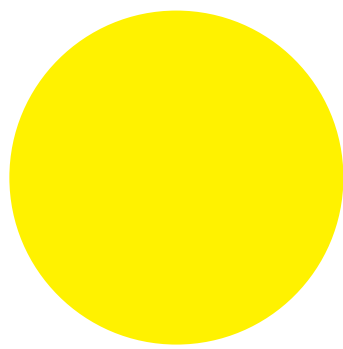


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a meeting with a group of political activists of Qazvin while visiting the city on November 20, 2025.
● president.ir

Change of mediator won't break deadlock between Iran, US

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



Talks between Iran and the United States have traditionally taken shape either through third-party mediation or within multilateral frameworks. Now, with discussions after the 12-day war waged by Israel against Iran hitting a stalemate and former mediators losing their ability to move the needle, Saudi Arabia appears to be stepping in as a new player. The Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman has recently told US President Donald Trump that Riyadh stands ready to help facilitate dialogue between Tehran and Washington. Iran, however, has stressed that its communication channels with the US still run through its traditional mediators, Oman and Qatar. Unlike its predecessors, Saudi Arabia lacks balanced relations with both Tehran and Washington, a gap that inevitably casts a shadow over its potential role. International affairs analyst Abbas Aslani told Iran Daily that although the rise of a new mediator may look promising, it cannot play the savior given the fundamental rifts between Tehran and Washington.

IRAN DAILY: What capacities and limitations do Riyadh have in acting as a mediator, and how effective could its role be?

ASLANI: Saudi Arabia, as a heavyweight regional actor with ties to various influential states and major powers, does have a degree of potential to take on a mediating role. Its close relationship with the United States, highlighted by the recent meeting between bin Salman and Trump, also adds to that capacity. Beyond this, Riyadh's considerable economic resources could, in theory, provide an additional lever in exploring such a role.

But major limitations also come into play, creating real challenges. First, Saudi Arabia is an exceptionally close partner of the United States. During the crown prince's recent trip to Washington, it was even stated that Saudi Arabia is a major "non-NATO ally" of the US. This means the balance in Riyadh's foreign relations tilts heavily toward Washington, and such closeness may skew any mediation process.

Another structural obstacle arises from the long-standing regional rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Despite recent improvements, the two countries have traditionally competed over various regional issues. This raises an obvious question: can a country viewed, at least to some extent, as a rival truly step into the role of mediator?

Additional concerns include issues like the "Abraham Accords," which Iran views with sensitivity and which could further complicate the mediation landscape. Overall, the scales are anything but balanced. Riyadh's alignment with Washington remains too pronounced to allow for an impartial process.

Countries like Oman and Qatar, by contrast, have a track record of mediation. Oman, in particular, has been relatively successful at times, and Qatar has also played limited mediating roles in certain periods. Even if such efforts fail, they do not damage Tehran's relations with those capitals. Saudi Arabia, however, lacks this historical foundation. Moreover, although Saudi Arabia has economic strength, Iran-Saudi ties have historically centered more on regional matters and issues such as the Hajj. Even before the 1979 Revolution, bilateral trade never carried significant weight, meaning Riyadh has little economic leverage to draw on in a mediation role.



With Cyrus, world entered new epoch

One grounded in peace, reverence for cultural, faith diversity

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Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Athletics glory headlines Iran's medal-laden run on Day 13

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Iranian duo storm IDFA with twin top wins in Amsterdam

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Trump-MBS deal could disrupt Mideast balance of power



By Nader Entessar
International relations expert

OPINION

In the recent meeting between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and US President Donald Trump in Washington, several agreements were reached, including a one-trillion-dollar investment by Saudi Arabia in the United States, the sale of F-35 fighter jets to Riyadh, a defense pact between the two countries, and talks regarding the normalization of Saudi-Israeli relations. These agreements signal the deep-

ening of political, security and economic ties between Washington and Riyadh, and they have the potential to reshape the balance of power in the Middle East.

However, although bin Salman expressed readiness to mediate between Tehran and Washington, there was little indication that Iran's red lines had been taken into account.

Saudi Arabia has long placed the strengthening of security cooperation with the US at the top of its priorities, and Iran's red lines matter only insofar as they do not clash with the kingdom's interests, particularly its security ones.

What Saudi Arabia prioritizes is reinforcing cooperation with the United States to position its capital as the region's leading power. If the promises Trump made to bin Salman are implemented not remain only at the level of words, they will have a negative impact on Iran's balance of power in the Middle East. This comes at a time when relations between Tehran and Washington, despite constant fluctuation and the difficulty of predicting their future, can be described as being at their lowest point since the establishment of the Islamic Republic. The 12-day war launched by Israel against Iran in June, which the United

States also joined, has effectively disrupted the negotiation process, and a return to diplomacy now appears almost unlikely.

The only circumstances under which such a process could succeed would be if both sides believed in it. In Trump's political culture, diplomacy has been turned into an instrument of bullying, threats and coarse language. Within such a framework, a return to what is erroneously labelled diplomacy today — and which is far removed from classical diplomacy — would only be achievable through the capitulation of one side, namely Iran.

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Tehran decries IAEA's 'illegal' resolution, vows countermeasures

Araghchi: Cairo agreement 'killed' by US, E3

International Desk

Iran strongly condemned as "illegal and unjustified" the anti-Iranian resolution adopted by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), saying it is considering countermeasure against the resolution.

The IAEA's Board of Governors on Thursday narrowly approved the resolution drafted by the European Troika – France, Germany and the UK – and the United States – passing 19-3 with 12 abstentions – that urges Tehran to "without delay" report on its enriched uranium stockpile and facilities damaged in the June aggression by Israel and the US, while omitting any mention of Iran's longstanding cooperation with the agency.

In a statement, Iran's Foreign Ministry said that the move also proves that the US and the European Troika are bent on misusing the agency to mount pressure on Iran.

The ministry said the resolution was rejected by about half of the IAEA members, including two permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The ministry said that the resolution violates the fundamental principles of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which grants member states the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The ministry said the resolu-

tion even failed to admit that direct military aggression by the US and Israel was the reason why the agency's inspections in Iran came to a halt.

It emphasized that Iran has never tried to make nuclear weapons, stressing that Israel and its nuclear arsenal pose the main threat to international peace and security.

The ministry concluded by making it clear that it will spare no effort to safeguard the rights and interests of the Iranian nation regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

West seeks 'escalation'

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a post on X on Friday said that E3 and the US seek escalation despite Iran's measures to cooperate with the IAEA as a goodwill gesture to resolve the nuclear standoff with the West.

"Like the diplomacy which was assaulted by Israel and the US in June, the Cairo Agreement has been killed by the US and the E3," Araghchi said.

Citing their measures against Iran in recent months, including strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, reimposition of international sanctions as well as the Thursday's resolution at the IAEA, the Iranian foreign minister said, "Clear for all to see: Iran is not the party that seeks to manufacture another crisis. Nor is our good will appreciated. Given that the E3 and the

US seek escalation, they know full well that the official termination of the Cairo Agreement is the direct outcome of their provocations."

The Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on Friday that Iran is considering countermeasures against the resolution.

"In an official letter to the Agency, we declared that the so-called Cairo agreement – which had been reached with Iran's goodwill and after relatively long negotiations with the agency – is now canceled. Other measures are also under consideration," Baqaei said.

Before the Cairo agreement, Iran had suspended cooperation with the agency following the deadly US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June.

Baqaei also condemned the IAEA's resolution as a "blatant misuse of the international body" to advance the objectives of the US and the three European countries about Iran's nuclear issue.

Russia, China, Pakistan oppose resolution

Russia and China rebuked the resolution on Friday, calling for the settlement of the Islamic Republic's nuclear issue through dialogue and cooperation.

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that Russia continues to firmly emphasize finding po-



People arrive for the quarterly Board of Governors meeting at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on November 19, 2025.
● ELISABETH MANDL/REUTERS

litical and diplomatic solutions to the issue of Iran's nuclear program.

The spokeswoman added that Moscow has repeatedly warned about the dangers of "military actions" that threaten the stability and security of West Asia, underlining that any military attack on nuclear facilities, especially those under the monitoring of the IAEA, is "unacceptable."

Zakharova further underlined that the West must put aside threats of sanctions and military threats and return to diplomacy with Iran.

Li Song, China's permanent representative to the IAEA,

told the Board of Governors on Thursday that pushing through a counterproductive resolution against Iran will "only make things worse," stressing that the US, Israel, and key European states are fueling the ongoing crisis surrounding Tehran's nuclear file.

"Countries that have recklessly resorted to the use of force and obsessively pursued confrontation and pressure are responsible for the current situation of the Iranian nuclear issue," Li said.

The Chinese envoy stressed that Israel and the United States attacked Iranian nuclear facilities safeguarded by

the IAEA in June, which led to a "fundamental change in the situation of the Iranian nuclear issue."

"Such an act should be strongly condemned by the international community and the IAEA," he said.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Foreign Ministry's spokesperson emphasized his country's principled position in opposing the escalating and anti-diplomatic actions regarding Iran's nuclear issue, saying that Islamabad supports Tehran's right to enrich uranium, the revival of the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Iran scolds Canada for 'posturing' as rights champion

International Desk

Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in a statement condemned Canada for posturing as a global champion of human rights, saying it should be put on trial over its history of systemic racism against the country's Indigenous people.

Canada on Thursday has welcomed the adoption of an anti-Iran rights resolution it had drafted at the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues) of the UN General Assembly.

"Spare us the sanctimonious drivel from Canada – a country with a well-documented history of thousands of Indigenous children dumped in unmarked graves, still steeped in its own entrenched structural racism – now posturing as a global champion of human rights vis-à-vis Iran," it said. The mission also noted that Canada would have stood trial if human rights had not been misused as a tool for political pressure.



Gholamhossein Darzi

"Had 'human rights' not been hijacked as a geopolitical cudgel by the usual club of serial offenders, Canada would have been the one in the dock, sweating under resolutions, not swaggering upon the stage!"

The UN's Third Committee on Wednesday approved the draft resolution titled "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran" by a vote of 79 in favor to 28 against, with 63 abstentions. Speaking prior to the vote, Iran's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Gholamhossein Darzi rejected the "politically motivated, selective,

and wholly counterproductive" resolution.

He said that the allegations against Iran contained in the document are based on "unverified and selectively interpreted information."

The resolution disregards Iran's human rights achievements, as well as its efforts towards advancing socio-economic development and strengthening legal protections in accordance with constitutional and international obligations, he added.

The envoy further criticized the resolution for failing to condemn the flagrant violations of international law committed by the Israeli regime and the United States during their 12-day military aggression against Iran in June.

The drafters, Darzi emphasized, deliberately omitted any reference in the text to the profoundly harmful and negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures with respect to the human rights of the Iranian nation.

Envoy: Pezeshkian's message to Saudi crown prince focused on ties, Hajj

International Desk

Iran's ambassador to Saudi Arabia said a recent message sent by President Masoud Pezeshkian to the Saudi crown prince was about bilateral relations and Hajj pilgrimage, rejecting media speculations about Iran's efforts to revive talks with the United States. Alireza Enayati said Pezeshkian sent a letter to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud on Tuesday to appreciate the facilities and services provided to Iranian pilgrims, especially during Israel's aggression against Iran in June, and emphasized the expansion of relations between the two countries.

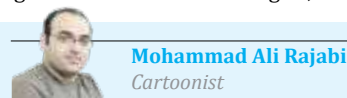
Enayati's comments came after Reuters on Thursday claimed that Iran's president in his letter had asked Saudi Arabia to persuade the US to revive stalled nuclear talks a day before bin Salman's visit to the White House earlier this week.

Citing sources in the West Asia region, Reuters

claimed that Pezeshkian in the letter had said Iran "does not seek confrontation," wants deeper regional cooperation and remains "open to resolving the nuclear dispute through diplomacy, provided its rights are guaranteed."

Earlier on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei had also said that Pezeshkian's message to the Saudi crown prince was "purely bilateral." Reuters claimed that one of the sources in the Persian Gulf said Iran is seeking a channel to reopen talks with Washington, and that the de facto Saudi leader also favors a peaceful solution and conveyed that message to US President Donald Trump during his visit.

"MbS (crown prince) also wants this conflict to be over peacefully. This is important to him, and he relayed this to Trump and said he is ready to help," the source said. On Tuesday, the Saudi ruler told reporters, "We will do our best to help reach a deal between the United States and Iran."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Trump-MBS deal ...

In the meantime, pressure continues on Iran through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The UN nuclear watchdog deems Iran's post-war cooperation insufficient under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and Western states have used this as a pretext to submit and pass a resolution against Iran at the IAEA Board

of Governors. As long as Iran has not suspended its membership in the NPT and the IAEA, it is legally obliged to implement all safeguards provisions and cannot bargain its way out of full cooperation with the agency. IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi is fully aware of this and knows that Tehran has no option but to comply with his requests regarding over-

sight of its nuclear program. This is why Grossi continually talks tough to Iran. It is Iran that must now decide whether remaining within the agency and its safeguards regime serves its long-term interests, or whether it should consider leaving an organization that has not only failed to provide any benefit but has limited itself to issuing statements and threats.

President pledges staunch support for domestic industry, production

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the government is determined “to remove barriers to production” and push the country forward with dignity and confidence, stressing strong coordination among the heads of the three branches of power to advance Iran’s development path.

Speaking at a meeting with investors and business leaders during a provincial trip to Qazvin Province, Pezeshkian said the government has “no limitations” when it comes to creating the conditions needed for industrial expansion, IRNA reported. He emphasized that sustained, direct dialogue between the administration and the country’s economic sectors is essential, noting that the government has introduced a structured plan for monthly consultations with chambers of commerce, entrepreneurs, and representatives from industrial and petrochemical fields. Two sessions have been held so far, Pezeshkian added.

These conversations, he said, are meant to identify obstacles in detail and find practical solutions so that relevant ministries can work directly with producers to remove bottlenecks and implement agreed measures. Pezeshkian said economic actors play a central role in the national economy and that the government “never sees itself as a competitor to the private sector,” stressing that Iran’s governance system is built to serve those driving production and investment.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a meeting with investors and business leaders during a provincial trip to Qazvin Province, on November 20, 2025. president.ir

He said the state’s role is to provide security, a predictable regulatory environment and better investment conditions so private-sector operators can function with confidence, enabling the country to grow.

Shift from oil dependence to industrial growth

He added that years of reliance on oil revenues had diverted sectors from their core mission, leading many to finance their expenditures through crude sales rather than domestic industry and production.

“With oil sales now facing constraints and difficulties, the need to return to a production-based path and support domestic industry is clearer than ever,” he said. If managerial mindsets are reformed and the ground is prepared for industrialists, producers and investors, “sanctions will lose their effectiveness.”

Iran has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear activities, pressure that has weighed most heavily on its oil and energy sectors.

On energy policy, Pezeshkian said Iran is adopting a “fresh approach,” calling for full use of the country’s solar potential.

“We should no longer rely solely on oil, gas and gasoline,” he said. “The sun is a constant and clean source placed at humanity’s



disposal and can support Iran’s energy future.”

He said cooperation across institutions would accelerate the installation of solar panels in Qazvin and nationwide to ensure sustainable energy and strengthen domestic production.

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 president also highlighted the importance of Qazvin’s water recycling initiative, calling it a strategic project that can help address water scarcity and improve efficiency.

New projects rolled out

On Thursday, two major infra-

structure and investment agreements were signed: one for the Talaqan-to-Qazvin drinking water transfer project to support long-term water security, and another for the first phase of the Nasim Salamat medical tourism complex aimed at attracting investment and expanding health tourism in the region.

In addition, Phase II of a de-

tergent powder project and a seamless steel pipe production project in the Khoramdasht industrial zone were inaugurated, marking a boost for the northern province’s industrial supply chain.

Pezeshkian also launched 4,972 National Housing units online, a move intended to accelerate homeownership for residents of Qazvin Province.

Iran’s aquatic exports top \$500m, reach 61 countries: *Union chief*

By Javad Mohammad Ali
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iran exported 202,000 tons of fishery products to 61 countries across the globe in the last Iranian calendar year starting March 21, 2024, with a total value exceeding \$500 million when aquafeed is included, according to Ali Akbar Khodaei, the secretary-general of Aquatics’ Production and Trade Union of Iran. Khodaei told Iran Daily that Iran’s seafood shipments — covering marine species; fish whose meat is considered haram (forbidden) under Islamic law, such as horse mackerel and cuttlefish; warm-water species like carp; cold-water species such as trout; as well as dried fish, canned tuna, caviar and ornamental fish — reached 202,000 tons last year. Based on customs benchmark prices, the value of these goods stood at \$401 million, but “if the value of exported aquafeed is added, the to-



Ali Akbar Khodaei

tal exceeds \$500 million.” A comparison with the previous two years highlights steady growth. Two years ago, Iran exported 153,000 tons of aquatics (excluding feed) worth \$326 million. In aquafeed — including feed, supplements and fishmeal — exports jumped from 53,000 tons valued at \$45 million two years ago to 114,000 tons worth \$96 million last year. Khodaei said the aquafeed industry has “significant capacity to meet domestic demand and supply various export markets.” Marine species, particu-

larly “haram meat” fish typically sold to non-Muslim countries, account for the bulk of total fishery exports, followed by shrimp, carp, trout, dried fish, caviar and canned tuna. In the first half of the current Iranian year, which began March 21, 2025, Iran exported 84,000 tons of fishery products valued at \$208 million, slightly above the 82,000 tons worth about \$198 million shipped in the same period last year. Export momentum usually accelerates in the second half of the year, he said.

Marine and “haram meat” species again led first-half exports, generating \$82 million. Shrimp exports were valued at \$28 million, canned tuna at \$12 million, carp and other warm-water fish at around \$10 million and trout at \$2.5 million and caviar at \$2 million.

Export destinations

According to the official, Iranian caviar is exported to more than 30 countries, shrimp to 17 countries, and marine and “haram meat” fish to around 15 countries across East and Southeast Asia. “Iran exports aquatic products to all neighboring countries,” Khodaei said.

Overall, Iranian aquatic products reach 61 global markets. Some buyers, such as the Netherlands and Germany, import only caviar, while others — notably Turkey — purchase “all products and even their aquafeed from Iran.” China mainly buys shrimp and marine fish, Russia imports trout and shrimp, and neighboring countries show stronger demand for trout and carp, he said.

METAFO draws 700+ firms from 13 countries, depicts industry breadth: *Minister*

Economy Desk

The 22nd Iran Metallurgy Expo opened in Tehran with 723 companies participating from 13 countries, with Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak saying that the turnout “reflects the breadth and diversity of the metallurgy and mining industry in the country.”

The Iran METAFO opened Thursday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds with 723 participating companies, including 610 domestic and 113 foreign firms from 13 countries. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Atabak described the event as “one of the most active and reputable exhibitions in the country,” IRNA reported.

The exhibition features the latest achievements, products, equipment, and innovations across iron and steel, casting and mold-making, non-ferrous metals,



Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak (3rd from left) poses for a photo with other officials at the opening ceremony of the 22nd Iran Metallurgy Expo in Tehran on November 20, 2025. [IRNA](http://irna.ir)

mining and mineral industries, furnaces, refractory materials, and industrial ceramics.

The event provides a platform for exchanging experiences, introducing new technologies, and fostering industrial cooperation at national and regional levels.

Atabak noted that attendance this year has improved compared to previous editions, with both the number of participants and quality of exhibits rising, allowing visitors to see notable developments. Foreign participants in this year’s event include companies from

Malaysia, Italy, China, Turkey, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil, Sweden, India, South Africa, Spain, and Austria. The 22nd Iran International Metallurgy Exhibition will continue through Sunday at Tehran’s Permanent International Fairgrounds, welcoming industry professionals, enthusiasts, and specialists.

With Cyrus, world entered new epoch

One grounded in peace, reverence for cultural, faith diversity



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Charter of Cyrus the Great was officially recognized on November 6, 2025, as the most ancient written document of human rights in the world and was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in the city of Samarkand. This event possesses profound significance not solely for Iran but for all individuals across the world who believe in the values of justice, peace, and esteem for cultural diversity.

The Cyrus Charter, a clay cylinder inscribed more than 2,500 years ago, presents a humane conception of authority and sovereignty; an authority grounded in sagacity, cultural tolerance, and the abstention from bloodshed.

The Cyrus Charter reminds us that in a tumultuous world, a monarch from ancient Iran addressed a conquered nation with a language of peace and respect and issued an edict concerning the preservation of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and of human values.

The states present at the UNESCO General Conference, through their extensive consensus regarding the inscription of the Cyrus Charter on the UNESCO World Heritage List, described the Charter as “a foundational document in the history of human civilization” and “the first written manifestation of principles such as freedom, justice, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity”; a document that, for 25 centuries, has served as a herald of human dignity, respect for cultural diversity, and peaceful coexistence.

At a time when the contemporary world confronts escalating crises, racial, religious, and doctrinal conflicts, and the attenuation of human rights values, the restoration of the status of the Cyrus Charter as a symbol of human-centered conduct is not solely a historical necessity but summons statesmen and nations to a greater attentiveness toward human rights, freedom, and reverence for diverse beliefs. The global registration of the Cyrus Charter constitutes an authentication of the reality that the honor and grandeur of a civilization reside in its compassionate conduct and safeguarding of human dignity.

Iran Daily, regarding the recent inscription of the Cyrus Charter on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the reasons, necessity, and significance of this matter, conducted an exclusive interview with Abdolmahdi Hemmatpour, an archaeologist and expert in Iranology, architectural studies, and archaeology, the full text of which follows:



Abdolmahdi Hemmatpour



IRAN DAILY: As an archaeologist, first elucidate the Cyrus Charter itself, its mode of discovery, and its characteristics.

HEMMATPOUR: The Cyrus Charter is one of the significant treasures of Iran and the world and contains a message that constitutes a source of human pride, namely, that an empire as powerful as Iran, approximately 2,500 years ago, recorded a charter as a charter of liberty and human rights, which represents the opulent culture and the authentic and humane identity of Iran.

The discovery of the Cyrus Cylinder occurred approximately 150 years ago during archaeological excavations by Hormuzd Rassam at Tell Amran-ibn-Ali near one of the defensive walls of Babylon. The inscription of Cyrus, in the first instance, belongs to royal inscriptions; kings composed inscriptions to commemorate particular events such as victories in war.

The construction of cylinders as foundation inscriptions was customary in Mesopotamia, such that the cylinder containing the information of a structure was made either solid or hollow and then placed in the building's foundation, preserving the information like a time capsule; the Cylinder of Cyrus

is of the solid type. Cyrus left this cylinder as a document concerning the reconstruction of the Temple of Marduk; the text of this charter was written in the Babylonian language and in cuneiform script, of which approximately one-third has been lost. The text contains an account of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BCE and begins with a narrative attributed to Marduk, the Babylonian deity, concerning the crimes of Nabonidus, the last Chaldean king. It then offers a story of Marduk's search for a worthy ruler, his attribution of universal sovereignty to Cyrus, and Cyrus's agency in the bloodless conquest of Babylon.

In this text, Cyrus refers to the peaceful entry of his forces into Babylon in such a manner that no terror was instilled among the inhabitants. He states that during the seizure of Babylon, he sought the security of the city and all sacred sites, and how he liberated the people from the yoke of oppressive rulers and released them from their fetters and exhaustion. He also declares that he restored various peoples to their settlements.

Apart from the human rights elements already mentioned, to what extent is this Charter significant for understanding Cyrus himself?

Before the discovery of the Cyrus Charter, scholars possessed only two sources for understanding Cyrus: the sources of the Hebrew Bible and the classical Greek and Roman sources. After the discovery of this cylinder, researchers realized that they were encountering documents in which Cyrus speaks directly and in his own voice.

Royal inscriptions commence either in the third person or in the first person. Cyrus articulates the historical preface in the third person and then introduces himself in the first person. Lines 1–19 contain a historical prologue and discuss the role of Marduk with third-person verbs. Lines 20–22 concern the entrance of Cyrus and the presentation of his lineage with first-person pronouns; lines 22–34 refer to the proper conduct of Cyrus, the restoration of the city to its natural order, and



Photographers jostle each other to get a good shot of the Charter of Cyrus the Great during an exhibition in Tehran, Iran, on September 14, 2010.

● ISNA



Humanitarian individual and social ideals, such as assistance to human beings during illness and distress, constitute among the significant elements recorded in this decree. The conviction of Cyrus was grounded in equal rights, and with a reverence for humanity, he liberated slaves and returned them to their homelands. He declared that every human being possesses the right to determine matters pertaining to himself at a time when coercion and the imposition of beliefs constituted the method and pride of conquerors.



The illustration, made by Artificial intelligence (AI), visualizes the possible celebration that ensued the unveiling of the Charter of Cyrus the Great in Babylon after its peaceful surrender to the Achaemenid king.

● SOCIAL MEDIA



dominion. When Cyrus declares in this inscription that he entered Babylon with his forces without any war and bloodshed, it reveals his sagacious policy in that era, such that both friend and foe received him with open arms. The magnanimous conduct of Cyrus toward his former adversaries is significant. He treated women and children with virtue and humanity, not separating them from men or enslaving them.

Thus, the entrance of Cyrus into Babylon and the conquest of this land constituted a factor in the cultural unity of Mesopotamia and initiated a new chapter in the history of the Orient and the world. The entrance of Cyrus into Babylon marked the world's entry into a new epoch, and in truth, the proclamation of Cyrus in Babylon announced the end of the ancient epoch of the world and the beginning of another epoch known as the epoch of Cyrus. Humanitarian individual and social ideals, such as assistance to human beings during illness and distress, constitute among the significant elements recorded in this decree. The conviction of Cyrus was grounded in equal rights, and with a reverence for humanity, he liberated slaves and returned them to their homelands. He declared that every human being possesses the right to



determine matters pertaining to himself at a time when coercion and the imposition of beliefs constituted the method and pride of conquerors. According to historical testimonies, Cyrus abstained from bloodshed, treated captives benevolently, and did not impose his beliefs upon the subjugated. For this reason, Cyrus transcended the visage of a ruler and ascended to a paternal symbol.

How have Western observers regarded Cyrus, and why has his Charter been accepted as the first human rights charter in the world?

In Western histories, he is portrayed as a great sovereign. Historians have extolled him, describing him as munificent, benevolent, and a master legislator. Therefore,

the trajectory and edicts of this great Achaemenid monarch must be considered by the rulers of the world in the 21st century. In the Cyrus Cylinder, a record of the conquest of Babylon, history and myth are interwoven. Some have called it a human rights charter, although it does not directly mention human rights. Perhaps the reason is that it constitutes the oldest written document concerning justice and the observance of the rights of others, and it displays forbearance and lenience toward those with divergent beliefs.

This Charter is the earliest document concerning the formulation of legitimacy for Achaemenid political history and is written with great splendor. In every line of this cylinder, indications

of respect for human rights are evident — which constitute a source of pride for every Iranian — including respect for other religions, one of the most significant components of this tablet. Cyrus sent offerings appropriate to the temples of other religions and transmitted the message that although he was a monotheist, he esteemed the rights of other religions and respected their beliefs. This is precisely the matter that must be considered in the present era, for despite advancements in science and technology, the concern over the violation of the sanctity of various religions persists.

The Cyrus Charter is an emblem of the Iranian national progressiveness and thought, a manifestation of the toleration and forbearance of the Iranian people toward diverse religions and doctrines. The land of Iran constituted a place of tolerance toward the various religions and doctrines present in the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus the Achaemenid, through the organization of diverse social strata and cultural amalgamation, created a civilization whose persistence endured among Iranians for centuries. Furthermore, the concepts contained in the Cyrus Charter established a distinct political perspective toward other contemporary peoples.

Why is the inscription of the Cyrus Human Rights Charter on the UNESCO World Heritage List significant?

There are still individuals who have not read the text of the Cyrus Charter, and even if they have, they ignore it and close their eyes to the rights of other religions. But we Iranians, by observing our illustrious past, acknowledge that we have possessed and respected human rights since antiquity. The fact that in this age, diverse religions continue their existence in our country, cities, and neighborhoods with peace and tranquility constitutes evidence for this claim.

At this historical juncture, during the recent session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in the city of Samarkand, the Cyrus Charter was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, indicating that the thought contained in it is universal. Among its other significances, one may state that this Charter was published by the United Nations in 1971 in six principal world languages and that its replica is currently preserved at the United Nations, and moreover that the inscriptions of this clay tablet approximate the exalted doctrines of divine religions and guide human beings toward righteousness and virtue.



The replica of the Edict of Cyrus (Cyrus Cylinder), presented to the UN by Iran in October 1971, is mounted on a wooden base in a display case with English and French translations of the Edict.

● UN



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Is what is written on Cyrus Cylinder historically accurate?



By Majid Khaleghian
Researcher

ANALYSIS

Given that the Cyrus Cylinder is a royal and commemorative artifact — usually produced by the institutions of power — any researcher may reasonably ask: is what is written on the Cyrus Cylinder historically accurate, or is it just propaganda? This is a common challenge for many such artifacts. To investigate this question, we must consult other sources and evaluate them to reach a conclusion. Fortunately, we do have other sources that address the same event described in the Cyrus Cylinder — namely, the conquest of Babylon. These include Greek, Jewish, and other texts. Most importantly, however, we have neutral archaeological sources that were written around the time of Babylon's conquest. By examining these sources collectively, we find strong evidence confirming many claims of the Cyrus Cylinder — such as the peaceful capture of Babylon, Cyrus the Great's humane and compassionate behavior, and more.

This article will briefly refer to some of these sources and pieces of evidence.

The famous cylinder, written in the Babylonian style and known as the Cyrus Cylinder or Charter of Human Rights, provides information about the conquest of Babylon. The cylinder notably refers to the peaceful capture of Babylon by Cyrus and includes references to freeing individuals from forced labor. In general, the Cyrus Cylinder portrays Cyrus the Great's benevolent conduct toward the people of Babylon.

For instance, one passage in the cylinder states: “(And when) my vast army (entered) Babylon in peace, I (Cyrus) did not permit anyone to terrorize the people of Sumer and Akkad.” (Cyrus Cylinder, line 24)

Greek, Jewish sources on Cyrus's compassionate behavior

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One key text that recounts events from the time of Cyrus is the Nabonidus Chronicle. The section concerning the 17th year describes Cyrus's peaceful treatment of the people of Babylon: “When Cyrus spoke to Babylon with greetings, the city was in peace and security.” (Nabonidus Chronicle, Column III, line 19)

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respects from archaeological findings and he seems to have blended multiple historical events, some unrelated to Cyrus the Great, still mentions Cyrus's fair treatment of the people. He refers to Cyrus's remarks about treating the Babylonians well and more generally emphasizes Cyrus's kindness toward people. (See: Xenophon, Cyropaedia, Book 7, Section 5:47; Book 7, Section 5:76; Book 8, Section 7:37–38.)

Jewish sources also describe Cyrus in ways that are consistent with these reports. (See: The Book of

Isaiah, end of Chapter 44 and beginning of Chapter 45.)

This consistency across sources from different cultures shows that Cyrus's just and humane behavior was so well known in the ancient world that it was recorded in various traditions.

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Perhaps the most compelling evidence for historians is found in records related to daily life — documents that were not written to glorify rulers but to record transactions, contracts, and other practical matters. These sources are highly credible because their authors had no reason to distort reality — they were simply documenting everyday affairs such as sales and agreements. When such records show that life continued normally, it indicates peace and stability.

Dr. Shahrokh Razmjou, researcher at the British Museum and professor at the University of Tehran, who translated the original Babylonian text of the Cyrus Cylinder into Persian, highlighted this point during the Third Commemoration Conference of the Cyrus Cylinder in 2013: “We have other documents from Babylon — tablets and clay inscriptions.”

Displaying one of these tablets, Dr. Razmjou explained, “This tablet dates to just two days after the conquest of Babylon, when Cyrus himself had not yet entered the city, but the Persian army had taken control. It describes a transaction involving the exchange of sheep for a payment.”

This shows that even while Cyrus's troops were present in Babylon, the city's administrative system continued to operate normally. Dr. Razmjou added, “This tells us... that people were engaged in their normal lives. There is no sign of massacres or plundering. These documents had to be prepared in administrative offices, with witnesses present to confirm and sign them. We have a collection of such tablets from the days following the fall of Babylon, showing that everything was functioning as usual.”

Considering the evidence, we can conclude that not only do diverse historical sources from different cultures confirm the Cyrus Cylinder, but contemporary archaeological artifacts related to everyday life also support its claims. Such corroboration is rare for many historical events across the ages, which are often known only through written texts.

The Cyrus Cylinder is seen from the back, during installation at the Getty Villa, Los Angeles, California, United States.

● THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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The Nabonidus Cylinder, a clay cylinder with cuneiform inscriptions of King Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who surrendered to Cyrus the Great.

● WIKIMEDIA

The article first appeared on kheradgar.ir.

With Cyrus, world entered new epoch

One grounded in peace, reverence for cultural, faith diversity



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Charter of Cyrus the Great was officially recognized on November 6, 2025, as the most ancient written document of human rights in the world and was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List during the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in the city of Samarkand. This event possesses profound significance not solely for Iran but for all individuals across the world who believe in the values of justice, peace, and esteem for cultural diversity.

The Cyrus Charter, a clay cylinder inscribed more than 2,500 years ago, presents a humane conception of authority and sovereignty; an authority grounded in sagacity, cultural tolerance, and the abstention from bloodshed.

The Cyrus Charter reminds us that in a tumultuous world, a monarch from ancient Iran addressed a conquered nation with a language of peace and respect and issued an edict concerning the preservation of the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and of human values.

The states present at the UNESCO General Conference, through their extensive consensus regarding the inscription of the Cyrus Charter on the UNESCO World Heritage List, described the Charter as “a foundational document in the history of human civilization” and “the first written manifestation of principles such as freedom, justice, tolerance, and respect for cultural diversity”; a document that, for 25 centuries, has served as a herald of human dignity, respect for cultural diversity, and peaceful coexistence.

At a time when the contemporary world confronts escalating crises, racial, religious, and doctrinal conflicts, and the attenuation of human rights values, the restoration of the status of the Cyrus Charter as a symbol of human-centered conduct is not solely a historical necessity but summons statesmen and nations to a greater attentiveness toward human rights, freedom, and reverence for diverse beliefs. The global registration of the Cyrus Charter constitutes an authentication of the reality that the honor and grandeur of a civilization reside in its compassionate conduct and safeguarding of human dignity.

Iran Daily, regarding the recent inscription of the Cyrus Charter on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the reasons, necessity, and significance of this matter, conducted an exclusive interview with Abdolmahdi Hemmatpour, an archaeologist and expert in Iranology, architectural studies, and archaeology, the full text of which follows:



Abdolmahdi Hemmatpour



IRAN DAILY: As an archaeologist, first elucidate the Cyrus Charter itself, its mode of discovery, and its characteristics.

HEMMATPOUR: The Cyrus Charter is one of the significant treasures of Iran and the world and contains a message that constitutes a source of human pride, namely, that an empire as powerful as Iran, approximately 2,500 years ago, recorded a charter as a charter of liberty and human rights, which represents the opulent culture and the authentic and humane identity of Iran.

The discovery of the Cyrus Cylinder occurred approximately 150 years ago during archaeological excavations by Hormuzd Rassam at Tell Amran-ibn-Ali near one of the defensive walls of Babylon. The inscription of Cyrus, in the first instance, belongs to royal inscriptions; kings composed inscriptions to commemorate particular events such as victories in war.

The construction of cylinders as foundation inscriptions was customary in Mesopotamia, such that the cylinder containing the information of a structure was made either solid or hollow and then placed in the building's foundation, preserving the information like a time capsule; the Cylinder of Cyrus

is of the solid type. Cyrus left this cylinder as a document concerning the reconstruction of the Temple of Marduk; the text of this charter was written in the Babylonian language and in cuneiform script, of which approximately one-third has been lost. The text contains an account of the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 BCE and begins with a narrative attributed to Marduk, the Babylonian deity, concerning the crimes of Nabonidus, the last Chaldean king. It then offers a story of Marduk's search for a worthy ruler, his attribution of universal sovereignty to Cyrus, and Cyrus's agency in the bloodless conquest of Babylon.

In this text, Cyrus refers to the peaceful entry of his forces into Babylon in such a manner that no terror was instilled among the inhabitants. He states that during the seizure of Babylon, he sought the security of the city and all sacred sites, and how he liberated the people from the yoke of oppressive rulers and released them from their fetters and exhaustion. He also declares that he restored various peoples to their settlements.

Apart from the human rights elements already mentioned, to what extent is this Charter significant for understanding Cyrus himself?

Before the discovery of the Cyrus Charter, scholars possessed only two sources for understanding Cyrus: the sources of the Hebrew Bible and the classical Greek and Roman sources. After the discovery of this cylinder, researchers realized that they were encountering documents in which Cyrus speaks directly and in his own voice.

Royal inscriptions commence either in the third person or in the first person. Cyrus articulates the historical preface in the third person and then introduces himself in the first person. Lines 1–19 contain a historical prologue and discuss the role of Marduk with third-person verbs. Lines 20–22 concern the entrance of Cyrus and the presentation of his lineage with first-person pronouns; lines 22–34 refer to the proper conduct of Cyrus, the restoration of the city to its natural order, and

his constructive activities. Lines 38–40 belong to newly discovered fragments of the Cyrus inscription. The final line of the Cyrus inscription identifies its essence.

The names of Marduk and Nabu also appear in this Charter. Nabu was initially the minister of Marduk, and in later narratives, his son. In the first millennium BCE, Nabu, alongside his father Marduk, constituted the king of the gods. Gradually, Nabu became the superior deity of Babylon alongside Marduk, and in many texts, their names appear together.

But why are other deities probably absent in this decree? Shamash, the sun god, is the god of war and judgment, and since Cyrus did not wage war, he could not have invoked him. Sin is the moon god, and Cyrus refrains from invoking him because Nabonidus had opened the gates to Cyrus on account of this very deity, and seeking assistance from him would provoke Babylonian anger. Anu is the god of heaven, creation, and nature, whose appearance in what is a chronicle is unnecessary. Adad is the storm god, and its natural nature renders its mention unnecessary. The presence of Ishtar, the goddess of war and love, is superfluous because Cyrus, again, did not engage in war. Finally, the presence of Nergal, the god of the underworld, war, and disease, is equally improbable since Cyrus did not wage war.

Any possibility regarding the presence of other deities in this decree remains open; in the future, another fragment of the inscription may be discovered that contains those deities as well.

What information does this Charter transmit to the world and to contemporary peoples concerning the conduct, character, and disposition of Iranians?

This Charter conveys the proud and illustrious past of the culture of the Iranian nation and demonstrates the equitable conduct of an Achaemenid monarch within Iran and the lands under Iranian



Photographers jostle each other to get a good shot of the Charter of Cyrus the Great during an exhibition in Tehran, Iran, on September 14, 2010.

● ISNA



Humanitarian individual and social ideals, such as assistance to human beings during illness and distress, constitute among the significant elements recorded in this decree. The conviction of Cyrus was grounded in equal rights, and with a reverence for humanity, he liberated slaves and returned them to their homelands. He declared that every human being possesses the right to determine matters pertaining to himself at a time when coercion and the imposition of beliefs constituted the method and pride of conquerors.



The illustration, made by Artificial intelligence (AI), visualizes the possible celebration that ensued the unveiling of the Charter of Cyrus the Great in Babylon after its peaceful surrender to the Achaemenid king.

● SOCIAL MEDIA

dominion. When Cyrus declares in this inscription that he entered Babylon with his forces without any war and bloodshed, it reveals his sagacious policy in that era, such that both friend and foe received him with open arms. The magnanimous conduct of Cyrus toward his former adversaries is significant. He treated women and children with virtue and humanity, not separating them from men or enslaving them.

Thus, the entrance of Cyrus into Babylon and the conquest of this land constituted a factor in the cultural unity of Mesopotamia and initiated a new chapter in the history of the Orient and the world. The entrance of Cyrus into Babylon marked the world's entry into a new epoch, and in truth, the proclamation of Cyrus in Babylon announced the end of the ancient epoch of the world and the beginning of another epoch known as the epoch of Cyrus. Humanitarian individual and social ideals, such as assistance to human beings during illness and distress, constitute among the significant elements recorded in this decree. The conviction of Cyrus was grounded in equal rights, and with a reverence for humanity, he liberated slaves and returned them to their homelands. He declared that every human being possesses the right to



determine matters pertaining to himself at a time when coercion and the imposition of beliefs constituted the method and pride of conquerors. According to historical testimonies, Cyrus abstained from bloodshed, treated captives benevolently, and did not impose his beliefs upon the subjugated. For this reason, Cyrus transcended the visage of a ruler and ascended to a paternal symbol.

How have Western observers regarded Cyrus, and why has his Charter been accepted as the first human rights charter in the world?

In Western histories, he is portrayed as a great sovereign. Historians have extolled him, describing him as munificent, benevolent, and a master legislator. Therefore,

the trajectory and edicts of this great Achaemenid monarch must be considered by the rulers of the world in the 21st century. In the Cyrus Cylinder, a record of the conquest of Babylon, history and myth are interwoven. Some have called it a human rights charter, although it does not directly mention human rights. Perhaps the reason is that it constitutes the oldest written document concerning justice and the observance of the rights of others, and it displays forbearance and lenience toward those with divergent beliefs.

This Charter is the earliest document concerning the formulation of legitimacy for Achaemenid political history and is written with great splendor. In every line of this cylinder, indications

of respect for human rights are evident — which constitute a source of pride for every Iranian — including respect for other religions, one of the most significant components of this tablet. Cyrus sent offerings appropriate to the temples of other religions and transmitted the message that although he was a monotheist, he esteemed the rights of other religions and respected their beliefs. This is precisely the matter that must be considered in the present era, for despite advancements in science and technology, the concern over the violation of the sanctity of various religions persists.

The Cyrus Charter is an emblem of the Iranian national progressiveness and thought, a manifestation of the toleration and forbearance of the Iranian people toward diverse religions and doctrines. The land of Iran constituted a place of tolerance toward the various religions and doctrines present in the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus the Achaemenid, through the organization of diverse social strata and cultural amalgamation, created a civilization whose persistence endured among Iranians for centuries. Furthermore, the concepts contained in the Cyrus Charter established a distinct political perspective toward other contemporary peoples.

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The Nabonidus Cylinder, a clay cylinder with cuneiform inscriptions of King Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire who surrendered to Cyrus the Great.

● WIKIMEDIA

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Athletics glory headlines Iran's medal-laden run on Day 13



● L-R: Ali Amirian (men's 800m), Fatemeh Mohitzaadeh (women's heptathlon), and Hashemiyeh Mottaqian (women's para javelin throw) celebrate with the Iranian flag after winning gold at the athletics/para athletics event of the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 20, 2025.

Sports Desk

The penultimate day of action at the Islamic Solidarity Games yielded 11 medals for Iran, including three golds in athletics. Hashemiyeh Mottaqian gave Iran a flying start to Day 13 in Riyadh, capturing gold in the women's para javelin throw F55/56 event. The Tokyo Paralympic champion produced a best throw of 22.45m to secure the title, with Zeinab Moradi's 21.98m effort sealing an all-Iranian one-two. Meanwhile, Ali Amirian grabbed gold in the men's 800m, crossing the finish line in 1:46.18, while

Fatemeh Mohitzaadeh scored 5,562 points to take gold in the women's heptathlon.

Amouzad marches to gold

Rahman Amouzad was in his familiar ruthless form, inspiring Iran to a gold and a bronze in freestyle wrestling on Thursday. The reigning world champion capped his dominant 65kg campaign with a 12-2 superiority win over Tajikistan's Russian-born Abdulmashid Kudiev in the final. Kudiev gave the Iranian an early scare when he scored a take-down to lead 2-0, but Amouzad bounced back to score three

stepouts before the break. Kudiev then tried a double-leg attack, but Amouzad countered with a magnificent chest-wrap throw for four points, making it 7-2 in the second period. Tajikistan challenged, asking for two points, but at no point in the exchange did Kudiev manage to expose or control Amouzad, who now led 8-2 for the lost challenge. Two stepouts and a take-down later, Amouzad secured his second major gold in two months following his success at September's Worlds in Zagreb. Earlier in the night, Ali Mo'meni recovered from a quarterfinal setback against Azerbaijan's Is-

lam Bazarganov to make quick work of Afghanistan's Sayed Omar Zazai (11-0) for a consolation bronze in the 57kg event.

Handball history

The Iranian women's handball team capped off their impressive run with a historic bronze, defeating Uzbekistan 29-25 in the third-place match. With star player Setareh Rahmanian sidelined by injury, Fatemeh Merrikhi led the scoring with 11 goals, helping Iran secure its first-ever senior international medal in women's handball. "It was a physically and mentally

tough match, but we stayed focused on the small details, and my players implemented the game plan perfectly. I'm truly proud of them," said Iran head coach Ana Seabra. "This result was really important for us, but we can't afford to get carried away by this medal. To genuinely progress, we need to compete in more events so we can improve step by step," added the French coach. There were further bronze medals in fencing, as the country settled for third place in the men's saber and épée competitions. The Iranian épée team – comprising Mohammad Esmaeili,

Amirhossein Movashahi, Behnam Beik, and Mohammadali Khakzar – defeated Indonesia and Uzbekistan but fell 45-36 to Saudi Arabia in the semifinals. In the saber event, the Iranian quartet of Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Fotouhi, Nima Zahedi, and Taha Kargarpour suffered a 45-44 loss to Uzbekistan in the semifinal, though Iranian fencing chief Alireza Poursalehman blamed controversial refereeing decisions for the defeat. Elsewhere, Ali Akbarpour (men's -85kg) and Hasti Hamoodi (women's -70kg) added two jiu-jitsu bronzes to Iran's medal tally.

AFC Women's Champions League: Khatoon edges Nasaf, stays in contention for knockout spot

Sports Desk

Bam Khatoon defeated Uzbekistan's PFC Nasaf 1-0 to revive its hopes of reaching the AFC Women's Champions League quarter-finals. Iran international Sara Didar scored 14 minutes into the game at Wuhan's Hankou Culture Sports Centre, helping the Iranian champions bounce back from a 3-1 opening-day setback against India's East Bengal. The victory took Khatoon's tally to three points in Group B, placing the club second among the best third-place teams across the three groups ahead of Sunday's meeting with group host and defending champion Wuhan Jiangda, which had defeated the Indian champions 2-0 earlier on Thursday. A draw – or even a one-goal defeat – will be enough to send Khatoon into the last eight of Asia's elite club competition for a second consecutive season. Nasaf had the first sight at goal through Maftuna Shoyimova's free-kick in the 10th minute which Diyorakhon Khabibullaeva headed wide as the side from Uzbekistan controlled the early proceedings. Against the run of play, Khatoon struck the opener four minutes later after Fatemeh Geraeli played a perfect pass behind Nasaf's backline with Didar's pace taking her away from Grace Adams to



● Bam Khatoon's Sara Didar (18) celebrates after scoring the winner in a 1-0 victory over PFC Nasaf in the AFC Women's Champions League in Wuhan, China, on November 20, 2025.

easily slot home. Nasaf pushed hard for the equalizer but found a major stumbling block in Raha Yazdani who was in inspired form, saving two powerfully struck attempts from Khabibullaeva. Yazdani produced arguably her best save in the 40th minute, showing great athleticism to make a one-handed stop to deny Natalia Simakina's point-blank header. After the interval, Nasaf camped inside Bam Khatoon's half but despite its dominance in possession, all it had were two Shoyimova shots from distance which were easily dealt with by Yazdani. Seeing his side create so little, Nasaf head coach Khan Vladislav withdrew center-back Adams for attacker Mehrbon Egamberdieva.

The persistent pressure from Nasaf, however, was without its rewards as Khatoon defended resiliently to hold out for the win. Asian women's coach of the year Marziyeh Jafari was pleased to see a resilient performance from her team. "It was a pretty challenging and difficult match for us," said Jafari. "Since we lost in the previous match, we didn't have anything to lose so we gave it our all. "We had many injured players and even during the match, we had to make two substitutions due to injuries. We had analyzed Nasaf and we knew what their strengths and weaknesses are. "I'm very happy with my players that we could control the match and win the game."

Iranian outside-hitter Poursaleh joins Sepahan

Sports Desk

Iranian international Elahesh Poursaleh has joined Sepahan for the upcoming Iranian Women's Volleyball Premier League. A former player for Odbojkarski Klub Formis in the Slovenian top division, the 22-year-old outside hitter recently claimed a bronze medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh with the national team. Iran suffered straight-set losses against Azerbaijan and Türkiye but came out victorious against Afghanistan and Tajikistan to finish third in the five-team round-robin format, before defeating Tajikistan 3-0 in



● KIMIA QASSEMZADEH/volleyball.ir

the third-place match. Poursaleh was also part of the squad when Iran won a historic title at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship in Uzbekistan in October — the first international

gold for Iranian women's volleyball. Sepahan will begin the new Iranian top-flight season with a home game against Malavan Tehran in Group B next Saturday.

FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers: Iran heads to Lebanon for Iraq double-header

Sports Desk

The Iranian men's basketball team departed for Lebanon on Thursday ahead of their upcoming double-header against Iraq in the first round of the FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers. The two teams will kick off their campaign in Group C –

which also features Jordan and Syria – on Thursday, before facing each other again in Zouk Mikael three days later. Arsalan Kazemi, Arman Zanganeh, Navid Rezaeifar, Sina Vahedi, Mobin Sheikhi, Matin Aqajpour, Mahdi Jafari, Jalal Aqamiri, Mohammad-Mahdi Heidari, Hassan Aliakbari, Amirhossein

Azari, Behnam Yakhchali, Salar Monji, and Mohammad Amini have been named to the Iranian 14-man roster by Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos. Iran will enter the qualifiers fresh off an impressive third-place finish at the 2025 FIBA Asian Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in August.

Isfahan prepares to mark its national day

Iranica Desk

In 2005, the Islamic City Council of Isfahan designated the first day the first day of Iranian month of Azar (Nov. 22) as Isfahan National Day, a date that has since become an occasion for celebrating the city’s cultural, artistic, and historical heritage. The day also serves as a platform for examining Isfahan’s opportunities and challenges — an invitation to shared reflection and dialogue aimed at advancing sustainable development. Although never institutionalized through official channels, Isfahan National Day holds a deep and enduring place in the collective memory of the city’s residents. Its grassroots and community-driven character has ensured its continuity and popularity, particularly among cultural, academic, and intellectual circles. Chosen through strong public support, the day has long been honored independently of government directives. Instead, it has been kept alive through spontaneous civic initiatives —



Qeysarieh Gate
● mizanonline.ir

cultural, artistic, and environmental gatherings, traditional ceremonies, storytelling tours, and even small neighborhood events, according to IRNA. The day provides an opportunity to highlight the many fac-

tors that have shaped Isfahan’s growth and reputation while also bringing attention to the challenges affecting its long-term sustainability. By presenting these varied dimensions of the city’s past and present, the

observance aims to broaden the conversation — extending from experts to officials — toward practical and thoughtful solutions. Its significance today lies less in the city’s distant history and more in the contemporary

civic engagement of its citizens. This year, as in years past, a series of events is scheduled across the city from Nov. 22–28 to mark Isfahan National Day and the Week of Isfahan Appreciation. The Isfahan Day Conference, a longstanding centerpiece of the celebrations, will be held on the evening of Nov. 27 with the participation of NGOs active in cultural heritage, the environment, and architecture, alongside several universities. Other programs include the unveiling of the Encyclopedia of Isfahan, compiled by researchers in the cultural, historical, and social fields. The continually expanding reference work will be introduced on Nov. 26 at Isfahan Central Library. A gathering at the Isfahan University of Art will also take place during the week, hosted in the historic Tohid Khaneh building, with discussions focused on urban planning and the future of the Zayandeh Rud River. The month of Azar holds long-

standing historical significance for the city. Construction of Isfahan’s defensive wall during the reign of Rukn al-Dawla, the first Buyid ruler of northern and central Iran, began at the start of Azar. In the Safavid era, the same month marked the beginning of construction of the Qeysarieh Bazaar. This temporal and architectural continuity ultimately helped shape the city’s emblem. Atop the Qeysarieh Gate, a mosaic depicts a horse archer — half human and half horse — aiming a bow and arrow at his own tail, which takes the form of a fire-breathing dragon. Decades ago, Abbas Behesh-tian, a devoted researcher of Isfahan, was the first to propose adopting this image as the city’s symbol. The idea was later reinforced by Lotfollah Honarfar, a prominent Isfahan scholar, who recommended the motif as the defining emblem of the city. The proposal was formally realized in 2005, when the first of Azar was officially designated as Isfahan National Day.

Preserving history to boost tourism in Hormozgan

Iranica Desk

During a visit to the historic districts of Bandar Lengeh and Bandar Kong, Sepehr Zarei, Deputy of Hormozgan Province’s Cultural Heritage, Touris and Handicraft Organization emphasized the need for the preservation, restoration, and purposeful utilization of historical sites to boost cultural tourism. Referring to the valuable antiquity of these districts and their historical role in shaping Bandar Lengeh’s identity, Zarei said, “The historic districts of Bandar Lengeh and Bandar Kong are symbols of the history, culture, and architecture of the southern coastal communities. With proper restoration and

revitalization, they have the potential to become one of the province’s most important cultural tourism destinations.” He added that due to their maritime and commercial heritage, these districts reflect a significant part of southern Iran’s historical identity. Reviving them could enhance the national visibility of Hormozgan Province’s tourism potential. Restoration of historic houses, and the creation of eco-tourism opportunities can preserve architectural authenticity while stimulating local employment and the economy, according to chtn.ir. Zarei also inspected the ongoing restoration of a historic bazaar in cooperation with the Bandar Lengeh Municipality, noting, “Historic markets are the economic and social heart of cities. Reviving and reactivating them not only strengthens urban identity but also increases tourist flow and the vitality of historic spaces. These restorations can serve as a model for other historic cities in organizing and revitalizing old markets.” Continuing his visit, Zarei reviewed the condition of historic houses in Bandar Lengeh and highlighted the launch of the city’s first eco-lodges as a key initiative of the Cultural Heritage Department. “Eco-lodges can serve as a bridge between past and present, offering tourists an authentic experience while simultaneously supporting the local economy,” he said.



● chtn.ir



Iranica Desk

Talesh, a land whose name is intertwined with history, invites you to explore its unique natural beauty and pristine attractions. The name Talesh comes from the Talysh people and, according to numerous historical sources and evidence, is considered a remnant of the ancient Cadusii tribes and one of the long-time neighbors of the Gilak people. The region is bordered by Ardabil Province to the west, Astara to the north, Rudbar to the south, and the Caspian Sea and Anzali to the east, kojaro.com wrote. Talesh stretches from the Caspian Sea on one side to the Talesh Mountains — the continuation of the Alborz range — on the other. Its natural attractions draw countless tourists every year, eager to witness its stunning landscapes.

Talesh is land of natural wonders, ancient heritage

Siah Daran Forest Park

The Talesh, with its unique geographical location, is bounded on one side by plains, towns, and the sea, and on the other by forested foothills. Among its many tourist attractions, Siah Daran stands out. Historically, Siah Daran was home to towering oak trees, whose dense canopy made it difficult for people to enter the forest. After seasonal settlers began inhabiting the area, it became known as “Siah Daran,” meaning “covered with dark trees” (primarily oak and elm). Located in the southwest of Talesh, Siah Daran has recently been developed by the Talesh municipality as a recreational and leisure destination. With roads and stairways built along parts of the hill, visitors can now enjoy a pristine and scenic area at the highest point, featuring amenities such as a restaurant, gazebos, and restrooms. A thrilling rail sled ride through the forested slopes adds to the excitement. The park’s natural wildlife, including deer and wild gazelles, also captivates many nature enthusiasts and tourists.

Do Khaleh Kuh

Do Khaleh Kuh, a highland area in Talesh, is one of the most untouched and refreshing destinations in Gilan Province. With its clean air and breathtaking landscapes, this region offers a peaceful escape from the noise and bustle of city life. The best time to visit Do Khaleh Kuh is during the first half of the year.

Subatan Cave

Subatan Cave, also known as Ganj Khaneh (Treasure House Cave), lies on the northeastern side of the lush and untouched Subatan region. To reach the cave, visitors must take a short 15-minute walk from the nearby village, ideally accompanied by a guide. The path to the cave offers scenic views of green meadows dotted with beautiful flowers and a refreshing atmosphere that captivates every traveler. The entrance to Ganj Khaneh Cave is hidden among cliffs five to 15 meters high. With its narrow opening, it is not ideal for casual nature walkers, but it does hold a strong appeal for cave explorers and adventure seekers. Locals are familiar with the cave and often recommend it as one of Subatan’s attractions — yet many believe that the cave is cursed and that entering it may result in harm. Because of this legend, few dare to venture inside. The cave was first mapped and explored in 2015.

Subatan highland

The Subatan summer highland region is located 22 kilometers from the city of Lissar and 36 kilometers from Talesh, situated at an altitude of 1,900 to 2,500 meters above sea level. The stunning natural beauty of Subatan captivates every visitor, and the presence of wooden houses adds to its charm. The access route from Talesh includes some unpaved sections, which can be challenging to traverse, especially during rainy days. The best time to visit Sub-

atan is from mid-May to mid-summer.

Seragah Lake

Seragah Lake is located about 10 kilometers from the central district of Talesh, in a village called Seragah. The lake’s water is supplied by multiple underground springs beneath its basin. It is used for fish farming and is considered private property, though visitors are allowed to explore the area with the owner’s permission. The best time to visit Seragah Lake is during spring and summer, and tourists can camp nearby or stay in traditional wooden cottages in the village.

Kargan Rud River

The perennial Kargan Rud River is the largest and most water-rich river in the western part of Gilan Province, located in Talesh. It has three main tributaries and experiences lower water levels from June to October. After flowing through the city of Talesh, the river joins the Caspian Sea near Qoruq village, about six kilometers east of the city. The river is home to various fish species, including Caspian whitefish and salmon.

Gisum Forest Park

One of the most popular attractions in Gilan Province and Talesh is Gisum Forest Park. The scenic road to Gisum, lined with towering trees, forms a picturesque forest tunnel that captures the heart of every visitor. The forest path is infused with the cool mountain breeze from the Talesh highlands, of-

fering peace and relaxation to anyone who passes through. Gisum is a rare place where the forest meets the sea. Although the best time to visit Gisum is during the first half of the year, the natural beauty of the area in autumn and winter rivals that of spring and summer. In fall, the dense forest — especially the ironwood trees — creates a dreamlike landscape of vibrant colors. In winter, a blanket of snow gives Gisum a unique and magical appearance. Located on the Rasht–Astara road, about 10 kilometers before the Asalem–Khalilabad highway, Gisum Forest Park offers numerous amenities, including parking, public restrooms, a market, restaurants, gazebos, jet skiing, paragliding, cycling, horse riding, boating, and activities for children such as trampolines and an inflatable playground.



● 8daynews.com



Iranian duo storm IDFA with twin top wins in Amsterdam

Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian titles lit up the 38th International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam on Thursday night, with Mehrdad Oskoueï's 'A Fox Under a Pink Moon' taking Best Film in the International Competition and Morteza Ahmadvand and Firouzeh Khosrovani's 'Past Future Continuous' winning Best Film in the Envision Competition. Oskoueï's win capped a commanding presence for Iranian non-fiction cinema at this year's IDFA. His 76-minute film, co-directed with Afghan artist Soraya Khalaqi, follows her self-shot chronicle of displacement, recorded over years on her mobile phone as she moves from Afghanistan to Iran and onwards in search of a foothold in

Europe.

The jury praised its "skillful" camerawork in dangerous situations and called Khalaqi's on-screen presence "luminous," noting the close creative partnership that allowed her, in their words, to "reclaim" herself amid exile and domestic violence.

Khalaqi wrote earlier in the week that bringing the seven-year project to the screen felt like "standing bare" before hundreds of viewers, describing the long haul of finishing the film as a cycle of "fear, injury, escape, fighting, building... and building again." The film, a joint production spanning Iran, France, Britain, the United States and Denmark, drew an extended ovation in the Dutch capital. In the Envision section, Past Future



Winners of the 8th International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) pose for a group photo to celebrate their achievements on stage, November 20, 2025.
● IDFA

Continuous impressed jurors with its hybrid structure, described as an "unusual, ironic cinematic experience" that fuses suspended time and layered memory. The panel highlighted what it called an "extraordinary text," saying the form "lifts the subject to a higher plane" as the directors play with a reality that is both invented and emotionally exact. Each film secured a €15,000 prize.



IDFA, founded in 1988 and held annually in Amsterdam, remains

the world's largest documentary festival and a key launchpad for

filmmakers heading into the winter awards season.

Nat'l library chief calls for regional cultural cooperation, digital overhaul

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's national library chief Gholamreza Amirkhani opened the seventh Conference of National Library Directors of ECO member states in the Turkish capital on Thursday, calling for "real cultural synergy" across the region and urging libraries to embrace a decisive digital shift to safeguard their shared documentary heritage. Amirkhani anchored his remarks in the long-standing cultural ties binding Iran, Türkiye, Central Asia and the Caucasus, IRNA reported. He argued that national libraries hold a strategic responsibility to protect the region's "collective memory", broaden access to knowledge and support diverse social groups through inclusive cultural programs. "We cannot afford to drift apart when our written heritage has tied us together for centuries," he said, pushing delegates to

"move beyond polite cooperation".

He used the Ankara gathering to set out Tehran's current work on manuscript preservation and bibliographic modernization. The organization, he said, has spent the past year expanding pre-publication cataloguing, tightening legal deposit workflows and building a more coherent national collection. New digital services for provincial centers and the updated Iran's national standard aim to pull scattered resources into a unified system that researchers can trust. During a plenary session on digital transformation, Amirkhani pressed national libraries to overhaul legacy systems and adopt serious technological tools, from mass-digitization lines and intelligent environmental-control systems to advanced forensic imaging used in manuscript analysis. These measures, he said, help institutions keep pace with rising user expecta-

tions and protect fragile archival material from environmental stress, uncontrolled handling and regional security risks. He also singled out Iran's recent bilateral projects with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan and Russia, saying that practical, small-scale joint ventures, shared cataloguing, staff exchanges and cross-border training, "do far more than ceremonial agreements". Such cooperation, he argued, helps countries pool specialized knowledge and spread the costs of preservation technologies that many institutions cannot shoulder alone. Delegates from ECO states, including the director-general of Turkey's National Library and a representative from its Culture and Tourism Ministry, spent the first day working through national statements, thematic panels and proposals for new joint working groups. Members later voted for Kazakhstan to host the next round of meetings.

Change of mediator ...

At best, Saudi Arabia might be able to act as a limited facilitator, not a full-scale mediator. And even that seems unlikely to be effective given current US positions. In fact, the main problem between Iran and the US has nothing to do with who mediates, it stems from entrenched positions. Washington is not genuinely seeking negotiations, it is pushing for its set of demands and says talks would take place only if Tehran accepts them. Iran views that as imposition or dictation, an approach that cannot lead to meaningful results. As long as the US maintains such a stance, switching mediators will not help. A mediator should not be mistaken for a savior; the core problem lies elsewhere. One more point is that in the past, Saudi Arabia may have opposed any US-Iran agreement, especially on the nuclear front. Today, Riyadh may believe it could benefit from a resolution and therefore shows willingness. Still, this is insufficient. The issues at stake are too complex, with too many variables, and mutual distrust is deeper than ever. So, while Riyadh's declared willingness is not unwelcome, it falls far short of creating conditions for a meaningful agreement, particularly as Washington has not altered its fundamental position.

Compared with traditional mediators such as Oman and Qatar, what advantages or challenges would Saudi Arabia face?
Traditional mediators like Oman and Qatar have

established records. Oman's long experience in mediation, combined with strong ties to both Iran and the United States, has enabled it to carve out a reputation for neutrality. Its close relations with Washington have never compromised its ties with Tehran, which is precisely why it has sometimes been effective. Qatar also maintains very close relations with the US, but after its dispute with Saudi Arabia in recent years, Doha's relations with Tehran shifted in quality, enabling it to step in at certain moments in a limited capacity. Qatar has also tried to present itself as a mediator in cases unrelated to Iran, and this broader portfolio has occasionally had spill-over effects on Iran-US issues. The nature of Saudi Arabia's relations with Tehran, however, is qualitatively different. Even if Riyadh's leadership currently enjoys warm ties with the US president, that alone is not enough. And more importantly, mediation is not the real issue here. The actual obstacle lies in the positions held by the parties, positions Iran did not change even after the recent military strike. It is unrealistic to expect that shifting the mediator would somehow turn the page.

Given the regional rivalry and history of tensions, how far is Iran willing to trust Saudi Arabia?

The matter is not one of Iran trusting Saudi Arabia. The core negotiation and the core balance must ultimately be established between Iran and the United States. Dialogue between those two has always been defined by mutual

distrust. Whether Iran and Saudi Arabia trust one another is beside the point, because it does not address the main issue. Even if Tehran and Riyadh were to reach an understanding, the primary party Iran must talk to remains the United States. Saudi Arabia cannot be the party that determines the future path of Iran-US diplomacy.

On the international stage, how do major powers such as China and Russia view Saudi Arabia's potential attempt to play a role in this file, and would they support it?

This is ultimately a question Beijing and Moscow can answer more definitively. It also seems too early to speak with certainty. But if the question is whether they will obstruct such a role or support it, it appears likely that both capitals would prefer to see the issue resolved. Any initiative that could push the process forward would presumably be welcomed. But the situation has not reached that stage yet. What exists so far is merely a unilateral statement by Trump in front of cameras about a supposed negotiating track, one that in reality does not exist. The US and Iran are not engaged in any meaningful or serious negotiation at present. No process has been launched. That makes Trump's announcement somewhat puzzling, and it leaves the topic far from any phase where serious discussion about great-power reactions would make sense. This question, therefore, belongs to a later stage, one that has not yet materialized.

Iranian painters bring 'Flowers' to life in Paris

Arts & Culture Desk

Five Iranian artists to open a three-day group exhibition titled 'Flowers' on November 27 in Paris, bringing their individual takes on the long-standing floral motif into dialogue with European painting traditions. Simine Paris, a small curatorial platform run by Paris-based art manager Leila Varasteh, set up the show until November 30, ILNA reported. The exhibition anchors itself in the dense neighborhood of commercial galleries and boutique project spaces that circle the Champs-Élysées, a district that often draws collectors who track Middle Eastern art pockets emerging across Europe. The line-up, Fereydoun Ave, Farhad Ostovani, Raana Farnoud, Mina Ghaziani and Shadi Mahsa, folds five distinct vocabularies into a single, tight space. Each artist returns to the "apparently simple" but culturally loaded flow-

er form, a device woven through centuries of Persian poetry and miniature painting. In Iranian verse, the flower carries beauty, transience and "a sudden spark of insight", as one curator's note puts it. In European still-life painting, it rings with echoes of abundance, decay and the study of light. The pieces range from canvases and paper works to painted boards and mixed-media surfaces. Some works push saturated pigments across the picture plane; others hold back, letting muted tones hover on sparse grounds. The artists tap into different registers, Ave's graphic discipline, Ostovani's textured layers, Farnoud's looser rhythms, Ghaziani's studied calm and Mahsa's contemplative marks, yet the works "speak across the Mediterranean", as the organizers describe it, leaning east for their imagery while relying on the formal clarity of Western modernism. The curatorial text frames

the flower as a shifting mask. At times it summons the imagined gardens of Persian literature; elsewhere it summons the strict compositional habits of European still-lives. The motif slips between birth and decline, abundance and withering, without settling in one place. Each piece stands as a self-contained vignette, but together they build what the organizers call "a collective meditation" on time, remembrance and the urge to hold on to fleeting experiences. The painters move along the thin borderline between the pleasure of looking and the quiet acknowledgement that the moment will not last, a tension that the flower, in Iranian culture, has long embodied. By setting these works side by side for only three days, Varasteh aims to keep the exhibition nimble, almost like a pop-up conversation between Iranian visual heritage and Europe's painterly past.

Fire raging in Hyrcanian Elit forest despite massive aerial response

Social Desk

A wildfire continues to burn across the steep, rocky slopes of the Elit region in the Hyrcanian forest of Marzanabad, Chalus, despite deployment of five helicopters and a 40-ton Il-76 water-bomber. Thick smoke, high winds and rugged terrain have hampered sustained aerial firefighting, officials said. The blaze first ignited on November 15 near a mountainous area roughly six kilometers from the village of Elit. Firefighters initially contained the fire within 24 hours, but strong winds and dry undergrowth reignited it on November 15, spreading it far beyond the original perimeter. By November 16, flames advanced south and east, while November 17 saw the fire shrink to two eastern pockets. After appearing extinguished on November 18, the blaze flared again on November 20 and has since continued in two separate zones. Hossein-Ali Mohammadi, head of Mazandaran's crisis management department, said

the Il-76 aircraft, dispatched from Tehran, dropped its first load of 40 tons of water directly onto the fire's core. "In case of need, the aircraft will return to Tehran for refilling and redeployment," he added. Helicopter crews have struggled to maintain water drops due to dense smoke and the steep, rocky terrain, which officials describe as among the most difficult in recent years. Local authorities have mobilized around 400 personnel, including forest rangers, volunteer nature-guardians, mountain rescuers and local council teams. Narrow rock faces, dense vegetation and sudden wind gusts have slowed ground efforts. Mehdi Younesi-Rostami, governor general of Mazandaran, said 20 volunteers have been injured over the past six days while fighting the fire. Authorities stressed that the fire is human-caused, but local residents should not attempt to enter the area, as conditions remain hazardous and all necessary firefighting resources are in place.