

# Iran casts health system as frontline pillar of nat'l resilience amid wartime pressure

## Social Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri on Monday cast Iran's healthcare and emergency apparatus as a core pillar of national stability, after visiting the National Emergency Organization of Iran and holding talks with Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarghandi. At the 115 emergency call center in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri, accompanied by emergency chief Jafar Miadfar, reviewed dispatch operations and praised responders for sustaining rapid, round-the-clock intervention under pressure. He described the emergency network as both a life-saving mechanism and a visible guarantor of public confidence, linking response speed to perceptions of state effectiveness. Figures presented during the visit pointed to the scale of recent strain. Miadfar said more than 34,000 people were injured and 3,375 killed during the war period, with 268 cities hit and over one

million calls logged. Despite damage to 56 emergency bases, roughly 62% of ambulances and dozens of hospital buildings, services continued without interruption, including more than 400 births carried out in ambulances. In parallel talks at the Health Ministry, Zafarghandi emphasized the system's operational continuity and nationwide coverage, underscoring that hospitals, pharmacies and emergency units remained functional despite infrastructure hits and surging demand. He highlighted the sector's capacity to absorb shocks and maintain access to medicines and care, framing it as critical to crisis governance and public reassurance. Salehi-Amiri, echoing that assessment, labeled the health sector a "third pillar of national power" alongside military forces and society, arguing it underwrites both frontline endurance and civilian welfare. He said the sector's contribution had been underrepresented in public narratives despite its centrality

to managing wartime pressures. The ministers also pointed to shifting social behavior during the Nowruz period, with nearly 29.7 million trips recorded but formal accommodation usage plunging to 4% from about 80% a year earlier. Around 4.7 million people traveled to rural areas, reflecting what officials described as a move toward perceived safety zones. Authorities reported minimal disruption to essential goods supply and healthcare access during the mass movement. Zafarghandi stressed that uninterrupted service delivery, even in degraded conditions, helped prevent shortages and stabilize public sentiment, while Salehi-Amiri called for stronger communication of healthcare efforts to ease psychological strain. He said visible readiness, from emergency roadside coverage to functioning pharmacies, was key to reinforcing social calm. Both ministers framed the health and emergency systems as decisive in sustaining national resilience, combining operational continuity with public trust at a time of acute pressure.

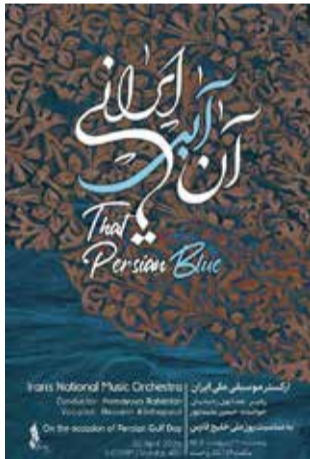


Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri (6th L), meets with Health Minister Mohammadreza Zafarghandi (5th L) and senior officials at the Ministry of Health in Tehran on April 27, 2026. ● CHTN

## 'That Persian Blue' to be staged in Tehran on Persian Gulf Day

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iran National Music Orchestra will perform 'That Persian Blue' at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Thursday, led by Homayoun Rahimian with vocals by Hossein Alishapour, the Rudaki Foundation said. The program, timed to coincide with Iran's National Persian Gulf Day (April 30), underscores a state-backed cultural push to foreground identity and heritage through flagship performances, as Tehran leans on the arts to project cohesion and historical narrative at home, IRNA reported.



Organizers said the concert adopts a "national" approach,

framing the Persian Gulf as a core cultural and historical touchstone. The work seeks to channel the "deep bond" between Iranians and the Persian Gulf, while evoking the "bravery" and endurance of those who defended the country across centuries. Drawing on the idiom of Iranian classical and orchestral traditions, the set aims to build an atmosphere of emotion, pride and collective resonance. It strives to carry a unified "voice" of patriotism, amplifying themes of identity and continuity on a day dedicated to the Persian Gulf's name and legacy.

## Reservoir inflows rise 60% as storage strengthens to 63% capacity in Iran

### Social Desk

Iran's water authorities reported a sharp rebound in dam inflows, with volumes jumping 60% year on year in the current water year that began September 23, according to the latest weekly water and electricity indicators cited by IRNA on April 26, 2026. Total inflows into Iran's reservoir system reached 30.85 billion cubic meters by April 26, up from 19.28 billion cubic meters in the same period last year and slightly above the 10-year average of 29.85 billion cubic meters, the report showed.



Outflows from dams stood at 17.51 billion cubic meters over the same period, marking a 5% increase from 16.70 billion cubic meters a year earlier, though still below the decade-long average of 21.19 billion cubic meters. Reservoir storage climbed to 32.5 billion cubic meters, compared with 27.10 billion

cubic meters last year, reflecting an 18% annual increase and sitting about 3% above the 10-year average of 31.27 billion cubic meters. The rise signals a gradual rebuilding of water reserves after prolonged hydrological stress. Overall dam fill levels were reported at 63% nationwide, showing improved but uneven water availability across Iran's river basins and reservoir network. The figures point to a system regaining balance, though still operating under structural pressure from long-term demand and climatic volatility.

## Domestic output covers bulk of thalassemia drugs as sanctions strain access



### Social Desk

Iran now produces 80% of medicines required by thalassemia patients, the head of the Iranian Thalassemia Association said Monday, citing wartime disruptions and sanctions-related bottlenecks that have driven up prices but expanded insurance coverage.

Younes Arab told a joint press briefing of special-disease associations that some 23,000 thalassemia patients live in Iran, with the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan accounting for 3,710 cases and more than 3,000 patients based in Tehran. He said over 1,500 patients have died since 2018, IRNA reported.

Arab, himself a patient, said sanctions have choked off access to new-generation therapies, including gene treatments, prompting the association to file a formal complaint over drug supply constraints. He condemned attacks on medical facilities and said wartime stress has aggravated patients' conditions, triggering hemoglobin drops and increasing transfusion needs. Thalassemia patients consume roughly 30% of the country's donated blood, he said, adding that heightened stress can mobilize clots and raise stroke risks. Airborne blood transfers to provinces became "impossible" during the conflict, though local donations helped plug gaps, including in Sistan and Baluchestan where shortages had been chronic. Separately, Masoumeh Sade-

ghzadeh, head of the Iranian Hemophilia Society, said 15,000 hemophilia patients are served through 32 offices nationwide, but sanctions have long posed a structural hurdle. Despite U.S. claims that medicines are exempt, she said ancillary restrictions, including costly cargo insurance, have disrupted imports, leaving three key foreign drugs unavailable and forcing reliance on legacy treatments. She said the Health Ministry's move to build six-month drug reserves stabilized supply during the conflict, with no reported shortages. Domestic producers now supply about 50% of hemophilia drugs, including factors VIII and VII. While prices have risen, comprehensive insurance coverage has largely shielded patients, with associations covering residual out-of-pocket costs of around 1%.

## Documentary 'Rebin and the Storks' enters Amsterdam festival lineup

### Arts & Culture Desk

The documentary 'Rebin and the Storks,' directed by Nourollah Fattahi and produced by Mohammad Javad Amirani with oversight from Al Jazeera Documentary, has been selected for the official competition of the Amsterdam Kurdish Film Festival (AKFF). The festival, scheduled for May 8-10 in the Dutch capital, will host the film's world premiere, marking its first screening before an international audience, according to ILNA. Set in the mountainous villages of western Iran, the documentary traces a recurring seasonal ritual in which villagers build nests for migrating storks as winter approaches and the birds return

each year to settle in the region's rural landscape. At the center of the story is Rebin, a village schoolboy whose deep attachment to animals collides with local belief and tradition. After failing last year to save a stork chick that fell from its nest, he once again becomes fixated on the fragile line between survival and loss as the migration cycle resumes. The film unfolds as a lyrical study of coexistence between humans and wildlife, weaving together themes of compassion, instinct, and inherited custom. It raises an unspoken tension between intervention and restraint, asking whether rescuing a living creature disrupts nature's order or fulfills a human duty embedded within it.

