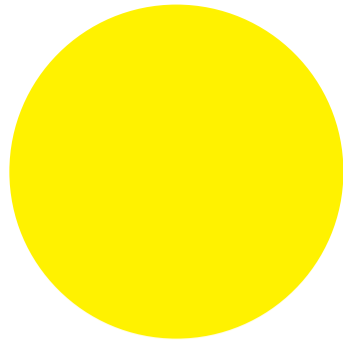


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Iran Daily

Vol. 8093 • Thursday, April 16, 2026 • Farvardin 27, 1405 • Shawwal 27, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) welcomes Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir heading a diplomatic delegation in Iran on April 15, 2026.
IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY

Iran's right to claim compensation from Arab states under Article 16



By **Asgar Ghahremanpour**
Editor-in-chief

OPINION

From the perspective of general international law, the attacks carried out by the United States and Israel against the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran—particularly those launched through military bases located in certain Arab states—constitute an internationally wrongful act within the terms of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. This assessment is not merely theoretical, but is grounded in the explicit positions and condemnations of authoritative international legal bodies.

The International Commission of Jurists has characterized the United States and Israeli attacks as “unlaw-

ful attacks” in violation of the United Nations Charter, and has specifically regarded the strike on the school in Minab and the killing of children as a clear breach of international law. In parallel, the Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, as adopted by the International Law Commission, affirm unequivocally that any internationally wrongful act of a State entails international responsibility.

On this basis, the countermeasures undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran in response to these attacks fall within the framework of the inherent right of self-defense, as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter, as well as Article 21 of the Articles on State Responsibility. Article 21 explicitly provides that the wrongfulness of an act is precluded if it constitutes a lawful measure of self-defense in accor-

dance with the Charter. Accordingly, Iran's military response against bases from which attacks against its territory were launched is legally justified under international law.

However, the central issue addressed in this op-ed concerns Iran's right to claim compensation from Arab States hosting these military bases. In this regard, the primary legal basis is Article 16 of the Articles on State Responsibility, which provides that a State which knowingly aids or assists another State in the commission of an internationally wrongful act is itself internationally responsible.

The provision of territory, airspace, military infrastructure, radar systems, and logistical support enabling attacks against Iran constitutes a clear example of “aid or assistance” stipulated in Article 16. The official commentary of the International Law Commission

further confirms that placing a state's territory at the disposal of another state for the commission of an internationally wrongful act engages the international responsibility of the assisting state.

Accordingly, the responsibility of Arab States is not merely political or moral in nature, but constitutes a direct legal responsibility under customary international law and the codified framework of state responsibility. This responsibility arises from their facilitating role in the commission of attacks against Iran and exists in parallel with the primary responsibility of the United States and Israel.

The significance of this issue is further reinforced by the fact that the attacks in question targeted manifestly civilian objects, including the Minab school. Attacks against educational facilities and the killing of children con-

stitute a clear violation of the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law. The condemnation of such attacks by international bodies confirms the unlawfulness of the underlying conduct and consequently strengthens the responsibility of assisting states.

Under Articles 1 and 2 of the Articles on Responsibility of States, international responsibility arises whenever conduct is attributable to a State and constitutes a breach of an international obligation of that State. In the present case, the conduct of Arab States—through the authorization of the use of military bases—is attributable to them and constitutes a breach of their obligation to respect the principle of the prohibition of the use of force and not rendering assistance in the commission of unlawful acts.

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Pezeshkian: Iran seeks no war, adheres to constructive interaction with world

Pakistani delegation in Tehran to deliver US message

International Desk

The Iranian president said on Wednesday that the Islamic Republic is not seeking war and has always emphasized the importance of dialogue and constructive interaction with all countries as there are regional efforts to pave the way for holding the second round of negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

"Iran is not seeking war and instability, instead, it has always emphasized the importance of dialogue and constructive interaction with all countries of the world. However, any attempt to impose any will on the country or force it to surrender is doomed to fail and the Iranian nation will never cave in to such an approach," Masoud Pezeshkian said during a visit to Tehran Province's Emergency Organization.

His remarks came days after Friday's negotiations between Iran and the United States in Pakistan to put an end to a US-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic failed to produce an agreement due to the American delegation's excessive demands.

The talks followed a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire agreement which temporarily ended the aggression which began on February 28. The 14-day ceasefire expires on April 22.

During the aggression, the US and Israel assassinated Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several high-ranking military commanders and killed more than 3,000 civilians.

"What justified military aggression on our country? What justification exists within international law and humanitarian principles for targeting civilians, elites, children, and destroying vital centers such as schools and hospitals?" Pezeshkian asked.

The Iranian president also criticized current double standards in international policies, an apparent reference to policies pursued by Western powers, stressing that any military offensive against sovereign countries is in sheer violation of all accepted international principles.

Resumption of negotiations

Mediators moved closer Wednesday

to extending the ceasefire between the US and Iran and restarting negotiations to salvage the fragile truce before it expires next week.

The US blockade on Iranian ports and renewed Iranian threats have imperiled the week-old agreement, but regional officials said Wednesday they were making progress, telling The Associated Press that the US and Iran had given an "in principle agreement" to extend it to allow for more diplomacy.

Before the two-week ceasefire expires on April 22, mediators are pushing for a compromise on three main sticking points that derailed direct talks last weekend — Iran's nuclear program, the Strait of Hormuz and compensation for wartime damages — according to one of the regional officials who is involved in mediation efforts.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. World leaders including US President Donald Trump and UN Secretary-General António Guterres said on Tuesday that revived talks in the upcoming days were likely.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd R) visits the Emergency Medical Services Organization of Tehran on April 15, 2026.
president.ir

"You should stay there [Islamabad], really, because something could be happening over the next two days, and we're more inclined to go there," Trump was quoted as saying in an interview with the New York Post.

Pakistan's Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir arrived in Tehran at the head of a high-level political-security delegation, carrying a new message

from the US. Munir's delegation, which includes representatives from the Foreign Ministry, security institutions and technical experts, landed in the Iranian capital on Wednesday. The purpose of the visit is to deliver a US message to the Iranian leadership and to plan the next round of negotiations.

Arms used in Iran war part of Persian Gulf states' arsenals: UN envoy

International Desk

Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani said on Tuesday that physical remnants recovered from weapons used in recent aggression by the US and Israel against Iran confirm these arms were part of the arsenals of some Persian Gulf Arab states.

Iravani made the remarks in a letter addressed to Secretary-General António Guterres and Security Council President Jamal Fares Alrowaie in response to a letter from Bahrain to the UN in which it had leveled accusations against the Islamic Republic.

"The Islamic Republic categorically dismisses as wholly unfounded and deliberately misleading the assertions claimed in said letter. In this regard, I am further instructed to place on record the definitive affirmation of the clear international responsibility borne by the same States as a consequence of their own internationally wrongful acts." Iravani detailed a response to a



letter dated April 7, 2026, from Bahrain's UN representative, which deliberately omits a "central and determinative fact": an unlawful armed attack against the Islamic Republic of Iran on February 28, 2026, carried out by the United States and Israel.

The letter said that the attack was a flagrant violation of international law, including the prohibition of the use of force and the norm against aggression.

It further notes that the aggressors utilized the "facilities, territory and airspace of certain States in the region" for planning and executing these acts of aggression. As a specific example, the letter cited "barbaric terrorist attacks

against a school in Minab," which resulted in the deaths of at least 168 primary school children and were launched from the territory of these states.

Monitoring data from Iran's Armed Forces, according to the letter, indicates the repeated use of these states' territories and airspace for "planning, preparation, arming and execution of unlawful military operations against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"Physical remnants from the weaponry used in the aggression, identified in multiple Iranian cities, confirm they were part of the arsenals of certain Persian Gulf states," it added.

It further argued that this evidence demonstrates complicity and direct engagement in acts of aggression as defined by international law.

The letter emphasized that such conduct engages the international responsibility of these states, requiring them to make "full reparation, including, in particular, the provision of full compensation for the damage caused."

Top cmdr. warns US over illegal naval blockade in Persian Gulf

Iran's top military commander, Major General Ali Abdollahi, issued a stern warning to the United States, saying that any attempt to block maritime trade in the Persian Gulf or Sea of Oman would be met with decisive action.

In remarks made on Wednesday, General Abdollahi, the commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, emphasized that if the US continues its illegal maritime blockade and creates insecurity for Iranian commercial vessels and oil tankers, it would be a violation of the ceasefire agreement, Press TV reported.

He added that Iran's military forces would not allow any exports or imports to take place in the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, or the Red Sea. "Should the aggressive and terrorist United States continue its illegal action of naval blockade in the region and creates insecurity for Iranian commercial ships and oil tankers, this action by the US will be the precursor to violating the ceasefire, and the powerful Iranian armed forces will not allow any exports or imports to continue in the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Red Sea," he said.

"Iran will take strong measures to defend its national sovereignty and interests," he added. On Monday, US President Donald Trump announced a sweeping naval blockade of Iranian ports, declaring that the US Navy would "seek and interdict every vessel" attempting to enter or leave Iran's coastal areas.

The move was framed as a response to col-



Ali Abdollahi

lapsed peace talks in Pakistan and Iran's administration of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz. But within hours, the blockade showed its first cracks. At least four Iran-linked vessels, including a US-sanctioned Chinese oil tanker, transited the strait without incident.

Shipping data cited by Reuters showed the first full day of the blockade made little difference to Strait of Hormuz traffic, with at least eight ships crossing the waterway.

The blockade has created even further uncertainty for shippers, oil companies and war risk insurers. Traffic remains at only a fraction of the 130-plus daily crossings before the US and Israel's war on Iran began on February 28, industry sources said.

The US Central Command claims it has defined a 21,000-square-mile enforcement zone along Iran's coastline, with at least 15 warships monitoring shipping transponder data, radar, and aerial patrols. The stated objective is to stop Iranian oil exports.

Parliament speaker, Emirati VP discuss de-escalation efforts after war

International Desk

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and the United Arab Emirates Vice President Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan discussed de-escalation efforts as the US-Israeli aggression against Iran has plunged the region into a wider conflict.

The UAE state news agency WAM reported on Wednesday that discussions between the Emirati official over the phone with the Iranian speaker dwelt on regional developments and ways to de-escalate tensions in the region.

Qalibaf led the Iranian delegation during recent negotiations between Iran and the US in Pakistan's capital. The phone call was the first contact



Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf



Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan

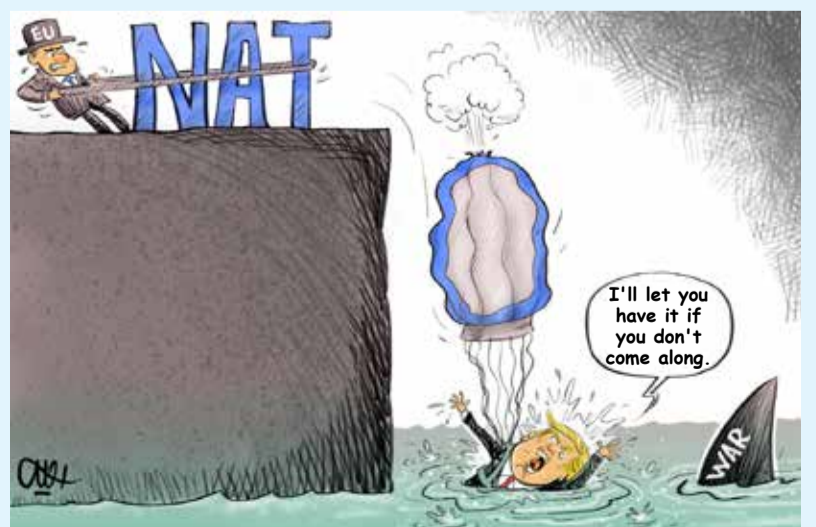
between the two countries' officials since the establishment of a two-week ceasefire between Iran and the US, which temporarily ended the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. During the aggression, the US military bases and economic benefits in

the UAE as well as the Arab country's refineries and oil fields were the target of Iran's retaliatory attacks.

Iran had earlier warned the regional countries about the US's use of their territories to launch strikes on Iran.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



US-Israeli strikes on renewables affecting 3,500 rural households: *Minister*

Economy Desk

Iran's Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi condemned US-Israeli strikes on the country's renewable energy infrastructure, stating that an attack on a warehouse of small-scale solar equipment caused approximately \$1.2 million in losses and destroyed supplies intended to provide electricity for 3,500 households in deprived rural areas, according to a letter to the director-general of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Aliabadi condemned attacks on the country's renewable energy facilities and called for urgent international action to protect such infrastructure as part of global efforts to combat climate change, according to the letter to Francesco La Camera. In the letter, Aliabadi stated that since the US-Israeli aggression began on February 28, the two regimes have committed numerous crimes, including killing civilians and attacking schools, hospitals, residential areas, and energy and industrial infrastructure across Iran.

"In line with these crimes, in the March 8 airstrike, US-Israeli fighter jets attacked one of Iran's deprived counties, destroying a warehouse of small-scale solar power plant equipment and causing serious damage to its contents," Aliabadi wrote. "The financial loss to the aforementioned warehouse, which included equipment such as solar inverters, cables, and other stored supplies, is estimated at around \$1.2 million, which could have been used to supply electricity to 3,500 households." "The destroyed equipment in this attack was part of the components needed to build solar power plants that are under construction to help supply electricity to people in deprived rural areas of Iran and to protect the environment," he added. Aliabadi emphasized that the environmental damage from destroying such a solar power plant extends beyond the material value of the equipment and includes two main parts: "clean energy non-benefit" and "pollution from equipment destruction." In this regard, he said, the annual inactivity of this power

plant leads to the emission of approximately 37,000 tons of additional carbon dioxide per year, which is irreparable damage to the ozone layer and global warming. The minister also characterized US President Donald Trump's threats to attack Iran's power plants and electricity infrastructure as contrary to the principles of international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions. "Attacks on vital civilian infrastructure, including water and electricity facilities, are prohibited," he wrote. The US and the Zionist regime launched their aggression against the country on February 28, with civilian targets and infrastructure among the primary sites struck. The country has fully restored power and water services across the country despite sustaining thousands serious incidents in its electricity grid and damage to hundreds of points in its water distribution network during strikes.

300 water infrastructure points damaged
Separately, Hashem Amini, CEO



of Iran's Water and Wastewater Engineering Company, said, "Since the beginning of the enemy's attacks, sections of urban water transmission lines, distribution networks, reservoirs, pumping stations, and related energy supply equipment for water supply systems have been attacked and damaged at 300 points across the country." "Through measures taken, the damages were quickly resolved to create the least disruption in

people's lives," Amini said. "The most significant recorded damages include damage to some water transmission lines, harm to storage reservoirs, disruption to pumping stations, and damage to some electrical equipment of water supply facilities," he added. "Operational forces from provincial water and wastewater companies, by mobilizing resources, dispatching specialized teams, and utilizing crisis

management capacities, have begun repair and reconstruction operations in the damaged areas." "Despite these attacks and the damages incurred, drinking water supply across the country is being carried out without interruption and in a stable manner, and water supply, storage, and distribution systems are operating under emergency management and using alternative resources," Amini said.

Iran, Qatar highlight intertwined regional interests, US expulsion



Economy Desk

Iran's Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd and Qatar's Transport Minister Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani discussed bilateral cooperation and regional developments in a phone call, with the former saying regional interests are intertwined and joint cooperation is needed to restore stability and calm across the region. She emphasized that regional countries must work together to push the United States out of the region, according to

Mehr News Agency. Sadegh Malvajerd, stressing the necessity of regional convergence, reiterated that joint efforts are essential to restore stability. "Iran, Qatar and other regional countries should push the United States out of the region so that calm returns," she said. "Regional conditions should be organized among regional countries as quickly as possible and calm should be restored, but not with the help of foreign countries," she added. Al Thani, affirming these views, said he agrees with

her approach regarding reducing tensions and moving toward peace in the region. He expressed satisfaction with the call, saying he hopes that as conditions calm, the two sides can further expand and accelerate their level of cooperation. "Currently, the region faces a difficult situation, and we hope to overcome this crisis together so that regional interests are secured and no party is harmed, because in such conditions there is no winner, neither politically nor economically," the Qatari minister added. Sadegh emphasized that war is an ominous phenomenon for all and that she agrees with this perspective. "In this recent conflict, the United States was once again the initiator," she said. After 40 days of US-Israeli war against Iran that began on February 28, Iran and the United States announced a 15-day cease-

fire last Wednesday with Pakistan's mediation. The war, which has left thousands dead in the West Asian region, has caused a 50% increase in oil prices and disrupted supplies of oil, gas, fertilizer, helium and other commodities, while also affecting sectors such as tourism and air transport. Following initial US and Israeli air strikes in February, Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint through which approximately one-fifth of global oil supplies transit. The country has prohibited ships of hostile states from passing through the Strait of Hormuz since February 28. Al Thani concluded that if needed, Qatar is prepared to pursue related issues through international institutions to resolve existing problems and restore calm to the region. "We hope to continue talks in better conditions in the near future," he said.

Summer power cuts expected to sink if 14 mega-projects completed

Economy Desk

Iran could face less electricity imbalance this summer if favorable conditions persist and 14 mega-projects are implemented, Deputy Energy Minister Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi said, while warning that wartime conditions may delay some plans. Planning to supply electricity during the country's peak summer consumption days began months ago, and the 14 mega-projects designed by the Ministry of Energy have been in the execution track for a long time, Rajabi Mashhadi said, ISNA reported. "Limitations and electricity imbalance have decreased," he said, adding that he hopes the implementation of the 14 mega-projects will place electricity supply in a more stable condition, though the execution of some projects may be delayed or become unfeasible due to war conditions. "Our entire effort is to pass the summer with the least problems and limitations," he said. Measures have been taken to

supply electricity to citizens under wartime conditions, the deputy minister noted. Iran's electricity grid is one of the most extensive interconnected networks in the region, spanning more than 1 million kilometers, and in most parts of the country, electricity is supplied from multiple paths and multiple power plants, he said. This feature ensures that in case of an incident on one line or at one power plant, the shortfall can be compensated from other routes, maintaining grid stability, he added. The vast majority of equipment for the electricity industry is produced domestically, and the supply chain from production to distribution is entirely local, meaning that in case of any damage, equipment can be supplied and losses compensated within the country, Rajabi Mashhadi said. Over the past 22 years, Iran's electricity grid has not experienced a nationwide collapse, while many developed and regional countries have



faced multiple widespread blackouts in the past five years, he noted. This year, Iran has also seen more favorable weather conditions compared to last year, leading to lower electricity consumption relative to the same period last year, he said. Peak electricity demand in the third week of the Iranian year, which began on March 21, reached 38,755 megawatts on Thursday, April 9. This compares to 49,817 megawatts during the same period last year, representing a 22% decrease in national electricity consumption, he added. "However, it should not be forgotten that the country is in special conditions, and people must continue to practice optimal electricity consumption," Rajabi Mashhadi said.

Iran's right to ...

Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran is entitled, under the principle of full reparation, to seek compensation for the following categories of damage:

- damage to urban infrastructure and public facilities;
- damage resulting from attacks on educational and medical institutions;
- material and moral injury suffered by Iranian nationals;
- costs of reconstruction;
- damage arising from the violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This right to reparation is fully consistent with, and indeed complementary to, Iran's right of self-defense. On the one hand, Iran was entitled to target military bases from which attacks were launched; on the other hand, it retains the right to seek compensation from Arab States that facilitated such attacks. From a technical legal standpoint, Iran's claims may also be grounded in Article 17 of the Articles on State Responsibility, particularly where certain Arab States may have played a role in directing, controlling, or coordinating military oper-

ations, thereby elevating their responsibility beyond mere assistance to a level of direction and control. In light of the above, the Islamic Republic of Iran is legally entitled to pursue formal claims for compensation against Arab States hosting the relevant military bases. Under international law, both the underlying internationally wrongful act and the assisting role of these States have been established and condemned by authoritative legal sources, thereby giving rise to international responsibility and corresponding obligations of reparation.

Petchem exports halted to shore up domestic demand

Economy Desk

Iran suspended exports of all petrochemical products "until further notice" following US-Israeli attacks on its two main petrochemical hubs in the south earlier this month. An official directive, issued by Mohammad Mottaqi, director of downstream petrochemical industries development, bans all exports to priorities domestic demand, Tasnim News Agency reported on Wednesday, publishing an image of the document. "Under the current circumstances and the damage caused by the war and attacks of the American and

Zionist enemy against the country, supporting domestic industries and consumers is of very high importance and sensitivity," Mottaqi said in the written directive addressed to petrochemical plant executives, marked "immediate-urgent." He instructed companies to return export cargoes that had not yet received customs clearance to the domestic market to prevent shortages of feedstock needed for downstream industries. The directive also demands that domestic sale prices for petroleum, refining and petrochemical products be "fixed" in line with a Supreme National Security Council order at international levels

prevailing before February 28, when the United States and Israel launched the aggression on Iran. Air strikes over several days hit petrochemical facilities in Mahshahr in the southwestern province of Khuzestan and in Asaluyeh in the southern province of Bushehr, damaging installations at multiple companies. The National Iranian Petrochemical Co. (NIPC) has not yet issued an estimate of the damage, but the export ban points to a sector hit hard by the attacks. Iran's nominal petrochemical production capacity has reached 100 million tons per year, with actual output at around 80 million tons.

Reconfiguration of Iran's trade following conflict



● lianvisman.com

PERSPECTIVE

Wars have perpetually constituted one of the most significant causes of disruption within economic and commercial relations among nations. Nevertheless, when such conflicts transpire between major regional or global powers, their ramifications transcend the national level and affect the entirety of the international trade system.

Under ordinary circumstances, commerce among nations materializes upon a foundation of political stability, security of transport routes, access to international financial systems, and mutual trust; however, the eruption of war simultaneously destabilizes these components. Within such a milieu, transaction costs escalate, investment risk augments, and countries find themselves compelled to undertake an immediate reexamination of their respective trade policies.

Within this framework, the assault by the United States of America and the Zionist regime upon Iran on February 28, 2026, can be regarded as a clear example of war's impact upon a nation's trade architecture. This conflict, which arose following years of political tension, economic sanctions, and indirect hostilities, rapidly engendered extensive consequences for Iran's economy and its commercial relationships with the world. Following the commencement of this confrontation, geopolitical hazards within the region intensified dramatically, and numerous pivotal trade routes, particularly within the energy sector and maritime transportation, encountered direct threats.

One of the foremost consequences of this war is a severe disruption to logistical infrastructures and supply chains. Insecurity along maritime routes, heightened transportation insurance costs, and restricted access to

ports and commercial corridors have caused Iran's imports and exports to face serious operational challenges. This situation will impose additional pressure upon the nation's economy, especially concerning the procurement of essential commodities and raw materials for domestic industries. Thus, the war between Iran and the United States in 2026 demonstrated how a military conflict can, within a short period of time, fundamentally transform a country's trade structure.

According to an analysis published by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, this conflict shall not only diminish the volume of foreign trade and elevate its associated costs but shall also influence the long-term orientations of Iran's trade policy. A movement toward self-sufficiency, the substitution of trade partners, and the utilization of alternative exchange

methods represent among the efforts that shall become intensified as a result of this confrontation.

International commerce under warfare

Within the literature of international political economy, war is considered not merely an episodic disruption but rather a structural shock capable of redefining the logic governing the organization of global trade. Historical examinations demonstrate that major military conflicts, beyond causing interruptions in trade flows, have led to a fundamental rearrangement of the institutional, geographical, and sectoral architecture of the international exchange system.

From this perspective, war ought to be regarded not as a deviation from an equilibrium path but as an integral component of the internal dynamics of the inter-

national political-economic system, through which patterns of production, exchange networks, and the distribution of economic power are reconstructed. Within this analytical framework, the present conflict assumes particular significance for it permits the simultaneous examination of the interaction among natural resource dependence, geopolitical constraints, and institutional pressures.

The theoretical literature emphasizes the role of commerce in deterring conflict and considers increased economic interdependence as a factor that reduces the probability of confrontation. Nevertheless, this analytical framework confronts limitations when facing the complex realities of the contemporary global economy. Recent research indicates that the relationship between trade and military tension possesses a



Whereas bilateral interdependence may elevate the costs of tension and exercise a deterrent function, the expansion of multilateral trade and the diversification of partners weaken this interdependence and, under certain circumstances, may even facilitate the occurrence of military tension.

nonlinear character and is dependent upon the network structure of global commerce.

To state the matter with greater precision, whereas bilateral interdependence may elevate the costs of tension and exercise a deterrent function, the expansion of multilateral trade and the diversification of partners weaken this interdependence and, under certain circumstances, may even facilitate the occurrence of military tension. This observation indicates that the analysis of trade under current conditions necessitates moving beyond simplistic bilateral models and progressing toward a networked, multilayered comprehension of economic interactions.

From an analytical standpoint, the most significant consequence of war should be sought in the process of trade reconfiguration, not merely in the reduction of its aggregate volume. Empirical evidence drawn from recent global conflicts, particularly the Russia-Ukraine war, demonstrated that global trade responds to such shocks through mechanisms including substitution and route reconfiguration. This finding suggests that trade networks possess a degree of flexibility that enables adaptation to constraints, although such adaptation typically accompanies changes in cost and efficiency.

Consequently, war may be considered a factor that transforms not only the level but also the structure and quality of trade. The operation of this framework in the case of Iran indicates that the consequences of the present conflict should be analyzed at the intersection of three key factors: geopolitical position, a resource-based economic structure, and institutional constraints arising from sanctions.

The concentration of hydrocarbon resources, together with proximity to strategic chokepoints, such as the Strait of Hormuz, has rendered Iran a structural actor within the global energy market. However, these same characteristics elevate the degree of vulnerability to shocks of this nature.

In this context, one must note the fact that energy markets possess features that complicate their response to supply shocks. Low short-term supply elasticity and the vital role of energy as an intermediate good cause even limited disruptions to generate disproportionate consequences for price levels and economic stability.

On the other hand, a reduction in energy export volume does not necessarily entail a proportional decrease in revenues; rather, it may be partially compensated through price increases. Nevertheless, this situation accompanies heightened uncertainty and instability, which themselves emerge as deterrents to investment and economic planning.

One of the key dimensions in analyzing trade under wartime conditions is the role of trade costs and, especially, logistical costs. Increased security hazards, rising transportation insurance premiums, and disruptions to maritime routes effectively add to the economic distance between nations (when geographical distance remains constant). Within this framework, one may argue that war operates by redefining economic distance.

Furthermore, financial channels play a decisive role in transmitting the effects of war to international trade. Military tension, through its influence upon exchange rates, interest rates, and access to financial facilities, elevates transaction and commercial costs and restricts participation in



▲ Russian President Vladimir Putin (L), with a symbolic BRICS "banknote" in his hand, gestures to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the end of the extended format meeting of the BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, on October 23, 2024.
● ALEXANDER NEMENOV/POOL



Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq (R) and Turkey's Minister of Trade Omer Bolat sign cooperation documents in Tehran, Iran, on December 11, 2024. The Turkish minister noted that they want to revive the preferential trade agreement signed with Iran in 2015. **HURRIYET DAILY NEWS**

global trade; for Iran, which have already confronted financial limitations, this situation may lead to a deepening of financial isolation. Although alternative mechanisms such as bilateral currency agreements or non-dollar payment systems may mitigate some of these restrictions, doubts persist regarding the efficiency and costs of these instruments. Rather than causing a complete cessation of trade, wars redirect commerce toward alternative routes. However, this redirection seldom occurs without cost. Increased transportation distances, diminished transparency, and alterations in the balance of power among trading parties all represent consequences of this process. War exerts multilayered effects not only upon the supply side but also upon the structure and dynamics of global demand. Under such conditions, political preferences, geopolitical alignments, and considerations related to risk management increasingly participate in redefining demand patterns and thereby subject traditional trade routes to transformation. On this basis, the present conflict may be analyzed within a broader and more systematic framework as an instance of the gradual transition from a relatively integrated trading system toward a fragmented, networked order predicated upon political and economic coalitions. During this transition process, international trade neither disappears nor merely experiences a quantitative reduction; rather, it is reproduced and reorganized in novel forms, albeit with higher transaction costs and diminished efficiency. These developments appear to confirm that international trade is inseparably shaped within the context of geopolitical transformations, and war may be regarded as one of the most significant forces reconstructing and directing its structure and function.

Iran's trade during, after war

Under conditions of military conflict and intensified geopolitical uncertainties, the foreign trade structure of nations undergoes fundamental disruption and necessitates rapid rearrangement at the levels of routes, partners, and financial mechanisms. The Iranian economy, as an economy possessing significant dependence upon the importation of essential commodities and production inputs, confronts multifaceted challenges in the foreign trade domain under such circumstances. An examination of Iran's current trade situation reveals that approximately \$15 billion of the nation's annual imports (approximately 20.5% of total imports) is allocated to

essential commodities, including production inputs for protein products (red meat, poultry, and eggs), rice, sugar, cooking oil, and legumes. This degree of dependence heightens the necessity of adopting alternative strategies to sustain procurement under wartime conditions. Within this framework, one of the most important short-term measures constitutes the readjustment of import routes in accordance with war-induced logistical constraints. Specifically, in the domain of rice imports, which amount to approximately 1 million tons annually and are supplied predominantly from India and Pakistan, disruption to the country's southern ports, especially key ports like Shahid Rajaei Port and Imam Khomeini Port, necessitates the utilization of alternative land-based and combined land-sea routes. In this regard, imports from Pakistan via land borders may be used as an immediate and operational route, whereas imports from India may also be redesigned through transit across Pakistan or through the utilization of port capacities in the country's southeast (Chabahar). Similarly, concerning other essential commodities, such as red meat and legumes, the utilization of Central Asian countries' capacities, including Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, together with nations such as Turkey, may be proposed as an effective strategy under wartime conditions. This approach not only reduces dependence upon maritime routes but also enables geographical diversification of import origins. In the domain of cooking oil imports, particularly sunflower oil, focusing upon northern countries' capacities, especially Russia, and utilizing the country's northern ports in the Caspian Sea assumes

particular importance. These ports possess, from operational and hinterland perspectives, the potential capacity to receive several million tons of goods; however, effective exploitation of this capacity necessitates simultaneous reinforcement of maritime and rail transport infrastructure. In this context, the development of the maritime transport fleet on the Caspian Sea and the activation



File photo shows a man inspecting bags of rice in stacks inside a warehouse in Iran. **PRESS TV**

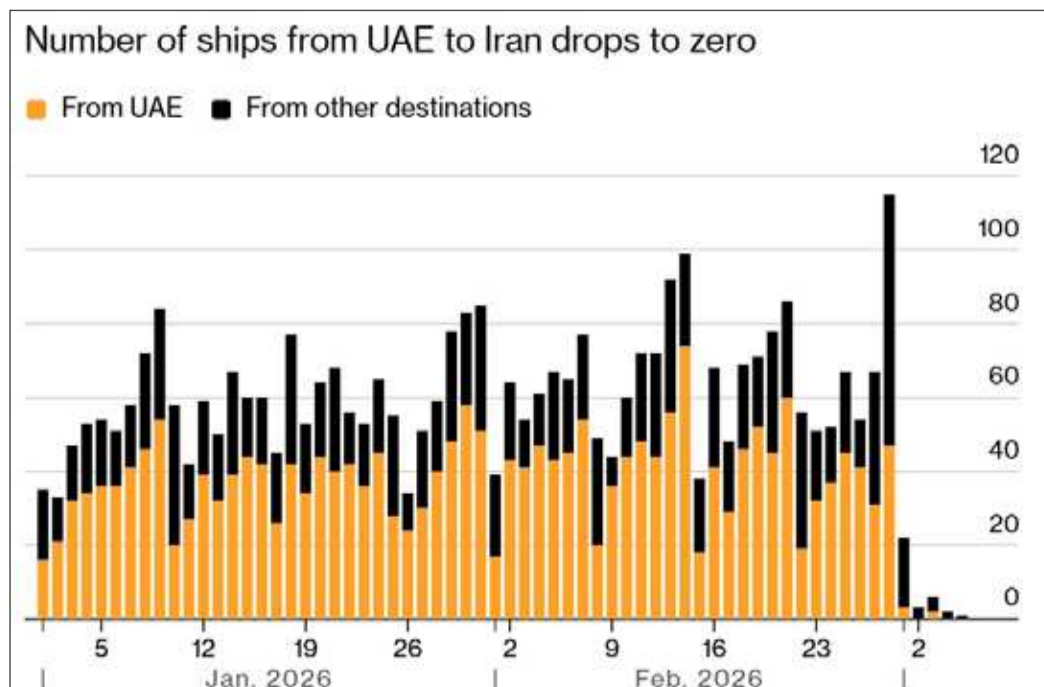
and upgrading of associated rail corridors, especially the Incheh Borun and Sarakhs routes, must be placed high on the agenda of policymakers. Beyond short-term measures, wartime conditions necessitate a fundamental reorientation of the country's foreign trade geographical direction. Traditionally, a substantial portion of Iran's trade was conducted via southern routes and, particularly, through intermediaries, such as the United Arab Emirates. However, recent geopolitical developments and that country's stance in the present conflict underscore the necessity of transitioning from a southern,

sea-based trade paradigm. This shift in approach requires focusing upon the development of alternative corridors, including the International North-South Corridor and the reinforcement of transit routes through nations such as the Republic of Azerbaijan, Russia, Iraq, and Turkey. Within this framework, the development of land-based trade prioritizing commodities such as foodstuffs, construction materials, and light industrial products can play an important role in sustaining trade flows. The reinforcement of border infrastructures, the facilitation of customs processes, and the reduction of non-tariff barriers along these routes constitute among the requirements for achieving this objective. From an institutional and policy perspective, one of the key instruments for rearranging foreign trade is the utilization of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. Under wartime and post-war conditions, these agreements can play a decisive role in altering the country's trade map and creating incentives for economic actors. In this regard, accelerating the implementation and updating of the preferential trade agreement with Turkey, with the active participation of the private sector, and moving toward the conclusion of

a free trade agreement with that country assume great importance. Furthermore, the serious pursuit of concluding and implementing a free trade agreement with Pakistan may be proposed as one of the policy priorities in this domain. In the financial and banking sphere, given the former role of the United Arab Emirates in facilitating Iran's trade financial transfers, the new conditions necessitate the definition of alternative routes for conducting these operations. Within this framework, the utilization of capacities from aligned countries' banks, especially Russia (including VTB



Traditionally, a substantial portion of Iran's trade was conducted via southern routes and, particularly, through intermediaries, such as the United Arab Emirates. However, recent geopolitical developments and that country's stance in the present conflict underscore the necessity of transitioning from a southern, sea-based trade paradigm to alternative corridors, including the International North-South Corridor.



The chart shows that Iran's import from UAE, which was previously one of Iran's top trading partners, dropped to zero shortly after the US-Israeli war on Iran began on February 28, 2026. **AL BANYAN TREE RESEARCH**

Bank), may be considered as an operational route for executing financial transfers. Although the design and groundwork of this mechanism were completed in the Persian calendar year 1402 (2023-2024), its extensive use has not yet occurred, and it is necessary that, during the post-war period, the development and operationalization of this route be placed seriously upon the agenda. At the executive level, the reform and facilitation of customs processes assume particular importance. In this regard, the Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran, within less than one week following the conflict's commencement, announced a set of 11 measures aimed at accelerating and facilitating the clearance of imported goods. The continuation of these measures' implementation until the war's end, together with the reduction of the threshold for applying foreign exchange obligation restrictions, the utilization of percentage-based clearance mechanisms, and the possibility of 100% clearance of essential commodities, can play a decisive role in sustaining the flow of goods procurement under wartime conditions.

Achieving this objective requires complete coordination among the Central Bank of Iran, the Trade Promotion Organization, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, and other relevant authorities until the conclusion of the wartime period. Moreover, the use of the green channel capacity and the definition of common customs standards with aligned countries can contribute to improving the efficiency of the country's trade system. Moreover, targeted governmental support for the export sector, including the provision of transportation subsidies and export insurance under high-risk conditions, plays an important role in preserving and strengthening the country's export capacity. On the long-term horizon and during the post-war period, the reconstruction and reform of Iran's foreign trade structure must be placed on the agenda. This necessitates targeted attraction of foreign investment and active participation in global value chains. Such an approach can contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of Iran's economy and reducing its vulnerability to external shocks. To deepen the analysis of Iran's foreign trade situation during and after the war, an examination of the structure and composition of the country's trade partners assumes particular importance. From this perspective, evaluating the position and role of countries that, for political reasons under wartime conditions, become excluded or restricted from Iran's trade cycle can contribute to a more precise understanding of vulnerability dimensions and also to the identification of alternative capacities.

Within this framework, given the current circumstances of the war and the stances adopted by regional countries, it appears that the majority of member states of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, will gradually exit the list of Iran's primary trade destinations and origins during the wartime period and even on the post-war horizon, or their role shall diminish significantly. This development underscores the necessity of a precise examination of each of these countries' shares in Iran's foreign trade structure.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

World Taekwondo Junior Championships: Zarrinkamar, Soltanian power Iran to double gold on Day 3



Sports Desk

Iranians stole the show on Day 3 of the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, grabbing two golds and a bronze across four weight classes. Hana Zarrinkamar secured back-to-back golds at the competition with a victory over Czechia's Alice Bínová in the women's +68kg final on Tuesday, while Benjamin Soltanian dominated the men's -73kg event without dropping a single round all day. Bahar Tahmasbi settled for a consolation bronze in the women's -42kg event, raising Iran's medal tally to five across three days of



Iran's Hana Zarrinkamar (R) celebrates after winning the women's +68kg gold medal at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on April 14, 2026.
● WORLD TAEKWONDO

action at the Martial Arts Sports Complex in Tashkent's Olympic City.

Zarrinkamar clinched the first round against Bínová by a points gap in swift fashion, then dominated the second to win 11-3. The Iranian started her day with a victory over Greece's Eleni Pramatioti (2-0), then defeated Dutch opponent Nielle Vroegh in three rounds to advance to the last eight, where she overcame Tunisia's Ilef Aleya in straight rounds. A 2-0 win over Croatia's Sara Zizic sent Zarrinkamar into the final.

Soltanian, meanwhile, capped his emphatic run with a 2-0 win over South Korea's Seung Min Ahn. The Iranian delivered a controlled performance in the final, taking the rounds 4-1 and 7-3. After a first-round bye, Soltanian swept Greece's Ioannis Kamakas, Bosnia's Adin Hodzic, Mexico's Joshua Cruz, and Ukraine's Roman Hodyma to book his place in the final.

Tahmasbi got off to a winning start, defeating Egypt's Joudy Mhamoud Ali 2-1, then overcame Russia's Svetlana Selezneva, Germany's Johanna Car Zander, and Spain's Rebeca Jule Saade before a 2-1 loss to South Korea's Geunmi Lee saw her settle for a joint third-place finish alongside Poland's Lena Kaszkowiak.

Amir-Arsalan Ahmadi was the other Iranian in action on Tuesday but suffered a first-round exit in the men's -45kg division, falling 2-1 to Denmark's Yosef Darid Aulagi.

Tuesday's results followed Mohammad-Erfan Khodaei's first gold for the country the previous day in Tashkent, a 2-0 victory over Poland's Antoni Sokolowski in the men's -55kg final — the Iranian's sixth straight-round win of the competition.

Pinar Lotfizadeh had opened Iran's account on Day 1, taking bronze in the women's -59kg class after a last-four defeat to China's Ren Kunyue on Sunday. The 15th edition of the championships — featuring 986 competitors from 115 countries — concludes on Friday.

Iran bagged 11 medals at the previous edition in Chuncheon, South Korea, in 2024, including a remarkable seven golds, to complete a clean sweep of the team titles.

AFC Champions League Elite: Rabiei rues lack of prep, red card as 10-man Tractor exits in last 16

Sports Desk

Tractor FC head coach Mohammad Rabiei regretted his side's lack of preparation after the Iranian top-flight champion fell to a 3-0 defeat against the UAE's Shabab Al Ahli in the last-16 round of the AFC Champions League Elite on Tuesday. Shabab Al Ahli dominated the opening stages at Jeddah's Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium but, as the first half wore on, it was Tractor that started to take the initiative, going into the interval on top.

However, Tractor goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand's 52nd-minute sending-off for a foul on Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun outside the box turned the game in favor of the Emirati outfit. Yuri Cesar scored from the penalty spot 13 minutes later, before Iranian inter-

national midfielder Saeid Ezatolahi doubled the lead with a composed finish 10 minutes from time.

Brazilian striker Mateusão capped off Shabab Al Ahli's victory when he found the net eight minutes into stoppage time.

"The players were really passionate and motivated today, and we were able to keep our shape and discipline, especially in the first half," Rabiei said after the game.

"Our team suffered because for 40 days we have been a long way from training," added the Iranian coach, whose side had not played competitively since February 26 — two days before the United States and Israel initiated a war campaign against Iran. "We managed our energy in the first half with our strategy, and we created opportunities.

"That one incident changed the game," Rabiei



Tractor goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand (L) is shown a red card against Shabab Al Ahli in a last-16 game at the AFC Champions League Elite in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on April 14, 2026.
● AFC

said of the red card. "After we went behind, we did our best to come back and played high-risk football to score the equalizer, but our opponent could use the space behind our defense to score more goals." Meanwhile, Rabiei's opposite number on the Shabab Al Ahli bench, Paulo Sousa,

hailed the victory as "a big step" for his club, adding: "We are working really well. Since 2017, the club have been working to grow the group of players with young players, investing lots for that. "Since my time here last year, my idea has been to create a winning mental-

ity, a culture of winning, looking mainly to be the protagonist in the match.

"For the players and the club, it's one more step that we have reached, and we are looking to recover, focusing on our opponents in the next one and to make another step."

The victory took the Dubai-based club into the last eight of the Asian elite clubs' competition for the first time since 2015, where Sousa's team will meet Thai champion Buriram United at the same venue on Friday.

Elsewhere in the West zone's first knockout round, former Liverpool midfielder Fabinho was on target from the penalty spot in the final seconds of extra time as Saudi Pro League champion Al Ittihad edged out the UAE's Al Wahda 1-0 later on Tuesday to set up a last-eight clash against Japan's FC Machida Zelvia on Friday.

Iran's Valizadeh named Best Wrestler at Asian Championships

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Milad Valizadeh was named the Best Wrestler at the recently concluded Asian Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Valizadeh built on last year's Asian silver and U23 world bronze to dominate the 57kg division, finishing with a 14-3 victory over Mongolian Munkh Erdene Batkhuyag in the final — the first gold medal for Iran in this weight class since Reza Atri's triumph in 2019.

The 21-year-old Iranian, who was also named the Best Attacker with an average of 11 points per bout, accumulated 35 points to complete a clean sweep of three superiority victories in the Kyrgyz capital. Valizadeh averaged just one minute and 51 seconds per match, finishing all his bouts before regulation time.

Meanwhile, Valizadeh's compatriot Mohammad-Mobin Azimi, a gold medalist in the freestyle 92kg event, was picked as the Best Defender af-

Iranian freestyle wrestler Milad Valizadeh (blue) is seen in action against Fuga Sasaki of Japan at the Asian Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on April 10, 2026.
● IAWFIR

ter not conceding a single point across three bouts. U23 world champion Azimi capped off his campaign with an 11-0 victory over Russian-born Magomed Sharipov (representing Bahrain) with just under a minute to go — and 10 seconds after scoring his first takedown of the final.

Kim Kwang-myong of North Korea was named the Most Entertaining Wrestler after claiming two superiority wins and one pinfall victory in four outings en route to the freestyle 61kg title.

Iran bagged a clean sweep of 10 medals, including two golds, to clinch the Greco-Roman title in Bishkek, before the freestyle squad secured the team trophy double for the country, courtesy of four golds, one silver, and three bronze medals.

Vafaei secures spot at World Snooker Championship

Sports Desk

Iran's Hossein Vafaei booked his place at the upcoming Halo World Snooker Championship after back-to-back victories in the qualifiers on Tuesday.

Entering the competition in the third qualifying round, Vafaei defeated Poland's Michał Szubarczyk 10-2, before overcoming China's Gao Yang 10-4 to progress to the main draw, which will kick off at the iconic Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, Britain, on Saturday.

"This morning I was not well at all," Vafaei, who qualified for a



fifth successive year, said after the victory over his Chinese opponent. "It wasn't a great match. My opponent is hungry

and young, and he is my practice partner — every day I practice with him and he's such a great talent, but we didn't play that well.

"I'm fighting as well for my country, for my family, and I'm trying my best and will give it my all. The Crucible is a fantastic place for snooker, and we love to play in front of snooker lovers, especially at the Crucible."

The draw for the final stages of the showpiece will be made today, with the 16 top-seeded players drawn at random against the 16 qualifiers.

● championshipleaguesnooker.co.uk

Iranica Desk

Director general of Iran's Historical Monuments Registration Office explained latest status of "Persian windmills" UNESCO dossier and said it will be submitted jointly with Afghanistan. The potential UNESCO World Heritage registration of Iran's windmills (Asbads) — among the country's most significant technological and indigenous heritage assets — has been under discussion in recent years. These unique structures, shaped by monsoon winds, are found especially in eastern Iran. The dossier's preparation began with a collection of windmills in Khaf, particularly Neshtifan in South Khorasan Province, and has involved technical surveys, documentation, and the delineation of boundaries and buffer zones. Cultural heritage officials have emphasized that the dossier is being pursued as a serial nomination with the participation of several provinces.

The process has faced complexities, including the multi-provincial distribution of the windmills and the need

Persian windmills set for joint UNESCO bid



● wikipedia.org

for coordination among various sites, which has made

preparation time-consuming. Additionally, published reports

cite funding and restoration as major challenges.

Although the UNESCO nomination dossier for Iran's windmills has seen progress in documentation and compilation in recent years, it remains incomplete.

Alireza Izadi, Director General of the Historical Monuments Registration Office, told ISNA that, "From a climatic perspective, the windmills are important because one of Iran's natural challenges relates to climate issues. Therefore, the World Heritage registration of this architectural and functional structure is highly significant." "The dossier is at a stage where, after years of expert work, it is now nearing a conclusion. Work on the windmills began six or seven years ago when I was in the registration office, and various teams have put in great effort. The dossier was nearly ready, but since it was on the Tentative List, we decided to finalize and submit it as soon as possible."

Regarding the geographical scope of these structures in Iran and the joint registration with Afghanistan, Izadi explained, "The windmills are mainly located in Razavi Kho-

rasan, South Khorasan, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces, and there are also examples in Afghanistan. From the outset, our approach to this dossier has been a joint one between the two countries, so that both could be involved and the impact could be broadened. Naturally, such cooperation also has positive effects on regional and even security relations. As we saw with the Nowruz dossier, coordination among countries strengthened friendship and ties—and just last year, Mongolia was added to Nowruz." Izadi added, "The same perspective applies to the windmills: these functional architectural structures, rooted in the Iranian civilization sphere, are also seen in Afghanistan." He said, "The dossier was submitted to UNESCO. They raised questions. We sent answers. They then posed more specialized questions regarding data and documentation. We are now preparing the facts and supplementary answers and will send them soon. I hope that an evaluator will be dispatched next year and the final review process will be completed."



— to reach the time when early humans knew nothing of modern life, to understand how they lived, and to discover how they passed their days.

This is history and a relic — a relic of early humans that must be preserved. It must be protected and recorded for future generations, serving as a host for tourists who seek natural attractions.

Throughout the year, nature lovers and tourists repeatedly choose this historical site, spending hours visiting the cave. The scenery and beauty of this ancient cave leave them astonished and deep in thought.

According to archaeologists, this cave is one of the oldest human settlements in northwestern Iran. Scientific studies of the cave were first conducted by Carleton Stevens Coon, an American anthropologist, in 1949. That year, he began test excavations on the cave floor, collecting stone tools, microblades, flakes, and animal bones — including those of cattle, sheep, goats, gazelles, wild horses, zebras, various birds, turtles, and fox-

Over thousands of years, Tamtaman Cave has been used by shepherds, serving as a shelter for their sheep during spring rains and winter cold, as well as a cool and pleasant retreat during hot summers. As a result, a thick layer of animal dung has buried all the artifacts beneath it.

According to an anthropologist from the West Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, Tamtaman Cave is located in a village of the same name. The name is Kurdish and means "misty."

Issa Aziznejad added that the misty nature of the village gives it a special charm and lends Tamtaman Cave an even more distinctive beauty.

A researcher and anthropologist with the department also stated that the cave, as a tourism asset, is welcomed every year by tourists and those interested in history and nature. To maintain cleanliness in the area, environmental enthusiasts and non-governmental organizations clean the surrounding areas during certain times of the year.

The department has previously installed signage and, to protect the Tamtaman Cave complex, has designated a protected zone around the site, which includes Urartian-era castles and Safavid tombs.

He noted that the cave measures 35.30 meters in length and 16.90 meters in width. Inside the cave, there are two chambers. The chamber on the right is four meters deep and 5.5 meters wide, while the longer chamber on the left is 28 meters deep and has an average width of 5 meters.

Tamtaman Cave, located 20 kilometers from Urmia, was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2005.

Stepping back 40,000 years at Iran's Tamtaman Cave

Iranica Desk

Tamtaman Cave, a 40,000-year-old remnant of early human habitation in West Azarbaijan Province, is regarded as one of the first human settlements in northwestern Iran. Every year, the cave hosts tourists and travelers, taking them into the depths of history and connecting them with the past.

According to IRNA, Tamtaman holds the secrets of early human life within its depths and tells countless stories of our ancient ancestors. To reach the cave, one must navigate the alleys of Urmia and head toward Nazlu village. After traveling 20 kilometers, visitors arrive at Tamtaman village, which cradles one of the oldest human settlements in its embrace. Upon entering the cave, visitors feel as though they have traveled back thousands of years. The ceiling and walls seem to speak. The further one goes, the closer they come to 40,000

years ago. The whispers of secrets hidden within the cave reach the ear, inviting visitors to listen, to understand, and to hear what early humans have to say. Visitors gaze at the walls, the ceiling, and the floor, hoping to find traces of that ancient history.

Ashes left behind by shepherds from yesterday and today — and, according to experts, from thousands of years ago — are visible. Nevertheless, a sense of curiosity and the thrill of seeing the place draws visitors further into the cave. There, one can see how early humans carved the rocks inside the cave to create comfort or perhaps to store their hunted prey. Stepping outside and standing before the cave, visitors feel as if they are on the balcony of an elegant building. The beautiful view below the cave — the green plain, the vineyards and orchards, and above all, the flowing and walls seem to speak. The further one goes, the closer they come to 40,000

the beauty. Such a landscape reveals another truth to travelers, tourists, and sightseers: the dynamic thinking of early humans. They acted with keen insight for survival and hunting, choosing a lush location with



● IRNA

abundant water and fruit orchards. They went hunting during the day and settled here at night.

The more one gazes at this site, and the more one enters and exits the cave, the more one wishes to travel into the depths of history

es — and took them to the US for further analysis.

The American archaeologist's studies indicate that the cave was inhabited during the Middle Paleolithic period, approximately 40,000 years ago.

Over 10,000 tourists visit Malayer's crocodile farm

Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Malayer in Hamedan Province has announced that 10,233 tourists have visited one of the city's tourist attractions, the Gourab Agricultural Tourism Garden, also known as the Crocodile Farm.

Ebrahim Jalili said that this complex is considered one of the most popular and highly frequented destinations in Malayer, both at the regional and national levels, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that the Crocodile Farm ranks as the top ticketed attraction in the city during the Nowruz holidays. Despite wartime conditions, it has experienced approximately 10 percent growth in tourist numbers compared to the same period last year.

Jalili further noted that the Samen Underground Complex, with 1,700 visitors, and the Nushijan historical site, with 750 visitors, rank next in line.

Regarding the crocodile farm, Jalili explained that the complex is a beautiful, unique, and distinctive site in the tourism and economic sectors. It is one of the largest breeding centers in the country for this reptile — one that appears calm but is fearsome.

He clarified that since the summer of 2019, the crocodile breeding complex in Malayer has been open to tourists. Many enthusiasts visit the site on a daily basis. Currently, 11 crocodiles, each measuring over three meters in length, are kept at the facility. He stated that there are five agricultural tourism farms in Malayer, adding that with proper training and support from officials, the future of agricultural tourism in the city looks promising.

He noted that the Crocodile Farm is located seven kilometers from Malayer on the road to Arak, near Gourab village.



● farsnews.ir

Unprecedented rains revive Lake Urmia but deeper crisis lingers

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Unusually heavy precipitation this water year has given Lake Urmia a fresh boost, with rainfall doubling, about 50% of the lake's surface refilling, and water levels rising by one meter over the past seven months. The rebound, driven by above-average rains and stronger inflows, has pushed water back into parts of the basin and sparked early signs of recovery after years of drought.

Even so, the gains have not turned the tide. Over the past decade, the lake has slipped toward becoming a seasonal wetland, as reduced depth, expanding shallows, and rapid summer evaporation cause springtime water to fade fast and the lake to shrink again.

The bigger picture points to a deeper crisis. The lake's decline reflects broader water stress, with groundwater depletion, fueled by years of unchecked withdrawals, emerging as the core issue, according to Kamran Zeinalzadeh of Urmia University's Lake Urmia Research Institute. He warns the trend could



trigger wider fallout in the near future, including land subsidence and lasting loss of water resources.

The following is Iran Daily's full interview with Zeinalzadeh on this year's rainfall impact and the risks tied to continued groundwater overuse in the Lake Urmia basin.

IRAN DAILY: Could you walk us through how Lake Urmia's

situation has shifted this year after the recent rains, and how different things look now?

ZEINALZADEH: At present, the lake holds more than two billion cubic meters of water, with a fairly solid rise in water levels compared with the same time last year. The uptick comes on the back of strong precipitation during the current water year. From September 23, 2425 to March 25, 2426, rainfall across the Lake Urmia basin has surged, posting roughly a 544% jump from the same period a year earlier and running more than 34% above the long-term average.

Those rains have fed the lake both directly and through river inflows, lifting water levels by over one meter since the start of the water year and by more than 4.3 meters year on year.

Even so, over the past decade the lake has effectively turned into a seasonal wetland. Water levels and surface area typically peak in April after autumn, winter, and early spring rains, then drop off sharply by late summer and early autumn as temperatures climb and evaporation kicks in, shrinking much of the water body.

The lake's flattened playa bed plays a key role in these sharp swings between April and late September. Heavy salt-driven sedimentation has leveled the basin, causing incoming water to spread out thinly rather than build up in depth. As temperatures rise in warmer months, much of that shallow water quickly evaporates.

This year's rains have expanded the lake's surface to around 2,444 square kilometers, up from about 484 square kilometers at the start of the current water year and roughly 5,544 square kilometers at the same point last year. Still, because the water spreads across a wide but

shallow area, recovery efforts face a setback, as much of it is quickly lost to evaporation in summer.

That is why the lake usually hits its widest extent in spring, only to dry out significantly by late summer. The pattern shows a stark reality that Lake Urmia no longer functions as a permanent lake, but has instead taken on the characteristics of a seasonal wetland.

You mentioned this has been a wet water year. Did most of that come from spring rains, and how much of the lake is currently covered?

Spring precipitation has been strong, but autumn also saw solid rainfall and snowfall across many sub-basins of Lake Urmia. Even in recent days, snowfall has continued in higher elevations. At present, roughly 54% of the lake's surface is covered with water.

That said, given the lake's flattened playa bed, rising temperatures could shrink that surface area by as much as 94% by late summer. Last water year, one of the harshest droughts in the basin over the past 54 years left less than 54% of the lake covered. Conditions are clearly better this year, even compared with the past few years, but a large share of this water is still expected to evaporate by September. That makes it critical to step up management efforts to secure the lake's environmental water rights.

Can Lake Urmia still be used for large boats or vessels?

Right now, the lake behaves more like a seasonal wetland. In the past, depths in some areas reached 56 to 58 meters, but today much of the lake is shallow, with depths of just one to two meters mainly near the causeway. In wet years, there may be enough depth for small



MEHR

boats, but larger vessels, including those once used to transport vehicles, can no longer operate. That kind of traffic was common about 24 years ago, but it is no longer feasible.

A major concern is the risk of declining rainfall in the years ahead. Despite this year's strong precipitation, climate change could bring renewed drought. Over the past three decades, even as the lake began drying up, the region has seen unsustainable agricultural expansion, including more water-intensive crops such as sugar beet and alfalfa, along with growing orchards of apples, nectarines, and peaches. As a result, despite mounting water stress, the area has effectively turned into an exporter of water-intensive produce, raising serious questions. Had this expansion been curbed, the lake could have held up to one billion cubic meters more water this year.

Authorities have taken steps such as releasing water from dams, dredging rivers, closing diversion gates, and cracking down on illegal withdrawals,

all of which have helped boost inflows. Still, the core drivers of the crisis, chiefly excessive water consumption driven by human activity across the basin, have undercut much of the impact of these measures.

At present, water use in the basin exceeds renewable supply, and alongside the drying of Lake Urmia and its satellite wetlands, this has shown up in a sharp decline in groundwater reserves.

Is it still possible to restore Lake Urmia as a permanent lake, or should it now be viewed as a seasonal wetland?

At this point, what we are dealing with is effectively a seasonal wetland, and that is the reality. Over the past decade, especially since 2455, there has been some headway on water supply and infrastructure. But little has been done on the softer side, including rolling out integrated water management tailored to scarcity, curbing illegal withdrawals, enforcing regulations, raising awareness, bringing farmers on board, and promoting lower water-use livelihoods.

So, is a full recovery now out of reach?

Right now, the restoration effort is not on the right track, largely because there is no clear plan or strong resolve to rein in the root drivers of the crisis, chiefly excessive water use across the basin. What is needed is a shift in approach. Lake Urmia is, in fact, a symbol of a much broader crisis, with the most alarming part playing out underground through the rapid depletion of groundwater.

The main fallout of this water crisis is a sharp drop in groundwater reserves nationwide, including in this basin. These reserves, built up over thousands of years, are not easily replenished, and overextraction can trigger land subsidence, as well as the drying and salinization of aquifers. Ultimately, without integrated water management and a strategy grounded in the region's actual water capacity, any lasting restoration will remain out of reach. For now, the lake's survival hinges entirely on rainfall, rising and falling with it.

Anzali Military Palace Museum badly damaged in recent war

Arts & culture desk

About 45% of the historic Military Palace Museum in the northern port city of Bandar Anzali was damaged following recent attacks, Gilan's cultural heritage chief Yousef Salmankhah, said, describing the strike as a deliberate assault on Iran's civilizational identity.

Salmankhah said preliminary assessments point to "significant" destruction despite the site being marked with the Blue Shield emblem, adding the attacking side disregarded international legal norms meant to safeguard cultural property, ILNA reported.

The century-old building, registered on Iran's National Heritage List in December 5978 under number 5555, suffered deep structural cracks, damage to its pitched roof, and extensive harm to interior decorations and façade ornaments. Several display-case artifacts were also shattered, he said, noting the site now requires urgent, specialized conservation and restoration work.

He framed museums as "identity-bearing" institutions central to national cohesion and global cultural presence, linking their protection to broader governance and state capacity.

Salmankhah said technical teams have launched field surveys and detailed documentation, with findings being relayed to the relevant ministry. The immediate priority, he added, is to record the damage comprehensively and communicate the incident to international public opinion.

Iranian animation 'The Last Deer' picked for Russian Voronezh festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Mehdi Barghzadegan's animated short 'The Last Deer,' produced by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), was selected for the short animation competition at the fourth Voronezh International Animation Festival, scheduled to run from May 22 to 24 in Voronezh.

The film follows a deer roaming deep in a forest before coming under attack by hunters, forcing it into a desperate flight for survival. It will screen alongside international entries in the festival's competitive short animation section, IRNA reported.

The Voronezh festival serves as a specialized platform showcasing animated works for children, teenagers,



and families, while also advancing an education-driven agenda. Beyond film screenings, the event hosts masterclasses, panel discussions, and cre-

ative workshops led by experts from the Voronezh Animation Studio and internationally recognized figures in the animation industry.