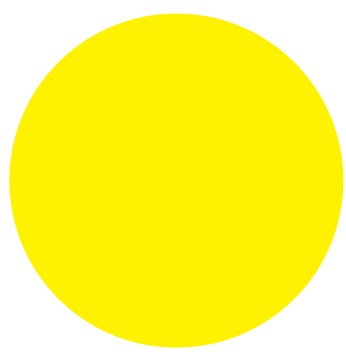


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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks at a ceremony in Tehran, Iran on May 20, 2025 to mark the first anniversary of a tragic incident that took the lives of former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as well as six others onboard a helicopter in northwestern Iran.

> leader.ir

Leader excoriates 'outrageous' US demands in nuclear talks

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday called US demands for zero uranium enrichment in Iran "excessive and outrageous," expressing doubt about success of the ongoing nuclear talks between the two countries.

"I don't think nuclear talks with the US will bring results. We don't know what will happen," Khamenei said in a ceremony held to commemorate the first martyrdom anniversary of former president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May 19, 2024.

"No one is waiting for permission from anyone. The Islamic Republic has its own policies, its own methods, and it pursues its own agenda," the Leader underlined. US chief negotiator in nuclear talks Steve Witkoff said on Sunday that the US administration's "red line" in nuclear talks with Iran is that Iran cannot maintain any ability to enrich uranium.

"We have one very, very clear red line, and that is enrichment. We cannot allow even 1% of an enrichment capability," Witkoff told ABC's "This Week" program.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks at a ceremony in Tehran, Iran on May 20, 2025 to mark the first anniversary of a tragic incident that took the lives of former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as well as six others onboard a helicopter in northwestern Iran.

● [khamenei.ir](#)

"Everything begins... with a deal that does not include enrichment... because enrichment enables weaponization, and we will not allow a bomb to get here," he added.

Conflicting statements

Earlier this year, Witkoff had indicated that the US would accept Iran maintaining a limited enrichment capability,

but the Trump administration has since hardened its public stance.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Tuesday repeated the US stances, saying that the Trump administration is working to reach an agreement that would allow Iran to have a civil nuclear energy program but not enrich uranium.

He admitted that achieving such a deal "will not be easy."

Rubio told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the administration was offering an "off-ramp" for Iran to pursue prosperity and peace.

"It will not be easy, but that's the process we're engaged in now," Rubio said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday criticized "positions from the United States that were inconsistent with any logic and reason."

Iran's top diplomat said these stances "have caused serious disruptions in the negotiation process."

Iranian officials have repeatedly announced that the Islamic Republic will not abandon its uranium enrichment program.

Since April 12, Iran and the US have held four rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear

program, with US President Donald Trump threatening Iran with military attack if no agreement is reached.

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 insists Iran must give up.

Next round of talks

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said on Tuesday Iran has received a proposal for the next round of indirect negotiations.

"We have received a proposal regarding the next round of indirect talks between Iran and the US, and it is under review," Gharibabadi.

No further details about the content or timing of the proposed negotiations have been released.

The comments come a day after a Wall Street Journal reporter said that the next round of the talks is expected to take place this weekend in Rome.

Israel's offensive, aid blockage draw condemnations UK, Canada, France threaten Tel Aviv with 'concrete actions'

International Desk

Israel's new military offensive in the Gaza Strip and its ban on the entry of humanitarian aid into the Palestinian territory drew strong criticism across the world, even by its western allies.

The British government ramped up its criticism of Israel's military offensive by suspending free trade talks Tuesday and hitting West Bank settlers with sanctions. The moves came as international pressure mounts on Israel following a nearly three-month blockade of supplies into Gaza that led to famine warnings. Even the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, has voiced concerns over the growing hunger crisis, AP reported. Foreign Secretary David Lammy described the situation in Gaza as abominable and said that while an existing trade agreement was in place, the government could not continue discussions with an Israeli cabinet pursuing what he called egregious policies in the West Bank and Gaza.

"The world is judging," Lammy said. "History will judge them. Blocking aid. Expanding the war. Dismissing the concerns of your friends and partners. This is indefensible. And it must stop."

The actions came a day after the UK, France and Canada issued a joint statement condemning Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the occupied West Bank.

'Cruel, indefensible' actions

Israeli's ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, was summoned to the Foreign Office on Tuesday where Middle East Minister Hamish Falconer planned to call the 11-week blockade of aid to Gaza "cruel and indefensible."

Lammy announced that in addition to previous sanctions imposed by the UK, it was now imposing sanctions on a further "three individuals, two illegal settler outposts and two organizations supporting violence against Palestinian community."

He said the illegal Israeli settlements were spreading across the West Bank with the "explicit support" of this Israeli cabinet.

Lammy's remarks followed those of Prime Minister Keir Starmer who said the suffering by children in Gaza was "utterly intolerable" and repeated his call for a cease-fire. Starmer joined French President Emmanuel Ma-



Israeli tanks deploy near the Gaza Strip on May 20, 2025.

● [JACK GUEZ/AFP](#)

cron and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Monday in issuing one of the most significant criticisms by close allies of Israel's handling of the war in Gaza and its actions in the West Bank.

The three leaders threatened to take "concrete actions" if Israel did not cease its renewed military offensive and significantly lift restrictions on humanitarian aid. Netanyahu said the statement was "a huge prize" for Hamas.

Starmer called for increased shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza, saying the basic quantity allowed by Israel is "utterly inadequate."

Insufficient aid

While Israel allowed trucks with baby food and desperately needed supplies to begin rolling into Gaza on Monday, UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher described the volume of aid a "drop in the ocean of what is urgently needed."

The world's patience with Israel is wearing thin after more than 53,000 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. Israel's latest onslaught has killed more than 300 people in recent days, local health officials said.

In recent weeks, Macron intensified diplomatic efforts to put pressure on Israel, urging a cease-fire and calling for lifting the blockade of humanitarian aid.

Last month, Macron said France should move toward recognizing a Palestinian state, possibly in June when France and Saudi Arabia co-host an international conference about implementing a two-state solution.

Macron, who has said that recognizing Palestine is not a "taboo" for France, last week suggested that revisiting the EU's cooperation agreements with Israel is on the table.

Tensions between France and Israel have escalated after Macron called for stopping arms deliveries for use in Gaza in an October radio interview, prompting Netanyahu's strong criticism.

France also sought to impose a ban on Israeli military companies to prevent them from exhibiting weapons at the Euronaval trade exhibition.

Iranian lawmakers decry UK move to designate IRGC

International Desk

Iranian lawmakers strongly condemned a move by members of the British Parliament to designate the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization, vowing to take legal action.

During a parliament meeting on Tuesday, the Iranian parliamentarians in a statement said that the Iranian legislature, based on its legal duty to defend national sovereignty, security, and the authority of Iran's Armed Forces, strongly condemns the Britain's move.

The statement said the initiative, driven by "Zionist regime orders and the propaganda of the terrorist [MKO] group", lacks any legal basis or political legitimacy.

The lawmakers also censured Britain for continuing its colonial and meddlesome approach toward independent nations.

Referring to Britain's "dark history" of meddling in Iran, the statement said Britain has repeatedly endangered the Iranian people's security and well-being through interference and acts of aggression.

The statement came after a cross-party group of more than 550 British lawmakers and peers have signed a letter calling on the UK government to label the IRGC a terrorist organization.

The UK government has not formally

banned the IRGC, but it has imposed sanctions on its members and entities.

The appeal came shortly after British police charged three Iranian nationals on May 3 with offences under the National Security Act, alleging they acted on behalf of Iran's intelligence service.

Britain and Iran summoned each other's envoys after the Iranians were charged with spying in the UK.

Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that the British charge d'affaires was summoned following the "suspicious and unjustified detention" of a number of Iranian nationals in the UK.

The head of the Iranian Foreign Ministry's Third Western European Department voiced Tehran's strong protest against the British government's move, as well as unjustified accusations leveled against the Islamic Republic.

The official said detention of Iranian nationals is contrary to the accepted rules and standards of international law and human rights, because they were charged without any evidence.

The UK Foreign Office then responded on Monday by summoning Tehran's ambassador to the UK.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said the UK would not tolerate what she called "growing state-backed threats on UK soil."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pezeshkian: Cementing Tehran-Ashgabat ties guarantees mutual prosperity

Turkmen FM says gas swap via Iran typifies robust relations

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored the role of strengthening cooperation with Turkmenistan, particularly through mutual investments, in guaranteeing long-term prosperity and security for both nations during talks with Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov in Tehran on Tuesday. “Deepening and strengthening cooperation, particularly mutual joint investments between Iran and Turkmenistan, can guarantee the prosperity, well-being, friendship, and future security of both nations,” Pezeshkian stated, as reported by IRNA. The president emphasized the Islamic Republic’s commitment to elevating relations and expanding collaboration with neighboring countries, especially Turkmenistan, across various sectors, noting that while Iran is keen to import gas from Turkmenistan, it also possesses significant capabilities to export and swap gas with regional countries. “The construction of the Iran-Turkmenistan gas pipeline must be designed and implemented to accommodate gas

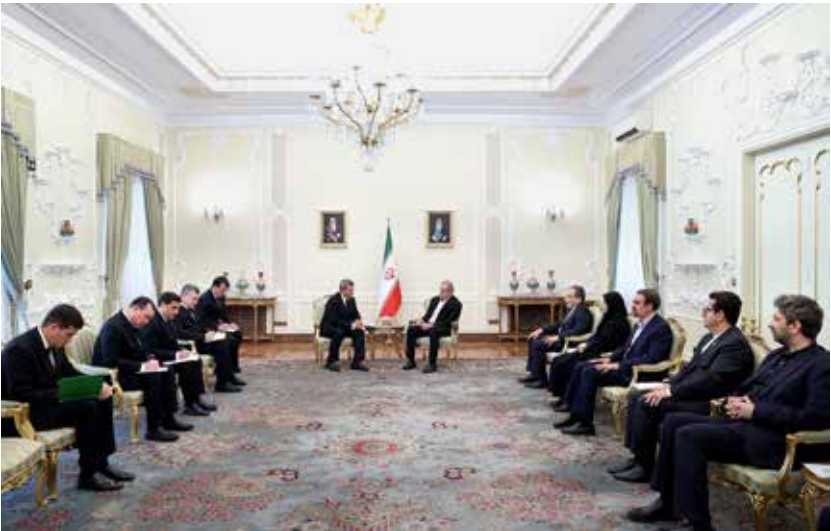


Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) meets Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov in Tehran on May 20, 2025. [president.ir](#)

transfer capacity for all three purposes [domestic consumption, exports, and swaps],” he added. Beyond energy cooperation, Pezeshkian highlighted Iran’s interest in broadening joint initiatives with Turkmenistan in economic, cultural, investment, road transportation, transit, and other fields.

Gas swap with Turkey

Meredov, who visited Tehran for the 18th session of the Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, during a separate meeting with Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, pointed to three key priorities for negotiations such as gas exports to Iran, joint development of gas pressure booster stations and pipelines, and gas swaps with third countries via Iran. “Turkmenistan currently produces over 80 billion cubic meters of gas annually, a significant portion of which can be ex-



ported through cooperation with Iran,” he said. Meredov described the rapid launch of gas swaps with Turkey via Turkmenistan and Iran as “a symbol of exemplary collaboration between the two countries.” “We also have ambitious plans for gas

exports to Iran,” the Turkmen foreign minister added. During the meeting, the oil minister affirmed the Iranian government’s “serious resolve to develop energy cooperation with Turkmenistan,” highlighting the swift implementation of the Turkmenistan-Turkey gas swap agreement

via Iran. He expressed his expectation that “other energy-related agreements, such as the gas import deal from Turkmenistan, will progress with similar momentum.”

Third electricity transmission line

In a separate meeting with Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, both sides stressed the urgency of expediting the completion of the third Mashhad-Mary electricity transmission line—a flagship bilateral project. Aliabadi underscored the need to expand cooperation in water management, energy, and technology transfer. Officials from both countries reported significant progress on the transmission line during the high-level Turkmen delegation’s visit to Iran. The project, aimed at enhancing energy exchange and grid stability, has seen the majority of its construction phase completed. Once operational, it will substantially increase electricity import-export capacity between the two nations and bolster Iran’s role in Central Asia’s energy market.

CBI vows to secure FX funding via international exchanges

Economy Desk

The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) pledged on Tuesday to secure foreign currency financing through international stock exchanges, emphasizing ongoing negotiations to enter the Russian stock market and expand access to other global financial platforms to meet the country’s critical monetary objectives. “Negotiations have been conducted to enter the Russian stock market, and we

are striving to access markets in other countries, as securing foreign currency financing is one of the Central Bank’s most critical objectives,” Mohammadreza Farzin said, as reported by ISNA. The CBI chief also noted President Masoud Pezeshkian’s upcoming visit to Oman next week, stating, “During this trip, negotiations will be held with officials from the Central Bank of Oman to issue foreign-denominated sukuk in the country.” During a press conference on Tuesday,

Farzin explained, “This year has been designated by Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as the ‘Year of Investment for Production.’ Accordingly, a \$10 billion investment plan has been outlined for the new year (began on March 20, 2025), of which \$2 billion will be sourced through the issuance of foreign currency Sukuk certificates (or Islamic bonds) in the exchange center. The remaining portions will be financed via collaboration with BRICS member states and other funding mechanisms.”

He went on to say, “Sukuk certificates are now gaining traction for financing not only in Islamic countries but also in non-Islamic nations.” A sukuk is an Islamic financial certificate, similar to a bond, that complies with Islamic Sharia law. The CBI chief added, “To date, nearly €260 million in foreign currency Sukuk certificates have been issued. The National Development Fund has committed to purchasing up to 90% of these certificates if they remain unsold.”



Tehran, Kabul underscore furthering cooperation in oil, gas sectors



Economy Desk

Iran’s oil minister and Afghan Taliban’s minister of mines and petroleum stressed the expansion of bilateral cooperation in oil and gas during a meeting on Tuesday, reviewing avenues to develop such collaborations. “The relations between the two countries are based on brotherhood and safeguarding mutual interests,” said Mohsen Paknejad, in his meeting with Hedayatullah Badri on Tuesday, adding that the Iranian government’s policy is to develop and deepen “economic relations, particularly in the oil and gas sector, with neighboring countries.” Referring to the immense capa-

bilities of Iran’s state and private companies in exploration, development, and production of oil and gas fields, Paknejad said, “Iran is currently prepared to provide comprehensive cooperation in oil, gas, refining, and petrochemicals in line with Afghanistan’s needs, but the current level of bilateral relations in this field does not match the existing potential.” The Iranian minister also highlighted Iran’s significant expertise in exporting petrochemical products, workforce training, gas exports, and developing the compressed natural gas (CNG) industry to Afghanistan. During the meeting, Badri emphasized the cultural and

historical commonalities between the two countries, stating, “Given their long shared border and geographical position, Iran and Afghanistan can significantly contribute to regional connectivity and trade exchanges between themselves and other countries.” Noting the existence of five sedimentary and exploratory oil and gas basins in Afghanistan and the country’s need to conduct exploration operations in these areas, Badri said, “Iranian knowledge-based companies possess the required experience and expertise for the exploration, development, and production of potential and newly discovered oil and gas fields in Afghanistan.”

IAIO voices aviation industry’s readiness to enter new tech generations

Economy Desk

The head of Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO) said the country’s aviation industry is now prepared to enter a new phase of producing and designing advanced aviation equipment and can secure a significant share in the global market. Speaking on Tuesday at the 23rd International Conference of Iranian Aerospace Society, Amir Khajeh-Fard emphasized the development of Iran’s aviation industry through reliance on indigenous expertise, enhanced industry-academia collaboration, and successful crossing through technological bottlenecks, IRNA reported. Khajeh-Fard highlighted the country’s immense scientific and industrial advancements in the aerospace and aviation sectors, saying, “Today, we possess products designed through indigenous expertise and the collaborative efforts of specialists and academics, which can guarantee the resilience and strength of Iran’s aviation industry alongside military and commercial fleets.” The CEO also addressed projections for the global aviation market, noting, “By the year 2032, approximately \$4.8 trillion will be invested in the global aviation industry, and Iran can capture at least one percent of this market. This is not only critical for economic development but also creates substantial employment opportunities.” “Over the years, we have achieved full capability in overcoming technological bottlenecks, including in aviation engines, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and advanced electronic systems. Today, in the design and manufacturing of aircraft, helicopters, and other aviation equipment, we have reached a level where no engine remains grounded in Iran due to technological shortcomings,” he added.



Referring to the impact of sanctions on the country’s aviation sector, he said, “Sanctions have not only failed to hinder progress but have compelled Iran to rely on knowledge-based capabilities and create indigenous capacities.” Khajeh-Fard continued, “The production of transport aircraft and certain advanced engines, despite sanctions, demonstrates Iran’s ability to compete with global products. We are now entering a knowledge-based phase and must leverage this experience to leap into new generations of technology.”

Self-sufficient industry

Also, Hossein Pourfarzaneh, the head of the Civil Aviation Organization of Iran, emphasized the historical legacy, self-sufficiency, and vast economic opportunities of the country’s aviation industry. Pourfarzaneh noted that the national aviation market generates over one billion dollars annually from ticket sales alone, stating, “This industry is economically self-sustaining. With adequate support for knowledge-based companies and investors, it will be capable of meeting domestic needs and reducing foreign dependency.”

Energy, food security, and Artificial Intelligence

New strategic triangle of Iranian diplomacy in West Asia



food-safety.com



ambiq.com



By Kamran
Yeganegi
Foreign policy expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

As the geopolitical architecture of West Asia undergoes a profound transformation — shaped by shifting alliances, technological upheavals, and the mounting imperatives of climate resilience — Iran finds itself at a pivotal juncture. No longer confined to reactive foreign policy maneuvers, the Islamic Republic is uniquely positioned to articulate a new, forward-looking diplomatic doctrine anchored in three interrelated domains: energy, food security, and Artificial Intelligence. This triad, if strategically cultivated, can form the cornerstone of a reimagined regional diplomacy — one that projects Iran not merely as a stakeholder but as a proactive architect of regional stability and cooperation.

Energy: structural asset in volatile world

With vast reserves of oil and natural gas and geographically located at the crossroads of

Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, Iran remains an enduring energy powerhouse. In a world reeling from energy shocks, Europe's pivot away from Russian hydrocarbons, and Asia's surging demand — particularly by China and India — Iran holds the potential to reclaim its place not merely as an exporter of raw resources but as a regional hub of integrated energy flows.

Rather than focusing solely on crude exports, Iranian energy diplomacy must pivot toward regional cooperation in refining capacity, petrochemical development, and knowledge transfer in renewables. Engagement with platforms such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and regional connectivity projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor can enhance Tehran's ability to act as an energy nexus — facilitating interdependence rather than dependency.

Food security: from consumer to strategic conduit

As climate change accelerates and global food supply chains become increasingly precarious,

food security has evolved from a domestic policy issue into a strategic geopolitical leverage. Iran, with its proximity to resource-scarce neighbors and access to both landlocked and maritime routes, can transform itself from a net food importer into a logistical and technological enabler of regional food resilience.

Through joint agricultural ventures, cross-border investments in irrigation and smart farming, and the establishment of agro-digital corridors, Iran can co-create food security networks with Central Asian republics, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf states. Moreover, by mobilizing its emerging ecosystem of agro-tech startups, biotech firms, and data-driven farming innovations, Tehran can position itself at the vanguard of climate-smart agriculture in the region.

AI: meta-infrastructure of future diplomacy

The third — and perhaps most transformative — pillar of this new strategic triangle is Artificial Intelligence (AI). No longer a mere technological novelty, AI constitutes the meta-infrastructure upon which future diploma-

cy, trade, and governance will be built. Iran must not remain a passive consumer of AI products but must become a co-designer of ethical, localized, and strategic AI ecosystems.

To this end, Iran should advocate for a regional AI framework that includes data-sharing protocols, research consortia, and regulatory harmonization. Aligning with countries in the Global South seeking digital sovereignty, Tehran can leverage AI to enhance not only economic productivity but also diplomatic influence through techno-normative leadership.

Moreover, the integration of AI into Iran's food and energy strategies — such as AI-driven water management, predictive crop modeling, and energy grid optimization — can drastically improve national resilience while showcasing the pragmatic benefits of technology-driven regional cooperation.

Toward holistic, forward-looking diplomacy

The future of Iranian diplomacy lies not solely in high-level summits or bilateral pacts but in leveraging strategic domains

where Iran holds both legacy strength and future potential. The triangular convergence of energy, food security, and Artificial Intelligence offers a multi-dimensional framework for Iran to assert a new regional identity — one that is collaborative rather than confrontational, innovative rather than inert, and resilient rather than reactive.

In embracing this paradigm, Iran must recalibrate its foreign policy institutions to operate beyond traditional silos. Diplomatic missions should be equipped with technological foresight, agricultural expertise, and energy modeling tools, enabling them to act as nodes in a transregional network of sustainable development.

Ultimately, Iran's ascent in the emerging order of West Asia will not be dictated by hard power alone but by its ability to weave together the flows of energy, food, and data into a coherent narrative of shared destiny. The region demands not another hegemon but a strategic convener — a role Iran is uniquely poised to play if it fully harnesses the transformative potential of its triadic strengths.



The integration of AI into Iran's food and energy strategies — such as AI-driven water management, predictive crop modeling, and energy grid optimization — can drastically improve national resilience while showcasing the pragmatic benefits of technology-driven regional cooperation.

Iran outpaces Saudi Arabia in industrial might



By Farshid
Farzanegan
Former head of
Iran-UAE Joint
Chamber of Commerce

OPINION

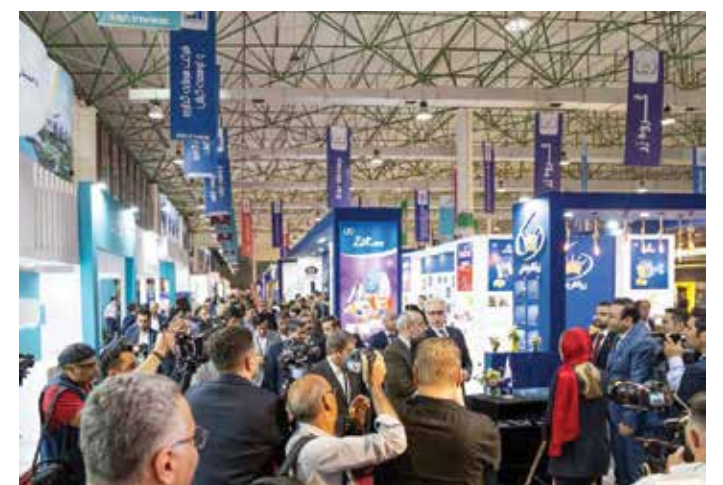
When President Trump recently claimed in Saudi Arabia that the kingdom had outpaced Iran in industry and technology, he was

only painting part of the picture. Iran is certainly ahead of Saudi Arabia scientifically and ranks among the world's top 20 countries for scientific publications. Moreover, Iran has chalked up genuine, homegrown achievements in advanced fields like nanotechnology, biotechnology, and even space technology. On top of that, Iran's local workforce stands out as one of the most skilled in the region.

Still, Saudi Arabia has indeed picked up speed in industrial development in recent years, largely thanks to massive foreign investment pouring in through mega-projects. The kingdom has also set out to reduce its dependency on oil. When it comes to bringing in foreign technology, developing free zones, digitizing government services, and rolling out infrastructure, Saudi Arabia has pulled ahead of Iran. Its per-

formance in non-oil exports and industrial diversification is also markedly better.

In a nutshell, Iran is more industrialized than Saudi Arabia, but Saudi Arabia is more modern and stable from a management perspective. Nevertheless, Trump, for his part, has always talked up Saudi Arabia only as a reliable buyer, especially given its hefty purchases of US arms and infrastructure.



An official visits a booth at the Tehran 23rd Industry Exhibition held with the presence of more than 300 local and foreign companies in Tehran, Iran, in November 2023.
irantradefair.com

Turning tide for Iran won't be easy

To turn things around, there's a clear roadmap: boost stability in industrial and technological policymaking, ensure consistency in macro-level decisions, hang on to top talent, and step up engagement with reputable global firms, universities, and research centers. Yet, with Iran's international investment ranking in the doldrums and capital security under threat, the country still struggles to draw in and hold onto foreign investment. The economic climate remains shaky, making any turnaround an uphill battle. On the technology front, Iran must build up an innovation ecosystem that welcomes transparent foreign investment. Interna-

tional companies and institutions need to see that Iran's political ties with the world are warming up before they take a closer look. He insists that scientific and technological diplomacy — not political confrontation — should be put on the agenda.

Sanctions profiteers deal blow to Iran's progress

US sanctions have definitely played a pivotal role in why Iran has fallen behind Saudi Arabia in industry and technology. However, I also like to call out unqualified managers, entrenched "sanctions profiteers" who cash in on the current situation, and influential stakeholders who throw their weight around in policymaking. Add to that the policy instabili-

ty, brain drain, corruption, and managerial incompetence from which Iran is suffering, and it's clear why Iran is lagging behind in the industrial and technological race.

To make up for lost ground, I prescribe economic reforms, smoother international engagement, improved diplomatic relations, support for top talent and the real private sector, and economic diversification.

Iran must patch up its relationship with the world. If that happens, the country has the talent and capacity to get back into the global economic game at full speed.

The article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.



● buenochem.ir

Iranian businesses at geopolitical crossroads



By Melika Molkara
Researcher,
economic activist

OPINION

Iran stands as the only country in Southwest Asia with direct access to three major geopolitical zones: the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian-Chinese sphere. This unique position, referred to in geopolitics as a "Geostrategic Convergence Zone," could turn a country's economic development strategy on its head. Yet, the pressing question remains: Have Iranian businesses tapped into this advantage, or are they still sitting on the sidelines? Geography alone does not amount to wealth; it is the management of geography that brings value to the table. With



● CSIS

15 neighboring countries and 27 official border crossings, Iran is well-placed to reach a market of 600 million people in its vicinity — a rare feat globally. Nevertheless, according to official reports from the Interna-

tional Trade Centre (ITC), Iran's share of its neighbors' export market at the end of 2023 was estimated at only about 2.4%. Meanwhile, Turkey, with far more limited geographic access, carved out a share of

roughly 8.6% in the same market.

If we zero in on concrete examples of this lag, we can point to the pharmaceutical, hygiene, technology-driven, food, home appliance, medical equipment, and health tourism industries — those that both have production advantages and face high regional demand, yet have not built up regional value chains.

For instance, Iran, with over 65 pharmaceutical units and a strong position in raw material production, could be a major supplier for neighboring countries. However, its pharmaceutical export market share is estimated at less than 5% of its potential capacity. Likewise, only 2% of Iran's technology industry exports make their way to the region, highlighting the lack of a regional technology

synergy strategy.

The world today is moving away from "within-border competition" toward networked, region-centric economies. The most successful global companies and brands are those that factor in political and geographical realities as part of their market analysis and product development.

Unfortunately, in Iran, many companies still draw up their growth strategies without a deep analysis of regional developments. As the holder of the world's second-largest gas reserves, fourth-largest oil reserves, a key transit location, and significant climate diversity, if Iran fails to turn its geographic edge into a sustainable economic advantage, it will, in effect, hand over its competitive benefits to regional rivals.

To pull this off, a structural link must be forged between industrial policy-making and regional geopolitics. It is also essential for Iranian enterprises — especially in startups, service exports, logistics, health, food, agriculture, and cultural industries — to move beyond a narrow domestic outlook and adopt a regionally driven development model.

In closing, let's not lose sight of this: In the ever-shifting landscape of regional geopolitics and economics, opportunities don't stand still. If policy-making and targeted action drag their feet, Iran's latent geographic advantages will quickly be snapped up by other regional and extra-regional players.

The article first appeared in Persian on Asia News Iran.

Iranian businesspeople overlook power of local bloggers



By Hassan Amidi
Scholar

OPINION

These days, communications have taken on a different meaning than before, and the reality is that today's human society is being swallowed up by rapid technological and communication advances. Therefore, Iran's merchants and traders must tap into this technological progress to introduce their products to the world. Unfortunately, the potential of media and content production has been left on the back burner, while other countries are making the most of this capacity. Today, East Asian countries such as China and Japan roll out localized media campaigns before launching products to win over their audiences. In many cases, the power of these campaigns even outstrips the quality of the products themselves. In other words, these countries call on local bloggers to promote their export products in the target market, ensuring the product is put across strongly to various segments of society. This crucial point has recently been overlooked by Iranian traders, who assume that because they have succeeded in industry and production, they will naturally succeed in product promotion and advertising both domestically and abroad. Meanwhile, many foreign traders carry out their advertising through local bloggers and influencers — and



● SOCIAL MEDIA

have hit the mark in doing so.

Weakness in product promotion

Iranian producers excel in manufacturing but fall short in product promotion. Without media backing and cultural understanding, one cannot expect to break into global markets effectively; Education in this area is essential. In addition to leveraging local bloggers, Iranian traders can also make use of native social networks to introduce their products in foreign countries. Unfortunately, product promotion in Iran is mostly limited to the domestic market, and there is a lack of sufficient knowledge about the media ecosystems of target countries. It should be noted that in many countries, a local blogger can carry more weight than an official campaign.

Traders focusing on domestic promotion

One major flaw of our traders is

that they put all their eggs in one basket by focusing on domestic product promotion and expect the same advertising approach to cut it abroad. However, our traders are out of their depth when it comes to running diverse advertising campaigns on platforms like YouTube.

Our merchants often see media as a rival rather than a partner, whereas media should be considered a strategic ally for economic actors and traders, even capable of stepping up as their operational spokespersons.

Weak presence in int'l exhibitions

One media tool that can make a splash in introducing products to target markets is participation in exhibitions. However, the reality is that our country's booths at international exhibitions are not comparable in quality to others. Iranian traders' weak presence in foreign ex-



hibitions is evident. Most rely on outdated methods like printing banners, posters, and brochures, while most countries bring cutting-edge tools to the table to showcase their products.

Whether in the public or private sector, our objectives at exhibitions are unclear; We stick to traditional methods from two decades ago without any special plans or content tailored for exhibitions. Meanwhile, other countries show up well-prepared and armed to the teeth with strategies.

What is expected from the Trade Promotion Organization is to step up training for traders, preparing them for international exhibitions in terms of product introduction and content. Being a strong industrialist does not automatically mean being a strong content producer, and this mindset must be turned around. Perhaps no institution has yet

stepped in to educate traders that succeeding in exports requires training in content creation for their target audiences. This is a major pitfall for our merchants and traders, whose thinking in this area needs to be brought up to speed.

The above points highlight part of the reason behind our country's shortcomings in exports. In some cases, our producers supply products equal to or even superior to those of other countries, but the reality is we lag behind in content production and media-based product promotion, an area that demands urgent attention and effort.

The article first appeared in Persian on Tasnim news agency.



Today, East Asian countries such as China and Japan roll out localized media campaigns before launching products to win over their audiences. In many cases, the power of these campaigns even outstrips the quality of the products themselves. In other words, these countries call on local bloggers to promote their export products in the target market, ensuring the product is put across strongly to various segments of society.

Turning tide for Iran won't be easy

To turn things around, there's a clear roadmap: boost stability in industrial and technological policymaking, ensure consistency in macro-level decisions, hang on to top talent, and step up engagement with reputable global firms, universities, and research centers. Yet, with Iran's international investment ranking in the doldrums and capital security under threat, the country still struggles to draw in and hold onto foreign investment. The economic climate remains shaky, making any turnaround an uphill battle. On the technology front, Iran must build up an innovation ecosystem that welcomes transparent foreign investment. Interna-

tional companies and institutions need to see that Iran's political ties with the world are warming up before they take a closer look. He insists that scientific and technological diplomacy — not political confrontation — should be put on the agenda.

Sanctions profiteers deal blow to Iran's progress

US sanctions have definitely played a pivotal role in why Iran has fallen behind Saudi Arabia in industry and technology. However, I also like to call out unqualified managers, entrenched "sanctions profiteers" who cash in on the current situation, and influential stakeholders who throw their weight around in policymaking. Add to that the policy instabili-

ty, brain drain, corruption, and managerial incompetence from which Iran is suffering, and it's clear why Iran is lagging behind in the industrial and technological race.

To make up for lost ground, I prescribe economic reforms, smoother international engagement, improved diplomatic relations, support for top talent and the real private sector, and economic diversification.

Iran must patch up its relationship with the world. If that happens, the country has the talent and capacity to get back into the global economic game at full speed.

The article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.



● buenochem.ir

Iranian businesses at geopolitical crossroads



By Melika Molkara
Researcher,
economic activist

OPINION

Iran stands as the only country in Southwest Asia with direct access to three major geopolitical zones: the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian-Chinese sphere. This unique position, referred to in geopolitics as a "Geostrategic Convergence Zone," could turn a country's economic development strategy on its head. Yet, the pressing question remains: Have Iranian businesses tapped into this advantage, or are they still sitting on the sidelines? Geography alone does not amount to wealth; it is the management of geography that brings value to the table. With



● CSIS

15 neighboring countries and 27 official border crossings, Iran is well-placed to reach a market of 600 million people in its vicinity — a rare feat globally. Nevertheless, according to official reports from the Interna-

tional Trade Centre (ITC), Iran's share of its neighbors' export market at the end of 2023 was estimated at only about 2.4%. Meanwhile, Turkey, with far more limited geographic access, carved out a share of

roughly 8.6% in the same market.

If we zero in on concrete examples of this lag, we can point to the pharmaceutical, hygiene, technology-driven, food, home appliance, medical equipment, and health tourism industries — those that both have production advantages and face high regional demand, yet have not built up regional value chains.

For instance, Iran, with over 65 pharmaceutical units and a strong position in raw material production, could be a major supplier for neighboring countries. However, its pharmaceutical export market share is estimated at less than 5% of its potential capacity. Likewise, only 2% of Iran's technology industry exports make their way to the region, highlighting the lack of a regional technology

synergy strategy.

The world today is moving away from "within-border competition" toward networked, region-centric economies. The most successful global companies and brands are those that factor in political and geographical realities as part of their market analysis and product development.

Unfortunately, in Iran, many companies still draw up their growth strategies without a deep analysis of regional developments. As the holder of the world's second-largest gas reserves, fourth-largest oil reserves, a key transit location, and significant climate diversity, if Iran fails to turn its geographic edge into a sustainable economic advantage, it will, in effect, hand over its competitive benefits to regional rivals.

To pull this off, a structural link must be forged between industrial policy-making and regional geopolitics. It is also essential for Iranian enterprises — especially in startups, service exports, logistics, health, food, agriculture, and cultural industries — to move beyond a narrow domestic outlook and adopt a regionally driven development model.

In closing, let's not lose sight of this: In the ever-shifting landscape of regional geopolitics and economics, opportunities don't stand still. If policy-making and targeted action drag their feet, Iran's latent geographic advantages will quickly be snapped up by other regional and extra-regional players.

The article first appeared in Persian on Asia News Iran.

Iranian businesspeople overlook power of local bloggers



By Hassan Amidi
Scholar

OPINION

These days, communications have taken on a different meaning than before, and the reality is that today's human society is being swallowed up by rapid technological and communication advances. Therefore, Iran's merchants and traders must tap into this technological progress to introduce their products to the world. Unfortunately, the potential of media and content production has been left on the back burner, while other countries are making the most of this capacity. Today, East Asian countries such as China and Japan roll out localized media campaigns before launching products to win over their audiences. In many cases, the power of these campaigns even outstrips the quality of the products themselves. In other words, these countries call on local bloggers to promote their export products in the target market, ensuring the product is put across strongly to various segments of society.

This crucial point has recently been overlooked by Iranian traders, who assume that because they have succeeded in industry and production, they will naturally succeed in product promotion and advertising both domestically and abroad. Meanwhile, many foreign traders carry out their advertising through local bloggers and influencers — and



● SOCIAL MEDIA

have hit the mark in doing so.

Weakness in product promotion

Iranian producers excel in manufacturing but fall short in product promotion. Without media backing and cultural understanding, one cannot expect to break into global markets effectively; Education in this area is essential. In addition to leveraging local bloggers, Iranian traders can also make use of native social networks to introduce their products in foreign countries. Unfortunately, product promotion in Iran is mostly limited to the domestic market, and there is a lack of sufficient knowledge about the media ecosystems of target countries. It should be noted that in many countries, a local blogger can carry more weight than an official campaign.

Traders focusing on domestic promotion

One major flaw of our traders is

that they put all their eggs in one basket by focusing on domestic product promotion and expect the same advertising approach to cut it abroad. However, our traders are out of their depth when it comes to running diverse advertising campaigns on platforms like YouTube.

Our merchants often see media as a rival rather than a partner, whereas media should be considered a strategic ally for economic actors and traders, even capable of stepping up as their operational spokespersons.

Weak presence in int'l exhibitions

One media tool that can make a splash in introducing products to target markets is participation in exhibitions. However, the reality is that our country's booths at international exhibitions are not comparable in quality to others. Iranian traders' weak presence in foreign ex-



hibitions is evident. Most rely on outdated methods like printing banners, posters, and brochures, while most countries bring cutting-edge tools to the table to showcase their products.

Whether in the public or private sector, our objectives at exhibitions are unclear; We stick to traditional methods from two decades ago without any special plans or content tailored for exhibitions. Meanwhile, other countries show up well-prepared and armed to the teeth with strategies.

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▲ A team from AIMedic, a knowledge-based Iranian company, is present at the GITEX 2023 exhibition in Dubai, the UAE, in October 2023.

● SOCIAL MEDIA

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What next for Iranian women's futsal after drab Asian Cup run?



Sports Desk

A new head coach looks inevitable and imminent for the Iranian national team following a below-par campaign at the newly-finished AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup in Hohhot, China.

The Iranian girls still had something to cheer about on the final day of the competition as a 3-1 victory over the host in the third-place playoff saw the country join Japan and Thailand in securing a spot at the inaugural Women's World Cup in the Philippines later in the year.

However, uninspiring performances and a first defeat in three editions for the two-time champion – a last-four setback against Japan – has convinced the national governing body of the sport to part ways with head coach Forouzan Soleimani ahead of the world showpiece in six-months' time, according to several reports in recent days.

News website Football 360 reported this week that Solei-

mani had been informed of the federation's decision immediately after the third-place victory, adding she refused to join the celebrations and was in tears while saying goodbye to her players in the locker room.

According to the report, the Iranian federation has already reached agreement with former coach Shahrzad Mozaffar for the job.

Mozaffar, who worked as an AFC analyst at the competition in Hohhot, was in charge of the bench when Iran won a second Asian title in 2018 and is expected to return to the role for a second spell.

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 history came to an end against Vietnam in contro-

versial, humiliating fashion. Soleimani's girls deliberately played for a goalless draw in their final group game, tanking the match to avoid Japan until the final, though the cynical approach backfired eventually 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.

"Our team was carried away by past successes going into the tournament, while our opponents came fully prepared with solid strategies, and reaped the rewards in the end," former Iran coach Shanaz Yari told ISNA.

"This team went seven years without any real program due to COVID pandemic and other issues. Now we all need to come together to make sure the team will have a decent campaign at the World Cup. Just being there isn't enough. We have to work hard to be among the top teams, which won't be easy, but these players have the potential to succeed."

Iran international keeper Niazmand signs for Persepolis

Sports Desk

Weeks of speculation over Payam Niazmand's future came to an end as the Iranian international goalkeeper joined Persepolis as a free agent from Sepahan on Monday, the Tehran Reds announced.

Niazmand, 30, who signed a two-year contract with the Reds, spent six seasons over two spells at Sepahan and registered 89 clean sheets in 201 appearances, helping the club lift the Hazfi Cup trophy last year.

Having made his Persian Gulf Pro League debut with Paykan in 2016, Niazmand joined Portimonense for the start of the 2023/24 season but returned to Sepahan a year later after making only five appearances in all competitions for the Portuguese top-flight side.

Capped on seven occasions for the national team, Niazmand is expected to be part of the Iranian squad at the World Cup finals in North America next year.

Niazmand's arrival could spell the end of Alexis Guendouz's time in Persepolis. The Algerian keeper joined the club last summer and had 15 clean sheets in 37 games with the Reds but his lack of contribution to the buildup play prompted Turkish head coach Ismail Kartal to seek a new number one.

Niazmand is the Reds' fifth signing in as many days since the conclusion of the league season, which promises a summer of shakeup in the squad under Kartal, after his team finished the campaign without a trophy. Persepolis failed to reach the knockout phase of the AFC Champions League Elite and

was beaten by Sepahan in the Hazfi Cup last 16, while finishing third in the league table with 60 points – eight adrift of champion Tractor. This was a worst league position in 10 seasons for the Reds, who dominated the Iranian club football for nearly a decade with seven top-flight titles – including domestic doubles on two occasions – while reaching the final showpiece of the Asian elite clubs' competition twice.

Persepolis has already secured the services of Congolese winger Thiery Bifouma and Amin Kazemian from Esteghlal Khuzestan and Iralco, respectively, while Mojtaba Fakhrian joined as a young frontline prospect from Shams Azar, and attacking midfielder Reza Shekari left Sepahan as a free agent to sign for the Reds.



Iranian goalkeeper Payam Niazmand (R) poses with the Persepolis shirt after signing a two-year contract with the Persian Gulf Pro League club in Tehran, Iran, on May 19, 2025.

● PERSEPOLIS FC



Ten Hag a candidate to return in charge of Ajax

REUTERS – Former Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag could be headed back to Ajax Amsterdam next season, the club's technical director said.

Ten Hag has been without a job since his firing in October, but Alex Kroes told Dutch television NOS that Ten Hag is a candidate to replace Francesco Farioli, who quit Ajax on Monday.

"Erik ten Hag has been on the list for a long time," Kroes said. "He is well-known, he did a fantastic job when he was here."

"I spoke to him briefly on Sunday. He was in the Arena as a spectator," he added.

Ten Hag attended Ajax's last game of the Dutch league season against FC Twente on Sunday. They won 2-0 but still fell short of taking the title, opens new tab from PSV Eindhoven.

The 55-year-old Ten Hag coached at Ajax from 2018 to 2022, winning three league titles and taking the club to Champions League semi-final in 2019 when they came all the way through the preliminary stages.

Farioli resigned on Monday but had already decided to leave after a dramatic draw in their penultimate game against Groningen last Wednesday when Ajax let slip

a 2-1 lead nine minutes into stoppage time to effectively cede top place in the standings to PSV.

"Francesco texted me from the bus that evening: 'let's sit down together tomorrow'," Kroes said. "Then he said that he had serious doubts about whether he should continue." Farioli said the Ajax board and he differed on how to proceed next year after Ajax squandered a nine-point lead with five matches left in the campaign.

"My decision has nothing to do with the title fight," insisted the 36-year-old Italian. "But I feel that this is the best choice, especially for the club."

Craftsmanship, artistry turning heads at Aqazadeh Mansion of Abarkuh

Iranica Desk

Among the narrow alleys of Abarkuh in Yazd Province, an old house with a striking windcatcher stands out, known as the Aqazadeh Mansion. This historic residence is considered one of the notable attractions of Abarkuh, housing the most beautiful two-story windcatcher in Iran and regarded as the largest windcatcher in the country. Built during the Qajar era, the Aqazadeh Mansion is registered as a national heritage site of Iran, celebrated for its architectural integrity and the masterful use of traditional architectural elements. Next, you can explore more about this magnificent historic building.

The Aqazadeh Mansion is located in Imam Hossein Square, within the Darvazeh Meydan neighborhood of Abarkuh. It lies approximately 150 kilometers from the center of Yazd and is only a ten-minute drive from the heart of Abarkuh.

Several historic houses are situated along a street in Abarkuh named Mousavi, Gabri, Hosseini Doost, Seyyed Ali Aqa, and Aqazadeh. The Seyyed Ali Aqa House is adjacent to the Aqazadeh House and is connected to it via a Sabeg, an old covered corridor, highlighting the close relationships or kinship among the inhabitants of these houses, IRNA wrote.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of this mansion is its impressive two-story windcatcher. Notably, the United Arab Emirates once attempted to register windcatchers under their country's name with UNESCO — a move that was opposed by Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization at the time. The structure underwent restoration beginning in 2006, which spanned over a decade.

Since Yazd is a desert area with extremely hot summers, it is advisable to visit the mansion during spring — especially until April-May — or in autumn and winter until December-January. If visiting in summer, it's best to go early in the morning when the temperature is cooler.

The Aqazadeh Manion was built around 1772 CE through the efforts of Haj Hossein Abarqui, a wealthy local figure dedicated to urban development and agriculture. Covering an area of approximately 820 square meters, it was registered as a national heritage site in 1996-1997 CE.

Entrance to the Aqazadeh Mansion is via a corridor leading into a spacious, beautiful courtyard centered around a rectangular stone pool. As you walk through the courtyard, you will notice a two-story house with stained glass and colored glass windows, alongside the eye-catching windcatcher. The rooms and various sections are arranged around three sides of the courtyard, designed for use during different seasons. The eastern and western rooms are constructed as three- and five-door rooms.

The two-story Aqazadeh Mansion, typical of Iranian desert architecture, is built with indigenous materials such as adobe and brick. Extensive woodwork is used for doors and windows, and decorative plasterwork (gachbori) embellishes many parts of the structure.

The entrance to the mansion is positioned on its northwest side and features an arch-shaped top. Upon passing through the door, you enter a vestibule and then a corridor leading into the courtyard. In the center is a stone pool, with rooms built along three sides. The courtyard floor is paved with cobblestones.

Rooms

Aqazadeh Mansion comprises five- and three-door rooms across two floors. The five-door rooms served as main reception areas, while the three-door rooms functioned as bedrooms, positioned on the sides of the larger rooms.

Summer room: This room was used during the hot summer months to provide relief from direct sunlight. Located in the southern part of the courtyard, it features a semi-open porch with a visible windcatcher above the roof. This porch has fewer decorations compared to the rest of the house because its open nature exposes it to dust. Adjacent to this room is a private chamber with a skylight ceiling, shaded with curtains or awnings, where water sprinkling helped cool the space.

Five-door rooms: Also known as Shahneshin, these rooms boast five stained glass doors (oriel windows) that face the large central pool.

Three-door rooms: These are decorated with stained glass windows, and their name reflects the number of oriel windows they contain.

These rooms are also decorated with stained glass windows, and their name reflects the number of oriel windows they contain. Like the other spaces in the mansion, these rooms are designed to provide comfort and aesthetic appeal, with intricate stained glass work that allows natural light to filter through while maintaining privacy. Their placement and decoration emphasize the house's emphasis on creating comfortable living and reception areas that are both functional and beautiful.

Sections

Kolah Farangi: The decorative turret, known as Kolah Farangi, is situated immediately next to the windcatcher on the roof of the main hall of Aqazadeh Mansion. This section of the house has an octagonal shape, with a colored glass window on each side. The purpose of these windows is to maximize natural light into the interior of the main hall while also enhancing aesthetic appeal. The Kolah Farangi not only contributes to the house's beauty but also plays a strategic role in its cooling and lighting system. The distinctive combination of the windcatcher and the Kolah Farangi significantly improves ventilation and illumination within the lower spaces and the hall of the house, making it a masterpiece of traditional Iranian architecture.

Basement: The basement of the mansion is carved directly into the rock, much like the architecture seen in Meymand village. It was formed by painstakingly digging through the stones, demonstrating the ingenuity and craftsmanship of traditional builders. This carved basement served as a cool, secure space, often used for storage or other functional purposes, revealing the sophisticated use of natural landscape features to adapt to the hot desert climate.

Decorations

Decorative elements are considered fundamental components of architecture in old mansions, and the Aqazadeh Mansion is no exception. Among these decorations are the muqarnas (inlay carvings), which adorn the lower part of the Kolah Farangi, as well as the vaulted muqarnas ceiling of the main hall. These intricate, illuminated carvings exemplify the refined craftsmanship and artistry characteristic of Persian architecture.

The mansion's aesthetic appeal is further enhanced by rectangular lattice windows decorated with colored glass and wooden frames featuring intricate latticework. These windows add

a stunning visual depth and charm to the building's overall architecture, especially when combined with the ornamental plasterwork at the edges of windows and doors. Another decorative element used extensively around the exterior spaces is Qatarbandi, a specialized type of plasterwork that adds texture and visual interest.

Decorative plasterwork is also found at the top of both the upper and lower windcatchers. These feature various geometric shapes and arches, inserted in a seemingly random yet artistically unified pattern. Such decorations do not follow a specific repetitive pattern but are considered signatures of the architect's unique style, reflecting his craftsmanship and artistic vision.

Windcatcher

The two-story windcatcher of Aqazadeh Mansion is designed in the Yazdi style and sits prominently atop the main hall. This impressive structure stands out from other desert houses because of its ability to effectively receive and direct wind from all four directions into the channels, classifying it as a four-sided windcatcher.

Remarkably, the engineering of the mansion's windcatcher allows it to provide effective ventilation even when there is no wind, thanks to its sophisticated design. It is a well-known landmark visible from all sides of the city and has become a symbol of traditional Iranian architecture. The windcatcher itself stands approximately 18 meters high from the floor of the courtyard, with the upper and lower sections perfectly coordinated. Its total area covers roughly 18 square meters. The second-floor windcatcher is slightly smaller than the first, and both feature rectangular plans.

The distinctive design and meticulous construction showcase the unmatched artistry and finesse of traditional Iranian architecture. The windcatcher comprises a total of 19 openings — its design includes both functional and ornamental features. These openings are engineered to be adjustable, allowing them to be opened or closed during strong winds or cold weather in winter, providing optimal control over air-flow and temperature.

Finally, the dimensions and materials utilized in constructing the windcatcher serve as indicators of the owner's status and wealth. Wealthy individuals, such as the owner of Aqazadeh Mansion, preferred a two-story, four-sided windcatcher made from a blend of adobe, clay, bricks, and plaster, often decorated with delicate ornamental details. This blend of practical engineering and decorative finesse exemplifies the sophistication of traditional Persian domestic architecture.



Iranian wildlife documentary 'Dog Eater' wins best short film at Ankara festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The short wildlife documentary 'Dog Eater', directed by Iranian filmmakers Fathollah Amiri and Nima Askari, took home the Best Short Documentary prize at the 1st Ankara International Wildlife Documentary Film Festival in Turkey, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Produced and co-directed by Amiri and Askari, the film was Iran's sole entry among 691 documentary films from 89 countries competing across short and feature-length categories, IRNA reported.

The festival was held from May 15 to 18. After the jury's deliberation, 14 films were selected as winners—seven in shorts and seven in feature-length—from countries including Russia, Spain, Germany, the United States, Nepal, India, Austria, France, Norway, and Iran.

"This was the first year the festival was held," Amiri said. "The organizers put a strong emphasis on scientific and artistic value, originality of subjects, and storytelling in documentaries."

He said 'Dog Eater' received warm reception from the audience, festival officials, and the international jury.

Set in a village in North Khorasan province, the documentary explores a community's encounter with a leopard preying on their dogs. Although the leopard was eventually trapped, villagers demanded its release, highlighting local attitudes towards wildlife conservation.

Amiri, a prominent documentarian from Ilam province, has produced several acclaimed films on Iranian wildlife, including 'In the Realm of the Spider-tailed Viper' (2018), and 'In the Whirlpool of Extinction' on the Asiatic cheetah. His



Iranian filmmakers Fathollah Amiri (2nd R) and Nima Askari (3rd R) pose with the Best Short Documentary award at the 1st Ankara International Wildlife Documentary Film Festival in Ankara, Turkey, May 18, 2025.

● IRNA

work has earned him numerous domestic and international awards, including a Golden Bear equivalent for his spider-tailed viper documentary.

Alongside screenings, the Ankara festival hosted a panel on wildlife filmmaking, technology, narrative, and creativity, drawing filmmakers and nature enthusiasts. Amiri noted that wildlife documentaries open a window to new worlds and play a vital role in raising public awareness about environmental protection.

'Dog Eater' also featured last year at Iran's Cinema Verite, further cementing its place in the growing field of environmental storytelling.



Iran eyes economic, health cooperation with Switzerland, Saudi Arabia during WHO summit



Iran's Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi (1st L) and his Swiss counterpart Elisabeth Baume-Schneider (1st R) meet on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly in Tehran, Iran on May 20, 2025. ●

IRNA

Social Desk

Iran's health minister held separate meetings with his Swiss and Saudi

counterparts on Tuesday in Tehran, focusing on economic ties and health diplomacy, according to Iran's Health Ministry.

During talks on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly, Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi and Switzerland's Health Elisabeth Baume-Schneider backed plans to hold the third Iran-Switzerland Joint Economic Commission in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Zafarghandi said the gathering is tentatively set for September 16, 2025, and could "boost cooperation," especially in the health sector.

He pointed to an internal task force dubbed the "Swiss desk," which helps resolve hurdles faced by Swiss health firms operating in Iran. "Their presence under sanctions has been of great value to us," he said.

Schneider, underscoring Switzerland's role as host of the World Health Organization, said Bern is committed to "glob-

al health" and is working on reforms to adapt to "a changing world."

She welcomed Iran's cooperation in anti-drug initiatives and said preparations for the Tehran economic commission were underway.

Ali Jafarian, senior adviser to Iran's health minister, called for reactivation of a special Swiss financial channel launched in early 2020 to facilitate humanitarian trade. That mechanism has since stalled.

Zafarghandi also met with Saudi Health Minister Fahad Al-Jalal, expressing hope for expanding what he called "health diplomacy" amid warming bilateral ties. He pointed to existing cooperation around Hajj pilgrim health and proposed a joint working group and a memorandum of understanding.

Iran, he noted, has "strong capabilities" in primary care, pharmaceuticals and medical education. A draft agreement with Saudi Arabia, already prepared, could pave the way for partnerships on smart hospitals, workforce training and global health security, Al-Jalal said.

Jafarian suggested Iran and Saudi Arabia could collaborate further on liver transplants, alongside Egypt and the UAE.

Zafarghandi invited his Saudi counterpart to visit Iran's health facilities to explore joint projects.

The WHO summit which began on May 19, runs through May 27 in Geneva under the theme "One World for Health." Iran's delegation is led by Zafarghandi and includes senior officials from the country's health sector.

UNESCO puts Iran environmental education on agenda

Social Desk

UNESCO's Iran office has added environmental education to its core programs in the country, aiming to push for "sustainable solutions" and deeper global cooperation, the head of the national commission said Tuesday.

Speaking at the 8th National Conference and Specialized Exhibition on Environmental Education, Secretary-General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO, Hassan Fartousi said the initiative reflects UNESCO's vision of awareness-building and training for climate action, IRNA reported.

"It's about knowledge, values and hands-on skills," he told delegates at Payame Noor University. He called environmental education a "vital process"

for addressing today's ecological challenges.

UNESCO's approach rests on four pillars, as Fartousi explained are raising public awareness, encouraging sensitivity to environmental issues, deepening understanding, and motivating action. "UNESCO plays a key role," he noted, through scientific programs like the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. These aim to improve the way people interact with the planet.

The commission also supports countries with data and guidelines to develop effective policies. According to

Fartousi, UNESCO is actively promoting education as a main tool to tackle climate change and ensure water sustainability.

One of the agency's newest pushes is the Greening Education Partnership (GEP). "It's a worldwide alliance," Fartousi said, calling on all countries to join. The programs don't just "raise awareness," he said, they also help build "sustainable solutions" through international collaboration.

A one-day exhibition held on the sidelines of the event showcased 30 booths featuring local research projects. Organizers said the goal was to align scientific efforts with emerging technologies for sustainable development.

The conference, delayed from March due to air pollution closures in the cap-



ital, drew scientists and policymakers aiming to exchange ideas and drive

innovation. It marks the eighth edition since 2012.