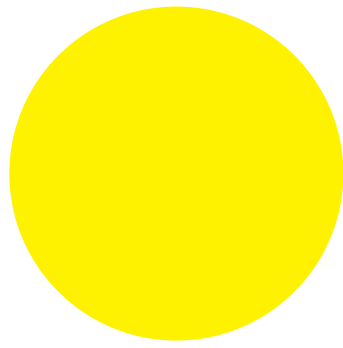


Trump says Iran has proposal from US on its nuclear program

Araghchi: Tehran ready to 'build trust, offer transparency'

2 >



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> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Four major development projects opened during president's trip to Kermanshah

3 >



Tehran, E3 confer
Iran's nuclear talks with US
Iran, troika determined to
make optimal use of diplomacy:
Gharibabadi

2 >



Iran, Eurasia
break down trade barriers

PERSPECTIVE 4 >



Iraq makes strong showing
as guest of honor at Tehran
Int'l Book Fair

EXCLUSIVE 8 >

Mashhad Expo spotlights on religious, healthcare tourism in Iran

EXCLUSIVE

7 >



IRAN DAILY

Ferdowsi's enduring heritage honored in Tus ceremony

Arts & Culture Desk

In the historic city of Tus, Khorasan Razavi Province, at the tomb of the renowned Persian poet Ferdowsi (940-1020), a ceremony was held to honor and celebrate his legacy. Coinciding with the May 15, National Ferdowsi's Day, the event was attended by Vice President for Strategic and Parliamentary Affairs Mohsen Mohsen Esmaeili, Deputy Tourism Minister Anushirvan Mohseni Bandpey and Deputy Minister of Handicrafts Maryam Jalali as well a number of other national and provincial officials.

Page 8 >



IRAN DAILY



Pezeshkian urges publishers to meet society's 'current needs'

8 >

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian looks
at a book during his visit to the 36th Tehran
International Book Fair, on May 16, 2025.
president.ir

Trump says Iran has proposal from US on its nuclear program

Araghchi: Tehran ready to 'build trust, offer transparency'



US President Donald Trump speaks to members of the media accompanying him aboard Air Force One, after leaving Abu Dhabi at the end of his Middle East tour on May 16, 2025.

● **BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP**

sists the Islamic Republic must give up. Trump made the comment aboard Air Force One as he ended his trip to the United Arab Emirates, the last stop on his three-nation tour of the Middle East that also included Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

At nearly every event he attended in the region, he insisted that Iran could not be allowed to obtain a nuclear bomb — something American intelligence agencies assess Tehran is not actively pursuing.

A reporter asked Trump: "On Iran, has the US given them a formal proposal? Has Steve Witkoff handed that over?"

"They have a proposal," Trump responded. "But most importantly, they know they have to move quickly, or something bad is going to happen."

Speaking on a visit to Qatar Thursday, Trump said the United States was "getting close" to a deal with Iran that would avert military action.

"We're not going to be making any nuclear dust in Iran," he said.

Trump has said he presented Iran's leadership with an "olive branch", adding that it was an offer that would not last forever.

He further threatened to impose "massive maximum pressure", including driving Iranian oil exports to zero if talks failed.

On Thursday, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi spoke to journalists at the Tehran International Book Fair and said that Iran did not have any proposal from the Americans yet.

Conflicting statements

Araghchi also criticized what he called conflicting and inconsistent statements from the Trump administration, describing them as either a sign of disarray in Washington or a calculated negotiation strategy. Witkoff at one point suggested that Iran could enrich uranium at 3.67%, then later began saying that all Iranian enrichment must stop.

Iran's top diplomat also stressed that none of the country's nuclear facilities will be dismantled.

"Defending the rights of the Iranian people in the nuclear field, including [uranium]

enrichment, is one of these principles and rights of the people that we will not compromise on, neither in the media nor at the negotiation table. This is the right of the Iranian people, and no one can deny it," Araghchi said.

He reiterated that Tehran is ready to "build trust and offer transparency" regarding its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions.

US companies in Iran

Araghchi reiterated that Tehran has no objection to US companies operating in the country, including in the oil and gas sector.

"We have no ban on the economic presence of American companies in Iran," Araghchi said, attributing the lack of US business activity to primary sanctions imposed by Washington.

"This ban has been imposed by the United States itself," he said.

"If American companies wish to invest in Iran's economy, the US must lift its own primary sanctions."

Iranian and American officials have been in Oman and Rome for the negotiations, always mediated by Oman's Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, a trusted interlocutor between the two nations.

International Desk

US President Donald Trump said Friday that Iran has an American proposal over its nuclear program as negotiations between the two countries go on.

Trump's remarks represent the first time he's acknowledged an American proposal is with Tehran after four rounds of negotiations between US

Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

Negotiations have gotten into the "expert" level — meaning the two sides are trying to see if they can reach any agreement on the details of any possible deal. But one major sticking point remains Iran's enrichment of uranium, which Tehran insists it must be allowed to do and the Trump administration in-

Russia, Ukraine meet for first direct talks since 2022

Two sides agree on POW swap, discuss cease-fire

International Desk

The first direct peace talks between Russia and Ukraine since Moscow's 2022 military operation ended Friday after less than two hours with the two sides agreeing on prisoner swap, cease-fire, and meeting between the two countries' leaders.

Vladimir Medinsky, the head of Russia's delegation at Ukraine peace talks in Istanbul, said on Friday after the negotiations that Moscow was satisfied with the results and was ready to keep talking to Kiev.

Medinsky said Russia and Ukraine had agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners of war each in the coming days, one of the largest such swap since the beginning of the conflict.

"The Ukrainian side requested direct talks between the leaders of the states. We have taken note of this request," Medinsky added.

"We have agreed that each side will present its vision of a possible future cease-fire and spell it out in detail. After such a vision has been presented, we believe it would be appropriate, as also agreed, to continue our negotiations," Ukraine's top negotiator, Defense Min-

ister Rustem Umerov, confirmed the swap in a separate statement and said a cease-fire and a possible Zelensky-Putin meeting had been discussed.

Thousands of prisoners have been released in a series of exchanges between Kiev and Moscow since 2022.

During the talks, a senior Ukrainian official said Russia introduced new "unacceptable demands" to withdraw Ukrainian forces from huge swaths of territory. The official spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make official statements.

He said the Ukrainian side reiterated it remained focused on achieving real progress — an immediate cease-fire and a pathway to substantive diplomacy, "just like the US, European partners, and other countries proposed," the official added.

The two sides sat at a U-shaped table but remained far apart in their conditions for ending the war.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had opened the session by urging the parties "to take advantage of this opportunity," adding that it was "critically important that the cease-fire happens as soon as possible."



● **AFP**

Both countries engaged in diplomatic maneuvering this week as they tried to show that they are eager to negotiate. On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin spurned an offer by Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy to meet face-to-face in Turkey. Zelenskyy accused Moscow of not making a serious effort to end the war by sending a low-level delegation.

Ukraine has accepted a US and European proposal for a full, 30-day cease-fire, but Putin has effectively rejected it by imposing far-reaching conditions.

Russia's attacks have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, the UN says, and razed towns and villages. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have died, and likely a larger number of Russian troops, officials and analysts say.

Tehran, E3 confer Iran's nuclear talks with US

Iran, troika determined to make optimal use of diplomacy: Gharibabadi

International Desk

Iran met with European powers on Friday to discuss its ongoing negotiations with the United States, which are aimed at settling a decades-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who attended the talks in the Turkish city, said in a post on X: "We exchanged views and discussed the latest status of the indirect nuclear negotiations (with the US) and the lifting of sanctions."

Gharibabadi said, if necessary, Tehran would meet again with Germany, Britain and France — the European parties to the 2015 deal along with China, Russia and the United States — to continue discussions, after several meetings since last year.

He added that, "Iran and the three European countries are determined to sustain and make optimal use of diplomacy".

The European nations — known as the E3 — were among the world powers that negotiated the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal along with China, Russia and the United States.

US President Donald Trump, in his first term as president, torpedoed the accord in 2018 by unilaterally withdrawing the

United States.

A year later, Iran responded by rolling back its own commitments under the deal, which provided relief from sanctions in return for UN-monitored restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities.

Following the US withdrawal from the deal, relations between Iran and Europe began to deteriorate due to the Europe's failure to fulfill its commitments under the agreement and opted to follow in the footsteps of the US.

Now, the three European powers are weighing whether to trigger the 2015 deal's "snapback" mechanism, which would reinstate UN sanctions in response to what they call Iranian non-compliance — an option that expires in October.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in an article published by the French weekly Le Point, warned of "irreversible" consequences if Britain, France and Germany move to reimpose United Nations sanctions.

Such a stance "risks provoking a global nuclear proliferation crisis that would primarily affect Europeans themselves", Iran's top diplomat warned.

"While we continue the dialogue with the United States, we are also ready to talk with the Europeans," Araghchi said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Council of Europe: Israel must end mass killing of civilians, deliberate starvation in Gaza

The Council of Europe on Friday said Gaza was suffering from a "deliberate starvation".

"The time for a moral reckoning over the treatment of Palestinians has come — and it is long overdue," said Dora Bakoyannis, rapporteur for the Middle East at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, AFP reported.

The 46-member Council of Europe works to safeguard human rights and democracy. "No cause, no matter how just or pure, can ever justify every means," Bakoyannis said in a statement.

"The mass killing of children and unarmed civilians, the deliberate starvation, and the relentless pain and humiliation inflicted upon Palestinians in Gaza must end." Since March 2, Israeli forces have blocked

all humanitarian aid entering Gaza for its 2.4 million inhabitants, now threatened with famine, according to several NGOs. US President Donald Trump said earlier Friday that "a lot of people are starving" in the besieged territory.

Bakoyannis said that "it takes a smart and brave nation to recognize when its actions are causing more harm than good. What is unfolding in Gaza helps no-one".

Breaking a two-month cease-fire, Israel resumed its offensive on March 18, with the declared goal of obtaining the release of all hostages still held in Gaza.

Gaza rescuers said Israeli strikes and shelling on Friday killed 74 people in the war-battered Palestinian territory. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Basal reported "74 martyrs as a result of the



● **AFP**

ongoing Israeli bombardment across the entire Gaza Strip since last night until this moment," most of them in the north of the Palestinian territory, after the agency earlier reported more than 50 dead. Since the beginning of Israel's attacks on Gaza in October 2023, at least 53,010 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed.



Four major development projects opened during president's trip to Kermanshah

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian inaugurated four industrial, infrastructure, and agricultural projects in Kermanshah Province on Thursday while visiting the western region.

During a session with economic stakeholders and investors of Kermanshah, four projects spanning industry, energy, agriculture, and healthcare were inaugurated simultaneously via videoconference, attended by the ministers of industry, energy, and agriculture, ISNA reported.

The initiatives are poised to boost employment, enhance regional infrastructure, and promote a people-driven economy.

The first project was the Alborz Tissue Science factory, a cutting-edge medical implant production facility established through a partnership between the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO), which holds a 40% stake, and private investors contributing 60%. Specializing in biological implants for bone, cardiovascular, and tendon-ligament applications, this facility is among the most innovative in Iran's healthcare sector. It has also established a national tissue bank and created specialized employment opportunities for 100 individuals.

Another project inaugurated was the bioethanol fuel biorefinery operated by Zagros Green Fuel Development Company in Bisotoun Industrial Park of Kermanshah. Funded with over 6,000 billion tomans, including public investments through capital markets, the plant produces 200,000 liters of bioethanol and 66,000 tons of livestock feed daily. This initiative not only reduces re-

liance on fossil fuels but also exemplifies a community-driven economic model, generating 230 direct jobs.

In the infrastructure sector, the 400-kilovolt substation in Sarpol-e Zahab and the expansion of two 230-kilovolt feeder lines, implemented with an investment of 1,540 billion tomans (approximately \$18.55 million USD) in less than a year, became operational. The project's objectives include strengthening the stability of the power transmission network, ensuring reliable electricity supply for tropical regions, and enhancing service infrastructure for Arbaeen pilgrims, who undertake an annual mass pilgrimage to Karbala, Iraq, marking the 40th day of mourning for Imam Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson (PBUT).

The fourth project marked the launch of Phase II of Iran's largest shaded orchard, spanning 40 hectares in Kermanshah County. With a 70-billion-toman investment (approximately \$843,400 USD) and smart irrigation systems, the orchard produces 2,000 tons of horticultural products annually. By cutting water consumption by 30% and boosting productivity three to fivefold, it represents a significant stride toward sustainable, export-oriented agriculture.

In a televised address on Thursday night, the president detailed outcomes of the government's two-day visit, revealing that nearly 26,000 billion tomans (approximately \$313.25 billion USD) from the national budget have been allocated to Kermanshah's development, with specific plans finalized for the funds, IRNA reported.

Pezeshkian added that 8,000 billion tomans (approximately \$96.39 million USD) in banking facilities are earmarked for private-sector industrial growth. The



president emphasized that private investors are prepared to execute 55,000 billion tomans (approximately \$662.65 million USD) in projects, which could "transform the province's economy."

Call for unified strategy in food production

Also, at a Friday forum on sustainable agriculture in Tehran, Pezeshkian urged the creation of a task force to unify stakeholders in food production. Addressing experts at the Botanical Garden in Tehran, he stressed the need to address water scarcity and modernize

farming practices.

"A coordinated strategy is vital to cut costs, boost efficiency, and harness neglected marine resources for affordable, nutritious food," Pezeshkian said.

The president also criticized theoretical academic approaches, advocating for hands-on farm training, "Agriculture students must learn cultivation, maintenance, and harvesting directly in fields." He highlighted global trends toward practical education, noting that universities worldwide now prioritize real-world engagement over classroom-only learning.



A factory that produces allograft bio-implants is inaugurated remotely in Kermanshah Province, alongside three other flagship projects, during a ceremony attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian (not pictured) and the ministers of industry, energy, and agriculture in Kermanshah on May 15, 2025.

● [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)

Concluding his remarks, Pezeshkian acknowledged systemic challenges in Iran's agricultural sector, stating, "Despite investments, inefficiencies persist. A cohesive plan, driven by collaboration, can reduce waste, strengthen farm economies, and ensure public satisfaction."

Russian minister announces 15-million-ton freight capacity for Rasht-Astara railway



Russian Transport Minister Roman Vladimirovich Starovit addresses the ceremony for the handover of acquired land for the Rasht-Astara railway project via a video conference on May 15, 2025.

● [ISNA](https://www.isna.ir)

Economy Desk

Russian Transport Minister Roman Vladimirovich Starovit highlighted the significant capacity of the Rasht-Astara railway, stating that freight transport along this route will reach 15 million tons annually after project completion and necessary infrastructure development.

During a video conference on Thursday addressing the ceremony for the handover of acquired land for the Rasht-Astara railway project, Starovit emphasized its critical role in

advancing international transport along the North-South Corridor. He referenced the 2025 agreement between the presidents of Iran and Russia to develop this corridor, noting that the 162-kilometer railway will feature eight stations, 56 aerial bridges, and 35 vehicular overpasses, ISNA reported. The Russian minister described the Rasht-Astara railway as essential for combined or multimodal transport (the transportation of goods under a single contract, but performed with at least two different modes of transport), citing Russia's 2024 freight volume

of 20 million tons (9.5 million tons moved by sea) and a first-quarter 2025 figure of 3 million tons. He stressed the railway's potential to boost capacity, adding that "after project implementation and infrastructure upgrades, freight volume on this route will reach 15 million tons. All required infrastructure from southern Iranian ports to northern Russian ports is now in place."

50% reduction in India-Finland transit time

Meanwhile, Iran's Deputy Head of Construction and Develop-

ment of Transportation Infrastructure Company, Abbas Khatibi, highlighted the country's strategic position along the North-South and East-West corridors.

He emphasized the North-South Corridor's significance for India and Russia, noting its "50% reduction in transit time and 30% cost savings."

Khatibi identified the Rasht-Astara railway as the sole missing link in the North-South Corridor, which currently takes 45 days to connect India to Finland. The 162-kilometer route will include 10 stations.

ECO, UNECE advance process to bring online Tehran-linked transport corridor in Tashkent talks

Economy Desk

The seventh meeting of the Coordination Committee between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul transport corridors was held in Tashkent.

The session on Thursday focused on operationalizing regional transport corridors, modernizing infrastructure, enhancing data flows during multimodal transport operations, and harmonizing transport documentation to support cross-border trade and logistics integration across the ECO region, IRNA reported.

The seventh session of the ECO-UNECE Joint Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul corridors convened in the Uzbek capital, with representatives from eight member countries. Alireza Mahmoudi, Director of Transport and Communications at ECO, represented the ECO Secretariat at the meeting.

Discussions addressed key operational and digitalization aspects of corridor management, including simulations of data and information flows during multimodal transport operations along segments of the Trans-Caspian routes. Practical bottlenecks and opportunities to improve coordination and real-time information sharing

were debated, with member states contributing valuable insights.

Existing transport documentation used across the corridors was also reviewed to identify specific opportunities for harmonization, simplification, and digitization. These measures aim to enhance efficiency and reduce administrative burdens on transport companies and border agencies. In his remarks, ECO's transport director emphasized the strategic importance of the corridors in fostering sustainable, resilient, and integrated regional connectivity.

"The sessions of this meeting not only reflect the operational realities on the ground but also

the strategic foresight required to unlock the full potential of our shared corridors," Mahmoudi stated.

He described the upcoming Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, to be hosted soon in Turkmenistan, as a milestone for regional transport and transit industries.

In addition to plenary sessions, a technical workshop on transport safety and the handling of containers and other cargo transport units (CTUs) was held. The workshop provided stakeholders with best practices and policy guidance to improve transport safety and mitigate operational risks.

The ECO secretariat reaffirmed



its commitment to close collaboration with UNECE and all member states to ensure contin-

ued progress in infrastructure development, trade facilitation, and digital transport solutions.

Iran, Eurasia break down trade barriers

PERSPECTIVE

After years of negotiations, technical coordination, and legislative approvals, the free trade agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) came into force on May 15, 2025. This agreement marks a significant step forward in Iran's efforts to step up economic ties with member states of the union and forms a central pillar of Tehran's broader strategy to reach out and deepen regional economic engagement.

The Eurasian Economic Union, comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia, boasts a population of over 180 million and a GDP exceeding \$2 trillion, making it a major economic powerhouse in the Eurasian region. Since 2018, Iran has been engaged in economic cooperation with the union through a preferential trade agreement. Now, with the comprehensive free trade, tariffs on 87 percent of goods traded between Iran and Eurasian Union members drops to zero. The agreement also rules out any non-tariff barriers, though a small fraction of goods not central to bilateral trade will remain subject to tariffs.

Rollout of free trade deal

Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, highlighted that the agreement not only covers essential goods but also the vast majority of traded items. "The remaining 13 percent of tariffs concern items that are rarely used, produced, or exported by Iran, so there was little incentive to include them in the agreement." He stressed, "Virtually all our main production sectors are covered, except for a few sensitive cases." The agreement, spanning one chapter and 245 pages, is highly detailed. A comprehensive guidebook for private sector stakeholders has been prepared, including a Persian translation of the agreement and practical instructions. Dehghan Dehnavi emphasized that, in addition to zero tariffs, the deal lays out provisions for removing barriers. The chapters address a wide range of topics, such as trade information exchange, mutual notification, standardization, sanitary measures, quarantine, health issues, customs cooperation, and even transport and transit — covering all the bases for smooth trade.

How much trade at stake?

According to the latest Iranian customs data, exports to Eurasian Economic Union members surged by 20 percent last Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024), topping \$2 billion. During this period, Iran exported \$1.121 billion to Russia, \$505 million to Armenia, \$278 million to Kazakhstan, \$111 million to Kyrgyzstan, and \$21 million to Belarus. Meanwhile, the same year saw \$1.51 billion worth of goods flowing in from Eurasian Union countries to Iran, a 20 percent decrease compared to its previous year.



The map shows the geographical locations of the five members of the Eurasian Economic Union, namely Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia.

● TASNIM

Mohammad-Sadegh Ghanadzadeh, deputy head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization, estimates that the current trade volume between Iran and the Eurasian Union stands at about \$5 billion. However, with the free trade agreement coming into play, this figure could shoot up to over \$20 billion within three to five years.

Key benefits for Iran

Economic experts believe that the agreement opens the door to vast opportunities for Iran's private sector and producers. The deal, designed for free trade with zero tariffs on about 1,000 items, consists of 11 chapters and an annex listing the goods covered. Under the agreement, customs tariffs on a wide range of products will either be reduced or eliminated, giving Iranian goods a leg up in the Eurasian market. Trade processes will be simplified, and non-tariff barriers — such as standardization, li-

censing, and customs clearance — will be streamlined. Another crucial benefit is the creation of a platform for joint investments between Iran and union members, especially in sectors like energy, petrochemicals, food, agriculture, and machinery. Reducing reliance on traditional Western markets and broadening export horizons to achieve balanced economic diplomacy are also highlighted in the agreement. Experts further note that, given international sanctions, barter and energy swap mechanisms could pave the way for expanding trade with Eurasia.

Infrastructure hurdles on road ahead

Despite the promising outlook, successful implementation will require extensive technical and administrative groundwork. Ghanadzadeh noted that some technical and logistical infrastructure — such as standards, customs procedures, and finan-

cial exchange mechanisms — are not yet fully up to speed. However, with the agreement set to roll out, other areas are expected to catch up quickly.

Experts stress that full coordination between Iran's National Standards Organization and its counterparts in the union, as well as boosting logistics capacity at key border crossings like Incheh Borun, Sarakhs, and Norduz, are challenges that must be ironed out.

Sadreddin Niavarani, vice-chair of the Iran Chamber of Commerce's Export Development Commission, pointed out, "Our transport system is European-American, which causes headaches when dealing with Russia and Eurasia. Domestic containers are limited to 22 tons, while Russian containers handle 60–70 tons. When three 22-ton containers make their way to the [Iranian] city of Gorgan and need to be transferred to Russian containers, about 4–5 tons are left unused,

causing both shifting and wasted capacity."

He added, "To get around this, the Ministry of Roads must be convinced to allow exporters to load an extra ton. But even these small steps haven't been taken yet." Establishing financial and banking channels to smooth out monetary exchanges — especially under international sanctions and restricted global financial access — as well as training and empowering domestic exporters to meet new trade and market standards, are other priorities for authorities.

On another front, Iran remains largely a raw material exporter, which is seen as a weak spot. Mohammad Lahouti, head of the Iranian Export Confederation, observed, "Most of our exports are low value-added or raw materials. This could put Iran at a disadvantage in regional competition and trade pacts as Iran may end up exporting only raw or semi-finished goods, while partner countries could take advantage of tariff removals to export finished products to Iran and tip the trade balance in their favor."

He argued that, during the transition period, policymakers should work toward building infrastructure, and producers must strive to improve quality and cost-efficiency to win over markets with higher value-added products.

The implementation of the Iran-Eurasia free trade agreement on May 15, 2025, is undoubtedly one of the most significant economic developments in Iran's foreign relations this year. Given the agreement's substantial potential, with serious follow-through and careful planning, Iran could see a surge in non-oil exports and strengthen its hand in the economic landscape of Eurasia.

The article first appeared in Persian on Mehr news agency.



Tariffs on 87 percent of goods traded between Iran and Eurasian Union members drops to zero, trade processes will be simplified, and non-tariff barriers — such as standardization, licensing, and customs clearance — will be streamlined. Another crucial benefit is the creation of a platform for joint investments between Iran and union members, especially in sectors like energy, petrochemicals, food, agriculture, and machinery.



Mohammad Reza Aref (2nd-L), the first vice-president of Iran, takes part in the third summit of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in Yerevan, Armenia, on October 1, 2024.

● ISNA

Major achievements at Iran's largest oil industry gathering

From negotiations to signing deals

PERSPECTIVE

The oil industry, recognized as the driving force behind Iran's economic growth, has consistently shown that when global prices and Iran's revenue basket pick up, the country's economic growth also heads upward. This underscores the critical need to bring in fresh investment for research, development, and the adoption of new technologies.

Alongside the investment factor — which is this year's central slogan for Iran's economy — the issue of shortages, especially in gas and gasoline, prompted oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical sector players to sit down for talks at the 29th Iran International Oil and Gas Expo in Tehran. Their agenda was clear: draw up plans to step up exploitation of existing oil and gas resources.

This year's 29th exhibition stood out as a beacon of hope and prosperity for the oil industry. The strong turnout from oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical companies, as well as innovative, tech-driven, and knowledge-based firms, added to the event's appeal.

Over the four days of the exhibition (May 8-11, 2025), the industry witnessed a flurry of contract signings and cooperation agreements, fueling optimism for better days ahead. Dozens of contracts and MOUs were inked between executive bodies, the Research Institute of Petroleum Industry, active companies in oil, gas, refining and petrochemicals, and knowledge-based and tech firms. The following highlights the most significant agreements.

On the first day, 18 "first-time production" MOUs were signed. During the signing ceremony, the vice president for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy noted, "The Ministry of Petroleum has had the brightest track record for first-time contracts." He called on other ministries to tap into the potential of such agreements, emphasizing, "Without a doubt, this is a major turning point for the country and knowledge-based companies."

Among the most important deals was the development contract for the Gordan and Pazan gas fields, signed on the final day of the exhibition between the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and three domestic firms. This 20-year, \$948 million contract aims to maximize gas extraction, create jobs in underdeveloped regions, and shore up the supply of feedstock to southern refineries. The agreement was signed between NIOC and the Bakhtar Group, Petro-Farhang Holding, and Energy Gostar Hana.

Estimates indicate that over the project's lifespan, 179.5 billion cubic meters of gas and 58.19 million barrels of condensate will be produced.

Moreover, a contract for the design and manufacture of five-megawatt turbo compressor packages was signed in the presence of the vice president for Science, Technology, and Knowl-



Iranian energy players negotiate at the 29th Iran International Oil and Gas Expo in Tehran (also known as the Iran Oil Show 2025).

IRNA

edge-Based Economy, the NIOC CEO, and the deputy oil minister for Engineering, Research, and Technology. Localizing this equipment is expected to save the country \$15 million in foreign currency.

Five contracts for the supply and lease of six heavy onshore drilling rigs and ancillary services were also hammered out between the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) and private sector firms.

Initially, two contracts for the supply and lease of two heavy drilling rigs for the West Paydar oilfield project and technical services were signed by Mehran Makvandi and Gholamreza Younesi, CEOs of NIDC and Dana Kish Drilling, respectively. Subsequently, a contract for the supply and lease of four heavy drilling rigs for the Gordan and Pazan fields was signed by Mehran Makvandi (NIDC) and Seyed Mehran Parhiz (Energy Gostar Hana). Moreover, two contracts for specialized technical services were signed between NIDC and Pasargad Exploration and Production, as well as Tadbir Drilling Development.

NIDC, as a key upstream sub-

siary of NIOC and the country's largest drilling entity, sets itself apart with its experienced specialists and comprehensive equipment, enabling it to roll out over 20 types of integrated technical services — an edge over other drilling companies in Iran.

10 contracts signed by GOGPC

Gachsaran Oil & Gas Production Company (GOGPC) took a major step forward by signing 10 contracts and MOUs with domestic firms to push ahead with specialized equipment development and support knowledge-based companies.

These contracts were signed with companies such as Behsazan Jonoob, Danesh-Ghat'e Samin, Dorood Kelid Bargh, Hamkar San'at Behsaz, Gazsoozan, Petro-Sanat Adel, Avand Plast Kerman, the science and technology parks of Khorasan and Kohgiluyeh & Boyer-Ahmad, and the Iran IoT Center.

Ali Akbar Hafezinia, CEO of Gachsaran Oil & Gas, highlighted the importance of these MOUs, stating, "This exhibition is a golden opportunity to meet industrial needs, identify problems, and

strengthen domestic interaction." He added, "Given the sanctions on the oil industry and obstacles to importing parts, teaming up with domestic knowledge-based companies is vital for the industry's survival."

Collectively valued at 1.1 trillion rials (approximately \$2.6 million), these contracts cover the supply of key equipment such as surface safety systems, airport fuel delivery electro-pumps, pipeline transmission equipment, compressor parts, insulated fittings, flanges, and polyethylene pipes.

The Research Institute of Petroleum Industry also signed six contracts and three MOUs with companies, academic institutions, and industrial institutions.

These agreements, aimed at technology development, efficiency improvement, localization of technological know-how, and addressing priority needs, were signed with partners including Shiraz University, Payandan Company, Farassan Manufacturing, the Iran Transformer Research Institute, Fajr Jam Gas Refinery, Pars Behin Qeshm Oil Refining, Tehran Oil Refining, Iranian Offshore Oil Company, and Kerman

Province Gas Company.

Key areas of cooperation include research, education, and technology development; localization and production of non-metallic pipes for oil and gas; environmental projects for bioremediation of contaminated soils; process design and technology transfer in MDHT units; emissions reduction and product quality improvement; and smart management and optimal exploitation of oilfields.

According to the Research Institute, these agreements underscore its pivotal role in driving forward national technology goals in energy and bridging the gap between industry, science, and technology — a link that generates added value and brings about a knowledge-based economy.

NIDC signs significant deals

NIDC and two domestic knowledge-based manufacturers also came together to sign two contracts for the manufacture of applied drilling equipment. The first covers the production of four drilling fluid centrifuges and feed pumps, including spare parts support, previously requested by NIDC's Drilling Fluid Services Management.

This contract was signed by Mehran Makvandi (NIDC) and Seyed Amir Moayyed Alaei (Andisheh Sazan Salamat Parsian/FEDCO).

Furthermore, NIDC ordered nine main diesel generators for drilling rigs, along with spare parts, from Faba Motor. The contract was signed by Mehran Makvandi and Mohammadreza Zomorodi, CEOs of the respective companies.

Accelerating South Pars gas pressure-boosting project

The Ahdaf Company, affiliated with the Oil Industry Pension Fund, signed an MOU with Petropars to get the ball rolling on the gas pressure boosting project. It was announced that OIEC is present in hubs 2 and 5, while hubs 1 and 7 have been handed over to Petropars. Phases one and two are being jointly executed by Ahdaf and Petropars.

It was further stated that Offshore Installations, Oil Equipment, OIEC, OTC, and Talash Gostar, representing Ahdaaf, are also pitching in on the pressure boosting project.

At the signing ceremony of another MOU with the Oil Ministry's Planning Department on synergy and pooling capabilities for establishing a digital energy governance ecosystem, it was noted that regular meetings have been held for the past two months.

Ahmad Zaraatkar, deputy oil minister, commented, "With this MOU, the Ahdaf Investment Group is stepping up to the plate to help reduce and offset energy shortages, joining the team formed to tackle these issues through energy regulation and petroleum product management with diverse group participation."

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Alongside investment, the issue of shortages, especially in gas and gasoline, prompted oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical sector players to sit down for talks at the 29th Iran International Oil and Gas Expo in Tehran. Their agenda was clear: draw up plans to step up exploitation of existing oil and gas resources.



Seen at the 29th Iran International Oil and Gas Expo in Tehran (also known as the Iran Oil Show 2025)

IRNA

AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup:

Japan defeat sums up below-par campaign for Iran

Sports Desk

Two-time defending champion Iran suffered a first defeat in the history of the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup on Thursday, falling to a last-four 3-2 loss to Japan in Hohhot, China.

The result meant there will be a first-time champion in today's final between Japan and Thailand, which came from behind to beat China 3-2 in the other semifinal.

Meanwhile, there will be much more than a consolation third place on the line when Iran and the host square off earlier today, as the winner will secure the third and final spot at the inaugural Women's World Cup in the Philippines in November.

Runner-up to the Iran in back-to-back editions, Japan started right on the front foot at the Hohhot Sports Centre and took a two-goal lead through Risa Ikada and Kyoka Takahashi inside four minutes.

A wasteful Iran managed to pull one back four minutes after the break, with Fereshteh Khosravi teeing up Maral Torkaman, who finished with a powerful strike. Yukari Miyahara restored the two-goal cushion for the Japanese on the counter in the 30th minute, before Torkaman reduced the deficit to one again two minutes later with her fourth goal of the competition. Iranian girls poured forward after that but despite utilizing the



power play, the equalizer eluded them as Japan held on to progress to a third straight final. "I'm proud of my players' performance and I'm happy to win the match and qualify for the World

Cup. Japan's strength is unity and all the players worked hard for this win. It was a really tough game. Reaching the World Cup is an honor," Japanese head coach said after the game.

"Iran is our biggest opponent in Asia. One of our goals was beating them but most importantly, we focused on ourselves and had self-belief after the hard work we put in. Discipline and

unity were key to our success." Iran coach Forouzan Soleimani admitted that her side couldn't recover after conceding the first goal. "I knew once we conceded that



Iranian players are dejected after a 3-2 loss to Japan at the Women's Futsal Asian Cup in Hohhot, China, on May 15, 2025.

● AFC

it was going to be very tough for us. Our goal was to be champions for the third time but we couldn't achieve it," said the Iranian.

"We played much better in the second half and for sure, we were the better team. However, there is still the World Cup spot and we will be motivated to win against China," added the Iranian.

The writing was always on the wall for Soleimani's team after a poor preparation for the tournament was followed by a shaky start in China.

Iran edged out the Philippines 1-0 in their opener, and then beat Hong Kong 3-1 to secure a knockout spot, before its 12-game winning run in the Asian Cup came to an end against Vietnam in controversial, embarrassing fashion.

Soleimani's girls deliberately played for a goalless draw in their final group game, tanking the match to avoid Japan until the final. The cynical approach, however, backfired as Japan's shock defeat to Thailand later on the final day of the group fixtures forced the two powerhouses into the same half of the knockout bracket.

Asian Weightlifting Championships:

Sharifi excels in superheavyweight as Iran collects eight medals

Sports Desk

Ayat Sharifi brought the curtain down on a decent run for the Iranian three-man squad at the Asian Weightlifting Championships by bagging three medals – including double golds – in the +109kg contests in Jiangshan, China, on Thursday. The final-day results took Iran's medal haul to five golds, double silvers, and one bronze as Behdad Salimi's trio finished runner-up in the men's team standings. China won the men's team

title, thanks to a remarkable nine gold and silver medals apiece, plus five bronzes. Sharifi had to settle for the snatch silver medal after registering a 195kg lift with his third attempt, with South Korean Hwang Wooman claiming the gold with 196kg, while Uzbekistan's Amir Abdullaev finished on 182kg for the bronze. The Iranian, however, went on to raise 227kg above his head to beat Hwang to the clean & jerk gold by two kilograms, before a total tally of 422kg secured a second gold of the afternoon for Sharifi.

Hwang also took the total silver, with his fellow-South Korean grabbing the C&J (220kg) and total (396kg) bronze medals. Iranian duo Alireza Moeini and Ali A'alipour – winner of three world medals between them last year – had claimed five of the nine medals up for grabs in the 96kg class earlier in the competition. It was an Iranian one-two in the snatch event with Moeini achieving the gold with 180kg – six kilograms clear of A'alipour – while the host's Qian Feixiang finished third with 173kg. An Asian 89kg champion last

year, A'alipour raised the bar in the clean & jerk category by making a 216kg effort for the gold, followed by South Korea's Won Jong-beom (215kg) and Feixiang (207kg). A'alipour took his tally to double golds, thanks to 390kg in total, while Won (385kg) and Moeini (383kg) stood next to him on the podium.



Iran's Ayat Sharifi is seen in action in the men's +109kg contests at the Asian Weightlifting Championships in Jiangshan, China, on May 15, 2025.

● XINHUA



Foolad Sirjan's Earvin Ngapeth (9) hits a spike during a 3-1 victory over Shanghai Bright at the AVC Men's Champions League in Kyoto, Japan, on May 16, 2025.

● FIVB

AVC Men's Champions League:

Foolad rallies past Shanghai Bright to progress to last four

Sports Desk

Iranian champion Foolad Sirjan came from behind to beat Shanghai Bright of China 3-1 (24-26, 25-21, 28-26, 25-23) and advance to the semifinals at the rebranded AVC Men's Volleyball Champions League in Kyoto, Japan.

Iran international outside-hitter Amirhossein Efsandiar contributed with a game-high

25 points for Behrouz Ataei's side, with opposite-spiker Ali Hajipour chipping in 20. Cuban middle-blocker Javier Concepcion and Alireza Abdollahmadi also finished in double figures for Foolad, registering 10 points apiece, while French superstar Earvin Ngapeth had a quiet day with four points. Chinese Pengzhi Wu was the top scorer for Shanghai Bright with 20 points, followed by Cong Tian

(15) and Bohan Wang (12). A bronze medalist in last December's Club World Championship in Brazil, Foolad was caught off-guard in the first set, but Hajipour and Efsandiar scored a combined 13 points in the second set to tie the game at 1-1. The pivotal point of the contest came in the closing stages of the third set, when Ataei's men overcame a 24-20 deficit

to win 28-26, before sealing the hard-fought victory in the fourth set.

Chasing a third Asian title four years, Foolad got off to a shaky start in the competition, laboring to a 3-2 win against Thailand's Nakhon Ratchasima QminC in their Pool C opener, and then went on to beat Taichung Bank of the Chinese Taipei to progress to the quarterfinals as the group winner.

Mashhad Expo

spotlights on religious, healthcare tourism



By Leila Imani
Staff writer

The 18th International Tourism and Handicrafts Exhibition of Khorasan Razavi Province is being held at Mashhad's Permanent Ground of International Fairs from May 14 to 17, 2025.

Spanning over 10,000 square meters, the exhibition features 490 participants from all over Iran. Of these, 100 are from Khorasan Razavi Province, and 390 from other provinces — demonstrating the event's national importance with active participation from all 31 Iranian provinces. Participating foreign countries include Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Oman.

Participants represent diverse sectors, including accommodation and eco-tourism, travel agencies, medical tourism, entertainment complexes, hotel and restaurant equipment, handicrafts, souvenirs, local foods, and ethnic and nomadic groups.

The key objectives are to create positive impacts locally and internationally, enhance tourism attraction, investment, and infrastructure, promote marketing and branding, foster active collaboration, raise public awareness, and support sustainable tourism development.



● IRAN DAILY

Promoting handicrafts

Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts for Handicraft Affairs, Maryam Jalali highlighted Iran's export potential for handicrafts, stating, "Engaging with neighboring countries — especially the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf nations — is the primary opportunity for showcasing Iranian art globally." Talking to reports on the sidelines of the exhibition Maryam Jalali, emphasized that exhibitions are a crucial link in the handicrafts value chain. This

sector needs widespread promotion and awareness to facilitate market development. She explained, "When we discuss the value chain, we mean that exhibitions should attract the attention of stakeholders, influencers, and key figures in the industry." Regarding stakeholders, Jalali added that these include artisans who showcase their products, exchange ideas, and share experiences. Also, clients seeking to purchase corporate gifts under government regulations,

as well as the general public who appreciate handicrafts and support environmental sustainability, are key stakeholders. Influencers are individuals who can greatly support trade. The participation of neighboring countries in these exhibitions offers a valuable opportunity. By attracting their interest in Iranian handicrafts — products that tell Iran's story and are environmentally friendly — we can boost trade, especially with neighboring nations, Caspian Sea border countries, and Persian Gulf litto-

ral states that share cultural affinities." "She further explained that such exhibitions attract tourists by providing new experiences in handicrafts, like pottery and embroidery workshops. Eco-lodges and handicraft houses, as embodiments of local arts, will share their stories and narratives, fostering the growth and expansion of trade relations."



● Maryam Jalali

Support for artisans

Meanwhile, Deputy Head of Khorasan Razavi Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization for Tourism Affairs, Yousef Bidkhori, said that in arrangements of the exhibition, certain space have been specially allocated for top Iranian handicraft artists. A significant portion of this space has been provided free of charge to enable artists to showcase their works and activities. The official noted that participation from various provinces in handicraft and tourism sectors is clearly visible, and most provinces are actively involved in both sectors. Countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Afghanistan send tourists for pilgrimage or medical treatment, making tourist exchanges between Iran and these countries highly significant. "Our programs include hosting the exhibition and conducting awareness initiatives for consuls and diplomats based in Mashhad. In the past, we successfully organized events in Dargaz and Kalat, and our goal is to continue these efforts."

"In addition to pilgrimage tourism, we focus on medical tourism and both domestic and international branding efforts. To encourage longer stays, we have implemented programs across numerous cities. Nearly 190 rural and traditional guesthouses have been licensed throughout the province, and most cities now offer eco-lodges and traditional accommodations ready to host both domestic and foreign tourists," Bidkhori said. He said he thinks that pilgrimage tourism is very accessible because, with the help of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), we can easily attract a large number of pilgrims. This is an opportunity and a skill of the officials, who, through cooperation and synergy, can effectively utilize these valuable capacities and facilities in cities and villages across the province. The official noted that currently, Khorasan Razavi Province holds the first rank in holding tourism events. Many national-level events have been held in the province along with major activities such as reputable conferences and various



cultural programs. "Mashhad has 59 hospitals and medical centers authorized to accept medical tourists. Within this framework, the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has issued medical tourism permits to various travel agencies and service companies," Bidkhori noted. Tourists seeking medical treatment can register with these companies' offices, many of which are located abroad, especially in

Afghanistan. Patients book their appointments, follow their treatment plans, and undergo care at authorized hospitals. If post-treatment services are necessary, they are provided as well. The official continued, "although primarily health-focused, this system has also been developed into a software platform, which we recently piloted in Khorasan Razavi Province and plan to expand nationally. This platform facilitates coordination between all involved

parties — such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, authorized hospitals, and relevant authorities — through a unified system". He stated, "If we delegate hospital coordination to private sector providers and focus on regulatory oversight ourselves, ensuring patients leave satisfied and can easily pursue follow-up care in their home countries, it will significantly improve the quality of healthcare services." In fact, Mashhad is not only a hub for religious tourism but also a prominent center for medical tourism. The city boasts highly capable specialized hospitals offering a range of services — from heart surgery to complex medical treatments. Some medical tourists come for cosmetic procedures or infertility treatments. Additionally, many private hospitals are excellent in ophthalmology and have developed state-of-the-art facilities.



● Yousef Bidkhori

A destination for Omani tourists

Sheikh Khamis Al-Yarubi, manager of a participating company from Oman, shared his insights on this exhibition. He stated, "In general, Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a long-standing relationship that dates back centuries and continues to be renewed. As neighbors, we share many cultural similarities and convergences. Hosting such exhibitions aims to strengthen our ties and foster closer cooperation between the two countries". He said people from Oman visit Iran for religious pilgrimages, as well as for tourism and trade. Oman imports many Iranian products, both agricultural and industrial.

"Iran is also the most popular destination for Omani tourists seeking medical and healthcare services in the Middle East. Compared to other options, Iran's medical services stand out for their high quality and affordability". He added, "Iran boasts numerous commercial, petrochemical, oil, and gas facilities, making it the leading country for exports worldwide." Al-Yarubi continued, "Given Iran's excellent infrastructure, our company collaborates with Iran in sectors such as food, tourism, and petrochemicals." He emphasized, "Our ultimate goal is to create a bridge for exporting Iranian products to other countries." He said that thanks to God, relations be-

tween Iran and Oman are strong. That is why we were among the first companies to participate in this exhibition. He highlighted that regarding the successful cooperation between the two nations, there is growing enthusiasm for future collaboration. "I cannot achieve my goals alone, and I invite the media to support me," he concluded.

Tourism exchange between Iran and Iraq

Reza Al-Sultani, representative of one of the Iraqi companies participating in the exhibition, said, "Every year, over three million Iraqis travel more than 1,750 kilometers to Iran to visit the holy shrine of

Imam Reza (PBUH) and to pursue medical and tourism purposes." He continued that the prevailing reality of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq is evident in the ongoing interactions between Iranian visitors to Iraq and Iraqi visitors coming to Mashhad or tourist sites across Iran. He added that these relations are not limited to tourism alone; tourism is just one aspect and outcome of the deep ties between the two countries. Cultural connections between their governments and peoples can also be seen through events, festivals, visits to tourist attractions and museums, and trips to cities that embody the rich history of both nations. In recent years, Iran has become an at-

tractive destination for many Iraqis. According to statistics released by the Iraqi embassy in Tehran, Iran currently hosts over 80,000 Iraqi students studying at Iranian universities and colleges. "The removal of visas for Iraqi citizens traveling to Iran has also facilitated daily land and air trips between the two countries. Al-Sultani believes that the main reasons thousands of Iraqis visit Iran annually include the ease of travel due to visa-free entry, the ability to travel at any time, especially during holidays, and the opportunity to visit historical and religious sites. Data shows that Iraqis primarily travel to Iran during the months of Muharram, Safar, Ramadan, and during the summer and winter school holidays.





Pezeshkian urges publishers to meet society's 'current needs'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday called for books to reflect the "issues and needs" of modern society, saying only then can they serve as a tool to improve the country's cultural and social landscape. Visiting the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, Pezeshkian said books should be grounded in expert knowledge and written in a way that speaks to the present. "Only in that case," he said, "can books truly contribute to social development." The president toured the fair, joined by Culture Minister Abbas Salehi. He walked through

various booths, held brief talks with publishers, and listened to complaints—chief among them, a persistent shortage of paper, president.ir reported. Pezeshkian flipped through a mix of genres: History, religion, poetry, memoirs from the Iran-Iraq war, novels, philosophy, and the 'Shahnameh,' the Persian epic. He praised the variety on display and stressed the need for books to stay current. Speaking with Iran's state broadcaster, IRIB, after his visit, Pezeshkian said time for reading has grown scarce since he took office. "Being here is personally valuable," he said. He urged young people to read



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd R), accompanied by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (1st R), browses books during a visit to the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, on May 16, 2025.
● president.ir

more, calling it a "way to grasp beliefs, ideas, and past experiences." On the issue of paper supply, he directed the culture ministry to conduct a thorough review and promised the government would do "whatever is in its power" to resolve it. The annual Tehran book fair opened May 7 and runs through May 17.



Iraq makes strong showing as guest of honor at Tehran Int'l Book Fair



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iraq is participating as the guest of honor in the international section of the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, bringing with it a collection of 3,000 book titles. This year's presence is marked by a collaboration between Iranian and Iraqi publishers, resulting in the planned publication of 150 new titles in both Arabic and Persian. Iraq's delegation includes 20 publishing houses. With the largest pavilion in the international section—spanning 360 square meters—the country is showcasing titles across various genres, including science, culture, history, and literature. The aim of Iraq's special status this year is to promote "historical, cultural, and literary ties" and foster what has been described as cultural diplomacy. "This year, our presence is more prominent than ever," said Thaer Jafar Al-Osami, deputy head of Iraq's Publishers Union. "We've been part of the fair in past years to boost cultural and

publishing exchanges, but being the guest of honor has taken it to a new level." Al-Osami noted that a significant portion of the showcased titles are children's books. In recent years, Iraqi and Iranian children's publishers have worked closely together. Many titles have been translated and distributed in both countries, strengthening cooperation in this niche market. The Iraqi booth was organized with the support of the country's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Iraqi Publishers Union. Al-Osami said the display has received "a warm welcome" from Iranian visitors. This is the second year the Iraqi Publishers Union has taken part in the Tehran fair. According to Al-Osami, the union has played a key role in connecting publishers from both sides. He recalled that last year, joint contracts were signed, leading to the publication of 30 translated books. "This year, we're aiming to bring out 150 more titles in both Arabic and Persian." Shared cultural and religious roots between the two nations have deepened

mutual interest in literary works. "Our people are naturally drawn to each other's literature," said Al-Osami, attributing it to "cultural similarities." Al-Osami praised the Tehran Book Fair as one of the world's largest in both scale and quality. With over 5,500 publishers attending this year, the fair has gained global standing. "This scale inspired us to take part even more seriously," he said. The 36th Tehran International Book Fair runs from May 6 to May 16, 2025, at the Imam Khomeini Grand Prayer Grounds, under the theme "Let's Read for Iran." An online version of the fair is also accessible via book.icfi.ir, offering remote book purchases.

Over 20 copyright deals

The first Tehran Publishing Fellowship, held alongside the book fair, has led to more than 20 copyright agreements for children's books. A representative from Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults met with publishers from countries including Russia, Italy, China, In-



dia, Turkey, Nepal, Indonesia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Mongolia. The fellowship, held from May 12 to 16 at the western wing of the fairground, was organized with support from the Iran Book and Literature House, the Iranian Grant Plan Secretariat, and the Children's Publishers Association.

During these meetings, the Iranian representative presented both new and existing titles from the institute. The negotiations resulted in copyright sales for translations into Chinese, Turkish, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, English, Istanbul Turkish, Albanian, Assamese, and Arabic.

Ferdowsi's enduring heritage ...



Participants also included representatives from foreign consulates, cultural and literary figures, university professors, and researchers dedicated to Ferdowsi. The celebration took place in a lively atmosphere, warmly received by the public and poetry and culture enthusiasts. During the event, officials, poets, and guests paid homage to Ferdowsi's memory and commended the high stature of this celebrated epic poet. The program featured performances such as heroic sports displays, epic music, poetry recitations, and reenactments of scenes from the 'Shahnameh,' (Book of



A group of daf (frame drum) players perform during a ceremony marking National Ferdowsi Day at the tomb of Persian poet Ferdowsi in Tus, Khorasan Razavi Province, northeastern Iran, May 15, 2025.
● iran-daily

Kings) a long epic poem written by Ferdowsi, creating an environment full of enthusiasm and grandeur. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian issued a message on this occasion, which was read at the ceremony by Mahmoud Shalouei, head of Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries. In his message, he emphasized that this day is a celebration of the Persian language, a recognition of cultural identity, and a tribute to Iran's glorious civilization. Ferdowsi, through his monumental 'Shahnameh,' not only preserved Iran's history from forgetfulness but also created an everlasting model for our cultural life. This model is rooted in the ideals of freedom, justice, and self-respect. Today, it is essential for us to revisit and revive this heroic spirit—a spirit in which this revered poet, both outwardly and inwardly, spoke of human dignity, national pride, and hope

for victory over oppression and decay. The Persian language embodies this enduring unity, representing not just the historical identity of Iranians but also serving as a mirror of the shared culture of the peoples of this expansive land. Addressing the ceremony, Esmaeili said, "Let us unite and pledge beside the tomb of the great Ferdowsi to uphold and preserve the Persian language, script, history, and literature of Iran. Take pride in them, pass them on to future generations, and safeguard them as a treasured legacy. He emphasized that 'Shahnameh' is more than just poetry; it is a guide to manners, morals, and wisdom. "By reading the 'Shahnameh,' we naturally transmit the values we hold dear—patriotism, sacrifice, selflessness, and kindness—to the generations to come. All these virtues are embedded throughout the epic.