

# ICOM Iran seeks emergency funds, presses global action to protect cultural assets

## Arts & Culture Desk

Monir Kholqi, head of Iran's National Committee of Museums (ICOM), said the country has activated emergency funding mechanisms and urged international bodies to act to protect cultural assets following US-Israeli attacks that began on February 28. Kholqi said a "red alert" was declared for historical sites within hours, with urgent notices sent to UNESCO's national commission, ICOM headquarters and regional councils warning against military activity near museums and heritage landmarks, IRNA reported. She described a co-

ordinated legal, technical and diplomatic response at national and international levels.

Citing the 1954 Hague Convention, she called on global institutions to use legal and diplomatic tools to halt threats against what she described as a "core" of human civilization.

Iran has submitted a detailed report on damage to Tehran's UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace complex, citing structural and decorative losses. It flagged deep fissures in buildings including Shams-ol-Emareh and the Windcatcher Mansion, along with up to 90% destruction of ornamental

woodwork and damage to museum equipment.

Kholqi said the filing seeks formal condemnation, accountability for any treaty violations and the dispatch of expert assessment missions.

She outlined a five-point demand to ICOM and UNESCO including firm condemnation, increased diplomatic pressure, expanded technical and financial support, rapid assessment teams and stronger coordination. The proposal also calls for recognising attacks on cultural assets as crimes against shared human legacy and activating emergency funds to address chemical

contamination.

A separate report documented pollution from strikes on oil infrastructure, including acid rain and hydrocarbon deposits affecting museum facades in Tehran, as well as blast-wave damage to sites in Isfahan and other regions. Kholqi urged implementation of "Blue Shield" protocols, including protective emblems on cultural sites to reinforce their civilian status under international law, warning that violations could be prosecutable. She also called on museum officials nationwide to submit rapid, documented damage assessments to support legal



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and conservation efforts. Debris and shattered glass

are seen inside a damaged hall at the Golestan Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage

site, following a US-Israeli strike in Tehran, Iran beginning on February 28.



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## Chinese visitors turn out for Iranian antiquities show as cooperation deepens

### Arts & Culture Desk

A traveling exhibition of Iranian antiquities has drawn strong public interest in northern China, with visitors in Hohhot turning out in large numbers as images of the artifacts circulate widely on Chinese social media, IRNA reported on Saturday citing the South China Morning Post.

The exhibition, widely billed as 'Ancient Persia and the Silk Road,' features 151

artifacts from five Iranian museums and has been on display at the Inner Mongolia Museum since December 2025. Organizers extended the show into early April 2026 to coincide with the Qingming holiday, reflecting sustained.

The collection traces Iran's rich artistic and historical legacy through ceramics, metalwork, glassware and miniature paintings, with a particular focus on the Safavid era and centuries

of cultural exchange along the Silk Road. Displayed far from regional tensions, the works have become a focal point for Chinese audiences seeking a deeper understanding of Iran's civilizational heritage.

The exhibition forms part of a broader cultural tour that opened in Guangzhou on March 31, 2025, ran through June 17, and later moved to Nanjing before arriving in Hohhot. It shows expanding cultural ties be-

tween Tehran and Beijing, where museum cooperation has steadily gained traction.

Chinese officials stressed the universal value of cultural heritage. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said "shared" heritage belongs to all humanity and must be safeguarded from harm during conflicts.

Hongda Fan, director of the China-Middle East Center at Shaoying University, said cultural initiatives help

counter "incomplete" narratives shaped by conflict-focused coverage. "Cultural exchange engages people directly," he said, adding that stronger mutual understanding can "pave the way" for broader cooperation.

Parallel exhibitions of Iranian artifacts in other Chinese cities, including Shanghai, point to a widening cultural footprint as the two countries deepen people-to-people engagement.

## Iranian GR team arrives in Bishkek ahead of Asian Ch'ships



The Iranian Greco-Roman wrestling squad and coaching staff pose for a photo before a training session in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 3, 2026.

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### Sports Desk

The Iranian Greco-Roman squad arrived in Bishkek on Friday ahead of the upcoming Asian Wrestling Championships, which will kick off in the Kyrgyz capital on Monday.

The Iranian team held its first training session on Friday afternoon, following an exhausting road trip to get out of the country amid flight cancellations due to the ongoing war in the region. The 10-man squad will still be the favourite to lift the team trophy after a glorious international season last year, in which the country completed a clean sweep of four world team titles across different age classes.

Head coach Hassan Rangraz has named a mix of youth and experience for the showpiece, with world and Olympic champion Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) spearheading the roster. Amin Mirzazadeh will be the wrestler to beat in the 130kg class, stepping

into the event as the reigning two-time world gold medalist.

Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg) will look to pick up where he left off in the 2025 season, where he won four golds at international tournaments, including the top prize on his Senior World Championships debut last September.

Farrokhi also claimed gold at the Zagreb Open, the Islamic Solidarity Games, and the U23 World Championships last year before being named the Greco-Roman Breakout Performer of the Year by the United World Wrestling. Joining the trio in the Iranian squad are Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi (55kg), Ali Ahmadi Vafa (60kg), Erfan Jarkani (63kg), Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg), Mohammad-Javad Rezaei (72kg), Ali Oskou (77kg), and Mohammad-Amin Hosseini (82kg).

The tournament will also serve as part of the Iranian team selection process for the World Championships and the Asian Games later in the summer.

## Tehran, Ankara in talks over pre-World Cup friendly

### Sports Desk

The Football Federations of Iran and Turkey are in talks over a friendly game between the two national teams next month, Iranian Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali announced on Friday.

Both sides will be among the 48 teams competing at the upcoming FIFA World Cup, which will be cohosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada from June 11.

Iran is scheduled to kick off its World Cup campaign against New Zealand at the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California, on June 16, before facing Belgium at the same arena five days later.

The final round of the Group G fixtures will see Iran take on Egypt in Seattle, Washington, on June 26.

Turkey, meanwhile, defeated Kosovo 1-0 in one of four Eu-



Iranian national football team players walk onto the pitch for a friendly game against Nigeria in Antalya, Turkey, on March 27, 2026.

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ropean playoff finals last week to book a place in the finals for the first time in 24 years.

The European team will be part of Group D, alongside USA, Paraguay, and Australia. Despite all domestic league matches suspended in the country since February 28 following the breakout of a military conflict between Iran and a US-Israeli coalition, the

Iranian national team played in a friendly double header against Nigeria and Costa Rica in Antalya, Turkey, in the latest international break.

Team Melli fell to a 2-1 loss to Nigeria on March 27 but hammered Costa Rica 5-0 four days later.

Questions still remain regarding Iran's participation at the global showpiece after Don-

yamali said that the country's National Security Council "will make a final call on the matter." Last week, the Sports Ministry prohibited all Iranian teams and athletes from visiting "adversary countries" for safety reasons amid the ongoing war in the region.

US President Donald Trump said in mid-March that Team Melli would be "welcome to The World Cup", but he doesn't believe "it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety."

However, FIFA President Gianni Infantino visited Antalya to watch Iran's victory over Costa Rica from the stands and offer his full backing for Team Melli despite Trump's bold remarks.

Iran will be looking to progress beyond the group phase at the World Cup finals for the first time in seven attempts.

## Iran's 3x3 basketball team gearing up for Asian Beach Games

### Sports Desk

The Iranian 3x3 basketball national team is preparing for the upcoming Asian Beach Games.

The sixth edition of the multi-sport event will kick off in Sanya, China, on April 22.

Despite all sporting competitions postponed in the country amid Iran's

ongoing military conflict with the United States and Israel, the Iranian eight-man squad has been involved in a training camp in the northern province of Mazandaran under head coach Mohammad Sistani since March 28.

In a recent visit that underscored the importance of the team's preparation, Javad Davari, the president

of the Iranian Basketball Federation, met with the players and the coaching staff, emphasizing the critical nature of the upcoming competition and its significance for the country. The federation president's visit and his assurance of full support have boosted the team's morale and created a positive atmosphere within the camp.



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