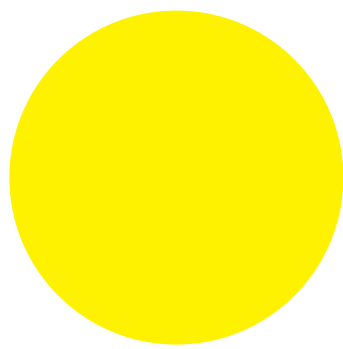


Persian
handicrafts
on display
at BRICS
exhibition in
New Delhi

8 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8210 • Saturday, September 12, 2026 • Shahrivar 21, 1405 • Rabi' al-Awwal 30, 1448 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Global forum rejects politicization of Iran's public security

EXCLUSIVE 2 >

Pezeshkian calls for BRICS financial mechanisms to offset sanctions

3 >



President Masoud Pezeshkian (Front, 2nd L) poses for a family photo as he attends the BRICS Business Forum in New Delhi, India on September 11, 2026. AFP

New regional security framework essentially anti-Israel: *Expert*

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

The formation of the joint defense pact among Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan may be considered one of the noteworthy developments in the security equations of West Asia. In the following interview with Afifeh Abedi, an expert on regional and international affairs, we have examined the dimensions and objectives of the pact, the motivations of its member states, and the potential opportunities and challenges that Iran's participation in this treaty bring.



Afifeh Abedi

IRAN DAILY: What objectives does this agreement pursue, and in what method does it differ from a classical defense pact, a military coalition, or other regional security mechanisms?

ABEDI: In my estimation, the joint defense agreement ought to be evaluated as yet another indication of the perceived gap in the security institutional framework of the West Asian region and the palpable sentiment of instability or insecurity pervading the area. Based on official positions, public statements, and available evidence, it has been constituted with Saudi Arabia as its focal point and initiative.

Among the most salient rationales to which numerous observers have cited is the security repercussions of the American and Israeli war against Iran upon Saudi Arabia's security. In the wake of recent conflicts, Saudi Arabia appears to have arrived at the conclusion that its alliance with the United States is insufficient for the provision of its national security, and that Riyadh requires supplementary security measures to augment its deterrent capabilities. For this reason, it has summoned Pakistan, as a nuclear power in the region, to this pact and, on the other hand, has incorporated Turkey, as one of the world's preeminent military forces and a NATO member, into this agreement.

Thus, this pact should not be regarded, at least for the present, as a classical defense pact because a classical defense pact ordinarily conduces to the establishment of infrastructures that this one currently lacks. Among these deficiencies is the fact that a fully integrated military organization with a command structure, joint forces, a unified budget, and operational planning analogous to NATO has not yet been instituted for this pact. Notwithstanding, the clause stipulating that "an attack on one shall be construed as an attack on all" constitutes a thoroughly classical element of collective defense.

Simultaneously, the motivations and objectives of the member states in this pact — which, for the time being, might more appropriately be designated a "defense agreement" — are disparate. Riyadh seeks to generate, alongside its security relations with the United States, additional regional capacities for its own defense. Turkey, for its part, desires to exploit its geostrategic position, military capability, and defense industries to assume a more substantial role within the regional security architecture. Pakistan, in addition to its historical ties with Saudi Arabia, can, through this agreement, elevate its status from that of a bilateral security partner to an effective actor in the security of the Persian Gulf and the Islamic world.

Is the formation of the pact merely a reaction to recent developments and fears regarding Iran, or ought it to be interpreted as part of a long-term transformation in the Middle Eastern security architecture?

Inasmuch as the war against Iran has constituted one of the most significant contexts for the emergence of this agreement, Iran undeniably represents one of the salient components within this defense accord. Nevertheless, given the divergent approaches of the three countries toward Iran and the far more consequential issues with which each of these states is preoccupied, it appears that the accentuated narrative of Iranophobia concerning this pact has been, to a considerable extent, a discursive line propagated by Western-Zionist media.

Page 3 >



Increased rainfall has revived hopes for revival of Lake Urmia
Yet groundwater reserves being depleted

4-5 >



AVC Men's Volleyball Continental Championship:
Iran holds off Taipei fightback,
sets up last-four date with Australia

6 >



Lavandevir aims to move
beyond a stopover destination

7 >



Iran warns IAEA resolution facilitates 'ultimate collapse' of non-proliferation regime

International Desk

Iran strongly condemned a resolution passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors that refers Tehran to the UN Security Council, warning that the move undermines global non-proliferation frameworks and ignores the realities of an ongoing war on Iran.

The UN nuclear watchdog on Wednesday referred Iran to the Security Council for "non-compliance" with its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty – the first such move in 20 years.

The board of governors cites a lack of information on Iran's nuclear material such as its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, and the lack of access to nuclear facilities for IAEA inspectors.

Iran's mission to the UN in Vienna in a statement slammed the "non-consensual adoption" of the resolution, arguing that it "facilitates further erosion and ultimate collapse of the proliferation regime as a whole." The Iranian mission placed the blame for the current



The IAEA logo is displayed in front of the agency's headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on June 5, 2026.

● REUTERS

nuclear standoff squarely on the United States and Israel, citing their wars of aggression against the country.

It noted that the US and Israel have bombed "peaceful, safeguarded nuclear sites" and violated basic principles of international law and the UN Charter.

The mission also highlighted the hypocrisy of Western powers that have historically praised "diplomatic solutions" at the IAEA while simultaneously resorting to the unlawful use of force.

Separately, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi criticized the logic of the IAEA and Western powers, saying that the

very lack of access being condemned was manufactured by foreign military strikes.

"They attack Iran's safeguarded nuclear facilities, disrupt the normal verification process, and then use that very disruption as a pretext for issuing a resolution in the Board of Governors," said Gharibabadi.

The IAEA has not had access to some Iranian nuclear facilities since a US-Israeli military offensive in June 2025, which included direct airstrikes on safeguarded nuclear sites.

Access has remained blocked following a broader war that erupted on February 28,

which has also seen nuclear and civilian infrastructure targeted.

This is while before the June 2025 strikes, the IAEA had access to those nuclear sites. A joint statement by Russia, China and Iran also slammed the draft resolution as "not relevant".

The statement said that triggering the so-called "snap-back" mechanism under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, known as the JCPOA, lacks legal basis because a UN Security Council resolution that was adopted more than 10 years ago and endorsed the JCPOA had terminated on 18 October 2025.

The three countries also reiterated that Tehran has maintained a good level of cooperation with the IAEA despite a war of aggression by the US, which they said has created "extraordinary conditions" in the country.

Ansarullah's forces take over Yemen's strategic Red Sea island

Yemen's Ansarullah movement seized a strategic Red Sea island on Friday after capturing territory along the coast, sealing their takeover of a vital shipping corridor linking Europe and Asia.

The development is likely to deepen the Middle East war's impact on international commerce, months after the strategic Strait of Hormuz was blockaded by Iran, which hailed its Yemeni allies' advance on Friday.

After a week-long offensive that has left hundreds dead, the resistance movement appeared to be in control of territory along the Yemeni side of the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the southern gateway to the Red Sea and, in turn, the Suez Canal, AFP reported.

A local official with Yemen's Saudi-backed government said on Friday that the Ansarullah movement had "completed their takeover of the Bab al-Mandab area and Mayyun Island", while a witness said gunmen were "deploying along the Bab al-Mandab shore and are



Yemeni Ansarullah's fighters shout slogans during a rally to recruit more fighters, in Sanaa on September 10, 2026.

● AFP

driving around in military vehicles".

The capture of Mayyun island, in the middle of the narrow waterway, heightens the fighters' ability to attack Saudi tankers, which they have been targeting since July.

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, has relied on the Red Sea ever since Iran's Hormuz blockade choked off its shipments via the Persian Gulf.

Oil prices have soared past \$100 a barrel this week, while average US diesel prices topped \$6 for the first time on Friday – a potential headache for President Donald

Trump ahead of midterm elections.

A member of the Ansarullah's politburo had sought to allay fears for global shipping in an interview released on Friday, insisting "there is no cause for international concern".

"Freedom of navigation and international trade in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab are safe and orderly," Hazem al-Assad told the Al-Araby al-Jadeed news outlet.

The offensive has cost more than 500 lives, and has displaced about 46,000 people, the UN migration agency said on Friday.

The Ansarullah carried out

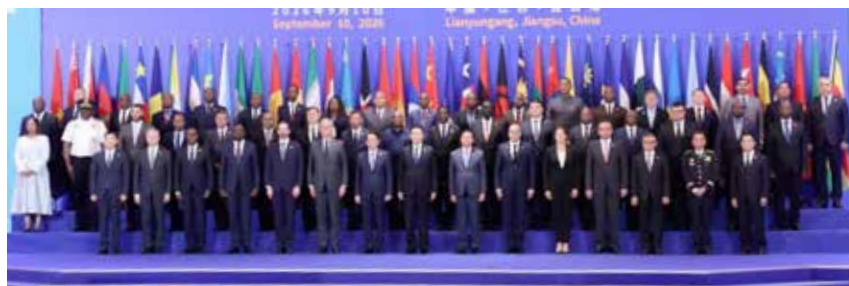
their heaviest missile and drone attack in years this week against Saudi Arabia – Yemen's northern neighbor – setting oil sites ablaze and wounding 73.

Before the Red Sea offensive, the Ansarullah already controlled a large part of Yemen's north.

They have recently attacked Saudi-backed government-held areas in Hodeida and Taiz provinces and swept down the coast, seizing the port city of Mocha and Zuqar island, north of the Bab al-Mandab, on Thursday.

While Saudi Arabia has hit back with airstrikes and ordered troop reinforcements from Aden, it has failed to stop the Ansarullah's lightning advance.

Global forum rejects politicization of Iran's public security



By Delaram Ahmadi

Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT EXCLUSIVE

The Global Public Security Cooperation Forum opposes the politicization and instrumentalization of the Iranian people's public security as a means of exerting influence on the country, the forum's chairman said.

"Security, stability and prosperity are common aspirations and I think we owe that to the Iranian people, and they should be able to enjoy these. And that is why this forum opposes unilateral action," Tsang Wai-hung told Iran Daily at a press briefing following the 2026 Conference of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum, held in China on September 9-10.

The remarks came as the Iranian people face not only military threats following the US-Israeli joint aggression in February, but also economic pressure that threatens their financial security. The US has imposed a naval blockade to obstruct Iran's international trade while continuing to impose sanctions, including secondary sanctions targeting countries that do business with Tehran.

Wai-hung stressed the need for multilateralism in international affairs and for a reassessment of the international order, particularly when it comes to conflict responses.

"We are against unilateralism and we encourage cooperation based on mutual benefits and mutual respect," he said.

He noted that the forum is an open and inclusive platform bringing together countries from both the Global North and Global South, and expressed hope that participants could make good use of it to address Iran's crisis.

China hosts global public security conference

The fifth Conference of the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum opened in Lianyungang, China, on September 9, bringing together participants from more than 100 countries, including Iran.

Held under the annual theme "Unite to Advance Public Security Governance, Bring Stability to a Turbulent World," the conference, hosted by the China Association for Friendship, brought together more than 2,100 participants from 139 countries, regions and international organizations.

Participants represented a broad range of geographical regions and professional backgrounds, including governments, international organizations, major enterprises, professional think tanks, universities and research institutions, as well as embassies and consulates in China.

During the conference, participants shared their perspectives and held in-depth discussions on the theme, addressing concerns of the international community.

Eight sub-forums were also held alongside the conference, covering migration management

cooperation, international drug control cooperation, international counter-terrorism cooperation, cybersecurity, public security technology and equipment, international police education cooperation, tourism security, and international security services.

Wai-hung stressed the significance of this year's edition, as profound changes unseen in a century are accelerating.

"Amid intertwined turbulence and pervasive uncertainties, this Conference has brought greater stability to cooperation in global public security," he said.

The Global Public Security Cooperation Forum was established in 2015 on the initiative of China's Ministry of Public Security in Lianyungang City. It serves as a platform for promoting law enforcement and security cooperation for global economic development through innovative thinking and pragmatic measures.

Iran joins international alliance against cyber fraud

On September 10, the inaugural Conference of the International Alliance Combating Telecom and Cyber Fraud was also held at the same venue.

Representatives from 46 founding countries and 34 observer countries, including Iran, as well as four international organizations, including the United Nations and INTERPOL, gathered to witness the launch.

At the conference, representatives of China and the Alliance's initiating and founding countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Kenya, Cambodia, Pakistan and Russia, delivered speeches, while an INTERPOL representative delivered congratulatory remarks.

All parties issued a joint statement recognizing telecom and cyber fraud as a growing global threat and stressing the need for an international organization to coordinate efforts to combat such crimes and protect citizens' rights and security.

Public security technology on display

The third Public Security Tech Expo was also held alongside the event.

The expo opened on September 8 under the theme "Technology Empowers, Cooperation for Win-Win" and ran for five days, with more than 100 enterprises in the public security and police equipment sectors presenting their products.

The expo featured several exhibition zones, including an equipment technology zone, an overseas security service solutions zone, a comprehensive equipment export services zone and a vehicle display zone.

The event showcased China's achievements in the development of modern police technology and equipment, as well as integrated solutions for the export of public security equipment.

In addition, six specialized police-sector zones were set up to demonstrate the latest practical outcomes of technology-empowered policing through scenario-based and specialized solutions.

Araghchi: US acknowledgment of Bahrain damage exposes cost of Israel's wars

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi referred to Acting US Navy Secretary Hung Cao's remarks on extensive damage to US facilities in Bahrain, saying Americans should not pay for Israel's wars.

"We appreciate the candor of Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao. Our powerful Armed Forces did indeed 'blow the hell out of the 5th Fleet HQ in Bahrain,' as well as other bases supporting US aggression," Araghchi wrote on X on Friday.

"The American people deserve better than footing the bill for Israel's wars," he said, Press TV reported.

Cao acknowledged in a September 9 interview with The Epoch Times the extensive damage inflicted on US naval facilities in Bahrain by Iranian attacks. Cao said Iranian forces had "blew the hell out of Bahrain," referring to the

damage sustained by Naval Support Activity Bahrain, which serves as the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet. The damage also disrupted operations involving the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, with Cao saying there was "no place for them to pull in."

The comments come after open-source and satellite imagery had also pointed to significant damage at US facilities in Bahrain during the early stages of US-Israeli aggression against Iran which began on February 28.

Adm. Daryl Caudle, the US Navy's top uniformed officer, said earlier this month that the Navy would not return to the Bahrain facility "anytime soon" because of the damage.

Jim Webb, a US Marine infantry veteran and independent national security consultant, said Cao's latest comments suggest that the current US force posture

in West Asia "is unsustainable without continuing to be under attack."

"I don't think there's any way, you know, in the short, medium, or potentially even long term, that we can adequately defend a place like NSA Bahrain, or let alone the rest of the logistics bases there," Webb told The Epoch Times.

Webb said keeping US troops at bases in the region makes those troops "constant targets."

Cao said the Navy was reviewing whether the facility would be needed for future high-intensity deployments, adding that he had assigned a task force to examine the issue.

The USS Abraham Lincoln recently ended an extended deployment of nearly nine months, including around 200 days in a combat zone, after arriving in Thailand earlier this month.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi

Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian calls for BRICS financial mechanisms to offset sanctions

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called on BRICS members on Friday to expand the use of national currencies and build joint financial mechanisms to make their economies more resilient to sanctions and political pressure, saying the group must turn its economic weight into practical cooperation. Speaking at the BRICS Business Forum in New Delhi, Pezeshkian said geopolitical uncertainty, disrupted supply chains and the growing use of economic tools for political pressure had made the global business environment more difficult. He said BRICS' strength should not be measured only by the size of its economies, but by its ability to turn its economic capacity into networks of trade, investment and joint financing. Pezeshkian said economic resilience required diversification of trade partners, financing sources and payment channels. Referring to sanctions on Iran and the military aggression of the United States and Israel, the president said economic security could not be separated from national and regional security.

He urged BRICS to build resilient economic mechanisms that would prevent any country from disrupting another member's legitimate trade by monopolizing a financial or technological tool. "One priority should be greater use of national currencies in trade between members, supported by mechanisms to manage foreign-exchange risks and enable mutual settlement," he said, calling for the New Development Bank to provide special credit lines, local-currency financing and guarantees to attract private investment into infrastructure and energy projects. Pezeshkian proposed establishing a joint BRICS reinsurance company with initial capital of \$10 billion to cover risks associated with major infrastructure and energy projects and help attract private investment. He also called for stronger cooperation on trade, investment and customs procedures, including digitalizing and integrating customs processes, reducing regulatory barriers and facilitating cross-border investment. Pezeshkian said BRICS should strengthen cooperation on standards so that the grouping could move beyond trading raw materials towards joint production



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the BRICS Business Forum in New Delhi, India on September 11, 2026. ● SNN

and value chains. "Iran could play a strategic role in BRICS energy, food and transport supply chains because of its geographic position and energy resources," he said. Pezeshkian also called for greater cooperation on artificial intelligence and the digital economy, saying BRICS should not merely consume technology but should help produce knowledge and shape digital-economy standards while strengthening cybersecurity. He said the BRICS Business Council should become an "executive engine of economic cooperation" rather than remain a forum for dialogue. Its working groups, he said, should set measurable targets for intra-BRICS trade, the use of national currencies and private investment. "BRICS' power will become more evident when it moves from potential cooperation to operational cooperation," Pezeshkian said.



The comments came ahead of the 18th BRICS Leaders' Summit, which India will host in New Delhi on Sept. 12-13 under the theme "Inclusive Global Governance and Strengthening Multilateralism.". The summit is expected to focus on trade, investment, global governance, technology, food and energy security and financial cooperation. BRICS finance ministers and central

bank governors have also called for stronger cross-border payment systems and greater interoperability between member countries' payment mechanisms in a statement issued ahead of the summit. The expanded BRICS grouping includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

US economic pressure on Iran costly miscalculation: CBI



Abdolnaser Hemmati ● IRNA

Economy Desk

Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Abdolnaser Hemmati said on Friday that US economic pressure on Iran was a "miscalculation" that would increase costs for Washington. "What the United States has done so far, alongside imposing some restrictions on revenues and trade, has been an attempt to intensify expectations and exert a temporary influence on markets," Hemmati was quoted as saying by IRNA. Speaking in response to the latest US sanctions against the

country, Hemmati said economic pressure was not a policy but rather a miscalculation that would raise the costs of the calculations made by the United States. Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions as well as a maritime blockade from the south. Iran, which has faced Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear activities, has also come under a new wave of US sanctions dubbed the so-called "Operation Economic Outcast."

On August 24, the US unveiled the new sanctions package against Iran, threatening secondary penalties against countries or entities that maintain trade ties with Tehran. The measures seek to use economic pressure to achieve what US military aggression failed to accomplish. On Tuesday, the US Treasury Department imposed additional sanctions on 27 Iranian airlines. According to the Treasury Department, the measures also target 35 companies and one individual, with foreign intermediaries linked to Iranian airlines in Turkey, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates among those affected. The scope of the sanctions could extend their impact beyond airlines to companies involved in financing, servicing and the international operation of Iran's air transport sector. Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization Captain Abouzar Shiroodi said on Wednesday that the new US sanctions against Iranian airlines were a continuation of a failed policy. He said the measures could raise the cost of operations and procurement but would not bring Iran's flight operations to a halt.

Minister says Kazakhstan offers major potential for overseas farming

Economy Desk

Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Ghezeli said Kazakhstan's vast farmland makes it an attractive destination for overseas cultivation. Speaking in a meeting with Iran's new ambassador to Kazakhstan, Mahmoud Safari, Nouri-Ghezeli said Kazakhstan has nearly 10 times Iran's agricultural land and the capacity to export up to 12 million tons of farm products a year, ILNA reported on Friday. He noted that foreign investors in Kazakhstan's agricultural sector are limited to a maximum 49% stake in joint ventures, but said the country's farmland still offers strong incentives for expanding overseas farming. Nouri-Ghezeli said Iran's first serious, large-scale overseas farming project took place in Kazakhstan and expressed hope the cooperation would continue. He also said expanding



shipping on the Caspian Sea is a precondition for growing trade with Kazakhstan, adding that capacity at Iran's northern ports falls short of regional demand. The minister said a joint Iran-Kazakhstan economic commission will be held in two to three months, preferably in the fall and hosted by northeastern Golestan Province. Safari said Kazakhstan moves about 466 million tons of cargo by rail and 355 million tons by road each year. He said Caspian shipping capacity could multiply if port manage-

ment and infrastructure were brought closer to global standards, without a major increase in the number of vessels. About 40 Iranian commercial ships currently operate in the Caspian, he said, and their effective capacity could rise to the equivalent of 120 to 160 ships if waiting times for unloading are cut. Safari said Kazakhstan currently exports about \$240 million worth of goods to Iran and imports about \$190 million from Iran, adding that both figures could rise quickly with better planning.

New regional security ...

Yet, this is also true that Saudi Arabia confronts substantial threats along its borders and adjacent regions including in north-eastern Africa, Pakistan is embroiled in conflicts with India, and Turkey faces escalating issues with Israel.

Given that it has been announced that this pact is not directed against any specific country, could it, in practice, be influenced by the rivalries between Iran and the Arab states or by developments pertaining to Israel?

Iran's approach to the agreement has not, to this point, been securitized, and it does not appear that this pact will exert a deleterious effect upon Iran's relations with

its member states. However, the introduction of the question of Iran's membership in this agreement could engender further contradictions within the accord and, of course, would accentuate its anti-Israeli dimension. One crucial point that must be considered is that this trilateral agreement is, in its essence, more anti-Israeli, even if the member states deny this fact. Saudi Arabia, far more than Pakistan or Turkey, possesses absolutely no interest in being part of arrangements that acquire an anti-Israeli label.

What is your perspective on Iran's accession to this agreement and the rationales for or against Iran's membership

from the standpoint of the national interests and security of the Islamic Republic? Iran is one of the preeminent countries of the region, possessing the longest coastline along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, constituting a significant military power, and ranking among the principal actors in regional energy security and maritime navigation. Consequently, the formation of regional security arrangements without Iran is not feasible, or, should such arrangements materialize, they will inevitably precipitate the emergence of countervailing security arrangements. Therefore, the official stance of Tehran has thus far not been fundamentally

negative, and Tehran truly possesses no cause for concerns regarding the agreement; moreover, from a more profoundly analytical perspective, the joint defense agreement will ultimately entail implicit and indirect opportunities for Iran. In sum, discourse concerning Iran's membership in the agreement is entirely political, although it is theoretically and idealistically sound.

The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs has welcomed Iran's accession to the pact; why has Russia advanced such a proposal? Is Moscow concerned about the formation of a regional security structure without Iran's participation, or does Russia harbor other distinct

interests deriving from such membership? The introduction of the question of Iran's membership in the trilateral agreement by certain parties, such as Russia, assuredly emanates, to a significant degree, from that country's overarching political positions concerning the region. Russia has repeatedly declared its support for the establishment of a regional security arrangement for peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and has even expressed its readiness to push an initiative in this regard. In my view, the raising of the issue of Iran's membership in the agreement by Russia ought to be evaluated within the framework of Moscow's macro-level stances concerning the Persian Gulf.

Increased rainfall has revived hopes for revival of Lake Urmia

Yet groundwater reserves being depleted



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Notable precipitations during the previous Persian calendar year (started March 21, 2026) have once again restored water to segments of the Lake Urmia bed and have resuscitated hopes for the rehabilitation of this watery expanse. Nevertheless, the recession of a considerable portion of these waters with the commencement of the warm season demonstrated that episodic rainfall, in isolation, cannot serve as the guarantor of the lake's deliverance. Lake Urmia, which over the course of more than one decade has forfeited a substantial fraction of its water, has today been transformed more into a seasonal wetland than a perennial lake; a condition whose roots must be sought beyond deficient precipitation and within the water consumption pattern and agricultural expansion in the lake's catchment basin.

Simultaneously, the persistence of excessive extraction from subterranean water resources, the proliferation of agricultural lands, and the cultivation of water-intensive crops in the region, in conjunction with the intensification of the water crisis throughout the nation, have exacerbated anxieties regarding the lake's future and the environmental ramifications of its desiccation.

Nonetheless, according to experts, the recent rainfall has conveyed a significant message: Lake Urmia still possesses the capacity for rehabilitation, provided that, simultaneously with the exploitation of climatic opportunities, the reformation of consumption patterns and the governance of water resources are also placed upon the agenda.

In the ensuing interview with Kamran Zeinalzadeh, the director of the Lake Urmia Research Institute, we have examined the most recent hydrological status of the lake, the effectiveness of the recent precipitations, the prospective outlook for forthcoming rainfall, the perpetuation of the subterranean water crisis, the role of agriculture and extraction from rivers, and, most critically, the real prerequisites for the restoration of Lake Urmia.

IRAN DAILY: At the inception of the current calendar year, when promising rainfall had occurred in the region, we conducted an interview with you concerning the condition of Lake Urmia. At that time, an extensive portion of the lakebed had been submerged; however, you issued a caution that, given the shallowness of the water and the start of the warm season, we would witness a decrease in the lake's water level. Now, after the passage of several months, how do you evaluate the state of the lake? And what differences does the current situation exhibit in comparison to the analogous period of the preceding year?

ZEINALZADEH: The current hydrological year, which commenced in Mehr 1404 (October 2025) and will conclude in Shahrivar 1405 (September 2026), has, from a climatological perspective, presented a favorable opportunity for Lake Urmia. During this hydrological year, the precipitation level increased by approximately 61% relative to the corresponding period of the previous hydrological year and by about 25% in comparison to the long-term analogous period; and this very factor caused a considerable volume of water to accumulate in the lake relative to prior years.

Of course, it must be noted that the bed of Lake Urmia, owing to the sedimentary deposits resulting from the evaporation

of the lake's water over the past three decades, has become nearly planar. Consequently, any water that enters the lake disperses rapidly across an extensive surface and does not attain significant depth. This phenomenon accelerates the evaporation rate of the lake's water. As we had predicted, with the onset of the warm season, a substantial portion of this accumulated water has evaporated; nevertheless, the lake's condition is superior to that of the previous year, which was among the worst years.

Could you provide a specific numerical figure concerning the current volume of the lake's water or the quantity of water that remains in comparison to the previous year?

The reality is that the numerical data pertaining to water volume under current circumstances, due to the imprecision of the existing bathymetric map of the lakebed, do not constitute accurate indices for evaluating the lake's status. The most recent precise information we possess regarding the topographical undulations of the lakebed dates to 1398 (2019-2020). Since that time, the lakebed has been altered under the influence of sedimentation processes, and for this reason, one cannot estimate with certitude regarding the extant volume of water in the lake.

However, the present situation is superior to that of the previous year.

At this moment, the lake's water level has risen by approximately 1.1 meters relative to the same period in the preceding year. The lake's surface area has also expanded by roughly 1,600 square kilometers compared to this time last year. I estimate that, under current conditions, the lake contains approximately 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of water.

It must be considered that, at this time last year, virtually no water remained within the lake — perhaps less than 100 million cubic meters. On the other hand, climatological projections indicate that the forthcoming autumn will likely bring relatively abundant rainfall as well. Perhaps the precipitation will not match the exceedingly heavy rainfall of the autumn of the previous year, but greater rainfall is forecast relative to recent years. Therefore, one may remain hopeful that autumnal precipitations will also contribute to the lake.

Given the adequate rainfall of the past two years, can it be asserted that these precipitations can lay the groundwork for the lake's rehabilitation?

The rainfall has rendered substantial assistance, but it cannot, in isolation, determine or guarantee the restoration of Lake Urmia. The principal problem of the lake is a grave and chronic malady, whose roots must be sought in the excessive consumption of water within the

catchment basin. We have persistently expanded agricultural lands beyond the capacity of the basin's renewable water resources. At present, there exist more than 600,000 hectares of irrigated lands surrounding the lake, particularly in the provinces of West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, and portions of Kurdistan.

A noteworthy point is that this crisis-stricken catchment basin is also active and holds a record in the exportation of water-intensive crops. This basin, while acutely suffering from water scarcity and having faced serious difficulties in recent years even in securing potable water for the settlements located within it, is an exporter of apples, other stone fruit crops, as well as commodities such as alfalfa, sugar beets, and other water-intensive products that are not particularly compatible with the region's climatic conditions.

The question arises: despite the constraints on water resources and the severe reduction in rainfall over past years, how does the production of these crops continue in such abundance? The answer must be sought in the absence of proper governance, insufficient supervision, the state of abandon in the water, agriculture, and natural resources sectors, and the lack of integrated water resource management.

Alongside surface water resources, the immoderate and unauthorized extraction of subterranean waters

also persists. These resources have been formed over thousands of years, but they are now being depleted at an accelerated rate.

The farmers themselves perceive this situation more acutely than anyone else; for every day, they are compelled to increase the depth of their wells in order to access water. This matter constitutes a serious warning regarding the state of subterranean water resources in the region.

Of course, it is possible that exceptional precipitations over several consecutive years might again introduce a considerable volume of water into the lake and contribute naturally to its rehabilitation process; however, subterranean water resources cannot, within such a temporal interval, compensate for the incurred water deficit.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, have the recent precipitations at least engendered the hope that Lake Urmia still possesses the capacity for rehabilitation?

That is correct. One of the most significant lessons that the recent precipitations have imparted to us is that Lake Urmia remains capable of restoration. Perhaps prior to these rainfalls, many people and officials had relinquished hope and supposed that the return of water to the lake was no longer possible. But the recent precipitations demonstrated that, if climatic conditions are

Tourists enjoy steering a swan-shaped pedal boat at Lake Urmia during sunset on August 15, 2026, after earlier heavy rainfall has raised hopes for the lake's revival.

● MOJTABA ESMAEIL ZAD/TASNIM





Tourists return to swimming in Lake Urmia on July 20, 2026, after recent precipitations have raised the lake's water level.
● MEHRDAD TABRIZI/IRNA

favorable, nature can assist in the lake's rehabilitation. As a result of these rains, approximately 3 to 4 billion cubic meters of water accumulated in the lake during early spring, and this event generated considerable optimism. In addition to the water that gathered in the lake, unofficial reports of the gradual dissolution of the lakebed's salt in certain areas and the deepening of the bed constituted another auspicious piece of news.

Of that volume of water, how much remains now?

Precise estimation is not feasible owing to the same issue I explained regarding the condition of the lakebed; however, based on superficial estimates, approximately 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of that lake water probably remains at the present time. But the atmospheric precipitations of the past year and the persistence of water in portions of the lake convey an important message: Lake Urmia is still restorable. We have no alternative but to proceed along the path of the lake's rehabilitation. Lake Urmia is not merely an aesthetically pleasing aquatic expanse; this lake plays a critical role in the region's climatic conditions, and its desiccation will entail serious consequences for the environment and for human livelihoods.

Therefore, the principal problem must be sought beyond the lake itself and in the water consumption within the catchment basin?

Precisely. I always employ an example to elucidate this matter. Suppose an individual has contracted diabetes due to excessive sugar consumption and, as the disease progresses, his foot has been damaged. We cannot merely contemplate treating or amputating his foot; we must rectify the primary disease, namely diabetes, which is rooted in the individual's consumptive regimen and lifestyle patterns. Lake Urmia is, in a sense, the consequence of a chronic ailment, and that ailment is the excessive consumption of water and unsustainable development within the catchment basin. If we persist in agricultural expansion and the immoderate extraction of water resources, the rainfall, even if increased, will not suffice to resolve the lake's and the basin's water problems. This trajectory endangers even the future security, the region's sustainability, and the resilience of forthcoming generations.

If the lake desiccates, what will be the most consequential ramification?

One of the significant repercussions of the lake's desiccation is the heightened risk of dust and salt particle emissions and the exacerbation of climatic alterations and damages in the region. Therefore, the issue is not merely the disappearance of a lake; its desiccation could generate a cascade of

environmental and social consequences. The problem, of course, is not confined to the Urmia catchment basin. Nearly all of the country's plains are confronting a negative water balance, and Iran is also in an extremely alarming state regarding land subsidence. The roots of this situation must be sought in unsustainable agricultural development, the disproportionate expansion of orchards, the establishment of water-intensive industries in water-scarce regions, and the neglect of territorial planning.

For the salvation of Lake Urmia and escaping from this predicament, what action should be prioritized?

If we desire the restoration of Lake Urmia and the preservation of the nation's wetlands, we must resolve the root cause of the problem. The excessive extraction from the basin's water resources is our foremost difficulty, and the volume of water that enters the lake through precipitation cannot compensate for these extractions. Even today, the issue is not exclusively environmental; we are also confronting a serious crisis in the provision of potable water. The past hydrological year was among the most difficult years in the country, and many cities, metropolises, and villages encountered grave difficulties in securing drinking water. Under such circumstances, it is natural that the primary priority is the supply of potable water, and in many regions, we cannot even furnish sufficient water for agriculture. This circumstance has exacerbated the heavy extraction of subterranean waters in the absence of supervision and governance. To extricate ourselves from this situation, we require integrated management and sound water governance. We must bring the water consumption into equilibrium and accept that, in an arid territory, we cannot continue to position traditional agriculture as the central axis of development. This does not signify the abandonment of agriculture. We require agriculture for food security, but we must transform our production methods. Today, novel technologies and scientific methodologies exist that permit us, with reduced cultivated area as well as lower water, pesticide, and fertilizer consumption, to achieve greater production and even sustainable exports of agricultural products.

Given the current circumstances, can it be stated that Lake Urmia has transcended the crisis phase, or does it remain in a critical condition?



The photo shows several artemia, the small brine shrimp that live in Lake Urmia, held in a person's hand.
● IRNA

Responding to this question necessitates precision. We have perhaps not had the former Lake Urmia for more than 10 years, and what we observe today is more of a seasonal wetland. In recent years, during autumn and early spring, precipitation causes some water to accumulate in the lake, but by the conclusion of the hydrological year, approximately in Shahrivar (August–September), the greater part of the bed again becomes desiccated, and this cycle repeats perpetually. Therefore, one cannot assert that we have passed beyond the crisis. As long as integrated water resource management is not established, the excessive expansion of farms is not halted, and the cultivation of crops incompatible with the region's climatic conditions is not controlled, one cannot speak of having overcome the crisis.

As you indicated, one of the critical issues is the extensive extraction of subterranean waters from the lands surrounding the lake. What direct connection do these extractions have with the condition of the lake itself?

This matter, from a scientific perspective, requires more meticulous investigation, and one must speak with scientific data regarding the degree of direct impact of subterranean water extraction upon the lake. Here, I principally wished to elucidate the dimensions of the water crisis; that is, that simultaneously with the lake's desiccation, on a broader scale, we are also confronting the depletion of subterranean water resources. These two phenomena, in conjunction, demonstrate that we are facing a grave crisis and that we must devise remedies for it as expeditiously as possible.

Do species that previously existed in Lake Urmia, such as Artemia, still persist?

Artemia, fortunately, has the capacity to tolerate harsh conditions of water scarcity, and even under desiccated conditions, its cysts can persist; and whenever conditions become suitable — that is, when water enters the lake and salinity reaches a tolerable level — Artemia can become active anew and resume its life cycle.

At present, Artemia exists in the lake, and given its abundance, proposals have even been advanced for its harvest and appropriate utilization since this aquatic organism could be economically and livelihood-wise beneficial for farmers and residents surrounding the lake.

Under current conditions, can water from rivers and dams be redirected toward Lake Urmia through management measures?

Unfortunately, due to climatic conditions, a considerable portion of efforts is now devoted to securing potable water. On the other hand, along the course of rivers and in the plains, agricultural lands have expanded to such an extent that a large fraction of river water is consumed before it can reach the lake. For this reason, we no longer possess a river capable of conveying a substantial volume of water to the lake as it once did. According to estimates, the basin's rivers, under natural conditions, should deliver approximately 3.2 billion cubic meters of water annually to the lake; however, under current circumstances, the quantity of water that actually reaches the lake is far inferior to this amount.

If you were to offer a concluding warning or principal recommendation regarding the future of Lake Urmia and the nation's water crisis, what would you state?

We must arrive as rapidly as possible at the recognition that the water issue is not merely an environmental matter but can be declared a crisis, and therefore we must take action to resolve this issue as soon as possible. The pattern of water consumption in the country is not commensurate with the region's capacity. We must transition toward activities that generate greater revenue with lower water consumption, including the development of services and industries appropriate to the region's capacity, and novel agricultural technologies. If we do not institute these changes, we shall continue to progress along the same worsening trajectory, and the water crisis will assume far more serious dimensions in the future.

”

It must be considered that, at this time last year, virtually no water remained within the lake — perhaps less than 100 million cubic meters. On the other hand, climatological projections indicate that the forthcoming autumn will likely bring relatively abundant rainfall as well. Perhaps the precipitation will not match the exceedingly heavy rainfall of the autumn of the previous year, but greater rainfall is forecast relative to recent years. Therefore, one may remain hopeful that autumnal precipitations will also contribute to the lake.

”

The problem, of course, is not confined to the Urmia catchment basin. Nearly all of the country's plains are confronting a negative water balance, and Iran is also in an extremely alarming state regarding land subsidence. The roots of this situation must be sought in unsustainable agricultural development, the disproportionate expansion of orchards, the establishment of water-intensive industries in water-scarce regions, and the neglect of territorial planning.

The photo shows an overview of the lands surrounding a part of Lake Urmia on August 30, 2026, after comparatively increased rainfalls of the previous months.
● HAMID AKBARI/FARS



AVC Men's Volleyball Continental Championship:

Iran holds off Taipei fightback, sets up last-four date with Australia



Iranian middle blocker Mohammad Valizadeh (27) hits a spike during a 3-1 quarterfinal victory over Chinese Taipei at the AVC Men's Volleyball Continental Championship in Fukuoka, Japan, on Sept. 11, 2026.

● QAAVC

Sports Desk

Iran overcame a third-set wobble to beat Chinese Taipei 3-1 (25-19, 25-19, 21-25, 25-18) on Friday and advance to the AVC Men's Volleyball Continental Championship semifinals in Fukuoka, Japan. Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh finished with a game-high 24 points, with fellow outside hitter Morteza Sharifi, as well as prolific opposites Amin Esmailnejad and Ali Hajipour, adding 12 apiece, as Iran tallied 68 points from attacks, seven blocks and four service points, while benefiting from 17 opposition errors. Outside hitter Chang Yu-Chen led Chinese Taipei with 18 points, while Wen Yi-Kai and Chang Yu-Sheng also reached double figures, chipping in 14 and 11, respectively. Standing between Iran and a fourth successive final ap-

pearance in today's semifinal will be Australia, which managed a tough 3-0 (25-22, 26-24, 25-19) straight-sets win over Thailand on Thursday, outplaying Thailand mostly at the net with a 10-4 advantage in kill blocks. Outside hitter Lorenzo Pope was the top scorer of the match, contributing 17 points, spiking at a 56 percent success rate and adding two kill blocks and an ace. Opposite Lincoln Alexander Williams chipped in with another 15 points, including two aces and a block. As if Iran needed extra motivation to chase a fifth continental crown in eight editions, direct Olympic qualification is up for grabs in Fukuoka, with the champion securing a berth at the multi-sport extravaganza in Los Angeles in two years. However, with defending champion Japan regarded as the ultimate favorite to punch the L.A. ticket on

home soil, Iran will have to deliver a much-improved performance from its disappointing Volleyball Nations League run in July in a likely showdown with the formidable hosts.

Entering the event on the back of nine defeats – including a 3-2 setback against Japan – in 12 outings in the VNL preliminaries, Iran defeated both New Zealand and India in straight sets before claiming a hard-fought 3-1 win (25-23, 23-25, 25-22, 25-23) against China on Wednesday to progress to the quarterfinals as the Pool B winner.

China surrendered a first-set lead to be stunned by South Korea 3-1 (17-25, 25-21, 25-22, 29-27) in the other quarterfinal on Thursday.

The two semifinalists in Fukuoka will be joined by the bronze medalist in qualifying for the rebranded FIVB Volleyball World Cup next year in Poland.

Asian Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championship:

Girls' glory inspires Iran to team title



Sports Desk

Iranian girls accounted for nine of the 11 gold medals as the country collected 31 medals to secure the team title at the Asian Cadet, Junior & U21 Karate Championship in Amman, Jordan. Iranian girls stole the show in the U21 women's kumite category on Thursday, bagging four golds and one bronze across five weight classes to bring the curtain down on a glorious campaign for the country in the Jordanian capital. Ghazal Fat'hi claimed the top prize in the -50kg event with an 11-1 victory over Saudi Arabia's Joud Myajan in the final, while Fatemeh Ja'farnejad defeated the host's Balsam Al-Saaidh 4-1 for the -55kg gold. Zahra Rezazadeh capped off her dominant -61kg campaign, during which she did not concede a single point across three bouts, with a

5-0 win against Macau's Lo Pui Cheng in the final. Mahla Sedaqat added a fourth gold on the final day in the +68kg division, beating India's Kalyani Vishwakarma 9-0 in the final. Boshra Imani, meanwhile, settled for a consolation bronze in the -68kg class, bouncing back from a semi-final setback against India's Anshika Bhardwaj to beat Jordan's Shadi Said Al Najjar in the third-place bout. Elsewhere, Abolfazl Tamadonzadeh added a silver to Iran's medal haul in the men's U21 contests following a 5-1 loss to Tajikistan's Makhosatullo Muminov in the -55kg final. Mahdi Choubakzan finished with a bronze in the -67kg class, courtesy of a 4-3 win against Chinese Taipei's Huang Tsu-en in the third-place bout. Abolfazl Hamdamjou (-60kg), Erfan Koshaqideh (-75kg), Vahab Shahmir (-84kg), and

Taha Yousefi (+84kg) were the other Iranians in men's U21 action but missed out on the podium in their respective events. Nirvana Razzaqi (-47kg), Baran Shadfar (-54kg), and Dina Karimi (-61kg) were the Iranian gold medalists in the girls' cadet category, with Abolfazl Arab-Yaqoubi (-63kg) and Hamidreza Rezayati (-70kg) triumphing in the boys' competition. In the junior kumite, meanwhile, Iran's sole gold medal came in the women's -53kg class, where Setayesh Qaneifard defeated Ramah Khayyat in the final. Iran was also not short of glory in the kata contests, spearheaded by Dina Safari, who outscored Iraq's Lanya Ahmed in the cadet girls' final. Saudi Arabia tallied 23 medals, including eight golds, to finish runner-up to Iran in the team standings, with Jordan in third place with seven golds.

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

No room for another stumble after Iran falls to Qatar in basketball opener

Sports Desk

Iran's men's basketball team was left with no room for further slip-ups in its next two Group B games after getting off to a losing start at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, suffering a 59-53 defeat against Qatar on Thursday. After an even opening quarter at the Aichi International Arena, Qatar outscored Iran 21-11 in the second to establish a 31-21 half-time lead. Iran fought back in the final period but could not erase the deficit, extending its losing streak after back-to-back setbacks against New Zealand and the Philippines in the FIBA World Cup qualifiers less than a fortnight ago. American-born guard Michael Lewis scored a game-high 21 points for Qatar, with Dejan Janjic adding 11. Matin Aqajpour led Iran with 15 points, while Piter Girgoorian finished with 10. Despite having several players capable of shooting from long range, Iran's poor three-point shooting ultimately proved costly. Iran attempted 36 three-pointers but converted only nine of them, finishing with a 25 percent success rate. More than 65 percent of the team's field-goal attempts came from beyond the arc, highlighting its heavy reliance on perimeter shooting and making it easier for Qatar to defend against a largely one-dimensional offense. Iran was also inefficient from inside the arc. The team attempted only 19 two-point shots during the game, making six for a 32 percent shooting rate. Qatar, meanwhile, made greater use of drives and play around the basket, converting 16 of its 30 two-point attempts for 53 percent and gaining a clear advantage in

the paint.

Iran's struggles at the free-throw line added to its problems in a game decided by just six points. The Iranians made only 14 of 24 free throws, leaving 10 points at the line and missing a valuable opportunity to close the gap or potentially turn the game around. The statistical battle was otherwise relatively even. Qatar narrowly won the rebounding contest 36-34, while Iran had slight advantages in assists and steals, 12-11 and 12-10, respectively. Qatar also committed more turnovers, 20 compared with Iran's 18.

day before concluding its group campaign against Jordan on Sunday, knowing that another defeat would leave its hopes of advancing to the quarterfinals hanging by a thread.

Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos's side, however, will look to build on its recent success against its next two opponents. Iran produced an epic fightback to overcome a 21-point deficit and defeat Chinese Taipei 78-75 in a thrilling quarterfinal clash at last year's FIBA Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia. Iran met Jordan as recently as July at the preliminary stage of the



Qatar's Mike Lewis (2) dribbles past Iran's Mohammad Heidari in a Group B game in the men's basketball event at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, on Sept. 10, 2026.

● AFP

However, the decisive difference came in overall shooting efficiency. Iran made just 15 of 55 field-goal attempts for a dismal 27 percent, compared with Qatar's 43 percent. Chasing a fifth medal in six Asian Games editions, Iran will resume action against Chinese Taipei to-

FIBA World Cup qualifiers, where Manolopoulos's men comprehensively won 67-49 in Amman before completing a 5-1 run to progress to the second round, making amends for the 73-60 setback against their familiar West Asian foe earlier in the qualifiers in February. Chinese Taipei narrowly defeated Jordan 83-80 later on Thursday. The top two teams in each of the three groups will be joined by the two best third-placed teams in the quarterfinals.

Lavandevil aims to move beyond a stopover destination

Iranica Desk

Lavandevil can be considered one of the lesser-known tourism hubs in western part of Gilan Province. The city and its surrounding area encompass a diverse range of attractions, from the Caspian Sea coast and wetlands to the Hyrcanian forests, Latun Waterfall, Kuteh Kumeh hot spring and the Lavandevil Wildlife Refuge. Despite these natural assets, the area continues to face challenges, including inadequate infrastructure and short tourist stays.

According to IRNA, Lavandevil's location along the Astara-Talesh route, its proximity to the Caspian Sea and access to a range of natural attractions have made it one of the key tourism assets of Astara. With proper planning, investment and local community participation, this potential could play a greater role in the regional economy.

Latun Waterfall, located in the mountainous areas of Lavandevil, is the area's most important natural attraction. It draws a considerable number of nature tourists and mountaineers every year. The journey to the waterfall is also part of the attraction, with visitors enjoying views of the Hyrcanian forests, rivers and surrounding highlands along the way.

Alongside Latun, the Kuteh Kumeh hot spring, nearby villages and the area's forested landscapes offer considerable potential for developing rural tourism and ecotourism. This potential could encourage visitors to stay in the area longer rather than making only brief stops. The coast and Sadaf tourism complex, wetlands and the Lavandevil Wildlife Refuge form another part of the area's chain of attractions. This diversity gives Lavandevil the potential to attract visitors with a range of interests, from nature-based and coastal tourism to rural tourism and wildlife experiences.

Ahmad Dadashzadeh-Asl, head of the Astara Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said construction of the first hotel in Lavandevil has reached 50 percent completion. He



said the complex is being built with 20 rooms and 48 beds, along with a range of accommodation, recreational and welfare facilities. He said construction of the hotel, the first hotel in the Lavandevil area, is aimed at developing tourism infrastructure and increasing accommodation capacity for visitors. He added that once completed, the hotel will have 20 rooms with a capacity of 48 beds. Planned facilities include a restaurant, coffee shop, swimming pool, bowling alley and sports areas. Construction is currently about 50 percent complete, while parts of the com-

plex's recreational and sports facilities are also under construction. Dadashzadeh-Asl said such facilities could help develop tourism infrastructure in Lavandevil, increase the length of visitors' stays and boost tourism-related economic activities in the area. Referring to Lavandevil's natural and tourism potential, he said the area's natural attractions and its location along Astara's tourism route have made strengthening accommodation and service infrastructure increasingly necessary. He emphasized that cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts are valuable

assets for the development of the area and said the department's goal is to introduce Astara's historical, cultural and natural attractions to domestic and international tourists and create conditions for more travel to the area. Dadashzadeh-Asl added that developing tourism infrastructure is a priority, while careful planning and private-sector cooperation can play a decisive role in increasing visitor stays and improving the quality of their trips. Referring to Astara's geographic location and proximity to the border, he said its pristine nature, busy customs facilities, coastline and natural and historical attractions offer suitable opportunities for investment in tourism. Dadashzadeh identified the short length of tourist stays as one of the challenges facing tourism in Astara, saying visitors currently stay in the area for less than one day. He said developing accommodation and dining facilities is essential to extending their stays. Vali Dadashi, Astara's representative in Parliament, also said completion of the hotel could create new employment opportunities for young people in the area. He emphasized that tourism development in Lavandevil should not be limited solely to increasing accommodation capacity, adding that the area's natural, historical and cultural assets should also be used to attract visitors and encourage longer stays. The lawmaker said investment in accommodation infrastructure can boost tourism only when accompanied by the promotion and development of local attractions, the creation of tourism services and measures to encourage visitors to spend more time in the area. At the same time, making use of private-sector investment alongside Lavandevil's natural and cultural resources could strengthen tourism while creating employment and supporting economic growth for local residents. One of Lavandevil's advantages is the close connection between its natural attractions and the lives of local com-



munities. In addition to their scenic surroundings, the area's villages have the potential to offer local products, traditional foods, handicrafts and accommodation services. Developing ecotourism lodges, launching small tourism businesses, employing local young people as nature guides and marketing rural products could increase the local community's share of tourism revenue. Under such conditions, tourists would not merely visit a natural attraction; their presence could also contribute to the growth of local restaurants, accommodation facilities, sales of local products, transportation and other services. However, increased tourism in Lavandevil also has another side: without proper management, greater visitor numbers could put pressure on forests, rivers, wetlands and the area's natural habitats. The presence of the Lavandevil Wildlife Refuge and the location of some tourism attractions within environmentally sensitive areas make the move toward sustainable tourism even more important. Organizing tourism routes, managing waste, providing restrooms and visitor facilities where needed, preventing unregulated construction and educating tourists and local communities are among the measures that could help strike a balance between tourism development and nature conservation. Experts say tourism development should not alter Lavandevil's natural character. Instead, the goal should be to provide infrastructure that allows visitors to enjoy nature without damaging it.

Makoran reveals geological story of Earth

Iranica Desk

Makoran is a name that carries a story hundreds of millions of years old — a story of continental collisions, the crashing waves of the Indian Ocean and the remarkable adaptability of life in one of the harshest climates on Earth. Ali Ghomi Avili, a specialist in ecology and world natural heritage, wrote in a note published by CHTN that Makoran, stretching from Gwatar and Pasabandar in Chabahar to Jask in Hormozgan Province, is far more than a coastline. It is a "living laboratory" where the pulse of Earth's tectonic activity can be observed at the very point where land meets the sea. The note offers an integrated account of this natural masterpiece, from the hidden layers of its geology to the fragile ecosystems that have developed along its shores. To understand Makoran, it is necessary to look beyond the surface and into the depths of the ocean and Earth's crust. The



landscape of this coastline was shaped not by calm, but by one of the world's most active convergent continental boundaries. This vast section of Earth's crust is slowly but continuously being forced beneath the Eurasian Plate. Through this intense process, a massive geological structure known as the Makoran accretionary prism has been formed. Like folds etched into the surface of the Earth, the accretionary prism is the product of ocean-floor sediments being compressed and deformed and gradually pushed upward over millions of years. The result of this silent but powerful collision is a coastline that is not static,

but constantly evolving. The mud volcanoes of Konarak are among the clearest expressions of this geological activity. They appear like openings through which the Earth breathes, with columns of mud and fluids rising from deep within the accretionary prism and reaching the surface. They reflect the continuing movement of sediments and fluids within a geological structure that is still taking shape. Nearby, the Shourain saltwater spring provides another sign of Makoran's dynamic geology. Its water does not originate from rainfall, but from underground water sources affected by tec-



tonic processes and intense evaporation. The region is presented not as a single, continuous site, but as a "serial natural property" comprising seemingly separate components that are, in reality, interconnected like links in a chain. Among them are the Miniature Mountains, locally known as the "Martian Mountains." Their ochre-colored hills have been sculpted by wind and water from unconsolidated coastal sediments into striking corridors, columns and other formations that appear to belong to another planet. The crescent-shaped bays of Beris and Pozm, meanwhile,

form tranquil recesses among rugged cliffs, creating a striking contrast with the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean. The Darak coastal area and Gurdim Rock add further diversity to the landscape. But Makoran is not simply a story of rocks and water. In the midst of its vast arid landscape, the Pink Lagoon stands out like a jewel. This rare ecosystem owes its distinctive pink color not to artificial pigments, but to halophilic microorganisms and the particular chemical conditions of its waters. Further along the coast, the mangrove forests of Gwatar Bay form a green refuge between

land and sea. They provide habitat for migratory birds and countless aquatic species, which find shelter from the region's arid conditions and high salinity among the aerial roots of the mangroves. Elsewhere, ancient temple fig trees have survived in rocky terrain and shallow soils. These venerable trees demonstrate the remarkable resilience of life in the face of water scarcity, salinity and extreme heat. The natural landscapes of Rig and Khor-e Tang complete this remarkable mosaic. Erosional and sedimentary processes have created distinctive landforms across these dry coastal environments. Together, the components form a continuous natural landscape in which tectonic forces, ocean waters, eroded soils and highly adapted forms of life have become intricately intertwined, creating an extraordinary masterpiece of nature. Inscription of the site on the UNESCO World Heritage List would be an important and historic step toward recognizing, protecting and promoting a remarkable concentration of geodiversity. Here, fire, water, soil and life have combined in an extraordinary interplay along the shores of the Indian Ocean.

President backs major expansion of university research funding



Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said the government is seeking to provide up to \$2 billion to strengthen scientific and research activities at Iranian universities, as he met with presidents of the country's leading universities to discuss student services and solutions to energy challenges. Pezeshkian said expanding universities' scientific and research capacity ranks among the administration's priorities, stressing that the government is determined to draw on the expertise of academics and scholars in managing the country's affairs, president.ir reported.

"We need to use the intellectual and scientific capacity of scholars and academics," he said, describing universities as vital partners in improving economic management, efficiency and the effective use of resources.

The president said universities need between \$1 billion and \$2 billion for research equipment and expansion, adding that the government was working with the Planning and Budget Organization to secure the necessary funding. He said resources could be reallocated if necessary to address universities' needs.

The meeting also addressed student welfare, including funding for student support and meal services. Pezeshkian proposed giving students a greater role in university decision-making through surveys and consultations overseen by management faculties.

He said the process should begin during the first month of the current academic year, with university procedures adjusted where necessary after gathering students' views.

Pezeshkian also called for university admissions to better match the country's real needs and approved budgets, arguing that unnecessary spending on fields with limited practical demand should be redirected toward improving educational quality and supporting faculty members. Turning to energy, the president said universities could help the government curb unnecessary consumption and develop a more sustainable culture around fuel use.

He outlined plans for government employees to go car-free at least one day a week and for students to receive public transportation cards.

Such measures, he said, could reduce gasoline consumption and air pollution while conserving energy resources and strengthening national resilience.

Pezeshkian also called on universities to contribute ideas on preparing for winter energy demand, reducing costs and improving efficiency, saying the government had already begun pursuing energy-saving measures across its own institutions.

He described students as "an opportunity" and urged universities to tap their ideas and intellectual capacity in addressing the country's challenges.

In a separate message to the Islamic Association of Students, Pezeshkian called for teenagers to become active participants in addressing the country's challenges rather than merely recipients of information. He urged students to understand national issues, think critically, offer ideas and contribute within their capacity to finding solutions.

He described the Islamic Association of Students as a lasting legacy of the Islamic Revolution and stressed the importance of strengthening young people's analytical, intellectual and spiritual capacities. The government, he said, supports educational institutions that can provide greater opportunities for young people to participate in society and help shape the country's future.

Persian handicrafts on display at BRICS exhibition in New Delhi

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian handicraft artists are showcasing the country's rich traditional arts, including Gilan's distinctive Rashti embroidery, at a specialized exhibition in New Delhi held alongside the 18th BRICS Summit from September 8 to 15.

The exhibition at the Handicrafts and Handlooms House brings together works from BRICS countries and offers a cultural showcase of their diverse artistic traditions. The summit itself is scheduled for September 12 and 13 at Bharat Mandapam in the Indian capital under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

Iran is represented by two prominent handicraft artists, presenting selected works that highlight the country's long-standing traditions and regional craftsmanship, CHTN reported.

Among them is Gilan-based veteran artist Ameneh Sedighi Chafjiri, a noted practitioner of Rashti embroidery. Her works bring a distinctive expression of northern Iran's artistic heritage to an international audience.

Rooted in the cultural landscape of Gilan, Rashti embroidery is distinguished by intricate needlework, traditional motifs and visual patterns shaped by the region's history and natural environment. The craft carries elements of local identity while reflecting the broader diversity of Iran's handmade arts. Its presentation in New Delhi places a regional Iranian art form within a wider international cultural setting, allowing visitors and representatives from participating countries to engage with a craft tradition passed down through generations. The exhibition forms part of a broader program surrounding India's 2026



BRICS chairship, which has included cultural and people-to-people exchanges alongside political, economic and financial initiatives. India has held the chairmanship since January 1, 2026, with cultural cooperation among the areas highlighted during its year-long



program. The handicraft exhibition will remain open through September 15, giving visi-



tors an opportunity to explore traditional works from participating countries, including Iran.

Wisteria complex nears completion as Iran advances tourism innovation hub



CHTN

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri visited the under-construction Wisteria Technology Tower and five-star hotel in Tehran on September 10, inspecting its technical works and meeting investors and project managers.

The multifunctional complex, billed as the country's first of its kind focused on innovation and tourism, is being built on a 4,200-square-meter site and combines commercial, administrative, service and hospitality facilities, IRNA reported. Construction is now 80 to 85 percent complete, putting the project on the cusp of its final finishing and outfitting phase. Salehi-Amiri called for faster completion of the development, which is designed to bring together tourism and the knowledge-based economy. The hospitality section will

feature 70 rooms and suites designed to five-star standards, with the capacity to accommodate specialized tourists, business delegations and technology professionals. The project is also intended to serve as a hub for technology products and innovation-related financial exchanges. Its planned facilities will provide space for showcasing and trading technological products while supporting links between the capital market and the technology sector. Project managers said construction has advanced in line with international engineering and building standards. They expect the complex to open by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, corresponding to March 20, 2027, or at the latest in early April. The development is being positioned as a new platform for combining hospitality, technology and tourism services in the capital.

Persian Gulf's ancient waters helped shape Sumerian civilization

Arts & Culture Desk

The shifting tides and waterways of the Persian Gulf played a decisive role in the emergence of ancient Sumer, one of the world's earliest urban civilizations, according to a new study published in the journal PLOS One.

The research reconstructs the ancient landscape of southern Mesopotamia and argues that the interaction of tides, rivers and a changing coastline created favorable conditions for intensive agriculture and the rise of the region's first cities, ILNA eported.

Led by Liviu Giosan, a retired senior scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Reed Goodman, an assistant professor of environmental social science at Clemson University, the study combined satellite data, paleoenvironmental evidence and newly collected sediment cores from Tell al-Hiba, the site of the ancient city of Lagash.

Researchers place Sumer's flourishing during the Uruk period, roughly 6,000 to 5,200 years ago, when communities combined herding, trade and diverse natural resources. Yet those activities alone do not explain how early societies generated enough agricultural surplus to sustain sophisticated city-states such as Uruk, Ur and Lagash before large-scale irrigation systems emerged. The researchers identify tidal irrigation as a possible missing piece. For centuries, tides from the Persian Gulf reportedly carried freshwater twice daily into the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates, nourishing fertile landscapes where small canals and date-palm groves could develop without massive infrastructure.



This stable hydrological system supported intensive and diversified farming, helping populations grow and societies become increasingly complex. As river deltas gradually advanced and the coastline shifted, however, access to tidal waters diminished.

Sumerian communities then turned to larger river-based irrigation projects requiring greater political coordination and more centralized administration.

Holly Pittman, director of the Lagash Archaeological Project at the Penn Museum, said the findings correspond with archaeological evidence, noting that rapid environmental change, inequality and political concentration helped shape the world's earliest urban society.

The study also explores how the changing waterscape may have found its way into Sumerian religious memory. Myths surrounding Enki and the separation of "fresh" and "bitter" waters may preserve echoes of an ancient environment where tidal currents brought freshwater and saltwater into constant contact.

By placing coastal dynamics at the heart of urbanization, the research offers a fresh perspective on Sumer's emergence as a civilization shaped by both human ingenuity and the life-giving waters surrounding Mesopotamia.