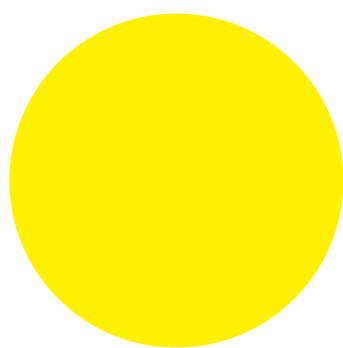


Iran, Qatar news agencies sign cooperation agreement

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Iran neither retreats from principles in talks, nor seeks tension: *Pezeshkian*

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New phase of Iran's Shetab linkage to Russia's Mir unveiled

CBI: Monetary, banking collaboration with neighbors on agenda



Economy Desk

The second phase of linking Iran's Shetab payment system to its Russian counterpart, Mir, was unveiled on Tuesday during a ceremony attended by senior Central Bank officials and diplomats from both countries at the Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s headquarters in Tehran. The new phase aligns Iran with global standards by enabling NFC-based mobile payments for Russian citizens' bank cards in Iran, ISNA reported. During the unveiling ceremony, CBI Governor Mohammad Reza Farzin said "monetary and banking cooperation with neighboring nations is a priority," adding that the institution is working to establish new frameworks for regional collaboration. He stressed that the Central Bank's monetary and banking initiatives operate independently of indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States, which held the 4th round of indirect talks in the Omani capital of Muscat on Sunday, focusing on Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions against Tehran.

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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

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Visitors browse books on display at the 36th Tehran International Book Fair on May 13, 2025.

IQNA

From Gulf of Mexico to Persian Gulf Trump's dangerous game with world map

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

As whispers of revived nuclear diplomacy emerge and the US signals a pause in regional strikes, an unexpected controversy brews. Reports suggest Donald Trump may use his Middle East tour, now underway, to announce a provocative renaming of the Persian Gulf—a move that could shake diplomatic foundations

and ignite nationalist backlash. Is this just symbolic theater, or part of a deeper geopolitical game? And how could a name—centuries old and internationally recognized—become the next flashpoint in US-Iran tensions? Check out page 4 where Iran Daily has unpacked the stakes behind a name that carries far more than history.

See page 4 >



Archaeological digs at 6,000-year-old city of Chegha Sofla

Unveiling Persian Gulf's ancient roots

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Foolad outclass Taichung Bank to top Pool C

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Iran's kidney stone rate high, expert warns of risk factors

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Iran neither retreats from principles in talks, nor seeks tension: *Pezeshkian*



President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a meeting with a number of Iranian lawmakers in Tehran on May 13, 2025.
● president.ir

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that Iran would neither back down from its principles in the ongoing nuclear talks with the United States, nor would it seek tension.

In a meeting with a number of Iranian lawmakers, Pezeshkian said the negotiations are carried out in full coordination with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

"We have not tied the people's livelihood and living conditions to the talks, nor will we ever do so," the Iranian president added.

Since April 12, the two countries have held four rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear program and removal of sanctions imposed on Iran.

Iran described the latest round of the talks held on Sunday as "difficult but useful" while a senior US official said Washington was "encouraged" and both sides confirmed plans for future negotiations.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem

Gharibabadi, who is a senior member of Iranian delegation in the negotiations, on Tuesday gave some details of the fourth round of the talks in Oman.

Gharibabadi said the Iranian side criticized the contradictory positions of the American officials and the sanctions recently imposed on Iran.

Respecting Iran's red lines

Gharibabadi also said the Iranian delegation underlined that reaching an agreement depends on respecting Iran's red lines.

"Therefore, if the Americans are after zero enrichment (in Iran), we see no need to continue the negotiations."

The US officials, including Washington's chief negotiator Steve Witkoff have called Iran's uranium enrichment a red line for the US.

Witkoff said on Friday that Iran's "enrichment facilities have to be dismantled."

In a separate meeting on Sunday, Pezeshkian clarified that the Islamic Republic found the demand for dismantlement of its entire nuclear infrastructure "unacceptable."

He underscored that Iran would not give up its nuclear achievements, particularly in the realm of peaceful energy.

Pezeshkian stressed that Tehran is serious in the negotiations and seeks to reach an agreement to put an end to decades of tensions on the issue.

He assured that Iran has never pursued, is not pursuing, and will never pursue nuclear weapons.

Regarding the uranium enrichment, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who leads the Iran's delegation in negotiations, has also said it is absolutely non-negotiable. But he said that Iran may be open to limit the level and volume of enrichment as a confidence-building move over a specified period.

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Mohammad Eslami stressed that, "The path of nuclear progress (in Iran) is clear, peaceful, and unstoppable — something the enemies have repeatedly admitted to."

Iran currently enriches uranium to 60 percent purity — far above the 3.67 percent limit set in the 2015 deal.

US, Saudi Arabia sign \$142b arms deal as Trump begins Middle East tour

International Desk

US President Donald Trump signed a host of economic and bilateral cooperation agreements in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, including a \$142b arms deal, as he kicked off a four-day Middle East trip that will also include Qatar and the UAE.

The White House released details on some of the US-Saudi agreements signed by Trump and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, describing them as "historic and transformative."

The deals include nearly \$142b in defense sales — what the White House called the largest-ever agreement of its kind — as well as tens of billions in energy and technology investments, which it says are "just a few of the many transformative deals" reached.

Altogether, the agreements are part of a broader package the White House said will total \$600bn.

"I really believe we like each

other a lot," Trump told crown prince, the Saudi de facto ruler. "We have the biggest business leaders in the world here today and they're going to walk away with a lot of cheques," Trump told the prince.

For "the United States, it's probably two million jobs that we're talking about," Trump said.

They signed more than a dozen agreements to increase cooperation between their governments' militaries, justice departments and cultural institutions. Additional economic agreements were to be inked later Tuesday at a US-Saudi investment conference convened for the occasion.

The White House said that Saudi company DataVolt will invest \$20 billion in artificial intelligence-related sites in the United States, while tech firms including Google will invest in both countries — welcome news for Saudi Arabia which has long faced restrictions in US advanced technology.

Visits to Qatar, UAE

Trump picked the kingdom for his first stop, because it has pledged to make big investments in the US, but he ended up traveling to Italy last month for Pope Francis' funeral. Riyadh was the first overseas stop of his first term.

The three countries on Trump's itinerary — Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — are places where the Trump Organization, run by Trump's two oldest sons, is developing major real estate projects. They include a high-rise tower in Jeddah, a luxury hotel in Dubai and a golf course and villa complex in Qatar.

Before the trip, Trump announced Washington was halting a nearly two-month US airstrike campaign against Yemen, saying Yemen has pledged to stop attacking ships along a vital global trade route.

Trump leaves Israel in the dark

The US administration didn't no-



tify Israel — which the Yemen's Armed Forces continue to target — of the agreement before Trump publicly announced it. It was the latest example of Trump leaving the Israelis in the dark about his administration's negotiations with common adversaries.

In March, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wasn't notified by the administration until after talks



US President Donald Trump (L) and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman applaud after the signing of agreements during a bilateral meeting in Riyadh on May 13, 2025.

● [BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP](#)

began with Hamas about the war in Gaza. And Netanyahu found out about the ongoing US nuclear talks with Iran

only when Trump announced them during an Oval Office visit by the Israeli leader last month.

"Israel will defend itself by itself," Netanyahu said last week following Trump's Yemen truce announcement. "If others join us — our American friends — all the better."

William Wechsler, senior director of the Rafik Hariri Center and Middle East Programs at the Atlantic Council, said Trump's decision to skip Israel on his first Middle East visit is remarkable.

Trump, meanwhile, hopes to restart his first-term effort to normalize relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Trump's Abraham Accords effort led to Sudan, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco agreeing to normalize relations with Israel.

But Riyadh has made clear that in exchange for normalization it wants US security guarantees, assistance with the kingdom's nuclear program and progress on a pathway to Palestinian statehood.

Iran welcomes PKK dissolution as 'important step'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday welcomed the dissolution of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), calling it "an important step towards rejecting violence and strengthening security."

"We hope that the completion of this process will lead to the promotion of stability and peace in Turkey and the region," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said in a statement.

The PKK, founded in the late 1970s by Abdullah Ocalan, on Monday announced its dissolution and the end of its four-decade armed struggle against Turkey, which has killed more than 40,000 people.

"The PKK 12th Congress decided to

dissolve the PKK's organizational structure... and end the armed struggle," Firat news agency reported it as saying in the closing declaration of a congress held last week in northern Iraq, where the group is based.

Kurds make up some 20% of Turkey's 86 million population. The PKK held the congress in response to a February call to disband from its jailed leader Ocalan, who has been imprisoned on an island south of Istanbul since 1999.

The PKK's decision could boost NATO member Turkey's political and economic stability and encourage moves to ease tensions in neighboring Iraq and also in Syria, where Kurdish forces are allied with US forces.

Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), a PKK offshoot founded in 2004, has



been also involved in operations against Iran over the past two decades.

The group is labelled a terrorist organization by Iran, Turkey and the US. The decision was welcomed by many countries in the world as well as the European Union and the United Nations.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hailed the PKK move, calling it an "important decision for maintaining peace and fraternity" in the country.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



2nd mining, mineral industries exhibition opens in southern Tehran

Iran's 'mineral paradise' a push to give momentum to geological tourism

Economy Desk

The 2nd specialized exhibition for mining, mineral industries, mining machinery, road construction, civil engineering, related parts, and equipment, as well as the second exhibit for foundry, molding, component manufacturing, machinery, and affiliated industries, opened on Tuesday at Tehran's Shahr-e Aftab Exhibition Center. Hosting 100 companies, the four-day event aims to showcase the latest advancements, technologies, and machinery in mining and foundry sectors, providing a unique platform for interaction among producers, experts, investors, and buyers, IRNA reported.

The mining exhibition focuses on mining, road construction, and civil engineering machinery, featuring cutting-edge equipment such as excavators, bulldozers, loaders, dump trucks, mining trucks, drilling rigs, and crushing systems. Concurrently, the foundry, molding, and component manufacturing exhibition highlights innovations in component production,

machinery, raw materials, molding tools, and engineering services, playing a pivotal role in advancing Iran's foundry industry. The participation of leading companies underscores the event's importance in strengthening supply chains, reducing import dependency, and enhancing domestic production quality.

Iran's 81 mineral types

At the opening ceremony, Ali-reza Shahidi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Iran Mineral Production and Supply Company, stated, "Iran boasts diverse mineral resources, with 81 types of minerals. Advanced technologies have been applied to these reserves while preserving their intrinsic value, making them available to industries." Shahidi added, "Iran's geological wonders have led international observers to call it a 'mineral paradise.'" Emphasizing that mining should not solely focus on mineral extraction, he added, "We must maximize the use of mines and prioritize tourism in the mineral sector." Highlighting Iran's iron ore pro-



duction capacity of 165 million tons, Shahidi warned, "Our iron ore reserves will be insufficient within the next decade." "Current mining depths are limited to 300-400 meters, while the richest mineral deposits lie at 700 meters. Our mines also

hold strategic mineral diversity," he further explained. Shahidi stressed the rising global shift toward clean energy and electric batteries, saying, "Lead is no longer prioritized as a mineral resource. Instead, copper and silver are

critical for automotive production. We must move beyond cathode production and drive the copper industry toward downstream sectors. For instance, China now produces batteries with 50-year lifespans using copper."

15th largest mineral producer

Abbas Taqdisinejad, CEO of Shahr-e Aftab Exhibition Center, said during the opening, "Iran's diverse mineral reserves are a 'national treasure.' We must advance in exploration, extraction, and utilization." Taqdisinejad highlighted Iran's position as the 15th-largest mineral-rich country globally, adding, "Mining is the backbone of industrial development and should replace oil as the primary revenue generator. While 26% of Iran's exports come from minerals, the sector has grown only 1-2% annually in recent years." Citing outdated equipment and underutilized domestic and foreign investment potential, he stated, "The 7th Development Plan forecasts 13% growth for mining. Achieving this requires greater coordination among stakeholders to attract investment." Taqdisinejad also emphasized the foundry sector's critical role, noting its "close ties to mining and mineral industries."

New phase of ...

"Through the SEPAM system (electronic financial messaging system), we can connect with any country's banking messaging platform without relying on SWIFT," Farzin stated.

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Call for NBD membership

The CBI chief highlighted Iran's recent diplomatic focus on strengthening ties with BRICS members — particularly Russia — and regional nations through cultural and economic partnerships. "No trade or economic relationship can thrive without robust monetary and banking linkages," he asserted. The Central Bank governor noted, "We began engaging with BRICS three years ago and have formally applied to join the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). This will soon be announced at the bank's assembly." He underscored that the Mir-Shetab connectivity project reflects a "shared

commitment to expanding Iran-Russia trade and economic relations." This initiative is part of a broader bilateral cooperation package, initially launched by linking the two nations' financial networks. "This allowed us to eliminate SWIFT from Iran-Russia transactions and later expand brokerage relations. Today, we have strong ties with major Russian banks," Farzin explained. Subsequent steps included establishing direct financial channels, culminating in a monetary agreement between Iran and Russia. "Implementing this required advanced technologies and took considerable time," he added. The first phase of the Shetab-Mir integration was unveiled on November 11, 2024, enabling Iranian tourists to withdraw rubles from Russian ATMs. Farzin at the time noted that the project is divided into three phases, with Phase



One launching in early August, 2024). Four Iranian banks have already adopted the system, four others completed successful trials, and remaining banks will gradually join.

Shetab-Mir integration benefits 10K students

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali emphasized in a video message that the linkage of



The photo shows the inauguration ceremony of the second phase of linking Iran's Shetab payment system to its Russian counterpart, Mir, in Tehran, Iran on May 13, 2025.

● IRNA

payment systems would significantly benefit over 10,000 Iranian students in Russia.

"Iranians can now withdraw rubles via Shetab cards in Russia, and Russian Mir cards will soon be activated in Iran," he said.

Jalali confirmed that specialized banking working groups have convened in Tehran and Moscow, with relations set to accelerate this year.

"The Central Bank's efforts are progressing well, and monetary and banking hurdles between the two nations will be resolved this year," he concluded.

Deputy Minister:

OIETAI ready to facilitate stronger presence of foreign investors in Iran

Economy Desk

The Organization for Investment, Economic & Technical Assistance of Iran (OIETAI) is prepared to expedite legal processes and provide technical assistance to create conditions for a more active presence of foreign investors in the country, said the head of the organization. Abolfazl Kodehei, during a meeting on Tuesday with Hassan Argi, Iran's commercial attaché in Hungary, emphasized invest-

ment procedures, adding, "Iran's commercial attachés in Hungary play a valuable role in attracting foreign investors. We therefore urge them to intensify their efforts in line with organizational objectives." The deputy minister of economy also stressed the necessity of greater cohesion among executive bodies to realize this year's slogan of "Investment for Production," stating, "Convergence between the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) and

the OIETAI can have a significant impact."

Strengthening economic cooperation with Hungary

Referring to his recent meeting with the Hungarian Ambassador to Tehran, Kodehei remarked, "Given the economic potential between the two countries, there is a suitable environment for expanding cooperation across various sectors." "Since the Ministry of Economy chairs the joint economic

commission between the two countries, we are prepared to expedite and pursue matters related to Hungarian investors by providing exceptional legal facilities," he underlined.

Argi also expressed hope that he could "serve as an effective element in advancing exports, not only in trade and commerce but also in the field of investment." "Given the approach of the Head of the Trade Development Organization and the management



of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Hungary, effective steps can be taken to attract investors from Hungary

and other parts of the European Union through collaboration with Iranian ambassadors in target countries," he said.

From Gulf of Mexico to Persian Gulf

Trump's dangerous game with world map



By Navid Kamali
Strategic affairs analyst

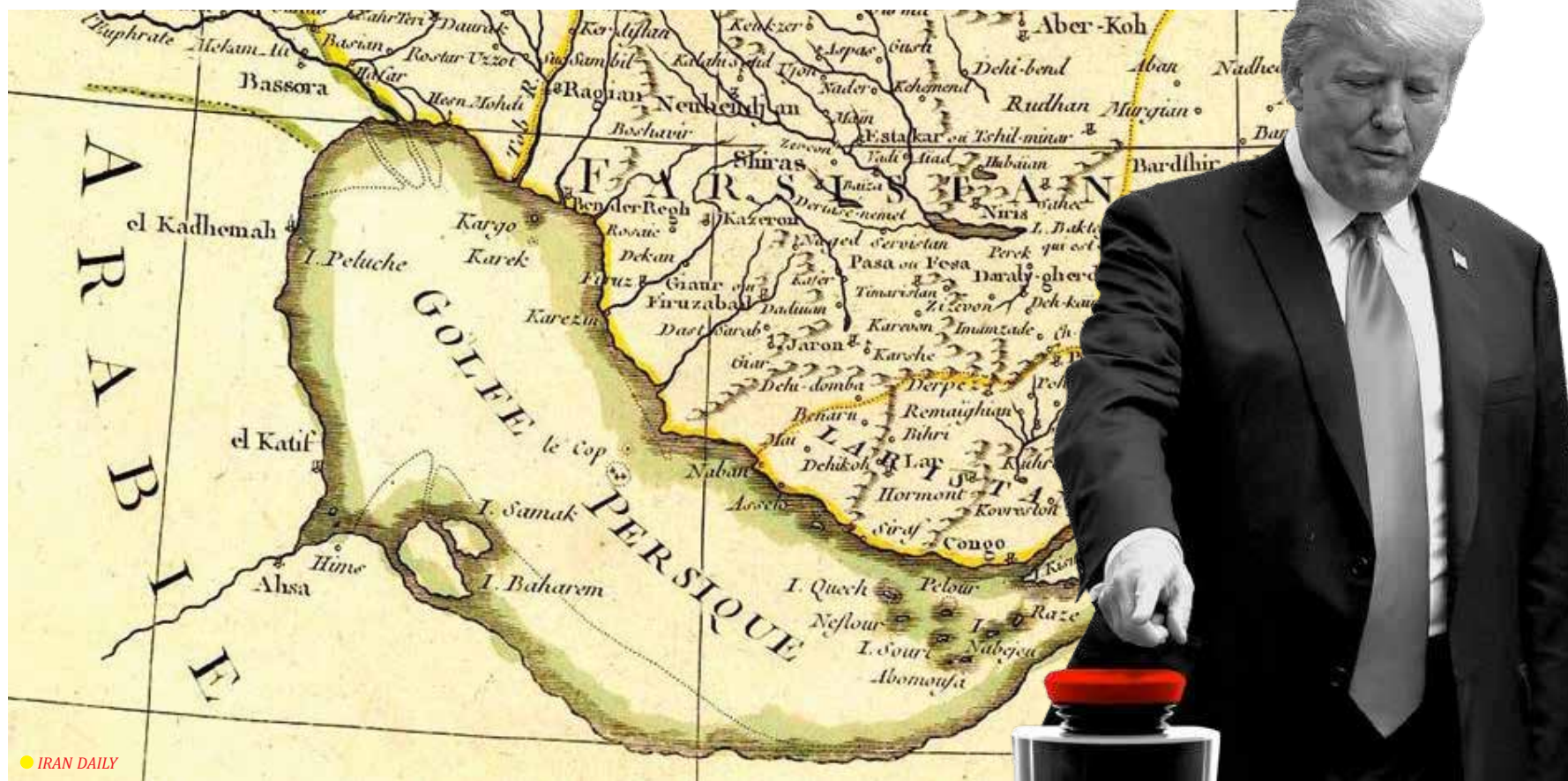
OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Amidst the current regional clamor, where whispers of progress in nuclear negotiations between our country and the United States are heard on one hand, and the White House speaks of halting military attacks on Yemen on the other, a thought-provoking and alarming rumor has been circulated by media outlets with alleged connections to White House insiders, claiming that Donald Trump intends to announce the re-naming of the historic Persian Gulf during his upcoming regional tour.

This news, yet to be officially denied, might at first glance be interpreted merely as a political gesture to appease Arab hosts. However, a deeper, strategic look reveals it as a piece of a more complex puzzle and an indicator of multi-layered objectives in US foreign policy towards the region, and particularly towards our country. Neglecting the dimensions of this identity-based conspiracy could pose significant geopolitical and geostrategic threats to our national interests and territorial integrity, and it is essential to meticulously analyze its roots and consequences with full vigilance.

The name Persian Gulf is deeply rooted in history, and numerous documents and maps, from antiquity to the present day, attest to this undeniable fact. Great geographers like Strabo and Ptolemy referred to this waterway as the "Persian Gulf," and this nomenclature has remained valid and recognized in international forums and official documents, including at the United Nations, up to the modern era. Even in past decades, the official stance of the United States has consistently been based on the use of the name "Persian Gulf" as this name was recognized as the official American term since 1917.

However, since the 1960s, with the rise of Arab nationalism, some countries along the southern shores of this waterway began efforts to substitute it with the fabricated name "Arabian Gulf". These efforts, though never able to undermine the historical and legal legitimacy of the name "Persian Gulf," have always been used as a tool for political pressure and an attempt to distort the region's historical identity. Concurrently, our country's sensitivity to this issue is such that actions such as the removal of the "Persian" suffix from "Gulf" by The Economist magazine or the Louvre Museum have been met with strong diplomatic reactions from our country.



Playing with names, playing with fire

Now, the sudden rumor that the Trump administration is changing the name of the Persian Gulf, especially while sensitive nuclear negotiations are underway and signs of efforts to reduce tensions on some regional fronts are visible, cannot be coincidental or merely an act to appease Arab allies. Rather, it must be analyzed within a broader strategy with multiple objectives.

The timing of this news with the nuclear talks strengthens the speculation that the US administration intends to use this as a psychological and political pressure tactic against our negotiating team. Creating an identity-based controversy and stirring Iranian national sentiments could divert focus from the main issues of the negotiations and poison the atmosphere of the talks. If realized, this action could be seen as a sign of "hostile intent" and negatively impact the negotiation process.

Let us note that Trump's visit to Arab countries in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, is undoubtedly aimed at consolidating regional alliances and advancing arms deals. Announcing such a decision on Saudi soil could be seen as a major concession to these countries and an attempt to secure more financial and political support for US regional policies. Previously, in 2010, Andrew Shapiro, then-assistant secretary of state, used the term Arabian Gulf while announcing a major arms sale to Saudi Arabia, indicating the connection of this issue to Washington's econom-

ic and military interests. This incident, given the repeated use of this term by Kurt Campbell, another then-assistant secretary of state, was seen less as a slip of the tongue and more as a sign of a potential policy shift.

Of course, we know that one of the key US objectives has been, and continues to be, advancing the normalization of relations between Arab countries and Israel. Creating a powerful common enemy and fueling identity and historical disputes can pave the way for these countries to move closer to Tel Aviv. In other words, the attempt to change the name of the Persian Gulf not only negatively impacts Arab-Iranian relations but also provides an unexpected opportunity for Israel to connect with the Arab world while simultaneously advancing its Judaization and de-Arabization agenda, particularly concerning Gaza.

Part of bigger puzzle

The Trump administration, like many others, at times resorts to creating foreign crises or controversies to divert public opinion from domestic problems and challenges. Raising such a sensitive issue can divert media and public attention, at least for a while, from other matters. Furthermore, this action could also be a way to gauge the sensitivity and reaction of our country and the Iranian public to an assault on their national identity. A decisive and unified response from the Iranian nation, across all political spectrums and preferences, can send a clear message to the architects of this plot. As in the past, this attempt to tamper with the name "Persian



The sudden rumor that the Trump administration is changing the name of the Persian Gulf, especially while sensitive nuclear negotiations are underway and signs of efforts to reduce tensions on some regional fronts are visible, cannot be coincidental or merely an act to appease Arab allies. Rather, it must be analyzed within a broader strategy with multiple objectives. The timing of this news with the nuclear talks strengthens the speculation that the US administration intends to use this as a psychological and political pressure tactic against our negotiating team.

Gulf" has been met with a strong and unified reaction from Iranians worldwide, and even Iranian-American organizations with political views vastly different from the Islamic Republic have been united on this issue.

Gulf of Mexico experience

Interestingly, this is not the first time the Trump administration has considered changing established geographical names. Shortly after entering the White House, the US president issued an executive order to change the name "Gulf of Mexico" to "Gulf of America". This action faced widespread negative reaction, and the Associated Press refused to accept the name change, which led to restricted access for AP reporters to White House events. Ultimately, a US federal judge ruled that the administration's action against the Associated Press violated the First Amendment (freedom of speech) and ordered the restrictions to be lifted. This precedent shows that such actions, rather than being rooted in geographical or historical logic, stem from a specific political approach and an attempt to

impose unilateral will.

Persian Gulf, national unity

Failure to confront any attempt to distort the name "Persian Gulf," beyond being a blow to national pride, could have profound geopolitical and geostrategic consequences for our country. Acceptance or silence regarding a name change means disregarding centuries of documented history and international records. In the long term, this could strengthen other countries' claims regarding border and sovereignty issues in the region, particularly concerning our country and the three islands. Any retreat in the face of potential US action would deal a major blow to our national security and regional standing. Although, as history has shown, the issue of the "Persian Gulf" name has always been a unifying factor for Iranians of all political leanings, and even Jason Brodsky of the anti-Iran organization UANI emphasizes that "one thing unites Iranians: ensuring it is called the Persian Gulf." National vigilance against these efforts is essential. The repetition of a fabricated name in media and official documents, even if lacking historical and

legal validity, can gradually lead to its normalization in global public opinion and marginalize authentic historical narratives.

Against identity-based conspiracies

In the face of this complex conspiracy, designed with multiple objectives, adopting a firm, intelligent stance based on historical and legal principles and evidence is vital. This stance must be taken at various levels, from official and active diplomacy in international forums to enlightening global public opinion and strengthening national cohesion.

Let us remember that the "Persian Gulf" is not just a name on a map; it is an inseparable part of our identity, history, culture, and national heritage, and a symbol of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any attempt to distort this name is, in fact, an attempt to tarnish this precious identity and heritage. However, in conclusion, one cannot overlook the shortcomings of the country's overseas cultural institutions and their lack of planning and waste of resources in safeguarding the "Persian Gulf" — an issue whose examination requires another opportunity.



Speedboats belonging to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) sail in the Persian Gulf during a naval exercise.

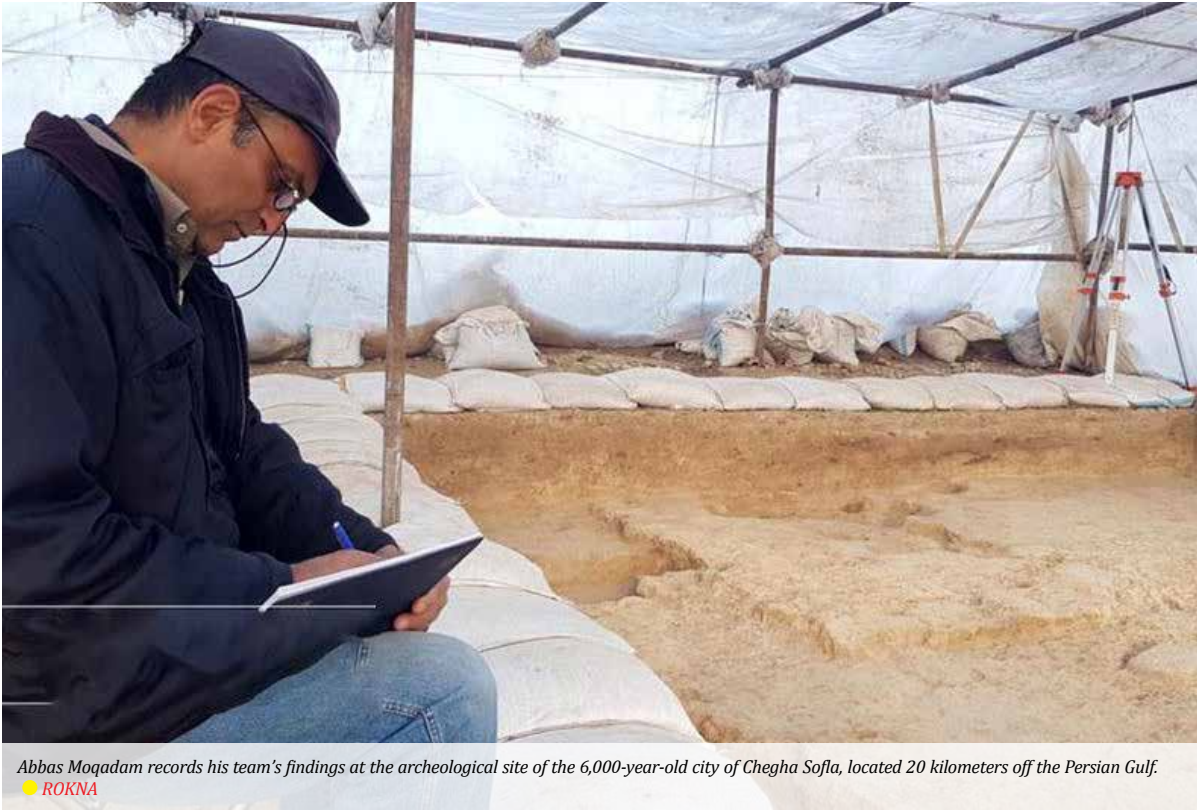
Archaeological digs at 6,000-year-old city of Chegha Sofla Unveiling Persian Gulf’s ancient roots

PERSPECTIVE

For years, some neighboring countries have tried to pass off a fabricated name for the Persian Gulf, even as excavations in Chegha Sofla, in the Zuhreh Plain, bring to light the direct influence of Iranian history and civilization on the region. The findings from this ancient city — the most compelling evidence yet of the Persian Gulf’s connection to Iran — spell out how, over millennia, places like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Occupied Palestine, and Mesopotamia fell under the sway of Iran’s 6,000-year-old civilization. So far, archaeologists have only dug up a handful of the 5,000 ancient graves at the site.

UAE’s cultural echoes 3,000 years on

Archaeologists at Chegha Sofla have come across stelae (carved stones) depicting two goats facing each other. Three thousand years later, this motif turned up as two Arabian oryx antelopes on the graves of Al Ain. Abbas Moqadam, head of the Chegha Sofla excavation, told Iran newspaper: “The UAE claimed at UNESCO that the Al Ain cemetery had a rich cultural background and had it listed as a world heritage site. But the stelae at Chegha Sofla date back over three thousand years before the images at Al Ain. The Al Ain graves show two oryxes facing each other, but in Chegha Sofla, it’s two goats.” Moqadam added, “The difference is that here in Chegha Sofla, the two goats are in a religious setting, while there in the Al Ain cemetery, they’re on a grave. So, we’re dealing with a deeply rooted tradition in the ancient region, and this tradition and civilization clearly stem from somewhere. There are no other reports. So, we have the oldest depiction at Chegha Sofla, which points to its role as the cradle of the region’s civilization.”



Abbas Moqadam records his team's findings at the archeological site of the 6,000-year-old city of Chegha Sofla, located 20 kilometers off the Persian Gulf. ● ROKNA

Impact on history of Hazor, Occupied Palestine

Archaeologists have also stumbled upon figurines in both the eastern and western parts of the Arabian Peninsula, showing Chegha Sofla’s influence. The stelae unearthed at Chegha Sofla tie in with ancient finds at Hazor, in Occupied Palestine, dating to the Bronze Age (around 1200 BCE). The Chegha Sofla stelae go back 3,800 years earlier than those at Hazor. But the story doesn’t end there. Moqadam explained, “In the Uruk culture of Mesopotamia, there’s a ritual stone vessel called the ‘Warka Vase’ with ceremonial scenes like offerings to a temple. We dug up an identical vessel, made of pottery, at Chegha Sofla. Anyone familiar with Mesopotamian art knows how much the Warka Vase drew on Chegha Sofla’s influence. The Chegha Sofla vessel predates the Warka Vase by 700 years.” Moqadam lined up the grave goods at Chegha Sofla against those from contemporary Mesopotamian sites like Ubaid and

Ur. He said, “This comparison shows that Chegha Sofla’s grave goods are extremely rich, pointing to a wealthy city with broad connections across the ancient world. These people could bring in marble from eastern Iran, metals from the east and the central plateau, decorative stones from Afghanistan, and obsidian from Lake Van in Turkey. But Mesopotamian graves are poor — mostly pottery. For the first time, archaeologists in the fifth millennium BCE are face to face with such an abundance of grave goods.”

Window into ancient Persian Gulf

Chegha Sofla lies just 20 kilometers from the Persian Gulf. Moqadam believes the city opens a window onto how ancient the Persian Gulf is. Before archaeologists cracked the code of Chegha Sofla’s mysterious world by entering its brick tombs, only a few scraps of the Persian Gulf’s history had been brought to light. The oldest finds linked to the Persian Gulf were a handful of Paleolithic caves in Hormozgan and a

few small fifth-millennium BCE sites in Bushehr, most of them inland, with only one or two right on the coast. In historical times, the Elamite city of Liyan and, later, the Islamic port of Siraf were excavated on the Persian Gulf’s shores. Moqadam said, “The cities of Susa and Chegha Sofla are the two most important prehistoric cities, but where is Chegha Sofla? Right next to the Persian Gulf.” He described the Susa excavations as compromised, focused on pulling out artifacts, but said, “Chegha Sofla is being excavated to international standards.” The French excavated Susa and carried off many of its artifacts.

Chegha Sofla’s case for World Heritage status

Chegha Sofla checks off at least four or five of UNESCO’s 10 criteria for World Heritage listing. One is evidence of “a masterpiece of human creative genius,” which archaeologists have tracked down in Chegha Sofla’s 6,000-year-old cemetery and sanctuary. Moqadam calls Chegha Sofla one of the rarest ritual sites from

the fifth millennium BCE. The site’s components are set out in an orderly fashion, with unique symbolism in the arrangement of graves, sanctuary, and pottery. He sees Chegha Sofla as a unique example of a lost civilization and tradition — another UNESCO criterion. “For the first time at Chegha Sofla, we’re confronted with precisely designed graves with partitioned chambers,” Moqadam said. This feature had never turned up in previous digs. In the 6,000-year-old cemetery, ossuaries were worked into the burial architecture. People set aside their ancestors’ bones in these ossuaries out of respect, and later burials took the place of the previous ones. Archaeologists have identified nearly 5,000 graves at the site, but the major discoveries so far come out of just 10 of them — leaving 4,990 graves still untouched.

Bringing Persian Gulf history back into spotlight

Everything about this site calls for turning Chegha Sofla into a museum as soon as possible — a destination for both domestic and interna-

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Chegha Sofla lies just 20 kilometers from the Persian Gulf. Moqadam believes the city opens a window onto how ancient the Persian Gulf is. The findings from this ancient city — the most compelling evidence yet of the Persian Gulf’s connection to Iran — spell out how, over millennia, places like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Occupied Palestine, and Mesopotamia fell under the sway of Iran’s 6,000-year-old civilization.

tional tourists to get to the bottom of the region’s history and see for themselves that those countries pushing a fake name for the Persian Gulf themselves owe a debt to Iran’s great civilization. In 2018, the excavation team, led by Abbas Moqadam, put forward a plan to relocate the village sitting atop the site and convert the site into a museum, submitting it to Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. “The plan is to build a new village, with all its houses and farmland, outside the Chegha Sofla area.” The team insists that villagers settle down nearby so they can cash in on the tourism boom. He said, “The plan takes into account all existing homes and land. We believe a new village should be designed with the region’s needs and Chegha Sofla’s future tourism appeal in mind.” The high number of tourists flocking to see Khatoun — the 6,000-year-old woman from Chegha Sofla, now housed in the Shush Castle Museum — shows the strong interest in visiting Chegha Sofla. Moqadam believes, however, that moving the villagers outside the Zuhreh Plain would bring about social consequences and that locals shouldn’t be cut off from their roots. The team has reviewed the area for the new village and confirmed it lacks historical or cultural remains. They’ve even laid out rules for the height and boundaries of new houses, so the view of Chegha Sofla won’t be marred. Moqadam says, “If officials sign off on the plan, the next step will be to focus on the architecture of the new village and its harmony with Chegha Sofla.” According to him, this architecture could turn the new village into one of the region’s attractions, closely tied to Chegha Sofla’s rich history. Moqadam, who has gone to great lengths to protect Chegha Sofla and highlight its significance, says, “The plan is written so that no rights of the villagers fall by the wayside.” If the authorities give the green light to the archaeological team’s plan, the new Chegha Sofla village could become the first purpose-built settlement focused on cultural heritage and welcoming tourists. The villagers could carve out a new livelihood through eco-tourism alongside farming, holding on to both their name and their bread. After all, these villagers are the original custodians of the oldest city that ties the Persian Gulf to Iran as far back as 4,000 BCE.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Iran.



Graves found at the Chegha Sofla archeological site ● CAMBRIDGE



Vessels found at the Chegha Sofla archeological site ● CAMBRIDGE

AVC Men's Champions League:

Foolad outclass Taichung Bank to top Pool C

AVC – Iran's Foolad Sirjan secured their place on top of Pool C and booked a quarterfinal berth at the inaugural AVC Men's Champions League after an emphatic 3-0 (25-17, 25-14, 25-13) victory over Taichung Bank of Chinese Taipei on Tuesday at the Panasonic Arena in Osaka, Japan.

The newly-crowned Iranian champion showcased their firepower and tactical superiority throughout the match, notching their second straight win and collecting a total of 5 points.

Nakhon Ratchasima QminC VC of Thailand took second place with 4 points, while Taichung Bank, winless in both outings, were eliminated.

French star Earvin Ngapeth and Iranian opposite Mohsen Delavari led the scoring for Foolad with 15 points apiece. Cuban middle-blocker Javier Concepcion added 13 points, while Alireza Abdolhamidi chipped in 11.

Foolad's cohesive offense and formidable net defense restricted Taichung Bank to limited opportunities – no player on the Chinese Taipei side reached double digits, with opposite Chen En-De leading his team with just 6 points.

"I'm very happy with our second win. It was important for us to secure this victory," said Concepcion after the match. "We might



Foolad Sirjan players and staff pose for a photo after a straight-set victory over Taichung Bank at the AVC Men's Champions League in Osaka, Japan, on May 13, 2025.

● AVC

face Shanghai Bright next in the quarterfinals. They're a strong

team with high-level tactics, so we'll need to push even harder and respond with our own strat-

egies. We're excited and ready for the challenge."

Foolad Sirjan started strong-

ly, asserting dominance in the opening set with explosive attacks, well-placed aces, and a

formidable block. Ngapeth, Concepcion, and Delavari proved unstoppable at the net, racking up points with powerful spikes and timely blocks. Although Taichung Bank showed flashes of resilience – most notably through Tseng Mao-Tsung, who came off the bench to contribute a few late points – the Iranians maintained control to close the set convincingly.

The second set saw Foolad Sirjan elevate their intensity. Ngapeth delivered a series of explosive hits, while Delavari impressed with sharp cross-court spikes and solid blocking. Despite efforts from Liu You-Lin and Li Yuan to stabilize Taichung Bank's attack, the relentless Iranian assault overwhelmed the defense, sealing another comfortable set.

Taichung Bank fought hard in the third set, attempting to break through the Iranian wall with a renewed offensive push. Wen Yi-Kai sparked some hope with aggressive attacks, but Foolad Sirjan's experience and depth proved decisive. Ngapeth and Delavari continued to dominate, combining for a string of aces and kills that left no room for a comeback. Foolad Sirjan closed the set and the match with ease.

Iranian Azadegan League:

Four-way battle as top-flight promotion race goes down to the wire

Sports Desk

Iranian football fans will be treated to the most thrilling Azadegan League finale in years this Sunday, as four teams vie for promotion alongside Fajr Sepasi to the Persian Gulf Pro League.

An emphatic 4-0 victory over Damash Gilan at home on Monday sealed the second-division title for Fajr, which will be back in the Iranian top flight after 11 years next season.

All eyes will be on Paykan, San'at Naft Abadan, Ario Eslamshahr, and Saipa, which sit second to fifth in the table, respectively – separated by just a single

point heading into the final day.

Farshad Mohammadimehr found the net from the spot in the 13th minute, before Abolfazl Akasheh added a second late in the game to help San'at beat Paykan in Abadan in the penultimate round of fixtures and move level on 58 points with the visiting side.

A superior head-to-head record means San'at will overtake Paykan, should the two sides remain equal on points after their final-day matches.

Paykan will host 11th-placed Mes Kerman on Sunday, with San'at visiting Ario in the Iranian capital.

Ario remained in contention for a top-tier debut after a first-half brace from Shahrar Salari and a Reza Sadri's strike on the hour mark led the club to a 3-0 away win against Shahr-dari Astara. Fourth on 57 points, Ario will hope a first win in five outings leads to another on Sunday.

Saipa is the most high-profile of the lot, having won a memorable top-flight title in 2007 under legendary Iranian striker Ali Daei, who served as player-manager.

Saipa had an Alireza Maleki's strike in the first half to thank for a massive 1-0 win at Mes Kerman on Sunday to

stay in the promotion mix. Saipa head coach Ebrahim Sadeqi, who played an integral part in the title-winning campaign 18 years ago, will hope to see his men claim all points against an unenthusiastic Fajr Sepasi on the final day, tough they will still need the results in the other three games to go their way for a return to the Pro League after four years.

San'at Naft's Farshad Mohammadimehr (1) celebrates with teammates after scoring during a 2-0 victory over Paykan in the Iranian Azadegan League in Abadan, Iran, on May 12, 2025.

● football360.ir



Qasempour given second chance for spot at UWW Worlds

Sports Desk



● IAWFIR

Freestyle wrestler Kamran Qasempour will still fancy his chances of securing a spot in September's World Championships in Zagreb, despite missing the first phase of the Iranian trials in last week's International Takhti Cup in Isfahan.

A top-podium finish in Isfahan would have sealed the Iranian 86kg slot for Qasempour, but a positive COVID-19 test on the eve of the competition jeopardized his bid for a third world gold medal.

However, the Iranian Wrestling Federation justified Qasempour's absence and announced this week that he could still punch his ticket for the Croatian capital with a head-to-head victory over Abolfazl Rahmani on May 27 in Tehran.

Rahmani defeated fellow-Iranian Amirhossein Kavousi 7-1 to walk away with the ultimate prize of the 86kg contests in Isfahan. The 70kg, 74kg, 79kg, and 97kg spots also remain up for grabs, which will be decided through the Iranians' results at the next UWW

Ranking Series event – starting May 29 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Reigning world champion and Olympic silver medalist Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) and Ali Mo'meni (57kg) won the gold medal in their respective events at the Takhti Cup to seal a spot in the Iranian freestyle team.

Joining the duo in the 10-man squad are Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan, Rahman Amouzad, and Amirhossein Firouzpour. Mohammadnejad-Javan will be the Iranian 61kg wrestler at the world event, thanks

to a gold-winning run at the Zagreb Open, as well as an Asian bronze in March. Amouzad, an Olympic silver medalist last year, has been given a shot at a second world 65kg gold after domestic rivals Yassin Rezaei and Ali Khorramdel had below-par runs at the Ranking Series season-opener in February. Firouzpour's impressive run of results in recent months, which has seen him win the Asian and Zagreb Open titles, convinced the Iranian coaching staff to pick him for the world 92kg contests.

Enchanting wilderness of Kuhgol in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province

Iranica Desk

Fresh air and diverse tourist attractions — ranging from towering mountains like Dena and Khami, lush forests, serene lakes, cascading waterfalls, and rejuvenating springs — have transformed Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province into a unique paradise for spring exploration. The region's natural landscape is adorned with a variety of edible and medicinal plants, complemented by the melodic songs of birds and a temperate climate, all enhanced by well-developed recreational infrastructure at Kuhgol Lake. This has made Kuhgol one of the most popular and bustling tourist destinations in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad during the spring season, chtn.ir wrote.

Kuhgol Lake, renowned for its abundant flora and fauna, is considered the most fertile area of eastern Dena. Visitors can witness migratory birds such as ducks, grebes, storks, herons, and egrets gracefully circling the lake's surroundings. The presence of diverse edible and medicinal plants — including wild mushrooms, chamomile, mountain mint, rhubarb, pennyroyal, and a vibrant array of mountain wildflowers — makes Kuhgol a lush habitat bursting with color and life. Its picturesque landscape, abundant with blossoms and thriving greenery, truly lives up to its name as a flourish-



ing garden of flowers and plants. According to Seyyed Mojtaba Amirhosseini, the director general of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, "Since mid-April 2025, the Kuhgol tourist area

of Sisakht has been filled with visitors from across the country during certain hours of the day." He highlighted that, since the beginning of Nowruz (Iranian New Year), the province's diverse attractions — including pristine natural landscapes, historic sites, and religious land-

marks — have attracted thousands of tourists from various regions both within and outside the province. Amirhosseini continued by emphasizing that the northern, cooler areas of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, with their refreshing climate and mountainous

terrain, are among the top destinations for spring and summer tourism, especially attracting visitors from southern Iran. He further pointed out that the development of infrastructure and strategic promotion of tourism capacities — via media outlets and digital platforms — have played

crucial roles in boosting the tourism industry year-round in this scenic region. He listed some of the notable attractions as Yasuj Waterfall, Mehrian Gorge, Yasuj Forest Park, Deh Sheikh Cave, and Tang-e Tamoradi Waterfall, sites that annually draw thousands of visitors during

spring and summer. To reach this earthly paradise, travelers must first arrive in Yasuj, the capital city of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, known for its four-season climate. From Yasuj, after traveling approximately 35 kilometers northwest, visitors arrive at Sisakht. Continuing through Sisakht and after roughly six kilometers, they reach the breathtaking natural beauty of Kuhgol. From the lower part of the Kuhgol, a scenic 30-minute walk through mountain trees and wild flowering shrubs leads visitors to one of Iran's most captivating natural attractions nestled in the heights of the Dena Mountain. At the end of the Kuhgol trail, there is conveniently a parking area for vehicles and various shops where local herbal and food products are sold — ranging from traditional herbal medicines to an assortment of pickles crafted from garden and forest harvests— adding to the area's charm and drawing the attention of many tourists. Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, with its wealth of natural and cultural attractions—featuring 250 natural recreational sites, 300 holy shrines, over 880 registered historical sites, and rich ethnographic elements such as local clothing, dialects, music, and dance — is widely recognized as one of the most prominent tourist destinations in southern Iran.

IRNA



Heritage, natural splendor awaiting development in Sarab Kalan village

Iranica Desk

Sarab Kalan village, situated on the slopes of the Zagros Mountains in Ilam Province, boasts a history spanning approximately 1,500 years. Surrounded by lush greenery, diverse flora and fauna, and located in a region renowned for its favorable climate, this village is endowed with remarkable natural beauty. Ilam Province generally experiences a temperate climate characterized by mild

winters and warm, pleasant summers, making it an ideal environment for eco-tourism and outdoor activities. The area's rich natural environment, combined with Ilam's generally clean air and diverse ecosystems, adds to the village's ecological appeal, ISNA wrote. Despite its rich historical heritage and stunning natural surroundings, this village has remained deprived of essential support in the tourism sector, limiting its

potential for development. In this regard, Hamid Seydi, the rural manager of the village, said, "Located in the northwest of Ilam Province and adjacent to perennial rivers, Sarab Kalan is a village with a permanent population of over 800 residents, complemented by around 500 seasonal visitors. This has designated it as one of the targeted villages for regional tourism development". He underscored the chal-

lenges, "Unfortunately, despite the presence of ancient historical sites, reliable water resources, fertile agricultural lands, and its favorable climate, there has been a lack of serious planning and investment in promoting tourism in this area." He elaborated further, "Historical documents indicate that Sarab Kalan was known as 'Masazan' during the Sassanian era, serving as the administrative center of the region. It is believed to have

been the provincial capital during the reign of King Khosrow I. Evidence of its historical significance can be seen in the remnants of a castle, clear water springs, and local inscriptions." "Most villagers are engaged in agriculture and livestock farming. The area includes approximately 300 hectares of irrigated land and 1,000 hectares of dry land, predominantly owned by local families," he noted. Regarding current invest-

ments, Seydi added that Sarab Kalan Village's Council allocates an annual budget for various needs such as sewage treatment, waste management, and road paving. However, no financial resources have been designated for developing tourism infrastructure, restoring historical sites, or attracting visitors. Addressing the tourism potential, he said that experts specializing in tourism and rural development believe

that, given its strategic geographical location, natural water resources, biodiversity, moderate climate, and rich historical sites, Sarab Kalan could become one of the foremost tourist destinations in western Iran. "However, without careful planning, increased government and private sector investment, and strengthened support for local capacities, these promising opportunities will gradually fade over time," he concluded.



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Tehran Int'l Book Fair spotlights Yemeni culture, religion, and politics



By Hamideh Hosseini
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Yemen is presenting 200 book titles at the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, with a focus on religious and political issues, the Ansarullah movement, and the cultural resilience of the Yemeni people, the head of the Yemeni pavilion told Iran Daily.

Abdulrahman Rajeh said the books aim to introduce Iranian readers to Yemeni history, traditions, and resistance culture. "We've been coming for several years to build understanding between our two nations," he said, adding that visitor interest has been strong.

The Yemeni pavilion offers mostly Arabic-language titles, but Persian-language brochures summarizing the content are available.

Two books in Persian are also on display — one exploring the ideas of Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, founder of the Ansarullah movement, and the other focusing on the group itself.

Visitors can also learn about Yemen's September 21 revolution, the socio-political context surrounding the rise of the Houthis, and the movement's core values.

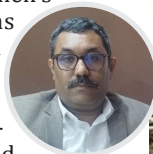
Rajeh described the fair as a "bridge" between Iran and Yemen, helping to "pave the way for deeper cultural awareness." The exhibit also reflects Yemen's solidarity with Palestinians and resistance against foreign military interventions.

"The bravery of the Yemeni people stems from our literature and identity," Rajeh said. He pointed to the role of Ansarul-

lah's leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, as a symbol of defiance. Rajeh praised Iran's strong record in literary translation, noting that many Persian works have been rendered into Arabic and are now read widely in Yemen.

He said this has enhanced Yemenis' knowledge of Iranian history, the Islamic Revolution, and Persian poetry. He also highlighted growing cooperation in publishing and translation between the two countries, saying such efforts could lead to "richer cultural ties."

The Tehran International Book Fair opened on May 7 and runs through May 17, 2025, under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran."



Iran, Qatar news agencies sign cooperation agreement



Arts & Culture Desk

The heads of Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and Qatar's state-run Qatar News Agency (QNA) signed a cooperation agreement in Doha on Tuesday. Hossein Jaberi-Ansari, CEO of IRNA, met with QNA Director-General Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Rumaihi to formalize the deal. The agreement aims to boost media ties between the

two countries through the exchange of news, photos, and video content, IRNA reported. The signing took place in the presence of Iran's ambassador to Qatar, Ali Salehabadi, and other officials from both agencies. The memorandum is expected to "deepen cooperation" and ease access for journalists operating across borders. Describing Tehran-Doha ties as "close," the two sides stressed the need to put the agreement into action across various sectors.

Jaberi-Ansari later toured QNA's newsroom, technical departments, and training facilities, gaining insight into its use of artificial intelligence and current

media projects.

Earlier in his visit, Jaberi-Ansari also held talks with Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al Thani, founder and chairman of Al Jazeera.

The veteran media leader expressed readiness for "full cooperation" with IRNA and affiliated cultural institutions.

Jaberi-Ansari's itinerary included a meeting with Palestinian thinker Azmi Bishara, founder of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.

The two exchanged views on regional developments, including the war in Gaza and what was described as the "legendary resilience" of the Palestinian people.



CEO of the Islamic Republic News Agency, Hossein-Jaberi Ansari (L), and Qatar News Agency Director-General, Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Rumaihi, hold the agreement signed in Doha, Qatar, on May 13, 2025.

● IRNA

Iran's kidney stone rate high, expert warns of risk factors



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iran lies on the "kidney stone belt," with around seven in every 100 Iranians likely to develop kidney stones in their lifetime, according to Amir Hossein Kashi, a urologist and assistant professor at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences.

In an interview with Iran Daily, Kashi explained that Iran's geographic location, climate, genetics, and diet contribute to the high prevalence of kidney stones, which have become widespread in the region.

"Due to these factors, the area is often referred to as the kidney

stone belt," he said.

Kashi noted that the rate of kidney stones in Iran is comparable to that of Western countries such as the United States, with lifestyle and dietary habits worldwide increasing the risk of the condition. Genetics is a significant factor, he added. "If a family member has had kidney stones, you're also at risk," Kashi explained. Other contributing factors include hot, dry climates, which further elevate the likelihood of developing kidney stones.

The expert also emphasized the role of diet in preventing kidney stones. "Proper intake of dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and avoiding excessive protein consumption can help prevent kidney stones," Kashi said.

He recommended consuming between 2.5 to 3 liters of water daily as well.

He also advocated for the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet – a heart-healthy, low-sodium eating plan, which has shown to help prevent kidney stones. "This diet encourages high consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy," Kashi said. "It limits saturated fats, cholesterol, and sodium."

Kashi noted that urological issues, including kidney stones, are widespread in Iran. "Someone with a history of kidney stones has a more than 50% chance of developing them again within 5 to 10 years," he said, urging ongoing prevention and treatment.

Prostate problems are also common, particularly among men over 60, with benign prostate enlargement affecting more than half of men in this age group. By age 80, up to 80% of elderly men experience this condition. Kidney cysts are another prevalent issue, affecting about 60% of people in their 60s, although most are treatable with simple procedures. Kashi stressed the importance of attention to urological cancers, such as bladder and prostate cancer, which, though relatively rare, are among the five most common cancers in men.

"These cancers require careful monitoring due to their potential severity," he said.



● IRNA