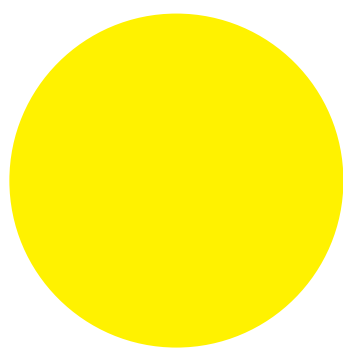


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# Iran Daily

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## President: Iran proud of commonalities with Azerbaijan

Tehran, Baku sign seven cooperation documents

Pezeshkian says both neighbors can secure regional peace, stability

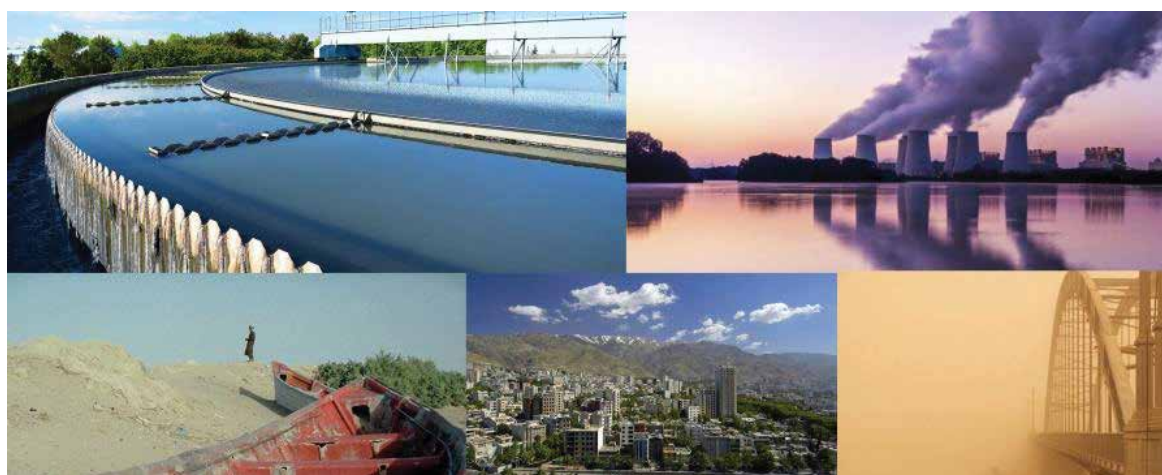
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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) shakes hands with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev during a welcoming ceremony prior to their talks in Baku, on April 28, 2025.  
[president.ir](http://president.ir)

## Iran's ecosystem: promises vs. reality

Where do we stand on ecological mapping?



Environmental policymaking ranks among the most challenging areas in developing countries, including Iran. Despite numerous efforts to draw up environmental laws and policies, our ecosystem still faces serious challenges and issues. Current indicators reveal a significant gap between the goals of the 2025 Vision and the General Environmental Policies (issued in November 2015) and the realities on the ground.

In this regard, Sadegh Zibakalam, Seyed Mohammad Mojabi, and Reza Maknoon studied these challenges and prioritized them in a published research paper, titled "Challenges of Policy Making: Iran Environment".

The article seeks to answer two fundamental questions: First, what are the challenges in finding solutions through Iran's environmental policymaking? Second, how should these challenges be prioritized, and which ones should be taken up for reform first? Below are key excerpts from the paper.

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# President: Iran proud of commonalities with Azerbaijan

Tehran, Baku sign seven cooperation documents

Pezeshkian says both neighbors can secure regional peace, stability

## National Desk

"We are proud of commonalities" between Iran and Azerbaijan, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday, stressing that based on these bonds Tehran is resolute in further strengthening of relations with Baku.

Referring to the two countries' cultural, religious, ideological, intellectual, and political commonalities, Pezeshkian said, "We take pride in these values, and based on these deep bonds, we are determined to further strengthen our relations. In many areas, we can share our experiences, benefit from each other's markets, and expand regional relations."

He made the remarks in a joint press conference with his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev in Baku, where the two countries also signed seven cooperation documents. The Iranian president pointed to an "important" decision to draw up a comprehensive

strategic program between the two countries, saying that it will "provide a framework for expanding industrial, scientific, cultural, economic, political, and security cooperation between Iran and Azerbaijan."

Pezeshkian also said that the two neighboring countries can establish peace, stability, and security in the region through cooperation and respect for their territorial integrity.

## Economic cooperation

He also highlighted the need to expand economic cooperation, saying that the two countries can link up their transportation and financial networks, boost trade, activate East-West and North-South corridors more effectively, and create shared opportunities for investment and production.

He also described the familial and historical ties between the two nations as an obstacle to any attempt to sow division between the two nations. Aliyev said Pezeshkian's visit

"is a reflection of the high level of relations between the two countries."

"Our peoples have lived for centuries in an atmosphere of friendship and brotherhood. Today, our interstate relations are developing on this solid foundation," he added.

During his one-day visit to Baku, the two countries signed seven memoranda of understanding in political consultations, transportation, cultural exchanges, healthcare sector, media activities and investment.

## Aras Corridor

Earlier on Sunday, the Iranian president in an interview with an Azerbaijani TV network said a project to establish a land link between Azerbaijan's mainland and its exclave of Nakhchivan via Iran is progressing rapidly. In October 2023, Tehran and Baku agreed to establish the transit route called the Aras Corridor, which allows Azerbaijan to access Nakhchivan through Iranian territory.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and his Azerbaijani counterpart Ilham Aliyev come down the stairs at Azerbaijan's Zulfuqar Presidential Palace in Baku on April 28, 2025.

president.ir

Bypassing Armenia, the Aras Corridor presents an alternative to the Zangezur Corridor with the potential of reducing Iran's

concerns for its common border with Armenia. Baku had been seeking to establish unimpeded access to Nakh-

chivan by opening the Zangezur Corridor through Armenia. The idea has been strongly rejected by Iran.

## Interior minister blames 'negligence' for Iran port blast

Death toll rises to 65

## National Desk

Iran's interior minister on Monday blamed "negligence" for a massive explosion that killed 65 people at the country's largest commercial port, with firefighters still battling a blaze at the facility three days after the tragic incident.

The blast took place on Saturday at the Shahid Rajaei Port in Iran's south -which is the most advanced container port in the country.

Hormozgan Governor-General Mohammad Ashouri Taziani said on Monday that the death toll in the Shahid Rajaei Port fire has reached 65. Also, more than 1,000 people have been injured in the explosion.

Only "120 wounded are still in hospital," Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni, who is in the area, said on Monday.

He added that "culprits have been identified and summoned," and that the blast was caused by "shortcomings, including noncompliance with safety precautions and negligence."

Iran's state TV showed images of firefighters still dousing the flames Monday, and said the dam-



age would be assessed after the fire was fully brought under control.

Meanwhile, the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei ordered a probe into the incident.

In a message on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei said the tragic incident has caused sorrow and concern. He urged security and judicial officials to identify any negligence or deliberate acts that may have caused the tragedy and to take necessary legal action in accordance with the law.

All officials must consider themselves responsible for preventing such bitter and damaging incidents, he said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the explosion. CCTV images on social media showed it began gradually, with a

small fire belching orange-brown smoke among a few containers stacked outside, across from a warehouse.

A small forklift truck drives past the area and men can be seen walking nearby.

About one minute after the small fire and smoke become visible, a fireball erupts as vehicles pass nearby, with men running for their lives.

The explosion has destroyed some nearby buildings and damaged vehicles parked near the site of the incident.

Shipping containers burned, goods inside were badly damaged and the explosion was so powerful that windows several miles away were shattered. The blast was also heard in Qeshm, an island 26 kilometers south of the port.

## Iran foils cyberattack on national infrastructures: Official

A senior Iranian official said the country successfully thwarted a large-scale and sophisticated cyber-attack targeting its critical national infrastructures.

Behzad Akbari, deputy minister of communications and information technology, made the announcement via a post on the social media platform X, former Twitter, on Sunday. The official did not elaborate on the nature of the attack or its origin, but emphasized that rapid detection and defensive response had prevented

any damage to the targeted systems, Press TV reported.

"By the grace of God and through the efforts of the security and technical teams at the Telecommunication Infrastructure Company and the Ministry of Communications, a major and sophisticated cyberattack targeting the country's infrastructure was identified and preventive measures were successfully taken yesterday," he wrote. The Islamic Republic has been a frequent target of cyber strikes, including by the United States

and the Israeli regime.

According to domestic officials, the country has developed a robust cyber defense program over the past decade to protect its critical infrastructures, including its banking systems, communication networks, and energy sectors.

One of the most notable cyberattacks against Iran was the Stuxnet malware incident, jointly orchestrated by the United States and the regime around 2010, which targeted the country's nuclear facilities.

## Netanyahu trying to dictate US policy in talks: Araghchi

Trump says negotiations going 'very well'

## International Desk

Iran's top diplomat said Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to dictate US policy in Tehran-Washington negotiations, after the Israeli prime minister called for the complete dismantling of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and the inclusion of its ballistic missile capabilities in any deal.

"What is striking... is how brazenly Netanyahu is now dictating what President Trump can and cannot do in his diplomacy with Iran," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X.

On Sunday, Netanyahu said any real Iran-US deal would be one "which removes Iran's capacity to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons" and "bring in the prevention of ballistic missiles."

The remarks came a day after Iranian and US delegations met in Oman for a third round of high-level talks on Tehran's nuclear program, with both sides reporting progress.

"Israel's fantasy that it can dictate what Iran may or may not do is so detached from reality that it hardly merits a response," Araghchi said on Monday.

He noted that Iran was able to thwart "any attempt by malicious external actors to sabotage its foreign policy or dictate its course."

"We can only hope our US



Abbas Araghchi

counterparts are equally steadfast," he added.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid Takht-Ravanchi, who is also present in the negotiations, on Sunday reassured Iran's parliamentarians that zero-uranium enrichment, Iran's defense capabilities, and its regional power are non-negotiable.

Takht-Ravanchi was briefing the Parliament's Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy on Sunday on the third round of talks which was led by Araghchi and US President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff. Earlier in the day, technical-level talks between Iranian and American experts also took place in Muscat.

Takht-Ravanchi explained that the Saturday talks in Muscat focused on building confidence about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of all sanctions.

He emphasized that Iran's nuclear case in the UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors must be closed.

Since April 12, the two countries have launched high-stakes negotiations to resolve a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Since then, Tehran and Washington have held three rounds of talks in Oman and Italy, which have been described as "positive and constructive" by both sides.

On Sunday, the US president said his administration's ongoing nuclear talks with Iran are going "very well" and that "a deal is going to be made there."

"We'll have something without having to start dropping bombs all over the place," Trump said.

The next round of the negotiations is scheduled to be held on Saturday, with the venue yet to be specified.



# Iran Expo 2025 kicks off in Tehran with reps from 111 countries

**Economy Desk**

The 7th Exhibition of Iran's Export Capabilities, Iran Expo 2025, officially commenced at the Tehran International Fairgrounds, attended by representatives from 111 countries.

During the inauguration ceremony, which included President Masoud Pezeshkian, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, Minister of Agriculture, the Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), and officials from various nations, TPO Chief Dehghan Dehnavi highlighted the event's significance, saying "This exhibition offers an unparalleled opportunity to expand Iran's exports."

"With non-oil exports growing by 15.6% last year, the upward trajectory of our foreign trade will continue," Dehnavi stated, ISNA reported.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, President Pezeshkian highlighted the country's strategic position, saying, "Iran serves as a crossroads linking east to west and north to south, offering diverse opportunities for investors, traders, and tourists. This foundation can forge a future marked by health, peace, and securi-

ty for the region and the world."

"Peace and security are established through trade, investment, and constructive interactions among nations, which require respect for the rights of nations and genuine collaboration," the president said.

The TPO chief also described the 7th Iran Expo and the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit as "Iran's largest commercial events," adding, "Today, with pride, we launch this exhibition alongside 190 official delegates and over 3,100 foreign business leaders and economic actors from 111 countries."

On the sidelines of the expo, Dehnavi emphasized its role in showcasing Iranian capabilities, saying, "Over 1,000 Iranian companies are displaying their export capacities here. Concurrent B2B negotiations, political consultations, and specialized meetings will ultimately bolster Iran's export development."

He further elaborated on the TPO's philosophy, adding, "We believe trade between nations transcends mere economic and financial ties — it strengthens friendships and fosters political and cultural bonds. This event seeks not only commercial growth but also economic

convergence and enhanced multilateral relations."

The TPO chief framed trade opportunities as "a platform for collaboration to build a better world, generate prosperity, and deepen fraternity among nations."

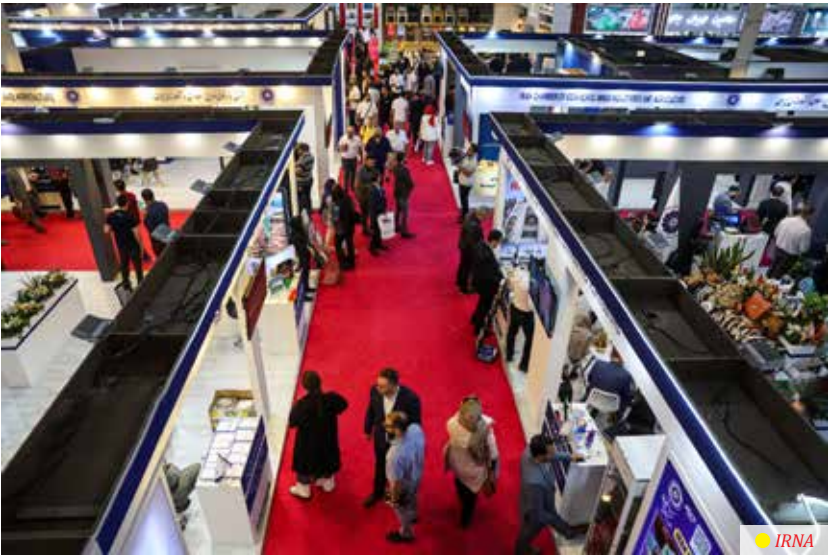
Reflecting on last year's achievements, Dehnavi noted, "Despite global challenges, Iran's foreign trade surged significantly. Non-oil exports reached an unprecedented \$57.8 billion — a 15.6% growth and a historic milestone."

While acknowledging that "not all growth can be attributed to a single exhibition," he stressed, "This event undeniably plays a vital role in boosting exports and remains central to our export expansion strategy."

Dehnavi highlighted the expo's international appeal, saying, "Participants include 40 Asian and African countries, 23 European nations, and 8 South American states — a geographic diversity underscoring the exhibition's global importance for Iran's trade development."

**A shift from MoUs to actionable contracts**

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters, Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Moham-



mad Atabak announced "unprecedented foreign business participation in Expo 2025" and outlined a key focus, "Converting memoranda of understanding (MOUs) into operational contracts."

Atabak contrasted this year's approach with past practices, "Unlike previous years, where many talks ended in

non-binding MOUs, Expo 2025 incorporates stricter monitoring mechanisms to ensure implementable outcomes." Specialized offices have been established at the venue "to conduct technical and legal reviews of agreements, guaranteeing their transformation into actionable commitments."

## NDF says poised to invest \$2b in Africa

**Economy Desk**

National Development Fund of Iran (NDF) announced the organization's readiness to allocate a \$2 billion credit line for financing technical and engineering services exports and investments in profitable projects across Africa.

Speaking at the financial, banking, and logistics panel of the 3rd Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit in Tehran, Hossein Eyvazlou, a board member of NDF, elaborated on the mechanism, saying, "After a commercial or investment contract is signed between Iranian technical and engineering service exporters and their African counterparts, the agreement will be referred to the NDF upon completion of technical, financial, and economic evaluations by the Iranian agent bank," Mehr reported.

"In this process, the agent bank may utilize the insurance services of the Export Guarantee Fund of Iran to cover commercial and political risks. The EGFI, in turn, will secure government or bank guarantees from the target African countries to mitigate these risks," he added.

Eyvazlou highlighted additional methods of supporting African projects, stating, "Beyond the banking agency model, if Iranian contractors participate in profitable African projects, the NDF — upon obtaining payment commitment guarantees from the Iranian broker bank — can directly transfer funds



to the overseas accounts of Iranian companies. Additionally, if a project's returns are sufficiently high, the fund may also acquire equity stakes."

He emphasized that this initiative aims to boost the NDF's foreign currency assets and facilitate overseas currency circulation, saying, "This approach will ultimately enhance the fund's capacity to supply foreign currency for importers of goods and services critical to Iran's domestic industries."

Stressing the importance of synergy among stakeholders, Eyvazlou proposed, "To operationalize the NDF's \$2 billion credit line, a dedicated working group on technical and engineering services exports and investments in Africa should be established, involving the Central Bank of Iran, the Trade Promotion Organization, the NDF, and the EGFI."

Eyvazlou underscored Africa's vast potential and Iran's technical expertise, describing the NDF's credit line initiative as a strategic step toward expanding Iran-Africa economic ties and strengthening Iran's position in international currency markets.

## Gov't offices to use solar power to ease summer energy deficit: SATBA

**Economy Desk**

An official from the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization of Iran (SATBA) said efforts are underway to equip a significant portion of executive and government agencies with solar power systems by this summer.

Deputy for Investment and Regulation of the SATBA, Amir Doudabi Nezhad, emphasized that, under current regulations, government offices are required to source at least 20% of their electricity from renewable energy, IRNA reported.

"Given the government's prioritization of this issue — particularly the president's direct emphasis — we aim to fulfill this obligation in the shortest time possible, even exceeding the mandated quota through solar energy," he added.

The deputy underscored the necessity for government agencies to secure adequate funding for this transition.

"Through coordination with the Plan and Budget Organization and provincial authorities, budgetary arrangements are being finalized," he noted.

According to the official, SATBA has also streamlined the process by identifying and introducing qualified solar contractors nationwide to facilitate direct agreements between agencies and suppliers.

"We hope that with the public sector's commitment and reduced bureaucratic hurdles, a substantial portion of this year's peak load can be addressed," Doudabi Nezhad remarked.

Recently, President Masoud Pezeshkian granted government agencies a two-month deadline to install solar panels.



**Ministry pledges support**

Meanwhile, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi affirmed the ministry's full support for accelerating solar power plant development in government facilities in line with the president's directives.

"Agencies in every province can benefit from solar plants. The Energy Ministry will facilitate this by introducing qualified contractors and providing necessary equipment," he said.

Aliabadi outlined the process that agencies with energy demands up to 7 megawatts should coordinate with local distribution companies, while those requiring 7–25 megawatts must engage regional electricity companies. After feasibility verification by Energy Ministry representatives, solar installations will proceed.

"Once preliminary approvals are secured, SATBA will issue permits for renewable energy projects," he added.

The energy minister has also announced updated electricity tariffs, with rates for

high-consumption users increasing by up to 26 times. However, tariffs for beneficiaries of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee and similar aid organizations will remain free. These changes take effect from May 22.

Citing data from Tavanir (Iran's Power Generation, Distribution, and Transmission Company), Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, the head of the company, reported that the electricity demand last year was approximately 48,876 megawatts, which reached about 56,000 megawatts on Sunday, April 27, compared to the same day last year — a 13.6% year-on-year increase attributed to unseasonably early heatwaves.

Rajabi Mashhadi noted that 14 megaprojects and 36 demand-management initiatives will help balance grid supply and demand during peak periods. He urged citizens to join the "25-Degree Campaign" (reducing AC usage by setting thermostats on 25°C) to alleviate strain on the power grid, particularly for industrial sectors.

## The Hague rejects Bahrain's bid to overturn €214m award to Iranian banks

The Court of Appeal in The Hague has rejected Bahrain's appeal to annul a €214 million arbitration ruling in favor of Iran's Bank Melli and Bank Saderat, upholding the award in the long-standing dispute.

According to Iran's Legal Affairs Center of the Presidential Office, the court dismissed Manama's challenge to the arbitration decision, which stemmed from the Iranian banks' legal action against

Bahrain's 2015 seizure and forced liquidation of Future Bank, IRNA reported.

The ruling confirms Bahrain's obligation to compensate the banks, as reported by IRNA.

Bahrain had alleged that the banks violated international sanctions regimes, but the arbitration tribunal dismissed these claims, finding insufficient evidence of unlawful conduct during the

period leading to the asset seizure.

In its November 2021 ruling, the tribunal concluded that Bahrain's confiscation and liquidation of Future Bank were politically motivated and "disproportionate" under international law, ordering Manama to compensate Bank Melli and Bank Saderat with €214 million in damages.

Following the verdict, Bahrain appealed to The Hague Court of Appeal to annul

the award, contending that the tribunal overstepped its jurisdictional authority and that upholding the decision would contravene Dutch public policy.

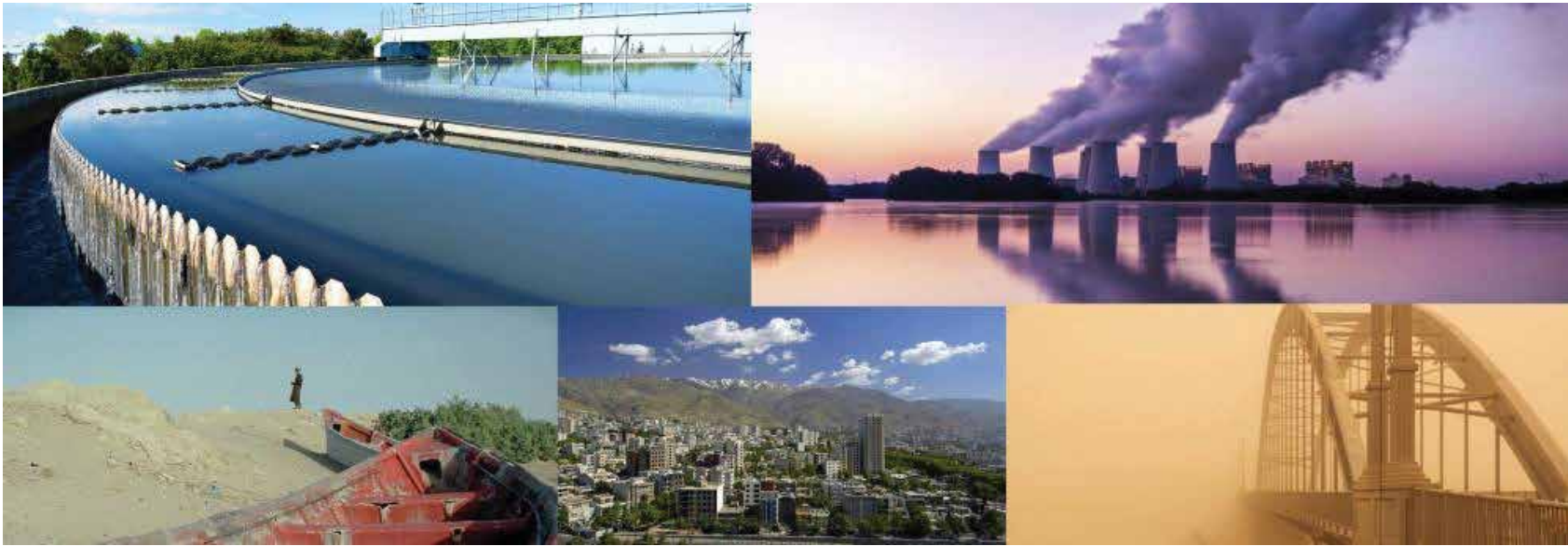
However, after a three-year legal review process, the court rejected Bahrain's arguments outright, ruling that its jurisdictional objections were procedurally time-barred and failing to demonstrate any violation of public order.





# Iran's ecosystem: promises vs. reality

## Where do we stand on ecological mapping?



● GETTY IMAGES

Environmental policymaking ranks among the most challenging areas in developing countries, including Iran. Despite numerous efforts to draw up environmental laws and policies, our ecosystem still faces serious challenges and issues. Current indicators reveal a significant gap between the goals of the 2025 Vision and the General Environmental Policies (issued in November 2015) and the realities on the ground. In this regard, Sadegh Zibakalam, Seyed Mohammad Mojabi, and Reza Maknoon studied these challenges and prioritized them in a published research paper, titled "Challenges of Policy Making: Iran Environment". The article seeks to answer two fundamental questions: First, what are the challenges in finding solutions through Iran's environmental policymaking? Second, how should these challenges be prioritized, and which ones should be taken up for reform first? Below are key excerpts from the paper.

### Current realities vs. past visions

The Islamic Republic of Iran's 2025 Vision aimed for regional leadership in key indicators, including the environment. However, despite putting in place appropriate legislative policies such as Article 50 of the Constitution and the General Environmental Policies issued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the country's environmental indicators have gone downhill.

For instance, in 2016, Iran ranked 105th globally in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) and 18th among the 24 countries targeted in the Vision document. Compared to two decades ago, there has been a notable decline, particularly in water resource sub-indices. Iran's per capita biocapacity is 0.9, while its ecological footprint is 2.1 — meaning the consumption of bioresources and its environmental impact are more than double the country's biocapacity.

Global per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions average 4.9 tons annually, but in Iran, this figure reaches 7.7 tons. Iran is now one of the world's top CO<sub>2</sub> producers, contributing disproportionately (1.84%) to global emissions. As a result, its carbon footprint stands out starkly on the ecological mapping.

Moreover, Iran has the highest water footprint among countries with populations over 5 million, estimated at 589 cubic meters per capita annually. These statistics, drawn from sources like the Footprint Calculator (2016), paint a worrying picture of the country's environmental state. They highlight the urgent

need to rethink Iran's environmental policymaking cycle, which clashes with its advanced laws and macro-policies.

### Research gap in Iran's environmental policymaking

This paper specifically focuses on the challenges in the second stage of the public policymaking cycle: solution-finding. Once an issue enters the public agenda, policymaking moves into two critical phases: first, proposing public action measures, and second, legitimizing these proposals and turning them into enforceable policies.

This study zeroes in on solution formulation — the stage before formal decision-making. Here, policymakers (executive, legislative, private interest groups, or a mix) come up with proposed actions that seem feasible, logical, and legitimate for addressing public issues.

However, a key weakness in Iran is the lack of robust research and evidence-based studies. Policies are often drawn up without scientific backing or practical experience, underscoring the need for more systematic research. Ultimately, a country's path to a healthy environment depends on its internal policy structure and direction.

### Solution-finding challenges

Despite Iran's relatively long history of environmental legislation, current conditions fall far short of the 2025 Vision goals. To examine this gap, the authors analyzed solution-finding challenges using a cyclical policy model, backed by in-depth interviews and surveys.

### 1. Influence of political/economic groups:

Special interests often steer solution design. For example, while water scarcity initially made it onto the agenda thanks to the efforts of environmental activists and those responsible, influential groups with organizational resources and governmental connections later pushed for water transfer projects in the solution-finding stage, sidelining alternatives like virtual water trade or greywater recycling.

### 2. Lack of a comprehensive actor framework:

The absence of clear roles leads to duplicated efforts, institutional confusion, and poor policy implementation.

### 3. Weak academia-policy link:

As one interviewee (a full professor at a top Iranian university) noted, decisions are often referred to universities for post-hoc justification rather than emerging from academic research.

### 4. Data shortages and transparency gaps:

Some data is missing, inaccessible, or suspected of being "fabricated".

### 5. Financial constraints:

Environmental agencies end up choosing the "least bad" options due to budget limits — e.g., using oil mulch over polymer mulch for dust control.

### 6. Weak civil society participation:

One of the interviewees with 25 years of experience in NGOs and environmental mass media said that public participation is often tokenistic, brought in only during implementation as mass mobilization.

### 7. Closed advisory circles:

Oligarchic consultation structures shut out broad-

er expertise. Many advisors hold roles across multiple institutions (ministries, parliament, etc.), while technical staff are left out of decision-making, breeding indifference or opposition.

### Research findings

- Expansive influence of political and economic special interest groups in solution design is the top challenge.
- Weak applied research and academic disconnect hinder effective policymaking.
- Unclear implementation mechanisms give rise to institutional overlap.
- Data gaps lead to flawed, ambiguous decisions.
- Financial limits force "least bad" choices.
- The public and experts are not involved in finding solutions, especially at the local level, due to the superficial and instrumental approaches of the officials.
- Exclusive advisory circles prop up inefficient, repetitive decisions.

### Recommendations

- Shift toward participatory, bottom-up policymaking to boost the efficiency of solutions to environmental problems.
- Bridge science and policy via actionable research and execution mechanisms.
- Build transparent, reliable data infrastructure to improve policymaking.
- Prioritize the environment in resource allocation.

*The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.*



● GETTY IMAGES

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Iran's 2025 Vision aimed for regional leadership in key indicators, including the environment. However, despite putting in place appropriate legislative policies, the country's environmental indicators have gone downhill. Ultimately, a country's path to a healthy environment depends on its internal policy structure and direction.



# Noise pollution harms wildlife

## OPINION

Many animal species rely on their sense of hearing, and loud noises can make their habitats unsafe, disrupt the breeding process, and even lead to the death of some species. In recent years, it has been observed that many nature enthusiasts use large speakers and car sound systems to play loud music while in forests, mountains, beaches, and other natural areas. This behavior, often intended to enhance the enjoyment of the trip and create a cheerful atmosphere, actually has a destructive and irreparable impact on the environment and wildlife. Many animal species depend on their sense of hearing, and loud noises can make their habitats unsafe, disrupt the breeding process, and even lead to the death of some species. Given that spring and summer see the highest number of visitors in nature, it is essential for this issue to be taken seriously and preventive measures to be implemented to stop this trend.

**How does noise pollution harm wildlife?**  
Wildlife is highly dependent on its calm and natural environment. Noise pollution caused by loud music can have several effects on animals, some of the most significant being:

**Increased stress, behavioral changes in animals**  
Many wild mammals and birds experience increased stress, fear, and unnecessary flight from their habitat due to loud noises. For example, deer, wild boars, and foxes may abandon their habitats in response to sudden noises and migrate to areas that are unsuitable in terms of food or safety. Predatory birds such as eagles and owls, which rely on their acute hearing for hunting, lose their ability to hunt in the presence of loud sounds and may ultimately perish from starvation.

**Reduced breeding in birds, other species**  
Studies have shown that noise pollu-

tion has a direct impact on breeding rates in birds. For instance, in some areas with high levels of human noise, birds such as woodpeckers, nightingales, and finches have shown reduced egg-laying, with some even leaving the area. This could lead to a long-term decrease in biodiversity in a region.

**Disruption of communication, warning systems in animals**  
Many animals rely on natural sounds to alert each other about dangers. Loud music can disrupt this communication. For example, deer and wild rabbits use specific sounds to warn their kind, and if these sounds are lost among loud music, they may not escape danger in time.

**Increased encounters between animals, roads/humans**  
When animals flee their habitats due to noise pollution, they become more susceptible to road accidents. Multiple reports indicate that increased wildlife movement toward roads in certain areas has resulted from their escape from noise created in nature.

**Countries addressing noise pollution in nature**  
Many countries, recognizing the destructive impacts of noise pollution, have enacted strict laws to prevent this issue. Some of these countries include:

- **Germany:** In this country's national parks, playing loud music is subject to heavy fines, and repeated offenses can result in restrictions on entering natural areas.
- **Switzerland:** Environmental laws state that any production of noise pollution in nature is illegal, and offenders may face fines of several thousand francs.
- **United States:** In national parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite, playing loud music is prohibited, and rangers have the authority to remove violators from the area.
- **Sweden:** In this country, forest rangers can fine individuals who create loud disturbances in nature and may even confiscate their speakers.

**Necessity of legal action against noise pollution in Iran**  
Considering that Iran has sensitive ecosystems such as the Hyrcanian forests, important international wetlands, and

protected mountainous areas, it is essential to enact and implement strict laws to prevent noise pollution in nature. Suggestions that could be implemented by the Department of Environment and the Department of Natural Resources include:

- Imposing fines for playing loud music in natural areas
- Installing warning signs in tourist and forest areas
- Intensifying monitoring by rangers over noise violations
- Raising awareness through media and social networks
- Supporting rangers and forest wardens; our social responsibility

Rangers and forest wardens put their lives at risk under the most challenging conditions to protect wildlife and nature. They work tirelessly in remote areas to prevent illegal hunting, deforestation, and environmental pollution. When these individuals sacrifice their lives to preserve nature, irresponsible behaviors must not undermine their efforts. Spring marks the season of nature tourism. However, enjoyment should not come at the cost of harming the environment and wildlife. It is crucial for people to understand the destructive effects of noise pollution and refrain from using large speakers and loud sounds in nature. At the same time, responsible organizations must prevent the recurrence of these violations by enacting laws and implementing strict monitoring. Nature is a valuable heritage for future generations, and it is our duty to preserve it.

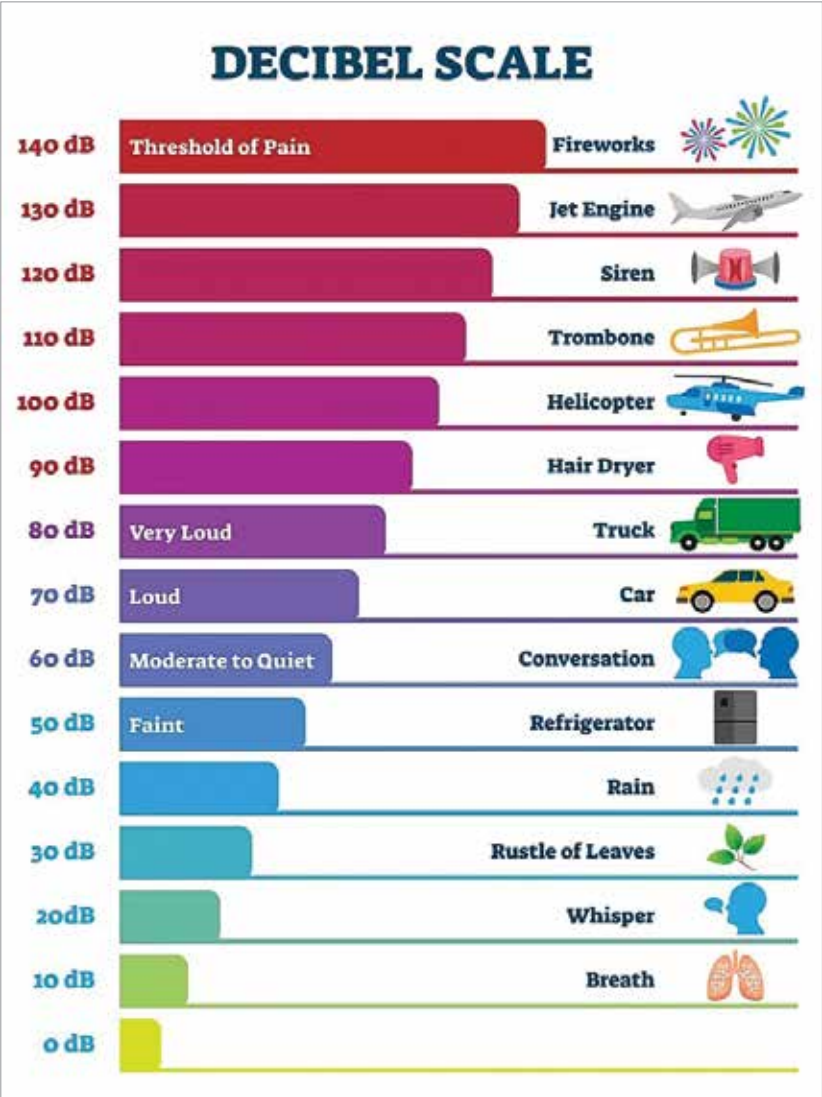
The full article first appeared in Persian on Khabaronline news agency.



● JULIA HELMINEN/GOOD NEWS FROM FINLAND



Many animal species depend on their sense of hearing, and loud noises can make their habitats unsafe, disrupt the breeding process, and even lead to the death of some species. Given that spring and summer see the highest number of visitors in nature, it is essential for this issue to be taken seriously and preventive measures to be implemented to stop this trend.



The decibel scale shows the relative noise levels produced by various sources. ● TRGROWTH/SHUTTERSTOCK



A researcher examines a young ash-throated flycatcher, Myiarchus cinerascens. Nestlings in the noisiest environments had smaller body sizes and reduced feather development. ● HOPE KLEIST/FLORIDA MUSEUM



## IWF Youth and Junior Championships:

## Iranian weightlifters eager to build on Asian success in Lima

## Sports Desk

Young Iranian weightlifters will be looking to carry their junior title-winning momentum from last year's Asian championships into the upcoming IWF World Youth and Junior Championships – starting Thursday in Lima, Peru.

Iran collected a remarkable 50 medals across different categories in December's Asian event in Doha, claiming the men's junior title with eight golds, 15 silvers, and 12 bronzes.

More than 500 of the sport's global talents will vie for success over a hectic six days in the Peruvian capital, where the youth and junior competitions will be staged concurrently for the first time.

Illiya Salehipour, who won two silvers and a bronze in Doha, will be joined by Amir-Mohammad Rahmati – a winner of three Asian youth medals – in representing the country in the men's junior 89kg class.

Hamidreza Zarei and Amirhossein Sepah, who collected six medals – including three golds – between them in the Qatari capital, will also be among the Iranian junior hopefuls in Lima, when competing in the 96kg contests.

Having a combined six world and Asian junior medals under his belt,

Abolfazl Zare' will be among the favorites in the men's 102kg event, with fellow-Iranian Amirmohammad Soleimani – a former Asian youth record holder – also fancying his chances for glory.

Alireza Nassiri will be the Iranian to watch in the 109kg class, having won two world junior golds in 2023, with Farhad Qolizadeh also hoping to have a decent campaign. The men's junior +109kg contests will see Tahan Ne'mati make his return to the world event following a triple silver-winning campaign two years ago, while Hamidreza Mohammadi-Tanha will be keen on building on his impressive performance in Doha, where he made a clean sweep of superheavyweight silvers.

Elsewhere in Lima, Hossein Yazdani will be the sole Iranian male contestants in the youth competitions, taking part in the men's +102kg event, while Alma Hosseini (64kg), Reyhaneh Karimi (71kg), and Ghazal Hosseini (76kg) will represent the country in the women's junior event.

Former Olympic champion Sohrab Moradi will be in charge of the Iranian men's squad in Lima, with Hamideh Hosseini – a winner of a historic three golds at the 2022 Asian Championships – coaching the girls trio.



● IWFIR

## UAE Pro League:

## Iranian duo on target as Shabab Al Ahli salvages point at Al Wahda



● shababalhli.ae

## Sports Desk

Iranian international teammates Saeed Ezzatollahi and Sardar Azmoun were on target as Shabab Al Ahli overcame a two-goal deficit to rescue a point in a 2-2 draw at Al Wahda in the Emirati ADNOC Pro League on Sunday.

Colombian Kevin Andres Agudelo put Al Wahda in front with 11 minutes into the game at Al Nahyan Stadium, following a smart assist from Argentine winger Facundo Kruspzky.

The visitors had a chance to level from the spot soon after, only to see Cartabia superbly denied by Al Wahda keeper Mohammed Al Shamsi.

Thing went from bad to worse for Shabab Al Ahli when a Sasa Ivkovic's header doubled the host's lead in the

40th minute. Ezzatollahi gave the Emirati league leaders a lifeline just before the break, heading home from close range to make it 2-1 at halftime – a sixth goal in 33 appearances for the Iranian holding midfielder this season.

Shabab Al Ahli kept the pressure high after the break, and Azmoun brought them level with a powerful finish in the 54th minute.

The goal took Azmoun's tally to a remarkable 26 strikes across all competitions in his debut season for Shabab Al Ahli, leaving him fourth in the league's leading marks-men chart with 11 goals.

Both teams had chances to secure all points, with Iranian midfielder Ahmad Nourollahi coming closest for Al Wahda, before Hamad Abdul-

lah's save kept Shabab Al Ahli in the game.

The draw saw Shabab Al Ahli tighten the grip on the top spot of the table with 56 points – 11 clear of Sharjah, which has a game in hand – and remain on course for a second domestic top-flight trophy in three years.

Elsewhere on Sunday, Sharjah settled for a 1-1 stalemate at Al Jazira.

Neeskens Kebano sent the goalkeeper the wrong way from the spot to give Al Jazira a 10th-minute lead, before Firas Ben Alarabi drew Sharjah level in similar fashion in the fourth minute of first-half added time.

Sharjah had to finish the game with 10 men, after full-back Shahin Abdulrahman received his marching orders in the 95th minute.

## Iran, Japan set to rekindle rivalry in FIBA Asia Cup

**FIBA** – Iran and Japan are headed for another chapter in one of the continent's most balanced and bruising basketball rivalries when they square off in Group B of the FIBA Asia Cup in Jeddah in August. It's a series deadlocked at 7-7 in Asia Cup history. Every win, every loss, has carried weight. The last time they met, Iran got the better of Japan, winning 88-76 at the Asia Cup 2022. It wasn't just the scoreline that stood out – it was the clash of generations and two of the biggest stars of the competition. Iran's Hamed Haddadi, the long-reigning king of Asian big men, stuffed the stat sheet with 21 points, 11 rebounds, 4 assists, and 3 blocks. Japan's Yuta Watanabe, a familiar name to NBA fans, countered with 17 points and 10 rebounds of his own.

Iran's Behnam Yakhchali and Mo-

hammad Jamshidi piled on 41 points combined, showing that the generation after Haddadi and Samad Nikkhah Bahrami is still carrying the torch proudly.

Their 2015 encounters are still a sore point for Japan. Iran crushed them 86-48 in the opening game – then came back to deny Japan a medal in the third-place game, winning 68-63 behind Bahrami's epic 35-point outburst.

Iran grabbed their fourth Asia Cup medal. Japan were left without a podium finish once again, a drought that has now stretched since 1997.

Japan once owned this rivalry, winning the first five meetings between 1973 and 1991. But Iran turned the tide in 1993, and since then, it's been a fight for every inch. They've spilled that battle over into World Cup qualifiers, too. Ja-

pan swept Iran in the 2019 Asian qualifiers during their miracle eight-game win streak to reach the World Cup.

In the 2023 cycle, the story flipped: Iran spoiled Japan's hot start with a 79-68 win behind Yakhchali's 30-point explosion, before Japan stormed back six months later with a brutal 96-61 payback, with Ren Kanekihara splashing six threes in his senior team debut.

This rivalry isn't just about the past – it's about two programs pulling in opposite directions. Iran, trying to squeeze the last drops out of a golden era. Japan, banking on a new wave of shooters, speed, and swagger.

Come Group B, history says it's a toss-up. Reality says it could be one of the most intense games of the group phase in Jeddah.



● FIBA



# Persian carpets connecting cultures and communities



● jardayeeghtesad.com



● yjc.ir

## Iranica Desk

Iranian carpets are more than mere floor coverings; they are vibrant tapestries that showcase patterns and motifs representing the nature, myths, beliefs, and aspirations of the people in this land. Each knot in these carpets serves as a testament to the patience, perseverance, and artistry of the craftsmen who have created these works with love and care.

From the magnificent palaces of kings and emperors to prestigious global museums, Iranian carpets have always held a prominent and valuable place. But what is the secret behind the durability and popularity of these carpets? How have they maintained their status throughout history despite the emergence of other art forms, becoming recognized as cultural symbols? What unique features are embedded in these artistic works that have elevated them to such heights? And can Iranian carpets still fulfill their role as cultural ambassadors, introducing Iranian culture and art to the world today?

**Historical roots of carpet weaving**

The art of carpet weaving in Iran is deeply intertwined with the history of this land. Archaeological findings indicate that Iranians have been familiar with the art of weaving since ancient times. During the Achaemenid period, exquisite carpets adorned the palaces of kings and nobles. In the Sassanid era, carpet weaving flourished, with silk carpets featuring intricate designs and vibrant colors gaining international acclaim, IRNA wrote.

In the Islamic era, Iranian carpets underwent transformative changes, inspired by Islamic art and showcasing arabesque and geometric motifs. The Safavid dynasty elevated carpet weaving to a royal art, establishing workshops across various Iranian cities. The carpets produced during this time gained worldwide recognition for their superior quality, stunning designs, and premium raw materials, often presented as valuable gifts to

kings and world leaders. During the Qajar period, carpet weaving experienced further transformations as Western designs and influences from European art began to emerge. Carpets woven in Tabriz, Kerman, and Kashan entered global markets due to their exceptional quality and aesthetic appeal, becoming some of Iran's most important export goods.

**Contemporary status**

Today, Iranian carpets continue to hold a significant place as one of Iran's most important traditional arts, despite competition from machine-made and modern carpets. Iranian carpet weavers strive to maintain authenticity and tradition while promoting their creations as symbols of Iranian culture and art.

**Patterns and designs**

One of the most notable features of Iranian carpets is the diversity and richness of their patterns and designs. Every region of Iran employs specific motifs influenced by local culture, customs, and climate conditions, resulting in a treasure trove of patterns and colors.

The designs often depict symbols of nature, myths, beliefs, and the aspirations of the Iranian people. Floral motifs like flowers, trees, and shrubs symbolize beauty, greenery, and fertility. Animal motifs such as lions, leopards, peacocks, and birds represent power, courage, beauty, and freedom. Geometric motifs — including diamonds, triangles, squares, and circles — symbolize order, balance, and harmony, while arabesque designs reflect the taste and creativity of Iranian artists. Colors also play a vital role in Iranian carpets. They not only enhance beauty but also symbolize various emotions and concepts. Red signifies joy, love, and courage; blue represents calmness, peace, and the sky; green embodies hope, life, and nature; yellow symbolizes wealth, happiness, and the sun; and white represents purity, peace, and light.

**Cultural ambassador in Age of Globalization**

In the Age of Globalization,

where borders are becoming less defined and cultures increasingly interact, Iranian carpets can play a crucial role in introducing Iranian culture and art to the world. Their beauty, delicacy, and diversity can attract international audiences, helping to create a positive and authentic image of Iran.

To fulfill this role, Iranian carpet artists must focus on innovation and creativity while preserving the authenticity and traditions of their craft, producing carpets with modern, appealing designs and colors. Additionally, both the government and the private sector should support carpet weavers and promote Iranian carpets through international exhibitions, showcasing and elevating this art form on the global stage.

Furthermore, Iranian carpets can serve as a valuable tool for developing tourism. Organizing carpet-weaving tours and visits to workshops can attract foreign tourists, providing them with an opportunity to engage with this art form. Additionally, selling Iranian carpets to these tourists can contribute significantly to the country's economic prosperity.

**Persian carpets in palaces**

Persian carpets in palaces around the world are among the most exquisite and valuable examples of handicrafts. They are luxurious items found in many palatial settings globally, as owners seek to gather the finest works from around the globe to enhance the elegance of their residences.

In Iran, particularly in Tehran, the capital, major old palaces, dating back to various past eras, are adorned with Persian carpets. These carpets are unparalleled anywhere else, uniquely designed for Iranian royal settings. Within these palaces, all furnishings are luxurious and valuable, reflecting the deep appreciation for Persian carpets among past kings and emphasizing their exceptional status in the world.

For instance, during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras, exquisite carpets adorned Golestan

Palace, showcasing beautiful designs typically featuring mihrab, pictorial, and medallion motifs. These carpets are woven from silk and wool sourced from the cities of Tabriz, Arak, and Sanandaj, although the identities of their weavers remain unknown.

**Persian carpets in foreign museums**

The Hermitage Museum, one of the largest in St. Petersburg, Russia, houses three million valuable artistic works for public display. Known as the Winter Palace, it was once the residence of Russian tsars and includes various collections, such as royal insignias and ancient gold. Among its most prized exhibits is the Pazyryk carpet, the oldest Persian carpet in the world, which shines like a jewel. Woven by skilled Persian artisans, the Pazyryk carpet showcases elements that carry profound meaning, perfectly aligning with the characteristics of Persian carpets.

However, this is just a small part of the broader narrative; Persian carpets are utilized in numerous settings, including museums, halls, palaces, and luxury homes, and even as wall tapestries. Highlighting these aspects emphasizes the ongoing importance of preserving Persian carpets and maintaining this rich heritage.

**Collaborative preservation efforts**

Given the potential of Persian carpets, it is essential for the government, the private sector, and carpet artisans to collaborate in developing and implementing programs aimed at preserving, promoting, and advancing this art. These programs should include support for carpet weavers, the organization of international exhibitions, education and promotion of carpet-weaving skills, the development of carpet tourism, and using Persian carpets as a means to showcase Iranian culture and art globally. By executing these initiatives, we can introduce Persian carpets as valuable cultural symbols to a global audience and further reinforce their role as ambassadors of Iranian culture and art.



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# Iran's tourism aims for 20mn visitors, seeks government support for growth

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's tourism industry needs significant government investment and support to reach its goal of attracting 20 million foreign visitors annually, according to Shahab Ali Arab, Vice Chairman of the Iran Chamber of Commerce's Tourism Commission. Speaking at a seminar held alongside the Iran Expo 2025 at the Tehran International Fair on Monday, Arab emphasized that while the nation has a strong potential for tourism growth, realizing this target will require active engagement from the government, IRNA reported. "Opportunities for investment in this sector must be better introduced to traders and the private sector," Arab said.

The expo, which coincides with the renewal of informal talks between Iran and the United States over the nuclear issue, has brought together a diverse group of business representatives from around the world, including more than 100 tourism agencies active in the country. Arab also noted the presence of numerous tour operators invited by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. "This year's Expo will help familiarize foreign businesses with Iran's tourist attractions, providing a significant opportunity for the tourism sector," he added. Despite a lackluster performance in 2023, Arab expressed optimism for the future. "This year, we expect to see a marked improvement in tourism as the country welcomes more

international visitors," he said, particularly pointing to the potential for increased tourist arrivals from neighboring Arab countries like Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar, as well as a possible rise in visitors from Saudi Arabia following improved diplomatic relations. The growth of Iran's creative industries also took center stage at the Expo. Morteza Haji Aghamiri, head of the Iran Chamber's Handicrafts and Art Commission, highlighted the vital role of cultural and creative industries in driving economic recovery. "Despite challenges like sanctions, these sectors have continued to thrive, especially during periods of economic downturn," he said. Haji Aghamiri pointed to the global creative industries market, valued at



approximately \$700 billion, as a clear indication of untapped potential. "Iran's handicrafts and traditional arts, including carpets, offer significant export prospects," he said.

However, he also stressed the need to overcome the obstacles posed by international sanctions and to enhance cultural diplomacy, which could pave the way for better market access.

## Iran returns to Arabian travel market in Dubai after 12 years



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has made its first appearance at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai after a 12-year absence, aiming to promote its growing tourism sector. The Iranian delegation, including seven companies, is showcasing

the country's rich cultural heritage and burgeoning health tourism industry at an 84-square-metre pavilion, IRNA reported. Moslem Shojaei, Director General of Marketing and Tourism Development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, highlighted the event as a

key platform for attracting Persian Gulf visitors and strengthening global collaborations, especially in medical tourism. Iran's participation is supported by government funding covering 85% of costs, and aims to tap into sustainable tourism and digital innovations.

The ATM 2025, running from April 28 to May 1, is one of the largest travel exhibitions in the Middle East, with over 2,800 exhibitors from 166 countries. Iran's return marks a pivotal step in revitalizing its tourism industry and forging new international partnerships.

## Reza Babak, an actor who lives through poetry, painting

By Saeideh Ehsani Rad  
Staff writer

Reza Babak, the actor beloved for his iconic role in 'Ziba Barbershop,' showcased his paintings at Saless Gallery in Tehran. Despite his extensive career in acting, Babak's artistic journey as a painter has been just as significant. Visitors to his exhibition 'Ba Babak' (meaning "With Babak") were able to meet the actor, chat with him, and take photos alongside his artwork. In recent years, more filmmakers and actors have begun displaying their visual art, offering their fans a glimpse into their creative world beyond the screen and stage. Babak's exhibition is part of this growing trend, where actors invite audiences to explore a new dimension of their artistic expression in galleries. His friendly nature was evident as he hosted his fellow veteran colleagues, greeting them warmly and sharing laughter. Curated by Arghavan Boroujeni and Shahram Azimi, Ba Babak features a selection of Babak's

works created over recent years. The exhibition opened on April 18 and closed on April 28. In the exhibition statement, Boroujeni describes Babak's work as deeply connected to his acting career, with paintings that are as poetic and gentle as his film roles. She notes that Babak's art taps into a childlike unconsciousness, conveying raw emotions and memories. Babak himself has shared his artistic journey: "I've been painting for years. It began early in my life, though there were periods when I stopped. Over time, I became more serious about it, starting with watercolors. When I wasn't acting, painting helped release my emotions and filled the void of not performing." This exhibition is Babak's second solo show. His first, 'The Sound of Painting,' took place in 1999 at the Sako Gallery. Azimi, the curator, explained that his friendship with Babak led to the exhibition, after seeing the emotional depth in Babak's paintings. The works on

display span from the 1970s to the present, reflecting Babak's ongoing passion for art. Babak has mentioned that painting gives him peace and helps release the stresses of everyday life. The exhibition includes nearly 100 pieces, all with unique emotional depth. Babak views acting as a profession to earn a living, but painting is a heartfelt, personal expression. Azimi believes the involvement of filmmakers in visual art depends on the quality of their work. "Some actors create impressive art, and there's no harm in showcasing it," he said. "The fame of an actor may influence pricing, but it's up to the buyer whether they value the signature or the quality of the work." The exhibition's title, 'Ba Babak,' reflects the warmth Babak shares with his audience, much like his paintings, which connect effortlessly with viewers. Prices for his works range from 15 million to 100 million Iranian rials, making them accessible to a wide audience.

## Childlike and captivating works

Reza Babak's paintings are filled with elements like fish, birds, plants, and imagination—each a testament to his vivid creativity. Displayed in small to medium sizes at Saless Gallery, these works offer a window into his rich artistic world. While Babak is primarily recognized for his acting career, his artistic endeavors are equally significant. His roles in theater, television, and film have made him a beloved figure in Iran, embodying calmness, warmth, and kindness. Through his diverse work in acting, directing, writing, and voice acting, Babak showcases his open-minded, exploratory nature. Oman Bonakdar's introduction to Babak's visual art came through a group exhibition highlighting the works of filmmakers. Intrigued by Babak's personal approach to painting, Bonakdar visited the actor's home to explore his collection further. There, he encountered a kind, straightforward man whose personality matched the warmth Babak exuded on



screen. When complimented on one of his paintings, Babak humbly responded, "I don't know!" Initially seen as a humble reply, it soon became clear that for Babak, painting transcends notions of "good" or "bad." It is a form of personal reflection and a meditative process that unfolds in moments of quiet solitude. What makes Babak's paintings stand out is their deep connection to his personal character. The works are characterized by simplicity, intuition, and a

fearless approach to color. His paintings reflect the playful, carefree spirit of a child, one who enjoys the act of creation without being concerned with the final outcome. His style is bold and spontaneous, with an uninhibited use of color and medium. Through his art, Babak reveals a new side of himself—a creator who invites the viewer into his imaginative world, offering vibrant and free-spirited expressions that speak to his inner creativity.

