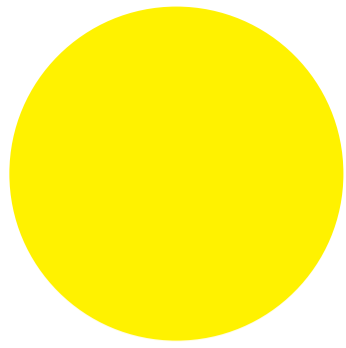


Ramadan War heritage plaques unveiled at Tehran museum



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The photo, shared by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei on X on May 24, 2026, shows an image of a rock relief in Marvdasht, southern Iran, depicting Roman emperors Valerian standing and Philip I kneeling before ancient Iranian Sasanian King Shapur I.

Ceasefire in Washington's interest, settlement on Tehran's terms



By Janvi Sonaiya
Indian Journalist

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

There is a telling asymmetry at the heart of the current Iran-United States negotiations that most Western commentary has carefully avoided naming. Donald Trump said that negotiators are "getting a lot closer" to a final agreement. He added that he would "only sign a deal where we get everything we want." It is a statement designed for

domestic consumption; confident, presidential in register. It is also, measured against the actual balance of forces on the ground, disconnected from the negotiating reality that serious analysts on all sides now privately acknowledge. The United States did not win this war in any meaningful strategic sense. It conducted strikes. It imposed costs. It did not alter the fundamental equation of power in the Persian Gulf. Iran entered these negotiations with its core strategic infrastructure intact. Its missile sites along the Strait of Hormuz remain largely operational. Its enrich-

ment program, while disrupted, was not dismantled. The Strait itself, the artery through which approximately a fifth of the world's traded oil passes, remains under Iranian sovereign management, and Tehran has stated with precision that this will not change regardless of what any final text says. This is the foundation on which Iran negotiates. From the position of a state that absorbed the full weight of American and Israeli military power and emerged with its deterrent capacity meaningfully preserved. Trump's assurance that Iran's enriched

uranium will be "satisfactorily handled" carries the weight of a phrase that has performed this function before, in 2015, in the various frameworks that preceded and followed the JCPOA; without ever resolving the underlying question of what satisfactory actually means to both parties simultaneously. Iran's Foreign Ministry has signaled clearly that the nuclear file is not its primary concern at this stage. Ending the war comprehensively is the non-negotiable condition around which Tehran has organized its entire diplomatic posture. It reflects Iran's understanding that a

partial agreement which ends American military pressure while leaving Israel free to continue operations in Lebanon is not a peace settlement. It is a rearrangement of the conflict's geography.

The pressure Washington does not discuss

Serious analysis requires accounting for the domestic political pressures that are shaping American urgency in these negotiations; pressures that receive far less scrutiny in Western media than Iranian domestic politics routinely do.

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Tehran, Washington edge closer to potential peace deal

International Desk

Tehran and Washington inched closer to an agreement to end an aggression against Iran as more details about the long-awaited agreement emerged on Sunday.

Washington and Tehran have observed a ceasefire since April 8 while mediators push for a negotiated settlement, although Iran has imposed controls on Persian Gulf shipping and the US has blockaded Iran's ports. Iranian officials on Saturday confirmed the existence of a draft agreement, but stressed that – contrary to earlier long-standing US demands – talks on the issue of Iran's nuclear program have been deferred for 60 days after any deal.

Iran Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said on state television that the two sides were nearing a "a memorandum of understanding, a kind of framework agreement

composed of 14 clauses, in "a trend toward rapprochement."

Details of possible deal

According to Iran's Fars news agency, Washington has agreed to release part of Tehran's funds frozen abroad under international economic sanctions and to end its naval blockade of ships travelling to and from Iranian ports.

In exchange, "according to this draft, passage through the Strait of Hormuz would return to pre-war levels under Iranian management."

And, Fars said, "sanctions on oil, gas, petrochemicals and their derivatives would be temporarily lifted during the negotiation period so that Iran can freely sell its products."

On Sunday, during a visit to India, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters, "I do think perhaps there is the possibility that in the next few hours the world will get some good news."

Hours later, US President Donald Trump said that he had told US negotiators "not to rush into a deal" with Iran.

"The negotiations are proceeding in an orderly and constructive manner, and I have informed my representatives not to rush into a deal in that time is on our side," Trump wrote on his Truth Social account.

"The Blockade will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed."

Bones of contention

Iranian media reported that there are still "one or two" points of disagreement in the potential deal.

Iran's Tasnim news agency said that under draft terms of the US-Iran negotiations, the Strait of Hormuz "will not return" to pre-war status, but adds that ship traffic will return to previous levels.

Following forty days of aggression against Iran aimed at sur-



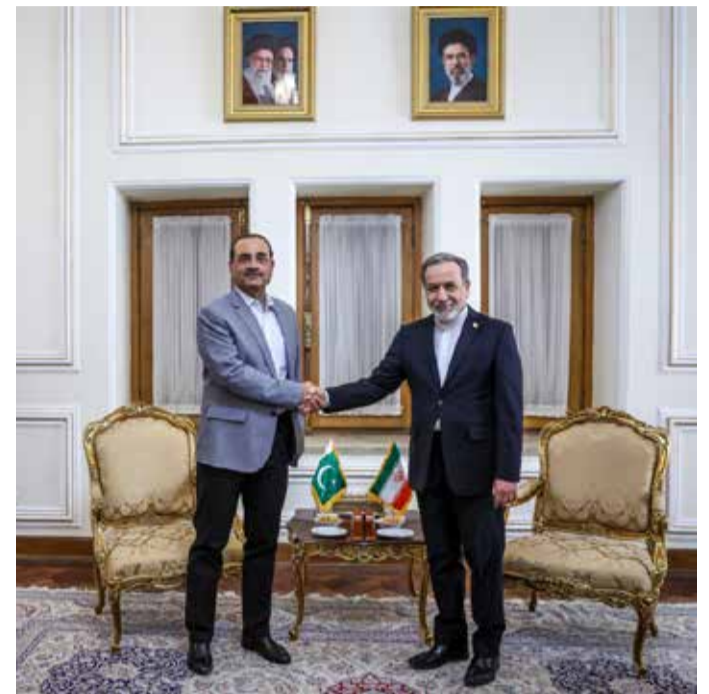
Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) shakes hands with Pakistan's Army Chief Syed Asim Munir during a meeting in Tehran, Iran, on May 23, 2026.

IRNA

rendering the Islamic Republic, the United States, which did not manage to achieve its goals in the war, unilaterally announced a ceasefire and entered peace negotiations with Iran.

On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei posted an image of the rock relief depicting the victory of second king of the Sasanian Empire, Shapur I the Great, over the Roman emperor, saying Iranians shattered the illusion that Rome was the undisputed center of the world.

"In the Roman mind, Rome was the undisputed center of the world. Yet the Iranians shattered that illusion; when Marcus Julius Philippus (Philip the Arab) marched east against Per-



sia, the campaign did not result in Roman victory — it ended in a peace established on Sasanian

terms: the emperor had to come to terms!" Baqaei wrote on his X account.

IRGC warns of 'hellish' response to renewed onslaught

National Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said that Iranian Armed Forces stand ready to deliver a "devastating and hellish" response to the enemy if it wages a new war of aggression against the country.

The IRGC General Command issued a message on Sunday, marking the anniversary of the liberation of the strategic Iranian port city of Khorramshahr on May 24, 1982, after 578 days of Iraqi occupation during the eight-year imposed war on Iran.

It said 44 years after the Khorramshahr historic epic, the Iranian nation once again emerged victorious after 40 days of resistance and retaliation in the third imposed war that caused the enemy to humiliatingly request a ceasefire.

"The country's powerful Armed Forces are at their highest level of readiness and active deterrence in all missile, air, naval, land, space, and cyber dimen-



IRNA

sions. Therefore, it is obvious that any renewed aggression by the enemy will result in a devastating and hellish response at the regional and extra-regional level," it added.

Iran has witnessed three imposed wars over the past years, including the 1980s' Iraq war, and two US-Israeli illegal acts of aggression, namely the 12-day one in June 2025 and this year's 40-day one. The latest military assault against the country began on February 28 and stopped under a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire on April 8.

Meanwhile, commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters Major General Ali Ab-

dollahi said outsiders will have no place in the future of the region based on the strategies devised by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

"We warn the enemies that the Leader's plans and strategies for 'managing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz' will guarantee the future of the region and a new regional and international order within the framework of the strategy of a 'strong Iran', in which foreigners will have no place," Abdollahi said.

He added that the Iranian nation's dignity and greatness at the most sensitive juncture of the history of modern humanity and its resistance in the face of the US-Israeli enemies marked "one of the most amazing historical events" and prepared the ground for a new geometry of global power centered on Iran.

"We stand fully prepared to deliver a harsh and hellish response to any form of aggression," Abdollahi pointed out.

President: Iran ready to assure world of not seeking nukes

'Negotiating team will never compromise on national dignity'



Masoud Pezeshkian
president.ir

National Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Tehran is ready to assure the world that it is not seeking nuclear weapons, adding that the country's negotiators in talks with the United States will never compromise on the "dignity" of the country. Pezeshkian made the remarks during a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), during which he held talks

with the IRIB's chief and managers as Tehran and Washington edge closer in Pakistani-mediated talks to finalize a memorandum of understanding aimed at ending a recent aggression by the US and Israel against Iran.

"During the era of our martyred Leader, we declared – and we declare again today – that we are ready to assure the world that we are not seeking nuclear weapons, nor are we seeking unrest in the region. The one seeking to destabilize the region is the Israeli regime, which pursues the 'Greater Israel' plan."

Pezeshkian emphasized that Israel is trying to keep war and unrest alive in the region through various means.

Referring to the Pakistani-mediated negotiations between Tehran

and Washington to end aggression, he said, "We and our negotiating team will never compromise on the dignity and honor of our country."

The 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.

On April 8, forty days into the war, an Islamabad-brokered temporary ceasefire went into effect. Since then, the two sides have engaged in negotiations brokered by Pakistan to end a crisis in the region, which has been caused by the aggression against Iran.

US, allies to blame for failure of NPT conference: Deputy FM

International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister pointed the finger of blame at illogical stances adopted by the United States and its allies for the failure of a major United Nations Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York earlier this week.

Kazem Gharibabadi said in an X post on Saturday that Western states led by the US were seeking to insert or retain phrases in a draft final document of the UN nuclear disarmament conference as they tried to condemn Iran for alleged non-compliance with its obligations under UN laws and resolutions.

Gharibabadi said, however, that those "desperate efforts" ended in vain, as Iran managed to prevent the adoption of a final document that was po-



Kazem Gharibabadi
IRNA

litically motivated.

"The responsibility for this failure lies with these countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow these countries to continue their indiscriminate instrumental abuse of international bodies and documents in pursuit of their political objectives," said the senior diplomat.

Iran is a member of the UN Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has accepted extensive inspections of its nuclear facilities as a sign that it has never

pursued nuclear weapons.

However, Iranian nuclear installations have come under rounds of attacks by the United States and the Israeli regime during two wars of aggression that took place in June last year and from February to April this year.

Reports on Friday said that the Iranian delegates to the UN disarmament conference had blocked efforts by the US and its allies to legitimize attacks on Iranian nuclear sites by accusing that country of non-compliance with the NPT.

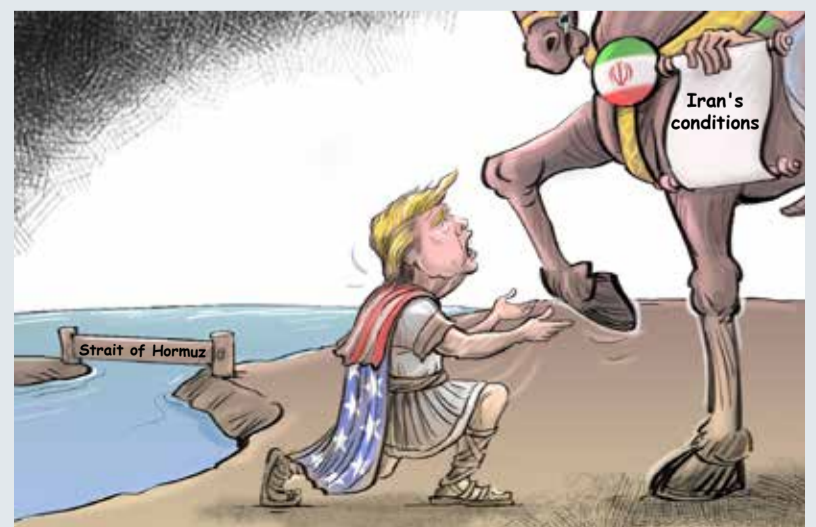
Gharibabadi said in his Saturday post that all countries in the world should be treated the same when it comes to nuclear disarmament.

"If the non-proliferation regime is to survive, it must be built on equal security, equal sovereignty, and equal accountability; not nuclear exceptionalism," he said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Gov't to manage fuel consumption via non-price measures: VP

Economy Desk

The government is seeking to manage fuel consumption through non-price measures rather than price increases, Iran's first vice president said, as authorities weigh policy options to address a widening gap between gasoline demand and domestic production.

Mohammad Reza Aref said "management of energy consumption is a necessity," but must avoid harming household livelihoods.

"In managing gasoline consumption, the government aims to ensure that decisions do not undermine people's livelihoods, while still taking economic realities and recent developments into account," Aref said, according to SHANA.

The meeting of the government's Economic Coordination Council, held on Sunday under Aref's chairmanship, reviewed gasoline pricing and fuel consumption management, with both pricing and non-pricing reform scenarios presented.

Aref said the government's core policy was to manage gasoline

consumption in order to eliminate the need for imports.

He also warned officials against making individual public statements on the issue before expert reviews are completed, as doing so could create unnecessary tension or concern in society.

"Expert assessments must first be examined and a final conclusion reached with all aspects of the matter taken into account," he stressed.

According to Mehr News Agency, Iran's average daily gasoline consumption in recent months has ranged between 130 million and 135 million liters, peaking at more than 140 million liters on high-demand days, while domestic refineries have an estimated production capacity of 114 million to 124 million liters per day under optimistic scenarios.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said last week that gasoline production capacity has decreased because the energy infrastructure and fuel production and processing facilities have been targeted in the US-Israeli strikes during the recent 40-day war



A meeting of the government's Economic Coordination Council is chaired by Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (2nd L) on May 24, 2026.
● fypresident.ir

that began in late February.

In remarks on May 18, Pezeshkian outlined a package of non-price measures to curb fuel consumption, including revisions to fuel quotas, reductions in allocations for high-income and high-consumption groups, tightening oversight of distribution channels, measures against fuel smuggling, expanded incentives for public transport use, limits on unnecessary private car use, and public awareness campaigns to change consumption behavior.

"Under current conditions, gasoline supply and imports are facing constraints, but if the public cooperates in managing consumption, the situation can be handled without serious disruption," he said.

Later during the meeting, Aref referred to energy consumption, saying the government's strate-



gy was to encourage savings in the household sector with public cooperation, in order to prioritize supply to industry and production sectors.

"If production is damaged and

leads to unemployment and economic problems, the impact will inevitably be felt across the country," he added.

The meeting also reviewed scenarios for reducing household

energy consumption while securing supply for industrial and production sectors. It was decided that final decisions would be announced to the public after further review and consensus.

NIGC signs 77 strategic contracts to curb gas consumption ahead of winter



A view of facilities at a phase of Iran's South Pars gas field
● ALI BOORBOOR SHANA

gas savings can be converted into energy-saving certificates tradable on Iran's energy exchange. Tavakkoli said there was significant potential to reduce gas use in smaller industrial sectors, including industrial bakeries, greenhouses and poultry farms, through limited efficiency measures.

He also said Iran's energy consumption remained higher than global averages and urged households to improve consumption behavior and pay attention to energy-efficiency labels on heating equipment to help maintain network stability.

Iran has nearly 29 million gas subscribers, according to Ali Asghar Rajabi, NIGC's energy and carbon manager.

Iran's natural gas consumption for the year ending March 21, 2026, is estimated at between 260 billion and 270 billion cubic meters, based on industry data and daily consumption records, although official annual figures from NIGC have not yet been published. Peak daily consumption reached 882 million cubic meters in January 2026, driven by heating demand in the residential and commercial sectors.

Separately, Esmail Habibi, deputy head of the National Productivity Organization of Iran, said on Saturday that the country's energy intensity index was more than 3.5 times the global average, meaning Iran consumed significantly more energy to produce each unit of gross domestic product.

He added that household energy consumption per capita was about three times the global average because of infrastructure deficiencies, poor building insulation and consumption patterns, underscoring the need for an urgent review of energy efficiency policies.

cal energy demand patterns.

"In some northern provinces such as Mazandaran, 94% of energy consumption is concentrated in the residential and commercial sectors, while in other provinces the main share belongs to industry," he said, citing Qom as an example where industrial consumption accounts for the largest share. He added that gas demand shifted heavily toward residential and commercial sectors during winter because of lower temperatures, adding that Iran's extensive gas network required special planning to ensure uninterrupted nationwide supply.

Tavakkoli said part of the infrastructure at the South Pars gas field had been targeted by the US-Israeli strikes during the "recent 40-day war" that began in late February, as well as during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), creating challenges for part of the country's gas production and processing capacity.

"Despite this, we made every effort to turn this enemy threat into an opportunity."

He said provincial authorities had been tasked with implementing localized operational plans based on regional gas consumption patterns and simulated winter shortage scenarios. The measures include consumption reduction programs coordinated through energy service companies, where verified

Economy Desk

Iran's National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has signed 77 strategic contracts with energy service companies, known as "Karvar", aimed at stabilizing gas supplies across the country through smart technologies and consumption optimization, CEO Saeed Tavakkoli said Sunday, as the country prepares for higher winter demand and ongoing pressure on its energy infrastructure.

Tavakkoli said the measures were part of efforts to address Iran's energy consumption imbalance and maintain the stability of the national gas network.

Tavakkoli told Radio Eqtasad that the activities of the Karvar companies had expanded from 22 projects to 77, while provincial authorities have rolled out roughly 280 operational measures to prepare for winter scenarios.

The NIGC chief said the companies were working with knowledge-based firms to develop smart boiler room systems, including electronic components and devices such as anti-scale equipment aimed at improving efficiency and reducing gas consumption.

Tavakkoli said NIGC maintain integrated management through the National Gas Dispatching Center, although consumption management strategies differ from province to province depending on lo-

IMF ranks Iran sixth among Islamic countries in 2025, data shows



Economy Desk

Iran ranked as the sixth-largest economy among Islamic countries in 2025 based on purchasing power parity, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to Tasnim news agency, the latest IMF data showed that Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) reached an estimated \$1,845 billion in 2025, placing it sixth

among 53 Islamic countries. Indonesia was ranked as the largest Islamic economy in 2025 with a GDP of \$5,047 billion. Turkey followed with \$3,785 billion, Saudi Arabia with \$2,728 billion, Egypt with \$2,393 billion and Nigeria with \$2,264 billion, all ahead of Iran.

Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates ranked seventh to tenth, respectively.

The UAE's GDP based on purchasing power parity was estimated at \$948 billion, about half of Iran's level.

Iran's economy was also larger than those of Algeria, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Albania and Iraq in 2025, the report said.

The IMF also reported that Iran's GDP increased by \$23 billion in 2025 compared with the previous year. Iran's GDP stood at \$1,822 billion in 2024, rising to \$1,845 billion in 2025.

Based on IMF figures, Iran ranked as the world's 24th largest economy in 2025. China remained the world's largest economy with a GDP of \$41 trillion, followed by the United States at \$30 trillion and India at \$17 trillion.

War-damaged universities, Pasteur Institute to be rebuilt via tax credits, official says

Economy Desk

The Iranian government will begin rebuilding several leading universities and the Pasteur Institute using a tax credit financing mechanism involving banks, a senior science and technology official said on Sunday, following damage sustained during the 40-day US-Israeli war against the country.

The process will cover four major universities and the Pasteur Institute, with financing arranged through tax credits despite government budget constraints, IRNA quoted the vice president for science, technology and knowledge-based economy Hossein Afshin, as saying on Sunday.

"With limited fiscal space, the government has struck an agreement with the Ministry of Economy and Finance to use tax credits to

fund these projects, with participation from the banking sector," he said.

According to IRNA, a joint meeting was held to review and finalize the operational framework for rebuilding Sharif University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, and the Pasteur Institute using tax credit capacity.

The official said reconstruction must be accelerated given the strategic and technological importance of the affected institutions.

Afshin said four universities and the Pasteur Institute will be rebuilt through bank-coordinated projects, with the completed facilities ultimately handed over to the institutions themselves.

He added that 32 research centers across the country had been damaged during



A view of damaged buildings at Iran's Pasteur Institute following airstrikes on April 2, 2026, during the US-Israeli military campaign, state media reported.

the conflict, with priority in the current phase given to selected parts of the five institutions due to their position at the forefront of science and technology, while other centers would be addressed in later stages. Rectors of the five institutions presented reports on the extent of the damage during the meeting.

Export is most formidable challenge of Iran's apiculture: **Businessman**

30% rise in honey output predicted for current year



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The beekeeping industry and honey production in Iran, on account of climatic diversity, expansive vegetative cover, and the country's four-season nature, possess unparalleled capacities for both production and exportation. Iran, at present, resides among the four foremost global producers of honey, and Iranian honey, due to its superior quality, singular flavor profile, and medicinal properties, has secured a distinctive position within international markets. From the slopes of Sabalan mountain and the Zagros mountain range in the nation's northwest and west, respectively, to the plains and pastures of the north and south, myriad botanical species have facilitated the production of diverse natural honey varieties within Iran, many of which enjoy worldwide renown.

Nevertheless, practitioners within the beekeeping sector contend that this domain confronts numerous challenges, including diminished export volumes, the depressed domestic price of honey relative to production expenditures, escalating costs associated with colony maintenance, and furthermore, the repercussions of sanctions and regional tensions. Under such circumstances, the expansion of exportation and the provision of support to beekeepers could assume a pivotal role in preserving Iran's global honey markets, augmenting foreign currency earnings, and revitalizing this industry.

In this very context, Abdolreza Bigonah, president of the Iran Beekeepers and Honey Producers Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the Ardabil Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Mines, during an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, announced a forecasted 30% increase in honey production for the current year and maintains that, contingent upon support for production and the expansion of exportation, the nation's beekeeping industry could transform into one of the paramount foreign currency-generating sectors of the non-petroleum economy.

In this interview, while elucidating the state of honey production and exportation, he addressed the challenges confronting beekeepers, the export capacities of honey and bee byproducts, the global standing of Iranian honey, and furthermore, the issues pertaining to pricing and production costs. You will read the full text of this interview below:

Abdolreza Bigonah



IRAN DAILY: What is your prediction regarding the state of honey production in the current year, and what circumstances did the nation's beekeeping industry endure during the previous year?

BIGONAH: It is projected that, owing to the promising precipitation patterns during recent months, honey production in the current Persian calendar year of 1405 (started March 21, 2026) will increase by approximately 30% relative to the previous year, attaining approximately 130,000 metric tons. The previous year's production conditions were not particularly favorable because honey production in the southern provinces of the country experienced a significant reduction due to dust and particulate matter, and this very matter impacted the nation's total production volume. For this reason, during the previous calendar year of 1404, the nation's aggregate honey production did not exceed 100,000 metric tons. Of course, Iran possesses substantial capacity within the domain of honey production. The unparalleled diversity of medicinal flora, climatic variation, and the four-season nature have resulted in the production of a wide spectrum of natural honey within the country, and, if the requisite support is provided, the capacity for even greater production exists, and, within a short-term multiyear period, the nation's honey output could readily reach a minimum of 200,000 metric tons per annum.

What is the status of honey consumption and exportation in Iran, and what constitutes the most significant challenge facing the nation's beekeeping industry?

Annually, approximately 60% to 70% of domestically produced honey is consumed within the country, with the remainder being exported. During the previous year, however, due to sanctions and issues that arose late in the year consequent to the war on Iran and regional tensions, exportation did not occur at a sufficient level.

At present, exportation represents the foremost challenge for honey producers within the nation. Should the declining trend of exportation persist, the beekeeping industry will sustain severe damage because, in the absence of exports for surplus production, the domestic selling price of honey will remain



A beekeeper inspects his bee colony in one of Iran's mountainous region, which have become popular for beekeeping.
● IRNA

depressed, and this matter will, over time, progressively weaken the beekeeping industry and obliterate the international markets for premium Iranian honey. This situation stands in contrast to the fact that honey exportation constitutes a highly promising arena for market development and revenue generation for Iranian producers and merchants. Through increased exportation, one could achieve foreign currency earnings, greater employment, market expansion, and superior recognition within global markets. Furthermore, the exportation of this product facilitates the development of the honey industry and its ancillary industries, in addition to enhancing added value.

Iranian honey is ordinarily exported to various countries

within the Middle East, South and East Asia, Europe, and North America. Previously, a substantial portion of exports was directed to Persian Gulf littoral states such as Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Bahrain. However, due to the wartime conditions within the region, this trend has diminished, and presently, Iraq and countries such as Indonesia in Southeast Asia constitute the primary export destinations for Iranian honey.

What specific impacts have climatic changes and environmental factors, such as drought and extreme heat, exerted upon honey production, and what measures have beekeepers undertaken to resolve these difficulties?

The Iranian beekeeping industry has, for many years, suffered from severe climatic difficulties. Consecutive droughts and diminished precipitation have destroyed natural vegetative cover

and have severely restricted bee nutritional sources. On the other hand, climatic changes have altered the flowering periods of plants, and this issue has directly disrupted the nutritional cycle of colonies and, consequently, honey production volumes. Extreme heat and temperature fluctuations in certain regions have furthermore escalated colony mortality rates. Under such conditions, beekeepers have been compelled to undertake lengthier and more costly migrations to locate regions possessing adequate vegetative cover. Additionally, many of them have been forced to employ supplementary feeding to preserve hives, a circumstance that, alongside the high cost of inputs and equipment, has



The photo shows a large shop in Ardabil Province, northwestern Iran, that sells dozens of honey varieties and other bee products.

● BALAD



imposed an additional burden upon producers.

What constraints have escalating economic difficulties and production costs created within the market for the beekeeping industry and honey production?

The difficulties of the beekeeping industry are not confined merely to the production stage; furthermore, the chaotic honey market represents a serious concern for producers. One such issue is the proliferation of adulterated and low-quality honey within the market, which, on one hand, diminishes consumer trust and, on the other hand, inflicts losses upon legitimate producers. Moreover, the increased cost of transportation, necessitated by longer migrations to locate superior regions, imposes a greater financial burden upon beekeepers. The high price of sugar and required inputs has also severely elevated the final production cost of honey. Exportation difficulties, likewise, prevent beekeepers from benefiting from foreign markets. The diminished purchasing power of the populace has furthermore reduced demand for high-quality, authentic honey, confronting producers with a sales stagnation. Nevertheless, as I have explained, Iran, due to its climatic diversity and varied vegetative cover, possesses substantial capacity for the development of beekeeping and non-petroleum exports, provided that planned and targeted support is extended to this industry.

What is Iran's global standing in honey production, and what factors have rendered Iranian honey recognized within international markets?

Iran ranks among the first three or four honey-producing nations globally, and, within Iran, the provinces of West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil, Fars, Kurdistan, Isfahan, and Mazandaran are considered among the most important honey-producing regions in the country. Natural Iranian honey, on account of its superior quality, singular flavor, and botanical diversity, has a distinctive position within global markets. Iran, due to its climatic diversity and expansive vegetative cover, is regarded as one of the world's richest nations in the production of diverse natural honey varieties. From the Zagros and Alborz mountain ranges to the northern, southern, and eastern plains of



Iran, due to its climatic diversity and expansive vegetative cover, is regarded as one of the world's richest nations in the production of diverse natural honey varieties. From the Zagros and Alborz mountain ranges to the northern, southern, and eastern plains of the country, there exist numerous species of medicinal plants and wildflowers from whose nectar bees produce honeys possessing unique characteristics and various therapeutic properties.

the country, there exist numerous species of medicinal plants and wildflowers from whose nectar bees produce honeys possessing unique characteristics and various therapeutic properties. The most renowned honey produced in Iran is Sabalan honey. Regions such as Sabalan, owing to their high botanical diversity, possess an unparalleled capacity for producing various honeys with medicinal and therapeutic properties, and this very matter has conferred global renown upon the honey from these re-

gions, attracting international clientele. In addition to honey, the development of exports for bee byproducts, including pollen, wax, propolis, royal jelly, and bee venom, could also be placed upon the agenda.

What is the situation regarding honey prices and its production within the domestic market?

The price of honey in Iran is very low in comparison to many other countries, and, at present, the price of one kilogram of

honey has even fallen below that of certain foodstuffs, such as cheese. Given the cost of sugar, rental fees for land required for colony placement, labor wages, migration costs, and other production expenses, the current honey price does not even cover the producer's final cost. Of course, the price of entirely organic honey is around 800,000–1,000,000 tomans (\$4–5) in Iran. However, in the global market, honey prices range from \$7 to \$10, and, for this reason, the expansion of

exportation could, on one hand, assist in price stabilization and profitability for beekeepers and, on the other hand, provide the groundwork for foreign currency earnings for the nation. Regrettably, the low price of honey and its lack of alignment with production costs have resulted in many producers pursuing beekeeping as a second or third occupation alongside other activities. This issue has reduced production efficiency and has furthermore exerted an impact upon both the quality and vol-

ume of honey produced. At present, approximately 6,000,000 bee colonies exist within the country, which require serious governmental support. In all developed nations, beekeeping and honey production are regarded as a leading and lucrative industry; however, in our country, this industry has not yet received the attention it deserves. This stands in contrast to the fact that support for this sector could assume a significant role in foreign currency earnings, job creation, and the expansion

of non-petroleum exports.

What measures do beekeepers ordinarily undertake to prepare colonies for traversing the winter season?

The summer season and mid-September ordinarily constitute an appropriate period for preparing and administering sugar syrup to bees as a nutritional substitute or supplement, thereby enabling beekeepers to ensure that colonies possess adequate and sufficient reserves to endure the winter season.

In parks, on rooftops

Urban beekeeping takes flight in US



By Andrew Zaleski
Freelance journalist

PERSPECTIVE

Pick any commercial office building in DC this summer and there's a decent chance that at least 50,000 winged insects call the rooftop their home. That's the typical size of a single honeybee hive. Some are self-managed; others are maintained by companies that specialize in urban apiculture.

One such business, Montreal-based Alvéole, is responsible for about 60 hives in the district alone (including the "Bloom Bees" atop the building that houses Bloomberg News' Washington, DC, bureau). Worldwide, the firm oversees some 2,000 hives across 73 cities. And it has lots of company: Other brands in the blossoming urban beekeeping sector include Best Bees, Bee Downtown and Bee2Bee Honey Collective.

Urban honeybees are having a moment in US cities like Atlanta, Chicago and Raleigh. Since New York City ended its prohibition on urban hives in 2010, honeybees have proliferated across the five boroughs: The industrious insects buzz on the green roof of the Javits Center and on the Art-Deco setbacks of the Empire State Building. There were 68 registered hives in NYC in 2010; today there are more than 400. Getting a handle on just how many bees are busy in the city is a little difficult. As of 2022 there were 3.8 million honeybee colonies in the US, according to the US Department of Agriculture. Many are overseen by commercial operations that truck hives from farm to farm — in addition to their honey-making duties, honeybees help fertilize 80% of all US-grown crops. But others are set up in yards, parks and rooftops. The National Honey Board says that the majority of the roughly 115,000 beekeepers in the country are hobbyists with fewer than 25 hives.

In part, the burgeoning popularity of urban beekeeping reflects a well-meaning sentiment: Honeybees have struggled with the combined effects of climate change, pesticide use and habitat loss. Two decades ago, the emergence of a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder gave rise to a new national consciousness around saving bees. President Barack Obama established a pollinator health task force in 2014 and instituted a National Honey Bee Day. (The Obamas also installed hives in the White House kitchen garden.)

But raising honeybees in a city has raised environmental con-



Alvéole workers are harvesting honey on a rooftop in Washington, D.C., the US.
● DAVID DUDLEY/BLOOMBERG CITYLAB

cerns, too. *Apis mellifera*, the European honeybees that are so important for commercial agriculture in North America, are not native to the continent, and they can outcompete and spread disease to native, wild bee species. "If you want to save the bees, don't keep honeybees," Bert Harris, co-director of the Clifton Institute, a Virginia nonprofit saving native species, recently told the Washington Post.

In terms of sheer numbers, honeybee populations in the US have rebounded since the 2000s, but they remain very unstable: Commercial beekeepers lost some 60% of their hives in 2025. The varroa destructor, a badass-sounding invasive mite that feeds on honeybees, has been fingered as one potential culprit, but the accelerating pace of seasonal die-offs is still poorly understood — and federal research into pollinator health faces new threats in the form of funding cuts from the Trump administration.

In this context, helping honeybees in cities can seem like a worthy gesture toward sustainability. Homeowners and restaurants erect hives for local honey production; schools set them up for educational purposes; corporate campuses earn points toward their LEED "green building" certification. All can help pollinate nearby plantings and make people more cognizant of the dangers of pesticides, the importance of ecological stewardship and the value of green space amid asphalt and the concrete.

They're pretty good neighbors, too, as stinging insects go: European honeybees are docile unless

their hive is threatened. But you're not necessarily helping the local ecosystem just because you set up a hive on top of the roof, many apiary experts say. "There's an element of greenwashing to it," says Jessica Helgen, program director of the University of Minnesota Bee Squad. "Honeybees are not inherently bad, but they're also not a conservation activity. It's akin to keeping chickens."

There are some 4,000 species of native bees in North America, and most of them are solitary creatures, burrowing into the soil or making other ground-based homes among leaves and brush. When it comes to bees in cities, what's more important is supporting the habitat of the native pollinators. Those tiny sweat bees you might find buzzing around your yard are one such example. So is the once-common American bumblebee, whose numbers have tumbled 90% in the last 20 years, according to the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity.

Tina Harrison, a researcher and expert on wild bees, points out that the "interactions between wild bees and honeybees are largely unknown". There is some

data indicating that as honeybee density increases in an urban area, wild bees are affected. One study of bees conducted in a Bavarian city concluded that thriving urban honeybees had a "significantly negative effect on wild bee abundance". Bees, butterflies and other insects feed on pollen and nectar from flowering plants, which can be in limited supply in heavily developed areas. A 2022 study of 12 Swiss cities suggested that "floral resources" were insufficient to support the local honeybee population. A meta-analysis of urban apiculture published in 2024 included this money line: "Honeybees are a major competitor in urban areas, in part due to beekeeping. Limiting beekeeping would prove effective in limiting competition with exotic species."

Honeybees are particularly well-suited to dominate an urban environment. Some of this comes down to the differences between honeybees and wild bees. Honey-

Bees are at work in an office park in San Francisco, the US, in 2025.
● SMITH COLLECTION/GADO



In part, the burgeoning popularity of urban beekeeping reflects a well-meaning sentiment: Honeybees have struggled with the combined effects of climate change, pesticide use and habitat loss. Two decades ago, the emergence of a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder gave rise to a new national consciousness around saving bees. But raising honeybees in a city has raised environmental concerns, too.

bees can fly several miles to forage for pollen; wild bees' range generally tops out at half a mile. Honeybees are great communicators, and can alert their brethren as to where the buffet is. In cities without much native plant life or not enough greenery, wild bees can find themselves crowded out. Honeybees can also overwinter better by storing food.

But beekeeping businesses resist the idea that their hives are pushing out the locals. "There are some studies that have been done that show that competition can exist. There are no surprises there," says Delaney Dameron, CEO of the Best Bees Company, which installs and maintains honeybee hives for commercial and residential properties. "If you stick a beehive on a big concrete property with no forage available and you put one flower bush there, of course competition is going to exist."

Dameron says that honeybees can help pollinate native plants, for example, that improves the wider ecosystem for several species. Hives situated on a low-rise building roof near a park, say, where there's an ample supply of trees, shrubs and flowers, can boost the broader health of neighboring habitats. (Honeybees are not fond of skyscraper living: Green roofs at heights above eight stories aren't very bee-friendly.)

"Effective pollination by honeybees leads to more successful seed production, which then creates larger and more diverse floral systems. And then that will lead to supporting more pollinator groups," says Kristen Rydberg, a Cornell-certified Master Beekeeper who oversees urban beekeeping programs for Alvéole in the Northeast.

Rydberg says the company also sets up homes for wild bees on the ground and within 300 feet of native plants when they install honeybee hives. The hope is that, as more urban residents see friendly honeybees going about their business in the city, they'll be more inclined to establish pesticide-free parks, plant native species in their yards, and support land use policies that protect insect habitat and create "pollinator pathways" that connect the fragments of green space found in cities.

"The biggest competition for any native bee is us and our impact," says Rydberg. "If New York City, for example, was just a wild jungle of biodiversity, you wouldn't even have to ask this question. But we've taken up so much space."

The article first appeared on Bloomberg

Asian Taekwondo Championships: Iran finishes men's runner-up, Kiani saves the day for women's team



Iran's Nahid Kiani, pictured at the Paris 2024 Olympics, won the women's -57kg
● WORLD TAEKWONDO



Sports Desk

The Iranian men's team had to settle for a runner-up finish at the Asian Taekwondo Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, despite an impressive haul of four gold medals, as well as one silver and one bronze across eight weight classes.

Ali Tajik's men must have felt unlucky to miss out on defending their team title, as only a single bronze medal separated them from South Korea, which celebrated its 21st men's crown in 27 editions.

Jordan finished third with one gold and two bronze medals.

The final day of the showpiece at the M Bank Arena

saw Iran's Amirreza Sadegian finish his campaign with a consolation bronze medal in the men's -80kg category after a semifinal setback against South Korea's Seo Geon-woo.

Amir-Abbas Rahnama and Mohammad-Hassan Palangfakan were also in action on the final day, finishing empty-handed in the men's -68kg event.

Reigning Olympic champion Arian Salimi had opened Iran's gold-medal account in the Mongolian capital with a dramatic victory in Thursday's +87kg showdown, before world champion Abolfazl Zandi (-58kg) and Mahdi Hajimousaei (-63kg) claimed the top prize in their respective divisions over the following two days.

Yasin Valizadeh, meanwhile, marked his senior debut at

the Asian Championships with an impressive silver medal in the -54kg division. Amir-Sina Bakhtiari (-74kg) was the other Iranian gold medalist in the men's competition, though his medal was not counted toward the country's tally, as he was handed a place in the event through an Asian Taekwondo Union invitation.

Kiani to the rescue

The highlight of Iran's final-day campaign, however, came in the women's competition, where Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani won gold in the -57kg category.

Former world champion Kiani, who recovered from knee surgery in time to make the showpiece, defeated Uzbekistan's Madina Mirabzalova in straight

rounds in the final to add to the Asian title she won in 2022.

Yalda Valinejad, meanwhile, suffered a 2-1 semifinal defeat against China's Luo Zongshi – the 2022 world champion and a two-time Asian Games gold medalist – to finish with a bronze medal in the women's -62kg class.

The two medals brought an end to a disappointing campaign for the Iranian women, after Masoumeh Ranjbar, Fatemeh Ahmadi, Baran Nemati, Mahla Momenzadeh, Fereshteh Fat'hi, Saghar Moradi, and Olympic bronze medalist Mobina Nematzadeh all missed out on medals in their respective events.

Iran finished fourth in the women's standings behind Chinese Taipei, South Korea, and China.

Para Powerlifting African Open Championships: Iranians complete one-two in heavyweight classes

Sports Desk

Iranian para powerlifters dominated the men's heavyweight and super-heavyweight events on Day 3 of the African Open Championships in Oran, Algeria, collecting 10 medals – including four golds – on Saturday.

Reigning Paralympic champion Ali-Akbar Gharibshahi was in a league of his own in the -107kg class, posting a 240kg effort with his third attempt to win the gold. A total tally of 705kg secured a second gold medal for the 44-year-old Iranian.

His compatriot Saman Razi – a former world and Paralympic bronze medalist – settled for silver with 205kg. Reza Enayatollahi completed an all-Iranian top three with a successful 200kg effort, while also securing the top prize in the next-generation age class. Later in the day, the +107kg contest proved to be a two-horse race between the two Iranians. Ahmad Aminzadeh – also a gold winner at Paris 2024 – finished atop the

podium thanks to a lift of 247kg, nine kilograms clear of his fellow Iranian Mahdi Sayyadi. Sayyadi still managed to win the total gold with 703kg, while Aminzadeh, who finished his campaign with two attempts, placed second with a 487kg tally.



Ali-Akbar Gharibshahi, pictured with the Paris 2024 Paralympic gold, secured two men's -107kg golds at the African Open Championships in Oran, Algeria.
● IRNA

Aliasghar Abareqi also enjoyed a clean sweep of two golds on Saturday, thanks to a 210-220-223 performance in the men's -97kg class. Mobin Mohammadkhani took the bronze with 215kg. Further success came for the Iranian squad in the women's competitions.

of 93kg and 98kg secured double next-generation golds for the Iranian athlete. Saturday's results followed a standout performance from Iranian duo Amir Jafari and Mohsen Bakhtiar in the men's -72kg contests the previous night.

A Paralympic silver medalist at Tokyo 2020, Jafari began

his campaign with a 196kg lift but failed a 205kg attempt on his second try. He bounced back to overcome the weight with his final lift, pipping Bakhtiar – who also posted a best lift of 205kg – for the top prize.

Reigning Paralympic bronze medalist Bakhtiar, however, went on to clinch the total gold with an impressive tally of 605kg.

Iran's Alireza Izadi and Mahdiyeh Mohammadian had collected four medals between them on the first day of the competition. Competing in the men's -59kg class, Izadi posted three lifts to bag bronze with 183kg before winning the total gold with a 542kg tally.

In the women's -55kg competition, Mohammadian registered three successful lifts (95-102-105) to finish with bronze and the total silver. Featuring more than 150 contestants from 20 countries, the event – the third regional championships in this year's four-event series – is a mandatory part of the LA28 Paralympic qualification pathway.

Iranian football legend Parviz Qelichkhani, dies at 81



● VARZESH3

Sports Desk

Parviz Qelichkhani, widely regarded as one of the finest players in the Asian football history, passed away in Paris on Saturday at the age of 81. He had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

Qelichkhani was a talisman of Iranian football's golden generation in the late 1960s and early 1970s – alongside Ali Jabbari and Ali Parvin – and a pivotal figure in the national team's major achievements during its glory years.

Though primarily an established holding midfielder, Qelichkhani was best known for his versatility across the pitch, having played in every position – except goalkeeper – for club and country throughout his career. He remains the only player in the continent to have won the Asian Cup on three occasions, captaining the national team to its last title in the continental showpiece on home soil in 1976.

Capped 66 times for the national team between 1964 and 1977, Qelichkhani scored 14 international goals – the first and arguably most famous of which was the late winner in the 2-1 victory over Israel in Tehran's iconic Amjadiyeh Stadium in 1968, which secured Iran's first of three Asian Cup titles and sparked nationwide street celebrations – a defining moment that cemented football as the nation's most popular sport.

He also won an Asian Games gold medal with Iran at Tehran 1974 and was a member of the Esteghlal team – then known as Taj – that claimed the Asian Club Championship trophy in 1970.

Qelichkhani made his Team Melli debut at the 1964 Summer Olympics against East Germany at the age of 17. He later represented Iran at the Munich 1972 and Montreal 1976 Olympics, scoring his last international goal in a 2-1 quarterfinal loss to the Soviet Union – a goal that

remains Iran's last in the multi-sport event to this day.

However, Qelichkhani's left-leaning and anti-monarchy political views ultimately cost him a place in Iran's maiden World Cup campaign in 1978 in Argentina.

In a 2010 interview, Qelichkhani – who in his later years preferred to be recognized as an activist rather than a football great – underlined how his childhood in a poor, working-class family in southern Tehran, along with his devotion to his sporting role model Gholamreza Takhti – the late Iranian wrestling great who attained legendary status as a 'people's champion' for his profound moral values – had shaped his political mindset in the 1960s.

At club level, Qelichkhani played for both of Tehran's archrivals, Esteghlal and Persepolis, as well as Kian, Pas, Oqab, and Daraei, before ending his career with the San Jose Earthquakes in 1979.

CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship: Iran eases past Sri Lanka in straight sets

Sports Desk

Iran secured a second successive victory at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship, defeating Sri Lanka in straight sets (25-16, 25-13, 25-11) in Kathmandu, Nepal.

South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's side had opened its title defense with a comfortable 3-0 rout of Bangladesh on Friday.

A sterner test awaits the Iranian women in their final pool game today against Kazakhstan, which emerged victorious 3-1 when the two teams met at last year's AVC Women's Volleyball Cup.

Iran achieved a historic feat at last year's CAVA event in Tashkent, capturing its maiden international women's volleyball gold medal since the establishment of

the national team in 1963, thanks to a straight-set victory over host Uzbekistan in the final.

This year's tournament marks the beginning of a congested international calendar for the Iranian women, who are also set to compete at the AVC Women's Nations Cup – starting June 6 in Candon, Philippines – where they have been drawn along-

side defending champion Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Lebanon in the same group.

That campaign will be followed by September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Japan, which will mark Iran's first women's volleyball appearance at the multi-sport event since the 1974 edition on home soil.

Sistan Anthropology Museum preserves 5,000 years of civilization

Iranica Desk

Sistan and Baluchestan Province, a land steeped in memories both ancient and recent, lies in the heart of Iran's historic desert landscape — a region where every grain of soil holds a story thousands of years old. The culture of the people of Sistan has been shaped by the wisdom of water, wind, and sunlight, reflecting a unique blend of patience, resilience, and ingenuity in confronting the forces of nature.

The Sistan Anthropology Museum is far more than a repository of historical artifacts; it is a reflection of the spirit, traditions, and beliefs cultivated by the people of this region across centuries. Each gallery of the museum presents a vivid portrayal of the work, art, customs, language, clothing, cuisine, and livelihoods of communities that built a remarkable civilization founded on solidarity and wisdom. The museum also serves as a gateway to the region's dynamic culture — one preserved through carpets and kilims, traditional embroidery, oral traditions, and ceremonial practices that continue to shape both Iranian and Sistani identity today, according to chtn.ir.

Visiting the Sistan Anthropology Museum offers an opportunity to experience a living culture whose roots extend deep into history and whose traditions remain alive in the everyday lives of local people.

Safar Peyghan, director of the museum, said the institution's primary mission is to raise public awareness about cultural heritage and encourage both citizens and scholars to participate in preserving this



● chtn.ir



● SNN

national treasure. According to Peyghan, the museum tells the story of generations of people who, over thousands of years, shaped their culture, livelihoods, arts, and beliefs in this land. As a result, a visit to the museum becomes a step-by-step journey from the distant past to the present day.

Highlighting the more than 5,000-year history of Sistan's civilization, Peyghan explained that the museum's 30 exhibition halls carefully trace the historical development of the region from the era of Shahr-e Sukhteh, or the Burnt City, to modern times.

He noted that a significant portion of the museum is dedicated to Shahr-e Sukhteh, an ancient city of which only around 10 percent has been excavated. Despite the limited excavations, archaeologists have uncovered extraordinary discoveries, including evidence of cranial surgery, an artificial eye, measuring instruments, one of the world's earliest forms of animation, and commercial artifacts such as



● SNN

seals and imported stones. Peyghan added that following the Shahr-e Sukhteh section, the museum introduces visitors to other important archaeological sites in Sistan, including Dahan-e Gholaman and Kuh-e Khajeh. He described Kuh-e Khajeh as one of the region's most significant sites for understanding the daily life and livelihoods of ancient communities. Evidence of animal husbandry, fishing,

carpet and kilim weaving, and indigenous technologies such as the construction of traditional "Tutan" reed boats are all reflected in the museum's exhibits.

According to Peyghan, the gallery dedicated to Kuh-e Khajeh extends into the Islamic era and features tools, weapons, agricultural equipment, and examples of the rituals and religious beliefs practiced by people who

once lived in some of Sistan's most important settlements.

He further explained that the exhibits from Kuh-e Khajeh reveal evidence of animal husbandry, fishing, carpet weaving, and boat construction, while the Tutan reed boat stands as a symbol of local innovation during that period. The gallery also showcases religious traditions such as Ta'zieh performances alongside agricultural tools and handmade weapons, all produced using indigenous methods and materials.

Emphasizing that Sistan's culture cannot be reduced merely to stone and mud-brick relics, Peyghan stated that the museum's 30 exhibition halls collectively represent the living heritage of the region. The museum seeks to demonstrate how the people of Sistan, despite enduring some of the harshest climatic conditions over five millennia, succeeded not only in adapting to their environment but also in creating an advanced civilization rich in artistic and technical achievements.

Peyghan also pointed to the museum's handicrafts section, where galleries dedicated to embroidery, spinning, carpet weaving, kilim weaving, Shahnameh traditions, water-right agreements, and jewelry-making illustrate key aspects of the culture and livelihoods of earlier generations. He noted that in the past, nearly every household in Sistan functioned as a carpet-weaving workshop, making weaving one of the region's central family occupations.

The museum director also highlighted the discovery of 5,000-year-old jewelry in the region. Crafted from finely carved and perforated stones, these ornaments demonstrate a level of precision whose exact production techniques remain unknown to researchers today. Referring to the discovery of a board game in Shahr-e Sukhteh, Peyghan said the finding reveals that the people of that era valued not only work and trade but also entertainment and leisure activities, reflecting a relatively prosperous and culturally vibrant society in ancient Sistan. Stressing that Sistan's culture remains dynamic and alive, he explained that the museum is gradually evolving into an educational center where students and researchers engage not only in visits, but also in studying and rediscovering their historical roots.

He added that the museum's ultimate goal is for every visitor to leave with a renewed sense of pride in their homeland, because Sistan is "the land of firsts" — a land of knowledge, creativity, and artistic traditions, many of which remain largely unknown to the wider world.

Ardabil Carpet remains masterpiece of Persian Art in London

Iranica Desk

Among the many Iranian artistic and historical treasures preserved in major museums around the world, the Ardabil Carpet holds an exceptional place. Considered by many scholars of Islamic art and carpet history to be one of the finest and most important carpets ever woven, the masterpiece is not only a testament to the skill of Iranian weavers but also a symbol of the peak of Persian artistic achievement during the Safavid era.

The Ardabil Carpet was woven between 1539 and 1540 CE (946 AH) during the reign of Shah Tahmasp I. The date appears in an inscription woven into the carpet's border, making it widely recognized as the oldest dated carpet in the world. The inscription also mentions "Maqsud Kashani," believed to have been the supervisor or master of the royal workshop responsible for its production, according to ISNA. The existence of such an inscription reflects the elevated status of carpet weaving in Safavid Iran, where carpets were regarded not merely as functional objects but as works of spiritual and artistic significance.

Measuring approximately 10.5 meters in length and more than



5 meters in width, the Ardabil Carpet is remarkable in scale. Yet what has drawn even greater admiration from researchers is its extraordinary technical sophistication. Experts estimate that the carpet contains more than 25 million knots, demonstrating a level of craftsmanship achieved by Iranian weavers in the 16th century that still astonishes textile specialists today. The carpet was woven with silk warp and weft and wool pile, while its colors — despite centuries of aging — have retained remarkable richness and depth. Shades of deep blue, cream, gold, and dark red were created using natural dyes, highlighting the advanced dyeing knowledge that existed in Iran at the time. Its dense wool pile, capable of preserving color more effectively than silk, contains roughly 5,300 knots per 10 square cen-

timeters. This extraordinary density allowed the designers to incorporate intricate details throughout the composition. Producing a carpet of such size and complexity would have required years of labor and the coordinated efforts of numerous highly skilled weavers. The design itself is considered one of the carpet's greatest artistic achievements. A deep blue background is covered with elaborate floral motifs, arabesques, and intertwined vines surrounding a large sun-like medallion at the center. Many scholars believe the central design was inspired by Persian domes and architectural geometry. The four corners mirror portions of the same medallion, creating a harmonious and mathematically balanced composition that reflects the Safavid mastery of symmetry and

proportion. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Ardabil Carpet is the story of the two original carpets. The carpet now displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum was originally part of a matching pair believed to have been commissioned for the shrine of Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili in the city of Ardabil. Such paired carpets were commonly used in royal and religious architecture to create visual symmetry within interior spaces. Both carpets reportedly remained at the shrine until the 19th century, and British visitors documented seeing them there in 1843. Decades later, according to accounts preserved by the museum, the shrine suffered damage — possibly from an earthquake — and the carpets were removed. Many historians believe they were sold

to finance restoration work, though details surrounding the transaction remain unclear. During the late Qajar period, European demand for Eastern art and Persian carpets grew rapidly. The British company Ziegler & Co., active in the Persian carpet trade, acquired the two Ardabil Carpets. Because one carpet had suffered significant damage, parts of it were used to restore the better-preserved piece. As a result, the carpet now in London survived in a more complete condition, while the second carpet lost sections of its borders and field. The restored carpet was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1893. Influential English designer William Morris, a leading figure of the Arts and Crafts Movement, reportedly described the carpet as "perfect" and praised its harmo-

ny and logic of design, playing a major role in persuading the museum to acquire it. The museum ultimately paid £2,000 for the piece — an extraordinary sum at the time.

The second carpet later entered American collections and eventually became part of the holdings of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where it remains today, albeit in a less complete condition than its London counterpart.

Today, the Ardabil Carpet is regarded as far more than a museum object. It stands as a symbol of the ingenuity, precision, and creativity of Iranian artisans and a reminder that Persian carpet weaving had achieved an extraordinary artistic maturity centuries before carpets became a global commercial commodity. Even today, despite changing lifestyles and the rise of machine-made products, hand-woven Persian carpets remain among the most enduring symbols of Iranian traditional art. In this context, the Ardabil Carpet continues to embody the continuity of Iranian creativity — a masterpiece that, nearly five centuries after its creation, still inspires admiration among museum visitors, historians, and art scholars around the world.



● ISNA

Pezeshkian says Red Crescent bridges Iran's different social strata

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday called for a deeper role for the Iranian Red Crescent Society in strengthening social unity and expanding structured public participation, saying the organization's trusted standing and humanitarian reach made it uniquely placed to connect different strata of society. During a meeting with senior officials of the Red Crescent, Pezeshkian said expanding neighborhood-based and mosque-linked volunteer programs would help embed participation more firmly at local level, allowing citizens to see the direct outcomes of their engagement in community life, president.ir reported. He stressed that strengthening lo-

cal governance and structured civic involvement was central to improving resilience and social unity. He stressed that the Red Crescent, given its widespread public trust, could act as a bridge between different social groups and viewpoints, drawing in citizens who might otherwise remain distant from institutional frameworks. "The more people take part in solving local problems and improving living conditions, the stronger governance and social unity will become," he said. The meeting reviewed ongoing initiatives, including a volunteer-driven social services platform relying on local trusted figures. The network is designed to operate across eight areas, including social empowerment, crisis response, community resilience and

welfare delivery. Pezeshkian urged the organization to move towards more structured and measurable frameworks for participation, saying civic programs must be institutionalized through clear and sustainable mechanisms to ensure long-term effectiveness. He also called for a clearer definition of the Red Crescent's responsibilities in addressing local social challenges. He further emphasized that the success of neighborhood-focused governance depends on its ability to demonstrate tangible impact. Citizens, he noted, were more likely to engage when they could directly observe improvements in their surroundings as a result of their participation. Framing the initiative within a



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (6th R) attends a meeting with senior Red Crescent officials in Tehran on May 24, 2026. ● president.ir

broader social strategy, Pezeshkian said inclusive participation across different social and intellectual perspectives would strengthen national unity and reduce fragmentation. He added that when people are given credible channels for engagement, they tend to contribute constructively rather than remain on the margins of social processes. He also warned that weakening public trust could undermine stability, describing social participation as the country's "main pillar of strength". A society that feels involved and represented, he said,



would be more resilient and less vulnerable to division. Pezeshkian concluded by outlining three guiding questions for future planning as what the main neighborhood-level challenges are, which fall within the Red Crescent's mandate, and what proportion of its capacity can realistically be mobilized to address them.

Ramadan War heritage plaques unveiled at Tehran museum



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri (3rd R) and other officials unveil a heritage plaque commemorating the Ramadan War during a ceremony at the Holy Defense Museum in Tehran on May 24, 2026. ● CHTN

planned museum of luminaries of Iran's cultural heritage and civilization should prominently feature narratives and statues honoring fallen figures of the country's contemporary history. In remarks steeped in symbolism, Salehi-Amiri portrayed the martyrs' legacy as a river still flowing through Iran's social fabric, saying their sacrifice had sparked a "cognitive transformation" that strengthened national solidarity during the upheavals of recent months. He also praised the Foundation for the Preservation and Publication of Sacred Defense Values for safeguarding what he called Iran's historical memory of resistance and sacrifice. The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of heritage plaques linked to the Ramadan War and a tribute to families of martyrs. Before the event, Salehi-Amiri and Deputy Minister Ali Darabi laid flowers and recited prayers at the memorial of unknown soldiers at the museum grounds.

"a power beyond all powers." "If Iran today stands with dignity, stability and security, it is because of the blood of the martyrs," he said, adding that the nation's endurance through recent regional turbulence had reshaped geopolitical perceptions of the Islamic Republic. The minister said the proposed foundation would document and promote the intellectual legacy, worldview and "civilizational ethos" of those killed in the 12-day war and the Ramadan conflict, arguing that their ideas should evolve into an educational and cultural current for younger generations. He urged educational institutions to incorporate the lives and philosophies of martyrs into school curricula and said Iran's

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri on Sunday called for the creation of a "Foundation for the Study of Martyrs' Thought" during a ceremony marking the unveiling of registered tangible and intangible heritage plaques from the Ramadan War at Tehran's Holy Defense Museum, coinciding with the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr. Addressing families of fallen servicemen and senior cultural officials at the Arvand Hall of the museum complex, Salehi-Amiri said the legacy of martyrs had fortified Iran's national identity, social unity and security architecture, describing their sacrifice as

Tehran mural captures global attention as symbol of Iranian resolve

Arts & Culture Desk

A towering new mural unveiled in Tehran's Republic Square has drawn wide attention from Western, regional and Hebrew-language media, turning a public artwork into the latest front in the battle of narratives surrounding Iran's regional posture and national identity. The mural, titled 'Victory' and designed by Iranian artist Danial Farrokhi, depicts martyr Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei surrounded by a sea of raised fists beneath a Qur'anic verse declaring that triumph comes only from God, "the Almighty, the All-Knowing." According to Iran's Art Bureau Visual Arts Center, the installation has rapidly surfaced across international outlets including The Guardian, Newsweek, NBC News, Euronews and



Saudi broadcaster Al Arabiya, each interpreting the imagery through sharply different political lenses. As rhetoric of confrontation once again echoes out of Washington and Pentagon corridors, Tehran has answered not with speeches, but with urban symbolism splashed across the city skyline. The colossal fists rising toward the sky have become, in the eyes of many foreign outlets, a visual shorthand for Iran's narrative of steadfastness and collective resistance.

Several Western reports linked the mural's unveiling to renewed discussion in the Trump administration over potential military scenarios involving Iran. Images of ordinary citizens walking calmly past the massive artwork circulated widely online, with some commentators portraying the scene as a metaphor for Iran's social resilience under pressure. Hebrew-language media framed the mural as a "giant threatening banner" signaling Tehran's readiness for con-

frontation, while Al Arabiya cast it as part of Iran's broader soft-power strategy aimed at reinforcing solidarity among its regional allies. Associated Press and Euronews focused on what they described as a growing "visual confrontation" unfolding across Tehran's streets, where murals increasingly function as political messaging visible far beyond Iran's borders. In that reading, the capital's walls have evolved into an extension of diplomacy itself, carrying messages that travel faster than official communiqués. In Tehran, the mural's clenched fists now stand not merely as artwork, but as a metaphor etched into concrete and sky, a reminder that in Iran's political imagination, victory is forged not in war rooms, but in unity and endurance.

Ceasefire in Washington's ...

Fuel prices in the United States have risen more than 50% since the war began in February. The midterm elections are approaching and the Republican majority in both houses is under genuine threat. The Persian Gulf states that might have provided sustained political cover for continued military operations have instead applied consistent and coordinated pressure for a settlement. The intelligence community's own assessments have confirmed that Iran's military capacity was not fundamentally degraded. A Georgetown University analyst stated what many in Washington understand

but few say publicly, that Iran has more structural advantages in this negotiation than the United States, and that the only instrument available to Trump is the threat of resumed strikes, a threat whose credibility diminishes with each passing week of negotiation. Iran has always understood this arithmetic. The Islamic Republic was built, in significant part, on the institutional memory of surviving external pressure, through the eight-year war with Iraq, through decades of sanctions, through the assassination of its scientists, through the sabotage of its nuclear facilities. It has developed, across these experiences, a strategic pa-

tience that has no equivalent in American political culture, which operates on electoral cycles of two and four years. Right now, it is Pakistan that has placed itself at the center of this diplomatic effort. Behind Pakistan stands China. Beijing, whose strategic and economic interests in Iranian oil, Persian Gulf stability and the broader restructuring of West Asian order are considerable, quietly encouraged Islamabad to intensify its engagement. India observes this shift with the attentiveness of a civilization that has maintained equidistance as a strategic principle across centuries. India's energy security, its diaspora in the Persian Gulf,

its evolving relationships with both Tehran and Washington; all of these interests require it to read this transition accurately rather than through the lens of any single power's preferred narrative. A former senior American diplomat invoked the Suez Crisis of 1956 to describe what Washington now faces. When Britain marched into Egypt and was forced to withdraw under American pressure, it was not the military outcome that defined the moment. It was the recognition, painful and protracted, that the old empire could no longer enforce its will in regions it had long treated as its sphere of exclusive influence. The transition from

British to American primacy in West Asia took years to complete. The transition that is now underway will take longer. But the direction is no longer genuinely in dispute. Trump says he will only sign a deal where America gets everything it wants but the Strait of Hormuz remains under Iranian management. The gap between those two statements is where the actual negotiation lives. And when the final text is agreed the distance between what Washington claimed it would accept and what it ultimately signed will tell us everything about who set the terms and who accepted them.