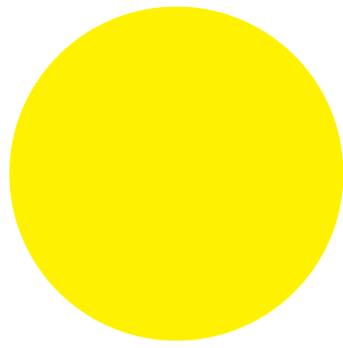




Iranian documentary on embroidery honored at US festival

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A plume of smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike on the outskirts of Tyre, southern Lebanon, on June 1, 2026. AFP

### Tehran sees wider regional agenda behind Israel's Lebanon offensive

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

#### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The intensification of Israeli aggressions in southern Lebanon has drawn reactions from Iranian officials, who have described it as tantamount to a violation of the ceasefire involving Tehran and have warned of its consequences. Meanwhile, Iran and the United States have themselves witnessed a limited exchange of fire near the Strait of Hormuz, although statements issued by both sides indicated that the incidents were solely related to developments in the waterway. These developments have cast doubt on the durability of the ceasefire and the continuation of diplomatic efforts on both the Iranian and Lebanese fronts. In an interview with Iran Daily, Hossein Kazemi, an international affairs analyst, said that Iran views Israel's operations in Lebanon as part of a broader project aimed at destabilizing the region. He argued that Tehran could use its political, diplomatic and regional leverage to raise the political and security costs of US support for Israeli actions and elevate the Lebanon issue into a regional and international demand.



Hossein Kazemi

**IRAN DAILY:** How do you analyze Iran's approach to developments in Lebanon? What tools does Iran have to pressure the United States and Israel to adhere to the ceasefire and halt operations in Lebanon?

**KAZEMI:** Iran does not view Israel's operations in Lebanon merely as a Lebanese issue. Rather, it sees them as part of a broader project of regional destabilization. From Tehran's perspective, the continuation of this trend could threaten not only Lebanon's security but also the security of West Asia as a whole. For that reason, Iran's opposition to the expansion of Israeli military operations should be understood within the framework of defending regional stability and preventing the outbreak of another large-scale war.

At the same time, Iran believes that the United States, as Israel's principal political and military backer, bears direct responsibility for the actions of this regime and cannot dissociate itself from their consequences. Washington speaks of diplomacy and de-escalation on the one hand, yet on the other it has not adopted a firm deterrent stance toward Israeli military actions. This dual-track approach has led many regional observers to question the sincerity of US support for peace and regional stability. As long as the United States is unwilling to use its influence to restrain Israeli actions, it will be difficult to speak of a sustainable ceasefire and regional security. Tehran can therefore draw on its political, diplomatic and regional capacities to increase the cost of continued Israeli aggression. Iran has also conveyed the message that ongoing attacks on Lebanon could negatively affect negotiations and regional security arrangements. In practice, Tehran's most important instrument is to raise the political and security costs of US support for Israeli actions and turn the Lebanon issue into a regional and international demand.

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## Iran names 26-man squad for 2026 World Cup

### Sports Desk

Iranian head coach Amir Ghalenoei on Monday named a 26-man roster for the 2026 World Cup, with Team Melli set to head to North America carrying a blend of experienced stars, domestic standouts and overseas-based players.

The tournament, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19, is the first World Cup expanded to 48 teams.

Veteran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand headlines Iran's goalkeeping unit alongside Hossein Hosseini and Payam Niazmand. In defense, Ghalenoei selected Ehsan Hajsafi,

Milad Mohammadi, Ali Nemati, Danial Iri, Shoja Khalilzadeh, Mohammad Hossein Kanaani, Saleh Hardani and Ramin Rezaeian. The midfield group features Aria Yousefi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh, Saeid Ezatollahi, Roozbeh Cheshmi, Amir Mohammad Razaghnia, Mohammad Mohebi, Mohammad Ghorbani and Mehdi Ghayedi.

Up front, Iran will rely on Saman Ghoddos, Mehdi Torabi, Ali Alipour, Shahriar Moghanlou, Dennis Dargahi, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and star striker Mehdi Taremi. Nine players in the squad currently play abroad, while the remainder come from clubs in Iran's top flight. Esteghlal, Persepolis and Tractor each have four representa-

tatives in the final roster, the highest total among domestic clubs.

The coaching staff also named Mohammad Khalifeh and Omid Noorafkan on a standby list. Both players will travel with the team and could replace an injured member up to 24 hours before the tournament begins.

Iran have been drawn in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt and New Zealand, with all three of their group-stage matches scheduled to be played in the United States.

The team opens its World Cup campaign against New Zealand on June 15 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, just outside Los Angeles.

Off the field, however, preparations remain complicated. Iran had originally planned to base itself in Tucson, Arizona, but later moved its World Cup training camp and headquarters to Estadio Caliente in Tijuana, Mexico.

The relocation comes as the squad continues to wait for US visas ahead of the tournament.

Iran's Ambassador to Mexico, Abolfazl Pasandideh, who visited Tijuana on May 28, said the team had not yet received visas to enter the United States and argued that Iran would not be competing under "equal conditions" because of difficulties surrounding its preparations before the tournament.



# *Pezeshkian:* Iran ready to ease maritime transit, safeguard shipping in Hormuz

'Diplomacy as the most effective way to settle outstanding issues'

## International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized Iran's readiness to facilitate maritime transit and ensure shipping security in the Strait of Hormuz which has been mostly closed by Iran following the US-Israeli aggression in February. "The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully prepared to facilitate maritime passage. The main problem stems from restrictions and obstacles imposed by the United States on Iran's shipping and trade," Pezeshkian told Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in a phone conversation on Monday. Pezeshkian also told the Japanese premier he will try to enable "a smooth and easy passage" of Japanese ships through the Strait of Hormuz. Pezeshkian also thanked Japan for its humanitarian assistance to Iran during the recent aggression, expressing hope that a return to normal conditions in the strategic waterway would allow greater use of Japanese technical and engineering capabilities in projects to

rebuild and develop Iranian refineries, ports, and damaged economic infrastructure.

Iran shut down the corridor to enemies and their allies following the launch of the latest bout of American-Israeli aggression targeting the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Republic began applying far stricter controls after US President Donald Trump announced continuation of a naval blockade of Iranian vessels and ports on April 13.

## Pursuing diplomacy

Referring to the regional tensions caused by the US-Israeli aggression, Pezeshkian stressed Iran's determination to resolve the problems through dialogue and diplomacy.

"Iran has always seen diplomacy as the most effective way to settle outstanding issues, but unfortunately some parties, including the United States through its withdrawal from commitments, as well as the destabilizing actions of the Israeli regime, have

complicated diplomatic processes," Pezeshkian said.

The Iranian president described as concerning the repeated ceasefire violations by Israel in Lebanon, the continued displacement of Lebanese civilians, and US political and military support for Israeli actions, and called on the international community to play an effective role in this regard.

The Iranian president also called on the Japanese government to help facilitate Iran's access to its financial resources and assets in Japan for the procurement of essential goods, medical equipment, and medicine.

The Japanese prime minister, for her part, reaffirmed Japan's support for diplomatic approaches, stressing the need to continue diplomatic dialogue to reduce tensions and resolve differences.

Takaichi also thanked the Islamic Republic for ensuring the safety of maritime routes and welcomed the successful passage of Japanese ships through the Strait of Hormuz.



Sanae Takaichi



Masoud Pezeshkian

Some Japan-connected vessels have passed through the strait since the conflict began in February.

Many resource-poor Asian countries including Japan are facing economic challenges from rising crude oil costs and shortages of key commodities due to their dependence on West Asia for imports that largely pass through the

strait, a critical energy chokepoint. Amid uncertainty regarding the progress of peace talks between Iran and the US, the Japanese prime minister later told reporters that she expressed "strong hope" that the Iranian side "will show the greatest possible flexibility and that an agreement can be reached as soon as possible."

## *Qalibaf:* Lebanon attacks, Iran blockade expose US breaches of ceasefire

Araghchi says Iran-US truce unequivocally applies across all fronts

## International Desk

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf warned that the US naval blockade of Iran's ports and Israel's actions in Lebanon will come at a price for Washington and Tel Aviv.

In a post on his X account on Monday, Qalibaf said the US naval blockade imposed on Iranian ships and ports and the escalation of "war crimes" by the "genocidal Zionist regime" in Lebanon clearly show the US's lack of compliance with a Pakistan-mediated ceasefire agreement with Iran.

The top Iranian negotiator in talks with the US further warned against the consequences of continued violent acts, which would ultimately come at a cost.

"Every choice has a price, and the bill comes due," Qalibaf said, adding, "It will all fall into place." Iran and the US agreed with a ceasefire deal on April 8 to give a chance



Smoke rises in Lebanon following an air strike on June 1, 2026, as seen from the Israeli side of the Israel-Lebanon border. **REUTERS**

to diplomacy to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. However, the US imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports on April 13 after Pakistan-mediated talks to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran failed to produce an agreement.

A halt to Israel's attacks on Lebanon has also been one of Iran's conditions in the ceasefire deal. The Israeli regime not only did not stop its aggression against Lebanon but it intensified its attacks and occupied more Lebanon's territories during its recent incursion. In recent weeks, the

Israeli regime has launched deadly strikes on civilian areas and issued evacuation orders targeting southern Lebanese communities. Israel's acts of aggression have caused significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure in Lebanon.

On Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also ordered attacks on the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut - a day after the regime's military took over the medieval castle of Beaufort. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also reacted to the recent Isra-

el's actions, saying that the ceasefire between Iran and the US is unequivocally a ceasefire on all fronts, including in Lebanon.

"Its violation on one front is a violation of the ceasefire on all fronts. The US and Israel are responsible for the consequences of any violation," Araghchi said.

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah began in March after the Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah launched military operations against the Israeli regime in response to its aggression against Iran. A truce to halt the fighting began on April 17, but has never been observed.

The Lebanese Health Ministry says Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,371 people since early March.

## *FM spox:* Contradictory US demands behind protracted negotiations

## International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said on Monday that new or contradictory US demands have prolonged peace negotiations between Tehran and Washington.

"In a situation where the other side constantly changes its views, raises new or contradictory demands, and sends different and inconsistent media messages, it is natural that this situation prolongs the negotiation process," Baqaei said at his weekly press conference.

Talks between Iran and the US, mediated by Pakistan and facilitated by Qatar, are continuing based on Iran's 14-point proposal. The discus-

sions aim to produce a memorandum to end the joint US-Israeli aggression against Iran, end a blockade on Iran's ports, and secure the release of frozen Iranian assets.

When asked about US President Donald Trump's recent claim that Iran's enriched uranium must be removed and destroyed, and whether Iran needs foreign technology to access the Fordow site, Baqaei responded, "Whenever we need to take action on nuclear issues, we know very well how to proceed."

"Regarding the details of nuclear-related discussions, no negotiations have taken place at this stage. I repeat once again that at this stage,

our focus is on ending the war," he added.

Iran was already in negotiations with the United States about the fate of its nuclear program in February, when the US and Israel launched air and missile strikes on the country.

And, while Tehran has long insisted that its nuclear program is for purely civilian ends, the US and its Western allies have long claimed that it aims to develop a weapon.

On Sunday, Iran's chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reiterated Tehran's distrust in Washington's "words and promises," stressing that Iran would not agree to any deal with the US unless it fully secures Iranian rights.

## IRGC blitzes US base linked to telecom tower attack in south

## International Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Monday it has carried out another retaliatory strike against an air base used by the United States to launch a military attack on a telecommunications tower in southern Iran. The IRGC said its Aerospace Force struck and destroyed the air base from which the "aggressor US military" launched an attack on the telecom tower on Sirik Island in Iran's southern province of Hormozgan. It did not specify which US base was targeted in the attack.

However, Kuwait's military said air defenses intercepted missile and drone attacks on Monday, while Washington claimed it had downed two Iranian missiles targeting US forces in the country. The developments came after the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) said late Sunday that it conducted "self-defense strikes" over the weekend against Iranian radar and drone command-and-control facilities in the city of Goruk and on Qeshm Island.

"The measured and deliberate strikes occurred on Saturday and Sunday," CENTCOM said in response to what it called "aggressive Iranian actions that

included the shutdown of a US MQ-1 drone that was operating over international waters."

The IRGC announced in a statement on Sunday that the elite force's air defense units detected and successfully shot down an intruding MQ-1 Predator drone belonging to the "aggressor US military" shortly after it encroached upon Iranian airspace over the Persian Gulf.

The statement added that the multi-mission and long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft was intercepted and destroyed as it entered the Iranian skies in the early hours of Sunday.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## CARTOON



# Astara Port revives as first vessel docks after dredging

## Economy Desk

The first commercial vessel in the new year, starting on March 21, docked at Iran's Astara Port after dredging operations restored access to the northern port, a development authorities said could help revive the region's trade and transit capacity. According to Fars news agency, Astara Port, one of Iran's key northern trade gateways and a strategic link in the International North-South Transport Corridor, plays an important role in expanding the country's economic exchanges with Caspian Sea nations.

Ali Darmani, governor of Astara, said the vessel carried 1,400 cubic meters of timber weighing about 800 metric tons and had sailed from Hovsan port in Azerbaijan.

Highlighting the border country's transit, export and import

potential, Darmani said the vessel's arrival demonstrated that maritime trade at the port could recover with the removal of technical obstacles, particularly sedimentation problems, and the continuation of dredging operations.

The port had faced challenges in recent years due to sediment buildup and restrictions on vessel traffic, resulting in a decline in commercial activity. In the months leading up to the dredging, clearing the port basin and access channel had become a major demand of businesses, traders and local officials.

Following the completion of the dredging work and the restoration of suitable navigation conditions, the first commercial vessel of the year arrived at Astara Port Complex carrying a cargo of timber from Azerbaijan and docked at the port's berth.

The revival of Astara comes as

Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors to counter growing restrictions on its trade routes.

The country's southern ports in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman remain under a naval blockade imposed by US President Donald Trump in mid-April. The blockade is aimed at pressuring Tehran into a peace agreement after a 40-day conflict launched by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28.

According to reports presented by economic officials, coordination with neighboring countries has helped activate and expand capacity at several land border crossings and alternative transport corridors to facilitate imports of essential goods.

Iran also officially launched transit operations at the southern port of Jask with the arrival of the first vehicle shipments from



Oman on Sunday. Located on the Gulf of Oman outside the Strait of Hormuz, Jask has emerged as one of Iran's most strategi-

cally important ports. The facility serves as the terminus of the Goreh-Jask oil pipeline and forms part of the International

North-South Transport Corridor, the multimodal route linking the Indian Ocean with Russia and Northern Europe.

## Annual inflation hits 53.9% in second month of calendar year: CBI



### Economy Desk

Iran's annual inflation rate rose to 53.9% in the 12 months ending in the second month of the current Iranian year, compared with the corresponding period a year earlier, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said.

According to state news agency IRNA, the central bank said the consumer price index (CPI) for goods and services in Iran's urban areas reached 667.5 in the second month of the Iranian year, which ran from April 21 to May 21, up 8.5% from the previous month.

Also, point-to-point inflation, which measures changes in consumer prices compared with the same

month a year earlier, stood at 77.2%, the CBI said. The central bank had reported annual inflation at 50.6% in the first month of the year, while the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) put the figure at 53.7%.

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.

## Alloy steel sector warns of output cuts amid import curbs, war damage

### Economy Desk

Iran's Alloy Steel Producers Association warned three senior economic officials that current policies could lead to a sharp decline in alloy steel production and potentially force some plants to halt operations.

According to ISNA, the association, in a letter addressed to the minister of industry, mines and trade, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran, and the head of Iran's Customs Administration, called for the "immediate removal of obstacles to imports financed through companies' own export revenues."

The association said steel producers were facing "exhausting bureaucracy" and "non-expert decisions." It said the main problem was that from mid-March until late May, the ability to register import orders through Iran's Integrated Trade System had been disabled for these companies. Even after extensive follow-up, the central bank had refused to issue permits for foreign exchange allocation using companies' own export earnings, it added.

The letter stressed that "steel plants have absolutely no need for foreign exchange resources from the central bank or other sectors of the economy and are only seeking to use their own currency resources, or in other words, the foreign exchange generated from their exports."

The association said the alloy steel industry is now struggling more with domestic obstacles and "self-sanctioning" than with external restrictions. Western sanctions on Iran, along with damage from recent military attacks on production infrastructure, have further intensified challenges facing the sector.

The association made three urgent requests; automated approval of orders and forex allocation from companies' own export earnings, removal of "excessive bureaucratic filters," immediate release of stranded equipment and raw materials at customs, and guaranteed stability of the trade system to prevent sudden restrictions on steel producers.

Two of Iran's largest steel producers – Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel,

which account for nearly half of the country's steel output – were targeted in airstrikes during the US-Israeli war that began in late February, according to industry sources. The attacks in March struck storage silo facilities, the sources said. The strikes came after Israel's prime minister claimed that 70% of Iran's steel production capacity had been destroyed. However, analysts at Morgan Stanley have estimated that the attacks eliminated between 13 million and 15 million metric tons of Iran's annual steel production capacity. That loss is equivalent to 24% to 27% of the country's total installed capacity and roughly 41% to 47% of Iran's estimated 2025 steel output.

Vahid Yaghoubi, secretary of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), said last month in a report on the industry's postwar outlook that the country's steel sector was expected to maintain its position as the world's 10th-largest producer despite losing about 30% of its capacity in the attacks.

"Estimates indicate that about 30% of



the country's steel capacity has been lost during these attacks and some major steel units have been damaged," Yaghoubi said. "However, reconstruction efforts have begun, and given Iran's roughly 10-million-ton gap with Vietnam – the 11th-largest producer globally – maintaining the country's global position remains possible."

The steel industry previously generated about 11% of Iran's foreign exchange revenues, equivalent to roughly \$8 billion, but that share is expected to decline by two percentage points to around 9% this year, he said in May. The sector accounts for 5.5% of Iran's gross domestic product and 11% of non-oil exports, equivalent to \$7.7 billion, underscoring its critical role in the economy, Yaghoubi added.

## TPO calls EAEU trade pact a 'model' as exports rise 16%

### Economy Desk

Iran's exports to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) grew by about 16 percent over the past year despite numerous political and security challenges, a senior trade official said, calling the regional trade pact a "successful model" for expanding non-oil exports. Amir Roshanbakhsh Qanbari, deputy for international business promotion at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said in an interview with Mehr news agency that the growth demonstrates how effective regional trade agreements can be in developing the country's foreign trade amid

difficult conditions.

"Last year, the country faced numerous political and security events, but despite these conditions, Iran's exports to Eurasian member countries increased by about 16 percent," Qanbari was quoted as saying.

"This shows how much trade and regional agreements can be effective in developing the country's foreign trade. We must use all the capacities of regional and international agreements to expand non-oil exports."

Qanbari described the EAEU as a "successful and practical model of regional economic cooperation" that took shape under the current admin-

istration.

His comments come as the free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU – comprising Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – marks its first anniversary. The agreement, which took effect on May 15, 2025, replaced an interim preferential trade deal signed in 2018 and grants preferential tariff access for more than 7,500 categories of goods, covering 87 percent of traded items.

Qanbari said the anniversary provides an opportunity to assess the agreement's performance and achievements over the past year, particularly in connecting Iran's economy more

closely to regional economies and free markets.

According to official figures, total trade between Iran and EAEU member states has expanded more than 2.5-fold since the initial preferential agreement was implemented, rising from about \$2.5 billion to nearly \$6 billion in 2023.

The agreement also serves as a key component of Iran's broader strategy to diversify its trade partners and logistics corridors as southern ports remain under US naval blockade following the 40-day conflict with the United States and Israel that began on February 28.

## Tehran sees wider ...

Can the clashes in southern Iran over the past days be linked to the intensification of Israeli military operations in Lebanon, or were they solely connected to developments in the Strait of Hormuz?

While there may not be a direct operational connection between the two incidents, they cannot be separated from one another from a strategic standpoint. The tension-generating policies pursued by the United States and Israel in the region have created a series of interconnected crises stretching from Lebanon to the Persian Gulf. Therefore, even if developments in southern Iran were directly

related to issues surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, they still unfolded within a broader climate of instability, a significant part of which stems from Israeli actions and US support for those actions.

**If Israel continues to expand its military operations in Lebanon, how serious is the possibility of another large-scale confrontation involving Iran, the United States and Israel?**

The broader the scope of Israeli operations in Lebanon becomes, the greater the risk that the crisis will spill over into other parts of the region. Experience in recent years has shown that Israel's ag-

gressive policies can lead to dangerous miscalculations. However, both the United States and Israel are well aware that entering a full-scale regional war would carry extremely heavy political, economic and security costs. For that reason, although the possibility of escalating tensions cannot be ruled out, significant deterrent factors remain in place against the outbreak of a wider conflict.

**Can it be said that Israel is seeking to influence Iran-US negotiations and reignite the flames of war by expanding its operations in Lebanon?**

Israel's recent attacks on Lebanon can be

viewed as part of a strategy that is based on generating new crises rather than addressing the root causes of existing ones. Expanding the scope of confrontations, increasing pressure on regional countries and creating an atmosphere of insecurity effectively place diplomatic efforts under strain. As a result, the question arises as to whether the real objective behind these actions is purely security-related, or whether certain actors are seeking to prevent the emergence of any process that could reduce tensions and alter regional dynamics.

Many regional analysts believe that the escalation of Israeli operations in Leb-

anon cannot be assessed in isolation from the region's political and diplomatic developments. Whenever signs of de-escalation or progress on diplomatic tracks begin to emerge, Israeli military actions can put negotiations under pressure and make dialogue more difficult. From this perspective, it is possible that the expansion of operations in Lebanon is intended to disrupt the diplomatic environment and push the region back into a cycle of tension and conflict, as the continuation of crisis and insecurity has long been regarded as one of the tools for preserving Israel's strategic advantage in the region.

# Persian handwoven carpet Iran's 'second flag': **Businessman**

## Restoration of carpet industry to golden era takes five years

By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

### INTERVIEW

The Persian handwoven carpet industry, for many years, has not only constituted a formidable export commodity and a source of foreign currency revenue for Iran but has also been recognized internationally as an embodiment of this land's cultural identity and artistic expression. "Persian Carpet," for decades, served as the standard-bearer of global carpet markets; and, during the 1990s, following petroleum, it was regarded as the premier non-petroleum commodity generating foreign currency for the nation. The zenith of this industry's brilliance occurred when it generated in

Alanour Tavakoli



excess of \$2 billion and provided direct and indirect employment for more than 10 million individuals.

However, this industry has, for many years, been grappling with multifarious challenges: international sanctions, impediments to monetary transfers, cumbersome regulations such as the foreign currency repatriation obligations, and, more recently, the ramifications of warfare upon trade routes have all conspired such that the Persian handwoven carpet has not only forfeited its preeminent global standing but has also plummeted to the fifth rank.

Simultaneously, rivals such as India, Pakistan, China, and Turkey have appropriated Iran's share of the global market. Statistical data indicate that the export revenue of the nation's handwoven carpets in the previous Persian calendar year of 1404 (March 2025–March 2026) reached \$37 million, which represents a 10% decrease relative to the preceding year; a figure that, when juxtaposed with the industry's Golden Era, is very negligible.

For a more profound analysis of this strategic industry's condition, we sought the opinion of Alanour Tavakoli Taba Zavareh, the president of the Union of Iranian Handwoven Carpet Producers and Exporters. Having worked for many years at the forefront of handwoven carpet production and exportation, he has, from close proximity, witnessed both the impediments and the unique capacities that this industry has.

During this exclusive interview, he spoke candidly concerning the impact of sanctions upon employment, the difficulties related to monetary transfer, the alteration of export routes, Iran's relinquished standing in global markets, and the prospects for a return to the Golden Era. He maintained that, notwithstanding all existing difficulties, the quality of Iran's carpet remains peerless globally; and, contingent upon the removal of obstacles, Iran shall be capable, within a 5-year period, of once again claiming the foremost rank and the largest share of the global handwoven carpet market. Below, you shall read the translated transcript of this dialogue.

**IRAN DAILY:** As the initial inquiry, kindly furnish a general picture of the present state of Persian handwoven carpet production and exportation.

**TAVAKOLI:** Under existing circumstances, the exportation of Persian handwoven carpets, and, correspondingly, their production, has diminished. Especially subsequent to the recent conflict, conditions have become even more onerous. Since the thrust of my remarks is concentrated upon exportation, I should mention that monetary transfer has encountered difficulties for foreign clientele, and foreign purchasers are unable to execute financial transactions; this circumstance, in and of itself, has rendered the situation more challenging. Both the sanctions and the monetary transfer issue have deteriorated relative to the pre-conflict period, and the apertures that colleagues previously utilized for monetary movement have, with the recent sanctions and the conflict, become less effective, thereby generating additional problems.

**Given the difficulties existing in the realm of naval blockade and military engagements along our nation's southern littoral zone, has the exportation of handwoven carpets also been affected by this matter?**

Previously, a portion of exports to places such as Japan, China, or South America was conducted via maritime routes. At present, in order to dispatch carpets to Japan, for example, we have been compelled to forward them via land route to Hamburg and, from there, after altering documentation and incurring higher expense, to dispatch them to Japan. This is to say that the merchandise initially proceeds to Europe and the West and is thereafter transmitted to the East; a circumstance that, naturally, exerts a negative influence upon our expenditures.

**What is Iran's share of the international handwoven carpet market, and which nations constitute our principal rivals?**

Given the recession that has materialized, our share of the global carpet market has markedly declined. According to the most recent statistics, unfor-



Foreign tourists sitting inside a carpet store in Iran are learning about Persian carpets.  
● [youngpioneertours.com](http://youngpioneertours.com)

unately, subsequent to many years and from the calendar year of 1403 (March 2024–March 2025) up to the present, Iran's standing in terms of share of the global carpet market has descended from the first rank to the fifth rank globally. This occurrence has transpired due to the international sanctions of the United States, as well as due to inappropriate domestic policies and approaches that, at times, function as internal sanctions; such as the matter of the foreign currency repatriation obligations, which has fettered exporters and inflicted a severe blow upon this industry.

At present, our rivals in the global market are the nations of India, Pakistan, China, and Turkey; Iran occupies the fifth rank, and, following us, there is Afghanistan.

**In terms of quality and production capacity, are these nations capable of competing with Per-**

The photo shows a priceless pictorial carpet depicting a Qajari woman and hanging on the walls of a house in Tehran, Iran.  
● **IRAN DAILY**

**sian carpets?**

In terms of quality, the carpets of none of these nations are comparable to the Persian carpet. Our outputs and the Iranian brand — namely, "Persian Carpet" — constitute a preeminent global

brand within the handwoven carpet industry; and this very matter furnishes grounds for optimism that we shall be able to recapture markets. Presently, the volume of production has declined due to the aforementioned



difficulties, but, if conditions for exportation are facilitated and the restrictions and obstacles to exportation are abolished, we shall be able to dominate the global carpet market. Yet, under current circumstances, even this is somewhat difficult.

**What has been the trajectory of Iran's export revenue from handwoven carpets in recent years?**

The most recent data available concerning the aggregate annual exportation of Persian handwoven carpets pertains to the year 1404, which amounted to \$37 million, and this represented a nearly 10% decline relative to the year preceding it. For the current year, the situation remains not yet precisely predictable.

The handwoven carpet, however, continues to be counted among the nation's foreign currency-generating commodities. During the 1990s, the handwoven carpet, following petroleum, was the foremost foreign currency-generating commodity in the realm of non-petroleum exports. During those years, the exportation of handwoven carpets generated for Iran in excess of \$2 billion, which constituted a substantial contribution. In terms of employment, more than 10 million individuals within the country were engaged in this profession, and, in terms of foreign currency income, conditions of the industry were favorable.

At present, however, the volume of employment in this sector has diminished to below 2 million individuals, even as the nation's population has increased relative to those years. So, the United States knew precisely where to target so as to inflict harm upon the nation. The Persian handwoven carpet was among the very first products that were directly targeted by sanctions and suffered harm because the United States recognizes how critical employment is for our nation and how much damage it can inflict. This approach demonstrates the United States' enmity and its economic warfare against Iran for the purpose of paralyzing our economy.

**If conditions for exportation are facilitated and sanctions are lifted, what is our capacity**



At present, in order to dispatch carpets to Japan, for example, we have been compelled to forward them via land route to Hamburg and, from there, after altering documentation and incurring higher expense, to dispatch them to Japan. This is to say that the merchandise initially proceeds to Europe and the West and is thereafter transmitted to the East; a circumstance that, naturally, exerts a negative influence upon our expenditures.

**for increasing exports and foreign currency revenue?**

In the handwoven carpet industry, the potential exists within the nation for us to return to that same Golden Era; that is to say, once again to be the foremost exporting nation and the holder of the largest share of the global market. Admittedly, a return to the Golden Era, contingent upon the removal of export restrictions, might require 5 years for us to recapture markets. This matter is conditional upon the abolition of cumbersome export regulations, such as the foreign currency repatriation obligations, and upon our enjoying the same economic liberties as during those years, so that we may restore carpet exports to their apogee.

**Has our prolonged absence from global markets caused a change in consumer tastes, or****have other nations appropriated Iranian designs under their own names?**

Both. At present, certain nations exploit Iranian designs and the Iranian brand in the market for their own benefit and release products into the market under Iranian names and designs. Unfortunately, such instances do exist. On the other hand, our absence from the market has permitted novel designs to enter and tastes to shift; that is to say, the market's palate is being altered. Of course, I must emphasize that the authentic designs of the Persian carpet always possess their own clientele in every nation and that the artistry inherent in our authentic carpet design has no substitute in the market. Furthermore, our nation is also exceptionally strong in the domain of carpet design, and we possess exceedingly talented and renowned designers who are capable of

entering the market with novel, popular designs and models and attracting customers toward our products.

**Kindly elaborate upon the target markets for the exportation of Persian handwoven carpets.**

At present, one of our most favorable markets is China. Additionally, in Europe, Germany constitutes one of our major export markets. The Arab nations of the Persian Gulf region were also among our principal markets; however, with the conflict, the market of those nations for our carpets has been disrupted. But, if conditions for exportation are facilitated, we have no difficulty regarding clientele; and there exists very robust demand globally for the Persian carpet because the Persian carpet has always enjoyed renown globally and has possessed its own fans.



The details of a Persian carpet from up close.

● IRAN DAILY

The Persian handwoven carpet possesses such fame and credibility that it is regarded as "Iran's second flag".

The Persian carpet is a product that is immortal. As time progresses, it becomes better, more valuable, and more expensive. During past years, however, its price within our nation's market has lagged behind; and, relative to domestic price increases, the carpet product has remained inexpensive. It would be appropriate for the price of carpets to be significantly higher than these figures, and for the continued activity within this industry to possess economic viability for weavers and stakeholders.



## Light and shadow

# Istanbul's flying Persian carpets and echoes of Iran war



Various carpets are displayed at a store in Istanbul, Turkey.

● TÜRKİYETODAY

"Many of these lands were once part of the Ottoman or Seljuk empires," Oter says. "Their threads still carry those echoes."

**Echoes of the first knots**

He pauses by ancient designs. "The Pazyryk carpet dates to 400 BCE, frozen in Siberia for millennia. Over 360,000 knots per square meter. Imagine that patience. Turkish carpets emerged centuries later in Konya, yet our work carried that same devotion."

Even painters like Jean-Leon Gerome traveled from France to Istanbul, recording carpets in markets and interiors. "The Carpet Merchant is full of them, our patterns captured on canvas for Europe to see."

**Where hands remember**

Oter lifts another Hereke rug. Silk threads brushed at 45-degree angles create patterns impossible for machines.

"A machine can never match the handmade," he says. "If it burns, gets wet, or rots, it can be repaired. Machine-made lasts ten years, maybe. Handmade can last generations. It is like gold." He adds, "machine-made carpets are thicker than handmade ones, but thinner is better, and needs more looms, knots."

Prices reflect time. A six-square-meter silk Hereke may take a year to produce, labor alone reaching \$12,000, with a final price of \$60,000.

Machine-made versions sell for a fraction.

"It is the same with fake Hereke that China produces," he adds. "Looks the same, but silk, feel, and life are lost."

**Travelers in a suspended world**

Foreign visitors once filled his store — Americans first, then the Swiss, the French, and then Arabs from the Persian Gulf.



A large Iranian carpet, hung on the wall, reveals its intricate patterns and rich colors.

● TÜRKİYETODAY

"Now, they hesitate. Airports are closed. Wars cast shadows on imagination. People come to look, not to buy. They want safety, not luxury."

He gestures to a Persian silk carpet. "This one, four by six meters, took four people two years to finish. It could cost \$75,000, but who will wait now?"

Like *The Kite Runner*, these carpets carry memory, culture, and longing for distant homes.

Oter sips his tea again. "Handmade carpets are alive. They breathe with the hands that crafted them. They carry nomadic stories, Ottoman palaces, and Seljuk empires."

Market remains sensitive to global instability, but across Istanbul, carpets continue to move across borders and generations, carrying not just patterns but time itself.

Knotted carefully, waiting to be unfolded, they are witnesses, storytellers, and keepers of a culture older than empires.

The article first appeared on *Türkiyetoday*.



Turkey is not part of the current war between Iran, Israel, and the US. Yet we feel it. Hotel reservations are canceled. Cargo stops. Tourists come less. Carpets are not food or drink. They are a luxury.



By Nour Dajani

Social media presenter and content writer

## PERSPECTIVE

The Grand Bazaar hums like a living river, its currents of color and sound weaving through vaulted stone.

Voices echo, merchants call out, hands glide across wool and silk. Quick, then slow. Carpets lift and unfurl. Persian rugs drape like banners, patterns spilling with flowers, vines, and geometry older than the market itself. Deep reds. Indigo blues. Soft golds. Bargaining becomes theater. A glance. A pause.

"In places like this," says Aykut Oter, owner of an Istanbul carpet store, holding a folded rug, "people chase something cheaper, but they miss the point."

A short drive away, at his showroom in Swissotel The Bosphorus, the noise of the bazaar gives way to stillness.

Turkish Hereke and Persian rugs wait patiently, meant to travel continents and carry culture and beauty, yet wars keep them grounded. They roll softly, climb walls, and flutter to the floor, dreaming of distant homes.

"Turkey is not part of the current war between Iran, Israel, and the US," Oter says, "yet we feel it. Hotel reservations are canceled. Cargo stops. Tourists come less. Carpets are not food

or drink. They are a luxury."

**When threads whisper centuries**

Oter sits in the quiet glow of his showroom that he opened in 2012 after years of trade, steam rising from a cup of Turkish tea. Carpets wait like patient storytellers.

He folds his hands over a Hereke rug, silk threads catching the light.

"Look at this," he says softly, "each knot is a heartbeat. Thousands of them can live on a single carpet. It takes patience, centuries of tradition, and hands that know the rhythm of generations."

"In villages, women still weave at home. In the past, families traveled with tents and sheep, carrying carpets from town to town, selling them in mosques and marketplaces. Each carpet carried a life, a season, a story." He gestures toward smaller pieces crafted in Balikesir and Usak, villages where nomadic rhythms still echo.

**The flying carpets from light to shadow**

Oter unfolds a Hereke carpet. Its threads shimmer like sunlight on a lake, patterns blooming like secret gardens; floral, geometric, alive with memory.

"The most important thing in a carpet is the knot," he says, lifting the finely woven piece. "Each one is tied by hand. A single centimeter can hold a hundred knots, and greater density

creates finer detail and thinner structure."

Some carpets shift in color as they move, subtle tones appearing and fading as light brushes the surface. This comes from a finishing technique where fibers are brushed at an angle, giving depth and life to the design.

Silk adds another layer of wonder.

In Bursa, silkworms spin cocoons that are carefully unwound into fine threads, dyed, and woven into intricate patterns. "If you take off your shoes," Oter says, "you will feel how comfortable it is."

**Whispers of Persia across the loom**

Across the room, a Persian carpet dominates the wall, its colors pulsing with history.

"Carpets are a tradition in Turkey," Oter says, tracing the patterns. "Iranian carpets are famous, but Turkish carpets came first." He continues with a tone of pride, "During the Seljuk Empire, cities such as Isfahan and Tabriz became centers where techniques evolved and spread, shaped by movement, trade, and time."

Shipping is difficult now. Conflict in the area close to ports, which raises costs. "Turkish, Iranian, Afghan, Indian. Around 20 countries near Turkey make carpets."

For Oter, each carpet carries geography as much as design.

# Wrestling U17 Asian Championships: Iran crowned freestyle champion, sweeps team trophies

## Sports Desk

Iran bagged eight medals – including four golds – across 10 weight classes to claim the freestyle title at the Wrestling U17 Asian Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Sunday.

Iranian boys concluded with 178 points – 13 clear of second-place Japan – to complete a clean sweep of team trophies.

Unlike the Greco-Roman contests, where Iran celebrated an early title with six golds on the first day of the event, the freestyle race went down to the wire and was perhaps decided when two Iranian wrestlers defeated their Japanese opponents in the final showpiece of their respective classes.

Benyamin Ashofteh beat Masamune Ushimado 5-1 in the 51kg showdown, before Arman Elahi outmuscled Kyosuke Ikeda 8-3 for the top prize in the 55kg division.

Mahdi Damercheli had opened Iran's gold account on the final day thanks to an emphatic 10-0 victory over Uzbekistan's Mukhammad Rakhimjonov in the 45kg final – his third superiority win in as many outings.

The other final bout featuring Iranian and Uzbek wrestlers, however, saw Amirali Raghbeh



Iranian wrestlers and coaching staff pose with the freestyle team trophy at the U17 Asian Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam, on May 31, 2026.  
● IAWFIR

suffer a 10-0 setback against Farrukh Makhmudov, with Iran's second silver medal coming in the 110kg category, where Amirali Esmali was beaten 4-1 by India's Arush Rana.

Elsewhere on the closing day, Mohammadtaha Ganjeh

bounced back from a 10-4 loss to Kazakhstan's Mardan Orynbassar in the 60kg semifinals to hammer Mongolia's Shagaikhuu Munkhzul 12-2 for a consolation bronze.

Amirali Ferasati had secured the 80kg title in style on the penultimate day of action in Da Nang by routing India's Mandeep Mandeep 10-0 in the final, recording his third superiority victory in four bouts.

Amir-Abbas Lotfinejad, meanwhile, finished his 65kg campaign with something to cheer about, recovering from a last-four setback (4-3) against eventual champion Rihito Hiura of Japan to beat Kyrgyzstan's Khantemir Ismanov 5-2 in the bronze-medal contest.

Kiarash Torabi and Mohammadreza Issazadeh were the two Iranians to finish empty-handed in the freestyle event.

Torabi suffered a second-round exit in the 71kg category, falling 2-1 to Tajikistan's Idris Bakhromov, while Issazadeh's campaign finished after a single bout as he was stunned by a fall defeat against Japan's Shu Yoshida while leading 8-4.

Iranian freestyle head coach Sadeq Goudarzi was full of praise for his boys, who showed "true spirit and determination despite all the difficulties they faced in the buildup to the tournament."

"Most of our wrestlers were competing in an international tournament for the first time," said the former Olympic silver medalist, adding: "Unfortunately, because of the wartime situation in the country, we were unable to hold two training camps that had been planned. The Abdollah Movahed Cup was also canceled under the circumstances, and we were unable to participate in a scheduled tournament in Türkiye. As a result, our wrestlers entered these championships without any previous international experience."

"Despite all the problems, the boys performed very well and showcased the hallmark Iranian art of leg grappling and take-downs throughout the competition, which demonstrated both their technical potential and the

bright future that lies ahead for them," Goudarzi added.

Earlier in Da Nang, Iran had dominated the Greco-Roman event with a remarkable haul of six golds plus one silver and one bronze apiece.

Armin Esmaeil (45kg), Ali Esmaeili (48kg), Vahid Ashiri (55kg), Amirreza Tahmasbpour (60kg), Amirreza Mehri (92kg), and Ali-Akbar Akoo (110kg) were the Iranian gold medalists, while Esmaeil Zaherdoust settled for 71kg silver and Mahdi Gholamian took the 80kg bronze.

"Every team arrived with its strongest lineup and competed at full strength. The wrestlers from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, in particular, were exceptionally strong," said Iranian Greco-Roman head coach Mohsen Sourian.

"A fifth consecutive Asian Greco-Roman crown underscores both Iran's dominance and the strong pipeline of technically skilled wrestlers being developed for the future."

"However, we must remain realistic. The challenge facing us at the upcoming World Championships will be significantly tougher, particularly with the Russian team in the mix and Azerbaijan enjoying home advantage," added Sourian.

## Sepahan ruled out of Asian competition as three clubs vie for Iran's final spot

### Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan has been officially ruled out of next season's AFC Champions League Two after failing to obtain the AFC's professional license required for participation in continental competitions, leaving the Iranian Football Federation facing a difficult decision over the country's third representative in Asia.

an appeal. The issue was effectively settled after it emerged that the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) would not grant Sepahan an additional opportunity to submit the required documentation.

With Sepahan removed from the equation, three clubs have emerged as potential replacements: Golgozar Sirjan, Chadormalu and Persepolis. Federation officials are understood to favor selecting the

are fully balanced could trigger objections from the two clubs directly behind them.

A second and potentially more significant complication involves an unresolved disciplinary case between Golgozar and Chadormalu.

Following Golgozar's 5-1 defeat to Chadormalu on Matchday 22 of the league season, the Sirjan-based outfit filed a complaint alleging that Paraguayan player Mauro Caballero had been ineligible to play for Chadormalu.

The case has reportedly been reviewed three times by the disciplinary committee in recent weeks, but no final verdict has been issued. Given the importance of the matter, any ruling is expected to be appealed by one of the parties, potentially extending the process further and delaying a final decision on Iran's third AFC Champions League Two representative.

Amid the uncertainty, reports have circulated suggesting that a three-team playoff tournament involving Golgozar, Chadormalu and Persepolis could be organized to determine the final Asian berth, but no official from the national governing body has confirmed such a plan. According to the federation, the AFC has agreed to extend the deadline for announcing Iran's clubs by two weeks, which could provide sufficient time for pending disciplinary cases and other outstanding issues to be resolved before a final decision is made.

next highest-ranked team in the league standings, meaning Golgozar would receive the vacant berth. Golgozar currently sits fourth in the league table with 36 points from 23 matches. Chadormalu is fifth with 35 points from 22 matches, while Persepolis is sixth with 34 points, also from 22 matches. However, Golgozar's advantage is complicated by the fact that the club has played one more match than both Chadormalu and Persepolis. Awarding the Asian berth to Golgozar before the standings

## Nematzadeh to miss Asian Games with torn ligament

### Sports Desk

Iranian taekwondo has been dealt a major blow as women's young prodigy Mobina Nematzadeh will miss September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games due to a torn ligament injury. An Olympic bronze medalist at Paris 2024, Nematzadeh – who also claimed gold at the U21 World Championships last December – was part of the Iranian roster at the Asian Championships last week but endured a below-par campaign in Ulaanbaatar, suffering a third-round exit against South Korea's Seo Yeon-won in the -53kg class.

"I tore my ACL a month before the Asian Championships, and only my family knows what I went through. My goal was to make my people happy by winning the gold, but the knee injury simply did not allow me to perform at my best," Nematzadeh said on Sunday.

"I will be sidelined for around nine months and miss the Asian Games. A selection trial between Nahid Kiani and me had been planned to decide the Asian Games spot, but it is now called off as I'll have to undergo surgery next week."

"I would like to ask my people to send me their positive thoughts and support," added the 20-year-old.

Her injury setback marks another twist in the two-horse race with Kiani for a place at the 2028 Olympics, though the 20-year-old remains confident of her chances to secure a quota for the Los Angeles Games.

"This year's Grand Prix tournaments are not especially significant in terms of Olympic qualification. From next year onward, points earned at the World Championships and at a Grand Prix event held before the world showpiece will be taken into account, and I



● EUROPA PRESS

believe that winning the world gold medal could completely turn things around for me," said Nematzadeh.

On her domestic rivalry with Kiani, Nematzadeh said, "We are like two friends in national team training and two rivals who can help each other improve."

"I'm not really into bragging, and I think my victories against her in the previous two meetings at the President's Cup and the Iranian league last year speak for themselves. I'm sure I'll be back at my best once I recover from this injury."

Iran will still fancy a successful -57kg campaign at the Asian Games, as Olympic silver medalist Kiani is all but guaranteed a berth at the multi-sport showpiece. Kiani, who had recovered from knee surgery in time to make it to the Asian Championships, defeated Uzbekistan's Madina Mirabzalova in straight rounds in the -57kg final to add to the continental title she won in 2022.

Her triumph in the Mongolian capital, coupled with Yalda Valinejad's bronze in the -62kg division on

the final day, saved the day for the Iranian women's squad, who had been left empty-handed across the other six categories.

"Three or four of our athletes fell short of expectations. We had expected more from them, but they were unable to implement the technical aspects of their game effectively during the competition," said Iranian head coach Mahrouz Saei, whose team finished fourth in the women's standings.

"Expectations were particularly high for Mobina. It is true that she was dealing with a serious ACL injury, but if we had believed she was not fit enough to compete, we would not have sent her to the tournament."

"Overall, I am pretty satisfied with the team's performance. Since these championships also served as the qualifiers for the Asian Games, we took a significant risk by sending five unranked athletes. "I have a high tolerance for risk when it comes to trusting youth, and thank God, even though some of the athletes did not win medals here, we still secured full qualification quotas," Saei added.



● KHABARVARZESHI

The federation had initially named Esteghlal and Tractor – the top two in the league table – as Iran's teams for the AFC Champions League Elite, after the domestic top-flight was canceled following the outbreak of the country's military conflict with the United States and Israel on February 28. Third-placed Sepahan had been lined up for the continent's second-tier competition. However, Sepahan's unsuccessful attempt to secure a professional license resulted in the Isfahan-based club losing its place despite lodging

# Quri Qaleh Cave in Kermanshah draws global attention

Iranica Desk

Kermanshah Province has long been recognized as one of Iran's major hubs for natural and historical tourism. Among the region's most remarkable attractions, Quri Qaleh Cave stands out as a geological masterpiece with global significance.

Located approximately 90 kilometers northwest of Kermanshah and near the city of Paveh, Quri Qaleh Cave is considered one of the oldest geological phenomena in western Iran. Known as the world's largest water cave and Asia's longest aquatic cave, the site is estimated to be around 65 million years old. The cave was formed from limestone deposits dating back to the Cretaceous and Triassic periods. The name Quri Qaleh is derived from a nearby fortress believed to date back to the Sassanid era. Local Kurdish residents originally referred to the structure as Gowreh Qaleh, meaning "Great Fortress," a name that gradually evolved into Quri Qaleh. Historical records indicate that



the cave was first explored in the 1970s by a joint team of British and French speleologists. The expedition managed to survey approximately 620 meters of the cave before being forced to stop when rising water levels reached the ceiling. Although the cave's total length is estimated at around 12 kilometers, only 1.5 kilometers are currently accessible to the public. The remaining sections require

specialized diving equipment and advanced caving expertise. In addition to its natural beauty, Quri Qaleh Cave is also archaeologically significant. Excavations in the area have uncovered valuable artifacts, including coins, plates, and pottery fragments from the Sassanid period (224-651 CE). Human skulls and decorated ceramic vessels featuring animal motifs, floral patterns, and traditional designs



IRNA

have also been discovered in the ruins of the nearby fortress. The cave is also home to rare mouse-eared bat species, adding ecological importance to the site. These bats are seldom found elsewhere in Iran. Temperatures inside the cave remain between 7 and 11 degrees Celsius year-round, with extremely high humidity levels. In some areas, water depth reaches up to 14 meters, while

an underground river flows through the cave's chambers. Massive halls decorated with naturally formed stalactites and stalagmites create a striking subterranean landscape. According to tourism statistics, Quri Qaleh Cave is among the most visited attractions in western Iran, drawing more than 500,000 visitors annually. The influx of tourists has significantly contributed to rural

development in the surrounding area and created full-time employment opportunities for more than 200 local residents. The nearby village of Quri Qaleh has become a major destination for domestic travelers as well as visitors from neighboring Iraq. Recognized as one of Iran's valuable natural heritage sites, Quri Qaleh Cave has been officially registered on the country's National Heritage List. Together with Porow Cave, it is considered one of the two major national natural landmarks of Kermanshah Province. One enduring local legend claims that the cave extends beneath the city of Paveh. Although this theory has not been scientifically confirmed, it continues to add to the cave's mystique and appeal. Situated in the scenic Haft Maran Valley, about 10 kilometers from Paveh, Quri Qaleh Cave is accessible via the Kermanshah-Paveh road. After traveling roughly 84 kilometers, visitors arrive at a destination that has attracted growing attention from tourism media. More than just a geological phenomenon, Quri Qaleh Cave symbolizes the immense tourism potential of Kermanshah Province — a region also home to iconic landmarks such as Taq-e Bostan and Bisotun, making it a lasting destination for lovers of history and nature alike.

## Ancient cypress in Bam set for national registration

Iranica Desk

Kerman Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization has announced the start of the documentation and registration process for an ancient cypress tree located in Dehbakri District of Bam, Kerman Province.

Rezvan Tajpour, an expert on the registration of natural heritage sites at the Organization, emphasized the importance of register-

ing the province's ancient trees as historical and environmental treasures. She said that documentation and preparations for the inclusion of the ancient cypress tree in Suluiyeh village on Iran's Natural Heritage List have officially commenced. Tajpour noted that the national registration of Kerman's ancient trees is far more than a ceremonial measure; it is an essential step toward safeguarding the living records of the region's history and

civilization, according to chtn.ir. She explained that these centuries-old silent witnesses possess unique genetic, botanical and ecological value while also serving as a vital link between local communities and their cultural traditions, myths and indigenous beliefs. The trees, she added, preserve the collective memories of successive generations. She further stated that listing these irreplaceable natural assets as national heritage sites will pro-

vide legal protection against damage or felling, encourage public participation in conservation efforts, promote sustainable ecotourism and strengthen the identity of surrounding communities. According to Tajpour, the national registration of ancient trees will help ensure the long-term preservation of an important part of Kerman's natural and cultural heritage, while guaranteeing that this valuable legacy is passed on to future generations.



chn.ir

### Reading Room



nournews.ir

By Mahshid Razavi  
RezvaniDirector of Mahshide  
Kherad Institute

#### OPINION

War, as a bitter and undesirable means of interaction among different societies and nations, has various dimensions. Yet issues receiving attention during war and in the post-war period often pay less regard to cultural matters.

Unfortunately, the traces of the recent war have not yet been completely removed. Therefore, a pressing concern for every compassionate Iranian is this: How can we leave a meaningful and lasting account for future generations of the pain, suffering and losses inflicted upon the

lives, property and heritage of this society? What plans can be developed for tourism and cultural heritage sector in the post-war environment with regard to cultural heritage affected by war?

In every post-war setting, dealing with cultural heritage goes far beyond a purely economic or architectural issue; it is a matter with identity-related, political and psychological dimensions. Wars not only destroy physical structures, but also target the collective memory of a nation.

Beyond targeting collective memory, they damage a nation's aspirations, emotions, affections and the diverse human expressions that characterize its historical experience. In analyzing this situation, there

## Tourism culture in post-war period

are two powerful approaches in the humanities that can be used for managing cultural heritage in the post-war era: the anthropology of heritage approach and the theory of collective memory.

Developed by theorists such as Maurice Halbwachs and later Pierre Nora, these perspectives hold that cultural heritage is not merely stone and architecture; rather, it is a means of connecting individuals to the past and defining their identity in the present. According to these theorists, the destruction of buildings in wartime is not simply the loss of property; it is regarded as an attempt to erase the identity of a nation. Each structure carries implicit messages embedded in the factors that shaped its creation and construction.

Even imagining how architecture, the art of mirror work, the colors of paintings and other artistic expressions were created with a sense of beauty to convey messages to future generations reveals what has been lost through such destruction. Within this perspective, tourism serves a restorative role. Tourism should not be solely for viewing beauty; it can also be a tool for rebuilding mean-

ing. The reconstruction of a destroyed monument can symbolize the restoration of identity and the triumph of the will to live.

At the same time, heritage tourism can contribute to peace by introducing shared heritage in disputed regions. Rather than emphasizing differences, it can highlight common historical points in order to prevent the recurrence of violence.

Another approach emerges from social psychology and the theory of community resilience. This perspective focuses on how a society rebuilds itself after experiencing trauma or the shock of war. How does a society connect the pains and sufferings of the past and present? From this viewpoint, damage assessment and analysis are essential and worthy of attention. War creates collective trauma. Damaged cultural heritage serves as a constant reminder of suffering, which may hinder a society's forward movement. Whenever individuals or tourists encounter these damaged sites, this collective trauma is, in some way, made visible. Yet messages of endurance and resistance must also be communicated alongside it.

In this framework, tourism takes the form of trauma-informed tourism. Tourism management in such settings must be highly sensitive. Tourism should not transform people's suffering into a spectacle of suffering. Instead, tourism should play a role in psychological recovery through what may be called therapeutic tourism. The return of tourists and global attention to a region's heritage sends a message to local communities that "you have not been forgotten" and that "your intrinsic value still exists." Such recognition restores a sense of self-worth to the community and contributes to the process of resilience.

With the hope that war has moved beyond its hard phase, preserving the identity-related message of this nation becomes necessary and essential in its softer phase.

In light of the two approaches discussed above, a management strategy can be proposed by combining their insights. If we wish to design a tourism management strategy for the post-war environment, we should adopt a model of "identity-reconstruction tourism" based on three pillars:

**1. Authenticity in reconstruction:** Reconstruction should not merely involve creating an attractive replica. It must be historically and culturally accurate in order to repair collective memory.

**2. Ethical tourism:** Tourists should be encouraged to view destinations not through a curious fascination with ruins, but through a respectful engagement with history. This prevents suffering from becoming a recreational commodity and promotes empathy, solidarity and shared human understanding.

**3. Community-led narrative:** Local people should tell the story of their own heritage — both the parts that remain intact and those that have been damaged — for visitors. This transforms cultural heritage from a subject to be observed into a source of power and identity for the community. Such an approach creates a living, genuine and mutually beneficial interaction: for those who narrate their stories, it can be a form of healing; for visitors, it offers a warm, meaningful and lasting experience. Simply put, in the post-war environment, the goal of tourism should not be merely to attract money; rather, it should be to attract attention to the reconstruction of meaning.

# Pezeshkian promotes preventive healthcare, empowerment of vulnerable children



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a visit to eastern Tehran's health centers on June 1, 2026. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

## Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian called for a sweeping shift in Iran's health governance model during a visit to eastern Tehran's health centers on Monday, urging authorities to move beyond treatment-centered policies and build a system rooted in prevention,

mental well-being, and community resilience.

Speaking during a review of the Family Physician Program and the referral system, and neighborhood-based health initiatives, Pezeshkian said the health network should evolve into a platform that coordinates medical, social, and preventive services, president.ir re-

ported. "Health is not limited to physical well-being," he said. "The health network must regard mental health, social health, and the prevention of social harms as inseparable parts of its mission."

Pezeshkian stressed that successful implementation of the Family Physician Program requires a clear assessment of existing infrastructure, service capacity, population coverage, and public access to care. Such data, he said, should guide resource allocation and future expansion plans.

He also called for strengthening primary healthcare services to reduce unnecessary referrals and improve efficiency across the healthcare system.

The president linked social factors such as poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and marginalization to mental health challenges, emphasizing the need for early intervention and community-based support.

He said local institutions, including mosques and community leaders, could help improve health literacy, strengthen social cohesion, and identify local

needs.

"Religious and cultural assets can play an important role in promoting mental well-being, reducing social harms, and increasing social resilience," he said. Pezeshkian also urged greater public participation in health initiatives, highlighting the contribution of charitable organizations and community partnerships to the development of the healthcare sector.

## Empowering children beyond care

Pezeshkian also visited Roshnaye Omid Foundation, a welfare-supervised non-profit center that supports orphaned and vulnerable girls aged 9 to 18, where he stressed the need to move from basic assistance toward long-term empowerment.

"The most important responsibility before us is to ensure these children can build independent, successful, and hopeful futures through education, skills, and sustained support," he said.

Touring educational and vocational training facilities, including sewing and technical workshops, the president

described empowerment and skills development as central pillars of social justice and equal opportunity.

He emphasized the importance of preparing young people for life after leaving care centers, calling for mechanisms that help them enter the labor market, continue their education, and integrate into society with confidence after reaching adulthood.

"Real support is achieved when individuals can rely on their abilities and skills," Pezeshkian said. "They should become productive and capable citizens rather than remain dependent on assistance."

He also called on government agencies and public institutions to purchase goods produced in vocational workshops at support centers, saying such measures would boost self-confidence, strengthen job skills, and help pave the way toward economic independence.

Pezeshkian further urged closer cooperation among government bodies, charities, and civil society organizations to expand educational, vocational, and employment opportunities for vulnerable children and adolescents.

## Private-sector tourism investment in West Azarbaijan tops \$114m

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's West Azarbaijan Province is rolling out more than 50 private-sector tourism projects worth over 200 trillion rials (about \$114mn) across the northwestern Iranian province, a senior cultural heritage official said on Monday in Urmia.

The investment drive underscores the province's growing appeal as a tourism destination and highlights efforts to channel private capital into hospitality infrastructure and heritage-based development, IRNA reported.

"Such a volume of projects reflects West Azarbaijan's substantial capacity for tourism expansion and investment attraction," said Morteza Safari, director-general of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

Department.

Safari said authorities had launched studies on the Khan Takhti-Sirv-Silvana-Oshnavieh tourism corridor to map its historical and natural assets and prepare the ground for future investment. The initiative aims to turn the route into a new tourism hub in the mountainous border province.

He also pointed to progress on the Shams project in Khoy, which began in 2018. After receiving only 140 billion rials (\$80,000) during its first seven years, funding accelerated in recent years. The project secured 300 billion rials (\$171,000) in 2024 and a further 320 billion rials (\$183,000) last year, lifting physical completion to 54%.

An additional 300 billion rials (\$171,000) would help

speed up construction and expand work shifts, Safari said.

The province is also pressing ahead with a series of museum and heritage projects, including the expansion of the Urmia Archaeological Museum, the Chaldoran War Site Museum and new galleries at the Shams Tabrizi memorial complex in Khoy.

West Azarbaijan's museums currently house 34,700 artefacts, including 16,000 historical and cultural objects. Around 14,000 of those items have been registered in the national heritage database.

Museum attendance reached 160,000 visitors last year, marking a 33% increase from a year earlier despite closures and operational restrictions, according to provincial data.

## Iranian documentary on embroidery honored at US festival

### Arts & Culture Desk

An Iranian documentary spotlighting the centuries-old art of Pateh embroidery won an honorable mention for Best Narration at the 23rd Archaeology Channel International Film Festival, held in Eugene, Oregon, from May 13 to 17.

Directed by Azam Ramezani and produced by the Yazd center of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), 'Pateh, An Intangible Heritage' explores the history, identity and cultural significance of Pateh, one of Iran's most distinguished traditional handicrafts, ILNA reported.

The film traces the roots of the intricate needlework tradition across central and south-east-



ern Iran, portraying its artistic techniques, cultural functions and enduring place in Iranian society. Through interviews with artisans, researchers and handicrafts specialists, it sheds light on the craftsmanship behind the embroidery while highlighting its role in preserving cultural identity. The Archaeology Channel International Film Festival

is regarded as one of North America's leading events dedicated to archaeology, cultural heritage and indigenous traditions. The annual gathering brings together filmmakers, scholars and heritage enthusiasts from around the world to showcase outstanding works focused on ancient cultures and humanity's shared heritage.

## Iran seeks to broaden visual arts reach through provincial galleries

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance has placed the expansion of provincial art galleries high on its cultural agenda, officials said at a meeting with provincial arts and cinema deputies in Tehran on June 1.

Speaking at the gathering held at the Iran Mall Museum Gallery, Director General of the Visual Arts Office Aydin Mehdizadeh, said strengthening galleries across the country would serve as a key driver for the development of Iran's visual arts sector. Mehdizadeh identified support for provincial galleries, the reinforcement of visual arts associations and the recognition of specialized visual arts experts in the provinces as the ministry's main priorities.



He said provincial cultural departments play a central role in shaping and directing artistic activities nationwide.

He also underscored the ministry's policy of devolving authority to the provinces, noting that Culture Minister Abbas Salehi and senior arts officials support transferring more responsibilities, including gallery-related licensing and administration, to local authorities.

"The development of visual

arts passes through the development of galleries," Mehdizadeh said, urging provinces to strengthen exhibition spaces and accelerate the completion of contemporary art museum projects where they exist.

The official further called for stronger professional structures for artists and cultural practitioners in the provinces, saying local visual arts associations should take a greater role in talent development, networking and the delivery of artistic projects.

He also highlighted the need to formally establish visual arts specialist positions in provinces that currently lack dedicated experts, arguing that stronger institutional capacity would help ensure more coherent and effective cultural programming.

## Iran dam inflows surge 74%, running 11% above decade average

### Social Desk

Water inflows into Iran's dams soared 74% year on year to 40.21 billion cubic meters by May 30 and stood 11% above the 10-year average, according to data released by Iran Water Resources Management Company, lifting reservoir occupancy to 67% and strengthening the country's water reserves ahead of the summer season. The latest figures show a marked improvement in Iran's

water resources, with stronger inflows boosting storage levels across the country's dam network.

The volume of water stored in reservoirs climbed 31% from a year earlier to 35.01 billion cubic meters. Storage levels also exceeded the long-term average by 8%, highlighting a firmer position for strategic water reserves.

The combination of rising inflows and higher storage has reinforced water security and

improved the overall balance of the country's reservoir system.

Meanwhile, total dam outflows reached 23.97 billion cubic meters during the current water year which began September 23. While releases increased 14% compared with the same period last year, they remained 10% below the 10-year average, supporting efforts to maintain strategic reserves while meeting water and energy demand.