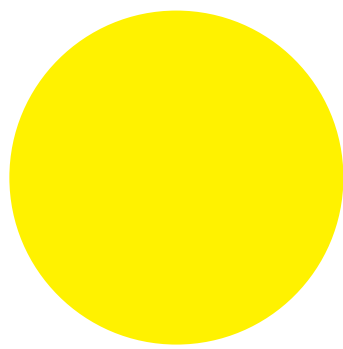


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Iranian First Mohammad Reza Aref (R) shakes hands with a local entrepreneur during a meeting with a group of businesspeople of Yaza Province on October 17, 2025.

fvpresident.ir

Rural heritage, global meaning: Iran's villages as beacons of cultural sustainability

By Reza Salehi-Amiri
Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE



Today, as the UN Tourism Organization inscribed the three Iranian villages of Shafiabad in Kerman, Kandelous in Mazandaran, and Soheili on Qeshm Island among the Best Tourism Villages of the World 2025, a new chapter opened in the cultural diplomacy of our nation — a chapter in which

rural life itself becomes a message to the world. In an age marked by civilizational turbulence and the restless acceleration of globalization, the world is once again searching for meaning, balance, and authenticity. It is no coincidence that the global gaze is turning once more toward villages — those living reservoirs of wisdom, identity, and the art of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. The inscription of these three Iranian villages within a single year places Iran among a select group of nations to receive such recognition. This milestone is more than a cultural achievement; it is a testament to the creativity of local communities, to the vitality of a culture rooted

in its land, and to a vision of development grounded in heritage, identity, and ecology. Each of these villages tells a living story of resilience and innovation: In Kandelous, the integration of traditional knowledge and modern creativity — reflected in its Herbal Museum and the thriving culture of indigenous medicine — represents a knowledge-based rural economy. In Shafiabad, women-led initiatives in handicrafts, qanat restoration, and eco-tourism illustrate the deep link between cultural heritage and social empowerment. And in Soheili, the fishermen of Qeshm have transformed their livelihoods into a movement for marine conservation — a symbol of human responsibility toward nature.

The UN Tourism selection process evaluated more than fifty indicators, spanning cultural and natural resources, social and economic sustainability, innovation, and environmental protection. That Iran stood out among these criteria reaffirms both its ancient heritage and its modern capacity to translate culture into a dynamic engine of development. Looking forward, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is preparing a National Roadmap for the global registration of Iranian villages, focused on infrastructure improvement, local training, and multilingual content creation — to amplify Iran's presence and visibility in the global tourism network. Iran, with over 60,000 villages, is not merely a geographical space; it is a living

archive of human civilization — a land where history breathes, and every field, home, and river carries a memory of balance between humanity and the earth. The global recognition of these three villages is not only a national success, but a cultural statement — a message from Iran to the world: That genuine development springs from culture, not from external imposition; that sustainability begins with memory; and that the future of humanity depends on the wisdom of its roots. With faith in this path, I believe that the name of Iran will remain not only inscribed in the lists of UNESCO and UN Tourism, but in the cultural memory of humankind itself — as a nation that continues to create meaning, harmony, and hope from its living heritage.

Russia: JCPOA to 'pass into history' as Resolution 2231 expires

Remaining UN restrictions on Iran will 'formally expire on Oct. 18'

International Desk

Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday that with the expiration of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 on October 18, the 2015 nuclear deal "will finally pass into history".

The statement said that all remaining United Nations restrictions on Iran would also formally expire on October 18 when the Resolution 2231 that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), ends too.

"The validity of all provisions of Resolution 2231 will cease, including its restrictions and related procedures," the ministry said, adding that the Security Council must close the file on Iran's nuclear issue and remove it from the non-proliferation agenda.

According to the statement, the expiration date was built into the original JCPOA and remains binding under international law.

The statement noted that Russia's presidential decree implementing the resolution "remains in force strictly until the established deadline," after which cooperation with Iran "will continue in full accordance with nation-

al legislation and international obligations." The ministry also highlighted that the 20-year comprehensive strategic partnership treaty between Russia and Iran, which entered into force on October 2, 2025, provided "a solid foundation" for deepening bilateral ties in multiple sectors.

Moscow denounced Britain, France, and Germany for their "aggressive" attempt to revive previous UN sanctions against Iran, calling it a blatant breach of Resolution 2231 and the procedures meant to prevent manipulation.

Unfounded claims

"Despite their insistent but unfounded claims to the contrary, the process of restoring the previous sanctions regime on Iran cannot be considered valid due to the serious procedural violations committed by the European trio."

The European countries have been "trampling over everything that stood in their way" in pursuit of a confrontational course, said the ministry, adding, "Under international law, a party that systematically violates an agreement cannot benefit from its mechanisms and privileges."

The statement added that the United States, which unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, and "unfortunately, the UN Secretariat," had politically supported the European move.

Moscow said such "legally and procedurally defective steps" cannot impose any obligations on "law-abiding members of the international community."

Reimposition of sanctions

The ministry said it had formally demanded that the UN secretary-general withdraw "false information" posted on the organization's website regarding the alleged reimposition of sanctions.

With the expiration of Resolution 2231, Moscow said the 2015 nuclear deal itself "will finally pass into history," though it credited the deal as "a major diplomatic achievement" that allowed the International Atomic Energy Agency to resolve all outstanding questions about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities.

"The successful implementation of the JCPOA was intended to enable Tehran to fully exercise its right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the Non-Proliferation



Russian Foreign Ministry

Treaty," the ministry said.

In August, the European trio triggered the "snapback" mechanism to restore UN sanctions — a move Iran rejected as illegitimate.

Despite diplomatic efforts by Russia and China in September, the Security Council failed to reach consensus, and Western powers declared sanctions reinstated.

Tehran ready for talks with all countries but won't give in to 'excessive demands': Veep



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (c) addresses a meeting with a group of industrialists and entrepreneurs from central province of Yazd on October 17, 2025.
● fvpresident.ir

The strikes came as Iran and the US were scheduled to hold sixth round of negotiations over Iran's nuclear program in Oman. The aggression derailed the talks which had been underway since April.

Since then, the US has outlined specific conditions for the resumption of nuclear talks that mainly focus on Iran's uranium enrichment activities and the broader scope of negotiations.

The US seeks a comprehensive agreement that addresses not only Iran's nuclear program but also its regional activities and missile development.

Tehran has rejected the US demands and underlined that it will only negotiate on the nuclear issue and that it will never give up enrichment of uranium in the country — the main point of disagreement between the two countries during the five rounds of the negotiations.

However, he said, the Islamic Republic would not accept the US approach toward negotiations.

Aref noted that Washington always portrayed itself as supporter of talks with Iran but this country in the middle of nuclear negotiations launched strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in June to force Tehran to surrender.

Back in June, the US joined an aggression by the Israeli regime against Iran, targeting three nuclear sites.

International Desk

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Friday Iran had always been ready to enter negotiations with all countries but it "would not give in to excessive demands".

Addressing a meeting with a group of industrialists and entrepreneurs from central province of Yazd, Aref said that the United States wanted Iran to accept its preconditions for negotiations to get underway.

Iran welcomes cease-fire between Afghanistan, Pakistan, calls for talks

International Desk

Iran on Thursday welcomed the cease-fire between its eastern neighbors Pakistan and Afghanistan, urging dialogue and diplomacy after days of deadly clashes.

In a statement, foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei expressed concern over civilian casualties and called for stronger regional cooperation to combat terrorism, while reaffirming Tehran's readiness "to assist in any effort to maintain calm and reduce tensions between the two neighboring Muslim countries".

Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had urged both sides to exercise restraint during the clashes, stressing that regional security was closely tied to stability between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as to Iran's own interests. Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on Friday to extend their 48-hour cease-fire

until the conclusion of talks in Doha, according to three Pakistani security officials and one Afghan Taliban source.

A Pakistani delegation had already arrived in Doha while an Afghan delegation was expected to reach the Qatari capital on Saturday, said the sources, who did not want to be named as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Kabul has instructed its forces to maintain a cease-fire as long as Pakistan refrained from any attack, Afghan Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid told Ariana News, a Pashto language local television news channel.

A temporary truce between the South Asian neighbors on Wednesday paused days of fierce fighting that killed dozens and wounded hundreds.

The violence escalated dramatically from Saturday, days after explosions rocked the Afghan capital, Kabul, just as the Taliban's foreign minister began an unprecedented

visit to India, Pakistan's longtime rival. The Taliban then launched an offensive along parts of its southern border with Pakistan, prompting Islamabad to vow a strong response of its own.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said 37 people were killed and 425 wounded on the Afghan side of the border.

Security issues are at the heart of the tensions, with Pakistan accusing Afghanistan of harboring militant groups led by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) — the Pakistani Taliban — on its soil, a claim Kabul denies.

"Pakistan has repeatedly shared its concerns" related to the presence of militant groups operating from Afghan soil, spokesman Shafqat Ali Khan said in a weekly press briefing Friday.

"Pakistan expects concrete and verifiable actions against these terrorist elements by the Taliban regime."

Araghchi: Iran committed to cementing economic ties with NAM

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Thursday that Tehran remained committed to strengthening economic partnerships with all members of the Non-Aligned Movement. Araghchi made the remarks in an interview with Uganda's BBEG media outlet on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement foreign ministers' meeting in Kampala.

"We welcome unity and economic partnerships among Non-Aligned Movement countries to promote effective diplomacy and sustainable development within our group. This solidarity is vital for all our partners," Araghchi said. He hailed Iran's significant capacity to share expertise with developing nations in areas such as oil and gas and called for greater South-South cooperation. The top diplomat also referred to the economic restrictions imposed on Iran, saying that the "illegitimate sanctions" imposed by the United States and the European Union have limited Tehran's ability to expand economic cooperation with other nations. Speaking in the 19th Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on Wednesday, Araghchi urged the member states to reject attempts by the United States and the three European countries known as the E3 — Britain, France and Germany — to reimpose United Nations sanctions on Iran.

"Just last month, the United States and the European permanent members of the Security Council tried to misuse the UN Security Council to reinstate terminated UN Security Council resolutions against Iran — a clear breach of the provisions laid out in Resolution 2231," Araghchi said.



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi talks with reporters on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement foreign ministers' meeting in Kampala, Uganda, on October 16, 2025.
● IRNA

The Resolution 2231, which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, expires on October 18. The 15-member Security Council on September 19 failed to adopt a resolution that would have prevented the re-imposition of UN sanctions on Iran after the three European parties to the nuclear deal triggered the "snapback" mechanism of the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Subsequently, the UN reinstated the sanctions on September 28. Britain, France and Germany initiated the return of sanctions over accusations Iran had violated the JCPOA. The Islamic Republic has denounced the European measures as "unlawful, unjustified and provocative". Pointing to the date when the resolution expires, the Iranian top diplomat said that "the revival of these terminated measures is completely groundless and illegitimate, amounting to nothing more than a means of political extortion."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran-Georgia trade hits record \$320m, poised for \$500m boost by 2030



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

Iran’s trade with Georgia reached a record \$320 million in 2024, with prospects of hitting \$500 million over the next five years if current barriers are lifted and cooperation infrastructure is strengthened, said Arash Nikpey, head of the Trade and Tourism Commission at the Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Nikpey told Iran Daily that trade with Georgia holds strategic importance for Iran, shaped by a confluence of economic, geopolitical, and regional dynamics. Although Georgia, with a population of around 7.3 million, represents a relatively small consumer market, it serves as a strategic entry point for Iranian goods to regional and European markets. He noted that Iran can export industrial, agricultural, and food products to Georgia, leveraging it as a strategic transit corridor to access neighboring markets and Europe. With oil exports constrained

by sanctions, Georgia also presents a viable channel for expanding Tehran’s non-oil trade. Georgia is a key transit corridor between Iran and Europe. The Lapis Lazuli corridor, linking Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey, offers Iran an opportunity to expand exports to European destinations, he explained. Launched in 2018, the corridor, comprising road and railway networks, serves as a vital trade-transit route spanning Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and Central Europe.

Cooperation with Georgia could also reduce Iran’s dependence on specific border crossings and ports, cutting logistical and political risks, the businessman added. **Energy cooperation, investment** According to Nikpey, Iran can play a role in supplying electricity and renewable energy to Georgia while benefiting from joint investments in energy projects. Shared ventures in renewables and natural resource development



could deepen bilateral economic ties. He added that joint industrial and agricultural projects in Georgia would yield mutual benefits and strengthen trade relations. “Agriculture and food industries are promising areas of cooperation,” he said, adding that Georgia’s diverse agricultural output and Iran’s large consumer market make the two economies complementary.

Expanding cultural, tourism exchanges Nikpey also underlined the potential for boosting tourism through shared cultural and historical ties. “Facilitating visa procedures, joint promotion campaigns, and investment in tourism infrastructure could increase tourist exchanges between the two nations.” “Cultural cooperation and joint marketing can raise awareness of Iranian products and services in Georgia—and vice versa,” he said.

Challenges The presence of Turkey, China, and Russia as dominant players in Georgia’s market poses a competitive challenge that could restrict Iran’s trade prospects, Nikpey said. Besides, he said, Western sanctions on Tehran remain a significant impediment, particularly due to stringent banking and financial restrictions and the lack of direct banking ties between the two countries, which continues to complicate cross-border transactions.

President joins national ‘Build a School’ campaign



President Masoud Pezeshkian, joined by his executive deputy Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, takes part symbolically in bricklaying work at a school construction site in Ahvaz, on January 23, 2025. ● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Thursday called on citizens and government officials to join the nationwide “Build a School” campaign, emphasizing collective participation in shaping the country’s future through education. Speaking at a ceremony honoring school benefactors in the central city of Isfahan, Pezeshkian said that national development hinges on raising a capable and committed generation, a goal that depends on the joint efforts of people and authorities, Tasnim reported. The president announced that he has personally joined the campaign and urged senior officials attending the event to do the same by contributing financially. “I ask all officials present to take part in this campaign and deposit 50 million rials (about \$45) each month from their personal income into this fund,” Pezeshkian said. Turning to his executive deputy, Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, he added, “Transfer one month of my salary to this account.” Pezeshkian stressed that education is the foundation of national development and that investing in schools means investing in the country’s future. He called on both the public and private sectors, as well as philanthropists, to expand their participation in school construction projects across Iran. “The future of Iran belongs to the children we educate today,” he said, urging “everyone, from ordinary citizens to senior officials, to take part in building that future.”

Presidential adviser: Approving CFT would rebuild investor confidence amid snapback return

Economy Desk

Masoumeh Aqapour, the Iranian president’s adviser for economic cooperation, said that ratifying the CFT and progress to norms of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) would boost foreign investor confidence and reassure business leaders that the environment for investment remains stable and secure, especially in light of the reactivation of “snapback” sanctions. Speaking to ISNA, Aqapour said the adoption of these measures could “open even a small path for the inflow of capital” into the country and significantly assist Iran in international trade. “We hope that approving (the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism) CFT will help reduce export-related costs,” she said, noting that renewed sanctions have made economic conditions more difficult. Iran’s economy has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program. The UN also reinstated previously lifted sanctions on the country on September 29, following a “snapback” process triggered by European powers in response to concerns over Tehran’s nuclear activities. Aqapour added that endorsing the bills would serve as “a bridge of communication” with global financial institutions, minimizing excuses within the FATF framework for maintaining countermeasures



against Iran. She said the approval of the CFT and Iran’s entry onto FATF’s gray list could also strengthen domestic banking groups in the stock market. Iran had committed in 2016 to take a set of measures to meet FATF standards, following which the body suspended its countermeasures on Iran. Yet, the suspension was terminated in 2020, due to Iran’s failure to join the CFT as well as the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), known as the Palermo Convention. That led FATF to call on all countries again to impose restrictions on Iran until shortcomings were resolved. In August 2025, Iran’s top arbitration body the Expediency Council ratified the Palermo Convention

and forwarded its instrument of accession to the United Nations. Later, on October 1, the same body gave approval for joining the CFT. “Over the past decade, Iran has already implemented many FATF-related reforms in its own laws,” Aqapour told ISNA. “But pursuing this internationally would show the world that Iran does not oppose global financial regulations.” According to the presidential adviser, FATF compliance would help ease international security concerns about Iran and eventually lower the cost of financial transactions. “CFT approval is a gateway to full compliance with FATF norms,” Aqapour reiterated. “We will see the real results when the costs of money transfers are minimized and the groundwork for Iran’s foreign trade is firmly established.”

Iran expands nuclear, energy cooperation with Russia

Economy Desk

Iran and Russia are expanding cooperation in the nuclear energy sector, with plans to jointly develop small modular reactors (SMRs) in addition to their existing 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant, said Mostafa Rajabi-Mashhadi, managing director of Iran’s Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company (Tavanir). Speaking on the sidelines of the Russian Energy Week forum in Moscow, Rajabi-Mashhadi said the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) is holding close negotiations with Russian companies, and several agreements are being finalized, ISNA reported. A delegation from Iran’s Oil Ministry was in Moscow to attend Russian Energy Week, held from October 15 to 17, which brought together around 5,000 representatives from 85 countries. “Our cooperation with Russian companies is expanding, particularly in



sharing experience and technical expertise in the nuclear sector,” he said, adding that Tavanir will establish optimal grid connection points for the new reactors to accelerate project implementation inside Iran. Rajabi-Mashhadi emphasized that Iran supports all regional policies that help strengthen ties with neighboring countries and promote mutual development.

Iran’s technical capabilities

Iran also has significant expertise in building hy-

droelectric power plants, he said, noting that large-scale hydro projects have been completed both domestically and in neighboring countries. “If requested, Iran is ready to continue such cooperation with other nations,” he added. Rajabi-Mashhadi said Iran ranks among the world’s top five builders of high-efficiency F-class combined-cycle power plants, with performance rates exceeding 55%. “We are ready to share our experience in this field with neighboring states,” he said.

Sharm el-Sheikh summit no opportunity for Iran: **Expert**

Iran must push diplomacy 'to its highest level'



By Hossein Alaei
Former IRGC Navy
commander

SEMINAR

Hossein Alaei, a former IRGC Navy commander and a faculty member at Imam Hossein University, spoke at a seminar on the implementation of the snapback mechanism held at the Center for Middle East Strategic Studies, where he spelled out the United States' policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and laid bare the mixed signals coming from Donald Trump, the country's president. A selected part of Alaei's address at the seminar is as follows:

Iran's drive for dialogue half the journey

We have never been after conflict or war. The aim of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to sort out issues through dialogue. Still, one must face the fact that talks only work out when both sides are on board. Our one-sided effort is only half the journey. Trump's conduct in meetings, in New York and at this Sharm el-Sheikh summit, is straight out of a royal playbook. The photos and videos released of his gatherings in New York and his latest function at Sharm el-Sheikh make it clear that he still acts with that royal mindset.

In such circumstances, why should our president even show up? Show up just to be humiliated and sent back? Was this ever really an opportunity for Iran? This game was set up to humiliate Iran — just to claim that they'd dragged Iran to the table.

US, Israel believe force can settle most issues

Let me spell out a strategy for you: What is the overall strategy of America and Israel, really? If we lose sight of this, we're likely to make mistakes. Instead of being surprised at America and Israel and questioning, "Why do you act this way? Why are you warmongers? Why do you always go around killing nations? Why did you kill 70 thousand people

in Gaza and bury 10 thousand under rubble? Why do you do these things?" — we'll be better off just looking inward at ourselves and our officials.

So, what is America and Israel's strategy? America and Israel believe anything that can be sorted out by force shouldn't be handled by negotiation. They could have sorted out a cease-fire in Gaza two years ago or handled the Gaza issue through talks — so why didn't they? Because their mantra is: "We have weaponry, power, and resources so we can wipe out the other side," and nobody calls them out. They flattened all of Gaza, forced its people to flee, cut off food and water, and killed many. Trump even showed up proudly and kept quiet about the massacre in Gaza. He boasts instead that he freed several captives. If Netanyahu wanted to get his captives back, he could have worked out a deal last year. Hamas had said it was up for a deal, but for the other side, as long as war is ongoing and working in their favor, they feel they must keep at it.

They kept pushing on until they realized that if they went further, even the last living captive would end up dead. Hamas didn't kill any captives; All those who died were killed in Israeli bombing runs.

Meanwhile, the Israelis wanted to force 2.3 million people out of

Gaza. These people were either killed or forced to suffer hunger and thirst, never given a secure haven — yet they held out in their own land.

Didn't Trump, at the start of his presidency (early 2025), float the idea of turning Gaza into a giant casino and beach resort, and shipping its people off to other countries? Did he not make such claims? These weren't offhand remarks. Every statement from Trump and Netanyahu came with an execution plan, with military operations in the pipeline. The most militarized governments on earth are America and Israel, and Israel sees itself as a full-blown military camp — with no mission but military operations.

But when they saw brute force didn't pan out, they eventually called a cease-fire. Do you think Israel would have called off the 12-day war if they'd thought victory was within reach? Of course not. Israel ended the war with Iran because a missile struck right in the heart of Tel Aviv, and the public's support for the Resistance held Israel back. We pray that there is no war.

Didn't Mr. Pezeshkian say from the outset that bilateral problems should be resolved? Why didn't the other side step up to solve things — instead of brandishing their swords? The incumbent Iranian government truly want-

ed to fix things, having put in the work. Talks were ongoing, but these behaviors kept carrying on regardless.

War must not be allowed to break out

Every issue has two sides, each important. If we fail to get to know the other party, we only end up doubting ourselves: "We want, but they don't." During the 12-day war, on the second day, Trump demanded unconditional surrender — meaning, "Just give up and leave, and we'd take over." They even tried to saddle the son of the deposed Shah and wanted to fly him into Iran from Paris in the style of Imam Khomeini. They thought whoever flies in from Paris would get a red carpet rolled out. But for Iranians, anyone cozying up to Israel should be thrown out like a filthy rag. They still haven't backed down from this attitude. So, we must hold onto our strength, and America is out to undermine our power — and not just our military might. We have to engage with the world and put diplomacy into play at the highest level, seizing every opportunity and pulling out all the stops so that they don't get the chance to drag us into war. They want to fight; We must not let war break out. These steps must be taken; The public must be kept content.



A municipal worker hoists a US flag next to those of other countries near Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport ahead of the arrival of world leaders for a "peace summit," in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on October 11, 2025.
● KHALED DESOUKI/AFP



They could have sorted out a cease-fire in Gaza two years ago or handled the Gaza issue through talks — so why didn't they? Trump even showed up proudly and kept quiet about the massacre in Gaza. He boasts instead that he freed several captives. If Netanyahu wanted to get his captives back, he could have worked out a deal last year. Hamas had said it was up for a deal, but for the other side, as long as war is ongoing and working in their favor, they feel they must keep at it.



US President Donald Trump (2nd-R) cuts short a conversation with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian (2nd-L) at a summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on October 13, 2025.
● X

We must keep building power across all sectors

We weren't out to trigger the snapback; Rather, Trump was after implementing it since his first term. Even back then, he went to the United Nations to push for snapback, but came up short. Now he's in power, and some world leaders are acting like court jesters and nominating him as a Nobel Peace Prize candidate. What went on at Sharm el-Sheikh was truly ridiculous. Trump behaved just like a king there.

We must build power in every field and also deter Israel and America from going to war. That's possible only if our words go after these global criminals — not ourselves — holding sway over humanity. We aren't seeking war — they are.

In my view, building power and deterring Israel and America are the two ways out of crisis, and we can succeed down this path — I am certain of what I say. During the war with Saddam, in the first week, he wanted to finish things quickly. Do you think Saddam went to war just to lose? He waged war to seize Khuzestan and our islands, and tear up the 1975 treaty. Trump and Israel also declared a cease-fire in the 12-day war because the public wouldn't let them come out on top.

Why some only count Israelis as human?

We must show them that this path gets them nowhere. The other side should sit down at the negotiating table, engage with Iran, and steer clear of war. Let's change approaches and policies toward every nation, especially towards Iran. Let the Palestinian state come into existence and the people there live like everyone else.

Why should only Israelis, in your view, be seen as human and given carte blanche, while Palestinians are denied the right to govern or even exist outside total blockade? Before Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, did Gazans have any real lives? Gaza was like an open-air prison. Even by Western accounts, its people were living under siege. Let humanity live and take charge of its own destiny.

The full article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Trump’s Gaza ‘peace plan’ Predators to share spoils



By **Jeremy Salt**
Expert on Mideast history

OPINION

The only positive immediate outcome of the Trump “peace plan” is the resumption of aid to the Gazans. They need to stock up as much as they can and as fast as they can because it won’t be long until Netanyahu finds a pretext to resume the killing. This “plan” is not a plan for peace at all. It is yet another betrayal of the Palestinian people at the benefit of the genocidal entity that has been butchering them for the past two years and for the previous 70 years. The lesson learned by Israel, again, is that crime does pay, even the biggest crime in international law: genocide. The 1990s “peace process” was sold as the “peace of the brave,” when it was nothing but the “peace of the grave,” with all Palestinian rights supposedly interred forever. The current reincarnation from the 1990s is far worse. Except for a cameo role for Mahmoud Abbas and the “Palestinian technicians” who will have to work under the direction of the Manhattan Pharaoh, the Palestinians will play no part in deciding their future. It will be decided for them. If that sounds familiar, it should because that is what they have been fighting against for 100 years. This imperial diktat is full of traps and loopholes inserted for the benefit of Israel and inserted by Israel. There can be no “peace” without the West Bank and Jerusalem, but as the plan points out, this is only peace for Gaza, which means, even worse than the 1990s, that in the eyes of the “peacemakers,” occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem) — and the west is just as much occupied as the east — and the West Bank are Israel’s now. So, again, no real peace at all. If the thought of including the West Bank and Jerusalem was ever in anyone’s mind, Netanyahu would have blocked it. Furthermore, the rights of the 1948 generation would have to be taken into account in any genuine peace. They are just as important as the rights of subsequent generations, irrespective of the attempts, even of previous “peacemakers” (Carter, Clinton, and all the others), to ignore them. Now, in the Trump “peace” plan, even the rights of the Palestinians occupied since 1967 have no place. According to this flimsy plan, the “war” will end immediately. Israel will withdraw to an “agreed line,” clearly within Gaza, so only a partial withdrawal. Again, this is like the Israeli “withdrawal” from the West Bank in the 1990s, which meant not withdrawal at all but redeployment. How deep the “agreed line” will stretch into Gaza is not mentioned, nor is how or by whom it will be agreed. Not that this is not clear, without needing to be written down. It will be decided by Israel, whatever the spin coming out of the White House. There is no call for a permanent



The illustration shows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) and US President Donald Trump revealing the truth about their Gaza Riviera fantasy plan.

● THE NEW ARAB



The current reincarnation from the 1990s is far worse. Except for a cameo role for Mahmoud Abbas and the “Palestinian technicians” who will have to work under the direction of the Manhattan Pharaoh, the Palestinians will play no part in deciding their future. It will be decided for them. If that sounds familiar, it should because that is what they have been fighting against for 100 years.



Israeli soldiers rest near artillery units near the border with the Gaza Strip on October 9, 2025. Overnight, the US president announced that Israel and Hamas had agreed to the first phase of a cease-fire plan.

● AMIR LEVY/GETTY IMAGES



end to military operations by Israel. They will only be “suspended,” leaving them open to being resumed by Israel on the pretext of violations by Hamas whenever Netanyahu decides. With the Gaza captives safely home, he does not even have their imprisonment as a restraint. Who will decide the volume of aid or the time frame in which it will be delivered is not mentioned. The plan lays down delivery through the UN, the Red Cross, and “institutions not associated with either,” which clearly will include the totally discredited Israeli-run Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), where food has been the lure for Israeli soldiers and US contractors to murder more than 1,000 Palestinians since May. There will be a transitional government of “apolitical Palestinians”. This is possibly the most ludicrous suggestion of all. They might as well have said zombies as there is no such thing as an “apolitical Palestinian,” not even amongst the children. Clearly, they will be imported from another planet and called Palestinians. Trump, and possibly Blair, will handle funding for redevelopment until the Palestinian Au-

thority completes its “reform program”. What reform program, one might ask? In fact, the PA does not represent the Palestinians at all. No one will be forced to leave Gaza. That is good. Their homes, shops, schools, universities, and mosques have all been destroyed. They have nowhere to live. They have been massacred and starved to death, but the governments that have watched all this without intervening to stop it now say they are not being forced to leave. The wheedling hypocrisy in all of this is just disgusting. Hamas “and other factions” will have no role in the new administration. As the “other factions” would include PIJ, the PFLP, and all other armed groups. What these predators are actually after, in the guise of peace, is the complete destruction of Palestinian armed resistance. Israel will progressively withdraw from Gaza, “save for a security perimeter that will remain until Gaza is properly secured”. There is no mention of who will decide when this point has been reached. Neither is there any mention of how deep this “security perimeter” will extend into Gaza. In other words, again, Israel is not

going to withdraw from Gaza at all, even in the medium term. In fact, Netanyahu and the cohort around him do not intend ever to withdraw, but to colonize and settle. Nothing is said about who is going to pay for all this, but presumably the international investors and rabid West Bank settlers who cannot wait to get their hands on Gazan real estate practically going for free, in a replay of what Chaim Weizmann said in 1948 on contemplating the enormous mass of land from which the Palestinian owners had been driven out: “What a miraculous simplification of our task.” It will be simplified even more once the first natural gas platform is built offshore and the money begins pouring into the pockets of Israeli and international corporations and investors. Trump says all of this will be good for the Palestinians, too, but does anyone seriously think these plunderers are going to build their shopping centers and residential towers for the people they have been complicit in slaughtering for the past two years? Does anyone seriously think they could give a damn about the Palesti-

ians? No, they are going to be brushed aside like the bothersome insects that racist Israeli generals, politicians, and rabbis have often likened them to. The team gathering in Sharm el-Sheikh on October 15 included all the governments complicit in the genocide. No mention was made of the Kushner-Trump Barbie dolls, who quickly flew to Tel Aviv, via occupied Lydd, to make sure they were not left out of the big money action. The predators were in Sinai, not to create peace but to bury the Palestine “problem” forever, before celebrating over cocktails in whatever five-star hotel they are staying at. This is what Trump calls “peace for the first time in 3000 years”. On the Middle East, its history, its culture, and its people, ignorance spills out of his mouth every time he opens it. He has no idea what he is talking about. The Gaza diktat is what Trump calls the pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood when, in fact, it pushes it entirely in the opposite direction. The intention is not to create a Palestinian State, but to bury it beneath the administrative enclave they are going to run in Gaza under their supervision and call a state. The whip hand will be Israel’s as it has no intention of letting go of Gaza. Trump is the colonial governor dictating terms to subjected African tribes in the late 19th century. If they had not learnt the lesson yet from the bullets spitting out of the end of the Gatling and Maxim guns, well, they were going to suffer in a way they had never suffered before. Similarly, “hell” is what awaited the Palestinians, unless they agreed to his “peace plan,” Trump said, apparently not noticing the living hell Israel had already put them in. The choice which has been given to them in this “peace plan” is “drink from the poisoned chalice, or we’re going to kill you.” Not much of a choice, is it?

The article first appeared on Palestine Chronicle.



AFC Awards Riyadh 2025:

Iran's Jafari makes history, wins Women's Coach of the Year prize

Sports Desk

History was made at the 2025 AFC Awards on Thursday as Marziyeh Jafari became the first-ever Iranian to win the Asian Women's Coach of the Year prize at the prestigious ceremony in Riyadh.

Beating Chinese Taipei coach Lu Kuei-hua and Thailand U20 manager Nuengrutai Srathongvian to the award, Jafari was recognized following a remarkable year with both the Iranian women's national team and domestic top-flight champion Bam Khatoon.

Jafari successfully steered Iran through the AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers in July, securing Team Melli's second consecutive berth at the continental showpiece following its 2022 debut.

Needing nothing less than victory in its final qualification showdown, Iran defeated Jordan 2-1 in Amman to progress to next March's finals in Australia. What made the feat even more remarkable for Jafari is the fact that the 43-year-old had only been appointed to the Iranian job three months before the qualifiers.

"I'm thrilled to have won this prestigious award. This is a great and ever-lasting honor for me," Jafari said in



a video message on Thursday night.

"I sincerely thank all the players and everyone who has stood by me over the years, as their role in this success has been truly significant.

"I hope I've brought joy to the people of my country and showcased the true potential and competence of all Iranian women."

Only the third Iranian

woman to be nominated for the award – after Shahrzad Mozaffar (2010) and Katayoun Khosrowyar (2019) – the Bam-born coach also guided her hometown club from the preliminary stage of the 2024/25 AFC Women's Champions League all the way to the quarterfinals, where Khatoon fell 1-0 to South Korea's Incheon Red Angels in March.

Having begun her coaching journey at just 17, Jafari has been the driving force behind Bam Khatoon's domestic dominance since joining the club in 2008. Promotion to the top flight followed a year later, and in 2011 she captured the first of 11 league titles – the most recent coming in March.

Aqapour's accolade

It was business as usual

for Iran in the Futsal Player of the Year category, as Salar Aqapour claimed the award ahead of club and country teammate Moslem Oladqobad – the 2022 winner – and fellow first-time nominee Muhammad Osamanmusa of Thailand. Aqapour became the seventh Iranian – and third in succession – to win the prize, following Vahid Shamsaei, Mohammad Ta-



Iran's Marziyeh Jafari poses for a photo with the Asian Women's Coach of the Year prize at the AFC Awards in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Oct. 16, 2025.

● AFC

heri, Mohammad Keshavarz, record four-time winner Aliasghar Hassanzadeh, Oladqobad, and Saied Ahmabbasi.

Aghapour's eye-catching displays at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Uzbekistan 2024 saw him get the nod ahead of team-mate Moslem Oladghobad, the 2022 winner, and fellow first-time nominee Muhammad Osamanmusa, as he became the seventh IR Iran player and the 16th overall to win the prize.

The 25-year-old, renowned for his mercurial skills and spectacular goal catalogue, recorded goal contributions in every match for the country at the 2024 Futsal World Cup, tallying six goals and three assists as Iran reached the round of 16 in Uzbekistan.

Part of the Iran side that lifted a record 13th Asian Cup trophy in Thailand last year, as well as the victorious AE Palma de Mallorca team in the UEFA Futsal Champions League 2023/24, Aqapour has cemented his status as a

world-class talent and currently plies his trade for Gohar Zamin.

There was another familiar face for the Iranians among the winners as Alireza Faghani, representing Football Australia, was part of the trio to win the AFC Referees Special Award – alongside Anton Shchetinin and Ashley Beecham.

Elsewhere, Saudi Arabian maestro Salem Al Dawsari was named the AFC Player of the Year, with Japan star Hana Takahashi claiming the AFC Women's Player of the Year honor.

Al Dawsari was recognized for a stellar 2024/25 season that saw him finish as top scorer in the AFC Champions League Elite to help Al Hilal reach the last four, while also starring at the FIFA Club World Cup in their run to the last eight. At domestic level, the 34-year-old became the all-time assist leader in the Saudi Pro League and scored 15 times.

Takahashi spearheaded Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies' domestic cup triumph as well as a third-placed league finish, while featuring in their journey to the AFC Women's Champions League quarterfinals. The defender was deployed upfront to great effect, scoring 12 times across all competitions.

World Para Powerlifting Championships:

Iran's Gharibshahi shatters world record to win gold

Sports Desk

Iranian para powerlifter Aliakbar Gharibshahi once again proved to be in a league of his own, delivering another world record-breaking performance to claim his third World Championships title in Cairo on Thursday.

Reigning Paralympic champion Gharibshahi displayed an incredible show of strength and determination to break his own world record of 254kg (set in Dubai 2022) by one kilogram with his second lift in the men's up to 107kg showdown. He attempted to go further with 260kg only to falter this time and save it for later.

"After last year's Paris Paralympics, I trained a lot to raise the bar again. I came to Cairo with a new world record in my mind and wanted to set 260kg but maybe next time," said the 43-year-old Iran, who won the gold in the French capital with a Paralympic record lift of 252kg.

Tokyo 2020 champion Sodnompiljee Enkhbayar settled for the silver at 243kg, with American Bobby Body taking the bronze with a 237kg effort. This was Iran's fourth medal in the Elite competition in Cairo.

Two-time Paralympic champion Rouhollah Rostami had to settle for a runner-up finish in the men's -88kg weight class with a lift of 243kg – one kilogram short of China's Yan Panpan – taking his personal World Championships tally to

one gold and four silvers.

Iran's second silver medal came in the men's -72kg class, where Amir Jafari posted 186-193-202 to finish behind Malaysian Bonnie Bunyau Gustin in the total standings.

Aliasghar Abareqi took the bronze in the men's -97kg contest thanks to a best effort of 227kg.

Earlier in the Egyptian capital, Iranians had impressed with nine medals, including a remarkable eight golds, in the Rookie and Next Gen age class at the World Championships.

Atiyeh Sadat Hosseini, 17, made history by winning Iran's maiden women's gold at the world showpiece, triumphing in the -61kg category.

Mani Saeidi clinched the gold in the men's -88kg category (Next Gen) by setting a new world record of 166kg before bettering the mark with

172kg on his second attempt.

Reza Enayatollahi secured the gold in the men's -97kg category with a new Next Gen world record of 195kg, before an overall tally of 383kg saw the Iranian prodigy also clinch the total gold.

Hassan Mohammad Hosseinpour claimed the ultimate prize in the Next Gen -80kg class, thanks to a 156kg lift, but settled for the total silver with 303kg.

Amirali Es'hagnia also enjoyed a double-gold winning campaign in the +107kg event with a 171-336 tally.



Iran's Marziyeh Jafari poses for a photo with the Asian Women's Coach of the Year prize at the AFC Awards in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Oct. 16, 2025.

● AFC



Wrestling World Championships:

Iran handed 2015 freestyle title after Russian's doping violation confirmed



Russian wrestler Abdusalam Gadisov (red) is seen in action against American Kyle Snyder in the freestyle 97kg final at the 2015 World Championships in Las Vegas, NV, US.

● SHUTTERSTOCK

Sports Desk

Iran was officially awarded the freestyle team title from the 2015 Wrestling World Championships, a decade later, after the United World Wrestling confirmed on Thursday that Russian wrestler Abdusalam Gadisov's doping ban had been upheld by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Gadisov lost in the final to American Kyle Snyder, settling for silver in the 97kg class in Las Vegas, but was later stripped of his medal and handed a four-year ban after testing positive for prohibited substances, as confirmed by the World

Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Russia had originally made a clean sweep of men's titles in Las Vegas, but has now dropped to third place in the freestyle team standings with 44 points, behind Iran (49) and Azerbaijan (46). Under former head coach Rasoul Khadem, Iran bagged a couple of silver medals through Hassan Rahimi (57kg) and Hassan Yazdani (70kg), along with bronze medals from Ahmad Mohammadi (65kg) and Alireza Karimi (86kg) across eight weight divisions in Las Vegas.

The international governing body's announcement took Iran's tally to seven freestyle team titles at the sport's

flagship international event since its inception in 1951.

Iran's most recent crown came at September's showpiece in Zagreb, where the nation's 10-man squad captured seven medals and tallied 145 points to beat the United States (134) to the top spot.

Rahman Amouzad (65kg) and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) won the ultimate prize in their respective weight classes, while Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan (61kg), Amirali Azarpira (97kg) settled for two silver medals. Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg), Kamran Qasempour (86kg), and Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg) added four bronzes to Iran's medal haul.

Lorestan Province's villages of water, harmony seek global tourism recognition

Iranica Desk

There are 11 tourism-targeted villages in the province, two of which — Bisheh and Kapar Judaki — have the potential for international tourism registration, said Ata Hassanpour, Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province.

He stated that three years ago, the management of Bisheh village's tourism services were handed over to the rural authorities so that local communities could directly benefit from the tourism potential of the waterfall and its surrounding natural beauty, ISNA wrote.

He noted that all financial credits allocated to the village's infrastructure are derived from this source. "In previous years, we established various facilities such as picnic platforms, connecting bridges, restrooms, a prayer room, and even an access road to improve visitor comfort and accessibility."

He added, "However, regarding the access road to the Bisheh Waterfall, due to the geological structure of the area, there have always been landslide issues. But with the road maintenance and stabilization project now underway, this recurring problem will certainly be resolved in the near future."

Hassanpour explained that the village, known as "the village without unemployment," owes this reputation to its



Bisheh Waterfall
● tourbist.com

year-round tourism potential created by the constant flow of visitors to the waterfall.

He said that another possible reason for this is the railway line passing through the village, which increases accessibility and attracts more tourists throughout the year."

He continued that the most beautiful part of the railway route — famous both in Iran and internationally for its geotourism value — is the section from Dorud toward

Khuzestan Province, distinguished by its tunnels, bridges, pristine natural attractions such as the Abgarm Waterfall, and endemic animal species like the Kaiser's newt, the blind fish, and the partridge. He emphasized that this area's breathtaking scenery and the hospitality of the local people along the railway have made it one of the most remarkable geotourism destinations in the country.

"Last year, the River and Rail

Festival was held in Bisheh village with the participation of foreign journalists residing in Iran. The village was among eight candidates nominated by Iran for registration with the World Tourism Organization, but it could not achieve the required score due to various reasons," he added.

Hassanpour said, "In terms of infrastructure, Bisheh village itself has no major problems for registration. The only issue lies in storytelling — a ritual-



Nest of storks, Kapar Judaki village
● [IRNA](http://irna.ir)



Dorud-Khuzestan railway
● tahilbazaar.com

istic and spiritual matter that we must work on. If the people of Bisheh village cooperate and take initiative in this field, and the World Tourism Organization acknowledges it, the village will certainly achieve international registration." The official noted, "Another village in Borujerd called Kapar Judaki also stands out.

One of the aspects that this organization values is the voluntary participation of people in environmental activities. For instance, the locals build nests for storks on top of electric poles, which demonstrates their commitment to protecting nature and preserving the harmony between humans and wildlife."

Immerse in Katalekhkor Cave's timeless subterranean beauty

Iranica Desk

Katalekhkor Cave, Zanjan Province, is a remarkable multi-layered limestone cave that shares its age with the renowned Alisadr Cave in Hamedan but distinguishes itself with its globally acclaimed transparent crystals and colorful stalactites, earning it the prestigious title of the second largest cave worldwide. This natural marvel, which formed over 120 million years ago, boasts an entrance situated at an altitude of 1,700 meters above sea level. The entry point opens into an impressive 4,000-meter-long corridor leading visitors eventually into magnificent halls adorned with crystal stalactites and massive limestone columns.

The stalactites within Katalekhkor Cave are far more than simple limestone deposits; their vibrant colors and astonishing clarity transport every visitor into dreamlike natural vistas, particularly those formations pristine of mineral impurities, shining with the brilliance of glass crystals, according to chn.ir. The cave, located in Garmab, was famously rediscovered in

the spring of 1952 by a group of notable Iranian mountaineers, although some sources suggest its discovery occurred in 1921, with an official registration following thirty years later through the dedication of Seyyed Asadollah Jamali. Of its seven layers — four unexplored and three officially mapped — tourists are currently permitted to explore only a two-kilometer path, a mere third of the entire cave system.

While Katalekhkor shares its geological age with Alisadr Cave, the purity of its limestone surpasses that of Alisadr, allowing light to permeate through the stalactites in some areas, creating ethereal scenes that appear almost unreal.

Geographically, the cave occupies a rectangular footprint of approximately 2,000 by 1,500 square meters, where experts attribute its formation to the combined effects of mechanical weathering and internal geological forces producing intersecting faults that eventually facilitated the cave's genesis under favorable conditions.

A unique feature attracting visitors to Katalekhkor Cave is



the imaginative naming of its various sections, each inspired by astonishing resemblances between limestone formations and familiar shapes. Along the visitor's route, one encounters evocatively named areas such as Panj Shir Square, Bistoun Square, Chehel Sotoun Square, Bride's Hall, Sham'e Square, and the Holy Mary Square — each evoking vivid mental imagery and imaginative worlds



● alibaba.ir

through their descriptive titles, derived from the distinctive limestone accumulations that define each area.

Katalekhkor transcends being a mere tourist destination by organizing into three distinct

sections catering to diverse interests: the recreational section featuring approximately two kilometers of publicly accessible paths; the sports section, reserved for experienced spelunkers, extending into

a four-kilometer route still awaiting full exploration; and the cultural section, a natural corridor hosting a variety of traditional ceremonies.

The optimal time to experience Katalekhkor Cave is during spring and summer when the cave's cool interior air complements the lush green surroundings, crafting an unforgettable ambiance. Visitors are advised to wear comfortable footwear, warm clothing, and carry only light backpacks for ease of travel. Access to the cave is straightforward, either by traveling from Zanjan toward Soltaniyeh and Khodabandeh-Garmab or by starting from Tehran, proceeding via the Qazvin-Zanjan freeway to Abhar and continuing toward Khodabandeh and Garmab, covering an approximate travel distance of 385 kilometers. Renowned as a natural treasure, Katalekhkor offers visitors access to around 1,250 meters of its vast interior on the first floor, although over 30 kilometers of passages have been mapped and identified. For travelers seeking extraordinary journeys and uncharted wonders, Katalekhkor in Zanjan presents an unparalleled gateway to a subterranean world where every stalactite narrates a tale spanning millions of years of geological and natural history.



Three Iranian villages join UNWTO global network

Iran's rural communities shine again on world tourism map: *Pezeshkian*



year. After rigorous review based on criteria such as tourist appeal, environmental protection, economic viability, and governance, three, Soheili (Qeshm Island, Hormozgan Province), Kandelous (Mazandaran province) and Shafiabad (Kerman Province), were accepted into the network, IRNA reported.

Soheili was selected for its mangrove forest preservation, eco-tourism schemes, and night-stay fishing boat accommodations. Kandelous stood out for its local museum, literary trails, herbal plant economy and community innovation. Shafiabad, positioned on the edge of the Lut Desert, was praised for historic architecture, desert heritage, and integration of tourism with local social structures. Mohseni Bandpey stressed that women's participation and youth engagement were key to their success. He acknowledged that infrastructure—roads, electricity, water, health services and internet connectivity—had long been a barrier. "We pushed hard this past year to fill the gaps," he said.

He added that Iran had previously registered two villages, but this triple success was a rare feat.

The recognition in Hangzhou grants these villages global visibility, technical support, and inclusion in international rural-tourism networks. It also strengthens Iran's position in cultural diplomacy and sustainable development forums.

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran secured global recognition Friday for three of its villages, which were officially admitted into the UNWTO Global Network of Tourism Villages at a meeting in

Hangzhou, China. The registration ceremony took place on October 17, 2025. Following the announcement, President Masoud Pezeshkian praised the achievement, saying the villages "once again illuminated Iran's name on the world

tourism map." In a post on X (formerly Twitter), he wrote, "From the heart of the desert to the foothills of Alborz and the azure coast of the Persian Gulf, the villages of Shafiabad in Kerman, Kandelous in Mazandaran, and Soheili in Qeshm have

once again made Iran shine on the global tourism map. Iran, the land of courage and art, embraces a grand destiny." Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said Iran had submitted applications for eight villages this

Iran-Turkey co-production 'Intoxicated by Love' debuts across Europe, North America



Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian-Turkish historical drama 'Maste Eshgh' (Intoxicated by Love) premiered October 16 in Turkey and 10 European countries, marking its international debut. The film, directed by Iranian filmmaker Hassan Fat'hi, explores the profound bond between the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi and his spiritual mentor Shams Tabrizi. Parsa Pirouzfar portrays Rumi, while Shahab Hosseini plays Shams. Produced by Mehran Broumand and Hassan Alizadeh, the film has already achieved significant success in Iran. Upon its

release in April 2024, it attracted over two million viewers and grossed 120 billion tomans, making it the highest-grossing non-comedy film of the year in the country. The European release is managed by AF Media Group, with screenings scheduled in major cities across Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. The film is also set to debut in Russia, India, and the Persian Gulf countries in the coming weeks. In North America, the film's release is backed by a distribution agreement guaranteeing a minimum box office revenue of \$1 million, reflecting the growing interest in Iranian cinema abroad. The film features a talented cast, including Turkish actors Ibrahim Çelikkol and Bensu Soral. The film's cinematography, led by the late Morteza Poursamadi, showcases stunning visuals of Istanbul, Konya, and other Turkish locales. The musical score, composed by Fahir Atakoğlu, complements the film's emotional depth.

Farshchian Museum turns 23

Sacred toil of miniature art

By Saeideh Ehsani Rad
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In the heart of Tehran's Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex rises a Qajar-era mansion that now safeguards the luminous legacy of Master Mahmoud Farshchian — a painter and miniaturist whose art redefined the boundaries of Persian imagination. Today, the building stands in solemn tribute, veiled in mourning banners and the soft glow of black candles, as if the walls themselves grieve the master's departure. Within its quiet halls, 50 of his masterpieces shimmer like fragments of a spiritual dream, each a window into the mystical soul of Iranian art, where color, poetry, and devotion intertwine.

On the 23rd anniversary of the museum's inauguration, October 18, Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Mahnaz Asadollah, the museum's director, to talk about its origins, memories, and the void left behind by the master's death.

IRAN DAILY: How did this Qajar mansion in Sa'dabad come to be assigned to the Farshchian Museum?

MAHNAZ ASADOLLAH: In 2001, during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, Master Farshchian requested that a museum be established for his works. After several consultations, this Qajar-era build-

ing — which had been used as a storage facility — was vacated and adapted to become the Farshchian Museum.

How were the artworks selected and arranged for display?

Thirty-six of the works were donated and endowed by the Farshchian Foundation. Several others were loaned from different institutions. Some pieces, originally created for the Astan Quds Razavi shrine, were temporarily exhibited here for a year before being transferred to Mashhad.

Given Sa'dabad's numerous palace museums, how well is the Farshchian Museum received by visitors?

It's among the most visited art museums in the complex. Besides general tourists, we have regular visitors who return monthly — people who spend hours in front of the paintings, sometimes moved to tears. During holidays and festivals, we host up to two thousand visitors a day. We also welcome school groups throughout the academic year.

What makes running an art museum like this a unique experience?

Visitors don't come to Sa'dabad just for the royal palaces; many are drawn to its specialized art museums as well. Among them, the Farshchian Museum stands out — partly because of the master's



immense reputation among miniature artists. His name alone attracts art lovers, ensuring the museum remains one of the complex's top cultural destinations.

You worked with Master Farshchian for years. What are some of your lasting memories of his visits?

There were truly golden days when the master himself attended events here. I've witnessed extraordinary moments — artists bringing their works for him to critique, seeking his gentle yet precise corrections. When I first joined the museum, I met him in person. His humility was disarming. Despite his fame and mastery, he treated everyone like family — patient, warm, and fatherly. During exhibition openings, which sometimes gathered 400 or 500 guests, he was deeply attentive, always reminding us to treat visitors with utmost respect.

How did the master himself feel about this museum?

He followed everything closely. Every week, he would call to ask about the museum's condition and our visitors. He cared deeply — this



place was a part of him. I used to send him photos and short videos from events and the crowds, which he appreciated immensely.

How has the atmosphere changed since his passing?

There's an undeniable emptiness. I used to speak with him every week — he was my source of strength. Now, his daughter, Leila Farshchian, and his niece, Parvindokht Farshchian, are continuing his legacy. I keep them updated with photos and videos of the museum's ongoing activities, and I also stay in touch with his wife regarding museum affairs.

How do you plan to honor the master's wishes and continue his vision?

His voice still echoes in my ears — he used to say, "Treat these works as if they were your own." That sense of responsibility weighs heavily on me. He often spoke about how he worked tirelessly from dawn, driven by love and devotion. The museum now holds 61 of his pieces across five galleries, yet his total body of work exceeds a thousand — many of which have been sold or gifted.