attack with 16 points alongside 15 rebounds for yet another double-double performance.

Sina Vahedi had 13 points before fouling

out. Stedmon Lemon supplied 12 points, 3 rebounds, and 3 assists. Rasoul Mozafari nailed three triples and made 11 points while Perry finished with 10 points and 6 assists.

The victory saw Tabiat improve to a 5-2 record in the group.

Marc Khouiery, on the other hand, led Sageesse with 19 points and 8 rebounds in the rally that fell just short.

Omar Jamaledine supplied 18 points as the locals tried to carry the fight on a night star guard Zach Lofton got hurt after suffering an apparent injury while making a layup at the 7:20-mark of the third quarter.

The former NBA pro’s limited time and pro-

duction (11 points) did affect the home team’s chances, yet the remaining players showed grit down the stretch by chopping down a 70-62 lead inside the game’s final 4:30.

Jamaledine himself pulled his side to within a field goal, 72-70, and it did not help Tabiat’s cause that Vahedi got fouled out as he and Khouiery got called for a double foul after getting a bit physical near center court.

It was also Jamaledine who cut the gap to a solitary point by following up Khalil’s floater, but Tabiat showed better poise when the going got tough – and some aid from Lady Luck – to withstand the fightback.



Tabiat’s Ivan Buva (25) goes up for a layup during a victory over Sageesse SC in the FIBA West Asia Super League in Zouk Mikael, Lebanon, on April 12, 2025.

● FIBA

Iran beats host to finish runner-up in Thailand futsal tourney



Sports Desk

Iran settled for a runner-up finish at the SAT Men’s Futsal Championship in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, thanks to a 6-2 victory over the host on the final day of the four-team tournament. Russia had routed Kuwait 10-1 earlier on Saturday to secure the title with a clean sweep of three victories.

In a repeat of the final showpiece in last year’s Asian Cup, Sarawut Phalpruek put Thailand in

front with 10 minutes into the game but Iran restored parity through Mohammad-Hossein Derakhshani seconds later, and then Hossein Sabzi and Hossein Tayyebi got on the scoresheet to steer the Asian powerhouse to a 3-1 lead at halftime.

Iranian keeper Saeid Momeni produced several fine saves to deny the host after the break before Mohammad-Hossein Bazyar extended the advantage for Vahid Shamsaei’s

men in the 27th minute. Iranian skipper Tayyebi, who went on to pick up the tournament’s best player prize, found the net from his own half for his second of the night three minutes later.

Ronachai Joongwongsuk reduced the deficit to three with two minutes left on the clock, before Amirhossein Gholami’s strike right at the death rounded off the victory for the 13-time Asian champion, which is preparing for the Futsal Asian Cup qualifiers in

September.

Iran suffered a 2-1 loss to Russia on the opening day of the tournament but bounced back to defeat Kuwait 5-0 – courtesy of goals from Tayyebi and Sabzi, as well as Masoud Yousef, Mahdi Karimi, and Behrouz Azimi.

Iranian captain Hossein Tayyebi (10) is seen in action during a win against Thailand at the SAT Men’s Futsal Championship in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, on April 12, 2025.

● FFIRI

ISF U15 Gymnasiade:

Iranian students collect 86 medals to stand fifth in table

Sports Desk

Iranian boys and girls grabbed 86 medals to finish fifth in the overall standings at the ISF U15

Gymnasiade in Zlatibor, Serbia.

The final day of the event saw Iranians grab five golds, plus three silver and bronze medals apiece

across boxing, archery, table tennis, and judo competitions, as the country finished with 29 golds, 28 silvers, and 29 bronze medals.

Organized by the International School Sport Federation, the biennial games featured 25 sporting events, participated by under-15 students.



● IRNA

Flick to focus on recovery as Barca lead LaLiga race

REUTERS – Barcelona coach Hansi Flick is focusing on his side’s recovery ahead of the season’s final stretch, in which they lead LaLiga and are still in contention for the Copa del Rey and Champions League.

Barcelona extended their advantage in the Spanish top flight with a 1-0 win at Leganes on Saturday, completing a 12-match unbeaten run and moving seven points clear of second-placed Real Madrid.

“We have to focus on recovery, recovery, recovery. That’s the way it is. We will arrive in Barcelona tonight, train tomorrow and fly to Dortmund on Monday,” Flick told reporters.

“We have no excuses – we have to recover, but that’s our job,” he added.

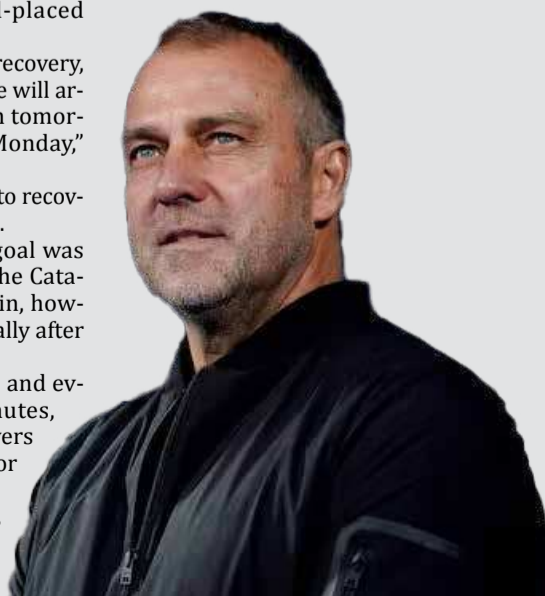
Defender Jorge Saez’s own goal was enough to secure victory for the Catalans, and Flick added that a win, however it came, was a win, especially after their packed calendar.

“Three points are three points and every game we fight for 90 minutes, when you see the load the players have had in the last few weeks or days, it’s unbelievable.

“After the international break, you see what my players have

done, my team’s performance has been unbelievable. I’m very proud of them.”

Barca, who are unbeaten in 24 games across all competitions, visit Borussia Dortmund in their Champions League quarter-final second leg on Tuesday, having won the first game 4-0. They will then host Celta Vigo in LaLiga on Saturday.



● ANA BELTRAN/REUTERS



Historical significance of Lenj construction in Iran

Iranica Desk

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to a collection of traditions, customs, knowledge, skills, and ways of life that are transmitted from one generation to another, carrying cultural identity and significance for various communities. Unlike tangible cultural heritage, which includes artifacts and historical monuments, ICH exists in an intangible form through experiences, behaviors, and social interactions within communities. This type of heritage is continuously evolving, responding to the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the society to which it belongs; thus, it cannot be confined to static objects. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines intangible cultural heritage as part of the living culture of people, encompassing music, dance, indigenous languages, rituals, and traditional knowledge about nature. This heritage plays a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion, identity formation, and fostering creativity. However, in an age of globalization, it faces threats that can lead to its neglect or alteration. Therefore, preservation through education, awareness-raising, and community participation is essential. Maintaining intangible cultural heritage contributes to cultural diversity, sustainable development, and strengthens relationships among cultures, IRNA wrote. The Persian Gulf is not only a strategic body of water but also a cradle of Iran's maritime civilizations. Among the traditional skills in this region, *Lenj* (a type of ship) building is one of the most important crafts, preserved and passed down through generations. The wooden *Lenjs*, handcrafted by skilled Iranian artisans, have been sailing in the Persian Gulf for centuries and are recognized as symbols of cultural identity and global heritage for Iranians. However, this authentic art form faces challenges today, including the replacement of fiberglass vessels, high construction costs, reduced demand, and the decline of traditional skills. The knowledge associated with the construction and navigation of these ships was registered as intangible cultural heritage of Iran on UNESCO's list in 2011.

What is Lenj?

Lenjs are traditional wooden boats, either sailing or motorized,

that have been used since ancient times for transporting goods, fishing, and long sea voyages in the Persian Gulf. In Iran, particularly in cities such as Bandar Abbas, Qeshm, Bushehr, artisans utilize teak wood, mangrove wood, and local materials to construct durable *Lenjs*. The process of building *Lenjs* is entirely traditional and conducted by hand. Artisans draw on knowledge passed down through generations to create sturdy *Lenjs* without the use of engineering blueprints. Their expertise enables these boats to withstand the powerful waves of the Persian Gulf. Skills related to the construction, repair, and navigation of *Lenjs* are transmitted from generation to generation among sailors and craftsmen. Oral literature, songs, and specific nautical terminologies form an integral part of this cultural heritage. Iran's maritime culture includes unique terms, poems, sailing songs, and stories that together constitute a significant portion of the oral literature and traditional music of the southern Iranian people. *Lenj* building is an essential aspect of Iran's identity and maritime culture, preserved for centuries by the coastal communities of the Persian Gulf. This industry not only reflects the traditional knowledge and indigenous skills of Iranians but also symbolizes their long-standing relationship with the sea and maritime trade. The construction of wooden *Lenjs* is based entirely on traditional knowledge, with artisans relying solely on their experience and indigenous expertise, without modern blueprints, to create robust vessels suited to the region's maritime conditions. From the past to the present, *Lenjs* have played a significant role in maritime trade, cargo transport, fishing, and sea voyages. Occupations related to *Lenj* building, fishing, and sea-related trade are vital to the local populace. Additionally, traditional *Lenjs* now hold great potential for attracting tourists. Some older *Lenjs* in coastal cities have transformed into living museums, contributing to the sustainable development of the maritime tourism industry in Iran.

History

According to historical documents, Iranians have engaged in navigation and the construction

of maritime vessels for thousands of years. Darius the Great noted the establishment of waterways and the creation of a naval fleet in his inscriptions, indicating that Iranians had mastered navigation as early as the Achaemenid era. Records regarding Iranian ships highlight the long-standing tradition of shipbuilding in Iran. During the pre-Islamic era, particularly in the Sassanid period and later during the Islamic period, Iran's trade relations with India, China, and Arab countries expanded significantly. During this time, Iranian *Lenjs* were utilized for trading spices, textiles, timber, and other goods. Historical texts reference the skills of Iranians in *Lenj* building and navigation. In the Safavid era, the kings' emphasis on expanding maritime trade led to a peak in the construction of *Lenjs* in Bandar Abbas, Qeshm, Bushehr, and Chabahar. During this period, Iranians built large wooden sailing vessels capable of carrying heavy loads. In the Qajar period and the early Pahlavi era, traditional sailing *Lenjs* remained common. However, with the introduction of diesel engines, some *Lenjs* became motorized, making sea voyages faster and more cost-effective. Nevertheless, traditional wooden *Lenjs* continued to be constructed and used in the southern islands and ports. In recent decades, the rise of fiberglass boats and industrial ships has resulted in a decline in the construction of traditional wooden *Lenjs*. Today, only a limited number of artisans in areas such as Bandar Kong, Bandar Lengeh, Qeshm, and Bushehr are still engaged in this profession. Iranians have played a significant role in navigation, trade, and the construction of wooden vessels since ancient times. Inscriptions from the Achaemenid period, historical texts, and reports by Greek and Arab historians reference the presence of Iranians in the Persian Gulf and their maritime superiority. *Lenj* building, which has been prevalent in this region for centuries, reflects the continuous presence and civilization of Iranians along the shores of the Persian Gulf. The term *Lenj*, referring to a type of large wooden boat, has its roots in the Persian language and signifies the maritime culture of Iranians. This word,

along with other traditional Iranian nautical terms, constitutes a sign of the cultural and linguistic presence of Iran in the Persian Gulf. In ancient documents related to navigation and the construction of *Lenjs*, the name Persian Gulf is mentioned as the primary body of water utilized by Iranians. Renowned historians and geographers such as Strabo, Ptolemy, Ibn Khaldun, and Al-Masudi have referenced the maritime trade of Iranians and the use of wooden *Lenjs* in the Persian Gulf in their works. *Lenj* building in the Persian Gulf serves as a living document illustrating the antiquity, cultural influence, and historical presence of Iranians in this region. Since this maritime industry has existed continuously along the southern shores of Iran since ancient times and has historical and global documentation, it can be regarded as one of the key pieces of evidence to underscore the name "Persian Gulf."

Heritage in peril

With advancements in technology and the introduction of fiberglass boats, the use of wooden *Lenjs* has declined, leading to the closure of many traditional *Lenj*-building workshops. Furthermore, the high costs associated with constructing and maintaining wooden *Lenjs* have diminished interest in continuing this craft. Consequently, UNESCO has placed this valuable heritage on its list of "urgently needed protection." To safeguard this invaluable art form, various initiatives have been proposed, including organizing *Lenj*-building festivals, documenting the skills of artisans, providing training for young people, and offering financial support for traditional workshops. Additionally, some coastal cities are promoting *Lenj* building as a tourist attraction to further support the industry. *Lenj* building is not just a facet of Iran's history and culture; it also embodies the ancient relationship between Iranians and the sea as well as maritime trade. Protecting this intangible heritage necessitates collaboration among government entities, the public, and cultural institutions to ensure that this invaluable art form endures for future generations.





Pezeshkian calls for inclusive, transparent cultural strategy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called for a “precise and effective” approach to cultural policy-making, urging officials to move past ideological confines and draw on the country’s full human capital. Speaking during a visit to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance on April 13, Pezeshkian underscored the need for inclusive planning and greater accountability. He urged authorities to create a level playing field for all cultural contributors, regardless of political or social affiliations. “Government must rise above narrow mindsets,” he said, adding that a healthy, competitive environment should be made available for all groups aiming to serve the public. The president sharply criticized the lack of clarity in Iran’s cultural output, especially in publishing. “It is not clear what types of books are being produced, for which audience, and with what aim,” he remarked. He pressed for cultural planning rooted in “clear targets” and measurable impact. Addressing the ministry’s leadership, Pezeshkian stressed that decision-makers should listen to the full spectrum of

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses officials during a visit to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance on April 13, 2025.
● president.ir

voices — “not only the loudest.” He called for broader outreach to underserved communities and a shift from selective engagement to more equitable service delivery. “These challenges are structural,” he noted, warning that a fragmented view of public service would prevent real progress. He urged the ministry to take a lead role in countering social imbalances, emphasizing the influence of media, cultural figures, and religious leaders in shaping national discourse. Citing the example of the 13th-century document in Tabriz, Pezeshkian praised historical models of self-sustained education and governance. He called for a renewed focus on “substance over form” in institutional reform. He also pointed to the extensive mosque network — more than 80,000 across the country — as a largely untapped asset for community support. “This is a unique opportunity,” he said, suggesting that with proper coordination, these religious centers could ease



economic strain and strengthen social unity. Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi, speaking at the same meeting, reaffirmed the ministry’s

commitment to the administration’s “national unity” agenda. He described key societal groups as vital bridges between the government and the public.

Salehi called on the president to reaffirm the ministry’s central role in shaping cultural policy and to restore its “influential position” within the government framework.

30 countries join Tehran Publishing Fellowship

Arts & Culture Desk

A total of 66 publishers from 30 countries have expressed interest in attending the first Tehran Publishing Fellowship, according to Alireza Nourizadeh, the Director-General of the Office of Cultural Associations and Organizations. The registration process,

which started recently, has drawn participation from a diverse range of countries, IRNA reported. Publishers from Albania, Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Kuwait, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Hungary, Mongolia,

North Macedonia, and Kazakhstan are among the confirmed participants. Nourizadeh emphasized the international scope of the event, noting that the fellowship would serve as a platform for cultural exchange. “This is a unique opportunity to showcase Iran’s publishing industry, particularly in the children’s and young adult

literature sectors,” he said. The registration for foreign publishers will remain open until April 19, with a total of 60 publishers—30 international and 30 local—set to be selected by a panel of judges. The Tehran Publishing Fellowship will be held from May 12 to 15, in conjunction with the 36th Tehran International Book Fair.



First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0040003

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Items	Material Description	Quantity
04	ROCK BITS 8-1/6 IN., JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES, 2 MOTOR TYOE, HIGH RPM, MIN RPM: 250	30NO&30ST

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 33,942/95 EURO or 15,858,859,544 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, BANDAR IMAM KHOMENI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL. NOTE: Based on enactment notified by Nisoc's Tender committee, foreign companies must submit a Bid Bond Guarantee amounting to aforementioned (paragraph 2) Euro amount. Otherwise, their quotations will not be considered.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex,
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644
Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

PUBLIC RELATIONS
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Iran to host int'l cartoon exhibition condemning Israeli atrocities



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran to launch an international cartoon and caricature exhibition denouncing Israel's military operations in Gaza and Lebanon. Titled “Zero Year,” the exhibition will open on April 14, at the Felestin Contemporary Arts Museum in Tehran, ISNA reported. The show features 60 selected works out of 700 submissions from 65 artists representing 42 countries. The pieces sharply criticize what organizers describe as Israel’s “crimes” in recent



conflicts. The exhibit was arranged by North Khorasan's Art Bureau in collaboration with the Palestinian Museum of Contemporary Art and the Society for the Defense of the Palestinian Nation. The exhibit will run from April 15 through May 5, excluding Thursdays and public holidays. Organizers say the event aims to amplify global outrage over Israel's recent military campaigns and to highlight what they call human rights violations in the occupied territories.