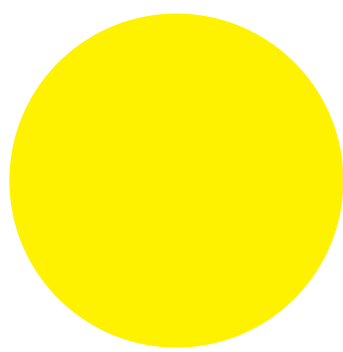


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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a ceremony to mark National Student Day in Tehran on December 7, 2025. president.ir

Russia, China and India's backing for Iran against West remains tactical

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE



Talks between Iran and the United States have been stalled since the 12-day war in June,

while Western pressure on Tehran continues through international bodies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As Western governments persist in leaning on Iran through pressure and threats to achieve their objectives, China and Russia, as two key permanent members of the UN Security Council, have reiterated that the dispute should be resolved through dialogue. During Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent trip to India and his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, New Delhi

likewise stressed the importance of talks. This development could signal the alignment of another major global economic power with the China-Russia bloc in supporting Iran against US unilateralism and Western coercion more broadly. Broader support from major powers could strengthen Iran's position in this standoff and potentially nudge the West toward stepping back from some of its maximalist demands and entering equitable negotiations. International affairs analyst Afifeh Abedi told Iran Daily that while such political backing carried significant weight, breaking the deadlock would still ultimately depend on Washington's willingness to compromise and its acceptance of Iran's rights. She also noted that the alignment reflected tactical considerations rather than a strategic commitment.

IRAN DAILY: Given China, Russia

and now India's support for dialogue to break the standoff over Iran's nuclear program, can this emerging consensus create space for breaking the deadlock between Tehran and Washington?
ABEDI: The current deadlock in Iran-US talks has not stemmed from actors other than Israel and the United States itself. China, Russia and India have consistently welcomed resolving Iran's nuclear file through dialogue. At certain junctures, players like Russia have had reservations, such as at the outset of the Ukraine war in 2022, but these were secondary factors. Just as Washington's stance obstructed a nuclear agreement in previous rounds, it was the US decision to prepare for military action against Iran on the eve of the sixth round of talks that ultimately derailed negotiations and brought the process to a halt. Despite Washington's claims of being ready to negotiate, there appears to be no genuine willingness to

reach an agreement. US calculations, misguided ones, seem to rest on the assumption that after the 12-day war and the instigation of the snapback mechanism to restore UN sanctions on Iran, it has managed to force Iran's hand and weaken its terms. Overall, any breakthrough in the current deadlock hinges on Washington adopting a realistic approach and accepting Iran's rights.

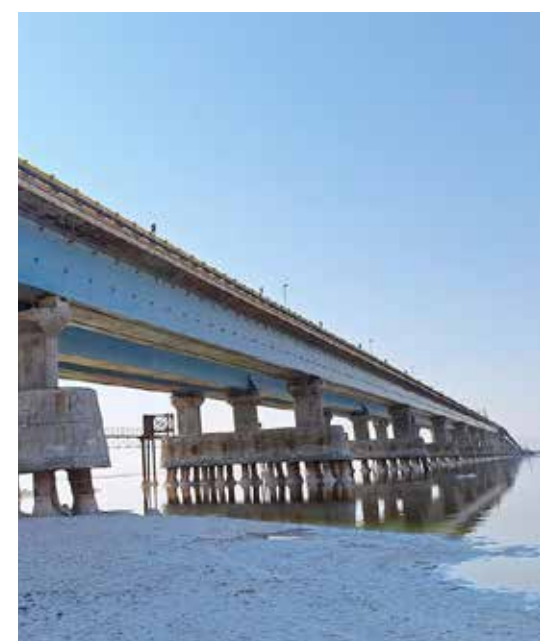
At what diplomatic or operational levels could these three major powers help advance a resolution of Iran's nuclear issue? Could political mediation or economic and security support be feasible?
The joint backing of Beijing, Moscow and New Delhi for "dialogue" has clear political significance. Their verbal support for Iran's nuclear rights has become more explicit, and at times they have sharply criticized Washington's unlawful actions against Tehran.

Only 5% of Urmia Lake's water remaining: *Expert*

Yet we 'set records' in export of water-intensive products

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

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Pezeshkian says pins hope on national support not foreign aid to overcome challenges

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday he only relied on the Iranian people, not outside assistance, to take on the country's challenges and confront hostility from the United States and Israel.

"I have no hope in anyone except God and our own people," Pezeshkian told academics and students at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran during an event marking National Student Day, according to his website president.ir. He said it was a "false illusion" to think anyone outside Iran was willing to help the country.

"We concluded during domestic and foreign trips that apart from our dear people and apart from ourselves, no one can save us," the president added.

Pezeshkian noted that those who were at odds with him or with his government were "not necessarily our opponents or enemies".

"If we understand the importance of this issue and tolerate one another, we will no longer fight," he added.

The president, however, complained about "unsupported criticisms" of his government's efforts to resolve major issues, including measures like hiking petrol prices and addressing Iran's growing energy shortages.

"In economic matters, all those who claim they can fix the situation should get into action..., not simply criticize. Instead of unsupported criticisms, they should come up with clear and practical proposals and solutions," he said.

Pezeshkian called mere criticism of



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during an event marking National Student Day at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran, on December 7, 2025.

● president.ir

the status quo "insufficient" and urged that "everyone join hands" to take effective steps to settle problems.

The president said his government aimed to steer the country toward growth and development with the help and synergy of all bodies, organizations and competent individuals.

"We hope that with constructive cooperation we can get through the existing problems and witness positive changes in various economic, educational and industrial sectors," he said.



Iran never sought to dominate region: FM spox



Ismaeil Baqaei
● IRNA

International Desk

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Sunday that Iran has never sought to dominate the West Asia region but by no means can any country ignore its regional position.

"We have our own position, role, and place in the region," Ismaeil Baqaei said during his weekly press conference.

He said that the Islamic Republic is the inheritor of an ancient civilization with a rich culture, which over time has learned well how to adapt to changing conditions.

Referring to Israel's expansionist policy in the region, Baqaei said that the only party that has taken over the territory of two regional countries is the Tel Aviv regime.

The issue that should be a shared concern for the countries of the region is the expansionist policy of the Israeli regime, Baqaei said, adding that, "It is enough to look into set of facts."

Since the beginning of the regime's onslaught on Gaza in 2023, it has also launched acts of aggression against several regional countries including Lebanon and

Syria and has occupied parts of their territories.

Over the past two years, Israel has rained down an equivalent of 12 atomic bombs of the type used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Gaza. This is the party that has carried out the massacre of over 70,000 innocent people in Gaza and insists on endless wars against the nations of the region, he added.

Elsewhere, Baqaei was asked about recent remarks by US Special Envoy for Syria Tom Barrack, who said Washington attempted twice in the past to overthrow the Iranian government but achieved nothing.

He said over the past five decades, successive US administrations have consistently sought to interfere in Iran's internal affairs.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman said that what the Americans themselves refer to as "regime change" is actually an explicit acknowledgment of their illegal attempts to violate Iran's national sovereignty.

"What this American official has recently said, in my view, amounts merely to an admission of two attempts. Yet, we know that over the years, there have been numerous actions aimed at harming the Iranian people and interfering in Iran's internal affairs, ... with the 1953 coup being a very clear example," he pointed out.

"Therefore, these actions have not been limited to the past five decades. The US interference in Iran's domestic affairs has a very long history."

Qalibaf cautions neighbors against testing Iran's resolve over trio islands



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf
● ICANA

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf dismissed the claims about three Iranian islands in the final statement of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), warning the neighboring states not to test Iranian nation's will to safeguard its territorial integrity, Press TV reported.

Addressing a parliamentary session on Sunday, Qalibaf categorically denounced the claims once again raised in the latest statement of the Persian Gulf bloc regarding the three Iranian islands of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa.

He stated that such unfounded and absurd claims, often pushed by other nations, go against the principles of respecting territorial integrity and maintaining good neighborly relations.

Iran calls upon its neighboring countries to refrain from challenging the determination of the Iranian

nation in safeguarding its territorial integrity and the Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf, which remain an integral part of Iran, Qalibaf emphasized. He stated that Iran has consistently pursued stability, the advancement of peace, and a commitment to the principles of good-neighborliness, while expecting its neighbors to uphold the same values.

The Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world.

However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. The islands fell under British control in 1921, but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

On November 30, Iran officially issued land demarcation and ownership documents for the islands of Abu Musa, along with the Greater and Lesser Tunbs, reinforcing its sovereignty over the territories.

Qatar warns anti-Tehran military actions to have regional consequences



Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdulrahman Al Thani attends a session on the opening day of the Doha Forum in Doha, Qatar, on December 6, 2025.

● MAHMUD HAMS/AFP

International Desk

Qatar's foreign minister said on Saturday that there is no effort to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic means, warning that any military action against Iran will have consequences for the regional countries.

"It is very important that we find a way to revive negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. If any actions are taken against Iran, all the countries in the region will be affected," Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said.

Iran and the United States engaged in nuclear talks in April and held five rounds of negotiations. But, in the middle of the talks Israel launched a surprise attack on Iran and derailed the talks. The US later joined the aggression and launched attacks on three Iranian nuclear facilities.

Iran responded to the attacks with missile strikes on Israel's positions in the occupied territories as well as the largest US military base in the region in Qatar. Despite the brief war between Iran and the US, Iran has repeatedly said that it is ready for ne-

gotiations to settle the nuclear tensions with the West.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in an interview with Japan's Kyodo news agency on Saturday said Iran remained open to diplomacy, but wanted guarantees of a "fair and balanced" outcome.

He reiterated that the deadlock affecting diplomacy stemmed from American demands introduced under President Donald Trump, including the Islamic Republic's halt to all uranium enrichment processes, a position Tehran categorically rejects.

The foreign minister said the core issue remained Washington's reluctance to recognize Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology, including enrichment, under the NPT. According to Araghchi, the Islamic Republic was prepared to accept limitations on enrichment levels and centrifuge types, and negotiations could progress once the United States accepted the country's peaceful nuclear energy program and lifted the illegal and unilateral sanctions it had imposed on the country.

"For the time being [though], we are not convinced they are ready for a real, serious negotiation," he said.

Russia, China and ...

However, the international landscape has shifted. The United States is now pursuing a full-scale strategy to contain and weaken China, Russia and even India, and therefore has little interest in resolving global issues in partnership with these powers. Moreover, containing Iran is itself part of Washington's broader strategy to constrain China and Russia. A weakened Iran in the Middle East creates more room to encircle Moscow and Beijing. Thus, Russia and China also have strong incentives not to let Washington gain the upper hand in the Iran file.

In this context, economic and security support from Russia and China through bilateral, multilateral or institutional cooperation could reinforce not only Iran's position vis-à-vis the United States but also their own standing in

the face of mounting American pressure.

To what extent are China, Russia and India willing to incur costs to protect Iran's interests under US pressure?

Their readiness to bear costs is naturally bounded. In the short term, these states do not want the Iran-US dispute to evolve into a direct confrontation between themselves and Washington. In the long term, they prefer that support for Iran translate into geopolitical and geo-economic leverage for them, not merely end in a bilateral deal between Tehran and Washington.

Among them, India—lingering between East and West—is expected to approach the Iran issue with greater caution.

Could the growing intimacy of these

three countries with Iran pave the way for a non-Western coalition against the United States, or is this just situational cooperation?

Based on the considerations outlined, the likelihood of a formal, overt anti-US coalition emerging around the Iran issue is low. Iran, Russia, China and India all seek to expand their power relative to the United States, but their priorities, constraints and issue areas differ. They also have varying dynamics within their bilateral and multilateral relations.

A tactical convergence is possible; a strategic one is not. It should also be remembered that even among the United States and Europe—actors with far deeper structural alignment—their approaches frequently diverge. Washington is, in fact, pursuing dominance even over Europe itself.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



New production line for hybrid vehicles to be launched by yearend: Minister

Economy Desk

Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak announced on Sunday the unveiling of a new production line for domestically manufactured hybrid vehicles by the end of the current Iranian year in March 2026. The rollout, scheduled for next year, marks a major step toward modernizing Iran's auto industry and reducing environmental emissions, Atabak said. The first hybrid models produced by local manufacturers will be introduced as part of the government's upcoming initiatives, IRIB reported. Production volume will depend directly on market demand, the minister added. "As consumers purchase these vehicles, production capacity will naturally expand," he said, noting that higher output could improve

consumer access and ultimately lead to lower prices. Most new vehicles currently in development will feature advanced engines designed to meet a presidential directive requiring fuel consumption below 5 liters per 100 kilometers. According to Atabak, these engines will significantly enhance efficiency and reduce fuel costs for drivers. Hybrid models entering the market are expected to achieve substantially lower fuel consumption compared to older vehicles, the minister emphasized. Meanwhile, gasoline types that have passed rigorous 85- and 125-item quality tests will continue to be produced. Such tests ensure fuel quality and performance, enabling automakers to rely on high-grade gasoline for new engine technologies, Atabak said.



The announcement builds on recent milestones in Iran's push toward vehicle electrification. In March 2022, an Iranian automotive company based in the

southern city of Shiraz unveiled the country's first all-electric vehicle (EV). In October 2025, Iran's second-largest carmaker introduced the country's

first domestically developed Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV), as part of broader efforts to align with global trends in automotive electrification. Separately, the

country's largest automaker had already unveiled a Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV), which it says is in the late stages of development or pre-production.

Economy posts slight expansion in H1 calendar year: SCI



The Iranian economy expanded slightly in the first half of the calendar year that began in late March 2025, according to figures from the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI). SCI data published on Monday showed that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) reached 50,568 trillion rials (over \$42.14 billion at free-market prices) in the six months to September 22, up 0.1% from the same period last year, Press TV reported. Using 2021 fixed prices as its baseline, the SCI reported that Iran's GDP excluding oil contracted by 0.5% year on year to 38,189 trillion rials in the six months to late September. The figures indicate that the Iranian economy returned to positive growth after a 0.1% contraction in the June quarter, the first negative rate in four years. The continued growth has come despite a harsh regime of US sanctions that seeks to restrict Iran's ability to sell oil and recover its export proceeds. The SCI generally produces more conservative growth estimates than the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), which typically reports higher GDP figures. The agency had reported a 3% economic growth rate for the year to late March, while the CBI put the rate at 3.1%. Figures released on Monday showed Iran's manufacturing and mining sector, which includes the country's large oil industry, expanded by 0.3% year on year in the six months to late September, while the petroleum sector itself grew by 1.8% over the same period. Agriculture was one of the worst-performing sectors of the economy during the April-September period, contracting by 3%. By contrast, the services sector expanded by 0.5% over the same timeframe.

Tehran University to set up Baghdad tech park branch in regional outreach push



Economy Desk

Tehran University is moving forward with plans to establish an international branch of its Science and Technology Park (STP) in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, as part

of a broader push to expand Iran's science-based diplomacy across the region, the organization's head said. Ali Asadi, head of Tehran University's Science and Technology Park, told ISNA that the university is actively pursuing the creation of a branch in one of the neighboring countries, with Baghdad selected as the location. "The international campus of Tehran University has already taken shape in Baghdad, and we hope to establish a branch of the Science and Technology Park alongside it," Asadi

said. He emphasized that the initiative aligns with Iran's focus on science diplomacy, noting that the university is not limiting its efforts to domestic development. "We are developing knowledge-based diplomacy and aiming to add an international dimension to these efforts in regional countries," he said. Companies capable of commercializing their products will be hosted at the international branch of the park, he added. "We are currently in the negotiation phase and working on infrastructure development for this project," Asadi said. "We are striving to place marketable products from Iranian companies within this park and are actively pursuing the necessary arrangements."

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Installing small solar farms in urban spaces could help supply clean energy

By Reza Yari
Renewable energy researcher

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Renewables play a vital role in the economic, social and environmental activities of every country, as the limitations of fossil-fuel resources and the global warming caused by greenhouse-gas emissions are forcing policymakers and planners to grapple with new and rapidly evolving economic realities. For this reason, economic strategies built on the assumption of unlimited and cheap fossil-fuel supplies can no longer sustain economic growth as they once did—nor for very long in the future. The interplay of factors such as rising energy consumption, increasing energy prices, dwindling resource availability, climate change and the declining capacity of ecosystems to provide essential services has heightened vulnerability and introduced major environmental, economic and social uncertainties. According to expert assessments, global energy demand will increase by around 60% over the next 25 years. In addition, thermal power plants remain among the key sources of air pollution in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Given the high volume of converted ener-

gy and the considerable energy losses across thermal power plants, shifting attention to renewable sources can lead to substantial fuel savings and meaningful reductions in environmental pollutants. In Iran, a large portion of the country's electricity is generated by fossil-fuel power plants. Increasing the use of renewable-energy plants as an alternative to fossil-fuel facilities can prevent power outages and reduce other damages caused by reliance on fossil fuels. Solar power is one of the most important renewable resources, though solar irradiation levels vary across different parts of the world; the highest levels lie along the Earth's solar belt. Iran is in high-irradiation zones, and studies show that through innovative ideas, modern technologies and mobile mechanical structures that track sunlight at the time of panel installation and during energy generation, a considerable share of the country's power needs could be supplied. Iran enjoys more than 300 sunny days in more than two-thirds of its territory, with an average solar irradiation of 4.5–5.5 kWh per square meter per day, placing it among countries with strong solar potential. The metropolis of Tehran lies between 51°17' to 51°33' E longitude and 35°36' to 35°44' N latitude,

at an elevation range of 900 to 1,800 meters above sea level. According to the latest official census conducted in 2006, Tehran had a population of 8,694,000. In this context, meeting part of Tehran's electricity demand through renewable sources is of great importance. In 2017, I set out to focus research on establishing and operating small-scale renewable-energy power stations installed on taxi terminus shelters, BRT stations, pedestrian bridges, car parks of recreational and sports centers, and the rooftops of mosques and schools—using mobile mechanical structures that track sunlight and deploying equipment designed to maximize power output at the time of installation. Evaluating available equipment and systems to identify weaknesses, update their data inventories, conduct feasibility studies for expanding renewable-energy projects, and train stakeholders across Tehran's urban network remain key requirements for improving the management and development of renewable-energy initiatives.

Importance & necessity

With rising demand from end-users, the need for electricity generation has increased. At the same time, higher natural-gas prices and regulatory emphasis on limiting greenhouse-gas emissions

have pushed up the cost of fossil-fuel-based electricity production. This has encouraged a shift toward alternative energy sources, including solar electricity generation through photovoltaic systems. Major advantages of distributed generation across most renewable-energy power plants include civil-defense resilience, enhanced energy security, and reduced grid losses due to their proximity to consumption points. A notable portion of electricity generated in renewable-energy facilities is injected directly into distribution networks, where it is consumed at the same voltage level. By contrast, electricity produced by thermal power plants lacks these advantages and must pass through transmission, sub-transmission and distribution stages before reaching end-users. As a result, when grid losses are taken into account, electricity generated by renewables can be considered equivalent to higher-volume thermal generation. Furthermore, the consumption of various energy carriers—particularly fossil fuels—remains the primary cause of air pollution, greenhouse-gas emissions and climate change. Greenhouse gases, produced largely by human industrial activity, not only contribute to pollution but also alter atmospheric composition and drive climate shifts.



Given Iran's position on the solar belt, the need for stable power generation, the imperative to avoid blackouts for end-users, the importance of environmental protection, and the requirement to curb air pollutants and greenhouse-gas emissions—alongside national objectives outlined in the country's Seventh Development Plan concerning energy management, sustainable consumption, integration of renewables into public transport and urban infrastructure, and the establishment of strategic energy-management systems in major municipalities—the deployment of small-scale renewable-energy power stations has become essential. In addition, the scalable nature and lower costs of such plants enable private-sector participation and help foster a broader culture of clean-energy consumption.

Only 5% of Urmia Lake's water remaining: *Expert*

Yet we 'set records' in export of water-intensive products

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

it stands upon the precipice of absolute annihilation. Estimates indicate that a mere 5% to 6% of the water remains within the body of the lake, and its current volume has been reported as less than 40 million cubic meters; a figure that, in actuality, signifies total desiccation. At present, only a tenuous and dispersed stratum of water is visible in certain regions of the lake.

Years of endeavor to revive the lake, from cloud seeding and deep-water extraction to inter-basin water transfer, have not borne fruit because they centered upon the production of water instead of the management of consumption. Experts warn that, without immediate rectification of consumption patterns, modern agriculture, alternative livelihoods, and transparent public communication, the lake shall, in the near future, stand upon the threshold of complete annihilation and effacement from the map of Iran.

According to the president of the Urmia Lake Research Institute, this catastrophe, transcending a local environmental issue, constitutes an emblem of the paradox of water governance in Iran; while the lake's watershed experiences the most severe drought years of the past 50 years and precipitation has precipitously diminished, the unrestrained expansion of agricultural lands and the establishment of water-intensive industries such as steel and water-intensive orchards persist. Urban water consumption, at three to seven times the global standard, the unregulated extraction of strategic subterranean reserves, and land subsidence delineate an image of the absence of integrated management of water and soil resources. The persistence of such a condition not only seals all apertures of hope for the revival of Urmia Lake but also engenders consequences such as saline dust storms, the proliferation of diseases, mass migrations, and even security threats.

Below is the full exclusive interview of Iran Daily with Kamran Zeinalzadeh, president of the Urmia Lake Research Institute at the University of Urmia, regarding the origins, determinants, and consequences of the desiccation of Lake Urmia and the remaining paths for its salvation:

IRAN DAILY: First, tell us about the condition of Urmia Lake; the news is disquieting. Does any hope for the lake's revival still remain?

ZEINALZADEH: Urmia Lake has, for more than a decade, in actuality, become a seasonal lake, and its initial functions have either been forfeited or subjected to grave threat, to the extent that the lake now endures its toughest days.

For years, our measurement and reading of the lake's water level have lacked requisite precision because the volume of water has diminished severely, and today, one may declare that the water within the lake is exceedingly trifling. Solely upon a dispersed surface and with a limited thickness does aqueous accumulation exist.

Estimates reveal that approximately 5% to 6% of the water remains within the body of the lake, and with this quantity, one may, in actuality, declare that the lake has desiccated. In the past 5 to 6 years, this watershed has traversed the most severe hydrological years of the country in the past 50 years. In these decades, we have experienced profoundly arid years, and simultaneously and paradoxically, the unrestrained expansion of lands and the establishment of water-intensive industries, from steel to agriculture-dependent industries and water-intensive products, have continued.

The catastrophe that, today, has determined the condition of Urmia Lake is graver than the lake's own crisis. For decades, all attention has been directed toward the lake, and endeavors have been pursued regarding its revival. However, because of an erroneous confrontation with the issue, the desiccation of the lake and its watershed has not been halted. During these years, whenever precipitation has increased, a temporary amelioration in the water level has been visible, and whenever precipitation has decreased, the condition of the lake has again deteriorated.

Within the human-activity domain, the strategies and approaches chosen have been erroneous. Yet they continue to persist, and the severity of

Urmia Lake, the azure gem of northwestern Iran and the greatest hypersaline lake of the Middle East, which once, with an expanse of approximately 5,000 square kilometers and a volume surpassing 30 billion cubic meters of water, cultivated a unique ecosystem within the province of Azerbaijan, today, subsists within the most arduous days of its existence.

For more than a decade, this aqueous expanse has metamorphosed into a seasonal and fragmented lake and has forfeited its fundamental vital functions, from the regulation of the local climate to the habitat of migratory birds, and

Kamran Zeinalzadeh



Boats are left stranded on the bed of Lake Urmia in northwestern Iran on November 15, 2025, as the lake edges nearer to complete desiccation.
● SEYED KAZEM YOUSEFI/ILNA

the damages has expanded tremendously.

What do you consider the origin and principal cause of the current catastrophe?

If one examines the composition of agricultural production in recent years within the lake's basin, and reviews the list of products exported from this region to other provinces or even

outside the country, almost all of them are water-intensive. How is it conceivable that Urmia Lake, with that vastness, has today become almost devoid of water, yet in the plains surrounding it and in its green regions, no patches of desiccation are visible? And simultaneously, the slopes of the mountains have transformed into orchards containing stone-fruit trees such as peaches, nectarines,

and other highly water-intensive species. This image demonstrates that no effective governance over water and soil exists.

The more we converse about the revival of Urmia Lake, if policies and approaches remain uncorrected, the conditions shall, in actuality, become more severe because these public warnings concerning the desiccation of the lake's water resources occasion-

ally generate a false exhilaration and encourage certain opportunistic individuals to utilize more water resources, exploit national lands, change land use, and expand agricultural lands without regulation, and we merely observe this process.

Urmia Lake constitutes a catastrophe unto itself. However, the root of this ailment is more significant than the lake's own crisis. We are not only losing the lake, but the life of the surrounding human settlements is also being threatened. Experts have warned for years that, perhaps with severe climatic transformations, specific scenarios, and a change of approach, one may somewhat ameliorate the lake's condition. However, subterranean water resources, which are immensely valuable reserves and the result of thousands of years of gradual accumulation and guarantee the survival of the present and future generations, have been extensively extracted in the past 15 to 20 years. This question arises: how are these reserves supposed to be replaced in the future?

With this water, we have produced agricultural products. However, we have neither created sustainable wealth nor rendered the future more secure; instead, we have also imperiled the continuity of life. These waters have both become inaccessible and, with unrestrained extraction, land subsidence has emerged in many areas as a secondary consequence.

For years, endeavors have been undertaken to revive Urmia Lake. Why have these approaches not succeeded?

Under current conditions, the revival of Urmia Lake has become exceedingly difficult; to articulate it precisely, now, no sufficient water exists for the revival of the lake. A collection of peculiar and theatrical approaches, including projects that constitute an amalgamation of scientific delusion and political considerations, such as the utilization of deep waters, cloud seeding, or inter-basin water transfer, possess neither the capacity to ameliorate the condition of the lake and subterranean water resources nor even



If one examines the composition of agricultural production in recent years within the lake's basin, and reviews the list of products exported from this region to other provinces or even outside the country, almost all of them are water-intensive. How is it conceivable that Urmia Lake, with that vastness, has today become almost devoid of water, yet in the plains surrounding it and in its green regions, no patches of desiccation are visible?



The photo shows the thin layer of water that exists under the bridge in this tiny part of Lake Urmia, northwestern Iran, on November 15, 2025.
● SEYED KAZEM YOUSEFI/ILNA

a guarantee to halt the process of degradation and depletion of these resources. As long as water-consumption management remains unrectified, no sustainable path stands before us. Today, no water exists for the revival of the lake; the lake has lost most, and perhaps all, of its water. Even for agriculture, no sufficient water exists, and beyond all, in certain regions, even for potable water supply, we confront grave limitations. Water management and its consumption pattern have remained neglected for years, and unsustainable development, without attention to the climatic capacities of the region, has pursued its course. On one side, we confront the reality of climate transformation and a drastic decline in precipitation, and on the other side, we confront an explosion in water consumption in all sectors. For several years, the subterranean reserves of the lake's watershed have diminished. However, simultaneously, agricultural lands continue to expand. In such conditions, this fundamental question arises: when water resources have drastically declined, how is this expansion of farms and orchards justified? How are water-intensive products such as sugar beet, alfalfa, fodder, watermelon, vegetables, and tomatoes produced and even exported? This contradiction delineates a lucid image of a profound paradox in water governance: a basin that suffers from extreme water scarcity possesses limitations even for the potable water of its inhabitants. However, simultaneously, it becomes a record-holder in the production and exportation of water-intensive products. The watershed of Urmia Lake constitutes only one example of water-resource management at the national level. Today, Tehran is situated within even more catastrophic conditions, and many basins in the west and east of the country confront analogous conditions. Urban water consumption is at least three times the global standard; in some cities, this number has been reported as high as six or seven times, although the share of potable water in comparison with the total renewable resources is minimal. These numbers demonstrate that a large portion of the inhabitants of these regions remain unaware of the depth of the catastrophe and continue to live with the same consumption pattern of 50 or 60 years ago. If no water exists for the revival of the lake, for agriculture, and even for potable water, how does this level of consumption continue? From where is this water supplied? The answer is clear: a significant portion of this demand is supplied from non-renewable and strategic reserves; reserves that must be

utilized only under ultra-critical conditions and for minimal potable needs. However, they are extracted continuously without oversight or prudence. For this reason, in appearance, green landscapes and cultivated lands are still visible, while in reality, we have approached the end of the reserves, and now we witness that, in actuality, no water remains within the lake, and sooner or later, the announcement of the exhaustion of subterranean water reserves shall be formally declared.

inates in global-scale climate change. However, the reality is that a lake with an expanse of approximately 5,000 square kilometers and a volume of approximately 30 billion cubic meters of water has transformed into a desiccated desert. This transformation, unequivocally, influences the local and regional climate, wind patterns, hazes, and the health of inhabitants, and it may result in the emergence of diverse diseases. Simultaneously, the same destructive pattern that has brought the lake to this

times beyond the actual need and possesses low efficiency, but the unrestrained usage of fertilizer and pesticide has also produced extensive environmental contamination. The transition to modern and intelligent agriculture, accompanied by the development of other economic spheres such as ecotourism, more sustainable utilization of border potentials, and the creation of alternative livelihoods that require little water yet are highly productive, may delineate a more sustainable trajectory for the region.

catastrophe in the domain of subterranean water resources, and the danger of this second catastrophe is nearer and more immediate. Prior to experiencing all the consequences of the lake's desiccation, we shall confront the repercussions of extensive subterranean water depletion. The origin of both catastrophes is identical, and if the principal factor — the erroneous pattern of exploitation and water governance — is not controlled, both shall propel us toward a form of hydrological bankruptcy. From the perspective of one who, for years, alongside other specialists, has expended time and energy upon Urmia Lake, the principal anxiety today concerns, more than the lake itself, the precipitous and unregulated depletion of subterranean water resources and the unauthorized extraction of surface resources. If this process continues, it shall reach an irreversible point, such that even the occurrence of great precipitation and large floods shall not be capable of restoring the subsided lands to their previous condition. In truth, today, Urmia Lake, with its desiccation and its ensuing repercussions, has manifested its reaction to these imprudences. Now, we witness the uprising of particulates from the bed of the lake in the form of hazes, perceptible transformations in the local climate, and the gradual expansion of problems. In actuality, we remain at the inception of the consequences. Perhaps, by conveying a minimal quantity of water to the bed of the lake and maintaining it in a moist condition, one may control a portion of the severe consequences. Watersheds exist around the region. However, because of decreased precipitation and unrestrained extraction, no water remains behind the dams to be released toward the lake. The Headquarters for the Revival of Lake Urmia, under current conditions, continues its efforts. However, their unavoidable priority constitutes the provision of potable water and sanitation for the region, and, given the limitation of resources, no share remains for the lake. If, in the forthcoming years, precipitation improves and, simultaneously, through cohesive management, one can halt unrestrained extraction and even allocate a minimal quantity of water to keep the bed of the lake moist, one may control certain consequences such as hazes. Nevertheless, if the depletion of subterranean waters and land subsidence continue, even under a scenario of the return of high-precipitation periods, the possibility of restoring the land to its previous condition shall not exist. This reality must be considered within all forms of planning.

The principal solution constitutes a global and well-tested one; contrary to certain presumptions, the issue of saving the lake is not resolved through the production of water or resorting to extravagant and peculiar technological approaches. The reality is that we consume water far beyond ecological capacity, and no resource exists to replace this magnitude of consumption. Our development trajectory must not advance by relying upon traditional and expansive agriculture, but must move toward modern agriculture.

The reality is that, simultaneously with the catastrophe of the lake, we confront a greater catastrophe in the domain of subterranean water resources, and the danger of this second catastrophe is nearer and more immediate.



The water-intensive nectarine stone-fruit is being sorted at this orchard on the outskirts of Urmia city, northwestern Iran, on August 14, 2016. urmia-city.blog.ir

Thus, may one declare that grave negligence has occurred in the domain of water-resource management? What we observe today, more than mere negligence, constitutes a sign of the absence of effective governance over water and soil. Integrated management of water and soil resources, in practice, does not exist, and the perspective of officials regarding this domain still resembles that of 60 or 70 years ago. The colossal edifices of the related ministries, from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Energy, and the multitude of universities and scientific institutions, have not yet culminated in practical and effective management of water and soil, and the systematic utilization of international experience is also exceedingly limited. In practice, things have been abandoned, with the justification that perhaps such temporary abandonment reduces livelihood and economic pressures, while this approach has not only failed to produce any meaningful improvement in livelihoods, but has also exposed the environmental and economic structures of the country to irreparable damage and may even constitute a source of security threats in the near future. A significant portion of today's water problems, of course, orig-

condition is being repeated today regarding subterranean water resources, and the precipitous depletion of these resources shall render the future of water management far more arduous. **As the Director of the Urmia Lake Studies Research Institute, who has worked and researched in this domain for years, what solution do you propose for saving the lake?** The principal solution constitutes a global and well-tested one; contrary to certain presumptions, the issue of saving the lake is not resolved through the production of water or resorting to extravagant and peculiar technological approaches. The reality is that we consume water far beyond ecological capacity, and no resource exists to replace this magnitude of consumption. Therefore, we must, with speed, rectify the consumption pattern and place demand management at the forefront. Our development trajectory must not advance by relying upon traditional and expansive agriculture, but must move toward modern agriculture. This transformation signifies the restriction and diminution of agricultural lands and, in contrast, the enhancement of productivity per unit area. At present, not only is water consumption several

If this change of approach does not occur and public participation is not secured, the catastrophe shall reach an irreversible point. Perhaps the first essential step constitutes transparent and sincere communication regarding the true dimensions of the catastrophe. Today, neither the public nor even a segment of officials possesses an understanding proportionate to the depth of the catastrophic condition, and everyday thinking dominates decision-making. Through the augmentation of public awareness, the attraction of local participation, targeted investment in the rectification of agricultural patterns, support for alternative livelihoods, and the decisive reduction of water consumption, we must act before we reach an irreversible point. Under such conditions, with reliance upon societal cooperation and, naturally, a relative improvement in precipitation, one may maintain hope for amelioration. **So, we have not yet reached an irreversible stage; is that correct? And with consumption management, the rectification of the agricultural sector, and reliance upon precipitation, may one hope for the lake's revival?** The reality is that, simultaneously with the catastrophe of the lake, we confront a greater



A saline dust storm originating in the semi-dry bed of Lake Urmia, northwestern Iran, has surrounded cars passing nearby on August 31, 2019. [SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA](http://soheil-faraji/isna)



The saline dust storms have desiccated the trees of this orchard, situated near the shrinking Urmia Lake, northwestern Iran, on October 8, 2017. [AMIR SADEGHI/FARS](http://amir-sadeghi/fars)

World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships: Iran collects eight medals, claims men's title

Sports Desk

Iran captured six medals, including three golds, to secure the men's title at the World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya. The Iranian women's squad earned a gold and a bronze to finish behind Türkiye, South Korea, and Morocco in the team standings. The final day of the inaugural event saw Mohammad Alizadeh take silver in the men's -87kg class, while Matin Rezaei claimed a bronze in the men's -68kg category. Alizadeh began his campaign with a straight-round victory over Serbia's Ognjen Radaković, then rallied from behind to defeat Spanish top seed Sergio Troitino 2-1 (0-1, 6-5, 6-5). The highlight of his run came in the semifinal against Brazilian Henrique Marques, where he once again fought back to beat the reigning world senior champion and earn a spot in the final against Kazakhstan's Batyrkhan Toleugali. Alizadeh's title bid ultimately fell short, as he suffered a 2-0 defeat in the final, with Toleugali adding the gold to his 2022 World Junior Championships

triumph.

Earlier in the day, Rezaei – also a 2022 world junior champion – defeated Morocco's Reda Khomani before overcoming neutral athletes Ivan Findziukevich and Pavel Lukichev, all without dropping a round. A semifinal loss to eventual gold medalist Berkay Erer of Türkiye left the Iranian joint third alongside Egypt's Omar Muhamed Fathy. It was Rezaei's fourth international bronze, following podium finishes at the 2023 World Senior Championships, the 2023 Asian Games, and last year's Asian Championships. Saina Karimi, who won a stunning gold at the Islamic Solidarity Games last month, was the only other Iranian in action on the final day. She fell short of the podium in the women's -46kg division after a quarterfinal defeat to neutral Russian athlete Alisa Angelova. Iran enjoyed further recognition during Saturday's closing ceremony, as Majid Aflaki was named Best Men's Coach, while Abolfazl Zandi received the award for Most Valuable Player in the men's category. Zandi – a world senior champion in late October – capped a brilliant five-week stretch by



Iran's Abolfazl Zandi (R), pictured in the men's -58kg final, was named the Men's Most Valuable Player at the inaugural World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO

winning gold in the -58kg division with a straight-round victory over Russian neutral athlete Magomedg Magomedov on the opening day. The final victory rounded out an emphatic run for the Iranian sensation, who completed a clean sweep of five 2-0 victories, scoring a total 131 points, while conceding only 23. Radin Zeinali and Ammirreza Gholami were Iran's other men's gold medalists. Zeinali defeated Türkiye's Omer Furkan Korpe 2-1 to win the -74kg crown on Friday, one day after Gholami edged Spanish top seed Mikel Fernandez Garcia (3-2, 8-8, 7-6) to claim the -80kg title. World junior champion Amir-mohammad Ashrafi (+87kg) added a bronze to Iran's tally, helping Aflaki's men finish ahead of Türkiye (two golds and one silver) and Kazakhstan (two golds and one bronze) in the standings. Iran's two women's med-



als came courtesy of Mobina Nematzadeh and Hasti Mohammadi. Nematzadeh, a bronze medalist at last year's Paris Olympics, bounced back from a disappointing performance at November's Senior World Championships to defeat Türki-

ye's Sila Irmak Uzuncavdar 2-1 (9-3, 7-12, 5-1) in the final and secure gold in the -53kg division. Mohammadi, who also won bronze at the Islamic Solidarity Games, suffered a semifinal setback against reigning world under-18 champion Amina Dehaoui of Morocco, finishing with

another international bronze in the -57kg category. More than 450 participants from 75 countries competed over four days at Nairobi's Moi International Sports Centre. The second edition of the tournament will take place in Samokov, Bulgaria, in 2027.

Iranian Ma'soumi to represent Azerbaijan at 2027 Wrestling Worlds



Sports Desk

Freestyle wrestler Amirreza Ma'soumi is set to represent Azerbaijan at the 2027 World Championships, the Iranian prodigy confirmed on Saturday. The 20-year-old standout has dominated the super-heavyweight division across multiple age groups in recent years, collecting six world gold medals – including last year's junior and under-23 titles. He also competed for Iran's senior team at February's Ranking Series event in Zagreb and then at the Asian Championships in March, winning the 125kg gold at both tournaments. However, Ma'soumi – who fell short against compatriot Amirhossein Zare' in last

year's Iranian Olympic trials – saw his hopes of securing a place at this September's World Championships dashed after suffering another defeat to the reigning world champion in the International Takhti Cup final in Isfahan in May. Ma'soumi had previously shared a photo of himself with his father and personal coach, Fardin Ma'soumi, during a training session with Azerbaijan's national team in Baku earlier in July – a hint that he was considering continuing his international career abroad. But the Iranian Wrestling Federation refused to issue a letter of consent for one of the country's brightest wrestling talents. Under United World Wrestling regulations, a wrestler

must either obtain approval from his home federation or refrain from competing internationally for three years before switching national allegiance. "I really wanted to continue winning medals for my country, but there are certain issues I don't wish to discuss right now. I don't believe in explaining myself, as it is a sign of weakness. The day will come when I prove through my achievements what Iranian wrestling has lost," Ma'soumi said of this new chapter in his career. He also addressed the time of his return to international competition, saying: "I will be eligible to wrestle for Azerbaijan from the 2027 World Championships, and I am firm in my deci-

sion."

The Azerbaijan Wrestling Federation reportedly made an official approach for Ma'soumi in July, offering 300,000 Swiss francs for his services – an offer rejected by Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian federation. "We've always granted approval for lower-ranked wrestlers to represent other countries, but Ma'soumi is a top-tier asset for us, already a favorite for world and Olympic golds. He has simply been unlucky to have Zare' as a domestic rival, though I believe the competition between them will push both to new heights. I'm sure they are by far the world's top two in their weight class," Dabir said at the time. "The national team's interests come first. I like Amirreza as if he were my own son, and I just hope he receives the right guidance," added the former world and Olympic champion. Ma'soumi's decision means wrestling fans could witness a rare all-Iranian showdown under different flags at the 2027 Wrestling World Championships – and potentially again at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Asia Triathlon Youth and U15 Championships: Iranian trio sweeps men's youth podium

Sports Desk

An Iranian trio dominated the men's youth category at the Asia Triathlon Youth and U15 Championships, completing a historic clean sweep of the podium in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Saturday. Sadra Ebrahimi claimed gold in the closely contested multisport event – which includes swimming, cycling, and running – finishing with a total time of 26:47 minutes, just one second ahead of his silver-winning compatriot Parsa Rasoul. Borna Naqiyeh secured the all-Iranian podium by clocking 26:49 to take the bronze. Aliasghar Keshavarzian was the other Iranian in action, placing 17th with a time of 28:08. The three-stage event featured 31 athletes competing in a 400m swim, a 10km cycling race, and a 2.5km run. Iran also fielded four competitors in the men's under-15 division, though none were able to reach the podium. Mohammad-Parsa Siampour finished sixth with



28:19, while Arvin Moqimi (29:40) and Mohammad-Sam Qahremani (29:56) placed 15th and 16th, respectively. Amirali Masaali completed the course in 30:30, finishing 18th in the 23-man field. Athletes from 13 Asian countries took part in the two-day tournament.

Iran learns hosting venues at 2026 World Cup



Sports Desk

Iran will begin its 2026 World Cup campaign against New Zealand at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, at 21:00 Eastern Time on June 15 next year. The two-day marathon for the draw of the expanded 48-team tournament – co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada – concluded on Saturday with the announcement of venues

and kickoff times for the global showpiece. The timing of Team Melli's opener will be disappointing for fans inside Iran, who will have to stay awake into the early hours of Tuesday morning to watch their national team in action. Iran's second Group G match will be against European heavyweight Belgium, again at SoFi Stadium, on June 21 at 15:00 Eastern Time.

The team will then travel to Seattle, Washington, to face Egypt in its final group-stage game at Lumen Field on June 26 at 23:00 Eastern Time. With eight of the third-placed teams across the 12 groups advancing to the round of 32, Iranian supporters will feel optimistic about their team's chances of securing a first-ever knockout-stage berth at the seventh attempt. Iran topped Group A in the third round of Asian qualifying to seal a fourth consecutive World Cup appearance, suffering its only defeat in 10 matches in a dead rubber away to Qatar in June. The opening match of the 23rd World Cup will feature co-host Mexico against South Africa at the historic Azteca Stadium in Mexico City – the iconic venue of the 1970 and 1986 finals – on June 11.

Ancient neolithic settlement discovered in Dehdasht

Iranica Desk

A 7,000-year-old prehistoric village has been discovered at the heart of the ancient city of Belad-e Shapur in Dehdasht, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, according to Zabi-hollah Masoudinia, the head of the archaeological excavation team. He noted that no archaeological research had previously been carried out in this ancient city, adding that this project marks the first scientific investigation in the area. Following the issuance of excavation permits, several exploratory trenches were opened across different parts of the city, Mehr News Agency reported. Masoudinia explained that the upper layers revealed remains from the Middle and Late Islamic periods, but once those were removed, archaeologists

encountered an extraordinary discovery: deep prehistoric layers. Initial studies indicate that these layers belong to the 5th millennium BCE. The findings show that this part of historic Dehdasht once hosted a village dating to the late Neolithic and early Chalcolithic periods — an occupation previously unknown to researchers. Masoudinia emphasized that the discovery could be highly significant and may greatly elevate the historical value of Dehdasht. He added that architectural remains from the later Islamic centuries are visible on the surface of the site. Archaeologists created a small excavation unit to remove these layers and examine deeper architectural phases dating to the Safavid and possibly Seljuk periods. During this process, they uncovered

pottery fragments and cultural materials from the 6th and 5th millennia BCE. He also pointed to another noteworthy find: fragments of heat-treated stones, which provide evidence of a unique prehistoric technique for warming liquids. The method involved heating stones in a fire and then placing them into containers filled with water or milk. Masoudinia stressed that the test trenches indicate the cultural and historical roots of Dehdasht extend at least to the late 6th and early 5th millennia BCE. Referring to aerial photographs from 1956, he noted that the images showed a prehistoric mound near the Dehdasht caravanseraï, which was later destroyed by urban development. Nevertheless, archaeologists have now recovered evidence from that same Neolithic village.



● sobhezagros.ir

He added that the excavations have helped researchers better identify the boundaries and original structure of the his-

torical site, revealing that many of today's streets, houses, and alleyways were built directly atop the ancient mound. The

team also identified remnants of old qanats used for water transfer in the northern part of the city.

Restoration efforts transform Bardsir into tourism destination



● chtn.ir

Iranica Desk

The Director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Kerman Province has announced the commencement of restoration work on historical buildings in Bardsir, following the allocation of the necessary funding. Morteza Nikroo stated that the restoration and organization of the historic Bahador-al-Molk House in Bardsir, as well as the historic bathhouse in the Lalezar district of the city, are currently underway using provincial budget allocations, according to chtn.ir. He explained that the ongoing restoration operations at this stage include hand excavation, repairs with mud-brick, restoration and maintenance of rooftop brickwork, structural reinforcement, and grouting — all key components of the efforts to revive Bardsir's historic sites. Emphasizing that the restoration and preservation of the province's historical buildings remain a top priority for the Organization, Nikroo noted that paying careful attention to the valuable architectural textures and heritage of the city not only plays a critical role in safeguarding Bardsir's cultural and historical identity but also lays the groundwork for sustainable tourism development. This approach creates new opportunities to introduce and showcase the city's unique capacities to both domestic

and international visitors. He concluded by highlighting that with the continuation of restoration efforts, strengthened public participation, and close cooperation among government agencies, Bardsir can be transformed into one of the province's key cultural tourism destinations. "We will continue to pursue this path with hope, careful planning, and a specialized approach," he said. Bardsir is a city whose historical sources trace its origins back to the Sassanid era. It is located 65 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Kerman and boasts a long and rich civilizational history. Even after the advent of Islam, Bardsir remained a city of considerable significance, a fact confirmed by the surviving monuments from subsequent Islamic dynasties. The city is situated in a valley oriented from northwest to southeast. Bardsir is bordered to the north by the counties of Kerman and Rafsanjan, to the east by Kerman and Jiroft, to the south by Baft and Sirjan, and to the west by Sirjan and Rafsanjan counties. Historically, Bardsir served as an important area for grazing and hunting. The primary occupation of Bardsir's residents has traditionally been agriculture. Today, however, the city has also developed into an industrial center, hosting numerous factories, including those producing rosewater and copper.

Revived Shir Chaharsouq Cistern emerges as cultural landmark again

Iranica Desk

Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Torbat Heydariyeh, Ali Mohammadi, announced that the restoration of the historic Shir Chaharsouq Cistern has not only drawn tourists but also transformed the site into a pivotal center for educating students about the artistry, ingenuity, and traditional water management techniques of Iran. The project has created substantial opportunities in both cultural tourism and educational programs. Speaking to ISNA, Mohammadi detailed the history of the cistern's construction and its recent restoration. "Recognized as one of the largest cisterns in Khorasan Razavi Province, Shir Chaharsouq was originally built in the late Safavid era and remained in active use by locals until the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution. Its location was particularly significant, positioned at the main crossroads of the old city — Chaharsouq — surrounded by numerous public-benefit structures, many of which were constructed by the city's founder, Es'haq Khan Qara'ei." Mohammadi continued, "The cistern maintained its primary function until the city's modern piped water network was introduced, after which it gradually fell into neglect. Unauthorized construction and alterations over the years further compromised the structure. Shops were built atop the cistern, sewage pipes

were routed through it, and parts of the reservoir were filled with debris and soil, leaving the site nearly in ruins." "After extensive research and the collection of historical documentation, it became evident that the cistern could still be restored. With the cooperation of the judiciary, illegal occupants were removed, and the process of debris clearance and structural cleanup began. A partnership with the private sector then facilitated plans to transform the cistern into a cultural and tourism hub," Mohammadi said. Describing the restoration process, he noted, "From the removal of encroachments to the completion of repairs, the project took roughly two years. During this time, critical sections — including the Pashir (inlet), reservoir, windcatchers, and staircases — were carefully repaired and re-mortared, and accumulated debris was removed. The greatest challenge was the absence of intact windcatchers, which are essential for ventilating the cistern and had been destroyed during prior construction. With municipal support, new windcatchers were installed along the street frontage, both to ensure proper airflow and to serve as a symbolic visual reminder of this historic landmark for pedestrians." Mohammadi added that another significant challenge was the presence of nine shops atop the cistern, whose water and sewage lines had caused serious structural damage. "This remains one of the main concerns for restorers, and com-

prehensive measures are underway to resolve it. Additionally, the construction of a clinic above the Pashir and surrounding areas has posed further obstacles to proper preservation." Highlighting the cistern's distinctive features compared to similar projects in the province, Mohammadi said, "Its location at the heart of the historic city adds immense cultural and identity value. Moreover, its expansive size, five main interior columns, and domed roof with intricate brickwork decoration distinguish it architecturally from many other cisterns in the region." He emphasized the project's role in preserving Torbat Heydariyeh's historical and cultural identity. "Since its reopening, numerous long-time residents have visited the site, recalling memories of the past and recognizing the cistern as a vital part of the city's heritage. While the city has multiple historic bathhouses and mosques, it lacked a functional cistern. The restoration of Shir Chaharsouq has filled a critical gap in showcasing the city's public-benefit heritage." "Today, Shir Chaharsouq not only attracts tourists but also functions as an important educational site, giving students hands-on insight into Iran's traditional water management techniques, engineering ingenuity, and creative approaches to resource management. It presents significant potential for cultural tourism and learning initiatives," he concluded.



● IRNA



● IRNA



Iranian documentary enters Brazil's PLANETA.doc competition

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmakers Saied Nabi and Maryam Khadivi have sent their documentary 'Forgotten' into the international line-up of Brazil's 10th PLANETA.doc festival, which runs nationwide from September 25 to December 25. The organizers placed the film in the festival's main competitive strand, a section

that draws leading environmental titles from across the world and brings in heavy-weight broadcasters such as National Geographic, Love Nature, Canal Off and Travel Box Brazil, ILNA reported. Screenings roll out through December in cinemas in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília and Florianópolis, with schools and universities given free, non-down-loadable access through the

festival's official platforms. The documentary centers on Abdolkazem Saki, an Iranian world and Paralympic champion who lives beside the Hoor al-Azim wetland on the country's southwest border. The film sets Saki's daily battle to stay in peak condition against the declining fortunes of the wetland, a place whose future, the directors say, "rises and falls" with the same fragility as the

athlete's sporting career. PLANETA.doc promotes a shared language across science, economics and the arts. Its remit ranges from biodiversity and renewable energy to sustainable innovation and environmental governance. In a festival statement, organizers said the time had come for disciplines to "pull together" and build a common vocabulary for sustainable development.

Nabi and Khadivi are already internationally recognized for their previous documentary, 'Standing with the Wolf,' which earned the Legendary Hero award in Russia, nominations for the Golden Panda in China and the Golden Sun in Spain, a diploma of honor at China's international festival, and two further nominations at festivals in Kolkata and Delhi.

'My Little Moon' shines at Nigeria's Lagos Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Ali Atshani's film 'My Little Moon,' produced by American Brightlight Film Productions, won three major awards at the 5th Universal Movie Awards (UNIMA) in Lagos, Nigeria, taking Best Screenplay, Best Sound and Best Original Score. The film had been nominated in eight key categories, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Cinematography, ILNA reported. The festival, one of West Africa's most significant cinematic events, showcased films from across the globe in Surulere, Lagos. Founded in 2020 by Hope Obiuma Opara, the Universal Movie Awards (UNIMA) promotes professional standards in film and television and supports international filmmakers, combining competition with cultural development in the region.



'My Little Moon' tells the story of two teenage girls whose online friendship spans continents. One lives in the United States, the other in Iran. Their bond demonstrates that love and friendship "know no boundaries," crossing cultural and geographical divides. The film stars Natalia Polo, Nicole Amato, Brent Kublick and Matthew Fireman. Its success

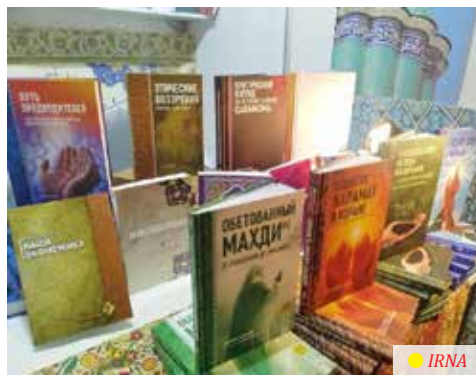
highlights the growing reach of Iranian-related cinema, which continues to earn accolades at international festivals. The Universal Movie Awards concluded with the awards ceremony on November 29, attended by filmmakers from Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States, cementing the festival's role as a hub for global cinema in West Africa.

Moscow non-fiction fair displays over 40 Iranian titles

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran unveiled over 40 recently translated works into Russian at the International Non-Fiction Book Fair held in the historic Gostiny Dvor hall, part of the Moscow International Book Fair running from December 4 to 8. The launch was attended by Iran's Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, and featured publications from Sadra Publishing House, affiliated with the Ibn Sina Islamic Studies Foundation, IRNA reported. The new titles included a study of Islamic tombstones in Kubači, Dagestan, a two-volume collection on marriage and women in the statements of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, a treatise

on "Money in Islamic Economy", a three-volume guide to Iranian miniature painting, and a critical history of the United States. Several works were designated as recommended reads by the fair's curators. Ambassador Jalali said Iranian books in Russian attract a substantial readership in Russia. Sadra Publishing alone has released more than 500 titles in Russian, many of them translations of major Iranian works. He highlighted the strength of the collection in Iranology, Islamic studies and philosophy. Masoud Ahmadvand, cultural attaché at the Iranian Embassy, confirmed that more than 15 Iranian publishers are represented at the pavilion. Many of their



titles focus on children, families, and general readers. A number of books also mark the 1,500th anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Nakhle Sabz Publication presented Russian editions of "Stay Celestial", a devotional book on Lady Fatimah, alongside a three-volume history of colonialism and nine new children's

titles. The publisher aims to provide a "cultural basket" for families with diverse worldviews while avoiding duplication of translated works. The fair brings together over 400 publishers from Russia and abroad and is a key platform for cultural exchange between Iran and Russian-speaking audiences.

When overload meets algorithms, public turns away from news

By Alireza Sepahvand
Journalist

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In a world where human attention has become a scarce commodity, media outlets and platforms compete fiercely for it, often by compressing information and favoring superficial content. Traditional media, struggling to survive, have increasingly pivoted to short videos, emotional headlines, and fast-paced storytelling.

A growing phenomenon is emerging, widespread disinterest in news. This is no longer an isolated or temporary behavior but a social-media reality with profound implications for public awareness, civic engagement, and the quality of democracy. How has a society that is more exposed to information than ever become so alienated from it?

News fatigue, psychology of constant stress

Part of the answer lies in human psychology. Over the past decade, audiences have faced an unprecedented volume of reports on political crises, corruption, discrimination, war, economic downturns, and human tragedies. In a world where crises arrive without pause and media outlets em-

ploy alarmist and emotional tones to capture attention, audiences endure a continuous emotional load, leading gradually to mental erosion. Psychologists call this "news fatigue," a state in which people lose the energy or desire to engage with news and unconsciously avoid it. This avoidance acts as a form of psychological protection, helping reduce the anxiety, sadness, or helplessness triggered by negative reports. Simply put, the weight of global problems feels beyond personal capacity, prompting people to distance themselves to preserve mental calm.

Superficial content, brain's hunger for instant reward

Digital platforms have intensified this trend. Most media consumption now occurs on platforms designed to maximize user retention. Algorithms prioritize fast, short, entertaining content—material requiring minimal mental effort and delivering immediate reward.

In this environment, serious news, complex, demanding focus, often non-entertaining, loses out. The brain naturally seeks the easiest route to reward, especially under daily stress. Short humorous videos, simplified educational content, and emotionally charged narratives dominate attention, leaving in-depth reporting behind.

Algorithms, cycle of avoidance

Human behavior is only half the story, and the structure of digital technologies plays an equally decisive role. Social media algorithms prioritize engagement, meaning posts with more likes, comments, or shares gain greater visibility. Negative or serious news rarely prompts such reactions, so it is gradually pushed out of view, while uplifting, entertaining, or emotionally gratifying content is systematically amplified.

This creates a vicious cycle in which audiences tire of news and engage less, algorithms interpret the drop in engagement as disinterest, news appears less frequently, and even those who want to stay informed miss critical updates. Over time, this pattern turns into a habit. Disinterest in news becomes the outcome of an ongoing interaction between human psychology and digital logic, not merely an individual choice.

Collapse of attention, engagement economy

The pursuit of attention drives media toward brevity and sensationalism, sacrificing depth, nuance, and quality. As a result, audiences cannot develop informed, rational relationships with news, they either turn away or consume simplified versions.

Lost solutions amid constant warnings

Much of the disinterest stems from media focusing on crises without explaining causes, providing context, or suggesting pathways for action. When news fails to inform constructively, it breeds collective anxiety. Feeling powerless, audiences retreat further, reinforcing avoidance.

Social, political consequences

News avoidance has broader effects:

- Decline in public awareness: Societies disengaged from current

events lose understanding of major developments.

- Rise of misinformation: The void left by credible news fills with rumors and sensational content.
- Drop in civic participation: Studies link news consumption directly to civic and political engagement.

- Weakening collective analysis: Without accurate reporting, societies struggle to evaluate reality critically.

- Reinforcement of oversimplified narratives: Superficial accounts easily replace nuanced understanding with distorted interpretations.

Restoring trust, engagement

Experts suggest several steps to reverse this trend, including producing solution-focused content rather than crisis-only coverage, offering accurate yet accessible narratives that simplify complexity without oversimplifying, using algorithms more responsibly across platforms and regulatory bodies, strengthening media-literacy education, and improving transparency in the news-production process to rebuild trust. Restoring the audience's relationship with news will take time. Without it, the gap between global realities and public understanding will only deepen.



AUCTION SJSCO. B140404

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 10,000 tons **STEEL BILLET** (Size 150 x 150 mm) on basis of FOB Bandar Abbas according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjSCO.ir, through the Sales and customer portal, Tender and Foreign Tender section. All documentation will be provided electronically. All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, December 15, 2025.**

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