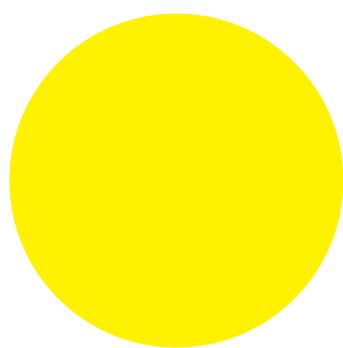


Iran urges stronger heritage protection at BRICS meet after damage to 149 sites



Iran Daily

Vol. 8193 • Saturday, August 22, 2026 • Mordad 31, 1405 • Rabi' al-Awwal 09, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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Iran: New US sanctions amount to 'economic terrorism'

China says US 'sanctions, pressure' on Iran not a solution

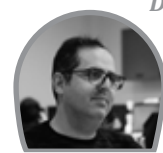
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Economic pressure cannot guarantee US political gains in Iran

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As the Iran-US conflict approaches its six-month mark and efforts to reach a broader settlement remain stalled, US President Donald Trump has announced what he described as an "Economic D-Day" against Iran. He has vowed to pursue "unprecedented isolation" of Iran and called on US allies to join Washington in stepping up economic pressure on Tehran. However,



Amin Mokarrami

economic analyst Amin Mokarrami said such pressure does not necessarily produce the political outcome Washington seeks, arguing that Iran will also find ways to adapt, as it has done for years.

IRAN DAILY: How realistic is Washington's expectation that such measures can force Iran to change its policies?

MOKARRAMI: Trump's announcement represents a significant escalation of an economic pressure strategy that Washington has pursued for years. He is now threatening not only Iranian entities but also foreign banks, businesses, airports, government bodies and other institutions that provide Iran with what he calls an economic lifeline. His references to oil smuggling, cash transfers, exchange houses, ship registries and front companies suggest an attempt to make Iran's external trade and financial channels more difficult to use.

Iran continues to face high inflation, pressure on household purchasing power, weaker business activity and tight government finances. Restrictions on oil revenues and access to foreign currency can make these challenges more difficult for households whose incomes have lagged behind prices.

But economic pressure should not be confused with economic collapse, nor should sanctions be assumed to produce political capitulation. Iran has a large domestic market, a substantial productive base and years of experience operating under sanctions. Its economy has repeatedly adjusted to restrictions that Washington hoped would change Iran's political calculations. The latest measures may increase costs, but they do not automatically give Washington the political leverage it seeks.

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the 31st General Assembly of the Islamic Association of the Iranian Medical Society in Tehran on August 21, 2026.

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President says time to end war while 'in position of strength'

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Friday that it would be better to end the war now while Iran is "in a position of strength and dignity", while warning that Tehran would respond forcefully to any renewed attack.

Speaking at the 31st General Assembly of the Islamic Association of the Iranian Medical Society, Pezeshkian described the recent agreement reached between Iran and the United States to end the aggression as a "major achievement" approved unanimously by Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Pezeshkian described the agreement as "honorable and valuable," rejecting criticism that Tehran had made concessions. "They cannot find even a single clause in this agreement that indicates surrender; all the commitments are related to the other side," he said. "War should end at some point.

It is better to end the war today, while we are in a position of strength and dignity," he added. "The whole world acknowledges our victory and emphasizes that America has attacked our schools, hospitals and infrastructure in violation of all regulations and is hated around the world."

No surrender

Pezeshkian stressed that Iran should not reject peace. However, he said that this does not mean Tehran would surrender if they launch another aggression against the country. "We will not bow to bullying and there is no doubt about it. We will stand against them until our last breath and give them a crushing response". He added that military commanders and Armed Forces remain fully prepared to defend the country, while stressing the importance of maintaining domestic unity. Iran and the US signed a



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the 31st General Assembly of the Islamic Association of the Iranian Medical Society in Tehran on August 21, 2026.

● president.ir

14-point Memorandum of Understanding in Islamabad on June 17 under Pakistani and Qatari mediation, providing for an end to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran and a 60-day period of negotiations toward a final agreement.

However, the US began to violate the agreement by attacking Iran in July on the pretext of Tehran's attacks on vessels in the Persian Gulf, prompting Iran's response to the attacks by targeting US military bases in the region.

The understanding had recognized Iran's rights and sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, and said Iran was responsible for removing restrictions that it has imposed over the strait for vessels affiliated with aggres-



sors and their supporters since the start of the aggression on February 28. However, the US attempted to undermine Iran's sovereignty by establishing an

unsafe corridor near the Omani shores.

The US measure prompted Iran's firm response to re-impose restrictions on the

waterway. Tehran says any movement in the strategic chokepoint must be conducted under Iranian arrangements, as per the understanding.

Iran: New US sanctions amount to 'economic terrorism'

China says US 'sanctions, pressure' on Iran not a solution

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry strongly condemned a new round of US economic sanctions against the country, stating that the measures amount to "economic terrorism" and "crimes against humanity."

In a statement issued on Thursday, the ministry said the new sanctions, announced by the US government on the anniversary of the 1953 coup in Iran, demonstrate the continuation of decades of hostility toward the Iranian people.

"The new US sanctions are not only another indication of the continuation of 73 years of hostility by US policymakers toward the Iranian people, but also demonstrate the anti-human, lawless and hegemonic nature of the US government," the statement said.

On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump announced what he called the "most crushing economic operation" against Iran, claiming that Tehran would face "economic warfare and isolation on an unprecedented scale". He also threatened sanctions against any country that does business with Iran.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who had previously teased new economic sanctions against Iran, said he would share more details about these measures next week.

"It is a one-two punch. We have the [naval] blockade, and we are going to have the toughest sanctions in history," the



secretary told CNBC on Thursday.

The threat comes as the war on Iran, launched alongside the Israeli regime on February 28, has failed to reach any of its objectives.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the sanctions target the fundamental rights of Iranian citizens and slammed Washington for violating international norms. "Without a doubt, the US economic sanctions against Iran, which target the fundamental human rights of every Iranian citizen, constitute 'economic terrorism' and 'crimes against humanity,'" it said, adding that those responsible should face prosecution and punishment.

It also called on countries committed to the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for national sovereignty, not to remain indifferent to continued US violations of fundamental international norms.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf, the speaker of Iran's Parliament, pushed back Friday against "unjust" US

economic sanctions.

"We must plan for the unjust sanctions so that we can overcome them," Qalibaf told a group of economic representatives in Baghdad, according to a message shared on Telegram.

Sanctions won't resolve tensions

China said on Friday that US "sanctions and pressure" would not resolve tensions in the Middle East, after Washington urged governments including Beijing to join efforts to isolate the Iranian economy.

"China calls on all relevant parties to take responsible measures and resolve the problem through political and diplomatic means," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told reporters on Friday.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has defended Trump's push for economic pressure on Tehran.

When asked whether the United States would pressure China to join the campaign, Bessent told CNBC that "many conversations are best to have in private", but called on Beijing "to get with the program".

Spokesman Lin reiterated the need for all parties to take "responsible measures" in resolving the war, when he was asked about Bessent's comments.

"China opposes illegal unilateral sanctions that have no basis in international law and are not authorized by the UN Security Council," Lin said. China is Iran's largest trading partner

Military chief warns of 'crushing' response to new threats

National Desk

Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Ali Abdollahi said Iran's Armed Forces will give "crushing, regrettable and devastating" response to any "miscalculation" or conventional and emerging threats.

In a message marking Iran's Defense Industry Day, Abdollahi said the country's Armed Forces were maintaining readiness across land, sea, air, air defense, space and cyber domains.

"I emphasize that the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, with comprehensive, intelligent and up-to-date readiness in all areas — ground, naval, air, air defense, space and cyber — will confront any miscalculation and conventional or modern threats by the enemies with revolutionary, forceful, regret-inducing and devastating responses," he warned.

He described developments at Iran's Defense Ministry in recent years as going beyond the production of military equipment, calling them a "deterrent defense industrial revolution" encompassing technology management, the defense economy, knowledge-based industries and advanced production.

Abdollahi said the changes were in-

tended to strengthen Iran's ability to confront increasingly complex forms of warfare.

Abdollahi's warning comes following wars of aggression launched by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran in 2025 and 2026. Iran responded to the unprovoked attacks by launching precision strikes against US and Israeli military assets across the region, inflicting heavy damage on adversaries. Tensions have risen as the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, signed on June 17, expired after two months following Washington's breach of its commitments.

Iran's acting Defense Minister Seyyed Majid Ebn al-Reza also said the country's Armed Forces have never started a war, but will not allow military aggression against Iran's independence or security.

Speaking before Friday prayers at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, Ebn al-Reza said Iran entered the "Ramadan War" significantly stronger than it had entered the earlier 12-day conflict.

He described the latest war as a "harsh test" for Iran, saying the country suffered deaths and heavy losses but that it also demonstrated the strength of "national self-confidence".

Speaker hails 'unbreakable' unity with Iraq

International Desk

Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf described the unity between Iran and Iraq as "unbreakable," saying the two countries will continue to stand against the United States.

Speaking on Friday after paying tribute to Martyr Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis at the Wadi Al-Salam Cemetery in Najaf, Qalibaf said the United States and the Israeli regime should understand that unity within the Muslim world, particularly between Iran and Iraq, is "unbreakable."

This relationship, he added, is cemented by shared religious and cultural foundations. He pointed to periods when Iranian and Iraqi forces stood together in response to shared threats, Press TV reported.

Qalibaf recalled the fight against the Daesh terrorist group, saying Iranian and Iraqi forces stood alongside one another when they needed each other.

He also pointed to the recent aggression against Iran, saying the Iraqi people rose up during the "Ramadan War," referring to the war launched by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran in late February, during the month of Ramadan.

Furthermore, he cited the US assassination of anti-terror commanders Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in January 2020 as a symbol of the close ties between the two nations. "The symbol of this struggle is the blood of the martyr Abu Mahdi and the dear martyr Haj Qassem, which was mixed in this land," he said. Qalibaf said the cooperation between the two coun-

tries would continue.

On Thursday, speaking with a host of Iranian and Iraqi businesspeople in Baghdad, Qalibaf said Iran does not seek war, but diplomacy can only be effective when backed by readiness for war, as the US resorts to economic threats against Iran following defeat in the military war.

"We are neither warmongers nor seeking war," he said. "But as Muslims, we believe in a principle in the Islamic Ummah: We will not allow people to trample on our dignity and honor. On this path, we will sacrifice our wealth and lives, stand firm, and defend our dignity and honor."

Qalibaf traveled to Iraq on Wednesday for a three-day visit, during which he held talks with several Iraqi officials including prime minister, president and parliament speaker.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Iran-Oman preferential trade agreement sent to Parliament for final review

Economy Desk

Iran's preferential trade agreement with Oman has been finalized after completing the required administrative procedures and has been sent to the parliament for final review. Abdolamir Rabihavi, director general of the West Asia Office at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), said the agreement is expected to be placed on the parliament's agenda next month. If approved and implemented, the agreement, which aims to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers, could serve as a catalyst for the growth of trade and investment and help diversify Iran's economy amid sweeping western sanctions.

Rabihavi also said preliminary work and initial negotiations have been carried out to update Iran's preferential trade agreement with Turkey, expressing hope that tangible results will be achieved in the coming months. Iran and Turkey have a preferential trade agreement that took effect in 2015. However, the agreement is now outdated, and officials from both countries believe its provisions can be revised to expand the scope of preferential trade. Rabihavi also identified the organization of border markets with Iraq and Turkey as another priority for the TPO. "Working with border provinces, including West Azarbaijan, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Ilam and Khuzestan, we have

reopened inactive border markets," he said. "In addition, by approving and submitting lists of goods and coordinating the allocation of import codes and customs procedures, effective steps have been taken to expand trade with these western neighbors." He added that good progress had also been made in using the capacity of Iran's southern ports to expand trade with neighboring countries such as Qatar and Oman. Among the measures, removing obstacles related to temporary import procedures at Jask Port has increased the port's capacity to develop trade with regional countries. Similar efforts are also under way at other customs offices and have produced posi-



itive results, he said. "These measures demonstrate the Trade Promotion Organization's comprehensive approach to making use of regional capacities and removing legal and infrastructural barriers to strengthening Iran's position in global trade."

100m cubic meters of war-hit gas capacity expected to return by October

Economy Desk

Iran expects around 100 million cubic meters of lost gas production capacity to be restored to the national grid by October as war-damaged gas refineries return to operation, an official with the National Iranian Gas Company said Wednesday. Houshang Seydali Seifabad, director of gas supply coordination at the National Iranian Gas Company, said four major gas refineries were targeted by US and Israeli attacks on March 17 during the 40-day war, taking 230 million cubic meters of gas production capacity offline. NIGC specialists, however, managed to take control of the crisis within less than four hours and prevented the country's gas network from collapsing, he said. Even before the war, Iran's



gas industry was facing a daily shortfall of around 300 million cubic meters. The remaining 130 million cubic meters of lost capacity has now been added to the existing deficit, making it more important than ever to curb consumption, Seydali said. He pointed to a target of cutting gas consumption by 15%, saying achieving it would require all gov-

ernment agencies to play their part and the public to cooperate. Seydali expressed hope that intensified efforts by NIGC employees and consumers' adherence to consumption guidelines would allow Iran to get through the coming winter without disruptions and with a stable gas supply. Iran's persistent gas imbalance has prompted

the government in recent years to introduce measures to promote energy conservation and improve consumption efficiency, while also prioritizing gas supplies during the winter. One such measure has been cutting gas supplies to major industrial consumers, including cement, petrochemical and steel plants, and redirecting gas to households. Iran has around 32-34 trillion cubic meters, of proven natural gas reserves, making it the world's second-largest holder of gas reserves after Russia. The country accounts for about 17% of global proven gas reserves. Despite its vast reserves, a significant portion of Iran's gas potential remains undeveloped due to sanctions-related constraints and insufficient investment.

Iran-EU trade falls 26% to €952m in H1 2026, Eurostat data shows

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and the European Union's 27 member states fell 26% year-on-year to €952 million in the first half of 2026, according to data released by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Commission, cited by Tasnim. The figure compares with €1.287 billion in trade recorded between the two sides during the same period last year. EU exports to Iran dropped 26% in January-June 2026, falling from €1.025 billion in the first half of 2025 to €754 million this year. EU imports from Iran also declined, dropping 24% to €198 million during the first six months of 2026, compared with €262 million in the same period a year earlier. Germany was Iran's largest trading partner among EU member states in the first half of 2026, accounting for 32% of Iran's total trade with the bloc. Trade between Iran and Germany fell 36% year-on-year to €304 million during the period. German exports to Iran declined 41% to €212 million, while imports from Iran fell 18% to €92 million.



Despite tensions stemming from the US-Israeli war against Iran, the decline in trade does not appear to have been significantly linked to the conflict. Eurostat data show that Iran-EU trade fell 27% following the US-Israeli attack on Iran in late February, reaching €574 million in March-June 2026, compared with €786 million in the same period a year earlier. However, bilateral trade had already declined by around 24% during the first two months of 2026, before the conflict began. This suggests that the escalation of tensions, including those surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, did not significantly alter the existing trade trend. Economic sanctions have been the main factor behind the decline, gradually weakening trade relations between Iran and the EU.

Economic pressure cannot...

How much room does Iran have to withstand this pressure, particularly if Washington targets its trading partners and financial channels?

Iran's room for maneuver can become narrower when the United States threatens countries and companies that continue doing business with Tehran. Secondary sanctions can raise the cost of trade. The financial side is particularly important because restrictions on payments, foreign-exchange transactions and banking relationships can affect trade even when goods themselves remain available. At the same time, Iran is not economically isolated from the world. China remains an important economic partner, including as a major buyer of Iranian oil and supplier of industrial goods and machinery. Iran also maintains commercial relations with neighboring countries. Its geographic position creates opportunities to redirect some trade when traditional routes become more difficult. The UAE is an important exam-

ple. It has long served as a major commercial gateway for Iran, so restrictions affecting financial activity through the country could increase costs and complicate access to imports and foreign exchange. But the impact would also depend on how quickly Iranian traders can use other partners and routes. Iran's geography and years of sanctions experience make a complete closure of external trade difficult. The same applies to maritime commerce. Shipping disruptions can be damaging because maritime routes cannot easily be replaced by land routes, especially for oil and industrial goods. A sustained reduction in exports would put pressure on foreign-exchange earnings and make financing imports, investment and public spending harder. Alternative routes and partners mean that pressure is likely to produce adjustment as well as damage.

Can Trump turn this economic pressure into political concessions, or could the new campaign ultimately strengthen

Iran's determination to preserve its economic and strategic options?

Sanctions can restrict Iran's choices and increase the cost of confrontation, but they cannot by themselves determine how a sovereign state responds. Washington has already imposed extensive sanctions, and Iran has developed ways to adapt. The more Washington tries to close one channel, the greater the incentive for Iran and its trading partners to develop another. That does not mean the new measures will be harmless. Lower oil revenues, higher transaction costs and weaker business activity could intensify fiscal pressures. If these pressures are accompanied by faster monetary or liquidity growth, inflation could become even harder to control. For ordinary households, especially wage earners and renters, another major shock would be difficult to absorb. Businesses would also face higher costs and greater uncertainty. However, economic pressure does not necessarily create the

political outcome Washington expects. Iran has little incentive to make major concessions while facing direct economic and military pressure, particularly if it believes that one concession could simply lead to additional demands. Tehran is therefore likely to preserve its diplomatic and economic options, strengthen alternative channels and manage the costs while waiting for conditions to change. Trump's "Economic D-Day" may create pressure, but pressure is not the same as strategic victory. The real test is whether Washington can convert its financial leverage into political concessions without encouraging deeper economic adaptation, stronger resistance or wider regional tensions. For Iran, the challenge is to limit economic damage, protect trade and essential imports, maintain foreign-exchange channels and preserve strategic autonomy. For Washington, the challenge is to demonstrate that a more severe version of a strategy used for years can achieve an outcome that previous rounds of sanctions have failed to deliver.

Banking hurdles cleared for Iran to access funds in Iraq

Economy Desk

Iranian Central Bank Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati said recent talks with Iraqi officials have removed obstacles to banking transactions between the two countries, paving the way for Iran to access its funds in the coming weeks. He said during a televised speech on Wednesday evening that during a meeting with the Iraqi prime minister Ali al-Zaidi, the collection of outstanding payments and efforts to accelerate economic ties were among the key issues discussed. One of the main outcomes of the talks was the Iraqi prime minister's agreement to issue guarantees for Iranian contractors backed by Iranian assets held in Iraqi banks, Hemmati said, adding that implementation orders have already been issued. "Given the positive approach and readiness of Iraq's new management team, new opportunities have opened up for expanding economic ties and strengthening trade cooperation between the



two countries," he added. Iran is owed around \$12 billion by Iraq for gas and electricity exports as well as contracting services. US sanctions have blocked Iran's access to its foreign-currency assets held in Iraqi banks. In recent years, part of Iran's outstanding claims on Iraq has been used through various mechanisms to finance imports of essential goods and meet Iran's foreign-currency needs. Iraq, however, has faced an additional constraint in recent months. A sharp decline in oil revenues, attributed to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and disruptions to oil exports, has limited Baghdad's ability to make direct payments to Iran.

Don't blame non-readers, rethink book engageability: **Podcaster**

Farhad Arkani



By Mostafa Shirmohammadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

science-fiction short stories, before he turned 18. He studied civil engineering at university but soon realized he needed to pursue what his restless mind had always been drawn to: literature, history, physics, cosmology and biology. His father was a veteran radio producer, and after graduating in the early 2000s, Arkani entered broadcasting himself, beginning as a writer and editor-in-chief before eventually becoming a presenter and producer. "Around then, I met Sara Sefati who would later become my wife. She was new to translation, just getting started. We worked on a few popular books that did well. From there, we built a life together," he recalls.

Throughout those years, as he puts it, he "wrote whenever he could, and kept translating and editing".

Nearly eight years have now passed since he launched the Telegram channel and podcast platforms that introduced his work to a wider audience. The project began with his audio reading of "Sapiens" by Yuval Noah Harari, an undertaking that opened the door to the world of podcasting.

One of Arkani's most striking qualities is his voice and his ability to turn written words into compelling audio. He reads as though he were the author himself. His tone, rhythm and delivery shift naturally with the text, drawing listeners into the language and ideas of a book and carrying them forward, step by step, without ever allowing the performance itself to overshadow the work. Along the way, Arkani met Professor Hamed Vahdati-Nasab, a leading archaeologist who earned his PhD in prehistoric anthropology from Arizona State University in Phoenix and now teaches at Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran. Together with their friend Bahar Katouzi, they launched "Banafsh" (literally meaning purple in Persian), a podcast devoted to promoting science and, to some extent, pushing back against pseudoscience. Arkani considers Banafsh one of the proudest achievements of his life, citing its massive hits and the extraordinary responses it has received.

"If you asked me today what my profession is, I probably wouldn't have a precise answer," Arkani says. "But if you asked what I love doing most, the answer is simple: learning, telling stories and inviting others on a journey that never truly ends."

Iran Daily sat down with Arkani for an exclusive interview that follows.

IRAN DAILY: It has been about eight years since you launched "Reading Books for Sapiens" on Telegram, a channel whose name was inspired by one of the world's best-known books. A quick look through the channel reveals audiobooks on prehistoric humans, evolution, evolutionary psychology, cosmology, astrophysics, the human brain, artificial intelligence and many other subjects. What motivated you to start this cultural campaign, especially in today's fast-paced world and without any expectation of making money?

ARKANI: When I launched the channel, my goal wasn't simply to produce audiobooks. I felt our society needed better tools for "thinking better" more than ever before. Every day we're bombarded with an overwhelming amount of information, rumors, misconceptions and unfounded claims. To me, the best vaccine against that chaos is familiarizing oneself with the scientific way of thinking.

That's why I've mostly chosen books that do more than present scientific facts. They change the way we look at the world. Whether they're about evolution, the cosmos, cognitive science, AI, biology or human history, these books remind us how our species arrived where it is today, how our brains work, why we fall into cognitive traps and where we fit in the vast universe. In a sense, they're lessons in intellectual humility and realistic thinking.

There was another reason as well. Not everyone has the time or patience to read a thick book, but almost everyone can listen while driving, walking or getting through everyday routines.

And no, this has never been a commercial venture, and it still isn't. The greatest reward comes from messages I receive from listeners who tell me that after hearing a book or even a single episode, they've started looking at the world, humanity or even themselves differently. If my work has played even a small part in helping people become more curious, more critical and



Author and translator Farhad Arkani (R) and his colleagues, leading archaeologist Hamed Vahdati-Nasab (L) and writer and actress Bahar Katouzi, are seen at a studio in Tehran, Iran, where they produce Banafsh, a podcast that promotes science and fights pseudoscience.

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more committed to seeking the truth, then I feel my years have not been wasted.

How do you decide which books to turn into audiobooks? What draws you to this

particular type of work?

Choosing a book has never been a random process for me. The

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Choosing a book has never been a random process for me. The first question I ask myself is, "Can this book change the way someone thinks?" If the answer is yes, there's a good chance I'll choose it. I always ask myself whether a listener will come away seeing the world just a little differently. My own interests inevitably play a role too. I honestly believe that if I don't genuinely love a text or know it inside out, I shouldn't, and probably can't, bring it to life in audio form.

first question I ask myself is, "Can this book change the way someone thinks?" If the answer is yes, there's a good chance I'll choose it. I always ask myself whether a listener will come away seeing the world just a little differently. If I believe they will, then I know it's worth investing the time to edit and narrate it.

I say "edit and narrate" because I almost always revise the text before recording it. That alone is an incredibly time-consuming process.

My own interests inevitably play a role too. I honestly believe that if I don't genuinely love a text or know it inside out, I shouldn't, and probably can't, bring it to life in audio form. That's something I constantly tell students in my voice and presentation workshops: Know the text so well that it feels as if you wrote it yourself. Otherwise, the recording will sound flat and be difficult to follow.

Many people wonder what practical value there is in studying evolution. How does learning about a primate that lived two million years ago, or Homo sapiens wandering in mountains and plains 50,000 years ago, help people living today?

At first glance, studying creatures that lived millions of years ago may seem far removed from everyday life. But in fact, understanding our evolutionary past is one of the most practical ways to understand who we are today. We are the product of billions of years of biological history, and many traits we still see in ourselves have their roots in that past, from the way fear and anger arise to our tendency toward tribalism, pattern-seeking, credulity, competition and cooperation.

Evolutionary psychology helps explain why the human mind, despite all the extraordinary advances in science and technology, remains vulnerable to cognitive biases, prejudice and erroneous beliefs. Once we recognize that our brains evolved to solve the problems of an ancient world, we become better equipped to understand their

limitations and make more informed decisions. But the importance of evolution goes beyond psychology. It gives us a much deeper sense of our place in nature, showing us that we're not something apart from it or above other creatures. That view tempers our sense of exceptionalism, both humbling us and making human experience feel more precious, because we see that we're the outcome of an insanely long and incredible journey.

One of the most fascinating themes explored in your audiobooks is evolutionary psychology. It certainly opened new ways of thinking for me. Could you explain a little about this branch of evolutionary science?

Evolutionary psychology is essentially an attempt to answer a simple but profound question: Why does the human mind work the way it does today? Just as our bodies are the product of millions of years of evolution, so too are our brains and many of our psychological tendencies. Why, for example, are people generally more afraid of snakes and spiders than of cars or airplanes? Why are we so easily drawn to rumors, bad news or emotionally charged stories? Why do emotions such as jealousy and love, as well as cooperation, altruism and even tribalism, appear in virtually every culture? Evolutionary psychology seeks to explain these patterns not only through culture or upbringing, but through the evolutionary history of our species. One point cannot be stressed enough. Evolutionary psychology does not argue that every behavior with an evolutionary origin is somehow "right" or "morally justified". The fact that a particular trait may have helped our ancestors survive does not mean we should embrace it today. The discipline is fundamentally about explaining "why certain behaviors exist," not about excusing or endorsing them.

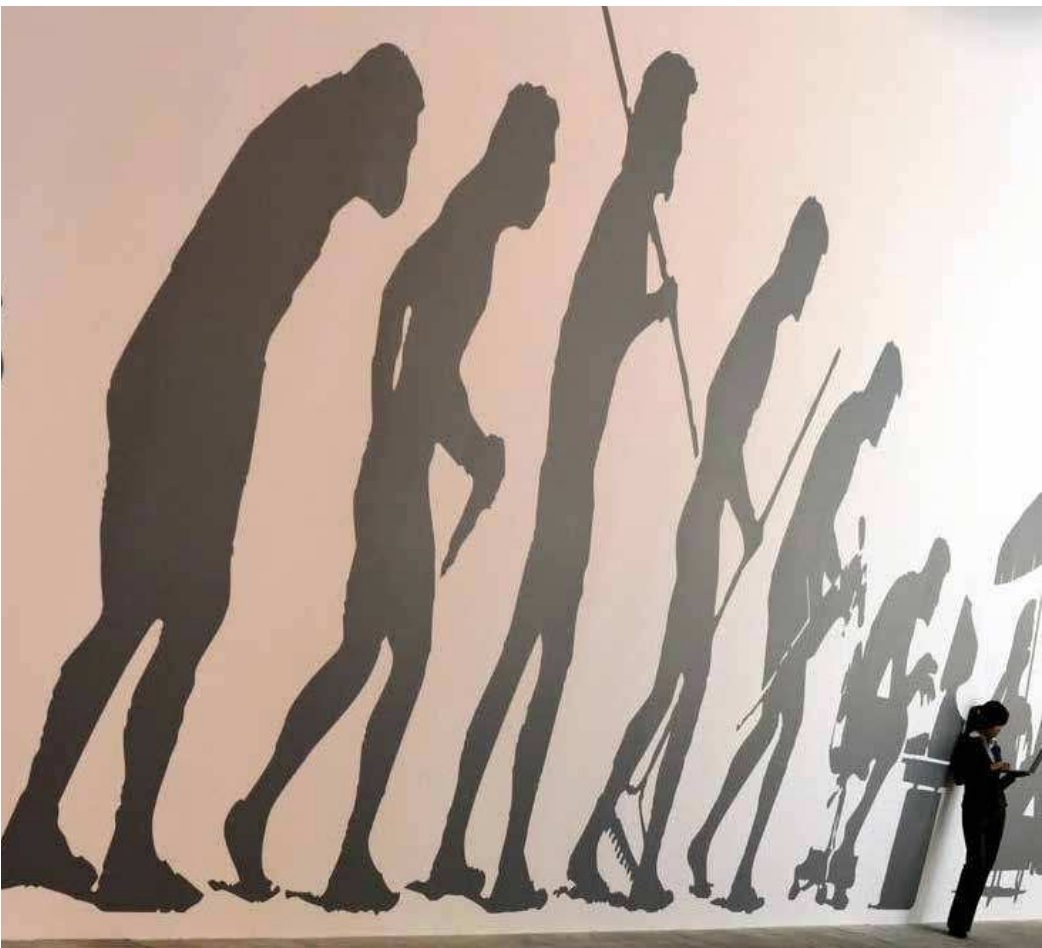
Among all the scientific books you have narrated, why did you decide to record Mark Manson's bestselling "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck," especially in a translation that so faithfully captures the book's brash, sometimes even rude tone?

The truth is, I've never confined myself exclusively to science books. As I mentioned earlier, my main criterion is whether a book can genuinely change the way people think or encourage them to see the world differently. "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck" draws heavily on psychological research as well as real-life experience, and what resonated with me was its central message: we simply cannot care deeply about everything, so we have to choose consciously where to give our attention and emotional energy. As for the language, I believe that if you're going to bring a book to an audience, you should remain as faithful as possible to its spirit, not just to its ideas. Manson deliberately writes in a sharp, witty, and sometimes even rude tone because he wants to jolt readers out of the clichés that dominate self-help books. Had that voice been toned down in translation or narration, a significant part of the book's personality would have been lost.

This approach isn't unprecedented either. Great figures such as Rumi occasionally employed equally bold and daring language when it served a literary purpose. The Persian translation by Ershad Nikkhah was exceptionally strong, so I found almost nothing that needed changing. However, that doesn't mean I believe this style of language belongs everywhere. Every book has its own voice and its own character, and this one demanded precisely that tone. One of my goals has always been to give listeners an experience that comes as close as possible to reading the original work.

Many of the books you feature share a strong philosophical undercurrent, raising questions about meaning, free will and humanity's place in the universe. Having spent years narrating these works, do you think an evolutionary perspective answers the question of why we exist, or does it simply explain how we came to be?

Science, and evolutionary theory in particular, is far better equipped to explain how life came about than why it exists. Science shows us how life emerged, how it became increasingly complex and how human beings evolved into what we are today. But questions such as "What is the ultimate purpose of life?" or "Is there any purpose at all?" belong to philosophy rather than science. People sometimes expect science to answer questions that lie outside its scope. It's rather like trying to weigh an object with a thermometer. The tool simply isn't designed for that task. In the same way, the scientific method cannot prove or disprove the existence of some overarching cosmic meaning. That doesn't mean science has nothing to contribute to our understanding of meaning. Quite the opposite. Learning about evolution, cosmology and the history of nature can profoundly reshape how we see ourselves. When we realize that every living creature on Earth is related to us, that every atom in our bodies was forged inside ancient stars, or that we inhabit an unimaginably vast universe, our perspective inevitably changes. Science may not hand us a ready-made answer to the meaning of life, but it helps us ask deeper, more honest questions. Personally, I don't believe meaning is something waiting out there to be discovered. I think it's something each of us creates consciously and responsibly through the way we choose to live. Science is an extraordinary



A woman stands in front of a wall depicting the contested narrative of the evolutionary theory in Hanover, Germany.
● DAVID HECKER/AFP

tool for understanding reality, but the responsibility for creating meaning ultimately remains our own.

Over the past eight years you have probably built a remarkably diverse audience, from eager university students to people encountering evolutionary thought for the first time and experiencing what might be called an "existential shock". What is the most memorable message you have ever received from a listener, and how did it reflect a change in the way that person saw the world?

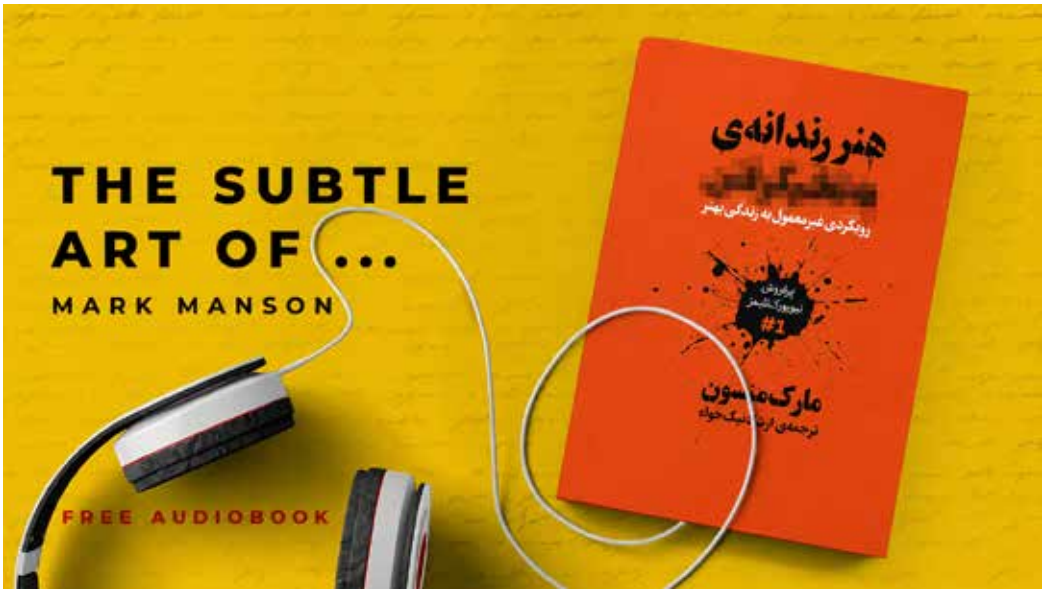
Honestly, this is the hardest question for me to answer. Over the years, I have received so many extraordinary and deeply gratifying messages that, more than once, I thought about publishing them all together. But then I realized they might mean very little to anyone other than me! So, let me just say this: I have told some of the people who sent them more than once that when I read a message like that, I feel that if I were to die right now, I would have done what I was meant to do in this world — and I would want for nothing more.

Based on the feedback you have received, which audio-

book has had the greatest impact on your audience? What made it resonate so strongly?

If I had to name just one, it would probably be "Sapiens" by Yuval Noah Harari, simply because that's where everything began. That said, I don't think Harari is an extraordinary scientist, nor do I consider Sapiens unparalleled on a global scale. His real gift is storytelling, and the human brain is wired to respond to a touching story. What makes the book powerful isn't that it delivers scientific facts. It reshapes the reader's mental framework. After reading or listening to it, you no longer look at history, money, nations, human rights, or even yourself in quite the same way. Harari invites readers to revisit some of their most deeply held assumptions, and for many people, that's a genuinely mind-blowing experience. The book also bridges disciplines, drawing together evolutionary biology, anthropology, economics, psychology and history into a single narrative. And that interdisciplinary approach makes you feel like you're not just memorizing a bunch of random facts, but putting together a much more coherent picture of humanity and the world. To me, a truly lasting book isn't one that simply adds to what we

The AI-generated image shows the cover of one of the translated books that Farhad Arkani decided to record an audiobook for.
● YOUTUBE



know. It's one that changes how we see. For many people who follow my channel, Sapiens has done exactly that. The world is the same when they finish it, but they aren't.

Suppose someone tells you, "I don't have time to read or listen to science books." What would you say to persuade them, without sounding preachy, to give it just one hour?

The first thing I'd say is that I actually agree with them! Modern life is genuinely busy, and many people struggle to find time to sit down with a book. But if you look a little more closely, most of us have pockets of time that go unused: driving, walking, standing in line at the bank, doing household chores. Audiobooks are made for those moments.

I never ask people to change their habits overnight. I simply say, "Give it one hour." Choose a book, or even an episode of our "Banafsh" podcast, based on what genuinely sparks your curiosity, not what someone else tells you to listen to. If, after an hour, you feel that it has added nothing to your perspective, feel free to set it aside.

I've seen it happen countless times. People who start with that single hour often end up looking for the next book, and then the next.

The most valuable asset anyone can work on is updating their mental model of the world. We routinely update our phones, our cars and our softwares, yet many of us go years carrying around the same assumptions and outdated beliefs.

As someone who has spent a lifetime reading and thinking about books, what do you believe it would take to encourage more people in Iran to read in an age dominated by social media, streaming platforms and endless digital entertainment? And beyond that, how do we steer readers toward books that genuinely change the way they think about life and the universe?

I think the first step is to stop blaming people. It's easy to say, "People don't read anymore." It's much harder to ask whether we've made books engaging, accessible and relevant in today's world. We're competing with extraordinarily sophisticated rivals: social media, VOD platforms and video games, all designed with the help of psychologists, designers and increasingly intelligent algorithms to capture and hold our attention. Against that kind of competition, books can't rely solely on their traditional form. That's why I believe we need new ways of bringing books to people. Audiobooks, podcasts, thoughtful conversations about books, high-quality summaries and smart use of digital media can all serve as gateways to the original text. The goal isn't to replace books with social media. That isn't realistic. The goal is to use those same platforms to lead people back to books. More importantly, though, the real issue isn't how much people read. It's what they read and how they think. A society progresses not because its citizens become vacuum cleaners for information, but because they learn to think more clearly, ask better questions and become more willing to challenge their own beliefs.



Science, and evolutionary theory in particular, is far better equipped to explain how life came about than why it exists. But questions such as "What is the ultimate purpose of life?" or "Is there any purpose at all?" belong to philosophy rather than science. That doesn't mean science has nothing to contribute to our understanding of meaning. Quite the opposite. When we realize that every living creature on Earth is related to us, that every atom in our bodies was forged inside ancient stars, or that we inhabit an unimaginably vast universe, our perspective inevitably changes.

AVC Women's Volleyball Continental Championship:

Iran fights back to stun Chinese Taipei in opener

Sports Desk

Iran got off to a flying start at the AVC Women's Volleyball Continental Championship in Tianjin, China, rallying from behind to stun Chinese Taipei 3-1 (16-25, 27-25, 25-19, 25-14) in Pool A on Friday. Iranian opposite Elaheh Poursaleh chipped in a game-high 25 points, while outside hitter Fatemeh Khalili added 17. Teenage outside hitter Ayda Valinejad and middle blocker Zahra Karimi also reached double figures for Iran, scoring 13 and 10 points, respectively. Tsai Yu-Chun topped the scoring for Chinese Taipei with 14 points, with opposite Chang Yi-Chi finishing on 13. Entering the championship on the back of a runner-up finish at the AVC Women's Volleyball Cup in June, Chinese Taipei was tipped for a comfortable win against Iran, which had finished seventh in June's tournament, and appeared to be on its way to doing so when it eased to victory in the first set.

However, Poursaleh's 13-point contribution, coupled with the introduction of Karimi, turned the contest on its head in the second set, as Iran edged out its opponent in a thrilling finale before coming out on top in the next two sets by commanding margins. With host and record 13-time champion China the overwhelming favorite to top the group, the victory gave Iran a massive boost in its bid for a top-two finish in the pool standings and a place in the quarterfinals. The impressive win also saw Iran surpass the 100-point mark in the FIVB Women's World Ranking for the first time, moving up to 41st with 104.47 points. Dedicating the historic victory to all Iranian women, head coach Alireza Toloukian was full of praise for his players, who "put in a great deal of effort and hard work" to achieve the milestone. "We were much more organized today. It was a truly demanding contest, but the jinx was broken," said the Iranian coach. "I



Iranian players and coaching staff pose after beating Chinese Taipei at the AVC Women's Volleyball Continental Championship in Tianjin, China, on August 21, 2026. ● FIVB

have always told the national team players that Iran's main rivals in the continent are South Korea, Vietnam, Kazakhstan and Chinese Taipei, and today's

result has opened the way for us to shine further in the tournament." Toloukian still urged his players not to get carried away by the

opening-day triumph and to remain realistic about their prospects against the continent's traditional powerhouses. "We do not want to get ahead of

ourselves. Beating China, Japan and Thailand, teams with experience of competing at the World Championship and in the Volleyball Nations League, is not possible for us at the moment. But we have to focus on beating our other rivals," he said. "I was thrilled to see the players manage to overcome the tactical and mental crisis after losing the first set, as they became more comfortable and coordinated as the game wore on," Toloukian said. "From the second set onward, we won the match through our defense and the way we designed our attacks," added the Iranian coach, whose team will next take on China on Monday before concluding the preliminary stage against debutant Iraq the following day at Tianjin Olympic Center Gymnasium.

WT President's Cup:

Iran rounds off kyorugi contests with 16 medals

Sports Desk

Iran enjoyed a prolific kyorugi campaign at the World Taekwondo President's Cup – Asia 2026, collecting 16 medals across the men's and women's competitions to win the team title in Lahore, Pakistan. Danial Bozorgi brought the curtain down on a glorious three days of action for the country by claiming the top prize in the men's -68kg category on Thursday. Having beaten reigning Asian champion Mun Jin-ho of South Korea in straight rounds in the semifinals, Bozorgi went on to defeat Uzbekistan's Shokhijakhon Akhmedov 2-1 (6-0, 7-9, 5-0) in the final to add the seventh gold medal to Iran's haul. The event, however, was one to forget for Olympic silver medalist and Asian

champion Nahid Kiani, who had to settle for a bronze in the women's -57kg class after suffering a 2-1 defeat to familiar foe Kim Yu-jin of South Korea – who had beaten Kiani in the Paris Olympic final – in the semifinals. Elsewhere, Saina Karimi (-46kg) and Sara Soufi (-73kg) won bronze in their respective women's events, while Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani finished joint third in the men's -87kg division. Reigning world and Asian champion Abolfazl Zandi (-58kg), Mahdi Hajimousaei (-63kg), Radin Zeinali (-74kg) and Olympic champion Arian Salimi (+87kg) had won gold in their respective men's events over the previous two days, while Nastaran Valizadeh (-63kg) and two-time world junior champion Hana Zarrinkamar (+73kg) finished atop the podium in the women's competition. Shaparak Najafi was the sole Ira-

nian silver medalist in the event after losing to Thailand's Chutikan Jongkolratnawattana in the women's -53kg final. Yalda Valinejad (-63kg), Saghar Mordai (-67kg), Fatemeh Ahmadi (+73kg) and Amirina Bakhtiari (-74kg) contributed four bronze medals, as Iran beat South Korea to claim the team crown in the G-3 tournament. South Korea bagged five golds, four silvers and six bronzes, while Kazakhstan stood third in the medal table with two golds and three silvers. Earlier in Lahore, Iranian athletes had collected seven medals, including one gold, in the poomsae competition. Yasaman Limouchi headlined the medal haul with gold in the recognized category and silver in freestyle in the women's competition, while Mobina Sharifimaher, Yassin Akbari and Morteza Zendedel added three silver and three bronze medals.

Olympic champion Arian Salimi (red) was among the Iranian gold medalists at the WT President's Cup – Asia 2026 in Lahore, Pakistan. ● MNA

AFC Women's Champions League:

Didar leaves it late as Khatoon salvages point against Al Nassr

Sports Desk

Iranian top-flight champion Bam Khatoon had a last-gasp equalizer to thank for a 1-1 draw against Al Nassr in their second Group E game in the AFC Women's Champions League 2026/27 preliminary stage in Hisor, Tajikistan, on Thursday. Iranian international striker Sara Didar found the net for Khatoon six minutes into stoppage time to cancel out Clara Luvanga's 84th-minute opener for the spot for the Saudi champion. Khatoon, which had beaten CSKA Dushanbe 3-0 in its opener, recovered from a slow start against Al Nassr to come close to breaking the deadlock in the 21st minute, only for Fatemah Shaban to fire tamely at goalkeeper Mona Alowais in a one-on-one encounter. Luvanga, who was also on the scoresheet in the 2-2 draw against Etihad



● AFC

Club, led the Saudi outfit's attack on numerous occasions but saw her efforts fall short at the final hurdle. Both sides ended the first half with Al Nassr having made four attempts at goal compared with Bam Khatoon's two, but neither side had anything to show for its efforts. The four-time Saudi Women's Premier League champion picked up the pace after the break, with Hessa Ali-

sa's lob from inside the penalty area in the 53rd minute skimming over the bar, while Luvanga's long-distance effort moments later was comfortably handled by Iranian goalkeeper Raha Yazdani. With the match seemingly headed for a stalemate, Al Nassr was handed a lifeline when Yasna Jafarnia brought down Shuruq Alhsawi in the 84th minute, with Luvanga stepping up to the penalty spot and

coolly sweeping the ball past a rooted Yazdani. Didar then came to Bam Khatoon's rescue in the dying seconds when she picked up a cross from Shaban on the left and toed the ball past Alowais from the center of the area to earn her side a share of the points. The result left Khatoon second in the group with four points, trailing Jordan's Etihad Club on goal difference. The result means the Iranian outfit must win when the two sides go head-to-head on the final day of the preliminaries on Sunday, as only one team will advance to the group stage of the continent's elite club competition. Iraqi international Shokhan Salihi scored a hat-trick, with Leen Al-Btoush adding a double, to steer Etihad Club to a 5-1 hammering of CSKA Dushanbe later on Thursday.

In-form Sayyadmanesh scores in Lech Poznan's rout of Thun

Sports Desk

Iranian winger Allahyar Sayyadmanesh continued his impressive start to life at Lech Poznan, scoring a goal and providing an assist as the Polish champions routed Swiss club FC Thun 7-0

in the first leg of their UEFA Europa League qualifying tie at home on Thursday. The 25-year-old Iranian set up Swedish winger Patrik Wålemark for the first of his two goals in the 10th minute before finding the net in a one-on-one

situation 10 minutes later. Having joined from Belgian top-flight side KVC Westerlo as a free agent earlier this summer, Sayyadmanesh has contributed four goals and two assists in eight appearances across all competitions.

Araei House stands among Isfahan's best-preserved historic homes

Iranica Desk

Araei House, one of the notable residences in the Khan Houses Complex in Khorasgan and one of the few historic houses in Isfahan Province whose foundations, main structure and architectural details have been exceptionally well preserved, offers visitors a rare and complete example of a traditional Iranian house.

Seyyed Rouhollah Seydaldasgari, deputy head of the Cultural Heritage Department at the Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, told IRNA that Araei House is considered one of the province's prominent historic residences because of its architectural decorations and the extent to which its original character has been preserved.

He said the house's most important feature is the near-complete preservation of the original foundation and the various com-

ponents of a traditional Iranian home.

"The number of historic houses in the province in which the entire structure and architectural details have survived without extensive alterations is very limited and may not even exceed the fingers of one hand," he said.

"Araei House therefore has considerable historical value from this perspective." He explained that in many historic houses, only parts such as the Shahneshin, or main reception room, have survived, while the courtyard, kitchen and other key spaces have disappeared over time. At Araei House, however, the overall structure remains intact, allowing visitors to see the different elements of a traditional Iranian house together.

Referring to the preservation of historic features inside the house, Seydaldasgari noted that several jars dating back centuries still remain in the kitchen. The survival of such



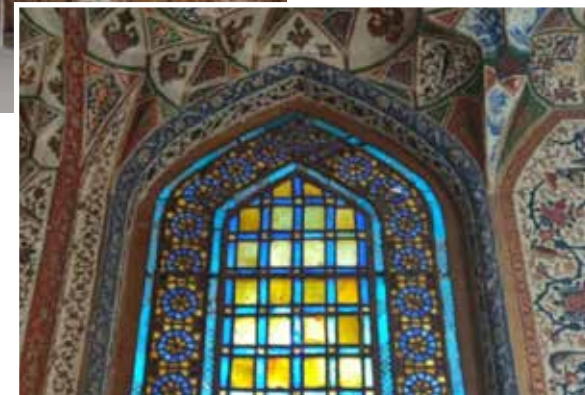
elements alongside the original structure further enhances the house's historical significance.

Regarding the documentation and national registration of Araei House, he said the owners had been reluctant in previous decades to allow government institutions to enter the property and conduct expert assessments. The Cultural Heritage Department therefore pursued the matter through

the judicial system.

Once access was secured, surveying and documentation were carried out, while photographs and videos were taken of different parts of the house to prepare the necessary records for its protection and national registration.

Seydaldasgari said the house was eventually added to Iran's National Heritage List. Its registration allows conservation and



protective measures to be implemented and makes the property eligible for Cultural Heritage Department support and financial

assistance for preservation. He said Araei House could have been identified and registered decades ago during assessments of historic residences and may even have been overlooked in surveys conducted during the Pahlavi era.

"This building genuinely ranks among the first-class historic houses of Isfahan," he said, adding that its registration could pave

the way for more effective protection of the valuable property. Seydaldasgari also highlighted the role of the owners' family in preserving the house. Although the owners had not wanted official institutions to enter the property in previous years, he said the family itself had played an important role in safeguarding the building.

The family lived in the house, and the family's grandmother, who died last year, had also lived there. The family preserved their ancestral home to a considerable extent, he said.

Khan Houses Complex in Khorasgan, Isfahan, is located in a historic area which was once home to the local headmen and their relatives, and more than 10 historic houses from the complex remain today. Araei House, dating to the Zand and Qajar periods, was recently added to Iran's National Heritage List along with the Kamarzarrin site in Isfahan, the underground city of Kord-e Olya in Tiran and Karvan, the Badafshan archaeological site in Badroud, and the Adineh Mosque in Dastگرد.

Pirgol Mud Volcano combines geological wonders with tourism potential

Iranica Desk

Sistan and Baluchestan Province, a land rich in geological wonders and pristine natural landscapes, has long attracted nature lovers and researchers. Among its natural phenomena, mud volcanoes stand out not only as rare geomorphological features but also as valuable assets for sustainable development and the expansion of health tourism.

Located southwest of Khash, the Pirgol Mud Volcano is a rare geological phenomenon with significant natural, therapeutic and tourism potential. Despite its distinctive features, the site remains relatively unknown. Developing basic infrastructure, promoting the attraction more widely and preparing a comprehensive plan to harness its health tourism potential could turn the area into a major ecotourism destination in southeastern Iran, according to IRNA. Among Sistan and Baluchestan Province's natural attractions, some remain overlooked and largely unknown. Such sites possess not only geological value but also the potential to drive economic growth, create local jobs and promote sustainable development in less-developed areas. Pirgol Mud Volcano in Khash is one such natural asset. The formation resembles a small mud volcano and rises amid the Siahband Mountains east of Bazman and southwest of Khash.

The discharge of mud, water and gas from its numerous vents offers a distinctive display of the region's geological and environmental features.

Located near Mount Taftan, pristine mountainous areas, designated tourism villages and the region's cultural and



● IRNA

social attractions, Pirgol could become a focal point in Khash's tourism network. This is particularly significant as health tourism has gained growing global popularity in recent years and is considered one of the driving sectors of the tourism industry. Mud therapy has long been practiced in different societies as a traditional way of using minerals found in mud. Many enthusiasts of nature-based therapies choose destinations with mineral-rich mud and natural springs. This makes scientific studies, proper management and the development of sustainable infrastructure at Pirgol all the more important. Dadshah Qalandarzahi, a resident of Khash, said Pirgol Mud Volcano is one of the region's valuable attractions and that local people have known about it for generations and attached particular importance to it.

He added that with broader promotion and proper planning, the natural attraction could draw many tourists to the area and create opportunities for economic activity among local residents.

The Khash resident noted that many areas with natural attrac-



tions have become leading tourism destinations through proper attention and investment, adding that Pirgol has similar potential.

Qalandarzahi stressed that greater government attention, proper promotion of the attraction and efforts to attract health tourists could facilitate the area's development and create new opportunities for local residents.

Nader Ebrahimi, a resident of the Karvandar Rural District of Khash, also emphasized the importance of introducing the area's natural attractions, saying Pirgol is among the sites that have yet to be properly intro-

duced to target audiences and people across the country.

He added that, beyond its environmental and geological value, the natural phenomenon could also be developed as a health tourism attraction and help attract visitors interested in nature and traditional therapies. The local activist said developing tourism in rural and less-developed areas could create direct employment while boosting handicrafts, local services and household incomes.

Ebrahimi said promoting Pirgol requires planning, effective advertising, visitor amenities and safe conditions for tourists so that the natural asset can be used in a sustainable and effective manner.

Head of Khash Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department Malek-Masoud Rigi said that Pirgol is one of Sistan and Baluchestan's lesser-known geomorphological phenomena and a valuable natural attraction of the province. He said the mud volcano has formed in the shape of a small mud cone. The discharge of water and mud from elevated ar-

reas and multiple vents has given the site a special place among local people, some of whom consider it sacred.

He added that because of traditional beliefs and faith in the therapeutic properties of the mud, local people have long visited the area to treat certain skin conditions and other physical ailments by covering their bodies with the mud.

Rigi said Pirgol has numerous active and dormant vents. The presence of old cones and the release of gas and mud through various cracks indicate ongoing geological processes in the area. He noted that, in addition to their tourism value, mud volcanoes provide important information about the Earth's internal structure, tectonic activity and possible underground resources, making them scientifically significant as well.

Rigi stressed that turning this natural asset into a health tourism destination requires



suitable access roads, service facilities, information signs, designated safe areas for visitors and scientific studies.

The governor of Gohar-Kuh District of Taftan, Ebrahim Rigi, said Pirgol mud volcano is one of the prominent tourism attractions of Taftan and, alongside Mount Taftan, is among the area's most important natural

assets.

He added that just as Mount Taftan is regarded as the district's natural symbol because of its grandeur, Pirgol also has the potential to become an important tourism destination because of its distinctive geological and natural characteristics. According to Rigi, some measures have been taken in recent years to provide electricity and establish basic infrastructure in the area, but these efforts are not sufficient to create suitable conditions and attract the maximum number of visitors.

The district governor said improving access, providing visitor amenities, strengthening safety measures and planning for tourist visits are among the area's key needs.

He noted that promoting natural attractions such as Pirgol could not only expand tourism but also create jobs for young people and boost the local economy.

Experts say the presence of mud volcanoes is an indication of relatively young tectonic activity in the region, and studying them can provide researchers with valuable information about the Earth's structure. Although the amount of water discharged by Pirgol has declined in recent years due to prolonged drought, the phenomenon remains one of the notable natural attractions of Khash and southeastern Iran.

Harnessing Pirgol's potential now requires a development-oriented approach, cooperation among government agencies, participation by local communities and planning to link nature tourism with health tourism. Such efforts could help put Khash and Taftan more prominently on Iran's tourism map.



Iran urges stronger heritage protection at BRICS meet after damage to 149 sites



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri (c) attends a BRICS tourism ministers' meeting in Jaipur, India, on August 21, 2026.
● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk
Iran's tourism minister on Friday called for the protection of cultural heritage to be placed at the heart of international cooperation at a BRICS tourism ministers' meeting in India, con-

demning US and Israeli military attacks that he said damaged 149 historical and cultural monuments, including five World Heritage sites. Speaking at the meeting in Jaipur, Reza Salehi-Amiri said the US-Israeli war on Iran that broke

out late February had caused not only loss of life but also serious damage to cultural heritage. "If we have put humanity's future first, protecting human lives, upholding human dignity, safeguarding communities and protecting our shared cultural

heritage must be at the center of our international cooperation," he said. Salehi-Amiri, whose remarks were made under the meeting's theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", said the experience had highlighted the importance of protecting the common heritage of humanity. He said resilience should not be viewed simply as a tourism destination's ability to weather an economic crisis. "Real resilience means the ability of people, communities and cultures to preserve their identity, rebuild their livelihoods and lives, and recover their strength and dignity," the minister said. Salehi-Amiri said the world needed resilient communities more than resilient economies

and called for tourism to become a bridge between nations, linking cultures, restoring hope, supporting communities and contributing to lasting peace. "The world needs cooperation instead of confrontation, dialogue instead of division and cultural understanding instead of hostility," he said. The Iranian minister proposed establishing a "BRICS Tourism Projects Support Fund", saying its operating mechanism could be defined within the processes of the New Development Bank of BRICS to provide financing for joint tourism projects in member states. He also called for stronger links between government policies and the private sector and said Iran was ready to offer practical mechanisms for implementing greater tourism cooperation. Salehi-Amiri urged BRICS countries to draw on the historic Silk Road and Spice Route, which he said had once served as cultural and commercial bridges between some member states, to strengthen people-to-people

exchanges. He called for an approach that goes beyond tourism as an economic activity, saying it could help connect communities, strengthen cultural understanding and build a shared future. The minister said Iran was ready to play an active role and offer practical mechanisms to deepen tourism cooperation among BRICS members. BRICS is an intergovernmental bloc of major emerging economies, established to challenge Western-dominated financial systems and promote multilateralism. It was founded in 2006 with four members—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—later joined by South Africa in 2010, and expanded to nine members in January 2024 with the addition of Iran, the UAE, Ethiopia, and Egypt. The group aims to reform global governance, facilitate south-south cooperation, and support sustainable development through institutions like the New Development Bank.

Iran opens Zurkhaneh exhibit in New Delhi



Two Zurkhaneh drummers perform on the stage at a ceremony in Iran's cultural center in New Delhi, India.
● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has opened a permanent exhibition demonstrating its traditional Zurkhaneh sport in Delhi after India hosted the World Cup of Zurkhaneh and Pahlavani wrestling, part of efforts by the two countries to build on centuries-old cultural ties through sport, IRNA reported on Friday. The exhibition, titled "Pahlavan Pouria Vali Zurkhaneh Corner", has opened at Iran's cultural center in Delhi. It displays traditional equipment including bells, drums, various types of clubs, shields, kabbadeh bows and takht-e shena boards, with explanations of their history and philosophy for international visitors. Farideddin Farid, Iran's cultural counsellor in India, said the exhibition was designed to introduce "pure human

values rooted in Iranian wisdom and promote traditional rituals and the culture of chivalry and generosity in Iranian-Islamic civilization." He said the choice of Pouria Vali, a legendary Iranian champion, highlighted deep cultural links between Iran and India, where traditions of chivalry and heroism also have ancient roots. The exhibition follows three years of cooperation between Iran's cultural center and the International Zurkhaneh Sports Federation to promote shared cultural and sporting traditions. Farid described the World Cup, held in Delhi in January, as a "turning point" in the center's three-year activities. The three-day event at Jamia Millia Islamia University's international stadium brought together athletes from nine countries in New

Delhi. Iran's cultural center acted as the main coordinator and quality supervisor on behalf of the international federation. The event followed a year of efforts to secure Indian government approvals and attract a local sponsor and was described by Iranian officials as a practical step towards establishing Zurkhaneh's position in India and gaining recognition from India's Sports Ministry. Iranian support for the sport's development in India has included training courses for athletes and coaches, efforts by local representatives to register a national federation, Zurkhaneh events at the cultural center and support for Indian athletes travelling to competitions in Iran. Farid said the permanent exhibition and the World Cup together showed how Zurkhaneh could serve as a bridge for public diplomacy and cultural interaction between Iran and India.

Asghar Farhadi receives Honorary Heart of Sarajevo as festival celebrates his career

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker and two-time Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi received the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo at the 32nd Sarajevo Film Festival, which celebrated his contribution to cinema with a special program of his work. The festival, held from August 14 to 21, honored Farhadi for his outstanding contribution to the art of cinema. He attended the ceremony in person, while a selection of his films was shown as part of a special tribute program, IRNA reported on Friday. Jovan Marjanović, director of the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF),

said Farhadi's importance to world cinema was difficult to put into words. His body of work showed that the deepest dramas were often hidden in everyday life, Marjanović said, adding that Farhadi's films did not offer simple answers but invited audiences to look more closely, listen more carefully and confront life's complexities. Farhadi's latest film, Parallel Tales, was also screened at the festival. He met with audiences, students and young filmmakers in a Masterclass, where he discussed his experience and work. The Iranian director previously served as president of

Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi holds high the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo at the 32nd Sarajevo Film Festival given to him to hail his contribution to global cinema in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
● IRNA



the jury for the festival's feature-film competition in 2018. His film Everybody Knows was also screened in the festival's open-air program that year. The retrospective of Farhadi's career included several of his best-known films, including About Elly, A Separation, The Past, The Salesman and A Hero.

Farhadi's cinema has largely focused on everyday life, human relationships and the moral complexities surrounding people's choices. The festival said the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo and the retrospective recognized one of the most important filmmakers in contemporary world cinema.

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0240005

First Announcement

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	PARTS FOR "HYDRA RIG" COILED TUBING IN MODEL: HR660, SER. NO. J13471, JOB#302197 REF. HYDRA RIG INJECTOR CHAIN ASSEMBLY, CD316387C GRIPPER 1.25 IN. (OPTIONAL) FIRST 7 DIGIT OF IRANCODE:6222260,NAFT_CODE:62222605555530 P/N:CD365723	60NO
2	GRIPPER 1.75 IN. (OPTIONAL) FIRST 7 DIGIT OF IRANCODE:6222260,NAFT_CODE:62222605555530P/N:CD365722	60NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 3,609,02 EURO or 6,146,945,095 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D. INCLUDING AN ADVANCE PAYMENT. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34124644 Fax No.: 061 34457437

PUBLIC RELATIONS

www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://iets.mporg.ir> www.setadiran.ir