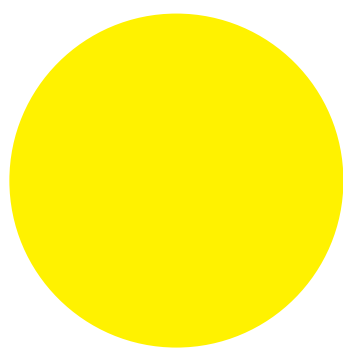


Pezeshkian urges universities to help nation out of crises

8



Iran Daily

Vol. 7846 • Sunday, June 01, 2025 • Khordad 11, 1404 • Dhu al-Hijjah 05, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir

IranDailyWeb

Iran says IAEA report based on 'fabricated' docs provided by Israel

2



'Renunciation of domination' Iran's key principle in nuclear talks: FM

Trump says US 'fairly close' to clinching deal with Iran

2

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (front-C) and his ministry staff, along with Seyyed Hassan Khomeini (front-R), the grandson of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, pay their respects to the late leader at his mausoleum, ahead of the 36th anniversary of his passing, in Tehran, Iran on May 31.

IRNA

Gaza paying price for Netanyahu's grip on power

By Alireza Majidi
Middle East affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is deteriorating as Israel continues to constraint aid, with the United Nations describing the territory as "the hungriest place on Earth." Israel has blocked entry of aid into the Palestinian territory since March 2, after US President Donald Trump gave a free hand to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to act.

Three months have passed and Netanyahu has gone all out, but little has been gained. The only claim of success is the alleged killing of Hamas' military leader Mohammed Sinwar, which has yet to be officially confirmed.

Now, signs suggest that even those close to Trump are starting to stir, seeking alternative paths, especially that public opinion in the West is increasingly voicing anger at the genocide in Gaza. That is why Washington's political calculus is kicking in: more than ten weeks have passed with no tangible results despite Netanyahu's expanded freedom. In this evolving landscape, Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff has stepped in again, now working to pressure Netanyahu into accepting a proposed 60-day cease-fire plan. But, will he accept a truce?

Netanyahu's need for war remains a crucial variable in Israel's political arena. A temporary cease-fire is conceivable, particularly as Israel might pivot toward launching a major operation in the West Bank, with annexation as the ultimate goal. This aligns with statements from Defense Minister Israel Katz, who recently told France and the UK that if they formally recognize a Palestinian state on paper, Israel will "establish a real Jewish state on the ground", meaning in the West Bank.

Khorramabad Valley's Neanderthal caves await UNESCO's final verdict

OPINION

4



New Iran coach Mozaffar facing mammoth task ahead of Women's Futsal World Cup

6



Health Ministry unveils 23 pharma products with \$43m import savings

3



Untapped potential of historic houses in South Khorasan Province

7



Over 200 top designs accepted for Iran's Fajr fashion festival

8

Page 2

'Renunciation of domination' Iran's key principle in nuclear talks: *FM*

Trump says US 'fairly close' to clinching deal with Iran

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister said that the "renunciation of domination" has always been one of the ministry's strategic principles in nuclear talks with the West which is pressuring Iran to give up its right to enrich uranium. Abbas Araghchi was speaking during a visit alongside the employees of the Iranian Foreign Ministry to Imam Khomeini's mausoleum in southern Tehran on Saturday to renew their allegiance to the ideals of the late founder of the Islamic Revolution.

"The main foundation of [Iran's] foreign policy is based on the mentality and principle of renouncing foreign domination," Araghchi said.

The top Iranian diplomat underlined that the same policy is pursued in Tehran's ongoing talks with Washington over the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy file.

"There is much to say about the nuclear issue and enrichment as one of the country's necessities, but in nuclear negotiations, another focus of our work relates to the issue of rejecting domina-

tion; this has always been our guiding principle in the current negotiations," Araghchi said.

"The statement that you should not carry out enrichment is itself domination. Why shouldn't we have enrichment? This is absolutely unacceptable to the Iranian nation."

Stressing that the Islamic Republic has been pioneering in the denunciation of nuclear weapons, Araghchi added, "They are by no means entitled to deprive the Iranian nation of its rights. Nuclear energy is the inalienable right of the Iranian people."

Supporting negotiating team

Seyyed Hassan Khomeini, the grandson of the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran Imam Khomeini, also met with the employees of the Foreign Ministry on Saturday and threw its support behind Iran's negotiating team in the nuclear talks. Referring to the capabilities of the negotiating team led by Araghchi, he expressed hope that the negotiations would lead to "good results."

Since April 12, Iran and the US

have held five rounds of nuclear talks described by both sides as "positive and constructive" and are expected to meet again for negotiations aimed at reaching a new agreement aimed at resolving a decades-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said Wednesday that "consultations are ongoing regarding the time and location of the next round of talks, and once finalized, they will be announced by Oman."

Progress in talks

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said on Saturday that, "We are witnessing some progress in indirect negotiations with the United States."

However, in recent weeks, the two countries have clashed over the issue of uranium enrichment in Iran, which Washington says must be brought to zero. Tehran maintains its nuclear program is exclusively for civilian purposes and views its enrichment industry as a red line.

Eslami said that talks of zero enrichment are more applicable



to "the Zionist society." In an interview with Oman's state television on Wednesday, President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran is prepared for relevant cooperation aimed at proving the peaceful nature of

its nuclear activities, but will not relinquish its nuclear rights under any circumstances.

In his latest comments about the nuclear talks, the US President Donald Trump on Friday reiterated his belief that

Washington was "fairly close" to reaching a nuclear deal with Iran.

"I think we have a chance of making a deal with Iran," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Iran says IAEA report based on 'fabricated' docs provided by Israel

International Desk

Iran on Saturday adamantly dismissed the latest report by the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), describing it as politically motivated and "based on fabricated documents" provided by Israel.

A joint statement released by Iran's Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said the report, presented to the IAEA Board of Governors in June 2025, repeated "baseless and biased allegations" and accused IAEA chief Rafael Grossi of acting "beyond the scope of his assigned duties" and "in contradiction with the professional standards governing international institutions, including the principle of impartiality."

Iran maintained that the allegations contained in the report relate to "a few alleged activities and undeclared sites from decades ago," and insisted that it has "never had any undeclared nuclear site or activity."

It further stated that Tehran had fully cooperated with the agency by granting access to the disputed sites, allowing sampling, and providing detailed explanations.

The UN agency in a report on Saturday claimed that Iran had further increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels. In a separate report, the agency called on Tehran to urgently change course and comply with its years-long probe.

The report claimed that as of May 17, Iran has amassed 408.6 kilograms (900.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%.

That's an increase of 133.8 kilograms (294.9 pounds) — or almost 50% — since the IAEA's last report



in February.

Iran's joint statement also criticized the IAEA for misrepresenting Iran's voluntary actions as "binding commitments," arguing that such interpretation "lacked legal basis" and was not supported by the agency's foundational documents. "Iran has no such legal obligation," the statement pointed out. Tehran objected strongly to the IAEA's reliance on intelligence from Israel, which it described as "an NPT non-signatory party possessing weapons of mass destruction."

It said such sources were "unreliable and misleading" and contradicted the IAEA's own verification principles. Expressing "deep regret" over the publication of the report, Iran said the document had been prepared under political pressure and "merely serves as a pretext for politically motivated campaigns against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Iran reiterated that nuclear weapons had no place in its defense doctrine, citing a religious decree issued by the country's Leader. It further said that its uranium enrichment program was entirely peaceful, fully transparent, and conducted under the oversight of the IAEA in accordance with the comprehensive safeguards agreement.

The statement added that had it not been for what it described as the "politicization and duplicity" of the United States and three European countries (France, Britain and Germany), the IAEA would not have issued such a repetitive and unjust report.

Iran also warned that any political exploitation of the report or Tehran's voluntary cooperation with the agency would trigger an "appropriate response," saying the consequences and responsibility would rest with those countries.

Gaza paying price ...

Given internal Israeli dynamics, there is a strong chance Netanyahu might shift gears from the Gaza offensive to an extensive campaign in the West Bank instead. Looking at Israel's military history, only a few wars, like the 1967 War, stand out as unequivocal victories.

Conversely, more contentious or drawn-out conflicts, such as the 1973 Yom Kippur War, initially caught Israel off guard, though success eventually followed. Yet, in its aftermath, a fact-finding committee led to the political retirement of then prime minister Golda Meir. Similarly, after the 2006 Lebanon War, which Israel failed to wrap up successfully, the Winograd Commission was set up, and then prime minister Ehud Olmert, in an attempt to divert the heat, launched the 22-day Gaza war. That, too, ended poorly, and Olmert, like Meir, was politically sidelined, never returning to the electoral field and forced out of his party.

This context is highly significant. Netanyahu now faces a parallel moment. By his own admission, Israel was blindsided on October 7, 2023. That element of surprise has ignited intense domestic pressure

for a fact-finding panel. For nearly seven months, demands had been mounting, but Netanyahu refused, dodging accountability by leaning on the pretext of a "wartime emergency." He might eventually agree to a cease-fire in Gaza, but this would not spell the end of hostilities, rather it would only signal a change in battleground, with operations potentially shifting to the West Bank or Lebanon. Netanyahu needs war to politically survive, either in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. Even his recent declaration, in which he said he would go ahead with a cease-fire if Hamas accepts Trump's relocation plan for Gaza, is more tactical than genuine. It is designed not to reject Trump outright but rather to maintain his support, knowing full well Hamas is unlikely to accept a proposal that contradicts its narrative of Gaza as Palestinian territory. Israel's blueprint for Gaza is becoming clearer: It wants to force Palestinians out of Gaza even through its so-called aid distribution plan that forces residents to register in certain areas and then receive humanitarian aid. This framework seeks to lay the groundwork for Israel's occupation of Gaza indefinitely.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Health Ministry unveils 23 pharma products with \$43m import savings

Economy Desk

Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education unveiled on Saturday as many as 23 pharmaceutical products by the Barkat Pharmaceutical Group, which would lead to foreign exchange savings of \$43 million. The products, which were predominantly imported, scarce or unavailable in the past, reached the stage of domestic production and self-sufficiency by leveraging domestic capabilities. The medicines represent a significant step towards increasing patients' access to specialized medicines and reducing dependency on imports, as reported by IRNA. "Today, 23 medicines and vaccines were unveiled, among which the quadrivalent Gardasil vaccine is one of the most important for preventing human papillomavirus disease," Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi said at the ceremony. Highlighting the significant capacity of the Barkat Pharmaceutical Group, Zafarghandi emphasized, "Valuable mea-

asures have been undertaken in the Barakat Pharmaceutical Group. These facilities have provided a suitable opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to develop their activities and investments." "As of today, seven new cancer treatment drugs will enter the market, produced in well-equipped facilities; furthermore, with the efforts witnessed, new drugs in the fields of cardiovascular, neurological, and psychiatric diseases have entered the country's pharmaceutical and health market," Zafarghandi added. According to IRNA, in the field of anti-cancer drugs, medicines such as Gefitinib, Zoledronic Acid, Abiraterone, Plerixafor, Gemcitabine, Regorafenib, and Macitentan have achieved domestic production. Additionally, in the cardiovascular drugs section, Indapamide and Sacubitril/Valsartan drugs have been introduced. In the neurology and psychiatry field, production of equivalents to foreign drugs has commenced. In the supplements and herbal products section,



Iranian Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi (2nd L) unveils 23 medicines and vaccines at a ceremony near the capital Tehran on May 31, 2025.

● IRNA

diverse products have been manufactured. In the vaccine sector, the Gardasil vaccine for preventing HPV (Human Papillomavirus) infection has been introduced, which can be effective in reducing the risk of cervical cancer and genital warts. Furthermore, in the cell therapy field, two important products titled "WhartoCell" and "LaViCell" have been developed. According to the report, in the anesthesia and operating room drug category, Ropivacaine and Lubricaine Gel drugs have been produced. Also, two important active pharmaceutical ingredients, Desloratadine and Pregabalin, have been domestically manufactured. Alongside these products, Artificial Saliva Spray has also been introduced as another product. The achievements have resulted in foreign exchange



savings equivalent to \$43 million through import substitution and is considered a landmark in the country's path towards pharmaceutical self-sufficiency.

RAI sets target for transporting 54m tons of cargo by year-end

Economy Desk

The managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) announced plans to transport 54 million tons of cargo via the rail network by the end of the Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2025). Speaking at the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting of Middle East Railways (UIC RAME), Jabar Ali Zakeri stated, "Approximately eight million tons of this volume is allocated to export, import, and transit cargoes," as reported by IRNA. The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways hosted the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting, attended by the managing directors of railways from Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Iraq along with accompanying delegations. The deputy minister of roads and urban development said,

"Given Iran's rail network connectivity to Central Asia, Russia, and China, as well as its connection to the European network via Turkey, Iran holds a favorable position for rail transit and international freight transport along East-West and North-South corridors." Zakeri, noting that active railway diplomacy is on Iran's agenda, continued, "Cooperation with Iraq on constructing the Shalamcheh-Basra railway line, agreements with Turkey to build a new rail route from the Cheshmeh Soraya (Soraya Spring) – located at the zero border point between Iran and Turkey, and increased cargo transit from Afghanistan toward Turkey are among the measures taken in this regard." The RAI chief emphasized, "In line with the new approach and policies of the railway, strong connections exist with Russia,

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan for freight transport along the western branch of the North-South Corridor." The official, highlighting the railway's activities in promoting training and updating rail industry personnel's knowledge, stressed, "We welcome international educational activities." François Davenne, executive director of the International Union of Railways (UIC), Bertrand Minari, Middle East regional coordinator, and several other UIC members attended the assembly via video conference. The attendees thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways for hosting the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting of Middle East Railways and expressed their views for enhanced interaction and cooperation among railways.

TPO warns of losing export market in neighboring Iraq

Economy Desk

The deputy of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, referring to the increasing trend of Iraq's gross domestic product (GDP), stated, "Estimates indicate that in the coming years, Iranian goods will have no market in this country, and industrialists must prioritize quality production to maintain this export market." Amir Roshanbakhsh Qanbari, deputy for the promotion of international business at the TPO, emphasized that Iraq is one of Iran's important trade partners, adding, "The increase in GDP improves the living conditions of the country's people, and enhancing the quality of domestically produced goods is essential for preserving the export market in Iraq." He made the remarks on Saturday during the ceremony honoring exemplary exporters and the nationwide women's conference in northeastern province of Semnan. Iraq ranked ninth among Arab countries in GDP per capita for 2025, according to data released by Country Cassette, a platform that monitors international economic indicators, shafaq.com reported. Within the Arab region, Qatar recorded the highest GDP per capita at \$71,653, fol-



lowed by the UAE at \$51,294. Saudi Arabia ranked third with \$30,099, trailed by Kuwait (\$29,951), Bahrain (\$28,857), Oman (\$20,546), Libya (\$6,801), Algeria (\$5,691), and Iraq (\$5,668). Stating that the value of the country's exports in the last Iranian calendar year – 1403 (began on March 20, 2024) was between \$57 and \$58 billion, Roshanbakhsh Qanbari continued, "Iran has a competitive advantage over Iraq and Afghanistan, and these two countries are considered Iran's economic partners." The TPO official stated that commercial governance in Iran is inappropriate and requires reform, saying, "The enactment of diverse laws for private sector businesses is burdensome."

Tehran-Dushanbe railway transit breaks Tajikistan's landlocked status

Economy Desk

Iran and Tajikistan commenced a new chapter aimed at enhancing railway cooperation between the two nations through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Signed on Thursday between Jabar Ali Zakeri, deputy transport minister and head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, and Mirzoali Komil Jumakhon, head of Tajikistan's State Unitary Railway Enterprise, the agreement lifts Tajikistan out of its state of isolation. As a landlocked country, Tajikistan, established following the dissolution of the Soviet Union

in 1991, seeks to strengthen and expand its railway trade through this new agreement with Iran. The nation requires access to southern warm-water ports for the expansion of its foreign trade. Furthermore, Tajikistan shares a border with China and was historically part of the 2,000-year-old Silk Road. According to experts, one route of the East-West Corridor passing through Iran traverses the country. Mehdi Baqeri, a transportation and transit expert, stated that the agreement between Iran and Tajikistan to facilitate railway transit and utilize Iranian railcars on Tajikistan's railway

network represents a significant step towards commercializing the East-West Corridor and the North-South Corridor passing through Iranian territory. The understanding, forged in pursuit of developing railway diplomacy and with the objectives of optimally utilizing existing capacities, fostering regional economic development, and increasing international rail transport, permits Iranian railcars to operate on the Tajikistan railway network. Dispatching Iranian railcars from the Tajikistan rail network to other railways constitutes another clause of the signed memorandum. Consequently, the exchange and

transit of Iranian railcars across all former Soviet railway lines becomes feasible, as they share a standard rail gauge and identical railway regulations dating back to the Soviet era's dissolution. Upon returning from his visit to Tajikistan on Friday, the Iranian vice president expressed hope that by pursuing the agreements and achievements secured during the trip, the level of relations and cooperation with Tajikistan would increase to several times the current level. Mohammadreza Aref emphasized, "By pursuing the agreements and achievements from this visit, the level of relations and cooperation with Tajikistan will reach



several times the current level, and particularly, the private sectors of both sides can engage in more substantive cooperation." Alongside enhancing railway cooperation between the two countries, significant agreements were reached in the fields of science and technology, the extension of visa-free stays from 10 to 30 days to facilitate tourism, the implementation of a railway line to Tajikistan, multilateral cooperation concerning water, electricity, and gas transfer, and cooperation in technical and vocational education between the officials of the two nations.

Khorramabad Valley's Neanderthal caves await UNESCO's final verdict



By **Ata Hassanpour**
Head of Lorestan's
Cultural Heritage
Department

OPINION

Prehistoric humans could never have imagined that their relentless struggle to carve out an existence during the harsh Ice Age — seeking out caves and oak forests in Iran's Zagros Mountains for shelter, or pressing on in utter despair while tracking down abundant wildlife in Khorramabad Valley — would, hundreds of thousands of years later, turn into a global dossier recognized for its outstanding value to human heritage.

The dossier titled "Prehistoric Caves and Falak-ol-Aflak Ensemble of Khorramabad Valley" is set to come under the microscope at the UNESCO summit in Paris in July 2025, where it will be up for final evaluation for inscription on the World Heritage List. The Khorramabad Valley excavations were one of the key requirements UNESCO laid down for Iran, requesting that research on the valley's caves be brought up to speed.

Ata Hassanpour, director general of Lorestan Province's Cultural Heritage Department, offers key insights into the ongoing efforts to investigate, preserve, and promote the region's rich archaeological heritage, highlighting the significance of recent discoveries and the push for UNESCO recognition.

Nestled in Khorramabad Valley are several prehistoric caves. Given that Khorramabad Valley is on the verge of world heritage registration, one of its seven caves was picked out as a pilot site and placed under the supervision of Dr. Fereidoun Biglari for archaeological excavation and research.

So far, based on relative dating conducted in this cave, the findings point to the Middle Paleolithic period with Mousterian tool-making culture, which coincides with the era of Neanderthals.

While the results are promising, they are not yet fully verified and require further testing. Although relative dating links human presence in Khorramabad Cave to roughly 80,000 years ago, based on artifacts found, this dating is only approximate. Absolute and precise dating will hinge on carbon-14 and uranium-series tests, among others. Only after these thorough tests can we officially pin down the age of the Khorramabad pilot cave for the world heritage dossier.

Now, archaeologists have carried out digs in seven of Khorramabad Valley's caves. The study of unearthed objects — including stone blades, charcoal samples, bone and animal tools, and other cultural materials — has started.

Khorramabad Valley, with its high number of caves, was a major hub for prehistoric humans. The prehistoric caves dotted around Khorramabad are all under protection, and their archaeological layers remain safe and sound, out of the reach of illegal diggers.

One of the standout values of



Archaeologists carefully excavate and sift through soil layers inside one of Khorramabad Valley's Neanderthal caves in Lorestan Province, western Iran.
● IRNA

the Khorramabad Valley and Falak-ol-Aflak dossier is precisely these caves, which bear out that humans, from the earliest prehistoric times, managed to make do in places that offered water, fire, ample fuel from oak forests, sufficient protein, easy access to rich wildlife, and safe havens to ride out the Ice Age — all of which are rolled into one in the prehistoric caves of Khorramabad Valley.

Not only is the sheer number of prehistoric caves in Khorramabad Valley a key criterion for world heritage status, but so is the Baradostian tool-making

culture, which is globally recognized. Although the name Neanderthal Valley is now ascribed to the Shanidar Cave in Iraq's Bradost Mountain, the greatest concentration of prehistoric human presence and tool-making culture is actually rooted in the ancient Khorramabad Valley. This was a major point UNESCO zeroed in on and registered as a key criterion.

Regarding the current state of Khorramabad's prehistoric caves for UNESCO listing, it should be stated that fortunately, these caves have been kept out of harm's way from illegal

excavators. All have been fitted with protective metal doors, are accessible, and have marked paths for tourists. Wooden flooring has been installed, and bilingual signs in English and Persian have been put up to describe and introduce the caves. Lighting and infrastructure have been put in place for visitors. Local tour guides have been assigned, and heritage protection teams keep an eye on the caves regularly.

Another key criterion in the Khorramabad dossier is the interaction between humans and their surrounding nature.

The valley has stood the test of time as a continuous settlement from the prehistoric Middle Paleolithic to the present day. This peaceful coexistence of humans and nature is yet another global benchmark for the Khorramabad Valley's world heritage candidacy.

The significance of Falak-ol-Aflak Castle in the dossier is also worth noting. Alongside all the prehistoric criteria and caves, the Falak-ol-Aflak Ensemble stands out. This historic fortress, perched on a natural hill or rock, was a strategic stronghold for controlling Khorramabad Valley throughout history. The area around Falak-ol-Aflak boasts lush gardens, a perennial river, several historic bridges, springs, and ponds — all coming together as a cohesive whole. For thousands of years, Falak-ol-Aflak has been the unrivaled guardian of this historic gateway.

It is worth noting that the Khorramabad Valley and Falak-ol-Aflak World Heritage dossier was submitted to UNESCO in early 2024. On September 6, 2024, ICOMOS evaluators traveled to Iran to visit Khorramabad Valley, its ancient caves, and Falak-ol-Aflak. After their assessment, UNESCO raised a few questions about the dossier, to which Iran has since responded. Now, the countdown is on: the upcoming UNESCO World Heritage meeting in Paris this July will make the call on whether Khorramabad Valley, its ancient caves, and the Falak-ol-Aflak Ensemble will finally make the cut as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The article first appeared in Persian on ILNA.

“

Humans, from the earliest prehistoric times, managed to make do in places that offered water, fire, ample fuel from oak forests, sufficient protein, easy access to rich wildlife, and safe havens to ride out the Ice Age — all of which are rolled into one in the prehistoric caves of Khorramabad Valley.



The Falak-ol-Aflak Castle in Lorestan Province, western Iran, overlooks the Khorramabad Valley.
● IRNA

Afghan-woven carpets sold as Iranian

Certificating Iranian carpet designs will stop imitations

OPINION *The authenticity and cultural richness embedded in Iranian carpet designs have long caught on worldwide, making Iranian carpets highly sought after. However, economic sanctions on Iran have taken a toll on this sector, leading to Iranian carpets either being smuggled into global markets or copied and passed off as Iranian-made but actually produced elsewhere — most notably in Afghanistan. Underground workshops in Afghanistan have been weaving up carpets that rip off Iranian designs, passing them off as Iranian products in international markets and making a profit. Sometimes, these designs are altered just slightly to get around international legal scrutiny and prevent complaints or legal action against the copying. Iranian carpet designs carry the identity of Iran’s civilization and culture, having been marketed for years with motifs inspired by nature, mythology, historical sites, and tourism. These carpets have been welcomed by foreign buyers due to their colors, elegance, and symbolic patterns. However, since sanctions were imposed on Iran in 2018, carpets have been added to the blacklist, severely restricting their export. Because Iranian carpets cannot be officially exported due to sanctions, they have found their way out either through smuggling or design piracy. Although Iranian designs are registered internationally, even the smallest changes can push them off the original country’s list and be labeled as new designs. To discuss solutions for clamping down on the theft of Iranian carpet designs and the need for official certification, Abdollah Bahrami, head of the Committee on Carpet, Handicrafts and Tourism of Iran Chamber of Cooperative, and Zahra Kamani, director of Iran National Carpet Center, were interviewed.*



People walk around, looking at carpets in an event held in Iran.
● MARZIEH SOLEIMANI/IRNA



By Abdollah Bahrami
Head of ICC’s Committee on Carpet, Handicrafts, and Tourism

Iran possesses a treasure trove of carpet designs and patterns, and it is entirely possible to nip design theft in the bud. Although some measures have been put forward in previous years, they have yet to be fully implemented. The process of certifying carpets through the Standards Organization and the National Carpet Center began three years ago, but since the certification was optional, not a single person took the initiative to certify their carpets. Not even a single chocolate product is produced in the

country without standard permits, yet Iranian carpets, with all their heritage and culture, are made and sold without any certification or identity, and are freely offered in global markets without detailed labeling. To protect the rights of producers and consumers, Iranian carpets must be certified. Once carpets are certified, design theft becomes impossible to get away with, and it becomes easy to call out offenders. Without certification, even if theft occurs, there is no way to pursue

it. When carpets are certified, details such as knot count, color, type of natural or synthetic fibers, weaving method, knot type, production date, and the names of producers and weavers are recorded, serving as a benchmark to tell apart authentic Iranian carpets from imitations. Export products worldwide carry barcodes, and if Iranian carpets had certification, no one would dare mess with Iranian designs and carpets as they would be traceable like official documents. So, I hereby

urge the Standards Organization to step up and make carpet certification mandatory. Notably, even within Iran, Afghan carpets are being sold off as Iranian carpets. Many carpet shops sell Afghan-woven carpets under the Iranian name. These carpets are so close to Iranian designs that it’s impossible for the average buyer to tell the difference. Sellers should come clean with buyers about whether a carpet is Afghan or Iranian, allowing buyers to make informed decisions regarding price and design.



By Zahra Kamani
Head of Iran National Carpet Center

It is important to embed certification into Iranian carpets in a way that cannot be separated and allows for tracking. Certification could be incorporated as barcodes to cut down on copying and give Iranian carpets a clear identity. Once Iranian carpets carry barcodes, they can no longer be passed off as products of other countries in international markets, which will help crack down on fraud. We should also raise cultural awareness, even though historically, weavers used to weave in brand names directly onto carpets. One of other benefits of certification is that it would make it easy to determine which region of Iran a carpet comes from and which provincial design inspired it, aiding in pricing regulation within the carpet industry. Since factors like knot count, color, fiber type, and design influence carpet prices, having certification would help put a lid on speculative pricing and middlemen’s profiteering. Many Iranian carpet designs have been registered internationally. Despite being listed as intangible heritage by UNESCO, a slight change in the design can be used to prove that the

design is not registered, which opens the door for more copying and benefits others at Iran’s expense. Iranian carpet designs reflect the identity, history, beliefs, and lifestyle of Iranian nomads, and certification is essential to hold onto this ancient heritage.

Iranian carpets symbolize the nation’s cultural identity, aspirations, and international connections. Although recognized by UNESCO as intangible heritage, to preserve this art and reclaim its rightful place, certification must be brought in by relevant authorities, producers,

and weavers. Otherwise, Iranian carpets will continue to be sold in Iran’s name but to the benefit of other countries, with profits and foreign exchange earnings flowing out of Iran’s hands.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



A woman and his coworker weave a handmade Iranian carpet.
● IRNA

“

Notably, even within Iran, Afghan carpets are being sold off as Iranian carpets. Many carpet shops sell Afghan-woven carpets under the Iranian name. These carpets are so close to Iranian designs that it’s impossible for the average buyer to tell the difference.

New Iran coach Mozaffar facing mammoth task ahead of Women's Futsal World Cup

Sports Desk

New Iran head coach Shahrzad Mozaffar will look to turn the national team's fortunes around ahead of the inaugural Women's Futsal World Cup, kicking off on November 21 in the Philippines. Mozaffar, 54, replaced Forouzan Soleimani on Iran bench this week, following Team Melli's underwhelming campaign at the AFC Women's Asian Cup in early May. A third-place finish at the expense of host China on the final day saw Iranian women join Japan and Thailand in booking a ticket for the Philippines. However, a run of unconvincing results and performances throughout the tournament suggested

significant improvements will be needed if Mozaffar's side is to succeed at the global showpiece. Stepping into the tournament as the two-time defending champion, Iran edged out the Philippines 1-0, and then beat Hong Kong 3-1 to guarantee a knockout spot, but its 12-game winning run in the Asian Cup came to an end against Vietnam in controversial, 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. The cynical approach, however, backfired as Japan's shock defeat to Thailand forced the two powerhouses into the same half of the knockout bracket. Iran labored to a 3-1 ex-

tra-time win against the Chinese Taipei in quarter-finals, before a 3-2 loss to Japan – beaten by Iran in the previous two finals – left Iranian players facing the harsh truth of a power shift in in the Asian women's futsal. With less than six months until the World Cup, Mozaffar, who led Iran to the Asian crown in 2018, will now have to restore the confidence and enthusiasm in her squad before the visit to Southeast Asia. Farzaneh Tavassoli, Fereshteh Karimi, Nasimeh Gholami, Sara Shirbeigi, and Tahereh Mahdipour – integral members of the title-winning teams in 2015 and 2018 – formed the old guard of the Iranian aging squad in China. Yet apart

from captain and goal-keeper Tavassoli, the other four made little impact, underscoring the urgent need for rejuvenation under the new coach. Given Mozaffar's proven track record in developing futsal talent with Iran and Kuwait, there's good reason to believe she can cultivate another golden generation of the sport on her return to Team Melli's bench. In a recent interview with Iran Daily, Tavassoli said lack of "adequate preparation and high-caliber warm-up friendlies" eventually cost Iran the title defense in China. Now Mozaffar will hope the national futsal governing body devises a rigorous preparatory plan for the world event.



AFC

Iran beats Italy in five-set friendly

Sports Desk

Iran came from behind twice to beat volleyball powerhouse Italy 3-2 (23-25, 25-18, 14-25, 25-21, 15-11) in a warmup game in Cavalese, Italy, on Friday. The game was part of Iran's nine-day training camp in Italy, ahead of the visit to Brazil for the first week of action at the Volleyball Men's Nations League – starting June 11 in Rio de Janeiro. Friday's victory was also a morale-booster for Iran, which has made a fresh start under new Italian coach Roberto Piazza, following

a dire run of results at the VNL and Olympic qualifiers over the past two years. Outside hitter Ali Haqqparast was the top scorer for the new-look Iranian team on Friday with 15 points. The two sides will meet again in Padova today. Iran will begin its VNL campaign with formidable tests against global heavyweights Brazil and USA. Piazza's men will take on the host on the opening day and then face the United States at the Maracanãzinho venue on June 12. A third game for Iran in Rio de Janeiro will come against last year's semi-

finalist Slovenia on June 13. Iran will conclude the first week of the preliminaries against debutant Ukraine on June 15, before heading to Belgrade for Week 2. The top eight of the 16-team table after three weeks will progress to the VNL Finals – starting with the quarterfinals on July 30 in the Chinese city of Ningbo.

Iranian players celebrate a point during a 3-2 victory over Italy in a friendly game in Cavalese, Italy, on May 30, 2025. [volleyball.ir](#)



Muaythai World Championships: Iranians impress with eight medals

Sports Desk

The Iranian muaythai squad collected eight medals to cap off an impressive campaign at the IFMA World Championships in Kemer, Turkey. Iranian girl Asal Zaferanlou tallied 8.63 points to walk away with the gold medal in the under-23

wai kru mixed contests on Friday, taking her personal tally to two medals in Kemer following a third-place finish in the female event. Dina Kalvandi, meanwhile, settled for a silver medal in the women's senior wai kru event, with 8.6 points. The two Iranian girls had also teamed up earlier in the competition to bag the bronze in the un-

der-23 team category. Elsewhere, Matin Panaghi won a precious gold medal in the para-amputee contests, while Ali-reza Zeinali, Ali-Asghar Abbasi, and Aezou Doustian added triple bronzes to Iran's medal haul across different weight and age classes in the men's and women's elite competitions.



Iranian Matin Panaghi is seen on the top podium after winning a para-amputee gold medal at the IFMA World Championships in Kemer, Turkey, on May 27, 2025. [iranmuaythai.ir](#)

Alcaraz made to 'suffer' in four-set win at Roland Garros

BBC – Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz was forced to fight for his place in the French Open fourth round with a testing victory over a dogged Damir Dzumhur. The second seed had looked to be making light work of his opponent with a two-set lead, before a revival from the Bosnian pushed their encounter into a fourth set under the lights on Court Philippe Chatrier. Spaniard Alcaraz, seeking to become the first man since compatriot Rafael Nadal in 2020 to retain the Roland Garros title, eventually ground out a 6-1 6-3 4-6 6-4 success. "I didn't enjoy it too much," said the 22-year-old. "I suffered quite a lot but I'm happy to have played a good match with Damir. "That's why it's difficult to win Grand Slams because you have to maintain your focus over three or four hours. "The first two sets were under control and then he decided to play deeper and

more aggressive. My energy went down and it was hard to push, but I had to give everything I had inside. I'm proud to get the win in the end."

Alcaraz will face 13th seed Ben Shelton next after the American beat Italy's Matteo Gigante 6-3 6-3 6-4 earlier on Friday.



Carlos Alcaraz is seen in action against Damir Dzumhur at the French Open in Paris, France, on May 30, 2025. [DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS](#)

Untapped potential of historic houses in South Khorasan Province

Iranica Desk

The historic houses of South Khorasan Province hold substantial potential for tourism development; however, many of these structures face the threat of deterioration for various reasons, including a lack of sufficient maintenance funds, improper utilization, and weak recognition. Revitalizing these buildings could play a pivotal role in stimulating the region's economy and fostering sustainable tourism. Urban tourism centered around viewing the preserved historic buildings from past eras, which enrich each area's cultural heritage, consistently attracts dedicated enthusiasts and cultural aficionados. In most cities within South Khorasan Province, the presence of old neighborhoods offers traces of historic houses, providing a unique glimpse into the rich history and traditional architecture of the region. South Khorasan Province's historic houses, renowned for their astonishing architecture, offer a sense of peace and tranquility that nourishes the spirit and soul. According to experts, many of these historic buildings date back to the Qajar era, although some extend their origins to the Safavid and Zand periods, reflecting the long-standing architectural heritage of the area, IRNA wrote. Characteristic features of these historic houses include garden courtyards, central open-air spaces with porches, and residences built on stepped terrains or featuring verandas and moonlit halls. The architecture of these structures provides a window into traditional building techniques that harmonize with the natural landscape and climate. The historic houses in Birjand, Ferdows, Qaen, Nehbandan, and Tabas are not merely old structures; they embody a way of life, the ingenuity of indigenous architects, and the human connection with nature that characterized life in the past. Many of these homes feature central courtyards, wind catchers (Badgir), subterranean rooms (Sardab), summer and winter chambers, archways, and ornate plasterwork — each demonstrating a remarkable adaptation to Iran's hot and arid climate in the east. These features hold significant appeal for enthusiasts of traditional architecture and cultural tourism alike. In recent years, efforts to restore some of these historic houses in counties such as Boshruyeh, Khosf, Sarayan, Darmian, Qaen, and Sarbisheh have been initiated. According to provincial officials, restoring nationally registered historic houses remains a top priority. Nonetheless, concerns persist about the underutilized potential of these structures in tourism development. Many valuable buildings nestled within the historic fabric of cities risk

being forgotten, and if not properly preserved and promoted, these lost opportunities could prove invaluable for future development. Experts believe that one of the primary barriers to the effective utilization of historic houses is the absence of a comprehensive plan for their restoration, revival, and proper presentation. Many structures remain in a state of disrepair, and in some cases, ownership is unclear or they have been transferred to private hands, yet their use does not always match their historical significance, leading to missed opportunities for cultural and economic benefit.



Foroutani House, Birjand
● neshan.ir

Presently, some historic houses have been converted into ecotourism accommodations, museums, or cultural centers through private sector participation. However, their overall contribution to attracting tourists and boosting the province's economy remains limited. Heritage managers emphasize the urgent need to attract investors and implement supportive policies and incentive packages aimed at restoring and utilizing all historic houses across the province. Mohammad Behmanesh, a tourism expert in South Khorasan Province, stated, "The historic buildings of the province, especially in Birjand, exemplify the architecture of eastern Iran and are influenced by styles from the Safavid, Qajar, and Zand periods." He further explained, "These buildings are characterized by features such as central courtyards, domed ceilings, exquisite stuccoes, and intricate decorations, many of which are observable in the region's historic houses." Referring to the age of some historic sites in South Khorasan Province, he added, "Part of these buildings date back to the Zand period, with notable examples found in Birjand that hold significant historical and architectural value."

He also pointed out that although South Khorasan Province's architecture shares common features with other regions in Iran, it also possesses unique distinctions. The most notable difference between the historic buildings of eastern Iran and those in the northern, western, and central parts of the country is the use of local materials such as adobe, mud, brick, and in some cases, sarooj — a traditional waterproof mortar — crafted to suit the desert climate of the region, showcasing the regional adaptation and vernacular building traditions that define its cultural landscape. Referring to the rich potential of South

He also pointed out that, in contrast, cities such as Tabas, Ferdows, and Khusf have adopted a more proactive and strategic approach toward utilizing their historic sites. Some of these locations are now serving as attractive destinations for visitors, contributing to local tourism and economy. Despite the existence of over a thousand nationally registered historic sites and ten UNESCO-listed landmarks in the province, the overall efforts made so far are by no means sufficient or exemplary for South Khorasan Province's potential, highlighting the need for a more focused and comprehensive strategy.

utilization in South Khorasan Province remains very low, which obstructs the development of this vital sector." Adding a specific example, he stated, "There are existing cases of agreements in the province, including the Sharif House, which was among the first properties transferred under the Revival Fund. Unfortunately, not only was there no special support for such projects, but the government's corporate approach policies in the field of cultural heritage have also further undermined investors' confidence. This has impeded further private sector engagement and slowed down the progress of heritage preservation efforts." He continued, stating that "In recent years, some unreasonable strictness and obstacles have caused investors to lose interest, and even companies that were previously active in this sector have sought to withdraw from cooperation with the province." Meanwhile, the Deputy Head of the Provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, also referencing the identification of 200 historic houses in the province, said, "Most of these houses are located in Boshruyeh and Birjand. If a house is within a historic texture, it is restored by the Cultural Heritage Organization." Ali Shariatmanesh emphasized the need for private sector participation in restoring historic houses, stating, "If the owner is willing to participate, historic houses in cities and villages can be restored." He also highlighted that, "If the owner intends to change the use of the property, it can be done without additional costs for the change of use. Therefore, residential or hospitality uses can be assigned to increase the productivity of historic houses." Referring to the growth in the restoration of historic houses over the past few years, Shariatmanesh recalled that in 2024, fifty historic buildings were restored using funds from South Khorasan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization. These buildings include historic houses and textures across all counties. Shariatmanesh continued, "The priority for restoration and preservation is given to privately owned historic structures, provided that the building serves as a shelter and residence for individuals." He emphasized, "Historic buildings require annual attention and restoration; this is why registered sites are allocated dedicated funding." South Khorasan's historic houses are valuable treasures situated in the heart of the desert, which, with proper identification and effective planning, could become the main drivers of cultural and economic tourism development in the province. This heritage, if not preserved and utilized today, will only gradually fade away into faint images within archives tomorrow.



Hadavi House, Birjand
● mehrnews.com



Mostofi House, Boshruyeh
● wikipedia.org



Fayaz Bakhsh House, Boshruyeh
● reiseniran.de



Pezeshkian urges universities to help nation out of crises



Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday called on universities to take a front-seat role in solving the country's "critical" national and regional challenges, including budget reform, water scarcity and energy use. Speaking at a meeting on government-university cooperation in Tehran, Pezeshkian said research and scientific activity should directly serve the goal of problem-solving, president.ir reported. "We've gone down the wrong

path," he said, urging professors and institutions to "point out the mistakes" and "show the right way." The president emphasized that universities should not just offer critique but step up with concrete proposals. "We need faculties to take responsibility," he said, naming economics, energy, employment and water management as urgent areas. Pezeshkian proposed that universities form a working group to launch the overhaul of the national budgeting system. "This is a complex process," he said, adding that a one-size-fits-all budget model won't work across ministries. Pezeshkian also floated the idea of giving underperforming state-owned companies to universities, urging them to turn losses into profits

and generate revenue in the process. He pointed to practical examples where academic input could bring direct benefits—from chemical faculties finding ways to locally source raw pharmaceutical materials to geologists helping revive dormant mines. Iran faces serious water shortages, even in coastal cities like Abadan and Khorramshahr, Pezeshkian warned. He said universities should draw on global models. "Look at how Stanford or Oxford are run," Pezeshkian noted, suggesting that Iran's institutions could learn from their administrative structures and applied research approaches. The president also pointed to the country's weak planning system as a major source of economic and environmental

failure. "A country like Turkey, with its dams and water, still has a drought plan. We don't," he said. In line with a broader decentralization effort, Pezeshkian encouraged universities to offer practical solutions tailored to provincial challenges, ahead of a planned handover of authority to local governments. Prior to the president's remarks, Iran's Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Hossein Simaei Sarraf noted that university-government collaboration has grown significantly. In 2013, universities handled around 3,000 government projects; that figure has jumped to 11,000 in 2024. "That's a healthy rate," the minister said, "though expectations are higher."

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) attends a meeting on government-university cooperation in Tehran, on May 31, 2025.
● president.ir

Over 200 top designs accepted for Iran's Fajr fashion festival

Arts & Culture Desk

More than 200 fashion designs have been accepted in the first round of Iran's 13th Fajr International Fashion and Clothing Festival, set to begin June 7 in Tehran, festival secretary Mohsen Gorji told ILNA on Saturday. From a pool of over 3,200 submissions by more than 1,300 designers, "about 200 entries made the cut," Gorji said during a press briefing at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The final round of judging will take place next week with a panel of academic and industry experts. This year's festival was postponed to June to avoid overlap with other cultural events and religious holidays, he explained. "We didn't want it buried under bigger festivals," Gorji said, noting that the new schedule allows for greater exposure. The festival, which runs June 7-14 at Tehran's Aseman Cultural Center, will showcase selected works and aims to connect promising designers with commercial opportunities. The event is the only nationwide platform for fashion in the Islamic Republic. Efforts are underway to expand so-



called "mentoring hubs" in several provinces, helping young talent transition from sketches to ready-to-wear. Gorji called this a "mid-term" goal that depends

heavily on private sector support. Turning designs into mass-market products is "a complex process," he said, and will only succeed if major domestic brands step in. The festival has shifted its research division to an external team led by Al-Zahra University and no longer calls for public submissions. "We outsourced it completely," he said. Also speaking at the press event, Zahra Golpayegani, head of the National Fashion and Clothing Committee, said the festival is focused on "discovery

and support" for regional talent, especially from rural and underserved areas. "This year, we gave the same chance to a designer from the south as we did to someone from a top label in Tehran," she said. The committee also worked to simplify festival logistics. "We wanted to cut through the red tape and make it easier to take designs from the runway to the street," Golpayegani noted. This year's motto, "Discover Iran," reflects a push to uncover hidden creative voices across the country. Organizers say the festival marks a turning point toward decentralization and private sector involvement. "It's not just about the designs," Gorji stressed. "It's the designers who matter most."

Iran showcases literature, handicrafts at Tbilisi International Book Fair



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran joined the 27th Tbilisi International Book Festival this week, bringing a wide selection of books and traditional handicrafts to the annual event that opened on May 29 at Expo Georgia. Led by Mehdi Saadat Nejad, Iran's cultural attaché in Tbilisi, the Iranian delegation presented over 80 titles—ranging from contemporary and classical Persian literature to English and Georgian translations—at a national booth organized in collaboration with Iran's Alhoda International, Cultural, Artistic, and Publishing Institution, IRNA reported. The event gathered leading Georgian literary and cultural figures, including Tamar Lebnidze, director of the fair and head of the Publishers and Booksellers Association, and Ketevan Dumbadze, head of the Writers' House of Georgia. "Our participation highlights cultural diplomacy," Saadat Nejad said during the opening, describing the promotion of Iranian books abroad as "a step forward" in strengthening ties between the two nations. He called the literary exchange a way to "deepen mutual understanding." Iran's presence went beyond books. Visitors browsed a curated display

of handcrafted items reflecting Iran's rich artisanal heritage. In a series of side events, Iran's cultural mission hosted three panel sessions. The first featured a presentation by Georgian scholar Giorgi Lobzhanidze, who last year attended Tehran's International Book Fair. He praised it as "a valuable platform" for cross-cultural cooperation and emphasized the "need for deeper engagement" between publishing communities in Iran and Georgia. The second panel focused on Persian literature in Georgian translation. Iranologist Tea Shurgaya offered insights into the growing readership in Georgia. "Persian literature still holds a place," she noted, but acknowledged the stiff competition from Western authors. She stressed the importance of "sustained support" for translation efforts. On the final day of the fair, Iranian children's literature takes center stage with a discussion on Georgian translations of 'Good Stories for Good Children' by Mehdi Azar Yazdi, followed by a student reading contest. The Tbilisi International Book Festival, first held in 1998, runs through June 1. The four-day event promotes reading and supports the South Caucasus publishing industry while encouraging cultural exchange.

Three Iranian films headed to competition at 2025 Shanghai festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian films will compete at the 27th Shanghai International Film Festival, set to run from June 13 to 22. 'Daughter,' directed by Pouria Kakavand, will screen in the Asian New Talent section. Nima Mahdian's documentary 'A Part of the Land' is slated for the documentary competition. 'Dead in the Water' a short film by Leila Hekmatnia, will take part in the short film category. The

Golden Goblet Award, the festival's highest honor, will be handed out across five competition sections: main competition, Asian New Talent, documentary, animation, and short film. Italian director Giuseppe Tornatore, best known for 'Cinema Paradiso,' will preside over the main jury this year. The Shanghai International Film Festival is one of Asia's largest film events and remains a key platform for filmmakers from around the region.

