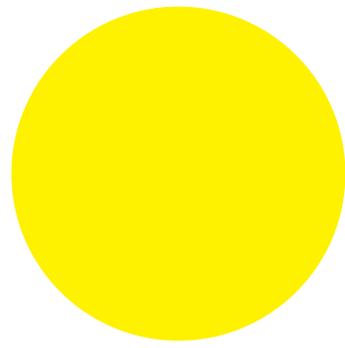


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Palestinians gather to receive a hot meal at a food distribution center in the Nuseirat camp for refugees, in the central Gaza Strip, on April 30, 2025. **EYAD BABA/AFP**



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HOSSEIN NAGHIZADEH/IRAN DAILY

Iran not to stand threats despite commitment to diplomacy

4th round of nuclear talks with US postponed due to 'logistical reasons'



International Desk

Iran reaffirmed its commitment to diplomacy to resolve a long-running "unnecessary and artificial crisis" over its nuclear program while saying that it does not put up with threats and pressure.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the Iranian negotiators have laid out the legitimate positions and demands of the country during the last three rounds of negotiations with the

US on its nuclear program, adding that they have diligently worked toward reaching a "fair, reasonable, and lasting agreement."

The statement said that Iran does not tolerate approaches based on pressure and threats – all of which violate the principles of the UN Charter and international law and are designed to undermine Iran's national interests and violate the rights of the Iranian people. "In this regard, Iran strongly condemns the continuation of illegal sanctions

and pressure on its trade and economic partners, viewing it as further proof of the Iranian people's well-founded distrust and deep suspicion regarding the US' seriousness in pursuing diplomacy" it said.

New anti-Iran sanctions

Despite the three rounds of Iran-US negotiations, Washington has continued to impose new sanctions on Iran.

On Wednesday, the US imposed sanctions on entities it accused of involvement in the trade of Iranian oil and petrochemicals.

The sanctions are the latest round imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump on Iran since February, when he reimposed his so-called maximum pressure campaign on Tehran in his second term in office.

Separately, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth warned Iran that it would face consequences for supporting the Ansarullah resistance group in Yemen, who have attacked Israeli-bound ships in the Red Sea in what the group says is solidarity with the Palestinians.

Trump also said on Thursday that all purchases of Iranian oil or petrochemical products must stop and any country

or person buying any from the country would be immediately subject to secondary sanctions.

"They will not be allowed to do business with the United States of America in any way, shape, or form," he wrote on Truth Social on Thursday.

Trump's comments followed the postponement of the fourth round of talks between the two countries, which had been due to take place in Rome on Saturday.

Iran-US talks postponed

"Together with Omani and US interlocutors, we have decided to postpone the 4th round of talks for logistical and technical reasons," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X late Thursday.

"On Iran's part, there is no change in our determination to secure a negotiated solution. In fact, we are more determined than ever to achieve a just and balanced deal: guaranteeing an end to sanctions, and creating confidence that Iran's nuclear program will forever remain peaceful while ensuring that Iranian rights are fully respected," he added.

In Washington, State Department

spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said a meeting in Rome on Saturday between the United States and Iran had never been confirmed.

"We expect another round of talks that will take place in the near future," Bruce said.

Iranian diplomats had also been due to meet in Rome on Friday with representatives of Britain, France and Germany. However, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the talks will not now take place.

"A technical meeting was planned prior to... (the) meeting between the United States and Iran," Barrot said in an interview.

"Since that meeting is not taking place, the technical meeting is no longer relevant, at least at that time," Barrot added.

Mediated by Oman, Iran and the US have held three rounds of talks in Muscat and Rome on April 12, 19, and 26 with the aim of reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions on Tehran.

Both parties have so far expressed satisfaction with the way the negotiations are moving on, praising the talks as "positive" and "moving forward."

Gazans 'going hungry' as aid efforts teeter on 'verge of collapse': Red Cross

Two months into Israel's full blockade on aid into Gaza, humanitarian aid efforts are described as "on the verge of total collapse," the International Committee of the Red Cross warned in a statement.

The United Nations and the Red Cross sounded the alarm at the dire situation in the war-ravaged Palestinian territory, demanding international action, AFP reported. "The humanitarian response in Gaza is on the verge of total collapse," the International Committee of the Red Cross warned in a statement.

"Without immediate action, Gaza will descend further into chaos that humanitarian efforts will not be able to mitigate."

The United Nations has repeatedly warned of humanitarian catastrophe, with famine looming as the blockade continues.

Israel strictly controls all inflows of international aid vital for the 2.4 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

It halted aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2, days before the collapse of a cease-fire that had significantly

reduced hostilities after 15 months of war.

Since the start of the blockade, the United Nations has repeatedly warned of the humanitarian catastrophe on the ground, with famine again looming.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said a week ago that it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks" to kitchens.

"Food stocks have now mainly run out," Olga Cherevko, a spokeswoman for the UN humanitarian agency OCHA, told reporters in Geneva Friday via video link from Gaza City.

"Community kitchens have begun to shut down (and) more people are going hungry," she said, pointing to reports of children and other very vulnerable people who have died from malnutrition and ... from the lack of food.

"The blockade is deadly." Water access was also "becoming impossible," she warned.

The situation is so bad, she said that a friend had described to her a few days ago seeing "people burning ... because of the explosions and there was no water to save them."

At the same time, Cherevko lamented



that "hospitals report running out of blood units as mass casualties continue to arrive."

"Gaza lies in ruins, Rubble fills the streets... Many nights, blood-curdling screams of the injured pierce the skies following the deafening sound of another explosion."

She also decried the mass displacement, with nearly the entire Gaza population being forced to shift multiple times prior to the brief ceasefire.

Since the resumption of hostilities, she said, "over 420,000 people have been once again forced to flee, many with only the clothes on their backs, shot at along the way, arriving in overcrowded shelters, as tents and other facilities where people search safety, are being bombed."

Trump ousts national security adviser Waltz

US President Donald Trump ousted his national security adviser Mike Waltz on Thursday and named Secretary of State Marco Rubio as his interim replacement in the first major shakeup of Trump's inner circle since he took office in January.

Trump, in a social media post, said he would nominate Waltz to be the next US ambassador to the United Nations, adding that "he has worked hard to put our nation's interests first," Reuters reported.

The retired Army Green Beret and former Republican lawmaker from Florida had faced criticism for mistakenly adding a journalist to a chat group where sensitive military plans were discussed - a political embarrassment likely to feature during confirmation hearings for the UN post.

Rubio will be the first person since Henry Kissinger in the 1970s to hold the positions of secretary of state and national security adviser simultaneously.

"When I have a problem, I call up Marco. He gets it solved," Trump said at a White House event earlier on Thursday. A person familiar with the matter said



Trump wanted to get to the 100-day mark in his term before firing a cabinet-level official. News of the shakeup on Thursday was so abrupt that State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce learned about it from reporters at a briefing.

The national security adviser is a powerful role that does not require Senate confirmation. Trump had four national security advisers in his first term: Michael Flynn, H.R. McMaster, John Bolton and Robert O'Brien.

The Waltz ouster caps a month of personnel turmoil within Trump's national security establishment. Since April 1, at least 20 NSC staffers have been fired, the director of the National Security Agency has been dismissed and three high-ranking Pentagon political appointees have been shown the door.

Bodies of 33 victims of southern port blast identified



National Desk

Iranian authorities said on Friday that they have identified the bodies of 33 of the 70 people killed in the last Saturday's deadly explosion in the coun-

try's southern Shahid Rajaei Port. With four more bodies identified on Friday, the number of the identified people reached 33, Chief Prosecutor of Hormozgan Province Mojtaba Ghahremani said.

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 on Saturday.

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.

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.

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.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran Expo 2025

Iran's largest export exhibition held in defiance of sanctions

Strong turnout of foreign traders, businesses at Tehran exhibit

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writerINTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

Iran Expo 2025, the country's biggest export showcase, went ahead this year despite the US's all-out economic war and crippling sanctions, drawing in an unprecedented delegation from 111 countries and over 3,000 foreign business leaders and traders to Tehran.

Contrary to expectations, harsh international sanctions have failed to put a dent in Iran's export growth. Instead, they've pushed Iranian producers and traders to branch out into new markets and diversify their products—driving up non-oil exports by 15.6% last year, with foreign trade on an upward trajectory.

Held annually, Iran Expo throws a spotlight on the capabilities of Iranian firms in exporting goods and technical services worldwide. This year's event, running from April 28 to May 2 at Tehran's International Permanent Fairground, played a key role in boosting non-oil exports, drawing in foreign investment, and raising Iran's profile in global trade by facilitating business talks, sealing deals, and expanding international networks.

Iran Daily spoke with several participants who shared their insights about Iran's economic outlook.

Private sector bears brunt of trade sanctions

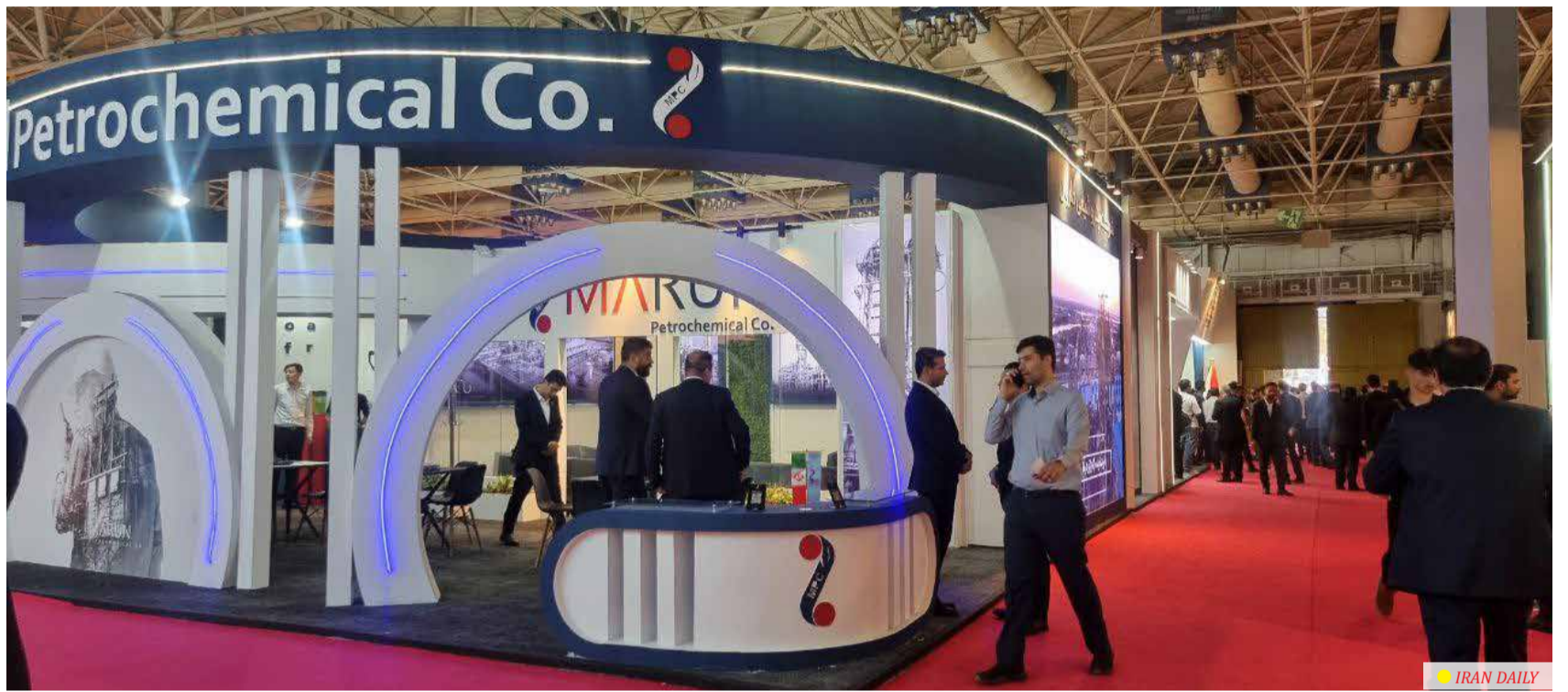


Yaghub Estilaf, vice president of the Iran-Australia Chamber of Commerce, weighed in on the Expo, stating, "Experience has shown that this exhibition can help bring up economic relations between Iran and other countries, and the Iran-Australia Chamber of Commerce is working hard to set up the groundwork for trade between the two nations."

He went on to say, "Sanctions have undoubtedly thrown up challenges for the country's economy, but economic players—especially in the private sector—haven't just sat idly by. Instead, they've been looking for ways to get around these obstacles and keep up our trade ties with the world." As a result, trade between Iran and Australia has carried on despite the sanctions, with a large part of this commerce going through intermediary and third countries. At present, products such as meat, foodstuffs, dairy, and more are brought in from Australia to Iran.

Highlighting the crucial role of the private sector in keeping trade afloat under sanctions, Estilaf explained, "Right now, it's the private sector that is shouldering the burden of sanctions in trade and finding ways to get around the restrictions in various ways. The private sector buys up the required goods through intermediaries and different countries and brings them into the country."

Estilaf emphasized, "The private sector never waits around for the government and has always taken the lead in foreign trade, constantly coming up with solutions for doing business with international partners. The Iran-Australia Chamber of Commerce has tried to step up by setting up business meetings, seminars, and face-to-face encounters between trad-



ers to help boost trade between the two countries and pave the way for further cooperation."

He added, "Currently, non-oil trade between Iran and Australia stands at over \$500 million, with the lion's share of these transactions going through third countries. We hope that, with the lifting of sanctions, direct trade between the two nations will pick up steam and we'll witness a breakthrough in exports from Iran to Australia."

Estilaf concluded, "Right now, a significant number of Iranians have moved to Australia for study and work. If sanctions are lifted and the environment for cooperation opens, they could play a key role in cementing and expanding economic and trade relations between the two countries."

Iran-Russia-Eurasian free trade agreement



Kambiz Mirkarimi, a board member of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce said that the Expo is by far the most important showcase for Iran's export capabilities, and every year it manages to draw in more and more international visitors. This year, the event really picked up steam, with Iranian manufacturing and trading firms coming together under one roof to show off their export strengths to both local and foreign businesspeople. As in previous years, Russian trade delegations—mainly from Astrakhan—turned up at the expo, looking to strike up partnerships in sectors like food, ceramics, fisheries, cosmetics, dairy, and petrochemicals.

He pointed out that a game-changing development is just around the corner as the Iran free trade agreement will come into force on May 15, slashing tariffs on 87% of goods traded between Iran, Russia, and the Eurasian bloc to zero. With tariffs wiped out, many trade barriers and costs will fall away, giving Iranian products a real leg up over foreign competitors in Russia and the wider Eurasian market. This, in turn, has already spurred Iranian firms to step up their presence in

the Russian market.

Highlighting the surge in exports, Mirkarimi noted that Iran's exports to Russia stood at around \$270 million in 2019, but this figure has shot up in recent years, breaking through the \$1 billion mark for the first time ever last year. With trade infrastructure now in place, he believes this upward trend will carry on, and Iran is just getting started in tapping into Russia's vast \$300 billion market. Despite the progress, Iran still holds only a small slice of the Russian market, and there's plenty of room to carve out a bigger share.

Looking ahead, he said there's a \$30 billion trade target on the horizon, and hitting that in the next few years is well within reach. Currently, Iran's exports to Russia stand at \$1.1 billion, while imports come to about \$1.8 billion. Whereas Iran's imports from Russia used to outpace exports by three or four times, the trade balance is now closing in on parity, and is expected to even out in the coming years.

Iranian expats a major asset for economy



Mohammad Vahidi Rad, head of the Iran-Canada Business Association, said the group boasts 730 active members and currently ships out \$7 million worth of goods from Iran to Canada every month. The association is also working on joint production ventures, ensuring Iranian products measure up to Canadian standards before making their way into various markets. On the flip side, the group helps Canadian industries farm out production to Iran, with nearly 40 licensed manufacturing units now up and running in the country.

He explained that, due to sanctions, it is tough to pin down the exact volume of Iran-Canada trade, and logistics issues mean much of Iran's exports go through third countries. As for the Iranian community in Canada, estimates vary as Iranian sources put the number at 700,000, while Canadian stats suggest at least 1.1 million Iranians among 1.4

million Farsi speakers. This sizable diaspora stands out as a huge asset and opportunity for Iran's trade, investment, and economic growth, and could be tapped into to boost bilateral cooperation.

Export items like agricultural products, seeds, and technology flow from Canada to Iran, while Canada takes in a range of Iranian goods, especially foodstuffs. Annual trade has topped \$200 million in recent years, but banking hurdles from sanctions have held back further growth. If a nuclear deal is hammered out and sanctions lifted, business could easily jump tenfold.

Iran Expo 2025 golden opportunity to raise exports



Abazar Barari, secretary-general of the Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce, described the Expo as a major springboard for boosting Iran's exports. He noted that over 30 business leaders from Kuwait, spanning sectors like healthcare, food, and construction materials, turned up at this year's event, all looking to track down potential Iranian partners for collaboration.

Highlighting the strong appetite on both sides for closer business ties, Barari pointed out that while Iran and Kuwait share deep cultural and religious bonds that have already laid the groundwork for robust relations, economic ties have yet to catch up. Despite Kuwait's annual imports topping \$30 billion, Iran's slice of that pie is still less than \$300 million—a figure that could easily shoot up if quality standards are met, especially in construction and food products. Barari explained that the Chamber is working hard to smooth the way for business between the two countries. At the Expo, Kuwaiti delegates dropped by Iranian export booths, and several rounds of talks kicked off between the two sides. There's hope these connections will soon bear fruit in the form of new contracts.

He added that trade between Iran and Kuwait could climb to \$1 billion within two years, provided trade roadblocks-es-

pecially around transport and Iranian business visas—are cleared up. Kuwaitis can currently get into Iran without a visa, but Iranian traders still need one to break into the Kuwaiti market. Barari urged Kuwaiti authorities to roll out the red carpet for Iranian businesspeople.

On sanctions, Barari acknowledged that financial restrictions have taken their toll, but the enduring cultural ties and the presence of many Iranians in Kuwait have kept trade afloat, even during the toughest times. He noted that Iran regularly ships out food and construction materials—cement, clinker, steel, tiles, and ceramics—to Kuwait.

India to lead the pack in trade if Iran sanctions lifted



Mehdi Rangrona, vice president of the Iran-India Joint Chamber of Commerce, said that more than 100 Indian businesspeople from cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Gujarat showed up at the Tehran Expo, eager to strike deals with Iranian producers in food, minerals, chemicals, and agriculture.

He called India a key trading partner, with Iran's exports to India now centered on agricultural and petrochemical products, while imports from India mainly consist of chemicals and agricultural goods like rice, tea, and bananas. With trade already topping \$2 billion, both sides have set their sights on reaching \$5 billion. However, India's cautious approach to sanctions means most trade goes through third countries instead of direct channels.

Rangrona emphasized that both countries are keen to cut out the middleman and ramp up direct trade, hoping that ongoing nuclear talks will open the door to better days. If sanctions are lifted, India is expected to jump in with both feet and make a splash in the Iranian market. For now, most trade is in agriculture, since those products are not subject to sanctions, but India is eager to expand it in various areas, which will only happen if restrictions are taken off the table.

From Kharg to Asaluyeh

Persian Gulf beating heart of Iran's economy



An Aframax tanker built by the Iranian Marine Industrial Company (Sadra) sails in the Persian Gulf.
● SHANA



The initial phase of the new pipeline project in South Pars Phase 16 reaches completion.
● ALI SOLEIMANI/SHANA

PERSPECTIVE

The Persian Gulf, intrinsically tied to Iran's energy supply, has carved out an irreplaceable role in the nation's economy, stretching from the port of Asaluyeh to the island of Kharg. This dazzling stretch of water is far more than just a body of water; it is one of the world's most strategic regions, holding on to a significant portion of the globe's energy wealth and has put Iran on the map as a major geopolitical player in the energy sector. Roughly 60% of the world's oil reserves and 30% of its gas reserves are tucked away in the Persian Gulf, with over 30% of global oil and gas being supplied from this region. The Gulf's enduring role in the production, processing, transportation, and export of Iranian oil and gas cannot be overstated — it is truly a game-changer for the nation's economic fate.

Oil facilities at core of Persian Gulf

Along Iran's southern shores,

a vast network of oil facilities — from refineries and export terminals to jetties, storage tanks, and gas compressor stations — has sprung up. These installations, located in Khuzestan, Bushehr, and Hormozgan provinces, play a key part in the country's oil and gas value chain. Kharg, Bahregan, Siri, Asaluyeh, Bandar Abbas, Lavan, and others have grown into strategic hubs for energy supply, steady exports, and the resilience of Iran's oil and gas products. The expansion of this infrastructure mirrors long-term investment and the technical prowess of Iranian engineers, who have weathered both challenging geography and international sanctions.

Kharg pulse of Iran's crude oil exports

Kharg Island, as Iran's largest and most crucial crude oil export terminal, stands out in the national economy. Over 90% of the country's exported crude oil is loaded up here and sent off to

international markets.

Equipped with advanced storage, loading jetties, floating buoys, and pipelines, Kharg Island has managed to keep exports afloat even when the going gets tough internationally. It remains the beating heart of Iran's oil exports and a symbol of the oil industry's resilience in the face of global headwinds.

Continental Shelf: rich reserves in southern waters

Iran's continental shelf in the Persian Gulf is home to dozens of major oil fields, including Fooroozan, Soroush, Norouz, Abouzar, Hendijan, Esfand, Doroud, Bahregansar, Salman, Arash, and Farzad. Many of these fields are shared, making it crucial for Iran to hold on to its share of production.

With over four decades under its belt, the Iranian Offshore Oil Company has taken charge of operating and maintaining these vast resources. Working

offshore calls for high expertise, specialized equipment, and complex technical support — much of which, in recent years, has been taken up by domestic specialists.

South Pars Iran's gas engine

South Pars, the world's largest gas field, marks a turning point in Iran's energy development. This shared field with Qatar serves as the main source of natural gas, gas condensate, and petrochemical feedstock for Iran.

The development of 24 phases in Asaluyeh has turned this area into the Middle East's energy hub. South Pars not only backs up domestic energy supply but also acts as a reliable source for gas product exports and foreign currency earnings.

Persian Gulf's share in Iran's energy economy

The Persian Gulf is not just the backbone of Iran's oil production and exports; it also sets the

stage for downstream industries, job creation, economic growth, and both domestic and foreign investment in the energy sector. Iran's prime location in the Persian Gulf opens the door to Asian, European, and African markets.

Backbone of national power, development

In today's world, where energy calls the shots in economics, diplomacy, and security, the Persian Gulf is far more than just a sea for Iran — it is a treasure trove of resources, capacities, and opportunities. Protecting, developing, and safeguarding these energy assets is at the top of the agenda for Iran's oil and gas industry. From the continental shelf's oil fields to Kharg's terminal, from South Pars's phases to Asaluyeh's export jetties, every piece fits together to make the Persian Gulf the beating heart of Iran's energy and economy.

The article first appeared in Persian on SHANA news agency.



Kharg, Bahregan, Siri, Asaluyeh, Bandar Abbas, Lavan, and others have grown into strategic hubs for energy supply, steady exports, and the resilience of Iran's oil and gas products. The expansion of this infrastructure mirrors long-term investment and the technical prowess of Iranian engineers, who have weathered both challenging geography and international sanctions.

Alarm bells ring over Iran's energy shortfall

Experts call for fundamental, immediate reform

OPINION

Iran, despite being one of the world's energy-rich nations, has come up against a serious challenge known as the "energy imbalance". The issue puts the country's sustainable energy supply at risk and spills over into the economy, industry, and environment, casting a long shadow over the nation's future.

The sixth pre-event of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering, focused on "Energy Rebalancing Solutions for the Benefit of Production," brought together a host of experts and officials. The session zeroed in on the energy shortfall and laid out solutions to deal with and break free from the current predicament.

Structural, managerial roots of energy shortfall

Hadi Sahebi, the dean of the Faculty of Industrial Engineering at Iran University of Science and Technology, pointed out the structural and managerial roots of the mismatch between production and consumption of energy. He said that the predicament could be looked at from four angles: technical, economic, environmental, and governance. He warned that factors such as the low efficiency of gas-fired power plants, the run-down condition of the power transmission network, heavy reliance on natural gas, and falling pressure in the South Pars gas field all play a major role in the energy deficit. Sahebi also flagged up the decline in energy sector investment over the past 15 years and the failure to put in place com-

prehensive and effective governance as further reasons for the crisis, calling for a holistic and systematic approach to get to the bottom of the issue.

His proposed solutions centered on improving power plant efficiency, investing in renewables, drawing up smart tariff policies, and optimizing energy consumption.

Need to rethink Iran's energy diplomacy

Ebrahim Rezaei-Rad, a representative from the Middle East Strategic Studies Center, stressed the importance of energy diplomacy, saying that energy was "one of the most important geopolitical tools in Iran's foreign policy, playing a vital role in the development and international relations". He pointed to the challenges facing Iran's energy diplomacy un-

der sanctions and competition with countries such as Qatar, underscoring the necessity for Iran to rethink its policies and step up bilateral and multilateral cooperation with regional and global partners.

Rezaei-Rad identified pipeline diplomacy, sanctions, long-term contracts, and pricing as some of Iran's energy diplomacy tools, and called attention to the drivers of energy diplomacy, such as energy security and sustainable development.

He highlighted the importance of sound governance and comprehensive planning and said that "to get through the energy crisis, the production, transmission, and consumption chain must be managed in an integrated manner. Only then can a sustainable future for the country's economy and industry be counted on."

Energy governance, managerial challenges

Mansour Moazzami, a former deputy oil minister, weighed in on managerial and structural problems in the energy sector, saying that the shortcomings across various sectors were the result of poor managerial decisions piling up over the years.

He emphasized the need to go back to scientific rationality in running the country, putting the spotlight on training specialized human resources committed to scientific principles.

Moazzami drew attention to rising energy demand, improper pricing, and inefficiencies in resource management and called for overhauling the managerial framework, lifting sanctions, and bringing energy prices in line with realities.

He reiterated that a return to

scientifically grounded decision-making was essential.

"The country must be run based on scientific principles and standards, which not only do not conflict with our cultural values but are also indispensable for better governance."

Iran's energy policy needed to be redesigned

Farhang Fasihi, the president of the Iranian Institute of Industrial Engineering, took up the issue of structural problems in Iran's energy sector at the session to highlight the necessity for reform in macro-level policymaking and the creation of integrated management. He said that a "siloes approach"

to energy management over the past decades has led to a lack of coordination between sectors such as industry, agriculture, and energy, and that efforts like forming the Supreme Energy Council have also fallen short.

Fasihi took issue with policy instability and the absence of a long-term outlook and said that tough decisions were often put off, which had resulted in major economic opportunities slipping through the cracks both domestically and internationally. According to him, reliance on fossil resources and neglect of new energies are among the main weaknesses in Iran's energy governance.

He pointed out structural problems in the energy sector to underline the need for macro-level policy reform and integrated management.

The union leader criticized the siloed approach and policy instability. "Reliance on fossil resources and neglect of new energies are among the main weaknesses in Iran's energy governance."

The president also referred to high household energy consumption and the impact of sanctions on the economy and called for the creation of integrated management structures, a focus on long-term policymaking, managing energy consumption

through advanced technologies, and reforming subsidy policies.

Iran's economy, energy sector require fundamental reform

Hamidreza Salehi, a member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, also spoke out against the state of economic governance, calling for sweeping reforms in economic policy and energy management. He believes that without fundamental changes at the highest decision-making levels, the country's current economic woes will not be sorted out.

Salehi said that government intervention in the economy, especially in electricity and energy pricing, had held back private sector investment.

He further underscored the need for transparency in government-citizen relations, reforming governance structures, creating investment security, and robust support for the private sector.

Noting that the government treats renewables as a "luxury item," he said that "getting out of the energy deficit crisis hinged on changing such a mindset and paving the way for energy production using clean and renewable sources."

Strategy for value creation in production

Kamran Yeganegi, a university



Engineers discuss matters in the Hengam gas condensate refinery in the Qeshm island, southern Iran. MEHR

faculty member, also called for energy rebalancing as a strategy for turning challenges into economic opportunities.

Yeganegi said that implementing policies based on consumption optimization and balancing supply and demand was the key to boosting productivity and competitiveness in production, and that energy should be seen not as a costly burden, but as a capacity for sustainable growth and devel-

opment.

He put forward solutions such as optimizing energy use in energy-intensive industries, expanding renewables, and digitizing the energy chain as effective strategic priorities.

The professor argued that leveraging advanced technologies like heat recovery, low-consumption burners, and smart energy management systems could go a long way toward reducing energy use

and ramping up output efficiency. He emphasized the importance of rolling out small-scale solar power plants in industrial parks and the need to come up with innovative energy management models, adding that countries like Denmark, Germany, and Turkey have been held up as successful examples of energy rebalancing.

"Denmark, by developing wind turbine technology, has managed

to boost both domestic supply and export capacity. Germany, by cutting fossil energy consumption and offering targeted incentives to industries, has shored up industrial production and energy efficiency. In Turkey, structural reforms and attracting private sector participation in energy have helped the country carve out a role as a regional energy player."

Urgent need to reform ongoing practices

Experts and academics present at the session agreed that the energy shortfall stemmed from structural, managerial, and policy-level problems and called for a comprehensive and systematic approach to tackle it.

Improving power plant efficiency, investing in renewables, reforming pricing and subsidy policies, managing energy consumption, strengthening energy diplomacy, and creating integrated management structures are among the solutions put forward by these experts to pull the country out of the energy deficit crisis.

It appears that immediate and coordinated action on these fronts is crucial to ward off even more serious consequences for Iran's economy and industry.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

South Pars on new course to tackle output challenges, beat rival

PERSPECTIVE

Qatar got a head start on Iran by beginning natural gas extraction from South Pars, the world's largest gas field, years earlier and has now geared up to boost pressure at the shared field, sounding the alarm that within a few years, there may be no gas left for Iran. While Iran has recently caught up to Qatar's daily gas production level, reports indicate that gas output in South Pars has taken a hit due to unsustainable production practices, with the problem expected to be felt more acutely in the Iranian section.

An assessment by Iran's National Development Fund lays out expectations that by 2033, a quarter of the country's total gas production will be scaled back due to a pressure decline in South Pars, which accounts for more than 70% of Iran's total gas output.

To head off production decline, Iran is tasked with installing 10 to 15 platforms, each weighing 20,000 tons — 15 times the size of current platforms — equipped with massive compressors. The investment is estimated to cost \$35 billion. Meanwhile, Qatar has already been down this road for years.

In March, Iran's Oil Ministry signed a \$20 billion contract with several domestic firms to build 28 platforms weighing 7,000 tons each, along with 56 compressors, as part of the pressure enhancement plan for South Pars. The move comes as Qatar had jumped on the need to compensate for the production decline much earlier. Until recently, well pressure in the Iranian section of South Pars had remained steady at an average of 210 bars. However, since 2023, pressure has dropped by 7 bars annually, resulting in a loss of 10 billion cubic meters per year. Notably, a significant decline in pressure has set in at Phase 12, the largest phase of South Pars, over recent years.

Iran, in an effort to keep up production levels, brought online Phase 11 of South Pars in Au-

gust 2023 and launched extensive drilling operations. Moreover, in November 2023, the Oil Ministry inked a contract to drill 35 new wells with local companies. However, while increased drilling may shore up gas production in the short term, it is expected to speed up the pressure decline in the Iranian sector.

entered its dew point in 2023 and has been facing pressure drops, technical experts say that continuing gas production requires 20,000-ton pressure-boosting platforms and powerful compressors.

The pressure enhancement project in the Iranian section of South Pars is planned across seven

Iranian Oil Company, these lighter platforms are still capable of meeting the pressure-boosting needs of the South Pars field and are considered appropriate. Since they can be built domestically, the weight reduction has also allowed for an increase in the number of platforms.

Reports by the Oil Ministry and

700,000 barrels of condensate (ultra-light oil) daily from these four layers. Notably, Qatar's total condensate production over the past three decades has been double that of Iran.

With Qatar's increasing production from this reservoir and Iran's declining output, it is predicted that gas reserves will gradual-

reaching 142 million tons by 2030.

As a result, Qatar's total gas production from South Pars is expected to hit 740 million cubic meters per day by 2030, while Iran's production from this shared field is forecasted to drop by over 30% within a decade, falling to around 350 million cubic meters per day



The photo shows Qatargas 4, a fully integrated liquefied natural gas (LNG) asset with joint ownership by QatarEnergy (70%) and Shell (30%). SHELL

The only way for Iran to turn things around is by installing 20,000-ton platforms equipped with massive compressors — a technology locked up by Western companies. All 24 phases on the Iranian side are operational, leaving no room to launch new phases to boost production or offset declines elsewhere.

Monitoring of gas production in South Pars shows that pressure decline in this shared field will step up to a serious level by 2026, and if the pressure enhancement project is not rolled out by then, gas extraction will become increasingly difficult. International reports indicate that Qatar caught wind of the issue years ago and signed up for pressure enhancement contracts to milk more gas from the shared field.

Currently, over 70% of Iran's gas production comes from South Pars, making pressure decline a serious threat. Since South Pars

hubs, involving companies such as Petropars, OIEC, MAPNA, and Khatam al-Anbia Construction Headquarters.

According to the Oil Ministry, implementing the pressure increase plan in South Pars demands a \$20 billion investment, which will raise gas extraction to 90 trillion cubic feet and condensate output to 2 billion barrels, generating about \$900 billion in revenue for the country.

The new South Pars pressure enhancement contract, the largest gas contract in Iran's history, lays out the construction and installation of 28 new platforms, half of which will be dedicated to turbo compressors. Each platform will be capable of pumping up one billion cubic feet of gas under pressure.

One of the key points in this contract is the shift from the originally planned 20,000-ton platforms to smaller 7,000-ton ones. According to the National

assessments from credible international organizations indicate that no serious action was taken to control the pressure decline, especially after Total pulled out of Phase 11 in 2018, which was supposed to install pressure-boosting platforms.

These reports highlight several key reasons behind the decline in Iran's gas production after the completion of the South Pars development phases: the natural drop in reservoir pressure, a surge in household gas and electricity consumption, government subsidies that keep energy prices artificially low, the switch from liquid fuels to natural gas, and the rapid growth of petrochemical plants and other energy-intensive industries.

As noted, the reservoir's inclination leans toward Qatar, with gas and condensate flows mainly heading out from Iran toward Qatar. Both countries currently produce between 650,000 and

ly shift over to Qatar. Furthermore, this field, located at a depth of one kilometer, contains several crude oil layers extending from Iran to Qatar, making it a shared asset between the two countries. Qatar began gas extraction from South Pars in 1990, a decade ahead of Iran, and has produced nearly twice the gas volume from this field. Nevertheless, Iran has launched 14 new phases over the past decade and recently caught up with Qatar's production level.

In 2005, Qatar announced a halt to development at the North Dome field to size up the impact of rapid production increases on the reservoir. However, development resumed in 2022, and Qatar signed off on contracts worth \$29 billion with Western companies to boost production by 30% by 2026. The goal is to increase annual LNG export capacity from 77 million tons to 126 million tons per year, with projections

due to pressure decline on the Iranian side if the pressure-boosting projects are not completed.

Despite the challenges laid out, it is clear that Iran's Oil Ministry is not standing idly by. With the signing of the largest gas contract in the country's history, a major step has been taken to revamp infrastructure and address the pressure decline in South Pars. By turning to domestic companies and reconfiguring the platform design to accelerate construction, the ministry has shown adaptability and determination to get the project off the ground. The launch of Phase 11, extensive drilling plans, and the push to install 28 new platforms and 56 compressors all reflect a proactive strategy aimed at sustaining gas production and safeguarding national energy security for years to come.

The article first appeared in Persian on Mehr news agency.

FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup:

Iran holds off Mauritania fightback to win opener

Sports Desk

Iran had to survive a spirited comeback from Mauritania to edge out the African newcomers 5-4 in their Group B opener at the 2025 Beach Soccer World Cup in Victoria, Seychelles.

Bicycle kicks from Reza Amirzadeh and Movahed Mohammadpour put Iran, which finished third in the previous World Cup edition in Dubai last year, in the driver's seat at the Paradise Arena.

Cheikh Belkheir pulled one back for the Northwest African side, but Mahdi Shirmohammadi's sublime volley restored the two-goal cushion for Ali Naderi's men, before Mohammadali Mokhtari made it 4-1 with nine seconds remaining in the first period. When Mokhtari netted his second goal of the day less

than four minutes after the restart, the reigning Asian champion thought it was headed for a comfortable opening-day victory but the Mauritians had other ideas.

Belkheir rounded off his man-of-the-match performance with two more goals either side of an Ahmedou Bilal's strike, forcing Iran to hold on late in the third period to avoid a first major upset of the tournament.

Iranian scorer Mohammadpour blamed the unfamiliar circumstances for his side's shaky start in the event, saying: "The first match of each tournament is so hard. We have to adapt to things because we are not familiar with the sand, so we tried to improve our teamwork. Mauritania started to pressure our defense and pressed us man to man, which took up

a lot of energy and made it difficult for us."

Mokhtari, meanwhile, said he and his teammates would have "to learn from our mistakes [against Mauritania] to improve for our future outings in the tournament."

Next for Iran is a game against Paraguay today, before Naderi's man square off against Portugal on the final day of the group fixtures on Monday.

A 20-goal thriller later on Thursday saw Miguel Pintado and Be Martins score a hat-trick apiece to help two-time champion Portugal beat Paraguay 11-9 and move atop the group table.



Reza Amirzadeh (1) scores Iran's first goal during a 5-4 victory over Mauritania at the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup in Victoria, Seychelles, on May 1, 2025.

● FIFA



● iranaiba.ir

Asian U15 & U17 Boxing Championships:

Under-17 Iranians finish with seven medals

Sports Desk

Iranian young guns enjoyed an impressive run at the inaugural Asian U15 & U17 Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan, by collecting seven medals across different under-17 categories. Amir-Ali Mehrabi was the sole Iranian gold medalist in the Jordanian capital, walking away with the ultimate prize of the boys' 60kg contests – thanks to victories

over opponents from Iraq, India, Japan, and Uzbekistan. Representing the country in the 48kg class, Zobeir Isazehi beat boxers from the Chinese Taipei, and India to reach the final showpiece, before a setback against the Uzbek fighter saw the Iranian boy settle for a silver medal. Navid Rezaei added a second silver to Iran's medal haul following a final defeat – also against an Uzbek opponent – in the boys' 63kg final.

Amir-Mahdi Ezzati (70kg) and Farhoud Qorbani (+80kg) also finished their campaigns with double silver medals, while Amir-Mahdi Akbari (46kg) and Ehsan Zolfi (57kg) took a couple of consolation bronzes in their respective categories.

Parsa Motevallian was the only member of the Iranian eight-man squad to miss out on a medal in Amman, following a first-round loss to Indian Udham Singh.

Iran had bagged a silver medal and three bronzes in the under-15 contests earlier in Amman.

Morteza Rahimi settled for a runner-up finish in the boys' 49kg event after a final defeat against the Kazakh boxer, with Aref Zivdar (46kg), Mohammadreza Zare' Atabaki (52kg), and Mohammad-Taha Najafi (55kg) standing on the third podium of their respective weight classes.

Knicks see off Pistons to set up Celtics semi-final

BBC – Jalen Brunson scored 40 points – including a game-winning three-pointer – as the New York Knicks sealed a 4-2 series win against the Detroit Pistons.

The 28-year-old, who last week was named the Clutch Player of the Year, found the bucket with 4.3 seconds left on the clock to give the Knicks a 116-113 victory in game six.

The victory means the Knicks will face 18-time Championship winners and defending champions the Boston Celtics in the NBA Eastern Conference semi-final play-offs.

"I stay poised and I rely on the trust and the composure that my team-mates give me," Brunson said. "None of this happens without them."

Brunson finished with four rebounds and seven assists alongside his 40-point haul, with Mikal Bridges scoring 25 points and OG Anunoby adding 22 at Little Caesars Arena

in Detroit.

Elsewhere, James Harden recorded 28 points as the Los Angeles Clippers took their play-off against the Denver Nuggets to game seven with a 111-105 victory in Inglewood, California.

The Clippers needed to win in game six to keep their play-off hopes alive

but they struggled against a fine display from Nikola Jokic, who weighed in with 25 points, eight assists and seven rebounds for Denver.

But Harden stole the show, adding eight assists and six rebounds as the Clippers aim for their first NBA Championship.

"James did a great job set-

ting the tone early, scoring the basketball and getting downhill and making the right play," Clippers coach Tyronn Lue said.

"Norman [Powell] made some big shots at the end and Kawhi [Leonard] was steady throughout the game. I thought those guys really stepped up and came ready to play."



● NBA

Malavan legend Bahman Salehnia dies at 86

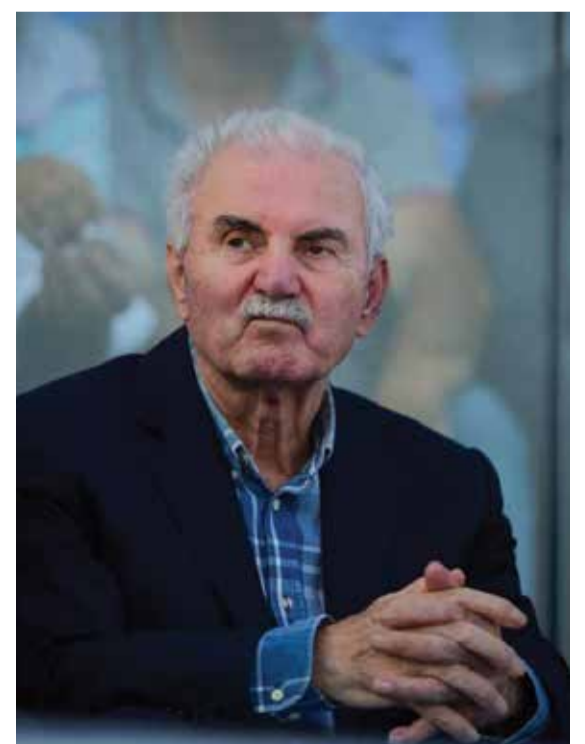
Sports Desk

Bahman Salehnia, a cult hero among the fans of Persian Gulf Pro League club Malavan FC, passed away at the age of 86 in the early hours of Thursday.

Salehnia founded the northern Iranian club in his hometown of Bandar Anzali in 1968 and went on to serve as the head coach until 1997. He returned to Malavan bench for a second spell from 2002 to 2004.

An assistant to former Iran head coach Frank O'Farrell in the 70s, Salehnia steered Malavan to six Iranian cup finals – a record for any head coach in the history of the competition – lifting the trophy on three occasions in 1976, 1987, and 1991.

Malavan's best-ever finish in the Iranian top flight also came under

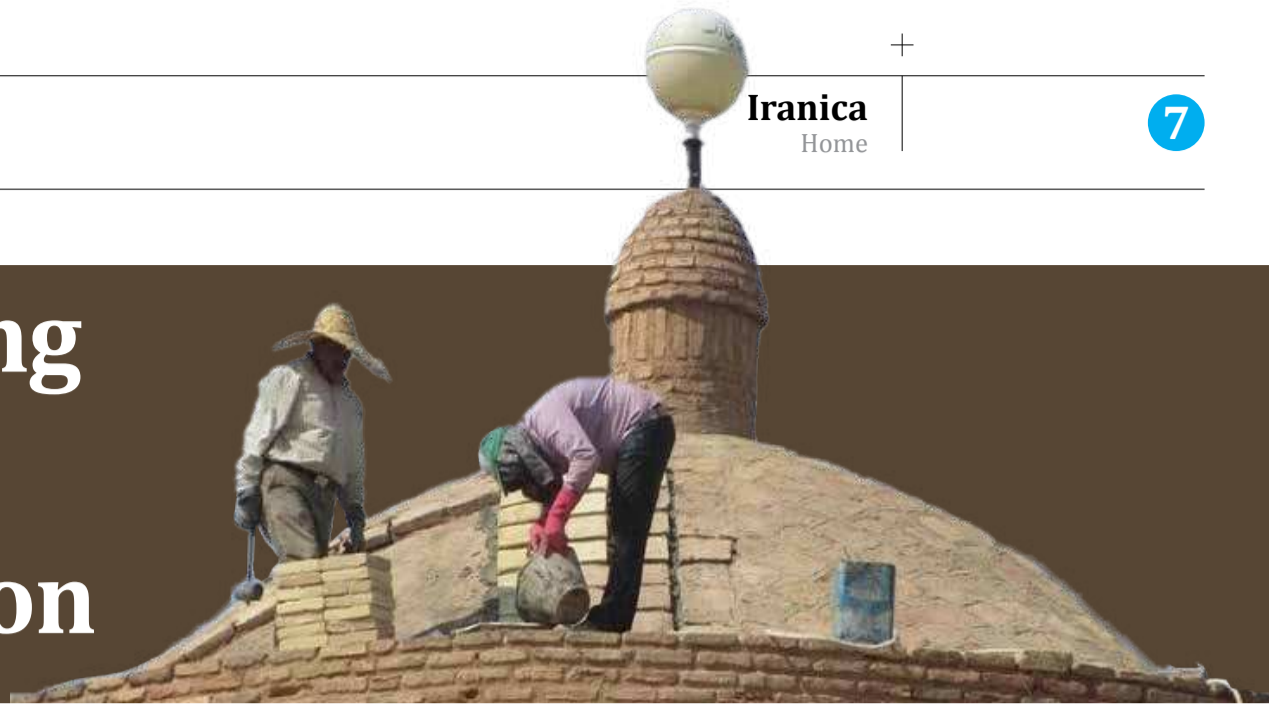


● AMIR GOLRIZ/PHOTOAMAN

Salehnia, when he guided the club to the third place in the Takht Jam-

shid League table at the end of the 1977-78 season.

Benefits of enhancing tourism through heritage preservation



Iranica Desk

An expert stated that historical buildings are considered cultural and identity treasures of every land. Khorasan Razavi Province, one of Iran's historical and cultural provinces, is home to numerous archaeological and historical sites, each narrating a story from the past. In an interview with ISNA, Alireza Yavari emphasized the importance of preserving historical buildings and sites in Khorasan Razavi Province. He noted that these structures represent not only the art and architecture of past generations but also reflect the beliefs, customs, and lifestyles of people throughout various historical periods.

Yavari expressed that protecting these historical artifacts is a social and cultural necessity that plays a fundamental role in preserving national identity and promoting sustainable development. The historical buildings of Khorasan Razavi Province, such as forts and caravanserais, hold significant architectural and historical value.

He added that visiting these sites can foster a deeper understanding of the region's history and culture. Furthermore, protecting these

buildings helps preserve cultural and historical identity for future generations, strengthening the sense of belonging and national identity within the community.

He stated that historical buildings and sites can serve as tourist attractions and significantly contribute to the region's economic development. Domestic and foreign tourists seek experiences rooted in a destination's history and culture, and each city in Khorasan Razavi Province, with its numerous historical sites, has the potential to become

a major tourist destination. Yavari noted that preserving these buildings can create conditions favorable for attracting more tourists, which would foster economic growth and job creation in the region. Moreover, cultural tourism can help promote local customs and traditions, encouraging the community to preserve its cultural heritage.

He added that historical buildings are valuable resources for education and research across various fields, including history, archaeology, architecture,

and art. Protecting these structures provides opportunities for researchers and students in these fields to conduct more in-depth studies of history and culture, thereby enhancing knowledge and public awareness.

He emphasized that conducting workshops and scientific seminars in these buildings can raise public awareness of their importance and encourage researchers to share ideas and experiences. However, despite their significant value, historical buildings face numerous threats.

He identified climate change, pollution, unauthorized construction, and neglect in their preservation and restoration as critical challenges that require attention.

Yavari noted that public ignorance about the significance of these buildings, along with inadequate planning for their protection, contributes to the damage of these valuable sites.

He also mentioned that storms, wind, and rain can gradually erode historical structures, while unauthorized construction can lead to unintended changes in

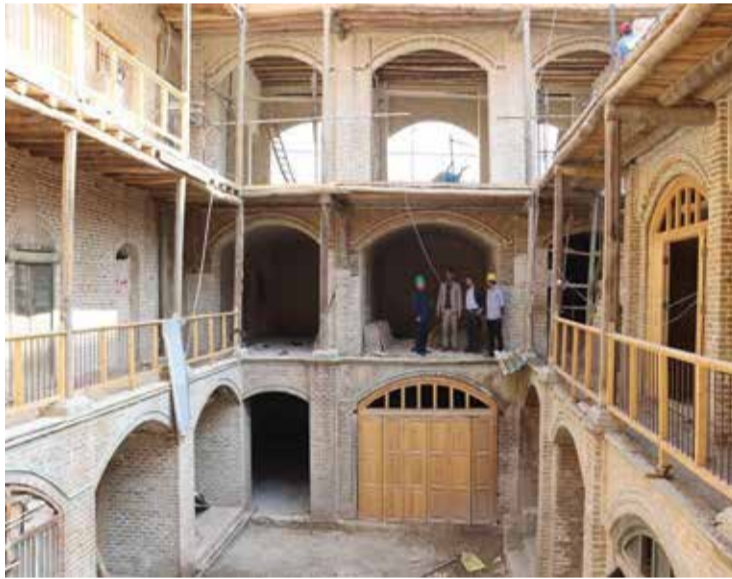
urban and rural environments. Furthermore, a lack of financial and human resources for the maintenance and restoration of these buildings presents additional challenges.

Yavari emphasized that the preservation of historical buildings and sites requires comprehensive cooperation from the government, private institutions, and the local community. He stated that the government and relevant organizations must provide the necessary financial and human resources for the protection of historical buildings.

He pointed out that the historical buildings and sites in Khorasan Razavi Province are not only valuable cultural and historical treasures but can also serve as tools for the economic and social development of the region. He added that preserving these sites requires the collaboration and participation of all segments of society.

This restoration and revitalization expert noted that given the existing challenges and threats, it is essential for all of us to strive to preserve and maintain these treasures for future generations. He expressed that protecting historical buildings is not only a national duty but also a social responsibility that requires special attention. These efforts can help create a culture of respect for history and national identity within society and strengthen the connection of future generations to the past.

Yavari also mentioned that, considering the vital role of these buildings in shaping cultural and social identity, it is crucial to undertake more serious actions for their protection and restoration so that we can safeguard these unique treasures for generations to come.



Discover excitement of karting at Azadi Complex

Iranica Desk

If you're someone who enjoys the adrenaline rush of high-speed driving, visiting Azadi Karting Complex in Tehran is highly recommended. The sensation of pressing the accelerator and experiencing the thrill of racing at top speeds can be truly exhilarating. Operated by the Motorcycle and Automobile Federation of Iran, this complex is easily accessible and provides a safe yet exciting environment where you can create unforgettable moments. Karting is a popular form of motorsport considered the precursor to modern road racing. It involves

small, lightweight vehicles with automatic transmissions powered by 125cc engines, capable of reaching speeds of up to 180 km/h. For recreational purposes, rental karts on the track typically have speed limits of around 70 km/h, making the sport accessible and safe for newcomers and enthusiasts alike. This sport has a rich history — famous drivers like Schumacher started their careers behind the wheel of these small but powerful racing cars, often compared to lawnmowers in size. Today, karting is enjoyed worldwide by people of all ages and skill levels, and

it's particularly appealing because you can experience high-speed racing on twists and turns with minimal requirements. Even without a driving license, almost anyone can enjoy the thrill — although some basic rules for track safety and conduct are in place and are easy to follow, visitiran.ir wrote.

Azadi Karting Complex is distinguished as one of the best karting tracks in the Middle East and is the only standard karting circuit in Tehran. Covering an area of approximately 30,000 square meters, it features an 800-meter-long track that hosts daily activities for motorsport enthusiasts.

One of the most captivating aspects of Azadi Karting Complex is the innovative design of its track, which not only enhances driving pleasure but also serves as a defining feature impacting the overall racing experience. Notably, the design, called "Formula," was developed with the approval of Italian engineers, ensuring a high-quality racing environment.

This track is a perfect place where the joy of speed combines with competition. When you visit with friends or family, you can compare your lap times using the dedicated karting software provided

by the complex. This adds an extra layer of fun and challenge, allowing you to see who really has the fastest skills behind the wheel. One of the significant advantages of karting at Azadi Karting Complex is that you don't need any specialized equipment to participate. The complex

provides all the necessary safety gear and equipment, making it easy for beginners to jump in and start racing. Additionally, there's a shop inside the complex where you can purchase everything related to karting—racing suits, helmets, hats, and other accessories.

For those who have a keen interest in advancing to professional racing, the complex offers karting schools where you can receive training and develop your skills further.

Azadi Karting Complex is not just about racing; it offers a range of entertainment options to keep visitors occupied for hours. Besides the karting track, the complex includes a well-equipped paintball club, a beautiful billiard hall, and facilities for handball and video games. The complex also features radio-controlled car tracks for hobbyists and enthusiasts. When you need a break, you can relax in the modern coffee shop or enjoy fast food from the on-site outlets.

Located on the east side of Azadi Stadium, next to parking lot 13, Azadi Karting Complex is ideally situated for easy access and is a perfect destination for individuals, families, or groups seeking fun, excitement, and competition in a safe environment. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned driver, spending time here guarantees a memorable experience filled with adrenaline and joy.



Anzali Free Zone to become Iran's handicraft export hub to Caspian Sea nations

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage is set to transform Anzali Free Zone into a major export hub for handicrafts to Caspian Sea littoral states, the deputy minister for handicrafts announced at the seventh Iran Expo 2025.

Maryam Jalali, during a meeting with Mostafa Taati-Moghaddam, CEO of Anzali Free Zone Organization, emphasized the strategic role of the northern free zone as a "launching pad" for Iranian handicrafts to reach markets around the Caspian Sea, IRNA reported.

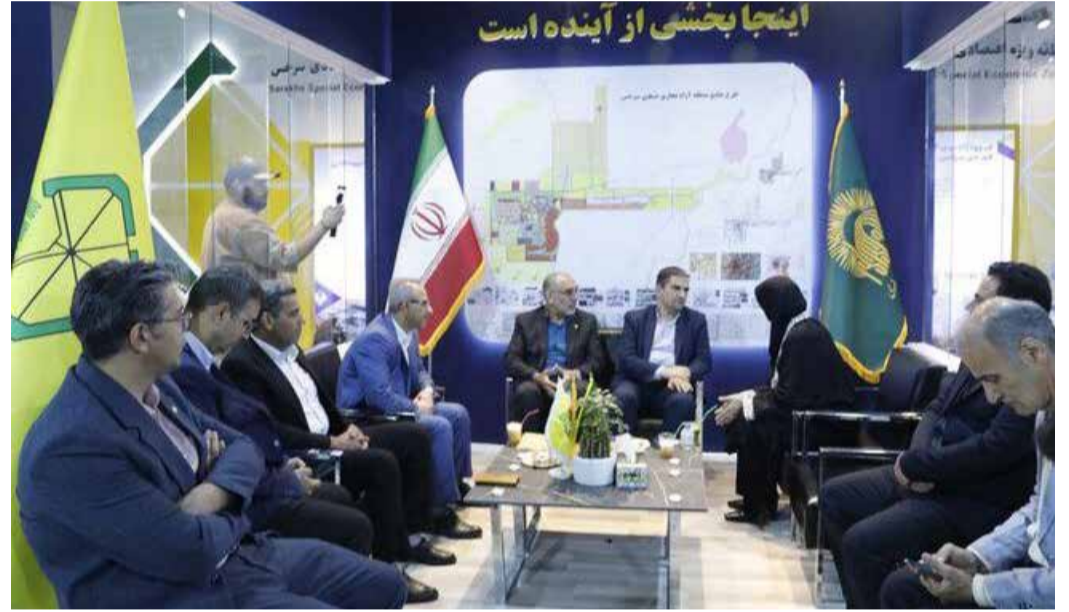
"Anzali has the potential to become a miniature Iran, a space where foreign tourists and traders can familiarize themselves with Iran's cultural diversity whilst benefitting from the free zone infrastructure for handicraft trade," Jalali pointed out. The deputy minister stressed the need to bolster export infra-

structure, noting that "establishing a specialized customs office for handicrafts, standardizing products, and enhancing artisans' commercial knowledge are our top priorities in this region." Taati-Moghaddam revealed plans for the country's largest handicraft complex in Anzali, centered around wickerwork produced in the national wickerwork village of Fashtake. "This complex, involving more than 1,800 artisans, will be operational by the end of the current year, serving as a platform for training, production, exhibition and export of handicrafts," he stated. He also announced the launch of Antonov-26 cargo flights between Rasht and a Russian province, with a capacity of six tons, scheduled bi-weekly specifically for transporting handicrafts to target markets around the Caspian Sea.

The deputy minister highlighted the establishment of a public joint-stock handicraft export

development company that will enter the capital market. "This company can play a key role in attracting investors and transform Anzali into one of the country's main gateways for handicraft exports," she explained. Iran's handicraft exports have reached \$224 million in the current Persian calendar year, with an equal amount estimated to have been exported through suitcase trade. The government is actively working to remove barriers to handicraft exports, with the resolution of foreign exchange commitments in collaboration with the Central Bank being a major step forward.

● IRNA



Jalali emphasized that free zones, particularly Anzali, offer unparalleled capacity for implementing economic diplomacy based on culture due to their

proximity to important markets like Russia. "Iranian handicrafts are not just commodities but living narratives of the country's history, art,

and ecosystem, which have eager audiences in today's world," she remarked, describing handicrafts as a vital link between economy and tourism.

Legacy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal

Iran pays tribute to 'poet of the East'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran held a commemorative conference celebrating the literary and philosophical legacy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal at Tehran's Art Bureau on Friday, bringing together scholars and poets from Iran and Pakistan to explore the influential thinker's multifaceted contributions.

Organized by ECO Cultural Institute and Art Bureau, the program featured speeches by distinguished Iranian scholars Mohammad Baqaei, Mohammad Reza Sangari, and Zahid Munir,

who holds the Urdu language chair at University of Tehran, on various aspects of Iqbal's thought and literary works. The event also featured poetry recitations by Iranian and Pakistani poets dedicated to Iqbal, IRIB news Agency reported.

"Iqbal Lahori is like the Rumi of our time," said Sangari during the conference. "He thoroughly understood Iranian philosophy and was influenced by great figures such as Sohrevardi, Avicenna, and Mulla Sadra".

Mohammad Baqaei, a prominent Iqbal scholar, expressed disappointment

over the lack of involvement from the Pakistani Embassy in recent commemorative events. He emphasized Iqbal's complex personality, describing him as "the most Iranian non-Iranian" who played a role for Persian language and culture in the subcontinent similar to what Ferdowsi did for Iran.

"Iqbal was a religious intellectual who accepted modern rational values while updating religious thought for contemporary times," Baqaei noted, adding that many themes found in modern Persian poetry can be traced back to Iqbal's work.

Saeed Lashgari, Deputy for Provincial Affairs at Art Bureau, highlighted Iqbal's role as a cultural bridge between Iran and Pakistan. "Iqbal's personality serves as a cultural bridge between Iran and Pakistan. He played a prominent role in expanding cultural and literary interactions between the two countries".

The event also featured a small exhibition displaying 60 book titles on Iqbal published by the ECO Cultural Institute. This conference follows a tradition of Iqbal commemorations in Iran, including previous events held at Tehran Uni-



versity and other academic institutions. Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), known as the "Poet of the East," is revered for his philosophical and poetic works that helped reshape Muslim thought in the early 20th century. His message of Islamic unity and revival continues to resonate across the Muslim world.

Printing industry drives five centuries of change: Iran's culture minister



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (center) pose for a group photo at a ceremony held at Bank Melli Iran's Printing and Publishing Company in Tehran on May 1, 2025. ● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi on Friday called the printing industry the "driving force" behind every major revolution of the past five centuries, crediting print with shaping the modern world.

Speaking at a ceremony marking International Workers' Day at Bank Melli Iran's Printing and Publishing Company, Salehi paid tribute to workers lost in the Shahid Rajaei Port incident, IRNA reported.

Salehi described print workers as "artists" and said humanity has seen two major turning points: First, the discovery of fire, and second, the invention of printing. He said the latter allowed people to "discover and express their infinite human dimensions."

"Printing has been the engine behind all modern revolutions," Salehi said, naming the Renaissance, the 17th-century scientific revolution, political upheavals in France, Russia and China, as well as the telecommunications, electronic, digital

and artificial intelligence revolutions. In each case, print played a "pivotal and driving" role, he said. Salehi called print "not just an episode in life, but the dawn of humanity's continuous movement" over the past 500 years. He praised the industry as "art and even beyond art," noting that the "fabric of many great arts is tied to printing." He also called it "culture and beyond culture," saying print is woven into books, media and advertising, and "industry and beyond industry," as many sectors depend on it. Workers in printing, Salehi said, "hold a lofty position" and "help humanity along many paths of progress." Printing, invented in the mid-15th century, is widely recognized for fueling the spread of knowledge and sparking the modern era.

Iranian play to be staged at Tajikistan's int'l theater festival



Arts & Culture Desk

An acclaimed Iranian play is set to take the stage at Tajikistan's International Festival of Professional Theaters this week, according to Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The play, 'Fox Hunting Manners,' written by Ebrahim Adelnia and directed by Mohammad Shakeri, will represent Iran at the festival in Dushanbe from May 1 to May 7, IRNA reported. Nadereh Rezai, Iran's Deputy Minister

for Artistic Affairs, arrived in Tajikistan's capital on Friday to attend the festival and hold talks with senior Tajik officials in the fields of culture and the arts. Upon her arrival, she was welcomed by Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan Manuchehr Sharifzoda, and Iranian embassy representatives.

'Fox Hunting Manners' drew "widespread acclaim" at Iran's 43rd Fajr International Theater Festival earlier this year, where it was hailed by critics and audiences alike for its powerful storytelling and direction.

The Dushanbe festival, now in its third edition, brings together theater troupes from across the region and beyond, aiming to "strengthen cultural ties" and promote artistic innovation. The Iranian delegation's participation underscores ongoing efforts to boost bilateral cooperation in the arts, with both countries emphasizing the "significance" of such exchanges for their cultural sectors.

The Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance said the festival "offers a unique opportunity" for Iranian artists to reach new audiences and engage with their international peers.