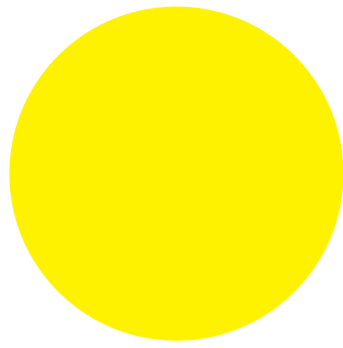


Media on cusp of historic transformation

AI reduced content production costs, but multiplied fabrication: *Expert*

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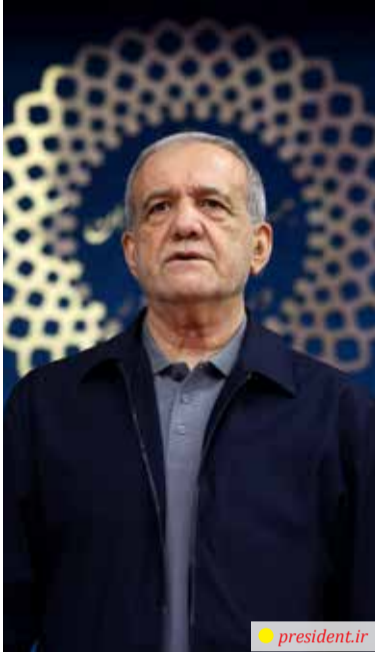


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Pezeshkian hails peace deal as 'diplomatic victory'



president.ir

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday praised a peace memorandum with the United States as a "diplomatic victory" and an "honor" for the Iranian nation achieved through "steadfastness and resistance against excessive demands."

"The victory astonished the world and brought dignity and pride to the country," Pezeshkian said at a gathering attended by provincial governors and members of his cabinet in Tehran, according to IRNA.

He said the outcome was the product of exceptional unity, solidarity and coordination among the three branches of power, Iran's Armed Forces and the guidance and support of the country's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

Pezeshkian also thanked Iranian negotiators, including Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, for their role in the process.

He described Israel's concern and anger over the agreement as "a clear sign of" Iran's success.

According to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, the agreement announced by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country served as a mediator, in the early hours of Monday will "immediately and permanently" end hostilities on all fronts, including Lebanon.

The deal will also fully and immediately lift a US naval blockade against Iran that have been in force since mid-April.

The memorandum is due to be signed in Geneva on Friday in the presence of US Vice President JD Vance and Iranian negotiators.

Pezeshkian said full implementation of the deal, provided the other side honors its commitments, "could help resolve many regional issues and usher in new international conditions."

He also stressed the importance of expanding relations with Islamic countries and neighboring states in the post-war period.

"Muslim countries are our brothers and we must work to strengthen relations and mutual cooperation," he said.

During the 39-day war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran in late February, Iran carried out missile, drone and air strikes against Israel and targeted US bases in Arab countries from which attacks against Iran had been launched.

Iran, US announce deal on ending war, reopening Hormuz

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REUTERS

Key to success at World Cup for Iran is to focus solely on matches



By Amir-Reza Vaez Ashtiani
Political, sports affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Iran's national football team enters the World Cup group stage under circumstances in which handling the distractions surrounding the squad may prove just as important as what happens on the pitch. Ever since Iran's participation in the event was confirmed, political and media controversies have overshadowed technical and sporting matters, raising concerns that the same pattern could

continue throughout the tournament. Coping with such pressures is never easy. But now that Iran has made its way into the World Cup, the overriding responsibility of the players, coaching staff and team officials is to preserve calm and remain fully focused on football.

The ideal scenario for Iran during its matches is to prevent controversies from taking shape in the first place. Even a minor emotional reaction or an unconventional response could quickly become fodder for media outlets that have had their eyes on Iran's national team for a long time.

For that reason, players and coaches should avoid any behavior that could fuel

tension or provide an opening for media narratives to spiral out of control. If incidents occur during matches, responses must be professional, measured and free of emotion. Experience has shown that cameras at events like these are not solely focused on goals and technical moments. Under current circumstances, distractions could quickly become liabilities for Iran.

The same approach should extend to press conferences. By sticking to football, avoiding inflammatory remarks and speaking in a thoughtful, disciplined manner, the team can significantly reduce opportunities for controversies to emerge. Some media organizations

may already have their own narratives in place, but a consistently professional approach can neutralize many of those efforts.

At the same time, the atmosphere inside stadiums and the behavior of spectators remain beyond the team's control. Different groups may attempt to shape the environment through flags, slogans or other actions. What the Iranian team can control, however, is the image it projects: one of composure, dignity and a culture rooted

in Iranian values. It should demonstrate that, for Iranian players, football is a sporting competition rather than a stage for peripheral conflicts.

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Iran, US announce deal on ending war, reopening Hormuz

Deputy FM: Peace agreement to be signed on Friday

International Desk

Iran and the United States announced a peace agreement on Monday after a marathon of negotiations mediated by Pakistan, with the Iranian president saying that the deal will be signed on Friday.

Details of the agreement were not immediately released, but it appeared that it would not be implemented until it is signed, which mediator Pakistan and Iran said would happen in Geneva. Until then, shipping will likely remain restricted in the Strait of Hormuz, which has been closed by Iran following the US-Israeli aggression against the Islamic Republic on February 28. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that the agreement will be signed on Friday.

Announcing the agreement in a post on social media on the early hours of Monday, Trump said the Strait of Hormuz, a major shipping route for global oil and gas supplies that Iran has effectively shut down for months,

would open on Friday, and that he had ordered the end of the US blockade of Iranian ports.

"The Deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran is now complete. Ships of the World, start your engines. Let the oil flow!"

His post came shortly after Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country has served as a mediator, announced a deal had been struck.

Sharif said in a post on X that the pact called for "the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon."

The secretariat of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said war and military operations on all fronts, including Lebanon, would end permanently starting on Monday night.

Shortly after the announcement of the agreement, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi in a televised interview gave some details of the framework which paves the way for 60-day negotiations over a final agreement covering Iran's nuclear program



People fish from the shore as cargo and commercial vessels lie at anchor in the Strait of Hormuz off Iranian southern city of Bandar Abbas on June 8, 2026.

● ISNA

and relief of longstanding sanctions against it.

Gharibabadi declared that starting Monday night, the US naval blockade against Iran will be terminated, along with "the immediate and permanent end of the war and military operations on various fronts, including Lebanon."

He also outlined the two-stage process following Friday's signing. First, a verification period will begin immediately.

"On Friday, we will have an official signing, and the heads of the two delegations will hold talks to determine the future arrangements of the negotiations. Until then, the US side's commitments regarding ending the war, lifting the blockade, and releasing assets will be verified. Entering the 60-day negoti-



ations is conditional on the implementation of these US commitments."

During the 60-day negotiation period, he said, several issues will be discussed, including ending sanctions against Iran.

He said the nuclear issue will also be

discussed, along with a mechanism for the reconstruction and economic development of Iran following the war. A diplomat told AFP on Monday that the US and Iran are to hold indirect meetings in Doha ahead of the formal signing of the agreement.

World leaders welcome Tehran-Washington memo

International Desk

The world praised a peace agreement reached between Iran and the United States on Monday, which brings an end to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran, lifts the naval blockade on Iran's ports, and reopens the Strait of Hormuz. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the agreement as a "critical step" toward resolving the conflict.

"The Secretary-General hopes that the parties will build on this new momentum and redouble their efforts towards a final resolution of the conflict," his statement read.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi also reacted to the deal, saying that the US-Israeli aggression "has caused serious economic disruption across the world and led to loss of life in many countries."

"India hopes that the implementation of this understanding will help restore peace and stability in the region and ensure the freedom of navigation and commerce," Modi said.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry also welcomed the agreement, emphasizing the importance of restoring security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and returning the strait's situation to its previous condition.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry also issued a statement welcoming the agreement between Iran and the United States for an immediate cessation of military aggression, guaranteeing freedom of navigation, and resolving certain other issues.

Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrah-



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (2nd R) and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd L) are greeted by Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar (R) and Army Chief Field Marshal Gen. Asim Munir (L) upon their arrival in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, on April 11, 2026.

● PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

man Al Thani expressed hope that all parties will engage in future negotiations "in a positive and constructive spirit."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he views the deal as "an important development for establishing peace and tranquility in our region" and welcomed it with satisfaction. He called for avoiding any provocations that could escalate tensions before the signing the agreement.

Speaking at a regular news conference, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian welcomed the agreement and praised Pakistan's role in mediating the negotiations.

"We hope the documents will be signed as planned and all relevant parties will stay committed to peaceful solutions," he said. Britain, France, Germany and Italy issued a joint statement saying they are "prepared to lift relevant sanctions in response to clear, verifiable steps by Iran on its nuclear program" and will work intensively with all sides to achieve a long-term diplomatic settlement.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said Japan "strongly hopes" that a final agreement on Iran's nuclear issue will be reached soon.

Australian Prime Minister

Anthony Albanese also welcomed the deal, noting that Australia has long called for de-escalation and an end to the conflict.

'Constructive' agreement

New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters called the deal "pivotal" and "constructive," stressing that "dialogue and diplomacy remain the most effective means of resolving longstanding issues."

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer described the deal as a hugely important step towards regional stability. French President Emmanuel Macron in a statement on X called for the rapid and complete implementation of the deal.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz congratulated both sides on the agreement, calling for its decisive implementation.

"I welcome the agreement between the US and Iran and congratulate President Trump and the Iranian side on this diplomatic breakthrough. This can pave the way towards a reinvigorated global economy and a more secure Middle East. It is crucial to implement it with determination," he wrote.

'Potential breakthrough'

EU foreign policy chief

Kaja Kallas described the deal as a "potential breakthrough" that could create space for further talks on Iran's nuclear program and other key issues.

She said the European Union is ready to play an active role in the next phase of negotiations.

Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares announced in a message on X that "dialogue and negotiation" can resolve "outstanding issues" and also guarantee a ceasefire, "including in Lebanon."

Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni called it an "opportunity for peace" and signaled Italy's readiness to contribute to an international naval presence supporting the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Colombian President Gustavo Petro also welcomed the agreement.

"Despite the distance I have with (Donald Trump) due to his improper interference in Colombia's internal politics, I am grateful for the efforts of President Donald Trump on the path to human peace."

He added that Colombia currently holds the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council and will do everything in its power to support peace efforts between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Araghchi: Iran to hold US accountable for implementing agreement



Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi discussed a peace agreement reached between Tehran and Washington with his counterparts from Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, emphasizing US responsibility for implementing the deal.

Speaking in separate telephone calls on Monday morning with Hakan Fidan of Turkey, Fuad Hussein of Iraq, Badr Abdelatty of Egypt, Toshimitsu Motegi of Japan and Faisal bin Farhan of Saudi Arabia, Araghchi discussed the process and provisions of the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, Press TV reported.

Referring to the responsibility of the United States in implementing the agreement, Araghchi emphasized the need for a complete halt to the destabilizing aggressions and the Israeli attacks against Lebanon.

The top diplomat also expressed gratitude for the positions and roles of Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt in supporting the establishment

of a ceasefire, reducing tensions, and pursuing diplomatic efforts to achieve regional stability and security.

The foreign ministers of Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt also stressed the continuation of close consultations and cooperation regarding regional developments and the necessity of strengthening diplomatic efforts to maintain peace and stability.

In his conversation with the Japanese counterpart, Araghchi explained the most important provisions of the memorandum of understanding and expressed hope that its implementation would mark the beginning of a new chapter of economic cooperation and investment between the two countries.

Motegi welcomed the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, describing it as an important step toward resolving regional crises, and emphasized the necessity of its precise implementation.

Araghchi also briefed his Saudi counterpart on the provisions and latest developments regarding the Islamabad memorandum of understanding.

Araghchi also expressed gratitude for Saudi Arabia's role in the ongoing diplomatic process aimed at ending the US-Israeli aggression against Iran and strengthening regional stability and security. He further stressed the importance of continuing this process.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



IKAC eyes regional investment hub status with flagship projects: *CEO*

Economy Desk

Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) plans to become a regional economic and investment hub through the implementation of a series of flagship development projects, its chief executive said on Monday, as the airport unveiled its new free zone vehicle license plate. Speaking at a ceremony marking the launch of vehicle registration and the unveiling of the free zone license plate for Imam Khomeini Airport City in Tehran Province, Ramin Kashef-Azar said that beyond aviation and terminal areas, airport cities around the world also encompass logistics, tourism, free zones, infrastructure and technology. According to IRNA, Kashef-Azar said the airport city covers an area of 14,000 hectares, of which 3,500 hectares have been designated for aviation activities. "The first phase of the master plan focuses on pioneer hubs, with the largest share allocated to logistics," he said. However, he added that the airport city must move toward technology and da-

ta-centric operations.

Four flagship projects

"By the end of this Iranian year (March 20, 2027), under an agreement with the vice presidency for science and technology, we will launch a technology tower and an artificial intelligence tower at the complex," he stated. Kashef-Azar said the airport city's development strategy is centered on four main projects; an expo center, a health village, a mega mall and an international sports camp. "With the implementation of these flagship projects, this region will become an economic and investment hub," he said.

He added that authorities are currently pursuing logistics development in the area and, if existing obstacles are resolved, construction of what he described as the country's largest mega mall terminal will begin at the complex in the coming months.

Kashef-Azar said attracting investment is one of the airport city's most important priorities, although in the short

term it will focus on digital economy projects.

He also said the area's free zone status offers advantages including fewer legal restrictions, no visa requirements and the possibility of cooperation with international business partners, creating favorable conditions for innovative businesses and foreign investors. If planned measures are implemented, construction of the country's largest mega terminal at Imam Khomeini International Airport will begin in the coming months, he added, describing it as one of Iran's most important logistics projects.

According to Tasnim news agency, Hossein Ferdowsi, acting head of the secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones, said at the ceremony that the unveiling of the airport city's free zone license plate was not merely a visual change but a symbol of an important transformation in the country's economic development, economic governance, international trade and investment attraction.



At the same event, Teymour Hosseini, head of Iran's traffic police, said the Imam Khomeini airport free zone is the 14th such zone to provide services and

facilities under a new approach. Hosseini added that mechanisms for the free zones of Baneh, Marivan, Mehran and Bushehr will be established soon.

Mobarakeh Steel reconstruction outpacing initial timelines



Furnace No. 8 at Mobarakeh Steel Company resumes operations on June 9, 2026. **TASNIM**

Economy Desk

Reconstruction work at Iran's Mobarakeh Steel Company following damage sustained during the recent war is progressing much faster than initially estimated, with the expected rebuilding time reduced to about one-fifth of earlier projections, a senior parliamentary research official said. According to ILNA, Mehdi Bani-Taba, deputy for economic affairs at the Parliament Research Center, made the remarks after a field visit on Sunday to the damaged sections of the Mobarakeh Steel complex in Isfahan Province, where he and a group of officials assessed the extent of the destruction and the reconstruction process. The delegation also held a joint meeting with Mobarakeh Steel Company CEO Saeed Zarandi to review the impact of the attack on different parts of the complex.

"What we have observed on the ground is far ahead of the initial estimates, and the reconstruction period has been reduced to about one-fifth of the original projections," Bani-Taba said.

"I can confidently say that the figures and reconstruction timeline contained in the expert reports submitted to Tehran are, in practice at Mobarakeh Steel, about one-fifth lower," he added,

describing the pace of the rebuilding effort as "a tangible example of crusade." During the meeting, the company reviewed its plans to protect its workforce, manage volatility in the steel market and maintain production by relying on domestic capabilities. Bani-Taba said documented and well-supported reports on the extent of the damage to Mobarakeh Steel, as well as estimates of the budget required for compensation and reconstruction, were of great importance for Parliament. He said lawmakers would make every effort to support the rebuilding process once those reports are compiled and submitted.

At the meeting, Zarandi presented a report on Mobarakeh Steel's role in Iran's steel production and economy, as well as its position in global industry rankings.

The World Steel Association's latest ranking of the world's leading steel producers by output showed that Mobarakeh Steel, the only Iranian representative on the list, produced 10.29 million metric tons of steel in 2025, increasing output from the previous year and improving its ranking by one place to 43rd globally.

Zarandi said that, given the country's circumstances in the final months of the last year, the company had prepared several

contingency scenarios in anticipation of a possible attack so that, if one occurred, the complex would face the least possible damage and disruption.

He also outlined the damage inflicted on affected sections of the complex and the successful reconstruction of Furnace No. 8 within 45 days.

Furnace No. 8 at Mobarakeh Steel, which was damaged during an Israeli attack in April, resumed production on June 9 after repairs.

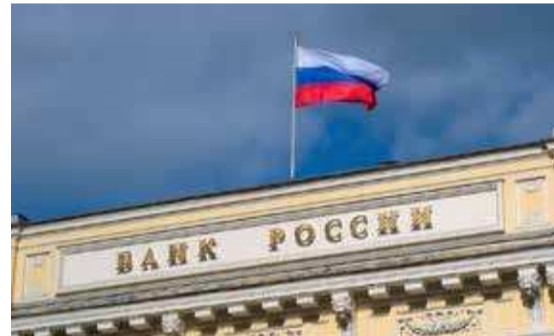
The Mobarakeh Steel complex was among 3,003 industrial units across the country that sustained damage during the 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February.

Many of the affected facilities, including the Mobarakeh Steel complex, were key upstream industries whose products serve as raw materials for a large number of companies and downstream manufacturers.

Analysts at Morgan Stanley estimated that the attacks eliminated between 13 million and 15 million metric tons of Iran's annual steel production capacity. The 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 Iran's Steel Association, 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.

CBI says Russian bank branch openings central to monetary pacts



Economy Desk

Iran and Russia are continuing to advance monetary agreements aimed at enabling financial transactions in their national currencies, with one of the most important steps being the establishment of branches of Russian banks in Iran, a senior Iranian central bank official said. Speaking to ILNA, Abolfazl Koudei, deputy for international affairs at the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), said the two countries are pursuing monetary agreements so they can conduct financial exchanges using their national currencies.

"These measures are underway, and the most important of them is the establishment of branches of Russian banks

in Iran," he said.

Koudei said one of the most tangible areas of cooperation between the two countries is the SHETAB Mir payment system, whose first and second phases have already been completed, while the third phase will be implemented soon.

The monetary agreement between Iran and Russia became operational in January 2025, and the national currencies of the two countries — the ruble and the rial — have been used as the basis for settlement at the agreed exchange rate in the commercial foreign exchange market.

Russia's Mir Card Network that was connected to Iran's SHETAB banking network in November 2024, allows Ira-

A Russian state flag flies over the Central Bank headquarters in Moscow, Russia. **REUTERS**

nian bank cards to be used in Russian banks.

"In this phase, Iranian individuals can use their Iranian bank cards at point-of-sale terminals in Russian stores and make purchases," Koudei said.

Also, Russia's second-largest financial institution, VTB, opened a representative office in Iran in 2023 to facilitate foreign currency transfers. The development strengthened the growing economic partnership between the two countries as they seek to mitigate the impact of Western sanctions. Iran and Russia have expanded their trade and energy ties since February 2022, when Russia came under Western sanctions because of its war in Ukraine.

The CBI official has also said the bank has maintained a continuous presence in international forums and institutions and recently played an active role at a meeting of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization. He said the Shanghai Development Bank is one of the organization's pillars and that the Central Bank of Iran has active cooperation with the institution.

"We advanced discussions on the framework for establishing the Shanghai Development Bank, and very good agreements were reached regarding its initial capital. The use of member countries' national currencies was also approved, which is an important step," he said. He added that understandings had been reached on the bank's governance system and initial capital, and that a memorandum of understanding had been signed, marking a significant step forward in the cooperation. He also said Iran has established strong ties through other frameworks, including BRICS and with neighboring countries, adding that these efforts are being pursued seriously and that positive developments are expected to be announced in the near future.

"One of our key programs is to establish banking relations with regional and international institutions and structures," he said.

Iran, FAO launch project to protect endangered livestock breeds

Economy Desk

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Iran's Agriculture Ministry have launched a new project aimed at empowering local communities to protect and sustainably develop endangered native livestock breeds in the country's northwest, state media reported.

The project, titled "Empowering Local Communities for the Conservation and Development of Endangered Indigenous Livestock Genetic Resources in Northwest Iran," was inaugurated at a workshop attended by government officials, technical experts, researchers, herders, and other local stakeholders, according to the Mehr news agency.

Participants discussed strategies to preserve valuable livestock genetic resources while simultaneously strengthening the livelihoods of rural communities.

Farrukh Toirov, FAO representative to Iran, emphasized at the opening session the vital role of native livestock breeds in building resilient agricultural and food systems and addressing global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and food security.

"The protection of these genetic resources is not only essential for preserving biodiversity, but also crucial for ensuring sustainable food production and strengthening the resilience of rural communities' livelihoods in the future," he said.

Northwestern Iran is home to several valuable native livestock breeds, including the Bactrian camel, Sarabi cattle, Mahabadi goat, and Markhoz goat. These breeds constitute an important part of the country's agricultural biodiversity and, in addition to providing livelihoods, play a significant role in preserving cultural identity and increas-

ing the resilience of rural and nomadic communities.

Toirov cited recent FAO assessments, noting that more than 8,800 native and transboundary livestock breeds have been identified worldwide, of which over 70% are at risk of extinction. "This underscores the need for conservation programs and greater support for herders who maintain these valuable resources," he said.

The initiative will also invest in rangeland restoration, strengthening dairy and mohair fiber processing units, and providing extensive training and capacity-building programs for herders, technical experts, and policymakers. In addition, measures will be taken to develop value chains and create new market opportunities for products derived from native livestock breeds to help boost incomes and economic resilience for rural communities.

Media on cusp of historic transformation

AI reduced content production costs, but multiplied fabrication: *Expert*

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In less than a few years, artificial intelligence (AI) has evolved from an emergent technology into one of the most consequential actors within the realm of media and communications; a technology that has not only revolutionized the modality of content production, processing, and dissemination, but has also precipitated novel questions concerning news veracity, the role of journalists, professional ethics, privacy, and the future of media occupations, thereby presenting these quandaries before the stakeholders of this domain. Today, one can

scarcely identify a media outlet that is not, in some manner, confronted with the opportunities and challenges posed by this technology.

Under such circumstances, that which acquires paramount significance, more than at any other time, is the meticulous comprehension of artificial intelligence's capacities and perils, along with the discovery of a method for its sagacious utilization. Artificial intelligence can augment the velocity, quality, and diversity of content production while diminishing production expenditures; conversely, phenomena such as deepfakes, the propagation of misinformation, algorithmic bias, and the infringement of intellectual property rights have rendered the necessity for devising professional and legal mechanisms more conspicuous than ever before.

On the other hand, the accelerated transformations of this technology have also raised the question of whether artificial intelligence will supplant journalists, editors-in-chief, and content producers, or whether it will merely alter the nature and methodology



Najafi Solari

of their activities. Furthermore, to what extent are the media institutions of this country prepared to enter this new epoch, and how can one establish an equilibrium between harnessing the capabilities of artificial intelligence and preserving professional media standards?

To examine these issues, Iran Daily has conducted an exclusive interview with Hassan Najafi Solari, who holds a doctorate in strategic management, serves as a researcher, university lecturer, and current expert at Iran's National Center of Virtual Space. Najafi Solari's CV includes the directorship of the Information Technology and Digital Media Development Center of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the presidency of the IRIB Production and Technical Department, and the secretaryship of the IRIB Structural Transformation Headquarters.

In the forthcoming interview, the opportunities and threats of artificial intelligence in media, the governance requisites of this technology, the future of media occupations, and the legal and ethical imperatives for employing artificial intel-

ligence in content production and dissemination have been examined.

IRAN DAILY: Considering the expanding utilization of artificial intelligence across various domains, from your perspective, what are the opportunities and threats of employing artificial intelligence for media?

NAJAFI SOLARI: Just as, for years, there was a debate regarding whether internet and virtual space are useful or harmful, we must first acknowledge that, today, the subject matter — that is, artificial intelligence — like those two that came before it, constitutes an accepted reality within the human system. In any case, this technology has arrived and, in the words of Jürgen Habermas, is inserting itself into the public sphere. That is to say, ordinary people are utilizing it, but so do media practitioners. On one hand, artificial intelligence provides immense assistance to them, and on the other hand, it inflicts certain damages.

As the adage goes, it is a double-edged sword. One edge represents benefit, and the other edge represents detriment and loss. For instance, within the media domain, AI provides substantial assistance in mon-

itoring, surveillance, content production, and news dissemination. One cannot deny that, concerning many concepts and subjects we previously could not express with ease, even our own abstract themes within philosophical and religious contexts, AI has come to our aid, creating symbols, providing models, and designing algorithms that enable the transmission of these concepts. For example, suppose you wish to depict love, affection, and friendship. Previously, you might have required a cinematic film costing several billion dollars to articulate that; but now, artificial intelligence, in a Lego model and within one minute, can accomplish the same task. That is, it authors, designs, and executes a short film or a short clip by itself, thereby fulfilling the objective you possess. Today, individuals who are considered media activists and have creativity, in order to pay lower costs for content production within cyberspace, turn to augmented realities, artificial intelligence, and so forth. Therefore, the first part of my discourse is that, firstly, AI is an accepted reality and truth, yet its utilization has advantages and disadvantages. You cannot assert that all of its contents are good and valuable. However, through the governance of AI utilization, one can steer a society's culture in a direction whereby its harms are not imposed upon us. Since AI is flexible, one can do anything with it. One can organize and systematize it in such a manner that it is beneficially employed, like a cane for walking.

Using artificial intelligence, nevertheless, also entails problems. Among other things, it can intrude upon users' privacy and create problems for them. For example, AI can construct your visage and articulate a speech on your behalf. This phenomenon, called "deepfake," can generate substantial troubles for certain individuals, especially because, on many occasions, one cannot distinguish fabrications from realities.

Consequently, the first problem of using AI is user privacy; for this, however, laws and regulations have been drafted to en-

sure vigilance, criminal prosecution, and confrontation with the offender. For instance, using artificial intelligence, they can easily alter your image and voice and broadcast them through media, and no matter how much you protest that this statement does not originate from you, it can prove futile.

Recall that during a period of the recent US-Israeli war on Iran, images of Netanyahu were circulated depicting him engaged in a media interview while having six fingers, and it was revealed that the images were fabricated using artificial intelligence. How do you analyze this matter?

Artificial intelligence is capable of fabricating all of these. Of course, concerning the issue of Netanyahu's six-fingered depiction in that footage, one must examine the purpose of its production, which, in any case, was the raising of an issue within the cognitive war. In my opinion, just as the occurrence of human error is always probable, artificial intelligence may also commit an error, or perhaps this matter occurred deliberately with specific objectives.

However, my conjecture is that they possess such an abundance of voids, bugs, gaps, and errors that we should not assume they would never commit such a mistake. Even they themselves, in their utilization of AI, may encounter substantial difficulties, realizing their error only after dissemination. As is evident, some of the imagery that the Zionists disseminate regarding their victories is subsequently exposed and revealed to be fabricated and unreal. Despite all the precision and subtlety that they employ, they eventually make a mistake.

In many instances, from artificial intelligence itself, at its current level, numerous errors emerge. For example, one of the phenomena that has become very prevalent in media and is cited as a danger of AI is diagnostic errors of AI. For instance, you employ AI to discern the veracity of a given news item. AI itself has access to only limited sources and presents the essence of the news to you in such a manner that, after you broadcast it, you realize it lacked factual basis and that AI's diagnosis was also erroneous.

Given that the data and information feedstock of artificial intelligence consists of human individuals and groups, how probable is it that these groups might supply specific data and information, aligned with their own intentions and objectives, to artificial intelligence in order to achieve a particular goal?

Of course, it is not the case that all AIs engage in such conduct. This is just like the perception we sometimes harbor regarding media — asserting that all media outlets seek the destruction of the Islamic Republic. Yet some of them aspire to adhere



AI is an accepted reality and truth, yet its utilization has advantages and disadvantages. You cannot assert that all of its contents are good and valuable. However, through the governance of AI utilization, one can steer a society's culture in a direction whereby its harms are not imposed upon us. Since AI is flexible, one can do anything with it. One can organize and systematize it in such a manner that it is beneficially employed, like a cane for walking.



This illustration created in Los Angeles, US, on April 9, 2026, shows a Lego-style AI-generated war-themed video playing on a smartphone in front of a television depicting US President Donald Trump (r) and US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth.
● CHRIS DELMAS/AFP



to journalistic standards, and their objective is not to harm. They may commit an error, fall into misunderstanding, and become ensnared by the Zionists or America's cognitive warfare, but their primary intention is not that. That is, they wish to exercise due diligence to comply with their media standards, yet they may eventually err. The exact same circumstance applies to artificial intelligence. We cannot assert that behind all AIs created by humans, there exists a harmful purpose, such as the realization of a political party's ultimate aim or the desires of an individual. It may not be so. Some professional media outlets do not sacrifice their credibility for such matters. In the technology domain, for example, Microsoft, after realizing that Israel was utilizing its suite of capabilities to commit violence and massacre Palestinians, imposed restrictions upon Israel. Whereas our subjective impression of this company is that it is entirely Zionist and un-

guard. AI has already come to our aid in certain fundamental science domains, such as botany, medicine, mathematics, and so forth, and numerous uses are being made of it. There even exists Iranian AI, which can assist us in specific situations when international internet access is unavailable.

In your opinion, does the utilization of artificial intelligence call into question the professional work of a media outlet and render it less valuable?
In truth, two perspectives exist among professors, thinkers, and experts working closely with highly reputable media and artificial intelligence. One perspective insists that editors-in-chief and journalists should rigorously abstain and not become addicted to artificial intelligence. This group believes that which imparts luster, beauty, and appeal to media is that the production be human-made and that the human beings themselves have created



The illustration has highlighted the six fingers that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had on his hand in the controversial clip that he published during the US and Israel's recent war on Iran.
● SOCIAL MEDIA

der their control, yet we observe that this is not the case and that, in certain instances, it has disapproved of the massacres and the hostile, anti-human policies of the Zionists because it does not wish its credibility to be impugned. Therefore, to preserve its social capital and brand, it may not consent to the utilization of artificial intelligence for the attainment of improper and publicly undesirable objectives.

How prepared are Iran's national media and other media institutions for producing content predicated upon artificial intelligence? To what extent is this infrastructure and platform available for our media institutions?

In this regard, they face no limitations. The matter is that, in my view, artificial intelligence is a facilitator. Contrary to the opinion of many who assert that its utilization in media and other sectors necessitates special structures and exorbitant costs, I believe that is absolutely not the case. Artificial intelligence has arrived to eliminate those complex structures, and this system is, in practice, a facilitator. Therefore, no problem exists in this domain. So much so that, currently, our national media, other media outlets, dissemination and production platforms, and home cinema face no limitations in this re-

gard. AI has already come to our aid in certain fundamental science domains, such as botany, medicine, mathematics, and so forth, and numerous uses are being made of it. There even exists Iranian AI, which can assist us in specific situations when international internet access is unavailable.

it. In the domains of translation, transcription, and copyediting, they permit machine assistance, but they assert that you should accept that the error rate of artificial intelligence exceeds that of human beings, and that AI has not yet reached the stage where it is error-free. Their opinion is that you should exercise a modicum of patience, and that your own work is superior to the machine's work. The second group, the absolute opposite of the first group, asserts that the first group is entirely wasting its time: the world is moving toward a state where we will no longer require journalists, editors, or editors-in-chief. Artificial intelligence will produce everything for us. Why waste time? AI itself monitors, identifies the best news, then tweets it, edits it if necessary, analyzes it if necessary, and if a film or photograph is to be appended, it produces and uploads it by itself, and it also locates its own target audience.

I believe that professional media practitioners must consider both facets. That is, you should employ artificial intelligence, but simultaneously combine it with human supervision. Also, we should continuously update our artificial intelligence's learning models. For example, do not become so engrossed in ChatGPT that you believe it



suffices. Furthermore, professionals should employ multiple layers for artificial intelligence. Meaning, if you have used ChatGPT and it has produced a content for you, verify and check it with another artificial intelligence. Most importantly, in the domains of professional AI utilization, adherence to international legal frameworks is obligatory. Has the AI complied with international law? Has it respected copyright? Has it considered authorial rights? Has it cited the source, or has it plagiarized?

Does Iran require specific regulations for the proper method of artificial intelligence utilization, red lines for the employment of this technology, and penalties for its improper use?

Fortunately, concerning crime and criminalization within the cyberspace and media domain, we possess extensive legislation. Press laws have existed since the Qajar era and have been continuously updated. During the Pahlavi period, we again enacted laws, and after the Islamic Revolution, we have updated these laws.

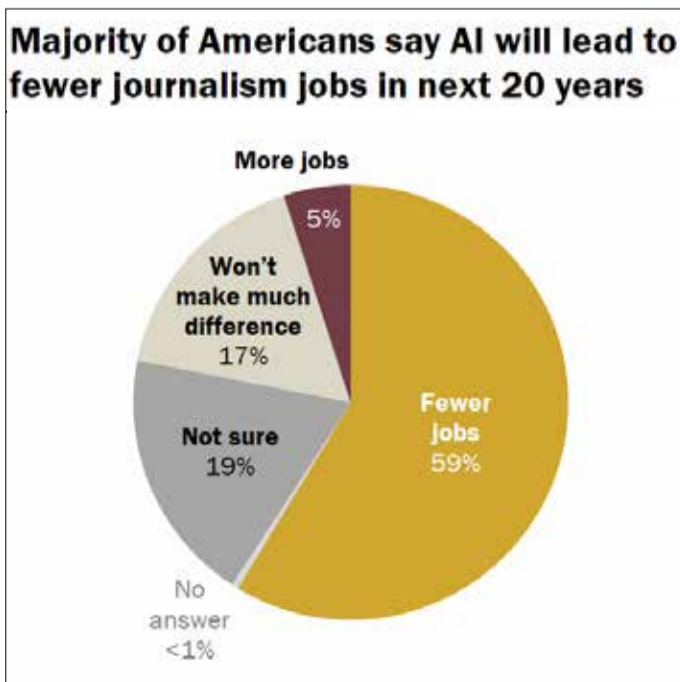
A substantial portion of those same press laws can be applied within cyberspace and to artificial intelligence. Our predicament is that we imagine that, because artificial intelligence has arrived, we must enact new legislation pertaining to it, and, for example, suppose that when a person's reputation and dignity are compromised by artificial intelligence, we require a new law to address it. Whereas, for instance, in the press law of the year 1968 (1347 Hijri), it is stipulated that if anyone produces and disseminates material that impugns the credibility and dignity of a person, this constitutes a criminal offense and carries, for example, a sentence of three months to one year of imprisonment. Now, if someone performs this action using AI and impugns a person's dignity, what difference does it make? Then, it was a publication or magazine; now, it is AI.

I believe we already possess the necessary regulations for this domain. We simply do not know how to enforce them, or we do not do so effectively. Or, if we attempt to enforce them, an uproar and a bizarre commotion will be instigated against us in cyberspace and the international arena, and we fear enforcing them. For example, the Mossad, utilizing media and psychological warfare, engages in the character assassination of high-level figures of Iran and attempts to damage their dignity and credibility, and certain individuals within the country have unwittingly become agents of the Mossad and have perpetrated this act. Numerous instances exist where the Mossad initiated the action, but domestic agents carried it through, destroying the dignity and credibility of a figure. Subsequently, it has been discovered that this was the Mossad's doing, yet the domestic agents continued. Now, if we seek to prosecute those domestic agents, an uproar ensues. Everyone rises against us, claiming you do not grant freedom, or you fear artificial intelligence, or you have shackled the nation, and similar statements.

Whereas the tangible reality is that if a crime or error of artificial intelligence has been criminalized in Europe and legislation has been enacted for it, precisely the same can be considered a crime in Iran. Why do we harbor worry and fear? On the contrary, we should learn from them. Currently, in the domain of cyberspace and artificial intelligence, the pioneering countries in legislation and the protection of users' rights are the advanced nations. For example, if, in a kindergarten, educators discover that a child has accessed their father's or mother's mobile phone and utilized AI in a manner that is harmful to them and causes them distress, European Union laws stipulate that this child must be removed from the custody of that father and mother because they lack the competence and qualification to raise this child. But, if in our country, you tell someone, "Sir, you have

The screenshot taken from a YouTube video shows how the film director has "de-aged" famous American Actor Robert De Niro through the use of deepfake in *The Irishman* (2019) to portray him in his younger years in the right frame. They first created a data set containing 10,000 images of De Niro's face sourced from some of his early movies. The left frame shows how De Niro looked at the time of filming.
● @SHAMOOK/YOUTUBE

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In my view, artificial intelligence is a facilitator. Contrary to the opinion of many who assert that its utilization in media and other sectors necessitates special structures and exorbitant costs, I believe that is absolutely not the case. Artificial intelligence has arrived to eliminate those complex structures, and this system is, in practice, a facilitator.



59% of adults in the United States say AI will lead to fewer jobs for journalists in the next two decades. Only 5% say AI will produce more journalism jobs.
● PEW RESEARCH CENTER

not observed children's rights and have permitted them access to anything," they respond, "You have abolished civil liberty." Adherence to international legal frameworks, in my opinion, is a significant issue and a current vulnerability in Iran and the world. Fortunately, in Iran, numerous laws exist in this domain that merely require enforcement. Internationally, they have commenced very vigilantly, expressing their familial, governmental, administrative, and organizational concerns, enacting legislation for them, and exercising vigilance. We, too, can avail ourselves of these laws.

Regarding the future of occupations related to AI, for example, media-related tasks such as editing, content production, and so forth, to what extent might these occupations be damaged or eliminated?

Yes, it is asserted that certain occupations will be eliminated or rendered less effective. But my answer is negative. I contend that the nature of occupations will change; the identity of occupations will change.

I shall provide an example: Once upon a time, banking and banking affairs were entirely manual. You would go to the bank, they would open a paper card for you and write your account number upon it. Whenever you went to deposit money, they would record it on that card as well as in the booklet that you had; that is, two papers existed in parallel. But now, those banking occupations that essentially involved writing on papers and organizing documents no longer exist externally. In their place, operators sit who work behind computer systems. Yet, not only has the number of bank employees not diminished, but additional occupations have been created, and the number of banks and related occupations has increased compared to before. That is, electronic banking has only altered the nature of occupations, and not only have occupations not disappeared, but they have also multiplied.

The same applies to media. It is true that you no longer have, for example, a program reviewer, a supervisor, or a text editor, and AI can perform these tasks for you, but because AI has not achieved perfection and the probability of error or mistake on its part exists, the need for a specialist in that domain persists to supervise AI's work and output. Nonetheless, if you go looking for the sentiment embedded in a poem or text, productions derived from AI cannot compare to those produced by humans, and AI's productions are typically devoid of that delicacy and authenticity present in human productions.

Therefore, it is natural that numerous and diverse occupations will be added within media for the utilization of artificial intelligence and for media development. Once upon a time, there were 30 occupations in television; now, there are 100 different occupations, but the nature of occupations has transformed. For example, in animation production, once upon a time, drawing was done on celluloid, and one person would draw a single frame. But now, a multi-person team performs a portion of the work, with the difference that the quality of animations has become vastly superior and more natural compared to before.

FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League: Iran coach Piazza questions team's mindset after Belgium defeat

Sports Desk

Head coach Roberto Piazza was left frustrated by Iran's error-ridden fifth set in a defeat to Belgium in Brasilia on Sunday, questioning whether his team has the right mindset for the Volleyball Nations League.

Piazza's side fought back from two sets down to force the contest into a decider, but eventually lost 3-2 (25-23, 25-22, 23-25, 17-25, 15-12) to finish the opening week of the preliminary round with a 1-3 record and four points, sitting 15th in the 18-team standings.

Iranian outside hitter Ali Haqparast emerged as the match's top scorer with 27 points, including two aces and two blocks, while opposite Ali Hajipour (11 points) and outside hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh (10), who was forced off injured midway through the third set, also reached double figures.

Young opposite Ferre Reggers, meanwhile, led the scoring for Belgium with 24 points, while 22-year-old outside hitter Pierre Perin excelled from the service line with five aces to finish with 20 points.

The defining spell of the contest came in the fifth set, when Iran made several service errors to allow Belgium to open a four-point lead. The Europeans never looked back, improving to 2-2 and moving into 10th place in the standings with five points.

"We fell behind because they were able to finish everything in the first two sets and we lost our mindset, but then we were back in the game in the third and fourth sets," Piazza said after the defeat.

"In the fifth set, we made six mistakes on serve. That means you're still not used to playing in this tournament.

This is not a normal tournament; it's a particular one," added the Italian, whose team is the second-youngest in the competition with an average age of 23.

When asked what he told his players after a third defeat in four outings, Piazza said: "That will stay with the players. It certainly won't come from me. But I'm sure one of the players will talk about it - I'm 100 percent sure. In my opinion, everything should stay in the locker room, though I know that's not the case here and that that's a problem."

Hajipour, meanwhile, regretted the "childish mistakes" that repeatedly undermined Iran in the Brazilian capital. "I'd rather not talk right now about why we started the match the way we did," said Hajipour, who finished Week 1 as Iran's leading scorer with 61 points. "But we need to learn how to finish strongly even when we don't start well."

"There are some mistakes that really damage this team - childish mistakes," he said. "Serving is also a major issue. We make too many errors and keep paying the price for them. It happened against Brazil and it happened again in this match."

Hajipour was particularly critical of Iran's serving in the deciding set.

"When I think about the fifth set, we had already made six or seven service errors before the midway point," he said. "That simply cannot happen."

"In my opinion, when the opposing team is under pressure and we have a chance to beat them, all we need is a safe, routine serve. That should be enough to help us win the match."

"I hope that with more effort and more practice on these details, we can cor-



Iranian players react after losing a point during their 3-2 defeat to Belgium in the FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League in Brasilia, Brazil, on June 14, 2026.

● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

rect our small mistakes and be better prepared than ever for the coming weeks," Hajipour added.

Iran began the preliminaries with a 3-1 loss to South American powerhouse Brazil before suffering a straight-sets defeat to Bulgaria. The team responded by sweeping Argentina 3-0 for its only victory of the opening week.

Chasing a first VNL Finals appear-

ance in four years, Iran will travel to Orléans, France, for the second week of competition, opening against host nation and reigning Olympic champion France at the CO'Met Arena on June 24. That will be followed by matches against the United States (June 25), Japan (June 26) and Cuba (June 28).

The third and final week of the prelimi-

nary phase will see Iran face Ukraine in Belgrade on July 15, followed by matches against Germany (July 16), Slovenia (July 17) and Türkiye (July 19).

The top eight teams in the 18-team standings will advance to the VNL Finals in Ningbo Beilun, China, beginning on July 29. China has already secured a place in the quarterfinals as the host nation.

Golshadnejad ruled out as Iran women gear up for Asian Karate Championships



Sports Desk

Atousa Golshadnejad will be Iran's major absentee when the country's women's team gets its campaign underway at the Asian Karate Championships in Bali, Indonesia, on Friday.

Golshadnejad enjoyed a remarkable international season last year, winning the second Asian title of her career before claiming gold at the Islamic Solidarity Games and making history as the first Iranian female karateka to capture a kumite world title.

However, Golshadnejad, along with Fatemeh Sa'adati - last year's Asian silver medalist - suffered injuries during the Iranian national team trials and will miss the continental showpiece in Bali. In the duo's absence, Iran's roster will be headlined by two-time world bronze medalist Sara Bahmanyar, with Ma'soumeh Mohsenian, Mehrnegar Ahmadi, Mobina Heidari, Liela Borjali,

Fatemeh-Zahra Saeid-Abadi and Hananeh Salehi also competing across the women's kumite weight classes.

Iran head coach Pegah Zanganeh shrugged off the absence of Golshadnejad and Sa'adati, insisting her team remains determined to deliver strong results in Bali.

"I do not consider this a crisis because the rest of the team has the potential to produce strong performances," Zanganeh told Mehr News Agency before departing for Indonesia on Sunday.

"The karatekas have faced many of their opponents in various tournaments and have a good understanding of them," she said. "That is why we are sending an experienced team. I recently presented a detailed analysis of these matchups and past results during a meeting attended by the sports minister. Even against some of the most decorated opponents, we have recorded more victories than defeats.

"We had a short period to prepare the team, but we have worked to bring the athletes to an acceptable level of fitness and hope they can achieve positive results," she added. "Our main objective at this event is to secure qualification for the Team World Cup later this year." Zanganeh also said the Asian Championships would play a key role in determining Iran's squad for September's Asian Games.

"Together with the federation, we have narrowed the pool of candidates for the Asian Games to the athletes included on our initial list," she said. "We still intend to evaluate a few competitors, and on the final day of the Asian Championships we will announce our representatives for the three available places."

Meanwhile, four-time Asian bronze medalist Fatemeh Sadeqi will be joined by Sepideh Amini and Zeinab Hosseini in the women's kata event, while Ali Zand, Mahdi Shahin, Matin Farimand, Mobin Jabbari and Sahand Eslami will compete in the men's kata draw.

In the men's kumite competition, Morteza Ne'mati will look to improve on his silver-medal performance in Tashkent last year. Reigning world silver medalist Saleh Abazari, Behnam Dehqan-zadeh, Hadi Kiani, Seyyed Amir Hassani, Ali-Asghar Asiabari, Mahmoud Ne'mati, former world champion Bahman Asgari, Mahdi A'ashouri, Mahdi Shahgol and Mahdi Ganjzadeh complete the Iranian kumite squad, which will be led by former Olympic champion Sajjad Ganjzadeh.

Iran women's volleyball out of Asian Games equation, NOC confirms

Sports Desk

Iran's women's national volleyball team will not be part of the country's delegation to the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September, Mahdi Alinejad, secretary general of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Iran, has confirmed.

The Iranian team had hoped to make its first appearance at the multi-sport showpiece since the 1974 edition in Tehran, but a disappointing campaign at the AVC Women's Nations Cup has convinced the country's sporting authorities to leave it out of the squad for the event in Japan.

Iran found some consolation by defeating host nation the Philippines in straight sets (25-21, 25-12, 25-21) in Candon on Sunday to finish seventh, its lowest placing in four appearances at the continental tournament despite an unprecedented build-up to the competition.

The team had left the country in April amid wartime conditions in the region to

continue preparations in East Asia for two major events over recent months.

Entering the Nations Cup fresh off a second successive CAVA Championship title a week earlier, Iran got off to a losing start in Pool B, falling 3-1 to Indonesia before suffering another defeat by the same scoreline against Kazakhstan - a team it had beaten twice at the CAVA event.

The Iranians bounced back with a comfortable victory over Lebanon but were swept aside in straight sets by defending champion Vietnam.

A 3-0 win over Hong Kong, China, saw Iran finish fourth in the six-team standings and advance to the seventh-place playoff.

Alinejad said Iran's delegation for the upcoming Asian Games would comprise between 300 and 310 athletes as the country seeks to improve on its performance at the previous edition in Hangzhou, China, where it collected 54 medals, including 13 golds, to finish seventh in the medal table.



● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

Train passes through history in Savadkuh



Iranica Desk

Savadkuh is a museum — a museum without walls, where the sky serves as its roof and its treasures include historic bridges and trees that are millions of years old. It is a museum that moves slowly, allowing visitors to observe every detail through a train window and offering a perspective unlike anything seen in photographs.

The train glides gently across the bridge. Below, a narrow and deep valley stretches out, with a small stream flowing 110 meters beneath the bridge. A few people stand below, watching the structure above. This is a bridge many have seen countless times in photographs, according to Mehr News Agency.

Perhaps you have pointed at it from a distance while traveling along the Tehran–North transit road, or stopped briefly to take a souvenir photo. But here, the story is different. The train passes through a place that no asphalt road can reach. This is above the Veresk Bridge — a place suspended between sky and earth.

For nearly a century, a living mu-

seum has existed here. Alongside the Veresk Bridge are the Shurab Railway Station with its colorful spring, the brick-arched Doab Bridge, the Se Khat Tala (Three Golden Lines) railway section — where the railway passes through the same area three times at different elevations — and a small workers' church, so tiny that some consider it one of the smallest churches in the world.

These are the historical sections of this museum: structures that still stand and continue to carry movement and life. Every bridge, station, and structure along this railway route represents a lasting identity.

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Savadkuh, Mohsen Nejad-Ebrahim, said that 23 bridges along this route have been registered as national heritage sites. Among the most notable are the Shurab Bridge, Veresk Bridge, Urim Bridge, and Kalantari Doab Bridge.

He added that, in addition to these sites, the Shurab Waterfall has also been registered as a national natural heritage site. These attractions,

he said, appeal to tourists both through railway tourism trips and independent travel.

Referring to the registration of Iran's Trans-Iranian Railway on UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2021, Nejad-Ebrahim described the event as an opportunity for better protection of historical structures and for introducing the tourism potential of the route at both national and international levels.

He added that the attractions of Savadkuh's railway route are not limited to bridges and historic structures. During the first half of the year, the landscapes of rice fields and traditional rice planting and harvesting methods can also become part of the railway tourism experience.

According to him, stopping the Tehran-North tourist train at Shurab village and setting up a temporary local market could provide an opportunity to introduce handicrafts, local food, and other attractions of the county while allowing visitors to purchase local products. Such an opportunity, he said, could encourage tourists to return to Savadkuh for independent trips,

giving them more time than a single-day train journey to see and experience each of these historic sites.

Highlighting Savadkuh's extensive potential along this railway route, he said that despite the route being located within the county's territory, no specific role has yet been defined for Savadkuh in railway tourism programs. For this reason, the county's cultural heritage authorities are seeking a stronger role in introducing, managing, and organizing this tourism potential. The natural section of this museum is the railway itself: tracks that climb and descend along mountain slopes and deep valleys, creating Se-Khat Tala before continuing through the winding paths of the Hyrcanian forests.

These two steel lines pass through forests containing trees millions of years old. At times, the tracks come so close to tree trunks that branches cast shadows over the rails, and at other times they disappear into the fog, as if leading into another world.

This coexistence of railway, mountains, and forests has turned the Savadkuh railway route into a popular destination for tourists and photographers.

Visitors preserve the beauty of this place through photographs, while photographers spend hours waiting for the perfect combination of light, movement, and stillness. The result is thousands of images of rails cutting through forests, bridges, and mountains, now widely shared on social media.

The region's beauty — from rocky landscapes to deep valleys — provides a unique subject for photography. These are the words of Hassan Issapour, a photographer with 15 years of experience, who describes the Savadkuh railway route as an exceptional example of the remarkable combination of na-

ture and human-made structures. However, the route is not without risks. According to him, unsafe proximity to moving trains and the possibility of falling from heights are among the serious dangers photographers face in the area. Issapour said that many enthusiasts come to this route for photography, but many are unaware of the dangers. The narrow width of the railway path and the lack of information about train schedules can unintentionally expose people to irreversible accidents and require serious attention from authorities.

Another photographer, Eshqali Iranmanesh, who has photographed this historic and natural museum many times during his 37-year photography career, shared his experience.

He said capturing an ideal frame requires hours of waiting and careful planning. To capture a memorable image, especially in locations such as Se-Khat Tala and Veresk Bridge, the first and most important factor is suitable lighting — including the time of day and the exact moment when passenger or freight trains pass through the route.

Iranmanesh said that the presence of old railway stations, tracks running through forests, tunnels, and historic bridges has created a breathtaking landscape — a harmony between human engineering

and nature. The railway, he added, appears to have become part of the region's nature and identity, not only failing to diminish the scenery but actually adding to its appeal.

He described the combination of railway tracks, the international road, river, forest, mountains, rice fields, and more than 30 bridges as an extraordinary scene, especially visible through aerial photography. According to him, this unique combination has made the Savadkuh railway route highly attractive for photographers, tourists, and even first-time visitors, creating a memorable experience.

The photographer added that in autumn and winter, the warm colors of the forest, floating fog in the valleys, rain, and snow give the route a dreamlike and poetic atmosphere. However, many tourists and photographers believe that the Savadkuh railway route has its own unique beauty in all four seasons, offering a new frame to capture and preserve every time.

Perhaps that is why this museum never becomes repetitive — not for photographers, not for tourists, and not for anyone watching this moving landscape from a train window. The rails pass over bridges and mountains and continue through the Hyrcanian forests; an extension of history, engineering, and nature that together have created a unique museum.



Expert warns of deteriorating condition of historic Qadamgah site

Iranica Desk

A heritage conservation specialist has raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of the historic site of Qadamgah, calling on cultural heritage authorities to take serious action to protect this valuable monument. The expert emphasized that the historic structure continues to suffer from a lack of proper maintenance and effective conservation measures.

Qadamgah, regarded as one of the most valuable historical and cultural landmarks in Fars Province, has been in poor condition for years. Despite repeated warnings from experts, heritage enthusiasts, and numerous me-

dia reports, the monument has yet to receive adequate attention or comprehensive conservation efforts, according to ISNA.

More concerning than the natural deterioration of the structure itself, experts say, is the continued lack of action by officials who are legally responsible for safeguarding the country's historical heritage. In recent years, the monument's critical condition has been reported several times, but no significant measures have been taken to address existing problems or implement a comprehensive preservation and restoration plan.

Earlier ISNA examined the condition of Qadamgah from various perspectives, highlight-

ing issues including vandalism, neglect, and the inappropriate use of parts of the stone structure as makeshift stoves or fire sites. Such incidents have intensified concerns over the continued erosion and damage to the monument.

The reports also noted that Behzad Moridi, the former Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Fars Province, had visited the site and announced the beginning of restoration efforts at the time. However, despite the passage of time, the monument's current condition remains far from satisfactory.

Heritage conservation specialist Mostafa Rakhshandeh-Kho said that Qadamgah has been facing unfavorable conditions for years and has remained deprived of proper care and effective protective measures despite repeated warnings by experts and media coverage.

Rakhshandeh-Kho said that the continuation of official neglect is more alarming than the physical deterioration of the monument itself. He questioned why, despite repeated emphasis on the importance of protecting cultural heritage, Qadamgah has still not become an operational priority.

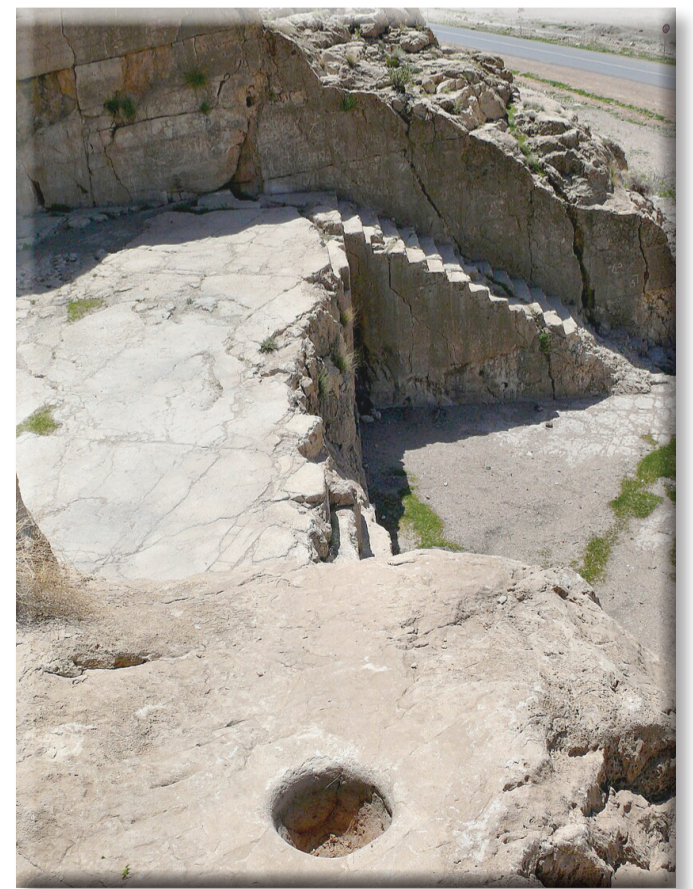
He also questioned why the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tour-

ism and Handicrafts and the Fars Province Cultural Heritage Department have not provided clear answers regarding their conservation plans for the site.

The conservation expert added that the Minister of Cultural Heritage and the Director General of the Cultural Heritage Organization of Fars Province, as the highest authorities responsible for heritage protection at the national and provincial levels, are accountable for the condition of historical sites under their supervision. He said the public has the right to know what steps have been taken to save the monument and what plans exist to prevent further deterioration.

Rakhshandeh-Kho stressed that Qadamgah now needs urgent attention, funding, and the launch of a professional restoration program. He warned that allowing the current situation to continue would not only lead to the gradual destruction of a historic monument but would also highlight the gap between heritage protection commitments and practical actions on the ground.

He expressed hope that, before the damage reaches an irreversible stage, responsible authorities would take field-based action, provide transparent responses, and implement effective measures to preserve and



restore the monument.

The current situation of Qadamgah reflects the continued deterioration of a valuable historical site due to insufficient attention and the absence of sustained and effective conser-

vation measures. Despite occasional visits and temporary initiatives, the issue remains unresolved and underscores the need for immediate, consistent, and results-oriented action by heritage authorities.



Isfahan to plug Iranian handicrafts into global markets

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has launched a broad initiative to modernize its handicrafts sector and expand its global reach, with Isfahan set to serve as the driving force behind a new phase of growth, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri said on June 15 during a ceremony marking National Handicrafts Week in the central Iranian city.

Describing handicrafts as one of Iran's most effective instruments of cultural diplomacy, Salehi-Amiri said the government is pursuing a comprehensive overhaul of the sector's production, marketing and export chain to better connect Iranian artistry with international markets, CHTN reported.

"Traditional approaches are no longer sufficient," he said. "We must redraw the path for Iranian art in global mar-

kets by utilizing modern technologies, major economic capacities and international distribution networks."

The minister said Isfahan, long regarded as Iran's foremost handicrafts hub, would spearhead the transformation.

"Isfahan must become the center of a new rise in Iran's handicrafts sector," he said. "We should prepare for a major leap that strengthens both the domestic market and Iran's share of global markets."

Salehi-Amiri said Iranian handicrafts continue to attract admiration during official meetings and overseas visits, calling the sector a powerful showcase of the country's cultural and civilizational heritage.

"Handicraft artists are, in reality, Iran's cultural ambassadors," he said. "Their works narrate the grandeur of Iranian civilization for today's and future generations."



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri speaks during a ceremony marking National Handicrafts Week in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on June 15, 2026.
 ● CHTN

He also announced new provincial support mechanisms aimed at boosting production, expanding market access and increasing exports. A special transformation headquarters for the handicrafts sector is expected to be established in Isfahan to accelerate implementation.

Calling Isfahan a "showcase of Iran's civilization, culture, art and heritage," Salehi-Amiri said the province plays an outsized role in projecting the country's cultural identity abroad.

The minister linked the sector's future growth to Iran's broader tourism strat-



egy, noting that under the Seventh National Development Plan the country is working toward attracting 15 million foreign tourists. Increased visitor ar-

rivals, he said, would directly support handicraft sales, strengthen family incomes and generate new employment opportunities across the sector.

Iran mourns legendary radio voice Behrouz Razavi



Arts & Culture Desk

Behrouz Razavi, the veteran broadcaster, narrator and cultural figure whose distinctive voice accompanied generations of Iranians through radio, literature and documentary programming, died late on June 14 in a hospital in Karaj after a prolonged illness, according to family members and colleagues. He was 79.

Razavi, one of the most recognizable voices in Iranian broadcasting, spent nearly six decades behind the microphone after joining national radio in 1968. His warm, measured delivery made him a fixture of cultural programs, most no-

tably 'Ketab-e Shab' (Book of the Night) and the long-running documentary series Iran, where he brought Persian literature, history and national heritage to life for millions of listeners.

A native of Yazd, born in January 1948, Razavi built a career that extended beyond radio into television presenting, voice acting, acting and songwriting. Cultural observers often described him as more than a broadcaster, a literary storyteller whose voice served as a bridge between generations and between contemporary audiences and Iran's rich intellectual tradition.

Tributes poured in from senior cultural and media officials across the country.

Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi led the condolences, describing Razavi's passing as "the loss of a part of our collective memory." In a statement, Salehi said that "in an age when many voices are heard but few endure, Behrouz Razavi was a voice that found a

lasting place in people's hearts." Peyman Jebelli, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), hailed Razavi as "the eternal voice of Iran," saying his narration of stories, epics and cultural ideals would remain embedded in the nation's memory.

Ahmad Pahlavanian, IRIB's Deputy for Radio, called him "one of radio's most valuable assets," while Mahmoud Shalouei, president of the Association of Cultural Works and Honors, said Razavi had devoted his life to preserving the Persian language, promoting reading and introducing the country's literary and intellectual luminaries. Actor Hossein Pakdel also paid tribute, writing that Razavi's "unique voice and enduring legacy" would remain alive in public memory.

Funeral services are scheduled for June 17 at the IRIB headquarters in Tehran. He will be laid to rest at the Artists' Section of Behesht-e Zahra cemetery.

Tehran exhibition opens door between art, credit

Arts & Culture Desk

A new exhibition in Tehran is testing an unprecedented model for Iran's visual arts market, allowing buyers to purchase artworks through bank financing in a move aimed at widening access to art and strengthening the country's cultural economy. The group exhibition titled 'Evermore,' running from June 10 to July 11 at the Karafarin Bank Gallery, brings together works by prominent Iranian painters under a pilot scheme developed through cooperation between the Institute for the Development of Culture and Art, Karafarin Bank, the Tehran Gallery Owners Association, Artibition, and GSM Group, IRNA reported.

"This is the first art exhibition in Iran to be accompanied by a structured credit-based sales system," Amir Tabatabaei, adviser to the chief ex-



ecutive of the Institute for the Development of Culture and Art, said.

"It enables galleries to present their works to a broader audience while helping people who may not be able to make a full cash purchase," Tabatabaei added.

Under the program, buyers can pay 30% of an artwork's value upfront and finance up to 70% through a one-year bank loan, subject to credit assessment, with financing capped at 4,000 million rials (\$2,481). The funds are transferred directly to galleries, while purchasers repay the

loan in installments. Organizers say the initiative seeks to draw new collectors into the market by lowering financial barriers and reducing perceived risks associated with art acquisition.

The pilot is being carried out both at the gallery and through the online platform Artibition, where prospective buyers can apply for financing after selecting a work.

Each artwork sold through the scheme receives an official certificate of authenticity. Tabatabaei said the certificate remains in trust with the institute until the loan is fully repaid.

Once ownership documentation is released, the artwork may potentially be used as collateral in future banking transactions, creating what organizers describe as a new financial pathway linking cultural assets and formal credit systems.

Short documentary wins top honor at Oscar-qualifying CineLebu festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Serna Amini's short documentary 'The Third Child' won the Best Documentary award at the 26th CineLebu International Film Festival, held from May 22 to 30 in Chile, marking a fresh international success for Iranian documentary cinema.

Written and directed by Amini, 'The Third Child' secured the festival's top documentary prize during the closing ceremony in Concepción, where CineLebu honored outstanding short films from across the globe. The Iranian production was named



Best International Documentary among entries from several continents, ILNA reported.

CineLebu is recognized as an Academy Awards-qualifying festival, meaning selected winning films may become eligible for Oscar consideration if they meet the Academy's requirements. The 25-minute Persian-language

documentary has already built momentum on the international festival circuit. It screened at Canada's Hot Docs International Documentary Festival and earlier earned nominations for Best Director and Best Editing at Iran's Cinéma Vérité festival. The film was also showcased at the Tehran International Short Film Festival.

With its global festival run now complete, 'The Third Child' is preparing for release on digital platforms, opening a wider window for audiences to experience a work that has carried Iranian storytelling onto another prominent international stage.

Key to success ...

I believe many of the challenges surrounding the team today can be traced back to the original decision to participate in a World Cup hosted by the United States. The actions of the US government, from visa issues affecting members of Iran's delegation to restrictions placed on football federation officials and public statements by American authorities regarding the team's security, all amounted to a display of disrespect toward Iranian football. Such behavior, in my opinion, should not have gone unanswered.

FIFA, meanwhile, has fallen short in fulfilling its role as an impartial governing body. Promises about containing political distractions and ensuring equal

conditions for Iran have not materialized in practice. Once again, this raises an important question: Does FIFA truly act independently, or have political considerations come to make its decisions?

FIFA continues to insist that politics and football should remain separate. Yet in multiple cases, including the exclusion of Russia from the World Cup, it has made decisions that were unmistakably political. At the same time, it has remained silent regarding the host country's treatment of Iran's national team.

This reflects a broader problem of double standards within FIFA's management. If politics is to enter football, it should not be applied selectively to certain countries. Logic and fairness

should guide FIFA's decisions, not political or economic calculations.

Now that Iran is already at the World Cup, the circumstances have changed. From this point forward, what matters most is preserving unity within the team, avoiding distractions and maintaining complete focus on the matches themselves.

Ultimately, both the sporting outcome and the political and media consequences of this participation will be judged by public opinion. At this stage, the national team's greatest assets are professionalism, composure, discipline and an unwavering focus on football. Iran's players and coaching staff must devote all their energy to achieving positive results on the field.