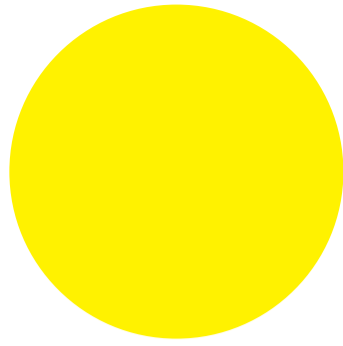


Ministry backs concert comeback, holds off on ticket price rise



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A speedboat of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps sails near a cargo ship as Iran seizes two vessels at the Strait of Hormuz on April 21, 2026.

TASNIM

US war on Iran faces fragile, contested political backing

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The war launched by the administration of Donald Trump against Iran has not only run into opposition from military and intelligence officials, but has also been met with growing public dissent. This has called the political legitimacy of the decision into question. Mehdi Paknia, an expert on US affairs, told Iran Daily that although this situation does not necessarily indicate a total lack of legitimacy, it suggests the political and social backing for the move was fragile and contested from the outset. Under such conditions, the longer or more costly the war becomes, the more these legitimacy gaps are likely to come to the fore and turn into a source of political pressure on the government.



Mehdi Paknia

IRAN DAILY: According to polls, the Trump administration's war against Iran has been described as the most unpopular military intervention in US history, with public opposition rising to over 60% in a short period. What factors have driven such widespread opposition in public opinion?

PAKNIA: The broad public opposition should be understood as the result of several factors unfolding simultaneously. First, the threat narrative has failed to convince; when society does not see a clear link between military action and an immediate threat to national security, doubt and distrust quickly set in. Second, the costly legacy of prolonged wars in the Middle East has generated a kind of strategic fatigue within American society, heightening public sensitivity to any new conflict in the same region. Alongside these factors, concerns over economic and human costs—especially at a time when domestic priorities have taken center stage—have played a significant role in shaping opposition. Finally, the deep polarization of the domestic political environment has meant that major national security decisions are less likely to be viewed through the lens of national consensus and more as subjects of political contestation between the Democratic and Republican parties. Taken together, these dynamics have caused social opposition to the war not only to build up quickly, but also to reach a broad scale. During the war, several senior military and security officials were dismissed or resigned, and reports also emerged of sharp disagreements within the Pentagon—apparently over the assessment that "Iran did not constitute an immediate threat to the United States" or over how the war should be conducted on the ground. How are these divisions within the US decision-making structure interpreted?

These divisions should rather be seen as a sign of the absence of genuine consensus at both the intelligence and strategic levels. When serious disagreements emerge within the Pentagon and security institutions over the nature of the threat, its urgency, and even the conduct of operations, it indicates that the war was not launched on the basis of a coherent assessment, but rather in an atmosphere marked by doubt and fragmentation. In such a context, dismissals and resignations are not merely administrative side issues; they serve as clear indicators of tension between the political will of the White House and the professional assessments of military and intelligence bodies. From this perspective, the issue was not limited to disagreements over battlefield tactics; rather, it is believed that there was no consensus even on the fundamental necessity of the war. If parts of the security establishment held that Iran did not pose an immediate threat to the United States, this suggests that the very foundation used to legitimize the war was contested from the outset.

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Iran proposes 30-day plan to end war, rejects extended ceasefire

International Desk

Iran's latest 14-point proposal to the United States calls for issues between the two countries to be resolved within 30 days and aims to end the war rather than extend the ceasefire.

On Thursday, Iran delivered a new proposal for peace talks with the US via mediator Pakistan, with negotiations between the two sides frozen despite a weeks-long ceasefire.

United States President Donald Trump has said he is reviewing Iran's 14-point proposal, while warning that Washington could restart air strikes if Tehran "misbehaves."

Issues such as guarantees of non-aggression, withdrawal of US military forces from the areas surrounding Iran, lifting the naval blockade, release of Iran's frozen assets, payment of compensation to Tehran for war damage, removal of sanctions, and ending the war on all fronts, including Lebanon, as well as a new mechanism for the Strait

of Hormuz, are also among the topics included in the Iran's proposal.

Also on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi continued its consultations with his counterparts over efforts to put an end to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran and secure peace in the region.

Araghchi held separate talks with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl and Oman's top diplomat Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, during which they discussed developments in the region as well as Iran's latest initiative handed over the mediator Pakistan to resolve regional tensions caused by the recent US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

Speaking to reporters in Florida before boarding Air Force One on Saturday, Trump confirmed that he had been briefed on the "concept of the deal."

Despite the diplomatic opening, the US president struck a characteristically blunt tone regarding the possibility of renewed hostilities, which have been



A man rides his motorbike past a billboard installed alongside a road as Pakistan prepares to host the US and Iran for peace talks, in Islamabad, Pakistan, April 10, 2026.

● REUTERS

paused since the announcement of a ceasefire between the sides on April 7. "If they do something bad, there is a possibility it could happen," Trump said when asked if strikes would resume.

The war, launched by the US and Israel with a vast wave of surprise strikes on February 28 has been on hold since April 8, but only one failed round of direct talks has taken place between Iranian and US representatives.

In the meantime, Iran has maintained its stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz while the United States has imposed a counterblockade on Iranian ports.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday that Trump had told security



officials to prepare for the blockade to last months, causing oil prices to spike. Since the failure of the first round of the negotiations in Pakistan, regional countries have been trying to get the US and Iran to the second round of negotiations. Iran refused to participate in the sec-

ond round due to the US violation of a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire by imposing a blockade on Iran's ports.

Iranian officials have also blamed the US side for putting forward excessive demands and shifting its position at the negotiating table for the failure of the first negotiations.

IRGC: Trump has to choose between 'impossible' war or 'bad deal'

The ball is in the United States' court, deputy FM says

International Desk

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Sunday said the United States faced a choice between an "impossible" military operation or a "bad deal" with Tehran, after President Donald Trump said the US is reviewing Iran's latest peace proposal.

"Iran sets Pentagon a blockade deadline; China, Russia, Europe shift tone against Washington; Trump's passive letter to Congress; acceptance of Iran's negotiating terms; there is only one way to read this: Trump must choose between 'an impossible military operation or a bad deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran,'" the IRGC's Intelligence Organization made the announcement in an X post.

"The room for US decision-making has narrowed," the IRGC said. Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a ceasefire came into effect on April 8, with only one round of direct peace talks held so far.

IRNA reported on Thursday that Tehran had submitted a 14-point proposal to mediator Pakistan.

Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi told foreign diplomats



● MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL/NURPHOTO

in Tehran on Saturday that, "The ball is in the United States' court to choose the path of diplomacy or the continuation of a confrontational approach."

Iran, he said, was "prepared for both paths."

Gharibabadi said that Iran is fully and resolutely prepared to repel any renewed act of aggression against the country, although it also believes in interest-based diplomacy to resolve existing issues.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted its plan to Pakistan as the mediator with the aim of permanently ending the imposed war, and now the ball is in the US court to choose between a diplomatic solution or a continuation of the confrontational approach," he said.

The diplomat said, however, that Iran has always approached talks with the US with a sense of distrust

because of Washington's track record in previous rounds of negotiations.

Iran and the US held a first round of talks in Islamabad on April 11, days after Pakistan mediated a ceasefire to allow a halt to the 40-day US-Israeli aggression against the country.

The unprovoked US-Israeli aggression on Iran began on February 28 with airstrikes that assassinated senior Iranian officials and commanders.

The Iranian armed forces unleashed 100 waves of successful retaliatory strikes against sensitive and strategic American and Israeli targets throughout the region.

They also blocked the Strait of Hormuz to oil and gas tankers affiliated with the enemies and those cooperating with them in an attempt to maintain security at the critical waterway.

On April 8, forty days into the war, an Islamabad-brokered temporary ceasefire went into effect but the first round of Tehran-Washington negotiations failed to reach an agreement.

Trump unilaterally extended the truce, but imposed an inhumane "naval blockade" against Iran.

Leader's aide warns US carriers, says graveyard ready for 'pirates'

A senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei said the United States is the "only pirate in the world that possesses aircraft carriers," warning that such carriers will face destruction if tensions escalate. Mohsen Rezaei, a former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said in an X post on Sunday that Iran's ability to confront "pirates" is no less than its ability to "sink warships."

"Prepare to face a graveyard of your carriers and forces, just as the wreckage of your aircraft was left behind in Isfahan," he wrote.

It came after US President Donald Trump unabashedly admitted that the US Navy is acting "like pirates" in carrying out Washington's naval blockade of Iranian ports.

"We took over the ship, we took over the cargo, we took over the oil. It is a very profitable business... We are like pirates. We are sort of like pirates but we are not playing games," Trump said on Friday, while describing the seizure of an Iranian ship by US naval forces a few days earlier.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said Trump's boast was "no verbal slip" but "a direct and damning admission of the criminal nature of their actions against international maritime navigation."

The US-Israeli aggression against Iran began on February 28 with airstrikes that assassinated senior Iranian officials and commanders, including Leader of the Islamic



Mohsen Rezaei
● MEHR

Republic Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The Iranian armed forces responded by launching daily missile and drone operations targeting locations in the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US military bases and assets across the region.

Furthermore, Iran retaliated against the strikes by closing the Strait of Hormuz, which resulted in a significant increase in oil prices and its by-products.

On April 8, forty days into the war, a Pakistan-brokered temporary ceasefire between Iran and the US took effect.

Negotiations ensued in Islamabad but stopped short of an agreement amid Washington's maximalist demands and insistence on unreasonable positions.

Since then, Trump has offered shifting timelines and goals for the war, which remains extremely unpopular in the US.

He has faced widespread condemnation over his comments on the aggression, including when he threatened to destroy Iran's "entire civilization."

US war on Iran ...

Therefore, these divisions can be seen as serious evidence that, prior to the outbreak of war, there was neither a complete intelligence consensus nor a clear strategy regarding objectives, costs, and the endgame of the conflict.

Democratic rivals of the Trump administration made several attempts in Congress to limit the president's war powers, yet each effort failed due to opposition from Trump's fellow Republicans. What explains this?

The failure of Democratic efforts to limit presidential war powers should be seen as a combination of political calculation and institutional considerations. On one hand, Republicans aligned with Trump were unwilling to display signs of division or weaken their political leadership in the midst of a crisis; therefore, opposition to limiting measures was less about the "nature of the war" and more a po-

litical response aimed at preserving party cohesion and supporting the president. On a deeper level, segments of the US power structure are reluctant to see the president's authority as commander-in-chief curtailed, as these powers are considered part of the traditional flexibility embedded in US foreign and military policy. As such, Republican opposition was not only politically motivated, but also partly rooted in defending the institutional balance of power within the American political system.

What impact does this situation have on the political legitimacy of the White House's decision? Can it be said that this war has faced a domestic legitimacy crisis from the outset? Overall, these developments—from widespread public opposition to divisions within security institutions and clashes in Congress—have inevitably had a significant impact on the polit-

ical legitimacy of the White House's decisions. In the US political system, the legitimacy of military action is not confined to the executive branch alone; it largely depends on the level of consensus across public opinion, higher institutions, and the broader political structure. When such consensus fails to materialize, a decision to go to war—even if legally within presidential authority—will face serious domestic doubts. From this perspective, such a war can be seen as having encountered a form of internal challenge or erosion from the very beginning. In other words, this does not necessarily imply a complete absence of legitimacy, but rather indicates that its political and social backing has been fragile and contested. Under these conditions, the longer or more costly the war becomes, the more these legitimacy gaps are likely to play out and turn into a source of political pressure on the government.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



CBI vows no shortages, tighter liquidity control as inflation surges

Economy Desk

Iran's Central Bank (CBI) governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said the government has taken necessary measures to ensure the supply of essential goods and medicines, stressing that no shortages are expected, state media reported on Sunday.

According to IRNA, Hemmati told a meeting with members of Parliament's Article 90 Committee, a constitutional oversight body that reviews complaints against state institutions, that authorities had mobilized all available resources to maintain stable access to basic commodities and pharmaceuticals.

He also underscored stricter oversight of the banking system, saying the Central Bank of Iran would not allow banks to engage in overdraft practices under any circumstances.

"Controlling liquidity growth is a necessity today," he said, adding that the CBI is working daily to

curb liquidity expansion in line with its primary mandate of containing inflation.

Data from the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) showed inflationary pressures intensifying. The country's consumer price index (CPI) rose sharply in the first month of the Iranian year starting March 21, with annual inflation reaching 53.7%.

The CPI for Iranian households stood at 569.3, marking a 5.0% increase from the previous month and a 73.5% rise compared with the same month a year earlier, the data showed.

Hemmati also said foreign currency allocation is being carried out under a structured plan aligned with the country's priorities, emphasizing targeted management of Iran's foreign exchange needs.

Meanwhile, Iran's national currency has fallen to record lows amid mounting economic pressure. The rial weakened beyond 1.85 million per US dollar on the

open market on Sunday, compared with about 1.54 million earlier in the week and around 811,000 a year ago.

The sharp depreciation highlights growing strain on the economy, already grappling with high inflation and Western sanctions. The country remains under wartime conditions following a recent conflict. Tehran and the United States agreed to a temporary ceasefire on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, though tensions persist.

Washington imposed a naval blockade on April 13 targeting vessels entering or leaving Iranian waters, later extending the measure to all Iranian-flagged ships on the high seas. Under new measures announced by Tehran, only pre-authorized commercial vessels are permitted to transit the Strait of Hormuz, while ships linked to the United States, Israel and other "hostile states" are barred from passage.



Iran shifts trade to alternative ports as UAE's Jebel Ali stalls

Economy Desk

Iran is redirecting cargo and logistics operations to ports in Pakistan, India and Oman after activities at the United Arab Emirates' Jebel Ali port stopped amid wartime conditions, the head of Iran's Shipping Association said on Sunday.

Masoud Polmeh, secretary-general of the Iranian Shipping Association, told state news agency IRNA that no commercial activity is currently being conducted through Jebel Ali, which has historically served as a key hub for Iran's trade exchanges. Instead, ports including Sohar and Salalah in Oman, Karachi in Pakistan, and Nhava Sheva and Mumbai in India are now handling cargo movements previously routed through the UAE facility.

"Claiming that only Jebel Ali served as the origin for cargo and logistics exchanges with Iran in past years is incorrect," Polmeh said. "Throughout previous years until today, various ports have undertaken this role, one



of which was Jebel Ali." He added that Jebel Ali traditionally held priority due to its corridor and arterial connections with neighboring countries, but Iran has maintained logistics links with the alternative ports in Oman, Pakistan and India.

Polmeh emphasized that shipping operations, including vessel arrivals, departures, docking, and cargo loading and unloading, are proceeding normally at Iran's southern ports. "All port operations continue through cooperation between the private sector and the government, and no activity has been halted," he said.

Iran has in recent years conducted a significant portion of its imports and

transit trade through UAE ports, particularly Jebel Ali. However, following the US-Israeli war against Iran and recent developments in trade flows, regional ports in Pakistan, India and Oman have emerged as alternatives.

According to IRNA, the shift is also driven by efforts to improve trade relations and reduce transport costs, with Pakistan's ports seen as having the potential to become a key hub for facilitating Iran's international trade due to their geographic position and infrastructure.

Addressing concerns over a naval blockade imposed by the US since April 13 on vessels entering or leaving Iran's southern coastal waters, Polmeh

told ILNA that while the term "blockade" may create a perception of complete encirclement, such a scenario does not fully reflect realities on the ground.

"The main chokepoint of any blockade is under Iran's control, and if a blockade were to take shape, it would effectively be in the hands of Iran's Armed Forces," he said.

He added that all Iranian ports remain fully operational, with no halt in ship movements or cargo handling, and that activities continue with the cooperation of both the private sector and the government.

Polmeh also pointed to Iran's strong rail links with China and extensive ties with Russia, describing both as strategic partners with land connections that cannot be blocked.

He said that even in the event of a complete closure of southern maritime routes, Iran would not be fully cut off from trade, though such measures could increase pressure and congestion on alternative routes.

Pezeshkian urged to restore stable Internet amid billion-dollar outages

Economy Desk

An Iranian industry body has called on President Masoud Pezeshkian to restore stable and high-quality Internet access, warning that disruptions are inflicting heavy losses on businesses and the broader economy, state media reported on Sunday.

According to IRNA, Abdolvahab Sahlabadi, head of the board at Iran's House of Industry, Mine and Trade, said in a letter that Internet access is a vital infrastructure for economic activity and urged authorities to accelerate normalization, improve quality and ensure stability of connectivity.

"Key decisions about the Internet should be made in consultation with economic associations, and the government must establish mechanisms to compensate for damages caused by disruptions," he said in the letter.

He added that any decline in Internet quality or access disrupts business operations, stressing that national regulations require consultation with economic groups and guarantee stable access, which is essential for digital economy development and e-government services.

The letter also highlighted the negative impact of restrictions, including lower productivity, higher costs, cybersecurity challenges and difficulties accessing cloud services and management systems such as ERP, CRM and SCM. Abbas Ashtiani, head of the blockchain commission at Iran's ICT Guild Organization, has estimated that the digital blackout imposes at least \$30 million to \$35 million in daily direct, indirect and opportunity costs on the country. A KhabarOnline report concluded that Iran's economy lost approximately 300,000 billion tomans (about \$1.62 billion) during two months of Internet shutdown.

Over the past year, Iran's Internet has been disrupted for more than 100 days, including a



record 63 consecutive days of outage during the recent conflict, according to available data. Internet access across the country was largely shut down from the early hours of the February 28 US-Israeli attack, with connectivity dropping to around 2% of pre-war levels, monitors said. Since an April 8 ceasefire, authorities have gradually expanded limited access to selected users and entities, but most of the country's population of more than 90 million remains offline.

Deputy Communications Minister Ehsan Chitsaz said on Sunday that differentiated access to the Internet, referred to as "Internet Pro," leads to unequal distribution of opportunity, power and even perception of reality.

He said digital supply chains in many industries are inherently cross-border and depend on international systems and protocols for order registration, coordination with foreign suppliers, shipment tracking, document exchange and logistics management.

Without international Internet access, these chains are disrupted, reducing businesses' visibility over supply and distribution, which in crisis conditions could lead to shortages of goods or disruptions in essential services.

Chitsaz told ILNA that from a digital economy perspective, the ministry's core principle is to ensure stable, high-quality and non-discriminatory Internet access for all citizens and businesses under normal conditions.

Tire industry prioritizes production, jobs despite mounting challenges

Economy Desk

Iran's tire manufacturers are prioritizing the continuation of production and preservation of employment despite facing significant economic and logistical challenges, the spokesperson for the country's Tire Industry Trade Association said on Sunday.

Mostafa Tanha told state media that industry stakeholders remain committed to maintaining strategic production levels, particularly in the tire sector, which plays a vital role in the nation's logistics infrastructure.

"Although we are grappling with challenges such as securing raw materials from domestic petrochemical companies, obtaining foreign currency credits, international transportation, and the impact of the national currency's devaluation on production costs, our main priority is overcoming these obstacles and sustaining production," Tanha said.

He added that pricing mechanisms and navigating complex payment arrangements currently rank as secondary priorities, with all efforts focused on keeping production lines operational and preventing factory closures.

Tanha noted that the tire industry, which manufactures various types including passenger, truck and radial tires, plays a critical role in maintaining the country's transportation stability, and any disruption to the sector would have widespread repercussions.

"Supporting domestic producers and facilitating the supply of raw materials is essential for navigating this challenging period," he said.

Tanha referenced as difficult conditions stemming from a "US-Zionist imposed war," emphasizing that in this sensitive period, preserving and continuing the

production cycle carries high importance.

The country remains under wartime conditions after a recent conflict, following a US-Iran ceasefire on April 8 brokered by Pakistan, though tensions remain high.

"We have deployed all our efforts to preserve employment and prevent workforce reductions," he said.

According to Tanha, despite economic pressures and sanctions, the rubber industry has adopted a strategic approach centered on maintaining production by relying on domestic capabilities to overcome the current phase.



He stressed that cooperation between the private sector and government remains crucial for ensuring uninterrupted operations across Iran's tire manufacturing facilities.

Sudden exit of Emiratis from OPEC

Disagreements, antecedents, and ramifications

ANALYSIS

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), the 3rd-largest producer within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which had acceded to this organization 59 years ago, recently proclaimed its intention to withdraw from OPEC and OPEC+ (which comprises OPEC and several non-OPEC oil-producing nations), effective from the commencement of May 2026.

OPEC, which was established on September 14, 1960, for the purpose of coordinating supply policies among oil-producing nations, after the Emirati departure, will have 11 member states: Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

OPEC possesses approximately 80% of global petroleum reserves and contributes roughly 38% of worldwide crude oil production. Its share of global oil exports exceeds 50%.

The Emirati egress transpires precisely at a juncture when West Asia, since February, confronts perils emanating from military and economic conflict resultant from the American-Israeli military aggression against Iran. This military aggression has disrupted energy provision and supply chains traversing the vital Strait of Hormuz, and the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that the world presently endures an acute energy crisis.

UAE targets production of 5 million barrels of oil per day

Across prior years, the UAE had made colossal investments toward the development of its petroleum infrastructure, with the objective of elevating its daily production capacity to approximately 5 million barrels by 2027. Nevertheless, OPEC's production ceiling and stringent quota impositions had, in practical terms, rendered this enormous capital captive.

Prior to the inception of the American and Zionist regime's imposed war against Iran, the UAE's oil production capacity had reached 4.8 million barrels per day; however, under the OPEC accord, it was permitted to produce merely 3.2 million barrels per day. According to observers, the UAE, through its exit from OPEC, seeks to augment its production capacity to nearly 5 million barrels per day. This gives



the nation enhanced competitive power and permits it to derive greater revenue from its petroleum resources.

Saudi Arabia was not consulted

Suhail Al-Mazrouei, the minister of Energy of the United Arab Emirates, stated that the UAE had not consulted with any of its partners prior to its decision to withdraw from OPEC or the OPEC+ alliance.

Al-Mazrouei, in response to a question posed on Tuesday regarding whether the UAE had consulted with Saudi Arabia, told Reuters: "We have not conversed with any other nation concerning this matter." This Emirati minister added: "This is a political decision, rendered subsequent to a meticulous examination of current and future policies pertaining to production levels."

Anas Abdoun, an international consultant in energy affairs and global matters, wrote for Al Jazeera: "The UAE's departure is, above all, the visible sign of a deep regional rupture between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi first, but beyond that, between two incompatible visions of what [Persian] Gulf order should look like."

Consequently, certain observers contend that, given the long-standing discordances between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in the domain of oil production and ex-

port policy, the Emirati departure from OPEC might now, at a more macroscopic level, signify a re-configuration of alliances within the Persian Gulf region, amidst the intensification of regional rivalries.

A power struggle within OPEC

Despite Al-Mazrouei's statement that this action was "rendered subsequent to a meticulous examination of current and future policies pertaining to production levels," one economic expert pronounced that this constitutes a component of a "power struggle" endogenous to OPEC.

Donald Trump, the president of the United States, during his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, accused OPEC of "ripping off the rest of the world" through the elevation of oil prices, and added that, even though the United States defends some members of this organization, "they take advantage of us by giving us high oil prices".

Therefore, the diminution of OPEC's control over prices serves the interests of the United States, because the UAE is the 3rd-largest oil producer within this organization, after Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Mohammed Sorour Al-Sabban, a former senior adviser to Saudi Arabia's petroleum minister, told Al Jazeera that the Emirati action is "not a major blow, especially

for OPEC+ [which] consists of 23 countries," and that one country going out doesn't mean anything. The UAE's move was more a political decision, he said, under the influence of the West, which has long sought to stoke division within the cartel.

Indeed, US President Donald Trump is known for his hostility to OPEC and has previously accused the cartel of "ripping off the rest of the world" by inflating oil prices.

Turning back on six decades of regional amity?

Kingsmill Bond, an energy strategist at the think tank Ember Future, asserts that the Emirati action is astute.

"They are clearly preparing for the period after the war because now that we have reached peak oil demand and we are entering a new environment — they want to be free from the constraints of OPEC," Bond said.

On the other hand, the official statement from the UAE, reflected in a piece by state-run Emirati news agency (WAM), proclaims that "this decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy profile, including accelerated investment in domestic energy production, and reinforces its commitment to a responsible, reliable, and forward-looking role in global energy markets."

The statement continues: "This



The United Arab Emirates' Minister of Energy and Industry Suhail al-Mazrouei (front) arrives for an OPEC meeting in Vienna, Austria, on June 4, 2023.

● JOE KLAMAR/AFP



The UAE's departure is, above all, the visible sign of a deep regional rupture between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi first, but beyond that, between two incompatible visions of what [Persian] Gulf order should look like.

decision follows a comprehensive review of the UAE's production policy and its current and future capacity and is based on our national interest and our commitment to contributing effectively to meeting the market's pressing needs. While near-term volatility, including disruptions in the [Persian] Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, continues to affect supply dynamics, underlying trends point to sustained growth in global energy demand over the medium to long-term."

Full utilization of production capacity

According to observers, this decision will enable the United Arab Emirates to become an independent producer and will grant it enhanced flexibility amidst persistent market volatility following the most severe global energy crisis in recent decades.

According to the International Energy Agency's Oil Market Report (OMR), which was published several days prior, global oil supply in March witnessed its most substantial historical decrease, declining by 10–12 million barrels per day compared to the preceding month, a decline attributable to the consequences of the war against Iran.

During this same period, OPEC+ production diminished by 9.36 million barrels per day, reaching 42.39 million barrels per day.

According to OMR, daily production reductions were recorded in several nations, including the United Arab Emirates (1.27 million barrels), Saudi Arabia (3.15 million barrels), and Iraq (approximately 3 million barrels), in addition to limited production decreases from Iran. According to this same report, total production from nations outside OPEC+ also declined by 770,000 barrels per day, reaching 54,660,000 barrels per day.

Impact upon the market

The sudden departure of a long-standing OPEC member cannot be devoid of consequence and may reduce the cartel's capacity to preserve the image of a unified front; an image which it has long sought to cultivate, despite frequent discordances among its members, whether concerning geopolitical matters or disagreements over production quotas.

In this regard, Ali Al-Riyami, an oil expert and former director-general of Oil and Gas Marketing at the Omani Ministry of Energy and Minerals, told Al-Hurra network that the Emirati departure was unexpected in terms of its method, timing, and surrounding circumstances, and that it surprised markets, traders, and even OPEC members themselves.

Nevertheless, the notion of departure was not entirely precluded, not only for the UAE but also for other nations. According to Al-Riyami, the central issue resides in the timing of the decision and why this decision was made specifically by the UAE at this particular moment, especially because its causes remain indeterminate.

Al-Riyami added that more time is necessary to clarify the situation, whether concerning immediate motivations or the potential connection of this decision to the



Dubai's reputation as hub for tourists and investment has taken a hit when Iran attacked the United Arab Emirates as part of the wider US-Israel war against Iran in 2026.

● FADEL SENNA/AFP

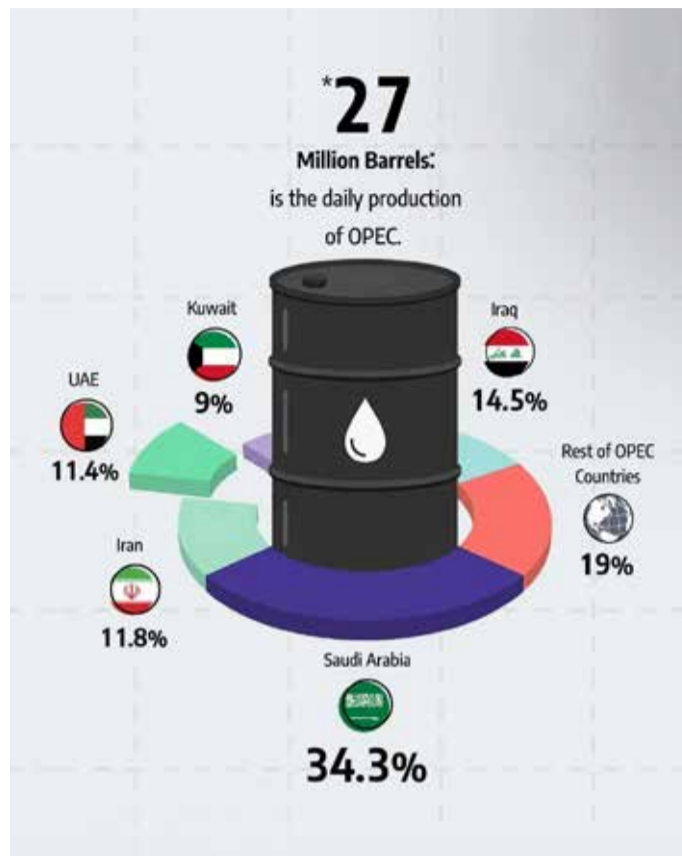


political conditions of the Persian Gulf region. Regarding market reaction, he stated that oil prices have experienced a modest increase, between 2.5% and 3%, and that this effect is projected to be short-term, whereas the long-term effect may diverge after the repercussions of the war subside. The truth is that the Emirati departure from OPEC liberates it from the quota system and bestows upon it enhanced flexibility in production and exportation. According to Al-Riyami, this factor may constitute one of the motivations for this decision, particularly given Abu Dhabi's previous challenges concerning production quotas, including its requests for baseline modification and subsequent arrangements and exemptions. Al-Riyami posits that the short-term impact may be limited, and that minor price fluctuations are possible, whereas the long-term effect could be relatively negative, especially given the persistence of competition in global markets. He explains that the Emirati departure does not necessarily signify an immediate intensification of competition because this competition already existed and will persist as long as oil production continues. Regarding OPEC, he states that this organization will be affected by the Emirati departure, given the weight and influential role

of the UAE in meetings, and that the departure will create a vacuum in the short term, particularly because other nations, including Qatar and Indonesia, have previously withdrawn from this coalition.

Potential ramifications

Sherif Othman, an Arab economist, regarding the consequences of this decision upon prices, considered the current impact upon oil prices to be insignificant and noted that there exists no direct correlation between this decision and crude oil pricing. Othman added that oil prices are currently fluctuating in accordance with broader medium-term developments, such as sanctions, prohibitions, and ongoing negotiations between Iran and the United States, with the objective of achieving an accord or reducing tensions. At the same time, he argued that this decision will possess a long-term effect, particularly upon the Persian Gulf region's control over international oil prices and its ability to influence them. Regarding OPEC's capabilities and capacities, he stated that the organization's power will diminish, following the previous departure of Qatar (in 2019) and now the Emirati departure, particularly concerning its ability to influence crude oil prices, which constitutes a considerable blow



to this organization. Nevertheless, the WAM news agency reported that the United Arab Emirates, after its departure from OPEC, will continue its "responsible" role through a gradual and precise increase in production, consistent with de-

mand and market conditions.

A test of cohesion or further political schism?

Amer Al-Shobaki, an energy affairs expert, in an interview with Al Jazeera network, stated that recent events should not be in-

The chart is based on OPEC's data as of February 2026. AL-HURRA



The Emiratis are clearly preparing for the period after the war because now that we have reached peak oil demand and we are entering a new environment — they want to be free from the constraints of OPEC.

terpreted solely as a nation's departure from an oil organization but should, rather, be interpreted as a shift toward a more profound conflict within the oil system concerning who will possess the right to lead the oil market in the forthcoming phase. According to Al-Shobaki, the Emirati departure does not signify the immediate collapse of OPEC or OPEC+, but it does strike one of the organization's most crucial assets, namely, its image of cohesion and collective discipline. From this economic expert's perspective, the peril of this decision resides in the fact that it was issued by a central Persian Gulf nation possessing high production capacity and aspiring to development, rather than by a small producer with limited influence. Al-Shobaki also stated that quotas within OPEC+ have constrained the United Arab Emirates' ability to convert its massive investments in production capacity into actual production and direct returns. Therefore, he posits that this decision represents a political and petroleum-related schism within the community of producers and could establish a precedent that encourages other producers to demand renegotiation or even to rebel against the quota system.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Why UAE walked out on OPEC

And what it means for the cartel

By Steven A. Cook
Senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations

OPINION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced last Tuesday that it is withdrawing from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The decision, effective Friday, ends a 58-years membership in the cartel and deals a symbolic blow to an economic alliance that is strained by the pressures of regional war and fractured diplomacy.

The Emirati government has long taken issue with the quotas and price controls instituted by the cartel, and so it views this as in its best interest. The UAE's departure has raised some pointed concerns about OPEC's long-term cohesion, but it remains to be seen whether this change will have a serious effect on the cartel.

Significance of UAE's departure

This is a significant geopolitical move. The Emiratis began studying whether to leave OPEC around the time Qatar (not a relatively large oil producer) left the cartel at the beginning of 2019. However, it seems unlikely that Emirati decision will undermine OPEC itself — it still has 11 other members who have not shown any signs of leaving — or global oil flows.

The Emirati leadership clearly believes that OPEC decision-making, which has historically privileged Saudi Arabia, has not served Abu Dhabi's economic interests. At the same time, the Emirates and the Saudi Kingdom have returned to a period in which their bilateral relationship is fraught. The close coordination between the two



governments in recent years, around which American policymakers and analysts have developed their assumptions about the region and its trajectory, is not the norm.

Like other smaller states in the Persian Gulf, the Emiratis have more often than not resisted Saudi Arabia's efforts to dominate them and the region.

Effect of the US-Israeli war with Iran

The war has had an impact, but perhaps not in the way people might surmise. Let's take a step back and look at the months leading up to US President Donald Trump's decision to launch Operation Epic Fury. In late 2025, the Saudis and Emiratis were in conflict over Yemen. The UAE supported a power grab by the Southern Transitional Council, a Yemeni separatist paramilitary group, at the expense of Saudi partners in the country. The Saudis went so far as to undertake air strikes on Emirati allies and military equipment at the Port of Mukalla. At the same time,

Israel's recognition of Somaliland contributed further to the mutual distrust between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The Saudis considered the Israeli move to be destabilizing and perceived Emirati complicity with it. The result was a two-months-long war of words between the two governments through mostly social media along with a campaign in Washington as both governments attempted to convince US officials that the other was to blame for the breakdown of ties.

Then came the war in Iran. With Iran's initial attacks on the Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, the president of the UAE, expressed solidarity with each other as well as the other regional countries under Iranian attack. Yet, the UAE and Saudi Arabia diverged as the war continued as the Saudis joined the Pakistanis, Egyptians, and Turks in seeking a diplomatic solution. For their part, the Emiratis do not oppose a diplomatic solution, but given the fire

The illustration shows a rift between Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (R), crown prince of Abu Dhabi, and Mohammed bin Salman, crown prince of Saudi Arabia. FARS



The Emirates had been weighing a break from the cartel for several years now. A war, a conflict in Yemen, and a collapsed partnership with Riyadh gave them their reason to act.

they have taken from Iran, they want to ensure that in whatever agreement is reached, the regime cannot threaten their security again. They believe the Saudis and others are willing to settle for less. This divergence has led to an erosion of the trust and solidarity that developed in early March. The Emiratis, who were already considering leaving OPEC, clearly concluded that the deterioration of their bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia presented an opportunity to end their participation in the cartel.

A deeper threat to OPEC?

So far, other members of the car-

tel have not signaled an intention to leave. Yet the Qatari move in 2019 and the Emirati decision could conceivably lead other members to consider whether they might be better off without the cartel.

Keep in mind that geopolitics seems to have driven the move, but it seems unlikely that Abu Dhabi would have left if its leaders did not believe there was an economic benefit of doing so. If the UAE can prove that leaving OPEC is not harmful, other countries might consider following suit.

The article was first published by the Council on Foreign Relations.



The photo shows the aftermath of a Saudi air strike on the Port of Mukalla, Yemen, on December 30, 2025, after ships suspected of carrying weapons shipments arrived there from Fujairah, a port city on the United Arab Emirates' eastern coast. X

Three slots up for grabs as Iran names Greco-Roman squad

Sports Desk

With two major wrestling tournaments fast approaching in the coming months, head coach Hassan Rangraz is yet to decide on three slots in the Iranian Greco-Roman 10-man squad. Rangraz called up a 13-man roster for a training camp – starting Wednesday in northern Iran – as the national team is set to step up preparation for September's Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan, followed by the Senior World Championships in October. Manama had originally been named host of the world showpiece, but the hosting rights have been withdrawn from the Bahraini capital amid the military conflict in the Middle East, with United World Wrestling yet to announce the new host nation.

Reigning world and Olympic champions Saeid Esmaili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi

Saravi (97kg), as well as world silver medalist Payam Ahmadi (55kg), Ali Ahmadi Vafa (60kg) – who won a bronze medal at the Asian Championships in April – Ali Oskou (77kg) – silver winner at the Asian event – senior and under-23 world champion Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg), and world and Olympic silver medalist Alireza Mohmadi (87kg) have already secured their places in the national team, with the 63kg, 72kg, and 130kg slots up for grabs in the coming months. All eyes will be on the super-heavyweight class, where two-time defending world champion Amin Mirzazadeh – also a bronze medalist at the Paris 2024 Olympics – will face domestic rivalry from 21-year-old prodigy Fardin Hedayati, a world U23 champion for the past two years.

Hedayati, who made his senior international breakthrough in style at the 2024 Ranking Series event in Budapest – defeating



● IAWFIR

Turkish great Riza Kayaalp and Georgian Olympic silver winner Iakobi Kajaia en route to the top of the podium – will have every reason to fancy his chances of

going all the way on a potential debut at the Senior Worlds. The two-horse race in the 63kg category will feature Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar and Er-

fan Jarkani. Keshtkar enjoyed a decent run of results last year, bagging silver at the Asian Championships before claiming an impressive bronze on

his debut at the World Championships. Former junior and under-23 world bronze medalist Jarkani, meanwhile, will be looking to build on an Asian silver-winning campaign in Bishkek, where he suffered a final loss to the host nation's Aftandil Taalaibek Uulu.

In 72kg, world bronze medalist Danial Sohrabi will take on Mohammad-Javad Rezaei, who tops the 2026 domestic selection cycle and also settled for silver at the Asian Championships after being pinned by Kazakhstan's Almatbek Amanbek in the final.

The decisive trials for these three weight categories are expected to be held in May or June, either in the form of domestic wrestle-offs or through assignment to an international tournament. Given the current wartime circumstances in the country, the coaching staff may lean toward holding domestic head-to-heads.

IHF Beach Handball World Championships: Iran to face Spain, Portugal, USA in men's group phase



● IRIHF

Sports Desk

Iran has been drawn against Spain, Portugal, and the USA in Group A of the upcoming IHF Beach Handball World Championships – starting May 23 in Zagreb, Croatia.

The draw for the 12th edition of the global showpiece was held in the Croatian capital on Saturday, where 16 men's teams were split into four preliminary groups.

Iran finished as runner-up at the Asian Championships in Muscat last year to secure a fourth participation at the world event, joining champion Oman as the continent's two representatives.

Iran's most successful campaign at the World Championships came in the 2018 edition in Kazan, Russia, when the country progressed to the quarterfinals before suffering a 2-0 setback against Sweden.

Iran will enter the tournament fresh off a glorious run at the Asian Beach Games in Sanya, China, last week, which

saw Mahdi Qashqaeirad's men bag the gold medal thanks to a shootout victory over Qatar in the final.

Spain will make a 10th appearance at the tournament, having achieved its best result in its maiden participation in 2006 – a third-place finish in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Spaniards will look to surpass that feat after an impressive silver-winning run at the European Championships last July.

Portugal, meanwhile, will be part of the World Championships for only a second time. The European side will still be among the teams to watch in Zagreb after claiming the bronze medal in the previous edition in China two years ago.

The United States will make a fifth appearance at the tournament, with their best result being an 11th-place finish in 2016. Elsewhere in the draw, two-time defending champion Croatia, which had the right to choose its own group as the host, picked Group D alongside debutant France, Oman,

and Australia. Denmark – beaten by Croatia in the last two finals – will be joined by 2010 silver medalist Hungary, Tunisia, and Puerto Rico in Group B.

An anticipated Group C will see Brazil – the most decorated team in the competition with three titles – and two-time champion and reigning European gold medalist Germany headline the group fixtures, with Argentina and debutant Italy also in the group.

The top three teams from each of the four groups will advance to the main round, which will feature two six-team groups, with the top four from each then moving through to the quarterfinals.

The bottom team in each of the four preliminary groups will continue in a round-robin consolation round.

The full schedule of the six-day World Championships, which will also feature the women's 16-team competition, is yet to be announced by the International Handball Federation.

Qolizadeh a World Cup doubt after injury blow in Polish league

Sports Desk

Iranian midfielder Ali Qolizadeh faces a race against time to be fit for the upcoming FIFA World Cup – co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada from June 11 – after suffering a knee injury while in action with Lech Poznań in the Polish Ekstraklasa on Saturday.

The 30-year-old winger, who was also ruled out of nine games in the early stages of the Polish top-flight season due to a torn thigh muscle, was forced off only 19 minutes into the away game against Motor Lublin.

"Ali will undergo an MRI scan on Sunday, with the result expected by Monday afternoon to determine the timeframe of his return," Lech Poznań's press officer Adrian Gatuszka said after the game.

The Iranian was trying to

jump over an opponent's tackle but twisted his previously operated right knee upon landing and clearly appeared to be in pain as he was stretchered off the pitch.

Lech Poznań still managed to win the game 1-0 – courtesy of Swedish midfielder Leo Bengtsson's 40th-minute strike – and retain top spot in the table with 55 points, six clear of nearest rival Górnik Zabrze, which has a game in hand, with three rounds of fixtures remaining, closing in on a record-extending 10th league title – its second in succession.

Qolizadeh has been in flying form in recent months, contributing six goals and four assists in 15 appearances since December, while playing a role in 14 of the club's last 18 league goals.

His potential lengthy spell on the sidelines would be



Iranian winger Ali Qolizadeh (8) is helped off the pitch by Lech Poznań teammates after a 1-0 victory over Motor Lublin in the Polish Ekstraklasa in Lublin, Poland, on May 2, 2026.

● DAWID CMIELEWSKI/KKSLECH.COM

a massive blow for national team head coach Amir Ghalenoei, who will likely have to build the team around overseas players, as domestic league players will be without competitive action until the World Cup following the top flight's postponement since the United States and Israel

launched a war campaign against Iran on February 28.

Iran is set to begin its Group G campaign at the global showpiece against New Zealand in Los Angeles on June 15, where it is also due to play Belgium six days later, before taking on Egypt in Seattle on June 26.

Iranian judokas finish empty-handed on IJF Grand Slam return

Sports Desk

All three members of the Iranian men's judo team suffered early exits at the Dushanbe Grand Slam in the country's first participation at the International Judo Federation's annual showpiece in six years.

A gold medalist at the Casablanca African Open in January, Elyas Parhizgar fell to a first-round defeat against Ukraine's Vladyslav Ukrkolobov in the -81kg class, while Amirabbas Choopan – a bronze medalist at February's Tunis African Open – was beaten by Kazakhstan's Daniil Krylov in his

first bout in the -90kg division.

Iranian prodigy Mohammad-Pouria Banaeian, who

claimed an impressive junior gold medal in the Tunisian capital, was undone by Azerbaijan's Ushangi Azekokauri in the +100kg contest.

Next for the Iranian trio will be the Astana Grand Slam, starting on Friday in Kazakhstan.

The two tournaments will serve as a significant part of Iran's preparation for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in September, after the country missed out on April's Asian Championships in Ordos City, China, as a result of the military conflict with the United States and Israel.



● IRIJF

UNESCO experts to visit Siraf for world heritage evaluation

Iranica Desk

UNESCO experts are scheduled to visit Bushehr Province in September and October this year to evaluate the historic port of Siraf for possible inscription on the World Heritage List, the director general of Bushehr Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said.

Nasrollah Ebrahimi said that the nomination dossier of Siraf has already been selected as Iran's official candidate for 2026, adding that the assessment will proceed despite ongoing wartime conditions, ISNA wrote.

He highlighted Bushehr's significant potential in maritime and coastal tourism, noting that multiple projects are currently underway. These include tourism development on Harku Island, restoration of the traditional Lenj (Ship)

Graveyard, construction of a marine aquarium, expansion of recreational piers, and the development of hotels and tourism complexes in cities such as Asaluyeh, Deylam, Ab Pakhsh, Bushehr, and Delvar. He further stated that new tourism initiatives have begun across the province, including the issuance of the first preliminary permit for a five-star hotel in Deylam — an important step toward strengthening tourism infrastructure in northern Bushehr.

Ebrahimi described the submission of Siraf's dossier to UNESCO last February as the province's most significant recent cultural heritage achievement. Competing with other candidates such as Tous, Siraf was ultimately selected to represent Iran for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2026.

Despite challenges posed by the war, he noted that



● booking.ir

preparatory measures — such as infrastructure improvements and the installation of signage — are ongoing, with UNESCO's official evaluation expected in early autumn.

On research activities, Ebrahimi reported that more than ten archaeolog-

ical programs have been conducted in recent years, including studies along the Persian Gulf coastline, excavations in Siraf, surveys of prehistoric sites in Dayyer, and boundary assessments for several historical locations.

He also pointed to the

organization of scientific events such as the National Conference on the History and Culture of the Persian Gulf, specialized archaeology meetings, and World Museum Day programs.

Regarding restoration efforts, more than 40 restoration workshops are

currently active across the province. In Bushehr's historic district, projects such as the paving the passageway of Sheikh Sa'doun Mosque and the Fadak clinic have been completed.

Ebrahimi announced that the Shahid Raisali Delvari Museum has been fully equipped and is ready for inauguration. Restoration work has also been completed on several historic structures, including the Dalaki Caravanserai, Moshir al-Molk Caravanserai, and more than 20 other valuable heritage sites.

He added that 34 elements of intangible cultural heritage from Bushehr were registered nationally last year, bringing the total number of registered heritage items in the province to over 450.

In terms of museum development, several institutions — including Jam

Museum, Siraf Museum, Printing Science Museum, and the Iranian Museum — are currently under construction or nearing completion. Additionally, a private ethnographic museum has been established in Chah Mobarak.

Ebrahimi also noted that, under Iran's Seventh Development Plan, a number of historic buildings—including Golshan Mansion, Najafi Mansion, Azin Mansion, Haj Rais Mansion, Moshir al-Molk Caravanserai, and the Siraf Nasouri Castle — have been handed over to the private sector.

Highlighting achievements in handicrafts, he said that 126 provincial works have received the National Seal of Excellence, while three have earned international recognition. Last year alone, 230 individuals were trained in the sector, and 219 handicraft licenses were issued.

Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari sees tourism as key driver



Kuhrang
● utravv.com

Iranica Desk

The tourism sector in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province represents a major opportunity for accelerating development, a senior tourism official at the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said.

Hadi Qasemi said the province's natural, historical, artistic, and social tourism capacities can be effectively used to generate jobs, reduce unemployment, and boost economic growth, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that close cooperation between the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Shahrekord plays an important role in advancing development objectives.

Qasemi noted that the chamber's tourism and related businesses commission has, over the past three years, served as a strong support arm for the provin-

cial tourism authority and has actively contributed to the sector's development efforts, which he described as commendable.

He also stressed that improving marketing, promotion, and branding of tourism sub-sectors in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari remains a priority through continued cooperation with the Chamber's tourism commission and related business sectors.

Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province is widely recognized for its rich natural attractions, particularly its rivers, waterfalls, and highland landscapes. Among the most popular destinations is the Zayandeh Rud river source area, which offers scenic views and recreational opportunities.

The province is also home to the city of Kuhrang, known for its pristine springs, cool climate, and alpine scenery. The waterfalls and surrounding valleys of the region attract large numbers of domestic tourists, especially during spring and summer.

Iran's endangered languages face rising risks in times of crisis

Iranica Desk

In conditions of natural disasters, armed conflict, and insecurity, the protection of intangible linguistic heritage becomes increasingly critical, as local language varieties are among the most vulnerable elements of cultural heritage. Population displacement, forced migration, generational disruption, and the weakening of local communication networks place these languages at serious risk of gradual erosion, loss of vitality, or complete disappearance.

In a note published by chtn.ir, Faryar Akhlaqi, a faculty member of the Linguistics Research Institute at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, emphasized that in such circumstances dialectology is not merely an academic discipline, but also a practical instrument for cultural preservation and for safeguarding the collective memory of local communities. According to her, systematic documentation of vocabulary, oral narratives, pronunciation systems, local expressions, and indigenous linguistic knowledge can play a decisive role in preventing the disappearance of a significant portion of Iran's cultural diversity, while also enabling its transmission to future generations.

The Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has long played a strategic role in preserving Iran's linguistic diversity. Its activities include field research on Iranian language varieties — particularly endangered ones — the implementation of the national Linguistic Atlas of Iran project, the development of audio and written archives, the training of local researchers, and the application of digital technologies for the recording, storage, and preservation of linguistic data. Beyond their linguistic significance, the scientific study of

Iranian languages and dialects contributes to a deeper understanding of local identities, cultural histories, and patterns of social interaction.

In crisis situations, experts stress that the formulation of emergency protection plans for linguistic data is essential. Secure backup systems for audio and written archives, as well as the continuation of linguistic research within protected and controlled environments, can help prevent irreversible damage to the country's linguistic heritage and ensure its long-term preservation.



● pgnews.ir

The Linguistic Atlas of Iran, which represents the outcome of thousands of hours of fieldwork and more than 27,000 recorded linguistic interviews conducted in villages across the country, is considered one of Iran's most significant scientific and cultural assets. This unique collection not only documents the extraordinary diversity of languages and dialects across Iran, but also preserves elements of historical memory, local identity, and indigenous knowledge systems of various communities.

Many of these language varieties are now experiencing rapid change, structural weakening, or even extinction. As such, the data recorded in the atlas constitute an irreplaceable historical document of Iran's vast linguistic

diversity, serving both present and future generations. It also provides a reliable foundation for research in linguistics, anthropology, cultural history, and social sciences.

Protecting this collection is, in effect, equivalent to safeguarding Iran's intangible cultural heritage and preserving voices, expressions, and narratives that may otherwise disappear with the decline of their respective languages.

To ensure the protection of these data, a range of scientific and technical measures is required. These include the full digitiza-

tion of audio archives — some of which are still preserved on cassette tapes — as well as written documents; the creation of multiple secure backups in geographically separate locations; the use of stable and long-term digital storage systems; and the periodic updating of file formats to prevent digital degradation and data loss over time.

In addition, detailed metadata must be systematically compiled and digitized. This includes information such as recording time, geographical location, speaker characteristics, village-level socio-cultural data, and livelihood patterns of local populations — much of which was originally collected during fieldwork in paper-based formats. Proper structuring and

digital organization of this metadata is essential to ensure efficient retrieval, accessibility, and scholarly use of the data. Furthermore, the establishment of a national linguistic archive with tiered access for researchers, the training of specialized personnel for data management and preservation, and the development of standardized protection protocols for crisis conditions — such as war, natural disasters, or infrastructural breakdowns — are considered essential measures.

In addition, the selective publication of data in printed form, as well as the preparation of linguistic atlas volumes for provinces whose datasets have been completed, can play an important role in both preserving this heritage and strengthening the connection between local communities and their native languages. Such initiatives also facilitate scholarly access to these valuable resources.

Over the past two years, the Department of Linguistics, Inscriptions and Texts has prioritized the safeguarding of existing linguistic datasets and has actively worked toward creating conditions for their publication.

In the first phase, with a focus on Semnan Province — whose linguistic atlas was compiled in 2019 — the documented vocabulary from all settlements in the province (where 28 language varieties are recorded according to the Linguistic Atlas of Iran) was extracted from the atlas archive and prepared for publication through two dedicated research projects.

In the subsequent phase, currently underway, the department has focused on typological analysis and the publication of all recorded sentences from the language varieties of villages in Semnan Province, also through two additional research projects aimed at further structuring and disseminating the data.

Ministry backs concert comeback, holds off on ticket price rise



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry is moving to restart live mu-

sic after months of disruption, with its top music official pledging institutional backing for performances while stopping short of approving higher

ticket prices. Babak Rezaei, head of the Music Office at the ministry, said the government's remit centers on licensing and facilitation, adding it "supports" artists and welcomes the return of concerts. Talks with industry players are under way, he said, though the hiatus has complicated a swift rebound, IRNA reported. "A concert is a collective, time-intensive process," Rezaei said, noting that production cycles, from rehearsals to repertoire preparation, were interrupted. Restarting requires coordination among ensembles and venues, he added, with the ministry working to reconnect artists and streamline approvals. He said many performers are eager to take the stage again, but stressed that improved social conditions, access to

rehearsal space and full troupe participation are prerequisites for a sustained revival. The ministry aims to accelerate those conditions so new works can reach audiences. On pricing, Rezaei said no final decision has been taken. While current economic pressures have eroded the viability of past price levels, the ministry is seeking to cap end costs by managing fees at state-run halls, extending targeted support and strengthening media outreach so artists can perform and the public can attend. Rezaei also stressed music's role at "critical junctures," pointing to a surge of nationally themed works produced during recent wartime conditions despite operational constraints that limited formal licensing. Hundreds of pieces circulated via public squares

and media outlets across Tehran and the provinces, he said, with several deemed "notable" for their impact. He drew a parallel between contemporary releases and canonical works, citing Mohsen Chavoshi's track 'Hasbi Allah' (God is sufficient for me) alongside the historic 'Ey Iran' by Rouhollah Khaleghi as examples of music's capacity to transmit social meaning, foster unity and bolster public resilience. Recent hostilities and a temporary ceasefire have galvanized the cultural sector, prompting artists to issue statements of solidarity and produce new material, while cultural institutions organized programs to reinforce national unity. Rezaei said music has once again demonstrated its ability to stand "alongside the people" and to help document defining social moments.

Iran seeks to etch Minab tragedy into global cultural memory

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, said on Saturday the country is bringing its full cultural capacity to bear to turn the Minab school tragedy into a "lasting" national and international memory, outlining a coordinated push across arts, media and legal channels. Speaking at a Cultural Council meeting in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri called for moving beyond a temporary response toward embedding the event in Iran's collective consciousness and global discourse, IRNA reported. "This incident must become enduring," he said, urging the formation of a "global consensus" to secure its place in international legal and cultural frameworks. The attack occurred on February 28, the first day of the US and Israeli aggression against Iran, when an elementary school was struck by an airstrike, killing 168 people.



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri (6th L), speaks at a Cultural Council meeting in Tehran on May 2, 2026. ● IRNA

He outlined a multi-pronged plan, including early-stage research groups drafting a unified narrative. The program features a museum dedicated to the Minab school victims, urban memorials, and extensive documentation, alongside a wide range of cultural output, from feature films and animation to literature, poetry and music, designed to sustain long-term engagement. Describing the effort as nationwide, he said a central task force will align cultural, educational and media institutions to ensure coordinated execution. Plans also call for integrating the narrative into textbooks, public spaces and digital platforms, embedding it in everyday life. "Our aim is repetition and re-cre-

ation in social memory," he said, adding that the victims' names and images should resonate across schools, universities, festivals and online spaces. Salehi-Amiri highlighted international outreach as a priority, announcing plans for "high-caliber" productions with global reach to engage audiences abroad and spotlight the tragedy as a humanitarian issue. He also pointed to the role of Iranian communities overseas in amplifying the narrative, stressing the use of cultural diplomacy to extend its impact. Sustained storytelling and cultural production, he said, are essential to securing a permanent place for the Minab school victims in contemporary historical memory.

'Yooz' roars into Russian cinemas, lands in top 10 with swift box-office run

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian 3D animated feature film 'Yooz,' directed by Reza Arzhang, opened in Russian cinemas on April 16 and grossed \$245,000 in under 10 days, entering the country's top 10 box-office titles and drawing strong early audiences. Released across multiple cities under the Russian title 'Толстяк Юзи,' the family-oriented film secured a prominent slot among foreign releases, signaling a growing international footprint for Iran's animation sector, ISNA reported. Russian outlets highlighted its environmental narrative and commercial momentum, noting its appeal alongside global family titles. The feature follows an Iranian cheetah on an arduous journey back to its



homeland, weaving themes of identity, conservation and cultural heritage into a fast-paced storyline. Its ecological focus on the endangered Asiatic cheetah has been central to its reception abroad, broadening its reach beyond younger viewers. Produced by Soureh Animation Center and VistaMedia, and distributed internationally by 'Ten Letters,' 'Yooz'

builds on a strong domestic run. The film premiered in Iran in October 2025, drawing more than 1.5 million viewers and earning almost 970 billion rials, becoming the country's highest-grossing animated title to date. Industry observers point to the film's "cross-border" appeal and technical polish, achieved through high production standards, as key to its overseas traction.

'Persian Gulf Photographer' awarded in Taiwan with eco-focused short

Arts & Culture Desk

An Iranian filmmaker from Qeshm Island won the Special Jury Award at the 2026 Chiayi International Three-Minute Film Competition in Chiayi, Taiwan, as his environmentally themed short stood out among entries from 33 countries. Asghar Besharati, widely known as the "Persian Gulf Photographer," secured the honor with 'The Way of a Red,' a compact, visually driven work that he wrote, directed,

shot and produced. The film's focus on environmental stewardship and the "vital" role of water resonated with an international jury and underscored Iran's growing cultural footprint at global festivals, IRNA reported. "The film speaks to a 'shared' concern," one festival juror said in a statement, praising its concise storytelling and visual clarity. Besharati's latest accolade builds on an established international track record. He has previously taken top



gold medals in Spain, the United Kingdom and Russia, and has increasingly pivoted toward documentary filmmaking that foregrounds the natural

heritage of southern Iran. Cultural officials describe him as a "credible ambassador" of Hormozgan's landscapes and traditions on the world stage. 'The Way of a Red' features Reyhaneh Sadeghi, with sound recorded by Maher Soroudi, sound design by Amin Ardani and editing by Mansour Vahdani. Its international distribution is handled by Exir Tasvir, led by Seyed Hamed Nobari. The film has already drawn recognition

across multiple platforms, including a special award at the Nikon International Film Festival 2025 and honors at the Golden Shot World Festival 2025, alongside national prizes in Iran's water and environmental cinema circuits. The Chiayi competition, hosted by the city's Cultural Affairs Bureau, is a prominent platform for ultra-short filmmaking, drawing a diverse international field and spotlighting concise narratives with global resonance.

Lake Urmia rebounds to five-year high as inflows lift water volume



Social Desk

Lake Urmia in northwestern Iran has reached its highest water volume in five years as inflows and transfer projects boosted levels, said Saeed Isapour, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Headquarters planning office, in Urmia on May 3. Water volume has climbed to 3.5 billion cubic meters, more than 3 billion cubic meters above the start of the current water year, he

said. Water level has also risen to 1,270.90 meters, up 1.40 meters since start of the water year, ILNA reported. Surface area expanded to 2,255 square kilometers, about 1,700 square kilometers more than the same period last year. Rivers feeding the basin are delivering 300-350 cubic meters per second, alongside a 30 cubic meters per second transfer from the Kani Sib project. He forecast level could reach 1,271 meters within two weeks if conditions persist. Farmers along river routes were urged avoid unnecessary abstraction ensuring flows reach lake. Officials said projected autumn and winter rainfall offers cautious optimism to stabilize the internationally monitored hypersaline lake into next water year.