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Democratic candidate for New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani reacts after winning the 2025 New York City mayoral race, at an election night rally in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, the US, on November 4, 2025.

● REUTERS

### COP 30; The Moment of Truth



By Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva  
President of Brazil

#### O P I N I O N E X C L U S I V E

Today, in the Brazilian Amazon, the Belém Summit opens ahead of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30). I have convened world leaders in the days leading up to the COP so that we can all commit to acting with the urgency the climate crisis demands.

If we fail to move beyond speeches into real action, our societies will lose faith, not only in the COPs, but in multilateralism and international politics more broadly. That is why I have summoned leaders to the Amazon: to make this the COP of Truth, the moment we demonstrate the seriousness of our shared commitment to the planet.

Humanity has shown its ability to overcome great challenges when it acts together and guided by science. We protected the ozone layer. The global response to the Covid-19 pandemic proved that the world can act decisively when there is courage and political will. Brazil hosted the Earth Summit in 1992. We approved the Conventions on Climate, Biodiversity and Desertification, and adopted principles that defined a new paradigm for preserving our planet and our humanity. Over the past 33 years, these gatherings have produced important agreements and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions — from ending deforestation by 2030 to tripling renewable energy use.

More than three decades later, the world returns to Brazil to confront climate change. It is no coincidence that COP30 takes place in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. This is an opportunity for politicians, diplomats, scientists, activists and journalists to witness the reality of the Amazon.

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## Pezeshkian to Macron:

## Iran welcomes dialogue, but demands West's respect for rights



Masoud Pezeshkian

## International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Tehran has always welcomed dialogue to resolve differences, but it is the US and Europe that, as a trust-building measure, should respect



Emmanuel Macron

Iran's rights and stop trying to impose their excessive demands.

The Iranian president made the remarks in a phone conversation with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday.

"It is not Iran that must prove its hon-

esty and build up trust; rather, it is the United States and Europe that must win Iran's trust by their sincerity".

Pezeshkian said that Iran has repeatedly declared that based on a religious decree issued by Iran's Leader and within the framework of its own security and defense doctrine, it has never sought to obtain nuclear weapons.

However, Iran has come under mounting pressure and sanctions on the false pretext of attempting to build nuclear weapons, he added.

Pezeshkian added that resolving misunderstandings through logic and dialogue is the principled approach of the Islamic Republic, noting that force and threats only worsen disputes rather than resolving them.

The French president, for his part, said he would work to set up a new negotiating framework so that a clear outcome could be reached between Iran and the Western countries.

"It is essential that our interactions and dialogues keep going in the direction of building transparency and trust so that we can reach an agreement, lift the sanctions, and improve and expand mutual relations," Macron said.

He also expressed appreciation for what he described as Iran's "practical steps" toward removing certain barriers and implementing previous agreements reached in earlier meetings. It seems that the French president was referring to the release of two French nationals by Iran.

## French nationals granted conditional release

On Tuesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said Tehran has released two French nationals on bail, who had been imprisoned for more than three years on spying charges.

He said that the detainees have been released "by the order of the presiding judge."

The duo, he added, "will remain under supervision pending the next stage of judicial proceedings."

Macron on Wednesday identified the two as Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris. Kohler and Paris were arrested in May 2022 while visiting Iran.

He welcomed this "first step" and said talks were underway to ensure their return to France as "quickly as possi-

ble."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said that they were in "good health" at the French ambassador's residence but declined to give details on when they would be allowed to leave Iran.

On October 21, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vahid Jalalzadeh said Mahdiah Esfandiari, an Iranian academic illegally imprisoned in France over pro-Palestine social media posts, had been included in a prisoner exchange plan.

Tehran came up with a political and consular package that both countries were to implement to expedite the release of Esfandiari, who had been arbitrarily detained in the European country for speaking out against the Israeli regime's genocide in Gaza, the official noted at the time.

The 39-year-old Iranian translator and university lecturer residing in Lyon was arrested by the French police over her activity on a pro-Palestine Telegram channel.

Scheduled to go on trial in Paris from January 13, she was released on bail last month in a move welcomed by Tehran.

## Mamdani; Bellwether of fight against Trump's despotism, cronyism

First Muslim mayor elected to lead largest US city in historic win

## International Desk

Zohran Mamdani, the newly elected mayor of New York City, issued a direct call to US President Donald Trump in his victory speech on Tuesday, saying he would enter City Hall with a firm plan to counter the politics of division and cronyism that helped elevate him to the White House.

Muslim lawmaker Mamdani has been elected as the 111<sup>th</sup> mayor of New York, the first person of South Asian descent and the first person born in Africa to lead the largest city in the United States. The 34-year-old mayoral candidate and assemblyman from Queens emerged victorious in the race on Tuesday to lead New York after polls closed in a heated contest that grabbed the world's attention. Mamdani outperformed his chief opponent — former governor Andrew Cuomo — with at least 50 percent of support after 85 percent of the votes had been counted.

Speaking to supporters in Brooklyn after victory, Mamdani said New York had shown it would be the "light" in a "moment of political darkness."

"Here we believe in standing up for those we love," he said.

Whether you are an immigrant, one of the many Black women that Trump has fired from a federal job, a single mom still waiting for the cost of groceries to go down, or anyone else with their back against the wall, Mamdani said.

"No more will New York be a city where

you can traffic in Islamophobia and win an election."

The mayor-elect then issued a direct message to the president, saying if any city could show the nation how to defeat Trump, it was the "city that gave rise to him".

"So, if there is any way to terrify a despot, it is by dismantling the very conditions that allowed him to accumulate power. This is not only how we stop Trump, it's how we stop the next one. So, Donald Trump, since I know you're watching, I have four words for you: turn the volume up," Mamdani said before declaring.

"If anyone can show a nation betrayed by Donald Trump how to defeat him, it is the city that gave rise to him."

Mamdani, who was born in Uganda and became a naturalized American citizen after graduating from college, went on to cast himself as the embodiment of resistance. "New York will remain a city of immigrants, a city built by immigrants, powered by immigrants and, as of tonight, led by an immigrant," he said. "So hear me, President Trump, when I say this: To get to any of us, you will have to get through all of us."

Trump, who has spent months insulting Mamdani and warning that the city would be ruined if he won, seemed to be watching.

New York has remained relatively unscathed by Trump's administration, as he has targeted cities including Los Angeles and Washington, dispatching the



Democratic candidate for New York City mayor Zohran Mamdani reacts after winning the 2025 New York City mayoral race, at an election night rally in the Brooklyn borough of New York City, the US, on November 4, 2025.

● REUTERS

National Guard.

The current mayor, Eric Adams, enjoyed an unusual alliance with the Republican president, whose administration dropped a federal corruption case against the mayor so he could better assist with the president's immigration agenda.

Trump has threatened to slash federal funding to the city and mount an outright takeover — threats that became a cornerstone of Mamdani's rivals' campaigns against him.

Mamdani was leading Cuomo by more than 8 percentage points, with 91% of the vote counted, around midnight ET. The result capped a stunning surge for the Democratic socialist after he won the June primary, and a dramatic fall from grace for Cuomo, who had waged a well-funded independent bid.

## Araghchi hails Iran-China-Russia cooperation against US unilateralism

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi praised "constructive cooperation" between China, Iran, and Russia in countering the unilateralism of the US and certain Western countries.

"The constructive cooperation between China, Iran, and Russia in countering the unilateralism of the United States and certain Western countries in the United Nations was of great significance," the Iranian foreign minister told his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in a phone conversation on Wednesday.

The Iranian minister also condemned the Israeli regime for its continued destabilizing actions in West Asia, urging the international community to stand against the "warmongering and hegemonic policies" of Israel to prevent further escalation in



Abbas Araghchi



Wang Yi

the region.

For his part, Wang Yi reaffirmed the strategic nature of the Tehran-Beijing ties and underscored the need for continued coordination and regular contacts between the two countries at the UN and other multilateral institutions.

The Chinese minister also praised Iran's peaceful approach to using nuclear energy and reiterated China's support for Iran's nuclear rights as a principal member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Both sides highlighted the constructive meeting between their presidents in September and expressed hope that the upcoming session of the High-Level Cooperation Mechanism would accelerate the implementation of agreements reached under the framework of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Back in 2021, Tehran and Beijing signed a 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement, marking a milestone in bilateral relations between the two countries.

## IAEA chief demands Iran's cooperation boost with UN agency

## International Desk

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi urged Iran to "seriously" improve cooperation with the agency's inspectors, stressing that it was not yet necessary to refer Iran to the UN Security Council as a result of the breakdown of inspections.

Grossi told the Financial Times that while the IAEA has carried out about a dozen inspections in Iran

since an unprovoked aggression by Israel and the United States in June, it had not been given access to nuclear facilities such as Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan, which were bombed by the United States.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei subsequently said that Grossi was "fully aware of the peaceful nature" of Iran's nuclear program and should not express "unfounded opinions" on it. Iranian officials have blamed the IAEA for providing a justification

for Israel's bombing, which began the day after the IAEA board voted to declare Iran in violation of obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Grossi told the FT that while the agency was trying to approach the relations with Iran with understanding, the country still needed to comply.

"You cannot say, 'I remain within the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons treaty', and then not comply with obligations," Grossi said.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON





# No decline in oil revenues, spending curbs planned for next budget: Minister

**Economy Desk**

Iran's Economy minister Ali Madanizadeh said on Wednesday the government has seen no decline in oil revenues and will proceed with its budget planning as scheduled, state media reported.

"We currently have no discussion of reduced oil revenues, and there is no signal of a decline," he told reporters after a weekly cabinet meeting, ISNA reported.

"Oil income will be included in the budget according to the usual plan."

Madanizadeh did not specify what benchmark or planning assumption he was referring to. Benchmark Brent crude has recently traded around the mid-\$80s per barrel, and the Iranian

government typically submits its draft budget to Parliament toward the end of the calendar year (March 20). The government has not disclosed its oil export assumptions for next year's budget. Iran does not release detailed figures on crude exports due to US sanctions, which it says require confidentiality.

However, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said last month Iran's oil production had increased by about 120,000 barrels per day over the year to September. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), Iran pumped around 3.45 million barrels per day in September, up from 3.2 million barrels per day at the start of the year.

"Iran's crude oil production climbed by 250,000 barrels per

day (bpd) in September compared with August, reaching 3.45 million bpd," according to the EIA's latest monthly report. The data came despite Washington's so-called "maximum pressure" campaign under US President Donald Trump, which aimed to drive Iran's oil exports to zero. US Energy Department figures show Iran has nonetheless continued to raise crude production.

On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, Madanizadeh said next year's budget would seek to reduce non-essential spending and link any spending increases to agency performance. The aim, he said, is to boost efficiency and rely on "reliable sources" of revenue rather than borrowing or other instruments that could widen the deficit.



Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh speaks to reporters after a weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on November 5, 2025.  
● president.ir

## Trade with neighbors tops \$38b in seven months: IRICA



The data suggests Iran has managed to retain and manage its regional markets even amid external pressures. The country has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear activities.

### Eurasian trade

Alongside trade with its direct neighbors, Iran also recorded \$2.2 billion in commerce with members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) over the same seven-month period, involving about 4.9 million tons of goods.

The bloc has grown into an increasingly important trading partner for Iran, particularly following the country's entry into a free trade agreement with the EAEU in late April. Iranian officials say expanded cooperation with the union could help diversify Iran's export markets and improve access to both regional and extra-regional economic corridors.

**Economy Desk**

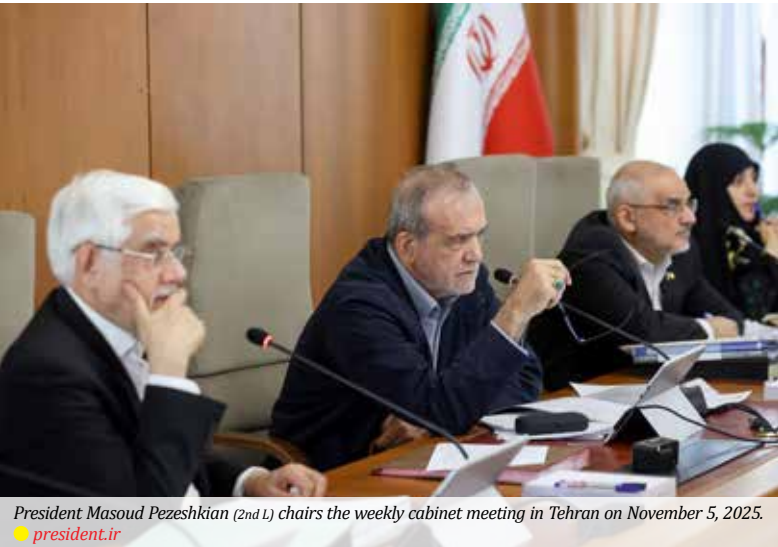
Iran's trade with its 15 neighboring countries totaled about \$38.15 billion in the first seven months of the Iranian year that began on March 21, Mehr reported, citing customs data, reflecting the continued central role of regional markets in the country's foreign trade.

According to figures provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exchanged 64.88 million tons of

goods with nearby states during the period. The combined value was roughly on par with the same period last year, indicating stable trade flows despite ongoing sanctions and international financial constraints.

Officials and analysts note that geographic proximity, shared cultural and logistical ties, lower transport costs and long-standing economic interdependencies have historically made neighboring countries Iran's largest export destinations.

## President urges continued scientific progress, stronger regional ties



President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) chairs the weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on November 5, 2025.  
● president.ir

**Economy Desk**

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Wednesday called for continued investment in scientific development and expanded regional and international cooperation, following a government briefing on the country's research and innovation progress, the presidency's official news website reported.

The call was made during a weekly cabinet meeting after the vice presidency for science and technology presented an overview of advances, ongoing challenges and proposals to strengthen Iran's position in global scientific rankings. The report analyzed fluctuations in Iran's scientific standing from 1959

to 2024. Pezeshkian emphasized the need to maintain the pace of progress and support "knowledge-based and security-oriented" approaches, according to the report.

Earlier in the session, Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni delivered a detailed account of a recent meeting of interior ministers from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which was held in Tehran. According to the minister, the summit resulted in decisions aimed at expanding trade cooperation, developing tourism ties, strengthening regional security coordination, and easing visa procedures among member states.

He said mutual recognition of driv-

er's licenses among ECO countries had also been placed on the agenda for a future session.

The vice president for science and technology Hossein Afshin then outlined current scientific achievements and obstacles, offering policy recommendations to further elevate Iran's global research ranks. Pezeshkian reiterated that sustaining scientific progress and deepening regional and international collaboration remain central to the government's strategic priorities.

According to SCImago data released in March 2025 for the 2024 rankings, Iran's position in terms of scientific publication output declined for the second consecutive year, falling one place to 17th worldwide. The ranking shows that Iran published 75,501 scientific papers last year, placing it second in the Middle East for total output.

Despite the drop in publication volume ranking, Iran maintained its 15th place globally in citation count for the fifth year in a row. SCImago data indicate that Iranian researchers accounted for 1.74% of global scientific output and 21.54% of research output in the Middle East over the past year — a share that has been gradually decreasing in recent years.

In March, Deputy Science Minister Peyman Salehi had noted that the margins between countries in the rankings had narrowed and warned that Iran's position could slip by another place by late spring.

## COP 30; The ...

We want the world to see the true state of the forests, the planet's largest river basin, and the millions of people who live in the region. COPs cannot be mere showcases of good ideas or annual gatherings for negotiators. They must be moments of contact with reality and of effective action to tackle climate change.

To confront this crisis together, we need resources. And we must recognize that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities remains the non-negotiable foundation of any climate pact. That is why the Global South demands greater access to resources — not out of charity, but justice. Rich countries have benefited most from the carbon-based economy. They must now rise to their responsibilities, not only by making com-

mitments but by honoring their debts. Brazil is doing its part. In just two years, we have already halved deforestation in the Amazon, showing that concrete climate action is possible.

In Belém, we will launch an innovative initiative to preserve forests: the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF). It is innovative because it operates as an investment fund, not a donation mechanism. The TFFF will reward those who keep their forests standing and those who invest in the fund. A genuine win-win approach to tackling climate change. Leading by example, Brazil has announced a US\$ 1 billion investment in the TFFF, and we expect equally ambitious announcements from other countries.

We also set an example by becoming the second country to present a new Nation-

ally Determined Contribution (NDC). Brazil has committed to reducing its emissions by 59 to 67 percent, covering all greenhouse gases and all sectors of the economy.

In this spirit, we call on all countries to present equally ambitious NDCs and to implement them effectively.

The energy transition is fundamental to meeting Brazil's NDC. Our energy matrix is among the cleanest in the world, with 88 percent of our electricity coming from renewable sources. We lead in biofuels and are advancing in wind, solar and green hydrogen energy.

Redirecting revenues from oil production to finance a just, orderly and equitable energy transition will be essential. Over time, oil companies worldwide, including Brazil's Petrobras, will transform into

energy companies, because a growth model based on fossil fuels cannot last. People must be at the center of political decisions about climate and the energy transition. We must recognize that the most vulnerable sectors of our society are the most affected by the impacts of climate change, which is why just transition and adaptation plans must aim to combat inequality.

We cannot forget that two billion people lack access to clean technologies and fuels for cooking, and 673 million still live with hunger. In response, we will launch in Belém a Declaration on Hunger, Poverty and Climate. Our commitment to fight global warming must be directly linked to the fight against hunger.

It is also fundamental that we advance the reform of global governance. Today

multilateralism suffers from the paralysis of the UN Security Council. Created to preserve peace, it has failed to prevent wars. It is our duty, therefore, to fight for the reform of this institution.

At COP30, we will advocate for the creation of a UN Climate Change Council linked to the General Assembly. It would be a new governance structure with the force and legitimacy to ensure that countries deliver on their promises, and an effective step toward reversing the current paralysis of the multilateral system.

At every Climate Conference, we hear many promises but see too few real commitments. The era of declarations of good intentions has ended: the time for action plans has arrived. That is why today we begin the COP of Truth.



## Jewel of Fars Province withering

## Collective battle to bring life back to Bakhtegan Lake

## PERSPECTIVE

Wetlands, those blue jewels of the planet, are recognized as some of the most vital yet fragile ecosystems on Earth.

These bodies of water not only serve as unique habitats for a wide range of plants and animals, but also play a key role in cleaning up water naturally, keeping floods at bay, feeding groundwater reserves, holding back dust storms, and smoothing out climate extremes.

Their economic role in keeping local livelihoods afloat through tourism, fishing, and agriculture is equally undeniable. Yet, across the world — and particularly in West Asia — these natural treasures have been facing growing threats.

Climate change, rising temperatures, declining rainfall, and most critically, poor water management and overuse of surface and groundwater have turned many wetlands into hubs of dust and salt storms.

Among these endangered ecosystems, the international Bakhtegan Wetland in Fars Province of Iran stands out as a textbook example of this complex crisis.

The salt lake's widespread desiccation has not only thrown the local ecosystem off balance but has also put the lives of nearby residents on the line.

Every coordinated and science-based effort to save this wetland counts as a step toward environmental health and a sustainable future for the region's inhabitants.

## A promising start

A meeting of the Bakhtegan Local Wetland Group, chaired by the deputy for Coordination of Developmental Affairs of Neyriz County and attended by representatives of related agencies, was held at the county governor's office. During this specialized session, attended by Ali Akbar Safaei, head of Neyriz's Environmental Protection Office, and other members, the latest situation of Bakhtegan Wetland was closely looked into, and practical strategies for its sustainable management were put on the table. According to participants, plans are underway to restore Bakhtegan as one of Fars Province's top environmental priorities.

This ecologically significant wetland calls for collective will and scientifically-grounded action to return to a stable state. The deputy for Coordination of Developmental Affairs of Neyriz stressed that only through pooling efforts among all related executive bodies could the restoration goals be brought within reach. The group will continue following up on restoration measures and keeping coordination alive across different sectors.

## Fall of water giant

Located beside the Tashk Wetland,



Bakhtegan salt lake in Iran's southern province of Fars is desiccated.  
● HANIEH HOSSEINPOUR/ISNA

Bakhtegan forms part of a larger wetland system in eastern Fars, registered under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

Once, Bakhtegan played host to countless migratory birds such as flamingos, pelicans, and cranes, and held the reins of regional ecological balance. Yet, over recent decades, a mix of natural and human factors — including prolonged drought, unchecked dam construction on upstream rivers (especially the Kor River), uncoordinated agricultural expansion, and excessive groundwater pumping — has drained much of the wetland dry.

This desiccation has taken a heavy toll, turning the area into a breeding ground of saline dust that poses a health hazard to nearby towns and villages, wiping out biodiversity, salting up farmland, and threatening the livelihoods of farmers and herders alike.

## Provincial drive to revive a natural heritage

The establishment of the Bakhtegan Local Wetland Group in Neyriz speaks volumes about the province's determination to get to grips with this ecological challenge. Formed under the Neyriz Governor's Office with representatives from key organizations — such as the Department of Environment, the Agriculture Ministry, and the Regional Water Authority — the group's structure makes it crystal clear that restoring Bakhtegan is a multi-dimensional battle that can only be won through full-scale cooperation between provincial and local bodies. Its focus on

"restoration planning" and "sustainable management" highlights a scientific, long-term approach.

No longer can we hope for a miracle if the steps we have taken are just periodic, rushed measures. Reviving Bakhtegan demands a comprehensive game plan, built upon solid data and sensitive to socio-economic realities.

## From identifying crisis to mapping solutions

Bahram Taheri, a senior wetland researcher, stated that the main problem facing Bakhtegan is hydrological: The inflow of water into the wetland has dropped sharply compared to the past due to mismanagement in the watershed. He emphasized that saving Bakhtegan requires setting aside a real and legal environmental water quota, determined through hydrological and ecological studies, and enforced through binding legal mechanisms.

He also pointed to the need to revamp cultivation patterns upstream, noting that a large share of the basin's water gets used up by low-efficiency farming. "Shifting to low-water crops and rolling out modern irrigation methods such as drip systems could free up substantial water for the wetland's revival," he added. "Such a shift, however, relies on the assistance and participation of local farmers — the main beneficiaries of the wetland's recovery — since its desiccation has already hit their soil and groundwater quality."

Taheri hailed the creation of the local group as a welcome move but cautioned

that its success hangs on key factors: having real authority to put decisions into practice, accountability to public opinion, and the genuine inclusion of local communities and NGOs.

"The people living around the wetland are its true owners," he noted. "Any restoration plan that leaves them out is bound to fail."

## Turning words into action

To move from words to action, the Bakhtegan Local Wetland Group needs a clear, prioritized roadmap.

The first step could be drawing up a comprehensive report on the wetland's current state using satellite data, field monitoring, and groundwater assessments.

Next, it should pin down the precise volume of water the wetland needs and the factors cutting off its supply upstream.

At the same time, trial projects on low-water crops in partnership with pioneering farmers could show the efficiency of these methods to others.

Waste management and controlling the inflow of untreated sewage are also among the urgent measures.

Meanwhile, setting up a continuous monitoring system to track how restoration affects water and soil quality and the return of wildlife will help the group fine-tune its strategies as needed.

## Hope that must take shape

Reviving the international Bakhtegan Wetland is an unavoidable necessity to keep ecological balance intact in Iran's Fars Province and secure a sustainable future for its people.

The crisis stems from years of neglect and short-sighted water management, and solving it will require time, unwavering will, and a holistic plan.

The formation of the local wetland group in Neyriz marks a turning point along this challenging path.

It signals a growing understanding among executive agencies that only through teamwork and cross-sector coordination can this crisis be brought under control.

Still, success depends on consistent commitment from all members, sufficient funding, expert input, and — above all — the trust and engagement of local communities.

If this collective will holds firm and moves beyond speeches and meetings to visible action on the ground, there is genuine hope that one day life will flow back into this withered jewel of Fars — and the cries of migratory birds will once again ring out over the waters of Bakhtegan.

Saving Bakhtegan, after all, means saving life across a vast part of Iran.

*The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.*



We need to revamp cultivation patterns upstream since a large share of the basin's water gets used up by low-efficiency farming. Shifting to low-water crops and rolling out modern irrigation methods such as drip systems could free up substantial water for the wetland's revival. Such a shift, however, relies on the assistance and participation of local farmers — the main beneficiaries of the wetland's recovery — since its desiccation has already hit their soil and groundwater quality.



A meeting of the Bakhtegan Local Wetland Group, chaired by Mohammad Sadegh Kamali (C), the deputy for Coordination of Developmental Affairs of Neyriz County, Fars Province, is held at the county governor's office to discuss the restoration of Bakhtegan Wetland.  
● IRNA



Farmers are working on their land while much of the Bakhtegan Wetland in Fars Province, southern Iran, is dry in the background.  
● HANIEH HOSSEINPOUR/ISNA



# How rural women are reviving Iran’s mangrove forests



Establishment of the first women-led mangrove nursery in Tiab, with a capacity of around 1,500 seedlings  
● UNDP IRAN

## PERSPECTIVE

In Tiab village of Hormozgan Province, a group of rural women has taken on an important role in protecting and restoring the Shour-Shirin-Minab International Wetland, one of southern Iran’s most valuable ecosystems.

Supported by the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) UNDP, funded by ICCA-GSI, and implemented by the Mashgh Afarinesh Va Toseye Paydar, the project set out to promote sustainable livelihoods that also contribute to the conservation of mangrove forests.

Through training and hands-on workshops organized in partnership with the Provincial Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, local women were trained on how to collect mangrove seeds, prepare soil mixtures, plant seedlings, and manage a small nursery.



Through training and hands-on workshops organized in partnership with the Provincial Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, local women were trained on how to collect mangrove seeds, prepare soil mixtures, plant seedlings, and manage a small nursery.

Later on, these efforts led to the establishment of the first women-led mangrove nursery in Tiab, with a capacity of around 1,500 seedlings. The nursery became both a source of environmental restoration and an opportunity for small-scale income generation. Ms. Mehri Zarei, member of the Tiab Women’s Green Nursery, says, “We nurtured these seedlings with our own hands, just like our own children... Planting each mangrove felt like giving birth to hope all over again. When I placed the roots into the mud, I felt as if I was becoming a mother once more, this time, to the Earth.” The initiative also encouraged knowledge exchange between Tiab and neighboring villages such as Chah Sahari, where similar activities were replicated. The women’s groups learned from each other’s experiences, sharing practical lessons in nursery management, irrigation, and seed collection. Through the meaningful engagement of local women in conservation activities, the project highlights how community participation can strengthen both environmental sustainability and rural livelihoods.

The article was first published by the United Nations Development Programme.

# Can AI solve Iran’s dire water crisis?

## Global research has the answer



By Darryl Sellers  
Public relations and communications strategist

## PERSPECTIVE

Iran is running out of water. But artificial intelligence is providing solutions, according to research from University of St. Thomas Professor John Abraham and his Iranian colleagues. They have partnered on 50 studies over six years to provide solutions to address the crisis.

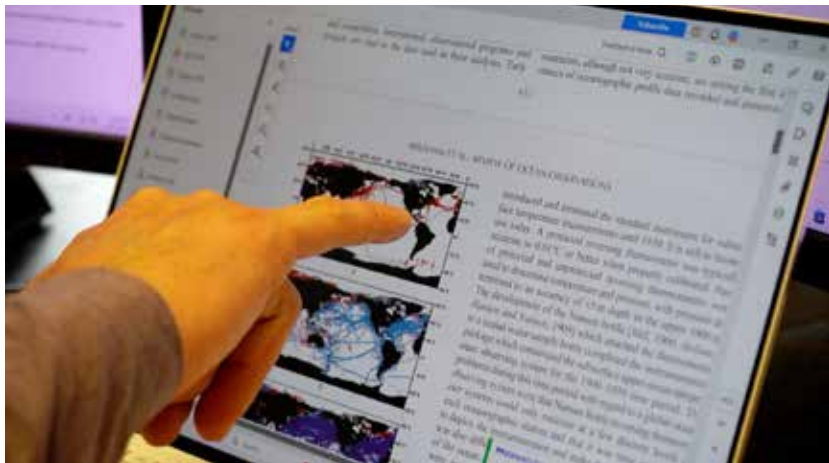


John Abraham



Farzin Salmasi

Abraham has co-authored two studies with Dr. Farzin Salmasi, a water engineering professor at the University of Tabriz in Iran. He works closely with Salmasi and credits the team of 20 Iranian researchers as the boots on the ground. These researchers operate at water structures and run the experiments. Their research, published in the Iranian Journal of Science and Technology and IWA, demonstrates how artificial intelligence can help Iran’s engineers improve water structure designs and better protect them. Abraham, a climate expert and mechanical engineering professor in the School of Engineering, said the team is examining two issues: “How do we get the water to the agricultural centers and the cities in a way that maximizes that water use? The other thing we’re looking at is the safety of the structures that get it there.” Those issues are important, he said, because “we want to build those structures in a way where they are safe, they’ll last indefinitely into the future, and they’re not going to undergo catastrophic failure like we’ve seen elsewhere around the world.” Iran is in one of the most arid regions in the world. According to Abraham’s research team, the average rainfall in Iran is 260 millimeters per year, while the average rainfall in the world is about 800 millimeters. Additionally, 90



Professor John Abraham monitors data on the ocean’s temperatures from his office in St. Paul.  
● ABRAHAM SWEE/UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

percent of the water volume in Iran is used for agriculture. Therefore, proper management of water consumption in Iran’s agriculture is crucial. “Because Professor Abraham specializes in the field of fluid mechanics, which is closely related to water engineering, we have developed a good collaboration,” Salmasi said. “In our joint research work, we’ve optimized the spillway of a storage dam, an important part of the dam that discharges water in excess of the dam’s capacity during river floods. I think our research will greatly contribute to these designs.” Abraham and his team use computer models to train AI to analyze thousands of different designs and determine which designs will help Iranian engineers improve their water structures. “What AI does is it takes our ideas that we start out with and it makes them better,” he said. “We come up with a basic design and then we use AI techniques like the ones in these studies to figure out if our design is the best. If it’s not the best, how can we change it to make it more effective?” Salmasi said using AI will also help engineers design more economical water structures. “In our joint research work, we optimized the stepped spillway of a storage dam with the aim of maximizing energy dissipation, which I think will greatly contribute to the economization of the designs,” he said. Abraham, who contributes to the

research by sifting through the data and sharing data analysis, is confident that the encouraging data analysis results from their research will enable the team’s work to have positive, long-term effects in Iran for years to come. “Right now, the information that we’re coming up with is being fed to the designers of the next generation of water structures,” he said. “They’re able to make that next generation better, stronger, cheaper, and able to sustain themselves and last indefinitely into the future.” Abraham said the world is in a race to improve the global water crisis because climate change is adversely affecting the planet’s precipitation patterns. Despite water becoming scarcer in some regions of the world, Abraham said they are hopeful their work will help Iran win its race to improve water management faster than the climate is changing. “I think we are going to win this race because we have jet power called AI,” Abraham said. “What gives me hope is we are using these new AI techniques to speed up the optimization process.” Abraham said one reason he works on these projects is that it makes him a better teacher. This fall, he is training undergraduate students at St. Thomas on how to solve similar problems. They are being trained using state-of-the-art virtual reality software and AI to improve water flow. Then, students use their knowledge to



In our joint research work, we optimized the stepped spillway of a storage dam with the aim of maximizing energy dissipation, which I think will greatly contribute to the economization of the designs.

design piping systems for buildings, catheters for heart disease therapy, and calculate drag forces for vehicles traveling through water. “That’s how we change futures — not just for our students, but for the world facing critical resource challenges,” he said. “AI gives us the momentum we need for hope, progress, and a sustainable tomorrow.” The importance of Abraham’s research extends beyond water, arming the school’s students with the best possible skills so they can land their dream jobs. “My job is to make sure my students can outcompete their peers at other universities, get those dwindling number of entry-level white-collar jobs, and launch their career trajectories,” he said. “When these students graduate and apply for jobs, they will show their future employers how they have taken their learning outside of the classroom and into the real world.”

The article was first published by the University of St. Thomas.



The outlet of the Kani Sib Dam water transfer tunnel flows into an open channel in northwestern Iran, as efforts grow to redirect water to Lake Urmia as part of restoration projects.  
● ALI ARSALANI/IRNA



## Sports Desk

Iranian international volleyball player Saber Kazemi passed away at the age of 26 in Tehran's Payambaran Hospital on Wednesday.

Kazemi, who had joined Al Rayyan for the new season of the Qatari Volleyball League, had been in a coma since October 17 after suffering a severe brain complication while recovering in a hotel pool in Doha.

The Iranian Volleyball Federation transferred him to Tehran on October 27, but despite the Iranian medical team's relentless efforts, the left-handed opposite spiker was declared brain dead in the early hours of Wednesday.

"It is with profound sorrow and grief that we extend our heartfelt condolences on the passing of dear Saber, a valued member of the Iranian national volleyball team," the national governing body of the sport said in a statement. "We pray to Almighty God to grant him eternal mercy and forgiveness, and to bestow pa-

# Iranian volleyball star Saber Kazemi dies aged 26

tience and strength upon his family and loved ones."

The exact cause of the incident remains unclear. Initial reports pointed to electrocution in the water, but his club Al Rayyan suggested the possibility of a cardiac issue. Another theory later emerged, claiming he had suffered muscle cramps in the water, though this was denied a few days later by the Iranian Volleyball Federation and his attending doctors.

Born in Aq Qala, northeastern Iran, Kazemi made his international debut at the 2018 Volleyball Nations League. He was a two-time gold med-

alist at the Asian Games in 2018 and 2023, and was named Most Valuable Player of the tournament when Iran won the Asian Championship title in 2021. Kazemi also represented the national team at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and was part of the silver-winning squad at the 2023 Asian Championship in Urmia, Iran. A former player of Turkey's Ziraat Bankası SK and Qatar's Al Arabi, Kazemi delivered an MVP performance to lead Foolad Sirjan to the Asian Club Championship title in 2021.



FIVB

## Islamic Solidarity Games:

# Iran coach Sahmsaei laments refereeing decisions after Morocco draw



Iran's Salar Aqapour (8) challenges Morocco's Soufian Charraoui for the ball during a futsal match at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 4, 2025. [isg-2025.com](#)

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Vahid Shamsaei hit out at the referee's controversial decisions after his team played to a 2-2 draw against Morocco in Group B of futsal event at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday.

In a rematch of last year's World Cup last-16 clash, which Morocco won 4-3, Mahdi Karimi finished off a well-worked counterattack to put Iran ahead with seven minutes remaining in the first half, only to see his goal canceled out by Bilal Bakkali two minutes later.

Karimi restored Iran's lead four minutes into the second half, smashing the rebound into the roof of the net after Saeid Ahmadabbasi's free kick had been kept out

by Moroccan goalkeeper Youssef Bensellam.

Morocco pushed hard for a second equalizer and its power play paid off in the closing stages as Soufian Charraoui brought the African champion level in the 39th minute.

"It was a beautiful, high-quality game of futsal between two top-tier teams in world. We should have been more focused in the final minute, though I'm still really pleased with my players," Shamsaei said after the game.

"Morocco is an exceptional team with quality players and a top-notch coach. Just look at the list of the teams they have played over the past year – Argentina, Portugal, Spain – all among the best in the world. I really enjoyed watching their per-

formance in the victory over Spain a couple of weeks ago. "All of their players compete in top futsal leagues abroad, but we really made it tough for them today. Their head coach, Dguig Hicham, even admitted that after the game and wall full of praise for the Iranian team.

"I think the referee lacked the required quality to officiate a match of this caliber," said the Iranian futsal great, adding, "The ball clearly struck a Moroccan player's hand in the buildup to their second equalizer and the referee saw it. But that's part of the game – we'll put today's result behind us and keep fighting in the next two matches."

Shamsaei and his team will face Afghanistan today, followed by a game against

Tajikistan on Saturday.

Afghanistan defeated Tajikistan 9-5 earlier on Tuesday to sit atop the Group B table. "Afghanistan is a decent side. Their Iranian head coach [Majid Mortezaei] is a dear friend of mine and many of their players compete in the Iranian league. It's definitely going to be a tough game against them, who are one of our main rivals at the Asian Cup," Shamsaei said of Iran's next opponent.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan came from behind to beat Saudi Arabia 5-2 and move atop the Group A standings on goal difference, while Azerbaijan edged Libya 5-4.

The top two in each group will progress to the semi-finals with the gold-medal match set to be staged on Tuesday.

## Iranian women fall to Azerbaijan in ISG volleyball opener

## Sports Desk

Iran got off to a losing start in the women's volleyball event of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, suffering a straight-set defeat against Azerbaijan on Tuesday.

The Iranian girls were caught off guard in the opening two sets, losing 25-11 and 25-16, before South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee made several changes for the third set. A different lineup paid off as Iran went toe-to-toe with the European opponent but ulti-

mately lost 26-24.

Featuring five teams – Türkiye, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan – the women's volleyball event in Riyadh is being held in a round-robin format until Wednesday, before the top two teams set to square off for the gold medal the following day. Iran will face volleyball powerhouse Türkiye today, before meeting Afghanistan and Tajikistan on Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively. Türkiye made quick work of Afghanistan later on Wednesday, coming victorious in straight sets (25-3, 25-4, 25-3).



volleyball.ir

## AFC Champions League Two:

# Navidkia rues missed chances as Sepahan held by 10-man Ahal

## Sports Desk

Sepahan head coach Moharram Navidkia was frustrated with the number of chances by his players after the Iranian top-flight side was held to a 2-2 home draw against Ahal FC of Turkmenistan in Group C of the AFC Champions League Two in Isfahan on Tuesday.

Sepahan dominated from the start and took the lead in the ninth minute, as Arash Rezavand slotted home Arya Yousefi's cut-back from inside the box.

The visitors found an equalizer against the run of play in the 27th minute when Alibek Abdurahamanov intercepted a poor cross-field pass and surged forward before playing the ball to Suleyman Mirzoyev for an easy tap-in.

Ahal took a surprise lead through Bagtyyar Gurgenov's header in the 62nd minute, but was reduced to 10 men three minutes later after Azat Rahmanov was sent off for a sec-



Sepahan's Mohammad Askari (17) celebrates after scoring the equalizer during a 2-2 draw against Ahal FC at the AFC Champions League Two in Isfahan, Iran, on November 4, 2025. [sepahansc.com](#)

ond bookable offence.

Despite the one-man advantage, Sepahan had to wait until the seventh minute of added time to find an equalizer, thanks to Mohammad Askari's side-footed volley from Yousefi's cross.

"The match became complicated for us just like the reverse fix-

ture. We had decent chances to finish the game with more goals in our favor, but unfortunately, we made a couple of costly mistakes," Navidkia said after the game.

"I think they had just two clear-cut chances" "I think they had only two clear-cut chances – one of them gifted by our

mistake – and converted both. Despite all our efforts and the numerous chances we created, we were unable to score, even when the opposition handed us opportunities with errors of their own," added the Iranian, whose team is now second in the three-team Group C table with four points – two adrift of Jordanian champion Al Hussein. "The only positive for me from this match was that the team fought until the final whistle to create chances. Overall, however, it was a disappointing night for us.

"Some might say the team played well, but that is of no consolation. In football, you have to win. Sometimes football produces strange results, and this was one of those bizarre nights," Navidkia said.

"I apologize to our fans. The responsibility for this lies entirely with me, and perhaps I failed to prepare my team mentally and psychologically.

Ultimately, we dropped points in a very damaging way, and that is extremely difficult for me to accept."

Sepahan will host Al Hussein at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium in its final group outing on November 25.



# Maranjab Caravanserai battles sand, time



● archilearn.net

### Iranica Desk

Amid the silent and breathtaking expanse of the Maranjab Desert in Isfahan Province, the Maranjab Caravanserai still stands — a historic structure that once provided refuge for caravans and now attracts nature enthusiasts and researchers alike. Yet this iconic site faces serious challenges: wind erosion and dust storms, advancing sand dunes, uncontrolled tourist pressure, limited restoration budgets, and weak management structures have left the caravanserai's future uncertain. The Maranjab Caravanserai is a classic example of Iranian roadside caravanserai architecture, strategically located on the desert's edge. It once provided vital shelter and supplies for traveling caravans. Its traditional design — featuring

a central courtyard, chambers, corridors, thick walls to moderate temperature fluctuations, and enclosed layouts to protect against sandstorms — reflects the unique needs of desert regions, [mehrnews.com](#) reported. In recent decades, cultural heritage experts and environmental activists have raised alarms about the site's preservation. Wind erosion and encroaching sand dunes are the primary environmental threats; shifting sands put pressure on the foundation and obscure the visual integrity of the structure, ultimately damaging the building. In many desert caravanserais, accumulated sand and dust block access routes and increase localized moisture around the foundations, which can lead to cracks and eventual collapse of walls. Another significant threat comes from unregulated tour-

ist activity. Insufficient guidance and infrastructure for managing visitor access have exacerbated pressures on the site. Heavy vehicles near the caravanserai, littering, unsupervised overnight stays, lighting fires, and graffiti on the walls have all contributed to cultural degradation. Additionally, climate change and rising local temperatures must be considered. Altered rainfall patterns and more frequent extreme weather events can accelerate erosion and further threaten the structure. Experts recommend developing a comprehensive restoration and management plan. This should include continuous structural monitoring, regulated tourist pathways, installation of signage, local supervision, and the definition of sustainable cultural and economic uses. Involving the private sector and local communities through employ-

ment-generating, responsible tourism projects can generate revenue while fostering preservation incentives. Securing national funding and access to restoration resources is also essential to prevent further deterioration. The Maranjab Caravanserai has already undergone restoration by the Fund for the Revitalization and Utilization of Historical and Cultural Sites and has been transferred to private management. UNESCO recognized the Maranjab Caravanserai, along with 53 other historic caravanserais across 24 provinces, under the "Iranian Caravanserais" listing, making it Iran's 27th UNESCO World Heritage Site. Preserving the Maranjab Caravanserai is not only about safeguarding a single historic building; it is about maintaining a connection to centuries of desert life, commerce, and

human ingenuity. Each stone, chamber, and courtyard tells a story of travelers braving harsh conditions, of caravans carrying goods across Iran's vast deserts, and of communities that relied on these waystations for survival and cultural exchange. Losing such a site would mean erasing a tangible link to this rich history. Experts argue that the caravanserai could also serve as a model for sustainable heritage tourism in desert environments. By integrating educational programs, guided tours, and cultural workshops, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the desert ecosystem, the history of trade routes, and the architectural genius of Iranian caravanserais. This approach not only enriches the visitor experience but also reinforces the importance of preservation as a shared responsibility.

Local communities have a pivotal role to play in the future of the Maranjab Caravanserai. Their participation in stewardship, guided tourism, and cultural programming ensures that economic benefits are reinvested locally, creating incentives for protection and maintenance. At the same time, careful planning can mitigate the impact of visitors, balancing access with conservation. Ultimately, the story of the Maranjab Caravanserai is one of resilience and opportunity. It stands as a silent sentinel in the desert, reminding us that history, nature, and human endeavor are deeply intertwined. By embracing responsible tourism, strategic restoration, and community engagement, this extraordinary site can continue to tell its story for generations to come — a timeless emblem of Iran's desert heritage standing firm against the relentless sands of time.

## Regional Museum of Southeast Iran rejuvenates ancient civilization

### Iranica Desk

The Regional Museum of Southeast Iran, one of the country's most significant cultural institutions, stands as a testament to the rich history and heritage of Sistan and Baluchestan Province. Located in Zahedan, the museum offers visitors an extraordinary journey through millennia of human civilization on the Iranian Plateau — from prehistoric settlements to the Islamic era. The museum's vast collection, the result of decades of archaeological research by Iranian and international experts, includes artifacts unearthed from renowned sites such as Shahr-e Sukhteh (the Burnt City), Bampur Mound, and Jiroft. Exhibits range from stone tools and ancient pottery to metalwork, jewelry, and manuscripts, each piece narrating the story of a civilization that was once at the crossroads of trade and culture. Beyond archaeology, the museum's anthropology section vividly portrays the customs, attire, handicrafts, and music of Sistan and Baluchestan's diverse communities, offering an authentic glimpse into the living traditions of the region, [mehrnews.com](#) wrote. According to Mojtaba Sa'adatian, Deputy Head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization for Cultural Heritage, the museum's foundation was laid in 1975 and it officially



opened in 2011. Covering more than 19,000 square meters across five floors, it is recognized as Iran's first regional museum designed to highlight the history, civilization, and ecology of the southeast. Sa'adatian noted that the museum's unique architectural design draws inspiration from the

province's historic fortresses, such as Suran Castle and Khajeh Mountain. Visitors ascend a gently sloped 500-meter ramp that guides them through a sequence of galleries showcasing the evolution of southeastern Iran's culture and history. He added that the museum's active departments — in-



● MIZAN/PEYMAN HAMIDIPOUR

cluding research, restoration workshops, and specialized exhibitions — collectively work to safeguard and present the cultural treasures of the region. Among the standout exhibits are the world's oldest artificial eye discovered at Shahr-e Sukhteh, ancient surgical instruments, prehistoric textiles,

and intricate beadwork reflecting the region's scientific and artistic legacy. The museum also houses a specialized library and research center, providing valuable resources for students and scholars exploring Iran's ancient civilizations. Mohammad Ali Ebrahimi, Di-

rector of the Regional Museum of Southeast Iran, highlighted the province's exceptional archaeological wealth, calling it one of the most significant ancient regions in the country. Over 2,000 artifacts are on display, including seals, figurines, pottery, and bone tools from Shahr-e Sukhteh, some dating back more than 5,000 years. He noted that among the most remarkable items are clay pipes from Shahr-e Sukhteh's early sewage system — evidence of sophisticated urban engineering — and artifacts from Jiroft and Shahdad, dating back 8,000 to 9,000 years, reflecting the artistry and innovation of early Iranian civilizations. Complementing these ancient treasures are Qajar-era coffeehouse paintings, coins from the Parthian to Saffarid dynasties, and precious manuscripts such as an illustrated Shahnameh and a handwritten calendar from the early Islamic centuries. The museum also features a statue of Rostam, the mythical Persian hero, alongside busts of prominent cultural figures from Sistan and Baluchestan. Ebrahimi emphasized that the Regional Museum of Southeast Iran is far more than a repository of the past. It serves as a vibrant center for research, education, and cultural dialogue — a living museum that connects visitors to the deep and enduring roots of Iranian civilization.





# Rumi-inspired Persian calligraphy on display in Turkey's Trabzon

## Arts & Culture Desk

An exhibition showcasing the works of Iranian calligraphers, inspired by the mystical poetry of Rumi, has opened at the Hamamizade Ihsan Bey Cultural Centre in Trabzon, Turkey. The display, organized by the art department of Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR) in cooperation with the Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkey, the Iranian Consulate-General in Trabzon and the Municipality of Trabzon, is held as part of the ongoing 2025 Iran-Turkey Cultural Year.

The opening ceremony took place on Tuesday November 4 and was attended by Ahmet Metin Genc, Mayor of Trabzon; Naser Mohabbati, Consul-General of Iran in Trabzon; Adnan Tas, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Trabzon; regional mayors, the head of the House of Arts in Trabzon and Alireza Behboudi, Deputy Cultural Attaché of Iran in Turkey, representing the ACECR.

Over a period of three days, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, the exhibition invites art and culture enthusiasts to

*An exhibition of Iranian calligraphy works is held in the city of Trabzon, Turkey, from November 4 to 6, 2025.*

● IRNA

view 40 selected pieces created by graduates of the center's short-term specialized training program. The exhibited artworks span a range of styles, including Nastaliq, Shekasteh- Nastaliq, Siyah Mashq calligraphy, as well as miniature painting and Tazhib, and were produced under the artistic consultancy of Hamid Reza Jamshidi over more than six months.

These works have already been shown in Ankara and Istanbul, and the current presentation in Trabzon is being supported by the International Al-Huda International Institute for Culture and Arts with the aim of promoting Iranian cultural-art heritage internationally, promoting cultural economy, facilitating the sale of Iranian artists' works abroad and enhancing cultural exchange between Iran and Turkey.

The Hamamizade Ihsan Bey Cultural Centre is located in



the Iskender Pasa neighborhood of Trabzon and features a 600-square-metre exhibition

hall among other facilities. This exhibition contributes to the broader objectives of

the 2025 Iran-Turkey Cultural Year, which both nations have declared to deepen cultural,

artistic and civilizational ties, leveraging shared heritage and contemporary collaboration.

## Tallinn, Goa film festivals host Iran's 'Almond Eyes'

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian feature film *Almond Eyes* (internationally titled *K-Popper*), directed by Ebrahim Amini and produced by Sajad Nasrollahi-Nasab, has secured invitations to two prominent international festivals. Firstly, it will be presented in the "Just Film" section of the 29th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in Estonia, one of the world's A-list, FIAPF-accredited festivals.

In addition, "*Almond Eyes*" has been selected for the competitive section of the annual International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa, where it will vie

for the prestigious ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal, an award dedicated to films promoting peace, tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

The film was previously showcased at major festivals including Kazan International Film Festival in Russia, where it won three awards (Best Director, Best Actress, NET-PAC Award), and the Eurasia International Film Festival in Kazakhstan, where it received a Special Jury Prize.

*Almond Eyes* tells the story of Maedeh, a 16-year-old girl from Shiraz who falls in love with a Korean pop singer and decides to travel to Seoul. The film stars Sareh Bayat, Setayesh



Dehghan, Mehdi Hashemi, Ali Bagheri, and debutants Hussein Ramah and child-actor Mahoor Sadeq Ali. Its international distribution is handled by the domestic company Shahre-Farang, and the domestic release by Seventh Art Institute.

## 'She's Not Here' to feature at Italy's Terni, Napoli festivals

### Arts & Culture Desk

The 14-minute Iranian short film "*She's Not Here*", written and directed by Saeid Siri and starring Sara Mayli and Alireza Gilouri, has been selected to screen in two Italian festivals as part of its 11th and 12th international outings.

First, it will participate in the 21st edition of the Popoli e Religioni Terni Film Festival, held in Terni from November 8 to 16, under the theme "The New World – Si vis Pacem, para Pacem (If you want peace, prepare for peace)". The festival focuses on issues such as spirituality, interreligious dialogue, migration and social justice in contemporary cinema.

Following that, the film will also screen at the 22nd edition of the DI-SACCORDI International Short Film Festival in Naples, from November 3 to 9.

The festival promotes emerging filmmakers and independent short films across fiction, documentary, animation and experimental formats.



"*She's Not Here*" tells the story of Kiana, a nine-year-old girl who suffers deep psychological trauma following an incident and then discovers that her drawing notebook possesses a magical power capable of altering her surroundings.

The short film had previously received the Best Director award at the 15th edition of the Iceland's Pageant Film Festival and was also recognized as the Best and Most Impactful Film at the Hecare Festival in Canada.

## Iranian film, animation to vie at Rabat Int'l Film Festival in Morocco

### Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian productions, the feature film "*Without Permission*" by Hassan Nazer and the animated series "*The Camel and the Miller*" by Abdollah Alimorad, have been selected to take part in the 30th Rabat International Author Film Festival in Morocco.

The Iranian-British co-production "*Without Permission*" has been invited

to the festival's main competition section. The film was previously screened in competition at the Busan International Film Festival in South Korea.

Behrouz Sebt Rasoul, best known as a director, takes on the lead role in the work, with cinematography by Ali Mohammad Ghasemi. The film tells a poetic and contemplative story of an Iranian filmmaker returning to his homeland. Seeking a new language to express his

thoughts and artistic concerns, he begins working with children, embarking on a deeply personal journey that celebrates imagination and self-expression in the younger generation. Global distribution for "*Without Permission*" is handled by the French company DreamLab Films, headed by Nasrin Mirshab.

Meanwhile, "*The Camel and the Miller*", an animated anthology directed by vet-

eran animator Abdollah Alimorad, will be screened in the festival's children's section. Produced by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), the collection includes three short films — *The Substitute*, *White Wings*, and *The Farmer and the Robot*.

The series was first unveiled at the film market of the 75th Cannes Film Festival and later enjoyed a public release

in France. It has since been shown at several major festivals in Morocco, including the 21st Meknes International Animation Film Festival (2022), the Morocco International Film Festival "Cinema for Teenagers" (2023), and the third Casablanca Independent Film Festival (2025).

The 30th Rabat International Auteurs Film Festival will run from November 7 to 15 in Morocco.