

Renewable power capacity to surge to 11,000 MW by summer 2026: *Minister*

3 >



# Iran Daily

Vol. 7964 • Wednesday, October 29, 2025 • Aban 07, 1404 • Jumada al-Awwal 07, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir)

| [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

| IranDailyWeb



## *Pezeshkian:* ECO economic success hinges on 'solid frameworks'

2 >

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C), accompanied by Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni standing on his right, attends the fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting in Tehran, Iran on October 28, 2025.

[president.ir](http://president.ir)



Iran's political thaw could unlock Austrian economic help vis-à-vis Europe: *Businessman*

**INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE** 4 >



U23 Wrestling World Championships: Iran stands runner-up to US in freestyle, misses out on title double 6 >



Breaking barriers through art at Tehran's Homam festival

8 >

## Lasting Iran-US rapprochement seems far-fetched

**INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE**



*Diplomatic relations between Iran and the United States have been severed for decades, with the two nations widely regarded as arch-foes on the global stage. This long-standing hostility has largely manifested through Washington's political, economic and military pressure, countered by Tehran's policy of resistance. Yet, there have been moments of attempted détente, most notably the 2015 nuclear accord known as the JCPOA, followed by subsequent efforts to revive it after US President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal in 2018. However, deep-seated differences between the two sides continue to stand in the way of any durable agreement. With tensions recently spilling over*

*into military confrontation, the question remains: is animosity between Tehran and Washington an unchangeable feature of their relations, or is there still room, however narrow, for reconciliation or at least de-escalation?*

*In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs expert Afifeh Abedi argues that the history of Iran-US relations shows that hopes for a lasting compromise are overly optimistic and detached from reality. According to her, Iran's most effective strategy lies in strengthening its power base and expanding strategic ties with other global players.*

**IRAN DAILY:** Given the historical and structural rifts between Iran and the US, how realistic is it for Tehran to manage its relations with Washington without incurring political or economic costs?

**ABEDI:** It would be unrealistic to assume that Tehran can completely call the tune in its relationship with Wash-

ington. A relationship always involves two sides, and it is invariably shaped by the one that holds more cards politically, economically, and strategically. Naturally, in this case, that side is the United States. What empowers Iran vis-à-vis the US is its will to resist and its ability to offset the pressures and costs imposed by Washington. This very resistance has, on several occasions, brought the US back to the negotiating table. Yet Washington has consistently sought to impose its will, one that it failed to enforce through war or open confrontation. After the US reneged on the JCPOA, the recent 12-day conflict was another episode where Washington, while seated at the negotiating table with Tehran, allowed Israel, its proxy, to launch attacks against Iran. That experience was a costly but valuable lesson for Iran: even during negotiations, it must remain alert to new tricks up the enemy's sleeve. So, when we talk about managing relations or negotiating with the US, we must think in terms of parallel scenarios, even under a legally binding deal such as

the JCPOA, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council. Iran must rely on a network of strategies to strengthen its position in relation to Washington. Alongside building up internal capacities, forging reliable strategic partnerships with other major powers is vital. Ties with the US should never come at the expense of Iran's relations with its eastern partners, namely Russia and China.

**Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has stressed that Iran remains committed to diplomacy, though past experiences have deepened mistrust toward the US. What mechanisms could foster meaningful and confidence-building dialogue? Could intermediary institutions or phased agreements help?** Remember that the JCPOA was approved by the UN Security Council, yet the US walked away from it. Even Washington's European allies criticized the withdrawal at the time, but the entrenched power dynamics and traditional alliances within the West ultimately pulled them into

line with Washington's stance. We must realize that this is essentially a power game. Even if you secure a treaty or a UN-backed resolution with the US, Washington can, through various ploys and maneuvers, push you into behavior that justifies its own hostile approach and eventually place you under more pressure or even threat of military action.

**How can Iran, while safeguarding its national principles and interests, engage constructively with the US? What elements should shape its foreign policy to preserve independence while keeping dialogue open?**

Iran has repeatedly tested negotiations with the US, only to be met with betrayal. It has even tried unilateral cooperation with Washington in Afghanistan and Iraq, but again faced hostile conduct. Still, we must acknowledge that the US remains an undeniable global player, and there may be times when tactical or even strategic talks are unavoidable.

Page 3 >



# Pezeshkian: ECO economic success hinges on 'solid frameworks'

## International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that success in economic cooperation among ECO member states requires common solid and stable frameworks and platforms. Addressing the 4<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting in Tehran, the Iranian president called the organization the heir to decades of efforts, synergy, and practice of its members for economic convergence. He urged the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, South Asia, West Asia, and the Persian Gulf, including the ECO member states, "to establish and implement a coherent, endogenously stable and development-oriented security architecture." "Success in regional economic cooperation requires, among other things, solid, predictable, stable, and resilient common frameworks and platforms,"

Pezeshkian added.

Founded in 1985 by Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, the ECO has since expanded to include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Today, it serves as a major platform for regional economic integration.

Elsewhere in his speech, President Pezeshkian stated that the nations of the region are a "valuable platform for dialogue, exchange of experiences, and synergy in all fields."

One of the unfinished tasks in ECO, he said, "is the creation of an ECO police force called ECOPOL, the process of which has not yet been finalized."

According to the president, the ECO region is "one of the few regions in the world that does not have a joint police force."

"This gap, in addition to intra-regional vulnerabilities, has prevented the optimal use of cooperation with other



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) attends the fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting in Tehran on October 28, 2025.

● president.ir

regional police forces and international police," he said.

"Our region and surrounding areas have not been immune to foreign attacks," he said, adding that the largest foreign intervention in contemporary history has taken place in this region. Referring to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, Pezeshkian lamented that the "largest occupation of the century" continues near our region after about 8 decades.

"The most heinous genocide and crime against humanity in the world has occurred in the West Asia region and in Gaza by the occupying regime in the



last two years," he added. The president warned that, "There is a great thirst among the international ex-

tremists and norm-breakers for presence and intervention in our region and our peripheral regions."

## Iran says committed to NPT, works with IAEA under own law



Esmail Baqaei  
● IRNA

## International Desk

Iran remains a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and works with the UN nuclear agency in accordance with a law passed by the Parliament despite suspension of cooperation, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Tuesday. During his weekly presser Baqaei said that Tehran's cooperation

with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would be regulated by the law passed by the Iranian Parliament. The legislation has required suspension of all cooperation with the nuclear agency following an unprovoked Israeli-US war on Iran in June, which used an earlier IAEA Board of Governors' resolution as a pretext. It has conditioned the resumption of cooperation on ensuring

the safety and security of the country's nuclear facilities and scientists.

The law has also demanded respect for Iran's right to peaceful enrichment activities inside the country's soil.

Citing the refueling of the Bushehr nuclear power plant and the monitoring of the Tehran research reactor's performance, Baqaei said that some aspects of Iran's cooperation with the UN agency were "routine collaborations" that served the country's national interests.

Back in June, Israel launched an aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed over 1000 people, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

Tehran accused the IAEA of effectively paving the way for the Israel-US attacks with a report on May 31 that led the 35-nation Board of Governors to declare Iran in breach of its non-proliferation obligations.

## FM: JCPOA not expired notwithstanding Resolution 2231 termination



Abbas Araghchi  
● TASNIM

## National Desk

Iran's foreign minister said that despite the termination of the United Nations' Resolution 2231, which endorsed the 2015 nuclear deal, the agreement has not expired and the Islamic Republic has yet to decide for withdrawal.

Abbas Araghchi made the remarks in a meeting with the members of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

Asked by a lawmaker why Iran has not officially declared the end of the nuclear deal, Araghchi said that since the deal recognizes Iran's right to enrich uranium and there are issues in the agreement that are beneficial to Iran, "We decided to remain as a member of the agreement."

Araghchi added that the deal is still

considered valid by the country's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), which is tasked to decide on the issue. Meanwhile, other parties to the deal, namely China, Russia, France, Britain and Germany, have not withdrawn from the deal despite the United States withdrawal from the agreement in 2018, which is officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Araghchi added.

In 2015, Iran and world powers – including France, Britain and Germany – reached the agreement, that saw the easing of international sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But the US unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and reimposed draconian economic sanctions.

Tehran adhered to the deal until Washington's withdrawal, and then began rolling back on its commitments.

The European parties to the deal also failed to fulfill their commitments to the agreement. Several rounds of talks to revive the agreement failed, and in August, the UK, Germany and France triggered the so-called "snapback" process on the pretext of Iran's non-compliance with its obligations, leading to the re-imposition of the UN sanctions. The deal's "termination day" was set for October 18, 2025, exactly 10 years after it was enshrined in the UN's Security Council resolution 2231.

## Iran demands \$170m from owner of seized Israel-linked ship



● IRNA

## International Desk

Iran has demanded a \$170 million fine from the owner of a cargo ship that it seized in the Persian Gulf last year and accused him of "financing terrorism," a judicial official said Tuesday. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards

Corps (IRGC) intercepted the MSC Aries in April of 2024 and detained its 25 international crew members.

The MSC Aries, owned by Zodiac Maritime, a company linked to Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer, was flying the Portuguese flag at the time of its capture. Iranian judiciary spokesperson

Asghar Jahangir said charges had been filed and the case was before the courts, though no date had been set for a trial.

"A fine of \$170 million has been demanded against its owner, of Israeli origin, accused of financing terrorism," Jahangir said, according to ISNA. At least some of the crew were later freed.

Jahangir said the ship, excluding its cargo, was valued at \$170 million and said that Ofer – an Israeli billionaire and shipping magnate – was an "influential figure" within the Israeli regime.

The seizure of the ship came amid the Islamic Republic's pledges of retaliation against the regime's deadly aggression against the Iranian soil, including its July 2024 assassination of the former Political Bureau chief of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, and Tel Aviv's atrocities against other regional territories.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON





# Renewable power capacity to surge to 11,000 MW by summer 2026: *Minister*



## Economy Desk

Iran plans to raise its installed renewable energy capacity to 7,000 megawatts per day by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2026) and further to 11,000 MW per day by next summer, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Tuesday. According to the latest data by Iran's Renewable Energy and Electricity Efficiency Organization (SATBA), some 2,555 MW of clean energy is produced daily, account for only 2.7% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity of around 95,000 MW. President Masoud Pezeshkian's government has set a goal of installing 30,000 MW of renewables in the next three years to help ease daily power shortage which was around 12,000 MW last summer. The mismatch between production and consumption forced the government to cut power to households nationwide.

Aliabadi said the power outages depended on consumption levels.

"If people continue to cooperate with the power industry as they have in the past, we will not experience black-outs," he said.

Aliabadi said the situation in the electricity sector was improving. "This winter our situation will be much better. Things are going well in the power industry, and with continued effort and public cooperation, we hope to achieve tangible results," he noted.

The minister added that various projects were underway in both power generation and consumption management.

"We are working to establish sound governance in the water and electricity sectors," he said, adding that the government had set ambitious targets despite existing challenges.

He also expressed hope that the ministry would build 3,000 megawatts of storage capacity this year.

## Annual inflation rises to 38.9%, point-to-point rate hits 48.6%: *SCI*



## Economy Desk

Iran's year-on-year inflation rate up to the seventh month of the Iranian calendar year (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22) climbed to 38.9 percent, marking a 1.4 percentage-point rise from the previous month, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) reported on Tuesday.

The report showed

that point-to-point inflation — measuring the percentage change in the consumer price index (CPI) compared with the same month a year earlier — stood at 48.6 percent, which means Iranian households spent, on average, 48.6% more than they did in the same month last year to purchase an identical set of goods and services,

IRNA reported.

The SCI added that the point-to-point inflation rate rose by 3.3 percentage points from the previous month. According to the data, the consumer price index for Iranian households reached 403.8 in the stated period, showing a 5.0% monthly increase, a 48.6% rise year-on-year.

## Nahid marks step toward national satellite internet: *ISRC* Iran plans to develop own version of Starlink

## Economy Desk

The head of Iranian Space Research Center (ISRC) announced on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic already has the infrastructure for satellite internet, with the Nahid satellite as its first example.

The satellite, now in orbit, can transmit and receive data in the Ku-band (a frequency band in satellite communication that spans from approximately 12 to 18 gigahertz (GHz) in the electromagnetic spectrum), marking a major milestone in the country's space communications capabilities, Vahid Yazdanian told ILNA.

"While Nahid provides the foundation," he noted that a "fully operational satellite internet network would require at least 40 to 50 similar satellites to ensure global coverage and connection to the international network."

Most countries build such satellites collaboratively, and Iran is exploring international partnerships, including discussions with China and Russia, to leverage external expertise, he added. The member of the Supreme Space Council highlighted that Nahid oper-



ates in low Earth Orbit (LEO), similar to satellites in the Starlink constellation, whereas geostationary satellites (GEO) would be needed for broadcasting purposes.

"The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has plans to develop an Iranian version of Starlink," he said.

According to the official, Iran annual-

ly launches several observation and communications satellites, and if tests prove successful, launch frequency will increase.

Financing and launch costs remain key challenges. Regarding a timeline for a national satellite internet network, he said. "An exact date cannot be announced, but medium-term access to this technology is achievable."

## Test flights of indigenous 'Simorgh' transport aircraft begins in Isfahan

## Economy Desk

Iran has begun test flying its domestically made Simorgh aircraft in the central province of Isfahan, aiming to meet the requirements for an airworthiness certificate from the Civil Aviation Organization, Mehr news agency reported on Tuesday.

The twin-engine Simorgh, designed to carry up to 6,000 kilograms of cargo over 3,900 kilometers, has a maximum takeoff weight of 21,500 kilograms and engines producing 2,500 horsepower each.

It took 15 years to be designed and built at the Shahin Shahr Special

Aviation Industrial Zone.

Starting Tuesday, with approval from the Civil Aviation Organization, the Simorgh has entered the test flight phase to fulfill airworthiness requirements and is expected to complete approximately 100 hours of flight tests, the report added.

Once this phase concludes and the STC certificate is obtained, the aircraft will be added to the country's transport fleet.

The ceremony to begin the test flights was attended by Hossein Pourfarzaneh, head of the Civil Aviation Organization, along with senior military and government officials.



"Fewer than 20 countries in the world have the capability to design and manufacture aircraft," Pourfarzaneh said pointing to Iran's position in aviation technology.

"Iran is among them, having achieved technical knowledge to design and build transport aircraft relying on domestic expertise and young talent," he added.

## Lasting Iran-US ...

However, Iran would be better off managing its affairs in a way that keeps the need for negotiations with Washington to an absolute minimum.

**Araghchi has recently stated that as long as Washington's hegemonic policies persist and Iran continues to resist, differences will remain. In such circumstances, what scenarios could help de-escalate tensions or resolve disputes? Could third-party involvement make a difference?**

The US has left Iran with no choice but to stand its ground.

The experience of negotiation and agreement with Washington has even brought Iran to the brink of existential threat. This has proven that the least costly path for Iran is to boost its military, economic, and political power.

Iran must continue on this path by tapping into its domestic strengths as well as regional and international capacities. After all, Washington faces challenges with numerous global players, and its hegemonic policies have triggered resistance across many fronts. This, in turn, presents Iran with opportunities to navigate its way through critical junctures in its confrontation with the US.



# Iran's political thaw could unlock Austrian economic help vis-à-vis Europe: *Businessman*



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

other European countries.

A look at more than five centuries of interaction between Iran and Austria shows that their relations, despite numerous ups and downs, have always stood on mutual respect, friendship, and shared interests. Historically, ties between the two countries have largely remained rather peaceful. The history of relations between Iran and Austria goes back to the early 16th century, during the rise of the Safavid dynasty in Iran and the Habsburg monarchy in Austria. Austria established its embassy in Tehran in 1872, and Iran followed suit six years later in 1878 by setting up its mission in Vienna.

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Austria was among the first countries to recognize Iran's provisional government. One of the most critical milestones in their bilateral relations was Austria's hosting of the nuclear negotiations that eventually led to the final nuclear agreement in 2015. Austria was also one of the few European countries that kept up its trade relations with Iran even when international sanctions were in place. Following the Vienna nuclear agreement, which brought about the gradual lifting of sanctions, former Austrian federal president Heinz Fischer became the first head of state from an EU member country to visit Iran.

Iran and Austria have much room for cooperation, particularly in the economic sphere, where collaboration could go a long way toward meeting both nations' industrial and service demands. To delve into the current state of these interactions — especially in trade and economics — Iran Daily sat down with Alireza Nazemolroayaei, vice president of the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce.

*The head of the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce believes that Austria can play a major role in reviving Iran's economic links with Europe. He adds that if government officials manage to build up the bilateral relations at political and economic levels, this will undoubtedly rub off positively on Iran's relations with*



Alireza Nazemolroayaei

**IRAN DAILY:** Could you briefly explain Austria's economic significance and capacities in Europe?

**NAZEMOLROAYAEI:** Austria lies in the heart of Europe. Three major international organizations, including the United Nations, are based in Vienna. The UN alone oversees around a dozen affiliated agencies headquartered there, with representatives calling the shots on significant global matters. These include the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Global Marketplace (UNGM), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The presence of these institutions gives Vienna special weight in international affairs. In addition, both OPEC and the OPEC Fund for International Development are based in Austria. OPEC comprises the world's major oil producers, and Iran is one of its founding members. The Fund pools contributions from oil-producing countries and channels them into helping developing nations. Most importantly, Austria leads

the pack across Europe when it comes to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), sustainable energy, and start-ups. It is regarded as one of the continent's innovation hubs. One can safely say that Austria plays a big part in shaping the overall European economy.

**When we look back at Iran-Austria relations, we see that they have generally been strong. How do you see the current outlook?**

That's correct. The friendship between Iran and Austria stems from their long history of positive cooperation. For example, Austria's OMV company, which operates in oil and gas exploration, extraction, and marketing, used to buy crude oil from Iran and provide essential additives in return. Several other Austrian firms also worked with Iran. However, after unilateral US sanctions were imposed, Austrian companies had to scale down cooperation to avoid heavy penalties. Gradually, the volume of economic exchanges fell off a cliff, reducing embassy and trade activity. Even visa processing has become difficult. Still, a few limited transactions are being carried out through in-

termediaries, though these drive up the costs dramatically. Some ties remain in pharmaceuticals and food ingredients. However, many Austrian companies that once operated in Iran — such as Doka, a supplier of industrial formwork — have pulled out, halting operations here.

Despite all this, Austria still hosts active small enterprises performing impressively in various industries and showing a strong interest in partnering with Iran. European nations need Iran's mineral, petrochemical, and industrial products, but banking sanctions make direct purchases impossible. Indirect transactions too often hit a snag as banks fear US fines and thus steer clear of Iranian deals altogether.

The absence of direct banking relations means goods must travel through longer, unofficial routes, lining the pockets of so-called "sanction profiteers" more than anyone else. For example, if a company wants to import industrial equipment, intermediaries in other countries now step in, documents get passed around, and goods take far longer to reach Iran. This cumbersome circle pushes up costs and directly affects

production prices — one main driver of inflation.

**What can the Joint Chamber of Commerce do to ease these restrictions and challenges?**

Under such circumstances, the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce is trying to smooth the way for businesspeople on both sides. Many of our members are actively looking out for trusted sources and companies to set up business links between Iranian and Austrian traders. Still, visa issuance and money transfer remain serious obstacles.

As a private-sector body, the Chamber doesn't have control over government limitations. However, if policymakers succeed in turning around political relations, Austria can truly step up and help rebuild Iran's economic ties with Europe. Its central geographical position and extensive expertise in innovation, tourism, and industry make it a key partner whose cooperation would likely open doors with other European states.

Austrians are also keen to collaborate as Iran stands out as a major hub for mineral resources, petrochemicals, medicinal



The illustration shows a freight train belonging to the Austrian Federal Railways, now commonly known as ÖBB, moving at high speed.

● [transporeon.com](https://transporeon.com)



Under the current circumstances, the Iran-Austria Joint Chamber of Commerce is trying to smooth the way for businesspeople on both sides. Many of our members are actively looking out for trusted sources and companies to set up business links between Iranian and Austrian traders. Still, visa issuance and money transfer remain serious obstacles.



A top-ranking delegation, headed by then-Austrian president Heinz Fischer (not pictured), is welcomed by Iranian officials upon their arrival in Tehran, Iran, on September 7, 2015, months after Iran's nuclear deal with the P5+1 countries was signed in Vienna, Austria.

● [MASHREGHNEWS](https://mashreghnews.com)

herbs, pharmaceuticals, food industries, nanotechnology, and engineering services — fields highly attractive to European investors. If sanctions are eased, Austria, with its prime location, can take the lead in facilitating Iran's broader economic engagement with Europe.

In earlier years, the two countries had already built up solid economic and developmental ties. After the 2015 nuclear deal, the Austrian president became the first EU head of state to visit Tehran — a turning point marked by significant contracts. However, those projects soon ground to a halt under American unilateral sanctions, causing losses on both sides. We now hope that new economic meetings and agreements will breathe new life into our cooperation and that Iran-Austria relations — long rooted in friendship and respect — will once again hit their stride.

**A large Iranian community lives in Austria. Does this help foster cultural and bilateral ties?**

Indeed, many Iranian expatriates in Austria and Vienna are among OPEC and OPEC Fund's top managers and experts, eager to reach out and cooperate with Iran. The Iranian community there numbers fewer than 30,000, most of whom are graduates of Austria's academic institutions.

Austria, with a population of about eight million, enjoys a stable economy. Its inflation rate is below the European average, and unemployment remains low. Over the years, Austria's government has stuck to sound economic policies and kept up public support by staying in tune with global economic trends.

Moreover, Austria is one of the world's key tourist destinations. Vienna and its surroundings, with their historical landmarks, cultural heritage, music scene, mild climate, and world-class museums, draw in millions of visitors every year. In my view, if sanctions-related problems are resolved, the two countries could branch out into extensive cooperation in tourism as well.





# Ministry of Economy's investment strategy to neutralize snapback



nist.gov

## PERSPECTIVE

Acting on a proposal by Ali Madanizadeh, the Iranian Ministry of Economy has rolled out a comprehensive plan to attract foreign investment as part of its package to counter the “snapback mechanism”.

At a time when the threat of snapback sanctions still practically hangs over Iran's economy, the ministry, under Madanizadeh's direction, has kicked off a new initiative to draw in foreign capital. The plan forms part of the government's broader strategy to cushion the psychological, financial, and budgetary blows of the adherence of some Western countries and their allies to the alleged return of sanctions. Emphasizing that “the response to the snapback mechanism should be anti-fragile, not merely resilient,” Madanizadeh said the program sets out to rebuild economic infrastructure in order to attract foreign funds, bring in technology, and secure sustainable financing.

### Proactive response to snapback threat

Shifting from mere resilience to anti-fragility means the new ministry plan aims not only to blunt the impact of sanctions but also to turn the threat into a driver of reform.

In a meeting of the ministry's deputy council, Madanizadeh, referring to the ongoing “economic war,” stressed that “the Ministry of Economy must, beyond day-to-day operations, live up to its commitments under the new circumstances and shore up the nation's defenses against threats.” By “resilience,” he meant not passivity, but reinventing the very structures of the economy so it cannot just withstand shocks but draw strength from them. The planned reform pillars include:

#### 1. Customs reform is gateway to investment

Madanizadeh highlighted that speeding up clearances and cutting through red tape must replace cargo stagnation at customs. Based on his remarks at the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council, a comprehensive plan has been put together

to address the backlog in customs clearance. Updating regulations, digitizing processes, and tapping into private-sector capacity are the three key pillars of this transformation.

“Our ultimate goal,” he noted, “is to deliver on the promise of three-day cargo clearance.” Such reform would send a clear message to foreign investors that Iran is doing away with unnecessary trade barriers.

A bill to overhaul the Customs Act has been put on the Iranian government and parliament's agenda, with detailed timelines already handed down to departments.

Linking digital customs with foreign investment is another goal. The ministry believes that a data-driven system, besides increasing transparency, will bring down transaction costs and boost predictability — two vital factors for investor confidence. Smart customs processes tie together anti-sanction goals and investment attraction.

#### 2. Coordination among economic institutions to build trust

Under the anti-snapback package, responsibilities have been clearly divided:

- The Central Bank of Iran will keep an eye on exchange policy and inflation control.
- The Planning and Budget Organization will take charge of expenditure and deficit management.
- The Ministry of Economy will handle taxation, financing, insurance expansion, and investment.

According to Madanizadeh, the full details of the package will be rolled out soon, but the goal is clear: to hold the line against currency depreciation, keep production resources flowing, and back up capital movement.

#### 3. Digital economy as magnet for investment

In a visit to the 28th Iran International Electronic, Computer & E-Commerce Exhibition (ELECOMP 2025), held from September 25 to September 28, 2025, Madanizadeh named the digital economy as one of the five pillars of the ministry's “justice-oriented agenda”. He said that “economic transformation will be technol-

ogy-driven,” adding that a three-year task force has been set up to finance the digital ecosystem. He also mentioned a draft bill for deregulating the digital economy and the formation of a dedicated board to smooth the path for licensing. Supporting tech companies to go public is also on the table.

This fresh outlook serves as a missing link in the foreign investment chain: Investors will only stay in Iran's market if the digital and financial systems are transparent and dynamic.

#### 4. Foreign investment, market psychology

At the ministry's deputy council meeting, Madanizadeh cautioned that “the economic war targets not just our finances, but also the psychology of the markets.”

“The public must be kept in the loop,” he insisted, “so they can rest assured the government is taking its responsibilities seriously.”

This communication strategy forms part of the investment plan itself: Winning over domestic trust is a precondition for attracting foreign confidence. Investors will only step in once they see that the government has a firm grip on conditions and responds proactively.

#### 5. Financial instruments to reduce risk

The ministry's proposed package includes specific measures aimed at cutting down invest-

ment risk:

- Investment insurance to guarantee principal and profit returns on select projects.
- Greater tax transparency and streamlined company registration.
- Incentives for overseas Iranian investors to bring back capital through favorable interest rates.
- Blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies brought under Central Bank oversight to ease international payments.
- Joint investment funds with aligned countries through BRICS and Shanghai blocs to bypass banking restrictions.

#### 6. Synergy between smart taxation, exchange rate policies

Madanizadeh cited the government's new system of credit allocation as a key step to keep the foreign exchange market in check. Using the credit of importers and pre-sellers, instead of direct forex allocation, will help preserve reserves and add predictability to the economy — an essential factor for foreign investors.

In taxation, AI-driven systems are being rolled out to track transactions more transparently — something that investors see as a clear reduction in business risk.

#### 7. Special committee on investment

On October 7, the ministry's third meeting of the Spe-



At a time when the threat of snapback sanctions still practically hangs over Iran's economy, the ministry, under Madanizadeh's direction, has kicked off a new initiative to draw in foreign capital. The plan forms part of the government's broader strategy to cushion the psychological, financial, and budgetary blows of the adherence of some Western countries and their allies to the alleged return of sanctions.



*Iranian Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Ali Madanizadeh (L) addresses the International Investment Forum 2025 held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on October 14, 2025.*

● SHADA

cial Committee, chaired by Madanizadeh, zeroed in on customs challenges, facilitation of essential goods imports, support for economic actors, and laying the groundwork for foreign investment.

The committee included top representatives from policy, stock exchange, customs, and taxation — all entities the minister described as being “on the frontlines of the enemy's economic offensive,” yet also potential pillars of strength if they work in sync.

#### 8. Simultaneous attraction of knowledge, capital

In ELECOMP, Madanizadeh reiterated: “The country's economic transformation cannot go forward without technology.” This marks a fundamental shift in how Iran's Ministry of Economy defines foreign investment — not merely as an injection of cash but as an infusion of know-how, managerial expertise, and international standards. The focus on the tech ecosystem suggests that investment is not confined to traditional sectors but extends to a convergence between innovation and external capital.

#### 9. Immediate measures to manage markets

In the same meeting, the minister announced that a “market defense operation room” has been set up to decide on real-time interventions aimed at staving off any plunge in the rial's value.

Such measures go hand in hand with the investment strategy since exchange rate stability and limited volatility are the first prerequisites for investor confidence.

#### Outlook of project

Economists have described the ministry's foreign investment package as a blend of endogenous reform and a smart, outward-looking approach. With customs and tax systems fully digitized, tech firms joining the stock market, and joint investment funds coming into play, Iran could emerge as a reliable destination for regional and Asian capital despite snapback pressure.

According to Madanizadeh, the ultimate objective is for Iran's economy to move beyond mere resilience into a state of anti-fragility — where every external shock triggers off internal reform.

Previously, foreign investment policy focused largely on oil and infrastructure contracts. But financial and banking sanctions shut down many of those avenues. Following regional agreements through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, however, new doors have opened up.

With its new mix of experience and technology, the Ministry of Economy's plan marks a turning point toward a transparent, smart framework designed to counter the snapback mechanism and set the country on a sustainable growth path.

*The article first appeared on Mehr News Agency.*





# U23 Wrestling World Championships: Iran stands runner-up to US in freestyle, misses out on title double

## Sports Desk

Iran finished second to the United States in the freestyle contests of U23 Wrestling World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, falling short of a second world team title double in 2025. After a clean sweep of senior world crowns last month, Iran lifted the Greco-Roman trophy earlier in Novi Sad, but ultimately settled for the runner-up spot in freestyle with 127 points – 10 adrift of Team USA. Japan finished third on 85 points.

The two wrestling powerhouses were tied on 102 points heading into the final day of competition, with the US needing a single victory to secure the title, while the Iranians had to win all of their three bouts.

The US sealed the title as soon as Jaxen Forrest defeated Omurbek Asan Uulu of Kyrgyzstan 17-14 in an epic 61kg final, bagging the fourth freestyle gold for his country. Meanwhile, Abolfazl Rahmani added a sixth medal to Iran's free-style haul by taking a consolation bronze in the 86kg class. The reigning senior Asian champion bounced back from a 2-1 semifinal loss to Moldova's Eugeniu Mihalcean to beat two-time world junior champion Rahim Magamadov of France 7-5 and share the bronze podium



Members of the Iranian freestyle squad and the coaching staff pose with the runner-up trophy at the U23 Wrestling World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, on October 27, 2025.

● IAWFIR

sian Takhir Khaniev – competing as a neutral athlete – 5-3 to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 92kg division, adding the under-23 crown to his 2023 world junior gold.

Former U17 world champion Sina Khalili had to settle for silver in the 70kg class – courtesy of a 9-4 defeat against Kanan Heybatov of Azerbaijan – while Milad Valizadeh (57kg) and Mahdi Yousefi (79kg) each claimed a bronze in their respective divisions.

The Iranian 10-man Greco-Roman squad had bagged six medals, including triple golds, to finish atop the standings with 143 points – 47 clear of second-placed Ukraine.

Iman Mohammadi (72kg), Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg), and Fardin Hedayati (130kg) were the Iranian gold medalists, while Sajjad Abbaspour took the silver in 60kg.

Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg) and Abolfazl Mohmadi (82kg) left Novi Sad with a bronze in their respective divisions.

with Azerbaijan's Ali Tcokaev – a second age-group medal for the Iranian in two months following his bronze at the U20 Worlds in August. Elsewhere, Abolfazl Babalou missed out on a podium finish in the 97kg event after a 7-1 setback against Rizabek Aitmukhan of Kazakhstan.

Former under-20 world champion Babalou recovered from a 13-2 quarterfinal defeat to Japanese-Iranian Arash Yoshida to overcome Hungary's Musza Arsunkaev 7-2 in repechage, but was the second best against 2023 senior world champion Aitmukhan in the bronze-medal contest.

Yoshida went on to round off his dominant campaign with a superiority victory (12-2) over Georgia's Merab Suleimanishvili in the final.

Mohammad-Mobin Azimi and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad were the Iranian freestyle gold medalists in Novi Sad.

An under-20 world silver med-

alist in August, Mohammadnejad was in a league of his own in the superheavyweight class, scoring a total of 25 points while conceding only two across three bouts before outclassing Azerbaijan's Khetag Karsanov by technical superiority (11-0) in the 125kg final.

Azimi, meanwhile, defeated Rus-

## Asian Youth Games: Iranian boys, girls march into volleyball finals

### Sports Desk

Iran will chase double volleyball golds at the Asian Youth Games today, after the country's boys' and girls' teams claimed last-four victories in Bahrain on Monday.

Iranian under-18 team came from behind to overcome the Philippines 3-1 (26-28, 25-18, 25-19, 25-18) in the girls' semifinals and secure a sixth consecutive victory in Isa Sports City.



● MOHAMMAD-HASSAN ZARIFMANESH/volleyball.ir

Standing between the Iranian girls and the ultimate prize in today's final is Indonesia, which overcame Thailand in straight sets (26-24, 27-25, 25-17) in the other semifinal. "The players felt a lot of pressure against the Philippines, but they managed it extremely well," Iran head coach Lee Do-hee said after the game, adding: "The players' mindset varies at each stage of the tournament. We were very concerned that the pressure of this match would get the bet-

ter of them and that's what happened in the first set – they were clearly nervous – but they did a great job to overcome it as the game wore on." On the prospect of a historic continental gold medal for Iranian women's volleyball, Lee said: "This is the best opportunity for us, and we will give everything we have to deliver a great performance."

"We've already beaten Indonesia 3-0 in this tournament, but after watch-

ing them against Thailand I realized that they have improved since our previous encounter. We won't underestimate them," added the South Korean coach, who also led the Iranian senior team to a maiden international glory at the CAVA Women's Championship earlier in October. In the boys' competition, Iran eased past Thailand in three sets (25-10, 25-21, 25-14) to set a final date with Pakistan.

Pakistan rallied from behind to beat

Indonesia 3-1 (22-25, 25-13, 25-19, 26-24) later on Monday.

"I congratulate all the players and their families. However, I believe we haven't accomplished anything yet. The real task is the final," Iran coach Adel Gholami said.

"Pakistan is one of the strongest teams in this age group. They even lost to Poland [in the last 16] at the U19 World Championship due to a few marginal errors. Had they not lost that game, they would have definitely gone all the way to reach the final," added Gholami, who steered Iran to a fourth-place finish in the under-19 world event in August.

"It will be tough game against them. We should forget all about today's victory and get ready for the final," Gholami said.

### Swimming history

Elsewhere in the Games on Monday, Mohammad-Mahdi Gholami captured Iran's first-ever swimming gold at an international event. Gholami, 16, clocked 54.75 seconds in the final to beat Filipino swimmer Jamesray Ajido (55.11) and Hong Kong's Lau Kin Hei James (55.23) to the top prize in the boys' 100m butterfly event.

In the women's 3x3 basketball event, the Iranian girls suffered a 15-14 heartbreak against Chinese Taipei in the final and settled for silver. The two sides were tied 13-13 at the end of regulation before Chinese Taipei prevailed in overtime.

In the women's futsal, however, Iran pulled off a shootout victory over Chinese Taipei to progress to the final.

Elnaz Hosseinpour gave Iran an early lead but Hou Yu-xuan and Ku Hsuan found the net in less than a minute to turn the game on its head in the first half.

Narges Amirmohseni found the equalizer with less than two minutes into the second half as it finished 2-2 before Iran won 3-1 on penalties.

## Brazilian Osmar replaces Hashemian as Persepolis head coach

### Sports Desk

Osmar Loss Viera was named the new head coach of Persepolis, taking charge of the Tehran Reds for a second spell, the Persian Gulf Pro League heavyweight announced on Monday.

The 50-year-old Brazilian takes over from Vahid Hashemian, who was relieved of his duties this week following a run of poor results and drab performances in the new Iranian top-flight season.

Hashemian was appointed to the Persepolis job for his senior managerial debut in July but his short stint ended after his team managed only two victories – conceding one defeat – in eight league games. Even the 2-0 home victory over Zob Ahan on Friday did little to save the Iranian's future on the Reds' bench.

When Osmar was given the Reds' role midway through the 2023/24 season, his appointment drew scrutiny from some Persepolis fans and former players, who believed the club should have hired a more prominent coach to continue the club's trophy-winning tradition. However, the Brazilian is set to receive a hero's welcome on his return to the club, having led Persepolis to its seventh top-flight title in eight years during his previous half-season spell, as the Reds will look to avoid a second successive season without the league title.

Osmar, who parted ways with Buri-ram United earlier in the month, steered the Thai League 1 outfit to a domestic treble and the ASEAN Club Championship trophy, as well as an impressive last-eight spot in the

● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

AFC Champions League Elite last season. Persepolis is seventh in the Iranian league table with 11 points – two points adrift of archrival Esteghlal on top – and will visit Tabriz to face defending champion Tractor on Thursday. Osmar is unlikely to sit on the bench due to contract issues, with Karim Baqeri set to be in charge for the highly-anticipated fixture.





# Khuran Wetland preserves nature, inspires wonder



### Iranica Desk

In the heart of Hormozgan Province's coastal strip — where the land and sea share a bond thousands of years old — lies a vast wetland adorned with evergreen forests: Khuran Wetland (Bandar-e Khamir), the largest wetland in southern Iran. It is not merely a habitat for birds and aquatic life but a mirror of natural balance that breathes in silence. On the southern edge of Bandar-e Khamir, where the warm, silvery waters of the Persian Gulf gently extend into the land, the Khuran Wetland unfolds — a 100,000-hectare expanse intertwined with the sea, home to countless birds, marine species, and mangrove trees, IRNA wrote. Khuran Wetland is more than a wetland or an ecosystem; it is a living testament to the harmony of humanity, nature, and history. The evergreen hara (mangrove) trees, rising in orderly grace from the salty waters, breathe and give life with every ebb and flow of the tide.

These mangrove forests are not only sanctuaries for thousands of migratory birds but also the first line of defense protecting the coasts from erosion and storms. The sound of seabirds flapping their wings and the sunlight reflecting off the lagoon's surface have transformed Khuran Wetland into a living painting of southern nature, where rare species make their nests. The city of Bandar-e Khamir, situated along the edge of this wetland, carries the title of "Iran's Wetland City" — a place where daily life, local culture, and even the economy are closely connected to the wetland. This lagoon, listed among the international wetlands of the Ramsar Convention, has in recent years become vulnerable to threats such as coastal pollution, overfishing, unsustainable development, and climate change. Environmental experts have repeatedly emphasized the need to develop and implement conservation programs, because the Khuran Wetland, though appearing full and vigorous, is silently

losing its natural balance. Today, attention is focused not only on preserving this wetland but also on using its potential wisely in nature-based tourism, environmental education, and the local economy. Khuran Wetland could become a model of participatory conservation in southern Iran — a place where humans stand alongside nature rather than dominate it. With all its beauty and grandeur, the Khuran Wetland is neither reproducible nor replaceable. Protecting it is not a choice but a necessity for the future of the children of this land — a future where, if we do not act today, the sound of its birds will be heard only in books tomorrow. The value of the Khuran Wetland in the wetland city of Bandar-e Khamir is so great that it has been designated a biosphere reserve. Its numerous islands and unique, beautiful ecosystem create a dreamlike setting for tourists and unforgettable memories. The hara (mangrove) forests of Bandar Khamir are also located

within the Khuran Wetland International Wetland; this lagoon is the largest marine wetland in the Middle East, protected under two international treaties (UNESCO and Ramsar). Hormozgan's wetlands are home to a variety of birds as well as rare and endangered species. Hormozgan's wetlands, in addition to being habitats for birds and aquatic life, are home to rare plant species such as hara and mangrove forests due to their proximity to the sea or their location along floodwater channels flowing into the Persian Gulf. These forests play a crucial role in coastal ecosystem sustainability and offer high potential for nature-based tourism development in southern Iran. Another advantage of Hormozgan's international wetlands is their position along floodwater pathways to the sea or adjacent to the coastline, which supports the growth of hara and mangrove forests. The Director General of Hormozgan Province's Department of Environment Habib Masihi

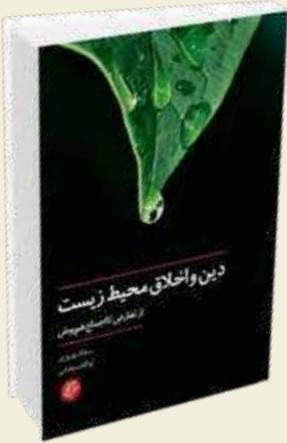
Taziani noted that the province contains over 33% of Iran's wetlands, emphasized its special status in the field of wetlands. He highlighted Khuran Wetland as the largest wetland in the province and Shidvar Wetland as a recognized wildlife refuge with coral reefs. He stated that Khuran Wetland, covering more than 100,000 hectares, is one of the province's most important natural habitats and plays a key role in preserving regional biodiversity. He em-

phasized that Hormozgan Province ranks second in the country in terms of wetland area after Khuzestan Province, and first nationally in the structure and extent of hara forests. Bandar-e Khamir, as Iran's first wetland city and host of the Khor Khuran Wetland, is located 70 kilometers west of Bandar Abbas and currently plays an important role in protecting and transmitting local knowledge related to hara forests and the region's natural habitats.

## Introduction to the book: Religion and Environmental Ethics From conflict to overlapping consensus

The book entitled Religion and Environmental Ethics, authored by Abul-Qasem Fanaei and Sajad Behrooz and published by Mofid University Press in 2022, represents an innovative effort to explore the ethical dimensions of environmental responsibility by applying the concept of "overlapping consensus," originally introduced by John Rawls in political philosophy, to the domain of environmental ethics. comprising 253 pages, it seeks to demonstrate that a common moral understanding regarding the environment can be achieved among followers of both religious and secular ethical frameworks. At its core, the book addresses the fundamental question of humans' moral responsibilities toward the environment. This includes both living beings — animals, plants, and other sentient entities — and non-living components such as mountains, rivers, minerals, and other natural resources. The text examines whether

moral consideration and ethical status extend beyond humans to other elements of nature, and if so, how this shapes the limits of human actions. If non-human living beings are granted moral standing, humans' rights to exploit these entities become ethically constrained. Moral status, in this view, not only establishes human duties but also delineates the permissible boundaries of those duties. Regarding non-living entities, human obligations are derived indirectly — not from the inherent moral status of these entities, but from the moral or legal rights attributed to God, to humans, or to other living beings in relation to the use of natural resources. The book addresses three central questions in environmental ethics: (1) Do humans have moral duties toward the environment? (2) What is the scope of these duties? (3) Are these duties direct — toward the entities themselves — or indirect, concerning



them only in relation to the rights of others? By analyzing these questions, the work clarifies whether obligations are grounded in human-centered considerations, divine command, or the intrinsic value of nature itself. From a religious perspective, certain theological assumptions — such as human stewardship and moral pre-eminence — have sometimes been

interpreted as justifying exploitation of nature. However, this book interrogates such interpretations, suggesting that these principles can equally imply profound ethical responsibilities: humans, as morally elevated or divinely appointed stewards, bear a duty to respect and protect the environment rather than to dominate it. Nature, in this sense, may be viewed as a divine trust, with harm or destruction representing a clear moral transgression. The text also explores secular perspectives and argues for common ethical ground. Drawing on the idea of "overlapping consensus," the author demonstrates that it is possible for individuals with diverse worldviews — religious and non-religious — to agree on fundamental environmental principles without necessarily agreeing on the underlying justifications. In practice, this means achieving broad consensus on principles such as respecting nature, prohibiting destructive exploitation, and safeguarding the rights of future generations, even when the rationale differs. The book emphasizes that these moral frameworks are not purely theoretical. They have practical implications for everyday life and public policy,

providing guidance for sustainable environmental behavior and collective responsibility. By bridging religious and secular ethics, it offers a foundation for cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation in addressing global environmental challenges. This work also serves as a model of rigorous philosophical research and applied ethics, illustrating how complex moral questions can be addressed in a way that is both conceptually precise and socially relevant. It is intended for scholars, students, policymakers, and anyone interested in deepening their understanding of environmental ethics and fostering a more sustainable relationship with the natural world. In sum, this book is a pioneering contribution to environmental ethics, demonstrating how humans can responsibly navigate their moral obligations toward both living and non-living elements of nature. By offering a framework that resonates across religious and secular traditions, it provides a compelling vision of shared ethical responsibility for the preservation and respectful use of the environment.

*This book has not been translated into English.*





# Breaking barriers through art at Tehran's Homam festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

The 4th Homam International Festival for People with Disabilities is drawing to a close in Tehran after a week of exhibitions and performances that brought together more than 430 Iranian and foreign artists, celebrating creativity beyond limitation. Held at the Iran Academy of Arts since October 23, the festival has displayed works from all 31 Iranian provinces and 14 countries, including Spain, Japan, Russia, Belarus, Pakistan, India, Armenia, Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan, IRNA reported. "This year's Homam has moved beyond exhibition," said festival secretary Mohammad Reza Mashhadi. "We are building bridges between Iranian and global disabled artists so that the art of perseverance can be seen worldwide." Named after an ancient Persian term for vitality, the Homam festival began in 2018 as a domestic event and has since evolved into a regional platform for artists with physical, visual, and hearing impairments. The displays range from painting, sculp-

ture, calligraphy and ceramics to miniature, wood-carving, enamel, weaving and mixed media. Submissions arrived from more than 23 countries, according to organizers, underscoring a growing international presence that Mashhadi described as "a genuine dialogue of creativity." Among the most striking works is "The Qur'an on Shells" by Mahtab Ghanbari Rad, a deaf calligrapher who handwrote the entire Qur'an on 18 natural seashells collected from Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf. "I saw myself writing it in a dream on the night of Ashura," she said. "It took me two years to complete. My wish is that the world sees this work." A member of the Iranian Calligraphers Association, Ghanbari Rad works in Nastaliq, Thuluth and Naskh scripts, often engraving verses on grains of rice or inscribing the word Allah on sugar crystals—miniature pieces that viewers examine with magnifying glasses. For the first time, the festival formally

included performing arts. Musicians and actors with disabilities took the stage daily, while theater performances explored inclusion and accessibility. Officials said the success of these programs could lead to a permanent "theater of ability" section next year. In the crafts pavilion, artisans showcased finely-carved wooden sculptures, embossed leather accessories, miniature carpets and metalwork that fused calligraphy with enameling and inlay. One panel featuring the name Allah in raised script drew particular attention for blending traditional craft with spiritual devotion. Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, who visited the exhibition with senior officials, praised the participants as "symbols of determination and creativity." "Our society reaches cultural maturity when all groups have equal opportunities to participate and influence," he said. "For these artists, art is not just a career—it is a means of empowerment and proof of capability."



"The energy is extraordinary," said one Tehran artist attending the show. "You feel a kind of joy that only comes from people who have turned limitation into expression." Organizers plan to display selected works

at Iranian embassies in 140 countries in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The initiative aims to introduce the achievements of Iranian artists with disabilities to global audiences and art markets.

## Iran's 'Black Scarf' wins best film in Italy, lands Australian nomination



### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian short film 'Black Scarf', directed by Alireza Shah Hosseini and produced by his company, Shah Hosseini Film,

clinched the Best Film Award at the Pinerolo Film Festival in Pinerolo, Italy, which ran from October 18 to October 25. At the same time, the 15-minute production was nominated for the Best Short Film category at the 19th edition of the Byron Bay International Film Festival in Australia, scheduled for October 17 to October 26, ILNA reported. In its official synopsis, 'Black Scarf' unfolds "on the last work day of a teacher at a small deserted village ... when his students ask for something which changes everything." The film features actors Pasha Rostami, Tara Majidzadeh, Lotfollah

Seifi, Mohanna Seyedi and the late Hatam Mashmouli. With this international recognition, Shah Hosseini's work is gaining traction on the global festival circuit. By earning the Best Film accolade in Italy and a nomination in Australia, 'Black Scarf' has opened new doors for Iranian short-form cinema. The Italian festival has long sought to spotlight "creative, different cinematic works from around the world," giving the award added weight. Meanwhile, the Byron Bay festival, set against Australia's coastal backdrop, offers a broader platform for the film's global rollout.

## Cultural renewal, civilizational resilience keep Iran alive through history



By Ali Akbar Salehi  
Head of Iranology  
Foundation

### OPINION

At every turning point in its history, Iran has emerged transformed yet intact, a nation reborn through crisis, continuity, and creativity. This is not merely a matter of geography or politics; it is a story of cultural resilience and civilizational renewal. What has kept Iran alive through invasions, revolutions, and modern upheavals is its extraordinary capacity for cultural dynamism and civilizational refinement. The Iranian identity has never been static. Over centuries, it has absorbed shocks, from Mongol conquests to Western cultural incursions, and reconstituted them into something distinctly its own. Iran has not only survived these encounters but turned them into sources of intellectual and moral energy. This embodies what I describe as cultural alchemy where external challenges are transformed into internal growth. Throughout history, Iranians have shown that endurance does not mean rigidity. On the contrary, it is flexibility, the spirit of moderation and synthesis, that defines Iranian civilization. From the ethical humanism of Ferdowsi and Sa'adi to the spiritual universality of Hafez and Rumi, Iranian thought has long reflected a culture of coexistence and inner balance. I believe the Iranian temperament is one of tolerance and reflection, enduring differences while learning from them. When Islam entered Iran, it did so as a faith without a unified intellectual structure. It was the Iranian scholars who gave it philosophical coherence and global reach. Figures such as Avicenna, and Farabi, though diverse in belief and method, embodied a Persian tradition of intellectual organization and synthesis. Iran did not merely receive Islam; it systematized, refined, and universalized it. This civilizational contribution, often overlooked, remains one of the most profound in world history. But the dialogue between Iran and

the world has never been one-sided. To understand Iran's place today, we must listen to those who have interpreted its essence, both from within and beyond. Iranian cultural thinker Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, in his work 'Where Is Iran, Who Is Iranian?', reminds us that Iran is not defined by uniformity but by its unity within diversity. Ethnic, linguistic, and religious pluralism have long coexisted here without annihilating one another. Iran is neither wholly Eastern nor Western; it is a middle world, a bridge where Eastern wisdom meets Western rationality. Beheshti urges us to rediscover this equilibrium at a time when we risk seeing ourselves through the distorted mirror of Western gaze. The late Palestinian scholar Edward Said also offers a critical lens. His seminal book 'Orientalism' revealed how the West's knowledge of the East was often a mechanism of control, a cultural prelude to political domination. Said demonstrated that representation itself is a form of power: by defining the "Other," the West defined itself. This insight matters deeply for Iran. In today's world of mass media and digital narratives, the struggle over meaning continues. Social networks and global news platforms now play the role that Orientalist scholarship once did, shaping perceptions and legitimizing influence. Iran, therefore, must move beyond defending its image toward shaping its own global narrative. To be meaningful in the 21st century, Iran must not merely be seen; it must speak, intelligently, confidently, and creatively. The real battle is over narrative, not territory. Here, the warning of Jalal Al-e Ahmad, the Iranian writer who coined the term Gharbzadegi (Westoxication), remains strikingly relevant. Al-e Ahmad saw Western domination not only in technology or politics but in thought, in the erosion of inner authenticity. He argued that when a nation begins to perceive itself only through Western categories, it loses the power to define its own destiny.

His call was not for isolation, but for rooted engagement: a dialogue with modernity that does not dissolve identity. Today, the same challenge persists. Globalization has intensified both communication and confusion. Iran must rediscover its cultural self-confidence, not through nostalgia, but through renewal. To "return to oneself," as Al-e Ahmad urged, is not to retreat from the world but to enter it from a place of strength. The Islamic Revolution of 1979, in this sense, represented more than a political upheaval; it was a civilizational statement. At a time when material ideologies, capitalism, communism, and secular nationalism, seemed to exhaust humanity's moral vocabulary, Iran's revolution reintroduced religion and spirituality into public discourse. Its reverberations were global: new academic centers for the study of religion and Islam emerged across Western universities, and the idea that faith could coexist with modern life gained renewed legitimacy. Forty-five years later, the task before Iran is not to repeat the past but to reinterpret it. The continuity of Iranian civilization depends not on the preservation of forms but on the renewal of meanings. Our challenge is to transform inherited wisdom into contemporary relevance, to turn tradition into a living resource rather than a museum relic. Cultural resilience, after all, is not the mere survival of heritage; it is the power to recreate heritage under new conditions. Iran's future, like its past, will be defined by this creative continuity. We must move from reaction to action, from defending our image to designing our message. Iran is not a relic of the past; it is a living civilization, a vessel that holds within it faith, art, and intellect. To preserve Iran is to preserve a space where meaning, moderation, and humanity can still coexist. In a fractured world hungry for identity and balance, Iran's enduring voice, if it speaks with wisdom, can once again illuminate the global conversation on civilization.

## Iran, Saudi Arabia expand health, medical cooperation in Riyadh

### Social Desk

Iranian Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarqandi and his Saudi counterpart Fahad Abdulrahman al-Jalajel met on Tuesday on the sidelines of the Global Health Exhibition in Riyadh to discuss expanding joint cooperation and investment in health, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment. The ministers praised the "growing" interactions between the two countries in the health sector and emphasized developing partnerships in scientific, academic, research, and educational fields, IRNA reported. Planned initiatives include exchanging university professors and students, holding joint congresses and specialized conferences, and strengthening links between Iranian and Saudi medical universities. Both officials also reviewed a draft memorandum of understanding on health cooperation, urging its expedited finalization. They highlighted the potential for joint investments in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and health infrastructure, aiming to leverage each country's expertise and capabilities. Zafarqandi invited al-Jalajel to pay an official visit



Iran's Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarqandi (L) and his Saudi counterpart Fahad Abdulrahman al-Jalajel meet in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on October 28, 2025.  
● IRNA

to Tehran to continue bilateral discussions and deepen health-focused collaboration. The Iranian minister is leading a delegation of senior officials from the country's pharmaceutical and medical equipment sectors to attend the 8th Global Health Exhibition, held in Riyadh from October 27 to 30.