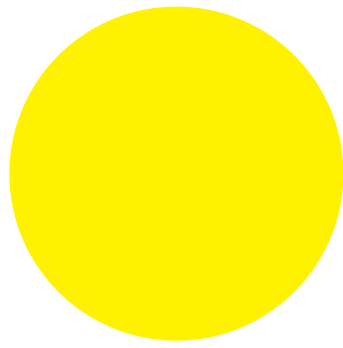


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President Masoud Pezeshkian (c), flanked by Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (l) and Police chief Ahmad Reza Radan, speaks at a meeting with top commanders of the Iranian Law Enforcement Force in Tehran on May 11, 2026.
president.ir

Europe eyes postwar Persian Gulf role

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

France and Britain had announced the deployment of warships to the region as part of a joint plan to lay the groundwork for safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz once the situation stabilizes or the conflict is resolved. The move has drawn a negative reaction from Iran, which warned against escalating the crisis and militarizing a vital waterway. In an interview with Iran Daily, Jalal Sadatian, an expert on European affairs, said European countries fear that their economic interests could remain at risk even after hostilities in the region subside, prompting them to explore mechanisms for maintaining a military presence in the postwar period. He stressed, however, that Europe can secure its interests in the region not through military means, but only through diplomacy and dialogue with Iran.



Jalal Sadatian

IRAN DAILY: Given that France and Britain, unlike the United States, have not joined plans for a blockade or military coalition in the Strait of Hormuz, what is the significance of this deployment?

SADATIAN: The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has had economic repercussions across the world. It has not only pushed up energy prices in the United States, but has also had a broader impact on prices across Europe. As a result, there is growing concern over the prospect of economic crises. France, Britain, Germany and others have each, in their own way, become increasingly worried about the fallout and consequences of these developments. From a military standpoint, however, Iran has warned France, and according to the latest information received, they have effectively backed away from plans to bring naval assets into the area. Still, efforts are under way under British and French auspices, with the participation of several countries, to assess what measures could be taken. At the same time, Iran has never said the Strait is closed. Rather, Tehran says it is exercising control there against Israel, countries it views as hostile, or states that provided their airspace or facilities for attacks. Other vessels, meanwhile, have continued to pass through in coordination with Iran. The diplomatic track is far more capable of resolving this issue. Iran, according to this view, has not sought to act in violation of legal norms or international regulations. Part of these European moves may also be aimed at appeasing the United States, given that Donald Trump sharply criti-

cized European countries.

European countries have stressed that this mission is intended to ensure maritime security after tensions ease or the conflict ends. What threat would remain that requires a European military presence in the region? Military confrontation may come to an end, but economic tensions will not necessarily disappear. For example, there are concerns that ships could eventually be denied passage through the Strait or that very high fees could be imposed on vessels crossing it. Because European countries have not entered into direct talks with Iran and have not fully considered Tehran's position, they assume Iran may seek to extort money. Iran, however, says it merely wants to collect fees for services aimed at ensuring the safe passage of ships through the area. That does not mean it intends to shut the Strait down. European countries do not want Iran to hold that level of control because they argue the Strait is not Iranian territory but an international waterway. This issue requires dialogue — specifically over the legal basis on which they claim the Strait is an international passage in which Iran has no rights. According to some arguments, the total width of the Strait is 21 nautical miles, of which 12 to 15 nautical miles fall within Iran's territorial waters, while the remainder constitutes economic

waters. In effect, the argument suggests that nearly the entire Strait belongs to Iran. Iran, meanwhile, raised proposals during talks with Oman's Foreign Ministry suggesting that arrangements for the Strait should be managed under the supervision of the two countries located on either side of it. This indicates that Iran is seeking to resolve the issue through understanding, dialogue and engagement. Given Tehran's negative reaction, is it realistically possible for European countries to reach an understanding with Iran over a naval presence in the region? Or would Tehran regard such a presence as part of a broader securitization campaign against itself? The idea is categorically unlikely. Iran even rejects the presence of US bases in the area and has repeatedly called for their withdrawal from the region. Tehran insists that regional countries themselves are capable of ensuring security and that there is no need for either American or European military deployments. Iran says it will guarantee security for all parties within the framework of international law and regulations, provided there is no hostility toward it or attempts to resolve matters through war. However, if the aim is to ensure the security of Israel and the United States in the region, Iran says it will not permit

such a role and will resist it. Tehran has already warned both France and Britain not to further complicate an already highly complex situation. Nevertheless, Iran says that if others have concerns or proposals, dialogue remains possible. In recent months, Europe has tried to distinguish itself from the Trump administration's more aggressive policies toward Iran. Could a more direct French and British role in Persian Gulf security equations undermine that image and affect Europe's future relations with Iran? Such actions would certainly deepen tensions and make the situation even more complicated. Iran does not want confrontation with Europe. Relations between Iran and Europe had already become more strained over the "snapback" issue. At present, it seems unlikely that Europe truly has the capacity to enter this conflict, particularly given its geographical proximity to Iran and Europe's own vulnerability. At most, European countries may seek to apply limited pressure in order to signal that they, too, are present and should be part of the equation. They want to position themselves as a party to negotiations because Europe has been largely sidelined during the latest developments. Through these largely symbolic actions, they are effectively trying to signal to the Americans that Europe still stands alongside them.

FM spokesperson: Tehran offers 'reasonable, generous' reply to US

'The only thing we have demanded is Iran's legitimate rights'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday that Tehran's response to US peace proposal was "reasonable and generous" after the US president rejected it as "completely unacceptable."

Esmail Baqaei said that, "We did not demand any concessions. The only thing we have demanded is Iran's legitimate rights."

"Is it unreasonable for Iran to demand an end to the war in the region, a halt to maritime piracy against Iranian ships, and the release of assets belonging to the Iranian people that have been unjustly blocked for years?" Baqaei asked.

"Is our proposal for safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz unreasonable? Is establishing peace and security across the entire region irrespons-

ble?" Baqaei said.

"Everything we proposed in the plan was reasonable and generous, and it is for the good of the region and the world," he further said.

He expressed regret that the American side, based on a mindset shaped by the Israeli regime, continues to insist on unreasonable demands.

Baqaei added that all of Iran's points were supposed to be discussed, but the US side has so far refused to engage with them in good faith.

A report by IRIB said that Iran has demanded full compensation for war damages, lifting of all sanctions imposed on Iran, release of frozen Iranian assets and the recognition of Iran's sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz.

US President Donald Trump reacted to Tehran's formal response to the American side,

calling it "completely unacceptable."

Trump also told Axios in an interview that he has discussed Iran's response with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Baqaei's remarks came as regional efforts are underway to end the ongoing tensions in the region, which have been caused by a US-Israeli aggression against Iran on February 28.

On April 11-12, Iran and the United States held the first round of negotiations brokered by Pakistan, days after Islamabad mediated a ceasefire to halt the aggression on Iran. However, it failed to produce an agreement due to the US excessive demands.

Efforts to bring back the sides to the negotiating table also failed after Iran refused to take part in the second round due to the US violation of the ceasefire.



Esmail Baqaei
IRNA

However, the two countries have been exchanging proposals through mediator Pakistan to find a way out of the crisis which has also disrupted global

economy. Iran submitted its response to the American side's proposed text earlier on Sunday. Tehran has repeatedly empha-

sized that at this stage, negotiations will only focus on ending the war in the region, rejecting any talks on Iran's nuclear program.

Iran warns of 'decisive response' to any European naval deployment in Strait of Hormuz



Charles de Gaulle Aircraft Carrier
CREATIVE COMMONS

International Desk

Iran warned of "a decisive and immediate response" to any deployment of military vessels by European countries in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that the Islamic Republic alone holds the authority to maintain security in the strategic maritime corridor.

Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks in a post on his X account on Sunday, after France and Britain announced their decision to deploy warships to the region.

"Whether in times of war or peace, only the Islamic Republic of Iran can

establish security in this strait and will not allow any country to interfere in such matters," he said.

Gharibabadi said that France has announced plans to send its flagship aircraft carrier, the Charles de Gaulle, to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, while the UK has indicated it will send a warship to the area in an effort to allegedly preserve freedom of navigation.

"Any deployment and stationing of extra-regional destroyers around the Strait of Hormuz, under the pretext of protecting shipping, is nothing but an escalation of the crisis, the militarization of a vital waterway, and an attempt to cover up the true root of

insecurity in the region," he warned. He also emphasized that maritime security cannot be ensured through military posturing, particularly by those nations who, by "supporting, participating in, or remaining silent in the face of aggression and blockade, are themselves part of the problems."

The Iranian diplomat further pointed out that the root of regional insecurity lies in the illegal use of force, consistent threats aimed at coastal states, and a disregard for international law as outlined in the United Nations Charter.

"The Strait of Hormuz is not the common property of extra-regional powers; it is a sensitive waterway adjacent to coastal states," Gharibabadi said.

"The exercise of Iran's sovereignty over this strait and the establishment of its legal frameworks fall within Iran's rights as a coastal state," he added. France and Britain are leading efforts to create an international coalition to break Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, but only after a deal between the US and Iran is secured.

In response to the US-Israeli aggression, Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz to shipping associated with the aggressors and their allies, sending oil prices soaring.

Iran began enforcing much stricter controls last month following US President Donald Trump's announcement of a blockade targeting Iranian vessels and ports.

Pezeshkian: Battlefield victory should be reinforced through diplomacy

National Desk

Iran's president said on Monday that the "rational and logical preference" is to complete the victory achieved by the Armed Forces on the battlefield through diplomacy, and to secure the rights of the Iranian people from a position of pride and power.

Masoud Pezeshkian made the remarks during a meeting with commanders of the Iran's Police Command in Tehran.

"The great nation of Iran and its armed forces managed to deny the enemy its goals and forced it to accept a ceasefire and stop the war," Pezeshkian said.

Outlining the country's options, he said Tehran could either engage in talks with dignity and strength to secure national rights, remain in a state of no war, no peace, or continue the path of conflict and confrontation.

However, he said that the rational, logical preference which is based on national interest is that the victory achieved by the Armed Forces on the battlefield be complemented in the field of diplomacy and the rights of the Iranian nation be established from a position of dignity and authority.

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched an unprovoked war of



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) speaks in a meeting with commanders of the Iran's Police Command in Tehran, on May 11, 2026.
president.ir

aggression against Iran, assassinating the late leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and striking nuclear sites, schools, hospitals and civilian infrastructure.

Iran's Armed Forces have retaliated against the aggression by launching missile and drone attacks on US military sites in regional countries and Israel's positions in the occupied territories.

Iran and the US have also held one round of negotiations in Pakistan to end the conflict. The negotiations between the two sides have yet to produce an agreement.

China chastises anti-Iran US sanctions as 'illegal, unilateral'

International Desk

China voiced strong opposition to US sanctions, calling the curbs on three China-based companies, which the US claimed enabled Iran's military operations, illegal and unilateral.

"We have always required Chinese enterprises to conduct business in accordance with laws and regulations, and will firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said.

Guo emphasized the importance of making every possible effort to prevent a resumption of hostilities in the region as the world's most urgent priority at this juncture.



Guo Jiakun
VCG

"The pressing priority is to prevent by all means a relapse in fighting, rather than using the war to maliciously associate and smear other countries." The US State Department this week sanctioned three Chinese companies it accused of aiding Tehran during the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, the latest in the back-and-forth between the two countries just days before President Donald Trump will meet

with China's leader Xi Jinping in a high-stakes confab in Beijing.

The agency accused the firms — Meentropy Technology (Hangzhou) Co. Ltd, The Earth Eye and Chang Guang Satellite Technology Co., Ltd. — of "providing satellite imagery that enables Iran's military strikes against US forces in the Middle East," according to a fact sheet Friday.

"The United States will continue to take action to hold China-based entities accountable for their support to Iran and ensure Iran cannot reconstitute its proliferation-sensitive programs following Operation Epic Fury," the State Department wrote.

"The targeting of US service members and partners will not go unanswered."

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Paknejad says experts 'laugh' at claims of damage to Iran's oil wells

Reports of crude dump near Kharg dismissed

Economy Desk

Iran's oil minister on Monday rejected claims that US pressure and a naval blockade had caused explosions at Iranian oil wells, saying the allegations reflected "wishful thinking" promoted through hostile media outlets.

Mohsen Paknejad dismissed reports suggesting Iran's oil wells had been damaged as a result of the blockade, saying industry experts would "laugh" at such claims.

"What oil well explosions?" Paknejad said. Throughout the 40 days of the US-Israeli war that began in late February, the production did not decline and the export process was proceeding appropriately and satisfactorily, he added.

He acknowledged that Iran had faced challenges in the days following the US naval blockade on Iranian ports but said measures had been taken to address them and that the process was continuing.

The remarks come against the backdrop of repeated claims by US President Donald Trump and other American officials that the blockade on Iran's ports since April 13 had severely disrupted the country's oil production ca-

capacity and caused irreversible damage to oil wells and infrastructure.

However, data from international tanker-tracking services indicate that Iranian oil exports through its maritime fleet have continued despite the blockade. Iran has also developed alternative solutions, including overland transport routes, to continue supplying oil to foreign customers.

The comments also come amid reports of a suspected oil leak near Kharg Island after satellite imagery this week appeared to show a large slick near the island, Iran's main oil export hub in the Persian Gulf. The reports surfaced as US officials warned that oil spills in the region could trigger an environmental catastrophe amid the ongoing standoff involving Iranian and US forces around the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has denied reports of an oil leak near Kharg Island with the country's Oil Terminals Company saying in a statement that inspections had found no evidence of leaks from storage tanks, pipelines, loading facilities or tankers operating near the island.

The company's chief executive said the Marine Emergency Mu-

tual Aid Centre (MEMAC), a regional marine pollution body, had also reported no sign of leakage in the area. He added that Iranian teams had conducted additional field inspections and laboratory tests after the reports emerged and had not identified "even the smallest trace" of leakage.

Separately, Iran's Department of Environment said the pollution observed near Kharg Island had been caused by the discharge of oil-contaminated ballast water from a damaged tanker and not by leaks from Iranian oil infrastructure.

According to a statement carried by ISNA, the department said field, technical and multi-agency investigations had found no evidence of leakage from pipelines, oil terminal facilities or platforms belonging to the Iranian Offshore Oil Company in the area.

It said the damaged tanker had previously been hit near the Strait of Hormuz and that the release of contaminated ballast water had caused the pollution detected near Kharg Island.

The department added that it was continuing round-the-clock monitoring of the area through satellite imagery, field inspections and coordination



Mohsen Paknejad
WANA

with companies operating in the region.

'Fabricated claims'

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei also denied Western media claims that Iran had dumped oil into the sea because storage capacity had been exhausted.

"This issue is an absolute lie," Baqaei said during a Monday press conference, according to SHANA. "We are deeply concerned about damage to the environment of the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz."

"Regarding the oil slick and the claims raised, they are all fabricated," he said.

Baqaei said environmental damage in the region stemmed from the US military presence and wars imposed on the region over past decades.

He added that preserving the marine environment was one reason Iran supported the establishment of a management mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz to ensure environmental protection and repair damage caused during the war imposed by the United States and Israel in late February.

CBI prioritizes essential imports, forex reserves in wartime crunch



Economy Desk

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) is prioritizing measures to facilitate foreign exchange inflows, preserve net foreign currency reserves and direct hard currency resources toward essential household goods and production inputs, CBI governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said on Monday.

According to IRNA, Hemmati said trade and foreign exchange restrictions stemming from the war had added pressure on the market, but the central bank had maintained currency exchange channels through preemptive measures and cooperation with the government.

He said the government had also restricted foreign currency spending to preserve reserves and ensure continued financing for essential imports needed by households and production sectors.

Iran's national currency has fallen to record lows amid mounting economic pressure.

The rial traded between 1.75 million and 1.9 million per US dollar on the open market in recent weeks, compared with about 811,000 a year earlier. The sharp depreciation has underscored growing strain on the economy, which is already grappling with high inflation and Western sanctions.

The country remains under wartime conditions following a 40-day US-Israeli conflict. Tehran and Washington agreed to a temporary ceasefire on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, although tensions remain high.

"CBI is committed in such sensitive circumstances to maintaining relative economic stability through practical approaches in coordination with the government, while providing targeted support for domestic production and people's livelihoods," Hemmati said.

Separately, speaking on the sidelines of a foreign currency allocation committee meeting on Sunday, Hemmati said the country's foreign exchange allocation schedule had been finalized.

He said essential goods and medicine remained the top priority for foreign currency allocation.

"What is important for us is the supply of essential goods and medicine, which is our first priority. Therefore, all our efforts are focused on ensuring there is no problem in providing foreign currency for essential imports," Hemmati said.

The chief banker added that the second priority was providing foreign currency for the reconstruction of industries.

Minister unveils post-war plans to expedite goods clearance via north



Economy Desk

Iran has put in place plans to facilitate the entry of goods through northern corridors and the country's land borders, Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh said on Monday, as Tehran moves to ease trade and imports under mounting external pressure.

Speaking on the sidelines of a Monday meeting with a group of lawmakers and members of

Parliament's Social Committee on measures taken to facilitate trade and goods imports, Madanizadeh said that the measures were already being implemented.

The remarks come as Iran faces growing external economic and maritime pressure, including US restrictions targeting its shipping and oil trade through a naval blockade imposed since mid-April. The move, part of what Washington has de-

scribed as "Operation Economic Fury," is aimed at pressuring Tehran into a peace agreement following a 40-day war that began in late February.

Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors amid the mounting pressure.

The minister also said the clearance time for essential goods had been reduced to nine days, adding that the government aimed to cut that to around three days through multiple measures currently underway.

He also said authorities had delegated powers to provincial task forces composed of governors, customs officials, free zone authorities, terminal managers and chambers of commerce to resolve production and trade bottlenecks more quickly at the provincial level.

"These measures will help economic operators import raw materials and needed goods more quickly into the country, and by increasing production and supply, provide the con-

ditions for lower prices in the market," he said.

A senior trade official recently said Iran was seeking to expand the use of the Caspian Sea for trade and reduce reliance on southern maritime routes as Tehran diversifies logistics corridors amid external economic pressure.

Mohammad Ali Dehqan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said during a visit last week to the northern province of Mazandaran that the Caspian Sea should be developed as a key commercial corridor.

"Trade through the southern sea routes is and will remain important, but we must also define trade routes in the northern sea alongside the south," he said.

Maximum use of Caspian Sea

Separately, Masoud Polmeh, head of Iran's Shipping Association and Related Services, told ISNA on Monday that the coun-

try could secure all essential needs and continue necessary exports to target markets by using logistical and transport corridors connected through Iran's 12 neighboring land and maritime borders.

"Following the naval blockade announced by the Israeli-American side, we tried to avoid being caught off guard by using other regional corridors that provide us with road and rail connections and are under our management," Polmeh said. "We also sought to make maximum use of the northern waterway and the Caspian Sea so that foreign trade could continue under favorable conditions," he added.

Polmeh said Iran had significant capacity along the North-South and East-West corridors, adding that neighboring countries had long played a key role in transit and economic ties with Iran.

"We hope to properly fulfill all responsibilities in supporting the economy," he said.

TPO partially lifts bans on petchem exports

Economy Desk

The Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran authorized limited exports of petrochemical products about a month after a sweeping ban was imposed to prevent domestic shortages following US-Israeli strikes on key infrastructure, according to a report by Tasnim on Monday.

The media outlet published a TPO letter to

the export office of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), that read "authorized units" could resume exports of some petrochemical products up to a "specified tonnage ceiling."

The directive did not specify which products could be exported or the volume permitted.

Iran issued an order in mid-April that banned all exports "until further no-

stice" to prioritize domestic demand after attacks earlier that month on two main petrochemical hubs in Mahshahr in the southwestern province of Khuzestan and Asaluyeh in the southern province of Bushehr.

Days later, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade said it was even considering importing petrochemicals to secure feedstock supplies for downstream industries.

The air strikes disrupted part of an industry that remains one of Iran's main sources of foreign currency revenue.

Iran earned \$15.6 billion from petrochemical exports last year after shipping 37.7 million tons of products abroad.

It remains unclear how much of Iran's nominal annual production capacity of 100 million tones has been affected due to the US-Israeli aggression.



US strikes on fishing boats risking livelihoods of thousands: **Businessman**



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Tensions and military confrontations within the waters of the Persian Gulf have disrupted numerous conventional maritime trade routes of Iran, consequently diverting Iran's aquatic exports from the Persian Gulf toward terrestrial boundaries. Stakeholders within this industry claim that a substantial portion of exports, which formerly departed from southern ports via the Persian Gulf corridor to markets of Persian Gulf nations and East Asia, have either ceased entirely or been redirected toward substitute pathways.

These developments transpire under circumstances wherein, traditionally, more than 80% of Iran's aquatic exports have depended upon the southern corridor and maritime transit. But, presently, exporters are compelled to preserve their export markets through re-marketing endeavors and the utilization of overland routes. Although certain commodities, such as shrimp, have even experienced an augmentation in export volume, escalated transportation costs, maritime restrictions, and the uncertainty engendered by wartime conditions have imposed pressures upon stakeholders in this industry.

In conjunction with export-related challenges, the subsistence of southern fishermen has not remained unscathed by the repercussions of warfare. Reports indicate damage to launches (boats) and fishing vessels, as well as the targeted destruction of certain fishing gear within southern ports and waters — an occurrence that not only impedes the fishing process and the supply of aquatic products, but also adversely affects the lives of thousands of families whose livelihoods are inextricably tethered to the sea.

To explore the status of aquatic exports, the transformation of export destinations, the condition of production and fishing in the southern region of the country, and furthermore, the prospective outlook of this industry amidst the persistence of maritime insecurities, Iran Daily approached Ali Akbar Khodaei, secretary-general of the Union of Aquatic Production and Trade of Iran, and conducted an exclusive interview with him, the full transcript of which you can read below.



Ali Akbar Khodaei

IRAN DAILY: Given the prevailing wartime conditions dominating the country, what has been the status of Iran's aquatic exports during the current year, and what alterations has this situation exhibited relative to the preceding year?

KHODAEI: Aquatic exports of Iran have not ceased during the past two months, notwithstanding the emergence of certain difficulties. Nevertheless, transportation routes have undergone fundamental transformations. Maritime routes, due to existent challenges in transit as well as the exceptional circumstances of the Persian Gulf, have been reduced to the minimum feasible degree. Although one cannot assert that these routes have been entirely terminated, the volume of exports via this modality has approached near zero. Exports to the port of the United Arab Emirates and several littoral states of the Persian Gulf have severely diminished. Furthermore, the dispatch of aquatic products through the Persian Gulf toward eastern destinations, including China, has confronted a significant decline. Under such conditions, stakeholders in this domain have turned toward the utilization of overland routes and exports to neighboring countries.

First, kindly elucidate what amount of Iran's aquatic exports ordinarily transpired via the sea and the Persian Gulf?

According to statistics from the first 10 months of the previous Persian calendar year of 1404 (started March 21, 2025), of a total of approximately 157,000 tons exported during that period, approximately 125,000 tons — that is, more than 80% — were conducted via the southern corridor and maritime routes. This 80% share of exports has now been severely impacted and is presently undergoing a rerouting toward alternative options and pathways.

Conversely, exports to nations possessing lesser dependence upon maritime routes and which were already executed via trucks and tractor-trailers have assumed an ascending trajectory. Destinations such as Russia, Turkey, and other neighboring countries, which have received our export consignments via refrigerated containers, continue operations without complication. The requisite number of trucks for overland exports remains available, and just the transportation costs have, in all probability, increased.



Generally speaking, how has the export situation in the Persian year of 1404 been relative to 1403, and, if possible, provide approximate 12-month statistics as well?

In the Persian calendar year 1404 (March 21, 2025–March 21, 2026 Gregorian), no dramatic change in export volume has been recorded relative to 1403 (2024–2025 Gregorian). Based on ten-month data, exports in 1404 amounted to 157,000 tons, whereas this figure stood at 160,000 tons during the comparative period in 1403. Total exports until the end of 1403 reached 225,000 tons, and it is anticipated that a similar

figure shall materialize for 1404. Of course, it must be noted that commencing from the calendar month of Esfand (February 20–March 20, 2026), concurrently with the initiation of military hostilities, a decremental effect upon final statistics may be observed. In aggregate, it is estimated that aquatic exports in 1404 shall reach approximately 350,000 tons, of which about 140,000 tons pertain to aquatic feed. After deducting this amount, net aquatic exports shall stand at approximately 210,000 tons, demonstrating no considerable change relative to the prior year. It must be mentioned that Iranian aquatic products are exported to more than 60 countries worldwide.

After the commencement of military conflicts within the waters of the Persian Gulf, toward which destinations have Iran's aquatic exports been rerouted?



Smoke rises after a US-Israeli air strike set fire on a fishing pier in southern Iran in late March 2026.

● TASNIM

Export destinations have been diverted from the routes of southern waters toward neighboring countries and land borders. This rerouting, however, does not merely signify a diminution in exports, as we have even experienced volumetric growth in certain seafood products. For example, the nation's shrimp exports during the one-year period concluding in Esfand 1403 amounted to 1,950 tons, whereas, in Esfand 1404 and its next month, this figure reached approximately 4,000 tons. This increase of more than 100% resulted from the rerouting of exports and the development of novel export destinations in other countries via terrestrial boundaries. Pre-



An Iranian fisherman whose boat has been struck by a missile at sea and who was left injured in the waters of the Persian Gulf during the US-Israeli aggression on Iran talks to the press on a hospital bed in Bandar Abbas on May 5, 2026.

● FARS



The fleet of fishing launches stationed in southern ports has likewise sustained damage during this war. Upon what basis and with what objective the enemy has targeted many of our fishing and cargo launches along the southern coasts and within the ports of the Persian Gulf remains ambiguous. Naturally, such attacks disrupt the process of capture and production. Therefore, under current circumstances, no clear prospect exists for the improvement or increase of capture.

viously, a substantial portion of shrimp exports was conducted exclusively by sea and to the United Arab Emirates. However, exporters, through renewed marketing efforts, have discovered alternative routes. In this process concerning shrimp, solely the export destination has changed, while export volume has doubled.

How do you assess the current status of fish capture and aquaculture production? Does warfare appear to have exerted a negative influence upon aquaculture output as well as upon harvest and extraction from the sea?

Generally speaking, approximately 70% of the nation's aquatic exports are supplied through marine capture, which predominantly concerns haram-flesh fish (non-scaled, bottom-dwelling species) of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman — most of which are exported. Thus, one could posit that, during the past month or two, both production and harvest have remained at acceptable levels. However, these products have largely been transferred to warehouses and exported via overland routes and substitute destinations.

Nonetheless, recently, due to wartime conditions in the southern sea, marine capture has declined considerably. The current circumstances represent one of the afflictions of warfare, and numerous enterprises have sustained losses. Naturally, the volume of marine production, whether from aquaculture or marine capture, has also faced reduction. For instance, in the domain of shrimp farming, stockpiling has decreased because feed costs have risen, and cultivators confront liquidity shortages as well as anxieties stemming from market conditions.

Does such a situation similarly exist regarding domestically marketable fish, such as rainbow trout?

Yes, analogous circumstances do exist. Domestic fish purchases during the final days of the calendar year were unsatisfactory. Under normal conditions, cultivators would offer their products during the New Year's Eve period; but this year, due to warfare, numerous individuals had departed Tehran and other cities, and familial priorities revolved around securing safety of life and livelihood, rather than purchasing fish. Unsatisfactory sales of fish products in the domestic market during

the New Year's Eve period have resulted in cultivators being unable to completely empty their ponds and prepare them for restocking. For these reasons, production reduction in both the aquaculture sector and the marine capture sector appears unavoidable.

Regarding marine capture in the southern sea, what is the condition of launches and fishing vessels? Have any damages been inflicted upon these vessels by the enemy during the war?

In the realm of capture from the southern sea, as you are aware,

numerous restrictions currently exist due to wartime conditions. The fleet of fishing launches stationed in southern ports has likewise sustained damage during this war. Upon what basis and with what objective the enemy has targeted many of our fishing and cargo launches

along the southern coasts and within the ports of the Persian Gulf remains ambiguous. Naturally, such attacks disrupt the process of capture and production. Therefore, under current circumstances, no clear prospect exists for the improvement or increase of capture.

As previously indicated, we shall also confront diminished production in the aquaculture sector. Consequently, a lesser quantity of product shall be available for export, and exports this year shall likely decrease relative to the preceding year. The precise magnitude of

this reduction depends upon various prospective scenarios. Naturally, the sooner the existent wartime conditions are resolved, the lesser the damage sustained. However, should this trend persist, greater harm shall be inflicted upon both production and exports.

Five shameless moments of Iran war opportunism and grifting

By Stavroula Pabst
Reporter

PERSPECTIVE

As the US blockade on the Strait of Hormuz threatens an already tenuous cease-fire between the US and Iran, many at home are looking to profit. Below are five examples of wartime grifters, profiteers, and opportunists absolutely outdoing themselves.

Lockheed Martin CEO: wartime Trump Pentagon a 'golden opportunity'

Late last month, Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet lavished praise on the Trump administration for rolling out the red carpet to the defense industry.

"This is a golden opportunity right now based on who's in government," Taiclet told investors during an earnings call. He cited in particular officials' "willingness to change" and "the demand that they have for what we do and what our partners in our industry do".

That "demand," of course, is war, and the administration has pretty much been in it since Trump's 2025 inauguration, from supporting Israel in its Gaza and Lebanon operations, firefights with the Ansarullah (Houthis), and now Iran. Lockheed has signed billions in contracts with the Pentagon since the beginning of the year, mostly to replenish missiles. Lockheed Martin also has an agreement with the Pentagon to quadruple its production of THAAD interceptors by 2027.

And the US has used many of them both. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies found late last month, the US has burned up over 45% of its Precision Strike Missiles (PrSMs) and roughly half of its THAAD and Patriot missile defense interceptors.



Eric Trump (L) and Donald Trump Jr. pose outside the Nasdaq in Times Square in New York on August 13, 2025.

To refill these stocks, the US is mulling a possible Iran war supplemental package — slated to cost an estimated \$80 to \$100 billion — to replace lost munitions and other military equipment. According to Mike Fredenburg in his reporting for Responsible Statecraft (RS) in 2024, the US pays way too much for each missile, a lot more than it should for say, a SM-2 missile (\$1.2 million–\$2 million a piece) or SM-6 (upwards of \$5 million each), but since there are only a handful of prime contractors in the business, they can charge whatever they want.

As Stephen Semler, journalist and co-founder of the Security Policy Reform Institute, tells RS, "The interceptor shortage will be addressed in the military-industrial-congressional complex's favorite way: throw money at the problem."

Trump's sons roll in the drone industry dough

Powerus, a drone firm funded by President Trump's sons, Eric Trump and Donald Trump, Jr., received an Air Force contract for an unspecified number of interceptor drones two weeks ago. Bloomberg reported last month

that Powerus is also in talks with the United Arab Emirates about a potential sale of drones that can counter Iranian attacks.

In recent months, the Trump brothers have gone all out on defense tech, lining themselves up to profit from the war's their father is waging. Besides Powerus, Eric Trump has invested in Israeli attack drone firm and DoD contractor Xtend, whose drones have seen use in Iran, through a multi-million-dollar contract with an unnamed Middle Eastern government. Donald Trump Jr., for his part, backs drone parts startup Unusual Machines and is also a partner at defense- and tech-oriented venture capital (VC) firm 1789 Capital.

Keith Kellogg, Trump's former special envoy to Ukraine, also joined Powerus as an advisor last month, mere months after leaving his diplomatic post — likewise positioning himself to cash in on his time in government.

Defense-contractor funded think tanker: Iran war is a bargain!

Two weeks ago, the Pentagon estimated that the Iran war has cost

about \$25 billion. Matthew Kroenig, a senior director at the defense contractor-funded Atlantic Council, called the low-ball price tag a "very good value."

"The entire US defense budget is roughly \$1 trillion and designed to deal with China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran," Kroenig wrote on X. "It only cost 2.5% of the annual defense budget to seriously degrade one of the four."

But others have to pay for Kroenig's bargain.

"I'm sure the farmers, trucking companies, and other small businesses that are going belly up because of soaring gas prices won't be surprised to hear that a war industry funded think tank believes the Iran war is a 'very good value,'" Ben Freeman, director of the Democratizing Foreign Policy program at the Quincy Institute, told RS.

The total cost of the Iran war has been a point of contention. Critics challenged the Pentagon's \$25



On March 23, anonymous traders bet about \$500 million that crude oil prices would go down. That was just 15 minutes before Trump announced the US would put off planned strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure — which sent oil prices falling. Another suspiciously timed trade occurred on April 21; betters wagered about \$430 million on falling crude oil prices, right before Trump said he would extend the US truce with Iran indefinitely.

billion estimate; US officials have since told CBS the conflict has cost around \$50 billion. Last month, Harvard economist Linda Bilmes predicted taxpayers will pay at least \$1 trillion for it in the long term. And none of these estimates include the broader impact of the war on the global economy.

According to the Quincy Institute's Think Tank Funding Tracker, the Atlantic Council has received nearly \$13 million from Pentagon contractors since 2019.

Literally gambling on war

Prediction markets such as Polymarket and Kalshi have seemingly allowed those with insider knowledge of wartime events to gamble on — and profit handsomely from — their outcomes.

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Another suspiciously timed trade occurred on April 21; betters wagered about \$430 million on falling crude oil prices, right before Trump said he would extend the US truce with Iran indefinitely. That announcement likewise led to a drop in oil prices. The timing and amount of funds placed in the bets have led experts to contend they were not lucky, but were likely made based on advance knowledge of the announcements.

The White House has said it does not tolerate administration officials profiteering from insider knowledge. Donald Trump Jr. is on the advisory board of Polymarket.

Political influence blitz

Chasing continued windfalls, weapons contractors are pushing for greater political influence in Washington.

As NOTUS reported two weeks ago, Political Action Committees (PACs) tied to 11 major weapons contractors sunk about \$4.7 million into federal congressional campaigns and political party committees from January 1 through March 31. As of late March, nearly three dozen firms had newly registered to lobby the US government on defense and energy-related issues since the conflict began, according to the Washington Times.

As contractors see it, money is on the table. In addition to a possible Iran war supplemental, Congress is also considering the White House's request for a record \$1.5 trillion defense budget for fiscal year 2027 — a jump up from fiscal year 2026's defense budget, which reached \$1 trillion for the first time.

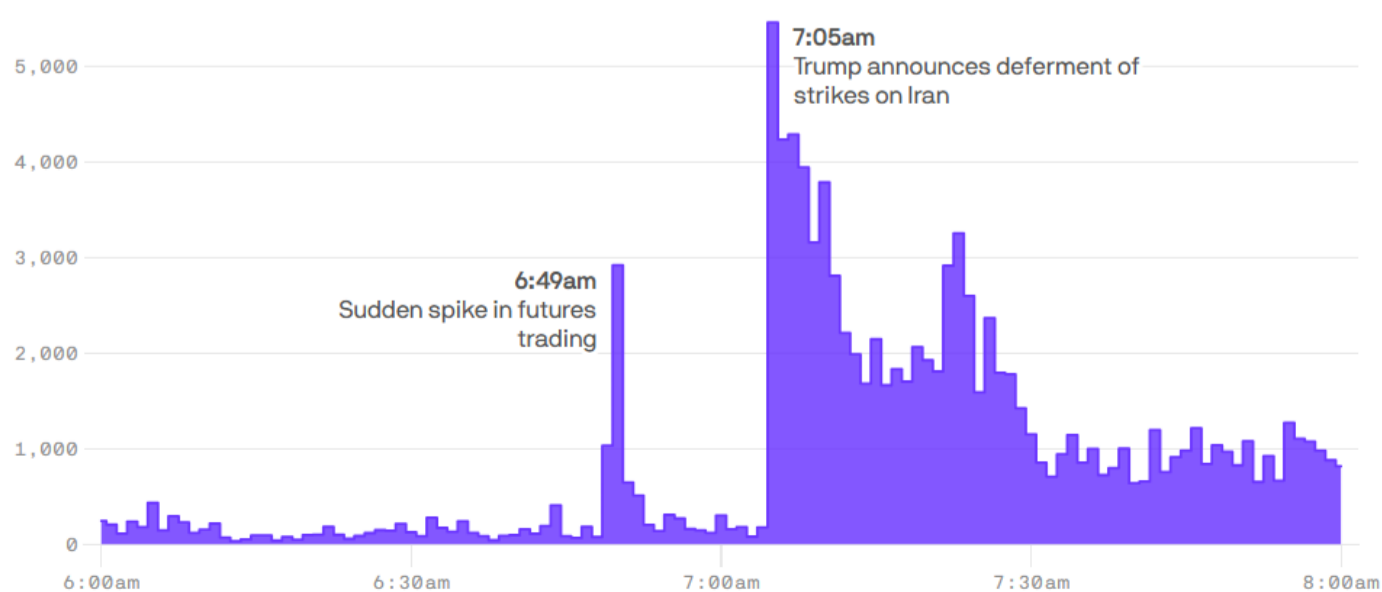
"Every year Pentagon contractors get more and more taxpayer dollars and then use some of that money to convince Congress to give them even more money next year," Freeman argued. "It's a win-win-win for contractors, lobbyists, and Congress."

"The loser? American taxpayers who have to pay for this corrupt war profiteering," Freeman said.

The article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.

Crude oil futures trading volume

Contracts traded per minute; 6am to 8am March 23, 2026; ET



YAHOO FINANCE/AXIOS

VNL, Asian events to decide Piazza's fate as Iran's Olympic path gets underway

Sports Desk

With the start of a hectic 2026 international season right around the corner, a significant clause in head coach Roberto Piazza's contract with the Iranian men's national volleyball team has officially been activated.

When Piazza was appointed to the job midway through 2024, the Iranian Volleyball Federation signed a 2+2-year contract with the Italian, meaning his team's results and performance in the first two years of his tenure would determine the future of his spell with the Asian powerhouse.

Piazza enjoyed a promising first year in charge, as Iran – having finished in the bottom three of the 18-team table in the two previous editions – staged a late surge in the 2025 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) preliminaries to place eighth with six wins from 12 matches.

Piazza's rejuvenated team, playing without the so-called 'Golden Generation' of Iranian volleyball, ultimately missed out on a first quarterfinal spot in three attempts, as China's host status secured the Asian team a place in the VNL Finals despite finishing second from bottom.



● FIVB

Iran still built on the impressive VNL run to deliver a decent campaign at the World Championship in the Philippines later in the year, progressing to the last eight before falling in four sets to the surprise package of the tournament, Czechia.

And now, Piazza – who brought the curtain down on his seven-year tenure at Power Volley

Milano in his home country – gears up for the 2026 season, which features two decisive tournaments that will not only shape Iran's status in the FIVB World Rankings but also impact the team's path to the Olympic Games, the national governing body's main objective when the Italian was hired.

Iran's first serious test will be

the upcoming Volleyball Nations League – a competition of particular importance due to its impact on world ranking points. Iran urgently needs to secure points to improve its ranking, which, should the team fail to qualify directly for the Olympics, would keep alive the team's hopes of earning a spot through ranking criteria.

The Asian heavyweight will get its VNL campaign underway with a daunting task against Brazil in Brasília on June 10 – a rematch of last year's opening day in the Brazilian capital, which the South American powerhouse won in straight sets.

Tricky games will come thick and fast in Week 1 of the preliminaries for Piazza's men, who will take on Bulgaria – a World Championship finalist – on June 11, before facing Argentina and Belgium later in the week at the Nilson Nelson Gymnasium.

Iran will then visit Orléans, France, for the second week of action, starting with a mammoth task against the host and reigning Olympic champion France at the CO'Met Arena on June 24. This will be followed by matches against the United States (June 25), Japan (June 26), and Cuba (June 28).

The third and final week of the preliminaries will see the Iranian men go head-to-head with Ukraine in Belgrade on July 15, with further outings against Germany (July 16), Slovenia (July 17), and Türkiye (July 19).

Even more important than the VNL will be the following Asian Championship, starting September 4 in Fukuoka, Japan, where Iran will be chasing a fifth ti-

tle in eight editions, looking to make amends for a final setback against Japan on home soil in 2023 in a possible showdown between the two continental giants.

This year's tournament carries double significance, as for the first time, the Asian champion earns a direct slot for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, allowing for long-term planning and preparation for the sporting extravaganza in two years' time. Another potential meeting between Iran and Japan could follow at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, which begin on September 19, where Piazza's side will look to secure a fourth consecutive men's gold medal.

While the Iranian Volleyball Federation retains the right to part ways with Piazza if the team's performance does not meet expectations, strong results could trigger a two-year extension, helping the Italian achieve his ultimate goal of "a constant place among the top eight teams in the world" for Iran, as he insisted in his first interview after taking the job.

All eyes are now on the national team to see if they can rise to the occasion – or if major changes await Iran's bench.

Asian U18 Beach Volleyball Championships: Iranian pair beats Japan to secure world spot



● AVC

Sports Desk

The Iranian pair of Amirreza Jamshidi and Amin Vakili secured qualification for the FIVB U18 World Beach Volleyball Championships in The Hague, Netherlands, later this year, thanks to a straight-set victory over Japan at the Asian U18 Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Sunday.

Iranian Team A emerged victorious 21-18, 21-16 against Japan's Rikuho Kashiwaki and Sota Sugiura in the men's fifth-place playoff at the Uzbek capital's Olympic Village to book the continent's fourth berth for the world showpiece.

With two Australian teams advancing to the semifinals, and in line with FIVB regulations – which prohibit two teams from the same country participating in the World Championships – the Iranian team was given a second chance to qualify, despite relinquishing a one-set lead to lose 2-1 (18-21, 21-11, 15-10) to Kazakhstan's Orazali Sagynsh and Agabek Alikhan in the quarterfinals. That defeat was

a repeat of the setback the Iranian team suffered when the two sides met in the CAVA U18 Championship final in the Uzbek capital last week.

The victory over Japan helped Iran secure its place in the main draw of the World Championships, while the Japanese team will feature in the qualifying bracket.

The Iranian duo had topped Pool C in Tashkent with maximum points before defeating Kazakhstan's Ilya Pavlov and Vladislav Shelekhov 2-0 (21-16, 21-11) in the round of 16.

Sina Al-e Yassin and Vahab Ownaq – bronze medalists at the CAVA event – represented the other Iranian pair in Tashkent, falling in back-to-back sets to Qatar's Moussa Alkheer and Mubarak Musa in the round of 16.

The Australian team of Ryan Edgar and Thomas Turner defeated Sagynsh and Alikhan 2-0 (21-16, 21-13) in the final, with Alkheer and Musa settling for bronze courtesy of a straight-set win (21-19, 24-22) against Australia's Lincoln Mowen and Hudson Symes earlier on Sunday.

Rezazadeh tips young Iranian weightlifters for senior success after world junior glory

Sports Desk

Legendary Hossein Rezazadeh has tipped the young Iranian weightlifters to build on their recent title-winning campaign at the IWF World Junior Championships for further glory at major senior competitions in the coming years.

An impressive haul of six golds, seven silvers, and one bronze medal saw the Iranian eight-man squad stand atop the team table with 520 points in Ismailia, Egypt, on Friday – a tremendous achievement that came against the backdrop of complications the team had struggled with in the buildup to the event.

While the team's preparation had been massively hampered by the wartime situation in the country, the Iranian weightlifters – coached by former world and Olympic champion Sohrab Moradi – only arrived in Ismailia last Tuesday after a visa delay had threatened to derail their title defense.

Hamidreza Mohammadi-Tanha capped off Iran's emphatic run on the final day by completing a clean sweep of three golds in the +110kg weight class, with his compatriot Taha Nemati settling for three silvers.

It was also an Iranian one-two in the 110kg division earlier in the day, with Abolfazl Zare hitting the 400kg mark in total for three gold medals, while Farhad Qolizadeh finished second in each of the three categories.

Hamidreza Zarei had opened Iran's account by collecting

the clean & jerk silver and total bronze medal in the 94kg event on the penultimate day of the competition.

Amir-Mohammad Rahmati and Mohammad-Amin Dadvand were the first Iranians on the platform in Ismailia, finishing empty-handed in the 88kg division on Wednesday.



● ISNA

Speaking to ISNA following the team's triumph, Rezazadeh praised the federation's long-term planning and the technical staff's dedication. "Over the past several years, significant work has been done in youth and junior weightlifting," Rezazadeh – the most decorated Iranian weightlifter in Olympic history with two golds – told ISNA. "Fortunately, with the federation's planning and the technical staff's efforts, well-organized training camps have been held, and now we are seeing the results," added the vice chairman of the federation. Rezazadeh, also a winner of 10 world golds, emphasized that

the junior team represents a dependable reservoir of talent for Iran's senior squad.

"Out of the eight athletes who competed in Egypt, at least five have the potential to be integrated into the senior national team," he said. "These young lifters can very well shape the future of Iranian weightlifting."

the clock, maintain professional and ethical conduct, and push themselves twice as hard to reach the summit of success in the years to come." He added that the ultimate goals for these athletes should be clear: success at the Olympic Games, Senior World Championships, and Asian Championships.

Rezazadeh also had warm words for Moradi, who has now led Iran's junior team to back-to-back world titles.

"Sohrab once again showed excellent performance," Rezazadeh said. "He is a world and Olympic champion, and with the federation's backing and regular training camps, he managed to deliver outstanding results."

"The team traveled under very difficult conditions and overcame problems related to the conflict situation," Rezazadeh explained. "Both the Iranian federation and the International Weightlifting Federation helped us secure visas. The situation in the country was different at that time, and extraordinary efforts were made to ensure the team could depart. In the end, they shone and set good records."

Rezazadeh concluded by calling for continued support and consistent training camps for the young team, with an eye on future major tournaments. "These athletes must maintain good training routines and continue their path under the technical staff's guidance," he said. "If they do, they will reach higher levels in the coming years and shine at the Asian Games and the Olympic Games."

Soleymaniyeh Garden where history and war damage coexist

Iranica Desk

The Soleymaniyeh Garden, once situated east of the Doulab district in Tehran, was part of the estate belonging to Amir Mostafa Amir Soleymani, son of Aziz al-Molk. The property remained under the stewardship of the Soleymani family for years until 1926, when Mirza Hassan Khan Vossough al-Dowleh, a distinguished Qajar-era statesman and man of letters, acquired the estate along with additional portions of the Doulab area.

In the northern section of the grounds, he constructed a two-story mansion known as the Andaruni, which functioned as a reception space for courtiers and prominent figures of the Qajar court, according to IRNA. Today, ancient trees still stand within the garden — towering pines and red pomegranate trees that quietly testify to a once-glorious past. For generations, local residents have left fragments of memory beneath their shade. From the original expanse of the estate, however, only a portion remains, now re-

stored and repurposed as Sahand Park.

Yet the garden is more than soil and trees; it is inseparable from the life of a man who once stood at the center of Iranian politics. Mirza Hassan Khan, known as Vossough al-Dowleh, was born in 1875. From an early age, he developed an interest in science and literature, learned French, and soon entered the royal court. He received the title Vossough

al-Dowleh from Naser al-Din Shah in his youth and remained among the leading statesmen of his era. After years of political activity, he was removed from the premiership and spent a period in Europe. He later died in Tehran at the age of 80. Today, his surviving legacy is this mansion — a reminder of a time when art, nature, and political power coexisted within a single landscape.



● hamshahronline.ir

During attacks by US and Israel in the Ramadan War, 149 cultural heritage sites across 20 provinces were damaged, including five world heritage sites, 54 museums, and seven historic urban fabrics. The Vossough al-Dowleh residence was among the affected historic structures, with part of it destroyed by blast waves.

According to international conventions, including the 1954 Hague Convention and the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, the destruction of cultural heritage during armed conflict is considered a crime against culture and humanity. The Vossough al-Dowleh Mansion still stands — wounded by history — yet every brick preserves a fragment of Tehran's historical identity. In the silence of its pomegranate branches, echoes of the past remain perceptible.

The head of the Non-governmental Committee for Protecting Historic Houses of Tehran stated that the garden and mansion — locally known as Bagh Anari, meaning Pome-

granate Garden due to its trees — has not only suffered war-time damage but has also been subjected to inappropriate restoration.

Sajjad Askari explained that the historic complex, once part of the Isfahanak village in the Doulab area, contains numerous untold narratives. The garden was initially named Ezzat al-Molk, later renamed Soleymaniyeh. It was subsequently purchased by Mirza Hassan Khan Vossough al-Dowleh, a prominent Qajar statesman and former prime minister, who built the current aristocratic mansion. Once adorned with stucco work, mirror decorations, and elaborate ornamentation, the residence reflected the grandeur of old Tehran and remained his home until his death.

He added that after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the property was transferred to the Tehran Municipality in 2020 and was converted into Sahand Park. Restoration efforts began thereafter and have continued since, though they have faced significant challenges.

He further noted that blast waves caused damage to doors, windows, structural cracks, and other serious harm. However, he stressed that his primary concern is not only war-related damage but also the quality and methodology of restoration work.

According to Askari, insufficient oversight by cultural heritage authorities has led to unscientific restoration practices and a prolonged five-year delay in proper rehabilitation. He argued that much of the visible damage attributed to blast waves was exacerbated by flawed reconstruction, while the building's original authenticity largely remains intact.

He called for stronger supervision by heritage authorities to ensure that the Vossough al-Dowleh Mansion is restored in a manner that allows the "Pomegranate Garden" to once again reflect its historical identity and spirit — serving not as a modernized reconstruction, but as an authentic and carefully preserved cultural heritage site.

Historic revival plan unveiled for Kerman's old quarter

Iranica Desk

Governor General of Kerman Province announced plans to establish a provincial historic district council aimed at removing investment barriers and accelerating the restoration of historic houses in the old quarter of the city of Kerman.

Speaking during a field visit to the city's historic fabric, Mohammad Ali Talebi said several sections of the district with strong investment potential had been reviewed and a number of restored houses are expected to begin operating soon as officially licensed accommodation centers, according to ISNA.

Highlighting the area's tourism and cultural potential, he noted that, in addition to the accommodation projects already underway, the district offers numerous opportunities for the expansion of tourism and cultural activities. Coordination meetings with relevant agencies will also be held to address regulatory and investment-related obstacles, he said. He stated that the newly planned historic district council would support the restoration of old houses, facilitate urban revitalization efforts, and improve coordination among executive bodies. According to Talebi, many of the historic homes in Kerman's old quarter could be repurposed as

eco-lodges, innovation hubs, and creative spaces, allowing the district to serve both residents and domestic and international tourists through sustainable and culturally appropriate uses.

He also announced provincial support measures for investors, including financial facilities for restoration, renovation, and equipping historic properties. Licensing procedures for eco-lodges and other community-oriented projects will also be expedited, he added. During the visit, cultural heritage and urban development experts outlined the historical and investment potential of the Atashkadeh area. Experts said one of the city's most significant historic blocks is

located there and has undergone minimal structural changes over the past century, preserving much of its original character.

The district covers approximately 12 hectares, with around six hectares designated as a target zone for revitalization and investment projects. The presence of historic homes, large land parcels, and adaptable spaces has created favorable conditions for tourism, cultural, and hospitality developments.

Experts also pointed to the district's narrow and dense alleyways, saying they could be transformed into pedestrian tourism routes and open-air museum corridors — a concept increasingly adopted in historic cities around the world.



● nazirkerman.ir

Reading Room

'State terrorism; the evil of our times'

Reza Davari Ardakani, who for years was a colleague and friend of Ali Larjani — former head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council who was assassinated in March in a joint US-Israeli attack — reflects in his essay, published in the memorial volume marking the fortieth day after Larjani's martyrdom, on his scientific and political orientation. He describes Larjani as a moderate, non-partisan figure and a scholar of distinction who worked to prevent the dominance of extremes in political life.

Relationship between philosophy and politics

In his note, Davari Ardakani begins with a thought-provoking question that directs attention to deeper dimensions of the event: "The martyrdom of Larjani is significant and worthy of reflection from various

perspectives; was he targeted merely because he held the position of national security official?" From the author's perspective, understanding this event is impossible without considering its broader political and historical context. He also notes that politics had taken Larjani away from teaching and academic life, "When he was appointed to this position, I was not pleased, because it absorbed all his time and left him no opportunity even for two or three hours of teaching. I have no right to judge individuals' political choices or preferences, but I can agree or disagree with them."

He further emphasizes the relationship between philosophy and politics, arguing that in the present conditions, philosophy has limited capacity to directly influence politics,



Ali Larjani

"I do not believe that in a time when reason is weakening, philosophy can offer much assistance to politics. Philosophy is itself one of the ways of understanding the age; it is not an all-knowing, just judge strengthening the world. In a fragile order, nothing is stable, and wherever thought and knowledge exist and life is vibrant, there is order."

A philosopher in the realm of politics

Davari Ardakani underscores the Larjani's non-partisan stance, writing, "One point that is less often noticed is his lack of factional alignment. He was a man of moderation and, following efforts made by other moderate politicians, took steps of his own to prevent the complete dominance of ex-

trémism in political space."

Referring to Larjani's academic background — holding a degree in computer science from Sharif University of Technology and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Tehran with a dissertation on Kant — he describes him as possessing "brilliant talent in science and philosophy."

He adds, "Academics who turn to politics are rarely able to preserve both roles equally, because practical politics is time-consuming. Apparently, Larjani was more inclined toward politics and entered its complex and difficult domain, where an individual's opinion and action can still have an impact. He did, in fact, exert influence."

Davari Ardakani stresses that Larjani never sought to practically merge philosophy and politics as some philosophers

have attempted; however, due to his dual engagement, his time was divided between the two, with a greater share devoted to politics.

Critique of state terrorism

Davari Ardakani explicitly refers to "state terrorism as one of the uglinesses of our time," linking the martyrdom of Ali Larjani to the emergence of this phenomenon in the contemporary world.

He notes that he wrote this essay in conditions of old age and illness to highlight two points: first, the emergence of state terrorism, and second, his personal sorrow over the loss of a valued colleague and friend. He further acknowledges that the weakness of age and the burden of illness currently prevent him from fully elaborating on the nature of these tragedies.

Government spox calls Persian Gulf's 'historic identity' a global cultural imperative



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian Government Spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani called for wider international recognition of the Persian Gulf's historical and cultural identity during a visit to the 'Persian Gulf, Sea of the Brave' exhibition at Tehran's Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense, saying museums and cultural institutions must help introduce Iran's civilizational roots to global audiences and younger generations.

Touring the exhibition's digital gallery



Iranian Government Spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani signs a large wall photo during her visit to the 'Persian Gulf, Sea of the Brave' exhibition at Tehran's Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense, on May 11, 2026.

● IRNA

alongside museum officials, Mohajerani viewed historical maps, archival documents and cultural artifacts related to the Persian Gulf, describing the event as a "documented and clear narrative" of Iran's enduring historical ties to the waterway, IRNA reported.

She said research-based cultural initiatives and museum exhibitions play an important role in strengthening public awareness while expanding cultural outreach to foreign tourists, diplomats, business delegations and Iranians living abroad.

"The Persian Gulf exhibition presents a clear and documented narrative of the region's historical and cultural identity," she said, praising organizers for combining scholarly work with artistic presentation. Mohajerani said the exhibition revolves around two parallel themes: historical evidence affirming Iran's longstanding con-

nection to the Persian Gulf and accounts reflecting foreign ambitions toward Iranian territory.

She also stressed the importance of cultural diplomacy through museums and public exhibitions. "After deepening awareness within society itself, introducing these concepts to international visitors becomes especially important," she said. Calling the Persian Gulf a source of collective national pride for Iranians, Mohajerani described the exhibition's tribute to the martyrs of the Shajareh Tayebah School in Minab, who were killed in US-Israel strikes on February 28, as "respectful" and emotionally resonant.

The exhibition, hosted at the Fakkeh Gallery in Tehran, ran through May 11 and features historical records and multimedia installations exploring the Persian Gulf's cultural legacy and historical significance.

Tourism sector set for 'smart overhaul' under new year policy framework

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts sector is moving toward a "smart management" overhaul in the new Iranian year which started March 21, as the government seeks to rebuild and reposition the industry following a turbulent year marked by regional conflict and domestic disruption, according to statements published by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri said in the preface to a newly released policy booklet that Iran is drafting a scenario-based governance framework for tourism in the current year, describing the sector as a strategic pillar of national development and international engagement.

"In Iranian thought, culture is not merely a collection of artifacts and rituals, but the foundation of national identity," Salehi-Amiri said, stressing that heritage, tourism and handi-

crafts form a unified civilizational system capable of strengthening social cohesion and national resilience.

He added that tourism today functions beyond economics, calling it a "strategic industry" and a channel for global communication. "Tourism is a language of peace and dialogue," he said, noting its role in shaping international perceptions of Iran and expanding soft power.

The minister said the government's new framework follows what he described as an "unusual" year in 2025 and early 2026, when regional tensions and multiple security incidents disrupted travel flows, reduced foreign arrivals, and strained hotels, tour operators, eco-tourism businesses and handicraft producers.

Despite the setbacks, Salehi-Amiri said the experience exposed structural weaknesses while also clarifying opportunities for reform. He emphasized that Iran's diverse tourism assets, spanning cultural, religious, medical, coastal, rural and

ecological segments, require professional and data-driven management to support sustainable national growth.

Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said the disruptions showed the urgency of a unified policy roadmap. He described tourism as more than an economic activity, calling it a factor in "social resilience, psychological stability and national cohesion."

He noted that reduced foreign arrivals during periods of heightened tension affected employment, service quality and human capital in the sector, warning that without a coordinated framework, policy fragmentation could weaken long-term development.

Mohseni-Bandpey said the 2026 strategy must rely on academic research, scenario planning and future-oriented analysis to prepare for multiple possible outcomes. "In unstable conditions, a coherent and dynamic policy framework is indispensable," he said.

Tehran Int'l Book Fair opens virtual doors to foreign publishers

Arts & Culture Desk

Registration for foreign publishers to join the seventh Tehran Virtual Book Fair has opened ahead of the nationwide online event scheduled for May 16-23, deputy director of the Tehran International Book Fair Ebrahim Heydari said, as Iran moves to broaden international cultural participation and expand access to foreign-language titles through its flagship digital publishing platform.

Heydari, who also heads Iran Book and Literature House, said licensed foreign publishers, official representatives and distributors can now upload credentials

and catalogues to take part in the week-long fair, which will run under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran."

The international section will feature Arabic- and Latin-language publications, with all titles undergoing expert review before entering the online sales platform to ensure authenticity and compliance with the country's cultural standards, Heydari said.

He described transparency in pricing, cooperation with supervisory bodies and the supply of original editions as key conditions for participation this year, signaling tighter oversight as the event scales up its international footprint.

The fair will offer layered discounts aimed at boosting readership and cross-border publishing exchange. Books published in 2025 and 2026 will be sold with a combined 20% reduction, including publisher discounts and subsidies from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Older titles will receive steeper markdowns.

Organizers have also extended the registration deadline for domestic publishers to May 9 following requests from industry participants seeking more time to complete applications. Iranian publishers are now permitted to offer books released from 2021 onward, a revision that significantly widens the eligible catalogue.

'Paper Flowers' heads to Moscow family film showcase

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian animated short 'Paper Flowers' by filmmaker Ramak Amin Kazemi was selected for the short film competition of Russia's 21st International "In the Family" Film Festival, as the festival prepares to gather family-themed productions from across the international cinema circuit in Moscow on July 4-7.

Produced by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), 'Paper Flowers' follows a writer who believes he has reached "the end of the road," unfolding through a visually



restrained narrative centered on loss, reflection and emotional renewal.

The selection extends the film's strong international festival run over the past year.

The animated short previously captured the Best Short Animation award at the Kazan festival and screened at a string of overseas events, including festivals in Girona, Spain, Cinema Nebrodi in Italy, T-Shorts in Germany and Tampa in the United States.

Widely regarded as Russia's largest festival dedicated to family-oriented cinema, the "In the Family" event spotlights works built around themes of love, loyalty and the revival of family values. Its competitive lineup spans feature films, children's features and animation, and short films.

Tehran faces deepening water strain as dams drop to 22% amid uneven rainfall

Social Desk

Iran's water sector spokesman Issa Bozorgzadeh said on Monday that Tehran is now at the center of the country's most acute water stress, with reservoir levels in the capital's supply dams falling to just 22%, sharply below the national average, showing mounting pressure on urban consumption patterns.

Bozorgzadeh said total storage in the five dams supplying the capital had declined to about 419 million cubic meters as of May 9, down from 459 million cubic meters a year earlier, adding that the figure

was also significantly below long-term averages. "The situation requires serious consumption management," he said, IRNA reported.

He noted that the national average dam fill rate stands at around 65%, but stressed that regional disparities remain pronounced, with Tehran, Alborz, Mashhad, Saveh and Arak among the most water-stressed areas.

Within the capital's network, conditions at key reservoirs remain particularly tight, with Lar dam at 6% capacity and Mamloo at 14%, both described as "concerning" amid continued pressure on urban de-

mand. Bozorgzadeh said around 35 million people nationwide are still affected by water stress, down from 65 million last year, but warned against reading broader rainfall improvements as a sign of recovery.

Average precipitation has reached 226 millimeters, only about 2% above the long-term norm, which he said does not indicate a shift into a wetter cycle. "The country has not entered a wet period," he said.

He added that rainfall remains uneven, with surplus precipitation in southern provinces such as Bushehr and Hor-

mozgan, while central and northern provinces including Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd continue to record deficits. "Local management is essential," he said, noting that national averages mask sharp regional imbalances.

The spokesman also warned against misinterpreting improved inflows, up 68% year-on-year in some reservoirs, as structural recovery, saying water management must remain "strictly consumption-focused," with higher tariffs for heavy users and incentives for conservation.

Bozorgzadeh said 11 provinces remain below normal rainfall levels, with Tehran



among the most affected, and reiterated that "no relaxation" in water-saving measures is expected in the coming period.