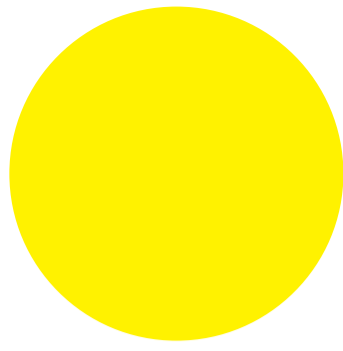


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian waves at a large gathering of elite workers at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, on April 30, 2025.

IRNA

Expo, int'l confabs prove Iran not painted into corner



By Jafar Ghannadbashi
Foreign policy expert

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

Iran's geographic position and its economic and commercial capacities are so important and huge that many countries—both openly and behind the scenes—are keen to establish ties with it and step into economic exchanges with the Islamic Republic.

The country is seen as a reliable partner in numerous areas of economic cooperation, including trade and investment. Given that Iran lacks any colonial history, it has a favorable image particularly among wealthier nations in the Global South, countries rich in natural resources and possessing valuable exports, such as certain African and Asian nations, as well as those currently gearing up for economic growth.

This is all in sharp contrast to the ongoing propaganda efforts aimed at painting Iran into a corner. Over the past 46 years, there have been numerous ups and downs in US-led Western attempts to isolate Iran. At times, the pressure has ramped up, while at others it has tapered off. Today, however, it seems that the West's stand-

ing—particularly among those leading the charge against Iran—has taken a serious hit to its credibility. One key figure in this decline is US President Donald Trump, whose racist rhetoric at home and derogatory remarks referring to African nations as "shithole countries," coupled with his pressure campaign against Iran, have backfired in significant ways.

As a result, Iran's popularity among African and Islamic nations has been on the rise. Governments around the world can hardly turn a blind eye to the will of their people. The Islamic character of the Islamic Republic has struck a chord with Muslim nations, while countries opposed to racism have not forgotten Iran's historical support for liberation movements, including during Nelson Mandela's struggle for South African freedom and Namibia's independence. Such shared memories have nudged public opinion in these regions in Iran's favor, paving the way for warmer relations.

In this context, the leverage once held by US diplomacy and its media apparatus has largely worn thin, especially after the past year and a half of widely criticized coverage concerning the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip. Their ability to shape the narrative and sway global opinion has taken a noticeable nosedive.

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Pezeshkian places premium on discovery of port blast causes



Firefighters try to extinguish fire caused by an explosion at Iran's Shahid Rajaei Port in southern province of Hormozgan on April 30, 2025.

● FARS

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called on officials to prioritize the discovery of causes behind Saturday's tragic explosion in the country's main southern port instead of identifying culprits or potential suspects involved in the deadly incident.

At least 70 people have lost their lives and more than 1,200 others wounded in the explosion and ensuing fire which rocked the Shahid Rajaei Port in the southern province of Hormozgan. The government will do its utmost to resolve the problems facing the families of the victims of the incident, the president said, while addressing a national commendation ceremony for seasoned laborers and elite workers. The president asked the relevant authorities to assess the damage and carry out compensation payments as

quickly as possible so that the affected individuals do not suffer further losses.

During a Wednesday cabinet meeting, Pezeshkian also said that cargo shipments should not be permitted to stay on site for months at a time and said distribution processes need to be accelerated.

On Monday, the interior minister said that the fire likely started due to "negligence" because the cargo was improperly stored.

Eskandar Momeni said there were "shortcomings, including noncompliance with safety precautions and negligence."

Authorities said on Tuesday that the port has resumed its activities after firefighters managed to fully contain a fire caused by the blast.

Despite the serious damage to the Bandar Abbas desalination plant and

power plant, vital facilities have been restored in the shortest possible time, according to the authorities at the country's main port.

Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization Saeed Rasouli on Tuesday announced the docking of 35 ships carrying various types of cargo at the port.

The customs at the port also announced that it has resumed its activities since Sunday.

An investigation is underway to determine the main cause behind the incident.

The port's customs office said the blast may have started in a depot storing hazardous and chemical materials. The port of Shahid Rajaei lies near the major coastal city of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil output passes.

Iran blames 'wrong policies' for dwindling E3 role in nuclear talks

Next round of talks to be held in Rome



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi talks to reporters after a cabinet meeting in Tehran on April 30, 2025.

● ALI HADDADI ASL/MEHR

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi blamed the wrong policies adopted by France, German and Britain for their diminished role in the ongoing nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington.

However, he said that Iran is not willing for this to happen, and that is why the Islamic Republic has proposed a meeting with the three European countries which are party to the 2015 nuclear agreement. Iran will hold talks with France, Britain and Germany in Rome on Friday, Araghchi told reporters on the sidelines of the Iranian administration's weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday.

Underlining that Tehran is keen to resolve its peaceful nuclear issue within a "global understanding," the top diplomat said, "We are continuing our negotiations with Europe, but the main talks are currently underway with the United States ... and the International Atomic Energy Agency will have an important role in the future if an agreement is reached."

Since April 12, Iran and the United States have held three rounds of negotiations to resolve a decades-long dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Fourth round of talks in Rome

Araghchi said the fourth round of negotiations will be held in the

Italian capital of Rome on Saturday. The two sides have so far described the talks as "positive and constructive."

In response to a question about whether the exclusion of European countries from the negotiations was Iran's or the US's decision, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Monday, "Neither, it was their own choice."

The three European countries had key roles in the conclusion of the 2015 nuclear deal from which the US withdrew in 2018 and reimposed sanctions against Iran. A move that left the future of the agreement in limbo specially after the three European countries failed to fulfill their commitments envisaged in the nuclear agreement which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Despite their inability to fulfil their commitments under the JCPOA, Iran has called for cooperation on different areas including the nuclear issue.

Since September, Tehran and the three European powers have met several times to discuss their ties and the nuclear issue.

The most recent meeting in March was held at the technical level, looking at the parameters of a future deal to secure a rollback of Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions.

Despite Iran's goodwill, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot warned that Paris will not think

twice about reimposing United Nations sanctions on Iran if negotiations with the US do not succeed. The 2015 nuclear deal with Iran expires in October and the E3 has the power to initiate its mechanism for reimposing sanctions, called snapback, at the Security Council. In response, Iran's ambassador to the UN lambasted the French foreign minister's open threat.

'Economic blackmail'

"Resorting to threats and economic blackmail is entirely unacceptable and represents a clear breach of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter," Amir Saeid Iravani wrote in letters to UN chief General Antonio Guterres and Security Council head Jérôme Bonafont.

Iravani said France's threat to trigger the so-called snapback mechanism despite its own failure to honor its commitments contradicts the fundamental principles of international law that preclude a party from claiming rights under an agreement while simultaneously failing to fulfill its obligations.

"Such an action is legally and procedurally flawed, unacceptable, and invalid, and would undermine the credibility of the Security Council," he added.

The snapback mechanism is triggered simply by the assertion of significant non-compliance on the part of a participating state, a prerogative the West might abuse based on its accusations.

Nukes hold no place in Iran's defense doctrine: Security chief



Ali Akbar Ahmadian (2nd R), the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, speaks at the BRICS National Security Advisors meeting at Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia, Brazil on April 30, 2025.

● IRNA

International Desk

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian said nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's defense doctrine, and the reports of international monitoring bodies prove the issue.

Addressing a meeting of BRICS National Security Advisors in Brazil on Wednesday, Ahmadian said, "Iran will not back down from its absolute rights, including the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Ahmadian emphasized that threats posed by certain countries against

BRICS and its members reflect their deep-seated concern over BRICS' immense potential to bring about a powerful economic, political, and cultural bloc. "The Islamic Republic suggests rolling out a BRICS digital currency and a secure, dedicated banking messaging system for intra-group trade, as a symbol of economic independence," he said. He added that Iran proposes setting up a Supply Chain Security Committee tasked with focusing on transport insurance, establishing an anti-sanctions corridor, and launching a support fund to counter external sanctions.

Israel's anti-Palestinian policies equal genocide, war crimes: Iran deputy FM

International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi said Israel's policies against Palestinians amount to clear examples of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Gharibabadi made the remarks during a hearing at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) into Israel's obligation to "ensure and facilitate" humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories and particularly in Gaza. The Iranian official called on the international community to act responsibly in response to the ongoing atrocities committed by the Israeli regime against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. He pointed to the "undeniable evidences of genocide" in Gaza, saying that despite repeated ICJ orders, the regime continues its deadly policies, and that the international community has failed to live up to its moral and legal obligations in this regard.

He noted that since the beginning of Israel's large-scale attacks on Gaza in October 2023, more than 52,000 Palestinians have been killed and more than 123,000 in-

jured, with the numbers rising on a daily basis.

Gharibabadi also referred to the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza due to the Israel's blockade on the Palestinian territory, saying that no humanitarian aid has been allowed to enter into the region since March 2. Citing UN reports, the Iranian official said, "Vital medicines are running out. Water and electricity networks have been destroyed, and aid workers have been targeted."

He called Israel's measures as clear examples of "genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity."

The UN's highest court has begun a week of hearings into Israel's obligation to "ensure and facilitate" humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories and particularly in Gaza.

The hearings come in response to a resolution passed last year by the UN General Assembly asking the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to weigh in on Israel's legal responsibilities after the regime blocked UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, from operating on the occupied territories.

Tehran boosts diplomacy with Russia, Serbia, Spain at Expo 2025

Economy Desk

The head of the Iran International Exhibitions Company met with officials from Russia, Serbia, and Spain specializing in trade fairs during the 7th Exhibition of Iran's Export Capabilities, Iran Expo 2025. Discussions focused on expanding bilateral collaboration in organizing such events. Sodaif Beykzadeh held talks with exhibition officials from the three European countries to discuss expanding bilateral exhibition cooperation. In a meeting with Sergei Selivanov, the deputy director-general of the Moscow Expo Center, the two sides reviewed actionable steps to implement recent exhibition agreements and negotiations. The

discussions focused on facilitating broader participation of Iranian and Russian companies in mutually agreed exhibitions and advancing joint international cooperation in the exhibition sector. During a session with Milan Čukić, the deputy mayor of Belgrade — attended by Iran's Commercial Attaché in Serbia — Beykzadeh highlighted his company's strategy to strengthen international partnerships. He expressed hope that continued follow-up on negotiations and mutual commitment to expanding exhibition collaboration would further elevate bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries. In a separate meeting with Gonzalez Bar-

ragan, the Middle East representative of the Barcelona International Fair, the two sides acknowledged Spain's historical participation in Iranian industrial exhibitions and emphasized the potential for Iranian firms to showcase their production and export capabilities in Spanish exhibitions. Both sides called for diversifying bilateral trade, enhancing exhibition ties between Tehran and Barcelona, and facilitating reciprocal trade delegations. The 7th Exhibition of Iran's Export Capabilities, Iran Expo 2025, officially kicked off on Monday at the Tehran International Fairgrounds, drawing 190 official delegates and over 3,100 foreign business leaders and stakeholders from 111 countries.



Top Russian carmaker eyes localization project in Iran



Economy Desk

Russia's largest car manufacturer AvtoVAZ eyes to launch a localization project in Iran where it can assemble the latest version of its popular Lada model. AvtoVAZ CEO Maxim Sokolov said that launching assembly lines and dealerships in Iran will give the company a "certain competitive advantage." Sokolov told the official news agency Tass that, "... we are betting heavily on the Iranian direction and expect that our dealership will open there soon." He said that a business partner from Iran, which he did not identify, has asked for the entire product line of AvtoVAZ's Lada model, including its new Iskra model. The CEO said that Iskra would be "one step ahead" of the majority of cars currently assembled and manufactured in Iran. AvtoVAZ seeks to expand its exports of Lada in 2025 with a special focus on markets of Iran, Kazakhstan and Vietnam, according to

statements from the company. Iranians have a good memory of old Lada models, which were famous for their safety and reliability when they hit the roads in the 1970s, Press TV reported. AvtoVAZ's plans to break into the Iranian market have faced difficulties in recent years, mainly because of US sanctions on Iran. However, growing cooperation between the automotive companies of Iran and Russia in recent years seems to have made it easier for Russian cars to enter the Iranian market. The cooperation deepened since early 2022, when major international automotive companies, including Renault, which owned shares in AvtoVAZ, left Russia because of Western sanctions imposed over the war in Ukraine. Iran's two largest carmakers, IKCO and SAIPA, have signed contracts for exports of cars and parts to Russia. Reports have also shown that carmakers from the two countries seek to launch joint manufacturing projects in the future.

Exports from Aras Free Trade Zone hit \$200m last year: CEO

Economy Desk

Head of Aras Free Trade Zone Hadi Moqaddamzadeh announced \$200 million in exports from the zone last year, saying, "Exports to Azerbaijan last year amounted to \$11 million, while imports from Azerbaijan stood at \$12,000." Speaking to reporters at the Iran Expo 2025 regarding Iran-Azerbaijan cooperation, Moqaddamzadeh said, "The joint conference between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran underscores the need to expand these interactions and exchanges across various fields, particularly in trade," ISNA reported. When asked whether there is a shared zone with Azerbaijan, he replied, "Given our geographical position and shared borders with Caucasus and Eurasian countries, as well as existing agreements — such as the transit routes connecting Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan, the railway line, and other provisions in the overarching agreement — we have a foundation to leverage these frameworks across multiple sectors." "Shared economic processes and mechanisms could be structured within a joint free zone framework, enabling Iranian and Azerbaijani investors to capitalize on opportunities aligned with both nations' capacities," he said. Moqaddamzadeh added that Aras Free Trade Zone boasts unique industrial and agricul-



tural capacities driven by sustainable water resources, as well as significant tourism potential. Highlighting the \$200 million in exports from Aras, he noted, "Exports to Azerbaijan last year (began on March 20, 2024 - 1403) totaled \$11 million, with imports at \$12,000. While trade with Azerbaijan exists at this scale, it remains insufficient given that Aras is one of the most industrialized free trade zones. We must adopt a more investment-focused approach to meet the target markets and needs of our neighboring country." He also addressed infrastructure development, saying, "Road infrastructure is fully operational. The free zone has contributed to completing the highway, and the Kalaleh-Jolfa route is a critical

asset. Furthermore, connecting the Siahrood Zone to Kalaleh would integrate east-west and north-south corridors, positioning Aras as the region's logistics hub." Moqaddamzadeh underlined that Aras Free Trade Zone holds unparalleled tourism potential, noting, "In 1404 (began on March 20, 2025), Aras ranked first among free zones based on criteria set by the secretariat of the country's Organization of Free Trade-Industrial Zones." Concluding the press gaggle, he stressed, "We must prioritize infrastructure development. Greater attention should be given to tourism infrastructure, lodging facilities, and streamlining transit by completing road and railway projects."

Expo, int'l confabs ...



It is therefore fair to say that the current landscape is highly conducive to renewed international interest in engaging with Iran. The presence of 39 countries at the

Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference, and participation of over 100 nations in Expo 2025 — both held in Tehran this week — sends a clear message that the tide has turned. The pressure campaign of previous years has lost steam, mainly due to the diminished clout of US political tools and the eroding credibility of Western media. Western powers are still intent on keeping Iran in the cold, but the broad international turnout at these two economic gatherings underscores a key shift: the West's political and media toolkit is not packing the same punch it once did. And that, indeed, is a development of real significance. One of the key pillars of Iran's strategy for achieving 8% economic growth is the expansion of effective, mutually beneficial, and well-structured relations with other countries. This comes at a time when certain Iranian industries—as well as parts of the private sector—have developed a strong po-

tential to break into global markets. Some Iranian products have now reached a level of quality that makes them highly attractive to international buyers. Moreover, many domestic industries currently depend heavily on exports not only to survive but also to move up the value chain and enter more advanced stages of production. Meanwhile, a number of African nations are themselves coming into their own economically and are well-positioned to take in Iranian exports, technology, and technical engineering services. Iran's private sector is also well-equipped to get involved in infrastructure projects abroad—such as the construction of silos, bridges, and power transmission lines, as well as gas pipelines and refineries. The country possesses strong technological capabilities and, by taking part in such ventures, stands to bring in substantial revenue. In light of this, Iran currently enjoys very favorable

conditions for sustainable economic growth. Some African nations, in particular, are ideal partners for buying up Iran's electrical and construction products. Others offer excellent conditions for overseas farming initiatives, which could help Iran boost its food security. There are also resource-rich countries with mineral reserves that Iran—despite its own wealth of mines—still has a need for. In addition, some African nations produce high-demand agricultural goods such as coffee, bananas, and coconuts—items that are widely consumed in Iran but are not easily grown domestically. This type of categorization clearly demonstrates that, with careful planning, Iran can tap into each of these areas to fuel its own economic growth while returning the favor by offering valuable cooperation to African countries—many of which are already looking on Iran with optimism and goodwill.

Why parallel negotiations matter

PERSPECTIVE

As the third round of nuclear talks between Iran and the United States wrapped up, the Iranian Foreign Ministry, in line with the country's interests and the public good, has brought friends and partners on board and will continue to make decisions and take action based on the three pillars of its foreign policy, tailored to the demands of time and place.

Since the current Iranian government took office in August 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy has hinged on two key principles: bringing friends into play and roping in countries that, by diplomatic standards, have not been counted as Tehran's allies or partners and whose relations with Iran have been neutral or frosty; and weighing and defining Iran's interests according to the prevailing circumstances. The decisions and actions of the foreign minister and the team of diplomats and experts at the ministry can be seen as part and parcel of advancing this outlook and its objectives. This approach has stood out in two distinct phases since President Masoud Pezeshkian came to power and has delivered on the country's goals.

Building consensus to safeguard national interests

From late September 2024, in the early weeks of the new government, a string of developments made the Foreign Ministry's job both complex and vital. At that juncture, the ministry had to stand shoulder to shoulder with those lining up against Israel's warmongering, while at the same time heading off further adventurism by Tel Aviv through getting regional and global countries onside. From September through December 2024, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's mission was to keep the specter of war with Israel at bay. To that end, Iran's neighbors played host to frequent Iranian envoys. The foreign minister's direct and candid talks with his counterparts and other officials in these countries centered on two key points: "Iran does not seek war," and "any conflict could turn the whole region into a living hell."

Given the sensitive security climate, the ministry opted for face-to-face meetings and frank negotiations over phone calls and official correspondence. Araghchi's visits to Bahrain, Jordan, and Egypt — countries currently experiencing chilly relations with Iran — were part and parcel of the policy of drawing so-called neutral states into Iran's orbit. This outreach, considering the geo-



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd-L) arrives in Jordan on October 16, 2024, for talks with the country's officials on regional issues.

IRNA

graphic position of these countries, was seen as a shrewd move at the time. Engagements in the capitals of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Oman — whether as allies or regional heavyweights — helped ensure that Israel's incursion into Iranian airspace was condemned not only by them but by many countries worldwide.

Moreover, Iran's stern warning, relayed by regional states to Israeli officials, drove home the point in Tel Aviv that the fallout from any move against Tehran would be more severe than ever, prompting Israel to hold back.

With Donald Trump moving into the White House and his particular brand of engagement with Iran, a new chapter in Tehran's diplomacy kicked off. Although Trump at first slammed the door on diplomacy by signing the return of maximum pressure against Iran, a letter he sent to Iran's top officials raised questions about his intentions and opened the door to talks.

Responding to this letter shot to the top of the Foreign Ministry's agenda and that of other relevant bodies in March. Tehran's reply was eventually sent via

Oman on March 26. Written exchanges between the two sides on April 12, in Muscat, Oman, with the Omani foreign minister acting as go-between, gave way to in-person, albeit indirect, talks. Thus, a new marathon in Iranian diplomacy got underway, reaching its third leg on April 26 in the Sultanate of Oman. This was a serious and tough stage, as wading into the details of the disagreements is both time-consuming and fraught with variables that could make or break a potential agreement.

According to the foreign minister's remarks at the close of the third round, both sides remain at odds over major and minor issues, but the talks were on track, and both parties have shown their resolve to move forward.

While indirect talks with the United States have grabbed headlines across global media, Tehran has not pinned its hopes solely on Muscat. From the outset, Iran has called on its friends to get behind the path of peace and stability. In the week leading up to the second round of talks, Araghchi headed to Russia for meetings with the president and

foreign minister, and before the third round, he touched down in Beijing for discussions with the Chinese foreign minister and other officials, with the nuclear talks topping the agenda.

Keeping China and Russia in the loop about the nuclear negotiations with the US makes perfect sense from both practical and strategic perspectives. As the foreign minister put it, Beijing and Moscow are Iran's "friends for tough times." Thus, updating them on developments with Washington while sticking to all red lines on Iranian independence follows a well-trodden path in international diplomacy, and Tehran has stuck to it.

China and Russia were also key players in the previous Iran-P5+1 nuclear talks, which, thanks to their positive roles, culminated in the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA. Logically, Beijing and Moscow should be kept abreast of the new round of nuclear negotiations again, with all national interests safeguarded. The Foreign Ministry has also brought Germany, the UK, and France up to speed — the three European signatories to the JCPOA.

Iran's bilateral talks with representatives of these countries in Geneva and Vienna, as needed, underscore the Islamic Republic's determination to tap into all available capacities worldwide to protect its interests.

The impact of every event, decision, and move in Iran-US relations on regional countries and their alignment with Iran during this round of talks stands out as one of Tehran's main motivations for keeping regional capitals posted on the negotiation process, always tailoring its approach to the circumstances.

Domestic interest calculations in line with external conditions

Dynamic decision-making has been the hallmark of Iran's foreign policy since the current government assumed power, and this trait has marked many turning points during the Foreign Ministry's tenure. In line with its interests, following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Iran opted for strategic patience in the face of Israel's war trap, and the diplomatic corps pulled out all the stops to drum up political consensus against Israel's action in international and legal forums.

As soon as this strategic patience ran its course, with Operation True Prom-

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Given the sensitive security climate, the ministry opted for face-to-face meetings and frank negotiations over phone calls and official correspondence. Araghchi's visits to Bahrain, Jordan, and Egypt — countries currently experiencing chilly relations with Iran — were part and parcel of the policy of drawing so-called neutral states into Iran's orbit.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi meet in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on October 9, 2024.

SAUDI PRESS AGENCY

ise 2 and Israel's subsequent airstrike, Iran's foreign policy shifted focus to explaining the rationale behind the operation and building consensus against Israel's air aggression. With Trump's arrival in the White House and the restoration of the maximum pressure campaign and threats against Iran, the Islamic Republic announced a policy of no negotiations or dialogue with the

US government.

However, as Trump's approach began to shift, so too did the Foreign Ministry's stance, making it clear that "anyone who talks to Iran in any language will get a response in kind." From early March, when Trump sent a relatively rational letter to Iran, Tehran chose to offer a diplomatic opening — but on its own terms. The letter was answered, but only via a media-

tor chosen by Tehran. Afterward, Trump again pushed for talks with Iran. This time, Tehran turned down direct negotiations under pressure and threat, declaring that diplomacy would be limited to indirect talks; Washington signed off on this, and Steve Witkoff, the US president's special envoy, and Araghchi held indirect negotiations brokered by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi.

Iran's foreign policy doctrine, anchored in the three core principles of dignity, wisdom, and expediency, aims to make the most of its capabilities and global opportunities to look after the country's national interests. Accordingly, in the new round of talks, Iran will decide how to respond to the US from a rational standpoint, weighing up America's next steps and adjusting its ac-

tions to every signal received. With this approach, Iran's foreign policy has not put all its eggs in the American basket and will cement its future relations with partners and neighbors, whether an agreement with the US is reached or not.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Small steps, but Iran wants giant leap

International Desk

PERSPECTIVE

On Saturday, April 26, the third round of indirect negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States took place in Muscat, the capital of Oman, with the participation of expert and technical delegations. The meeting, held in a serious and precise atmosphere, delved into the disputed details between the two sides and managed to set the stage for further steps on the path of diplomacy.

Though these talks were still conducted indirectly, with Omani officials mediating, they carried signs of progress — signs that have revived hopes for a return to the path of agreement and taking practical steps toward lifting the sanctions.

Moving beyond generalities

Unlike the initial stages, the third round of negotiations moved to a more specialized level. The discussions went beyond broad statements and focused on a more detailed examination of key issues — issues that have remained contentious in recent months. The tone of the talks suggests that both sides, acknowledging each other's sensitivities, have tried to adopt a realistic approach toward their differences and take steps toward finding practical solutions.

This time, Iranian experts and diplomats, with a precise approach based on national interests and the country's principled policies, stressed Iran's core demand: the lifting of illegal sanctions and the US returning to the path of international commitments.

Core demand

The Islamic Republic of Iran once again stood firm on its principled position: any agreement is meaningless without the real, effective, and verifiable lifting of sanctions. The memory of the US unilaterally pulling out of the previous deal (JCPOA) in past years remains fresh in the minds of the Iranian people — a bitter experience that imposed significant political, economic, and social costs on Iran. In this round of talks, Iran pointed out that a return to the agreement would only make sense if the US not only calls off the sanctions but also provides practical guarantees to prevent a repetition of past betrayals. Naturally, without credible guarantees, trust-building will remain difficult.

Path still requires persistence

According to the assessments of experts, this round of talks yielded more progress than previous sessions, and it can be said that a step forward was taken. The atmosphere of the talks showed a willingness to keep up the dialogue, with both sides coming to the conclusion that diplomacy remains the best and least costly solution to their disputes.

However, it must be acknowledged realistically that the path to a final agreement still requires sustained consultations, patience, precision, and adherence to principles. In diplomatic negotiations, gradual progress based on goodwill matters more than anything else.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (sitting-L) holds a consultation session with the Iranian delegation in Oman. ● MEHR

Smart mediation

Oman's role in this process was once again highlighted. Muscat, with its long-standing policy of building communication bridges, provided a reliable platform for sensitive talks. The Omanis, maintaining neutrality and employing their diplomacy, which avoids fanfare, kept the negotiations free from tension and enabled the exchange of precise messages.

Historical experience has shown that regional diplomacy and the role of neutral mediators can help break deadlocks and facilitate understanding. Oman's active presence in this process carries significant value that must be appreciated.

Logical principles have to be key

What matters more at this stage is the continuation of talks based on clear and logical principles. The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently demonstrated its commitment to responsible and rational negotiations — ones in which national dignity, wisdom, and interests are upheld.

At the same time, past experience has clearly proven that trusting Western parties — especially the US — without receiving practical guarantees is a mistake. If an agreement is to be reached, it must be sustainable in practice and must safeguard the legitimate interests of the Iranian people.

Iran has once again stressed that playing for time and wasting opportunities benefits neither side. Any delay in lifting the sanctions will impose greater costs on the international community and further limit diplomatic opportunities.

Iran's clear message

Iran's message in Muscat was clear: if the US is ready to return to the path of rationality and responsibility, it must demonstrate this readiness in practice. The real lifting of sanctions, the provision of credible guarantees, and the abandonment of the policies of applying pressure and making threats are obvious prerequisites for reaching a lasting agreement.

By reiterating its principled stance, Iran

has declared that it remains committed to diplomacy — but this commitment will not be one-sided. The other side must also prove its goodwill through action.

Global test for US

The third round of talks in Muscat took place as the international community closely followed the discussions. Many countries, particularly in the Middle East, welcome an agreement that could lead to greater stability and security.

Yet now, the ball is in the US court. Is Washington ready to learn from past failed experiences and adopt a different approach? Or will it stick to misguided sanction policies and maximum pressure? The answer to this question will not only determine the fate of the current negotiations but also influence the future of regional relations and even some international equations.

Small steps, big hopes

The third round of Muscat talks showed

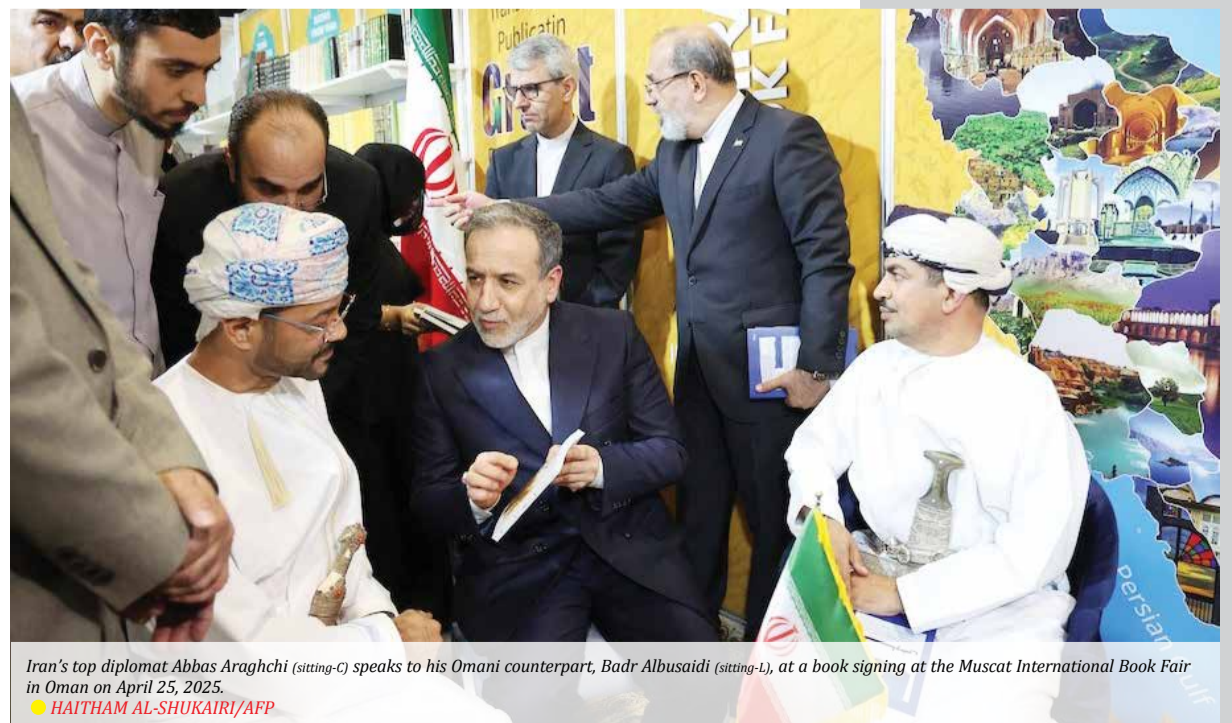
that while differences persist, there is a will to move forward. The steps taken today, however small and gradual, could pave the way for major changes in the future.

Ultimately, the success of these negotiations depends on the diplomats' wisdom, the experts' precision, the parties' goodwill, and respect for the legitimate interests of nations. As it has repeatedly stated, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to keep up the diplomatic path until a just, honorable, and lasting agreement is reached — one in which the dignity of the Iranian people is preserved, unjust sanctions are lifted, and the bitter experience of past betrayals is not repeated.

Now, we must wait and see whether, in the coming months, this determination to reach a win-win agreement will pay off — an agreement that can only be achieved through genuine adherence to commitments and respect for the logic of dialogue.

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The real lifting of sanctions, the provision of credible guarantees, and the abandonment of the policies of applying pressure and making threats are obvious prerequisites for reaching a lasting agreement. By reiterating its principled stance, Iran has declared that it remains committed to diplomacy — but this commitment will not be one-sided. The other side must also prove its goodwill through action.



Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi (sitting-C) speaks to his Omani counterpart, Badr Albusaidi (sitting-L), at a book signing at the Muscat International Book Fair in Oman on April 25, 2025. ● HAITHAM AL-SHUKAIRI/AFP

Iran coach Ja'fari aiming to elevate women's football stature



● AFC

Sports Desk

Marzieh Ja'fari, the newly-appointed head coach of the national team, said she has set sights on elevating the stature of the Iranian women's football in the continent.

Ja'fari took over from Maryam Azmoun last week after a dreadful run of results saw Iran fail to win a single game in 12 outings across different competitions – suffering eight defeats, while finding the back of the net only twice in the process.

The 42-year-old is the most decorated coach in the Iranian club football with a remarkable 11 top-flight titles on Bam Khatoun's bench.

She also guided Khatoun to an impressive last-eight spot at the inaugural AFC Women's Champions League in March, before suffering a 1-0 loss to South Korea's Incheon Red Angels, and will now be looking to build on her illustrious career in the new role. "I have already told the federation that my priority will be to raise the status of the women's game, rather than focusing on short-term results," Ja'fari said in an interview with IRNA. "Of course, it will be a long-term pro-

cess, which will require a team effort to succeed," added the Iranian.

"All of my predecessors gave their utmost effort to make an impact and that's exactly what I intend to do in this new role."

Iran is 68th in the latest FIFA Women's World Ranking, sitting 15th among fellow-AFC member states.

Asked why Iranian women's football has failed to elevate in the continent at the same rate as the men's game in the country, Ja'fari responded: "Women's football is a relatively new-born sport in the country and far from a finished article, compared to other nations in the continent."

"Let's not forget Asian powerhouses like Japan, Australia, China, and South Korea are among the world elite. Unlike the men's game, which is dominated by European and South American countries, Asian female football has become a genuine force on the global stage," Ja'fari added.

No. 5 in the World Rankings, Japan won the Women's World Cup in 2011 and was then runner-up to the United States four years later, while Australia made it to the last four in the latest edition in 2023 on home soil.

A first major test for Ja'fari and her team will come in the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers – starting June 23 in Amman, Jordan – where Iran is drawn in Group A, alongside the host, Lebanon, Singapore, and Bhutan.

Team Melli will begin its qualification campaign against Singapore on June 26, before taking on Bhutan, Lebanon, and Jordan, respectively, until July 5. On her biggest challenge until the event gets underway in less than eight weeks, Ja'fari said: "The players have been out of action since the Iranian league season finished in early March, so my coaching staff and I will have to make sure they will reach the proper fitness levels for the tournament in Jordan.

"The Jordan has played numerous friendlies and will arrive in peak condition, not to mention, they will be backed by home advantage. Lebanon and other opponents have also begun preparation through friendly matches, while the Jordanian climate in that time of the year could be quite challenging for our team."

Only one team from the group will progress to the 2026 finals in Australia.

Asian Club Taekwondo Championships: Iranians win nine medals on Day 1

Sports Desk

The first day of the Asian Club Taekwondo Championships saw Iranians collect triple gold medals in Wuxi, China, on Tuesday.

Representing the Shahr-dari Varamin and Reza clubs, Iranian contestants also collected double silvers and four bronze medals in the 13th edition of the competitions.

Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani and Amirsina Bakhtiari won a couple of men's golds in their respective weight classes, with Sogand Shiri defeating Thai opponent Patcharakan Poolkerd to walk away with the ultimate prize in the women's -46kg event.

Yazdani beat second seed Shukhrat Salaev of Uzbekistan 2-1 in the -87kg showdown, while the other final showpiece featuring Iranian and Uzbekistani participants saw Bakhtiari come out on top against Shakhboz Tusmatov in straight rounds in the -74kg class.

Ali Khoshravesh, meanwhile, suffered a last-four defeat against Bakhtiari to share the third podium with Kazakhstan's Altair Omirbekov. Elsewhere, Amirreza Sadeqian finished his campaign with a silver medal after a 2-0 loss to Jasurbek Jaysunov in the men's -80kg final. Saeideh Nasiri, meanwhile, fell to a 2-1 defeat against China's Jingyue Ma

in the women's -49kg final to add a second silver to Iran's medal haul. The event in Wuxi was hardly a success story for Iranian Olympic medalists Nahid Kiani and Mobina Ne'matzadeh, who could only manage to win a consolation bronze in the women's -53kg and -57kg contests, respectively. Amir-mohammad Rahmani-Rad was the other Iranian bronze medalist on Day 1, settling for a joint-third place in the men's +87kg class.

Iranian girl Sogand Shiri (L) won the women's -46kg gold at the Asian Club Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO



Persepolis set to sign Alanyaspor fullback Hadergjonaj: Report

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League giant Persepolis is closing in on a contract with Alanyaspor fullback and Kosovan international Florent Hadergjonaj, Varzesh3 reported.

Hadergjonaj, 30, who joined Alanyaspor in August 2023, has bagged four goals and five assists in 28 games for the club in the ongoing Süper Lig season. Should the deal go through, the Swiss-born defender will likely replace Moroccan Ayoub El Amloud on the right side of the Reds' backline for the start of next season.

Amloud, whose campaign has been interrupted by several injury spells, was last in action during a 3-2 loss at Shams Azar in the domestic league on March 30, leaving the pitch in the 50th minute with a groin problem, and is not expected to play for Persepolis again ahead of what



● GETTY IMAGES

promises to be a summer of shakeup under Turkish head coach Ismail Kartal. First introduced to European football with ex-Bundesliga club FC Ingolstadt 04, Hadergjonaj also made 47

appearances for Huddersfield Town in the English Premier League, before The Terriers were relegated to the EFL Championship at the end of the 2018/19 season. Persepolis is third in the Pro

League table with 51 points – 10 points adrift of Tractor on top with three games remaining – and will miss out on the Iranian top-flight crown for only the second time in nine seasons.

Cohesion the key for PSG in Champions League

REUTERS – Paris St Germain have been labelled a collection of talented individuals with little collective backbone in recent years but they have turned the corner this season and on Tuesday against Arsenal in the Champions League looked like a team with a masterplan. The French champions secured a 1-0 win in London in the first leg of their semi-final, a result built less on star power than on tactical coherence, defensive discipline and a tireless press that choked the life out of Arsenal in the first half.

Ousmane Dembele's early goal gave PSG a lead they ultimately protected with a mixture of intelligent pressing and organised defending that had Luis Enrique's stamp all over it.

PSG's press was sharp and well-coordinated, forcing Arsenal into rushed passes and panicked clearances throughout the opening 30 minutes. "This team is always competitive, we're getting the

maximum out of our qualities. We achieved a great job, individually and collectively," Luis Enrique said.

While PSG faded physically after the break they still kept their shape, and in Gianluigi Donnarumma had a goalkeeper ready to make the key interventions when Arsenal threatened. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, brought in last summer to provide more unpredictabil-

ity on the wing, was instrumental in the win.

His assist for Dembele's goal was a product of both sharp movement and awareness, but equally valuable was his defensive discipline – dropping in to support his full back and thwarting Arsenal's attempts to overload the flank. Arsenal, who are second in the Premier League, struggled to find space in a congested final third.



PSG players celebrate their victory over Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium, London, Britain, on April 29, 2025.

● ANDREW COULDRIDGE/REUTERS

Engage with history, nature in Semnan's villages

Pa Deh

Pa Deh village is located 25 kilometers east of Garmsar, three kilometers east of Aradan, and south of the Tehran-Mashhad road. The village has a history that dates back approximately six centuries. Notable structures within the village include Imamzadeh Abu-sa'id, while nearby attractions feature the Aradan Bazaar, Imamzadeh Shah Nazar, and Imamzadeh Khalilollah. The main agricultural products cultivated in this village include wheat, barley, cotton, melon, watermelon, figs, pomegranates, and more.

Tuyehdarvar

Tuyehdarvar village is situated 48 kilometers from Damghan, north of Qusheh village, nestled in the northern mountains of Damghan. The residents of this village speak Mazandarani, and their primary agricultural products include walnuts, apples, grapes, wheat, barley, and more. Livestock breeding is a key occupation here, producing items such as yogurt, milk and butter. The village boasts a cold mountainous climate with abundant rainfall throughout the year, creating an ideal environment for agriculture. Consequently, people from Damghan often spend their hot summers in these villages. Key attractions include Baghestan Castle, Imamzadeh Mir Jebra'il, Kalateh Zakaria, and ancient trees that have been nationally registered.

Reshm

Reshm village is located 105 kilometers south of Damghan in the Sarkavir region. The area of the village and its pastures is approximately 150 square kilometers. Surrounded by mountains to the north, northeast, and west, the village faces the desert plain to the south and southeast. Due to its proximity to the mountains, Reshm enjoys a favorable climate and a lush, green landscape compared to neighboring villages, setting it apart from those in the desert. The presence of numerous springs in the village has supported the cultivation of various agricultural products, and it is inhabited by migratory nomads. The old cemetery of this village is situated to the west. The tomb of Imamzadeh Abbas, with its square shape and stepped dome,

houses an octagonal grave that occupies almost the entire interior space and is thought to date back to the Timurid era. Another notable structure in the village is the Baseri Edifice, constructed of raw clay and representing one of the village's historic architectural sites.

Farumad

Farumad village is located in Meyami. Notable historical sites in this village include the tomb of Ibn Yamin and the Grand Mosque. The tomb of Sheikh Hassan Juri, a religious leader and chief of the Sarbadars during the Ilkhanate period, is also situated near this village.

Qalebala

Qalebala village is located 24 kilometers southeast of Biyarjomand, bordering the desert and characterized by a semi-arid climate with moderate vegetation. Most residents of this village engage in livestock breeding and agriculture, with main agricultural products including wheat, barley, sesame, walnuts, and apricots. Due to its foothill location, construction in this village is tiered, utilizing raw clay for older buildings and bricks for newer homes. The village's proximity to Turan National Park and the presence of wildlife such as the Asiatic cheetah, Asiatic zebra, and gazelle are significant attractions.

Molla Deh

Molla Deh village is part Mehdishahr and is located 55 kilometers north of Shahmirzad. Its climate is mild in the spring and summer, while winter is cold and snowy. Historical attractions in the area include the Molla Deh Mansion, which comprises two buildings set in a beautiful garden. This complex features the House of Ebrahim Khan in the western part and the or Kolah Farangi Mansion, in the northeast. The heights around Molla Deh offer unparalleled vistas, including spectacular views of snow-covered mountains in winter, rocky terrain, and steep slopes. Local wildlife includes partridges, bears, foxes, wolves, and wild boars, as well as native plants like barberry and wild. The village is also surrounded by Urus forests, shrubs, and oak trees, and is home to various birds.

Iranica Desk

Proximity to the capital, location along the route of pilgrims to the holy city of Mashhad, the presence of historical and natural sites, and the unique climatic conditions resulting from being situated on the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains — as well as other areas bordering the northern edges of Iran's central desert — are among the potential attractions of Semnan Province for domestic and foreign tourists. One of the most significant tourist draws in Semnan Province is its villages, each offering unique appeal for enthusiasts of cultural heritage, nature, linguistics, culture, traditional rituals, and anthropology, among other interests. With relatively modest planning and investment in these areas, it is possible to transform the province's economy by attracting both domestic and international visitors. This report introduces several key tourist villages in Semnan Province, according to chn.ir.



Pa Deh village
● eneshat.com



Tuyehdarvar village
● IRNA



Reshm village
● chn.ir



Farumad village
● IRNA



Qalebala village
● kojaro.com



Molla Deh village
● wikipedia.org

Shokat Abad; an iconic Persian garden of South Khorasan Province

Shokat Abad Garden, an exemplary Persian garden, was commissioned by Ismail Khan Shokat ol-Molk of the Alam family near Birjand, South Khorasan Province. Persian gardens are a defining characteristic of Iranian desert cities; a garden in the heart of the desert exemplifies the brilliance and ingenuity of Iranian engineering and historical techniques.

Spanning a large area, Shokat Abad Garden uniquely features fruit trees, emphasizing its agricultural vitality. Reflecting traditional Persian garden architecture, it centers around a Kushk (pavilion), dating back to the Qajar dynasty. The pavilion boasts a white façade and a spacious terrace supported by two pillars and arches. Some sections feature

decorative Goldani motifs. Surrounding the terrace are multiple rooms, with additional structures at the back, visitir. ir wrote. Shokat Abad's architecture and structural design are impressive, meticulously planned to match specific agricultural and aesthetic needs. The Howz Khaneh — a summer retreat typically featuring an octagonal layout —

houses most of the decorations and intricate details. Above it, a large vault, topped with a Kolah Farangi dome resembling a foreign headpiece, provides shelter. Strategically placed holes in this structure allow natural light to illuminate the Howz Khaneh. Constructed with vaults, the garden's architecture effectively addresses the hot, dry climate of South Khorasan Province.

Some parts of the complex are newer additions, made to meet the needs of its current residents. The owner's private quarters, known as the Andaruni, are situated on the southern side of the complex. They resemble traditional Birjand houses, featuring stucco frames and arches around the pools. Fruit trees, another hallmark of the garden, not only

provide produce but also serve as ornamental features. Shokat Abad is located five kilometers east of Birjand in the village with the same name, along the route from Birjand to Zahedan. An easy landmark to find is Birjand University, which is directly opposite the garden. This site was registered as a national heritage of Iran on August 14, 1999.



Evaz in southwestern Fars named Iran's Book Capital



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has named the southwestern town of Evaz as the country's ninth Book Capital, citing a decade-long commitment to reading and grassroots literacy programs. The announcement was made Tuesday during a ceremony at the ministry's headquarters in Tehran, attended by local officials, cultural figures and media representatives, IRNA reported. "Evaz symbolizes endurance and continuity in promoting books and reading," said

Mohsen Haji-Zeinolabedini, the chief juror of the selection committee. The jury highlighted the town's community-led efforts and deep cooperation between civil society and government agencies. According to the ministry, 110 cities entered the nationwide contest, but only 47 presented eligible proposals. Among those, Evaz stood out for its creative and sustained initiatives, such as traditional maktab-khaneh schools, a prison library, and international book promotion campaigns reaching the UAE, Kuwait, and Germany.

The town, located in the arid southern reaches of Fars Province, has long been recognized for its civic innovation. UNESCO has already designated Evaz as a "safe town for children" – a rare title in the region. Despite lacking high-rise buildings or grand cultural centers, Evaz has quietly built a reputation for inclusive development and education. Villages around Evaz, including Galar and Fishvar, also played a part. Projects like the "Alley of Joy," run by local teenagers to manage neighborhood cultural events, and museums focused

on dolls and folklore, added to the town's edge. "This is not just about books," said Azadeh Nazarboland, Secretary General of Iran's Public Libraries Institution. "It's about empathy, connection, and resilience. Right now, Evaz is the capital of all three." The selection process also honored cities including Shahin Shahr, Urmia, Qazvin, Lahijan, and Behshahr as "Book-Friendly Cities." Fuman, Rabar, and Fahraj were named "Under-the-Book Umbrella," while Khoy, Sirjan, and Sabzevar earned the title of "Book-Thirsty Cities."

Iran launched the Book Capital initiative in 2014 to decentralize cultural development and encourage reading at the grassroots level. The program has grown in scope, pushing towns across the country to innovate in literacy outreach and cultural engagement.



Persian Gulf as Iran's geo-civilizational core of peace, identity: Minister



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's ministers of culture and heritage called the Persian Gulf a cornerstone of national identity and regional solidarity, urging deeper cultural ties, sustainable

tourism, and peaceful coexistence across its shores. Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, described the Persian Gulf not simply as a body of water but as a "civilizational concept" deeply "woven into the fabric" of Iran's history and development. He said the Gulf's value reaches beyond "economic and security equations," rooted instead in ancient records, heritage, and widely accepted global narratives. In a formal statement, Salehi Amiri framed the Persian Gulf as a platform for cultural diplomacy, regional convergence, and economic renewal. "Peaceful coexistence is not

a dream but a geo-civilizational necessity," he wrote, calling for expanded cooperation among Persian Gulf countries to strengthen tourism and dialogue. Tourism, particularly with neighboring Persian Gulf states, was described as a powerful tool for "reproducing national power" and fostering cultural understanding. The minister stressed shared religious and historical links, saying they could help draw more regional travelers to southern Iran. To boost this potential, he said the government is stepping up efforts to improve infrastructure, streamline visa processes, expand air routes, and strengthen partnerships with local communities and the

private sector. Southern islands like Kish, Qeshm, Hormuz, Hengam, Abu Musa, and Henderabi could become major destinations, he noted, "if managed under a unified ecological strategy." Abbas Salehi, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, echoed those sentiments in a separate message, calling the Persian Gulf "a piece of Iran's soul" and a name "stitched into the cultural memory and honor" of the nation. He praised Iranians for historically standing firm in defense of every inch of their land and waters. However, official events planned by the ministry were scaled back due to a deadly explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar

Abbas. "The Persian Gulf mourns with us," the minister said, offering condolences to the victims' families and wishing recovery for the injured. April 30 marks the anniversary of the 1622 victory by Safavid naval forces over the Portuguese at the Strait of Hormuz, an event that led to the naming of the day as Persian Gulf Day. Iran consistently defends the historical term "Persian Gulf" against alternative names it sees as politically motivated. Officials emphasized the Persian Gulf's continued role as a symbol of peace, dignity, and heritage. "It will continue to shine," Salehi Amiri wrote, "as a symbol of peace, dignity, and lasting legacy."

Dust control, forest revival on Iran's environmental agenda: VP

Social Desk

Iran is stepping up efforts to contain domestic dust storm sources, according to the country's Vice President and head of the Department of Environment (DoE), Shina Ansari. Speaking during a two-day visit to Lorestan province, Ansari said dust hotspots are being "identified and stabilized" in coordination with relevant agencies to tackle pollution. The project, part of a broader environmental action plan, includes soil management, reforestation, and air quality measures.

At a tree-planting event in Khorramabad, Ansari praised the work of rangers and environmental volunteers, saying environmental protection "requires collective effort" and that the government "won't hold back" on this front. She also paid tribute to fallen rangers, including those killed in recent years—such as in Golestan National Park and the Zagros wildfires. "These trees are symbols of sacrifice," she said, "by those who gave their lives for Iran's nature." The Zagros forests, home to a declining population of oak trees, are under new threat from the green oak leaf roller moth.

Ansari said a "national will" is needed to contain the outbreak, which has reached even protected areas. Joint efforts with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Natural Resources Organization are underway to manage the forests and prevent wildfires, using emergency services' capacity. A national conference on the Zagros forests is scheduled for July to push the agenda forward. In Khorramabad, local officials highlighted a shortage in green spaces. Mayor Dariush Barani Beyranvand said urban green space per capita stands at only nine square meters—below the national standard of 7–12

square meters. "We've lost 1,200 hectares of garden land to housing," he said. To reverse the trend, the city has launched a "green belt" initiative and plans to plant 20,000 trees to expand urban greenery. Ansari's visit also included meetings with NGOs, a tour of the Khorramabad combined cycle power plant, and a stop at a Persian fallow deer restoration site in the region. According to the United Nations, Iran faces some of the world's most severe desertification and air pollution challenges, with sand and dust storms posing serious threats to health and agriculture in recent years.



Iranian doctor awarded at Geneva Invention Expo

Social Desk

An Iranian gynecologist has been awarded the WIPO Medal for her groundbreaking work in women's health, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA. Hasti Hosseini received the honor at the 50th International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva, organized by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a specialized UN agency. The award is often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of inventions." Hosseini was recognized for developing a stem cell-based therapy that helps control HPV and heal cervical wounds. Her

invention earned an A-grade rating for innovation and humanitarian value from the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA). It also won the Gold Plus Medal from the Swiss judging panel in Geneva. WIPO medals are awarded annually to inventors whose creations show "exceptional value" and real-world application. The Geneva event, under UN auspices, is one of the most respected platforms for global inventors. In a recent achievement, Hosseini also took home a gold medal from Silicon Valley in September 2024 for her medical innovation in HPV treatment.

A man from the land of words; Iran remembers Mohammad Moin



Arts & Culture Desk

April 30 marked the birthday of Mohammad Moin, Iran's most revered lexicographer and creator of the landmark Moin Dictionary, a cornerstone of modern Persian lexicography. Scholars and literary circles across the country paid tribute to the man whose life, as one colleague put it, was "sacrificed for the Persian language." Known for working up to 20 hours a day, Moin poured his energy, health, and intellect into preserving and expanding the Persian lexicon. He died in 1971 at the age of 61, Fars News Agency reported. "Moin was a man who lived among words," said

Ali-Ashraf Sadeghi, a linguist and former student. "Even a moment away from language was difficult for him." Born in Rasht, northern Iran, on April 30, 1914, Moin began his academic journey in Persian literature and Islamic philosophy, later earning a doctorate in linguistics. He served as a professor at the University of Tehran, where his intense dedication to research left a lasting impression on students. "He was so focused on work," Sadeghi recalled, "he barely had time to talk." The Moin Dictionary was part of a three-tier vision: a large encyclopedia-style dictionary, a mid-sized reference (the version most published), and a smaller, portable edition. It aimed to bridge classical and modern Persian, and its "almost encyclopedic" scope set it apart from previous dictionaries, many of which had been compiled outside Iran or by non-native speakers, often riddled with errors. Before Moin, dictionaries such as Burhan-e Qati or Farhang-e Amouzgar were widely used but lacked academic rigor. The Moin Dictionary,

published posthumously, quickly became a national reference, praised for its structure, accuracy, and modern approach. It remains a staple in homes, schools, and offices throughout Iran. Moin's scholarly integrity earned him the trust of Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda, compiler of the monumental Dehkhoda Dictionary. In his will, Dehkhoda named Moin the sole guardian of the project's manuscripts — a rare gesture in Iran's tightly knit literary community. "He was a man of trust," said Mohammad-Taqi Rashed Mohassel, a member of Iran's Academy of Persian Language and Literature. "Dehkhoda handed everything over to him without hesitation." Yet Moin's legacy is more than academic. Literary historian Jalal Khaleghi-Motlagh once said Moin combined "scientific precision with deep humanity." His colleagues often described him as humble, noble-hearted, and quietly driven by an overwhelming love for knowledge. Esmaeil Azar, a leading voice in Persian literature, called him "a complete human being."