

Iran Daily

Vol. 8271 ● Sunday, November 22, 2026 ● Azar 01, 1405 ● Jumada al-Thani 12, 1448 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Pezeshkian calls for closer regional engagement to boost trade

3

How Iran can counter US economic strangulation



By Amin Mokarrami
Economic journalist

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The United States appears to be settling on a strategy that avoids renewed military strikes and a negotiated settlement with Iran. According to a report on US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's remarks to G7 foreign ministers, the Trump administration wants to maintain economic pressure and the naval blockade while restricting Iran's access to land routes. The aim is to raise the costs of standing firm until Tehran accepts Washington's terms.

This approach should be taken seriously, but it is not an entirely new challenge. Iran has lived with sanctions for years and learned how to keep parts of its trade and production moving. Experience, however, is not a strategy. The pressure described by US officials makes it urgent to address the weaknesses sanctions have exposed, rather than simply finding temporary ways around them.

The first priority is to keep trade routes open and diversified. A country dependent on a few ports or border crossings is vulnerable when those links come under pressure. Iran's location links the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman to the Caucasus, Central Asia, Turkey and beyond. It needs to turn that advantage into a functioning network of roads, railways, ports and customs facilities. The North-South Corridor and Eurasian Economic Union links need reliable, competitive services and efficient border handling.

This requires practical agreements with neighbors. Border procedures can be simplified, customs services coordinated and transit rules made predictable. Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Central Asia offer different routes and markets. No single corridor can replace all others. A network gives traders alternatives when one route is disrupted.

Regional trade must be easier to finance. Banking restrictions turn ordinary transactions into costly exercises. Iranian exporters and importers need workable payment arrangements, including local-currency settlement, bilateral banking channels, countertrade and commodity exchanges. These mechanisms cannot replace normal access to international finance, but can reduce dependence on channels most exposed to US pressure. Such arrangements will attract partners only if they are commercially useful. Businesses need clear rules, timely payments and confidence that agreements will not change without warning. Governments can negotiate frameworks, but companies must be able to use them without excessive paperwork or political interference. Iran must also protect the foreign-currency income needed to finance imports and stabilize the domestic market. Oil remains important, but dependence on a narrow group of buyers or export channels creates risks. Maintaining energy relationships, expanding refined-product and petrochemical exports and developing non-oil sources of foreign exchange should go hand in hand. The effect of a blockade would be felt beyond headline export figures. Delays in shipping and payments can raise the cost of imported inputs, interrupt production and feed inflation. Protecting supply chains is therefore as important as finding new reliable buyers for exports.

At home, the most effective response is to reduce the cost of doing business. Sanctions become more damaging when combined with unpredictable regulations, multiple exchange rates, slow customs procedures and uncertainty over raw materials. These problems cannot all be blamed on external pressure. They are policy choices that can be corrected. Clearer currency allocation, priorities for essential imports, faster customs clearance and stable rules would help producers plan and keep factories operating.

This matters for machinery, spare parts and intermediate goods. A factory cannot maintain production if a critical component is unavailable. Import substitution is useful when economically viable and when it strengthens local capacity. It becomes costly when pursued without regard to quality, price or technology.

Page 3

IRGC unveils dual-missile liquid-fuel launcher

Army warns of immediate response to any new aggression

2



The photo shows a dual missile liquid-fuel launcher unveiled by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps at an underground facility in Iran on November 21, 2026.
defapress.ir



58th US MQ-9 drone downed by Iran over Strait of Hormuz

2



New standards planned to improve quality of handicrafts

7



Hosseini tips Iranian women weightlifters to vie for global glory

6



Tehran book fair to return in December after war disruption

8







IRGC unveils dual-missile liquid-fuel launcher

Army warns of immediate response to any new aggression

International Desk

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force unveiled a new missile launcher capable of carrying and simultaneously firing two liquid-fuel missiles for the first time.
The system was displayed during a visit by IRGC Commander Major General Vahidi to one of the force's underground missile facilities, where several new military capabilities and achievements were also showcased.
According to IRGC commanders, the newly displayed capabilities have been developed and upgraded during the period between the two imposed wars by the US and Israel on the country.
The unveiling of the dual-missile liquid-fuel launcher marks another step in the development of the IRGC's multiple-missile launch systems. On April 7, the force used a launcher capable of simultaneously firing two solid-fuel missiles during the final days of the third war. Liquid-fuel missiles offer capabilities such as vertical launch and adjustable impact speed, features that can contribute to their operational effectiveness and help them penetrate or evade air defense systems.



Missiles are displayed during a visit by the Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Major General Vahidi to one of the country's underground missile facilities on November 21, 2026.
defapress.ir

Iran's Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia said on Saturday that the country's Armed Forces have full surveillance and control over the Strait of Hormuz from east to west, warning that anay new aggression would trigger an immediate, decisive and effective response.
Speaking at a meeting with commanders of Army units in southern Iran, Akraminia said Iran is considerably stronger than it had been in the past and that its military forces are fully prepared to confront any new threat.
He warned that Iran's response would not be confined to any particular geographical area.
The army spokesman said the enemy had so far failed to achieve its objectives, including occupying Iranian territory, breaking up the country or establishing control over Iran, despite the damage inflicted on the country.
"The United States has no choice but to accept Iran's logical and legitimate conditions," Akraminia said, adding that Washington could not gain control over the Strait of Hormuz through hostile actions and aggression.
"The enemy should not think it can start a war whenever it wants and stop it at a time of its choosing," he said.

Protests held across Europe over wages, services, high living costs

Protesters rallied across 25 European countries amid a wave of public discontent over issues ranging from high living costs to military spending and the climate crisis, ramping up pressure on political leaders they accuse of ignoring the concerns of young people.
Inspired by demonstrations that have shaken France in recent months, thousands took to the streets in countries including the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Croatia on Friday.
The rallies, coordinated by a youth-led coalition of over 50 groups, are fueled by grievances that vary from place to place, including Israel's war in Gaza, high rents and deteriorating learning conditions at schools and universities.
But a common theme runs through them – a sense that governments across the continent are too busy with geopolitical crises and helping big business, and not investing enough in the well-being of younger generations.
While Europe seeks to rearm in the face of a hostile Russia, organizers of the continent-wide protests say funds allocated to rearmament should be spent on education, youth policies and housing.
Tens of thousands of workers and students protested in more than 100 Italian cities to demand higher wages and greater investment in public services.



Protesters hold a placard featuring the German Chancellor Friedrich Merz painted as a clown during a demonstration against issues from high living costs to military spending and the climate crisis in Frankfurt, Germany, on November 20, 2026.
AFP

The rallies coincided with a general strike by Italy's largest trade union, CGIL, that involved workers in both the private and public sectors, including schools and healthcare.
The Italian rallies followed a nationwide mobilization on October 17 that descended into rioting and looting and prompted the right-wing government of Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni to approve sweeping security measures and deploy the army alongside police in subsequent demonstrations.
Student groups have since continued protests and occupations at schools and universities, with opposition to higher military spending also emerging as a rallying cry.
Opposition leaders joining demonstrations on Friday criticized Meloni's government and its budget policies amid rising living costs.
Several hundred protesters, some in school uniform, gathered at demonstrations in London outside parliament and in nearby Trafalgar Square, waving placards that said "save higher education" and "Fight for our futures not their wars".
"I've lost so much hope," Eliz, who had taken the day off from college and gave only one name, told AFP.
The 18-year-old said she was unsure whether she would go to university, "because of money. Because most jobs are getting taken over by AI. Everyone's just kind of more depressed".
Meanwhile, in Germany, campaign group "Gen Z regelt" (German for "Gen Z sorts it") said it was organizing protests in 73 cities and towns.
In Berlin, roughly 4,000 people attended a protest in the city's Alexanderplatz square.
Protesters gathered to call for greater education funding and to oppose a possible return to compulsory military service.

58th US MQ-9 drone downed by Iran over Strait of Hormuz

International Desk

Iran's Armed Forces on Saturday successfully intercepted and downed a US military MQ-9 drone in the skies of the Strait of Hormuz.
According to a statement by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), the drone was targeted and destroyed by a newly deployed and advanced air defense system operated by the IRGC Aerospace Force. The operation marks the 58th MQ-9 drone shot down by Iranian forces.
Iranian authorities have repeatedly stated that they continuously monitor all military and aerial activities in the strategic waterway and will respond firmly to any violations of the country's airspace.
The MQ-9 Reaper is a medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned combat aerial vehicle utilized by the US military for surveillance and targeted strikes.
Iran has downed many drones over the course of the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, which started in late February.
Meanwhile, two other tankers caught fire in the Strait of Hormuz after hitting naval mines, British maritime agency UKMTO said.
"A tanker transiting outbound in the Strait of Hormuz has been hit on the stern by an unknown projectile. There are no reported casualties at this time," the agency said, adding that another tanker was struck in its engine room.
Iran's Army on Saturday said a ship was on fire after hitting a mine in the strait.
"Before noon today, a violating oil tanker that had entered a restricted zone east of the Strait of Hormuz caught fire after striking a naval mine," Iran's Army naval forces said in a statement.
The tanker "had its identification and navigation systems switched off, in defiance of issued warnings and maritime transit regulations," it added.



In recent weeks, Tehran has made multiple announcements saying ships have caught fire in the strait after striking mines.
But the US military recently claimed it had cleared all mines from the main routes through the waterway.
Iran maintains full control over transit through the Strait of Hormuz — responsible for the flow of roughly one-fifth of global oil — requiring prior authorization and confining safe passage exclusively to designated northern corridors.
Southern routes near Omani waters are declared unauthorized and mined.
IRGC Navy units continue to intercept or neutralize ships attempting covert transit, including those linked to the Israeli regime or operating under US encouragement.
The force underscores that only ships complying with Iranian rules can transit safely, while those serving the interests of the aggressors will face decisive consequences.
Iran imposed the restrictions on the Strait of Hormuz in response to the latest round of US-Israeli aggression, which began on February 28.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0240004
First Announcement
N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
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	CASING, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS, "VAM","NEW VAM" THREAD, R-3 API 5CT/ISO 11960, PSL: 2, AS PER API 5CT/ISO 11960, SIZE(OD), WEIGHT(PPF), AS SPECIFIED, MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT, NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I: 1) "QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM", "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION", OD: ACC. TO CLAUSE 8.11.1 APISCT 10 ED. (TABLE 13 & 14 & 15), WT: ACCORDING TO CLAUSE 8.11.2 APISCT 10 EDITION, MASS: ACC. TO CLAUSE 8.11.3 APISCT 10 EDITION (TABLE 16), ID. ACCORDING TO CLAUSE 8.11.4 APISCT 10 EDITION, 5-1/2 IN., 20 PPF	2,200LE

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 than14 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 33,092/00 EURO or 66,906,560,790 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.
FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Pardaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4044 Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37
2330425 شناسه
PUBLIC RELATIONS
www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir http://iets.mporg.ir www.setadiran.ir
MT40FOQS018X0



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian calls for closer regional engagement to boost trade

Economy Desk

Iran needs to strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries and move away from confrontational rhetoric to expand regional trade, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday, calling for the removal of barriers to economic ties and greater engagement with Muslim countries.

Speaking at the annual capital market conference in Tehran, Pezeshkian said neighboring countries offered significant opportunities to expand Iran's exports and trade, and that reducing existing restrictions could help strengthen economic relations.

"We should lay the groundwork for interaction, cooperation and trade development with our neighbors," he said, adding that an aggressive approach would naturally constrain opportunities for cooperation and commerce.

Referring to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's emphasis on unity and engagement with Muslim countries, Pezeshkian said Iran's approach should be based on strengthening solidarity and expanding ties with those countries. Divisions, aggressive behavior and tensions would not solve problems, he said, adding that cooperation and solidarity were more important than ever.

Economic resilience amid pressure

Pezeshkian also praised investors, producers and merchants for helping the country withstand wartime conditions and economic pressure, saying their efforts had helped thwart the adversary's objectives.

Describing the recent war as unequal and unjust, he said Iran's adversaries had expected external pressure and sanctions to cause shortages of goods and even famine, but those conditions had not materialized and production had continued.

Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has faced wartime conditions and a maritime blockade aimed at halting its oil exports and depleting government revenues, alongside decades of Western sanctions over its nuclear activities.

The president thanked businesspeople for their efforts during what he described as a difficult economic war, saying the challenges posed by economic pressure were substantial, even without the missiles and destruction associated with military conflict.

Ensuring a stable supply of energy to industries during the winter was another priority, Pezeshkian said. The government was planning to minimize disruptions to electricity, gas and other energy supplies needed by producers, amid existing imbalances and the possibility of tighter restrictions in the coming months.

If energy restrictions became necessary, industry and production should be the last sectors to face supply cuts, not the first, he said, adding that the issue was being seriously discussed by the government to prevent factories and production units from shutting down.

Pezeshkian called for lower energy consumption in non-production sectors, citing plans to improve heating and cooling systems, reduce energy use in government buildings and optimize office space. The public and non-industrial sectors should accept some restrictions to help ensure that production continued, he said.

Government support for production

The president also said the government was ready to work with the private sector and the chamber of commerce to review and amend regulations that hindered business activity. The government's role was to facilitate the work of investors and producers rather than obstruct it through its decisions and rules, he said, urging businesspeople to clearly identify the obstacles they faced.

Acknowledging the country's difficult economic conditions, Pezeshkian said problems should be recognized and addressed through planning rather than ignored or portrayed inaccurately.

Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh, speaking at the same conference, said inflation remained high but that measures introduced to contain it had slowed monthly inflation growth.

The impact of those policies, aimed at restoring economic stability, would become visible over the coming months, he said.

Madanizadeh also said the government had managed to meet its financing needs this year without financing the budget deficit through the Central Bank. He added that the debt market had been reformed and that, unlike in previous years, the government's budget shortfall had not been passed on to the central bank.

The Central Bank said last week that the average annual inflation rate for the 12 months ending in the seventh month of the Iranian calendar year (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) stood at 71.4%, compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.

Iran's consumer price index in urban areas reached 836.8 in the month, up 4.6% from the previous month, the Central Bank said. The figures also showed that year-on-year inflation, which had been rising in previous months, declined in the sixth and seventh months of the current Iranian year, reaching 83.8% and 83.5%, respectively.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the annual capital market conference in Tehran on November 21, 2026.
president.ir

Iran, Pakistan near finalizing free trade deal, TPO official says

Bilateral trade stands at about $6b, with potential to exceed $10b

Economy Desk

Iran and Pakistan are expected to finalize a free trade agreement by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, an Iranian trade official said on Saturday, as the two neighbors seek to expand bilateral trade, which currently stands at about $6 billion.

Mehdi Siadat-Nasab, deputy head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization's East Asia and Subcontinent Office, told the IRNA news agency that negotiations on the free trade agreement had reached their final stages following progress in talks and the exchange of lists of goods covered by the deal.

"With the agreement reaching its final stage and its implementation, Iran-Pakistan trade will increase through the facilitation of trade relations and a reduction in customs costs," he said.

Iran and Pakistan currently have a preferential trade agreement. Further trade agreements are expected to contribute to the expansion of bilateral commerce.

According to the latest figures, formal and informal trade between the two countries totals around $6 billion, Siadat-Nasab said, adding that there was potential to increase the figure to more than $10 billion given their considerable economic potential and opportunities for expanding commercial cooperation.

The two countries have also set a target of increasing their annual bilateral trade to $10 billion. The target was reiterated at the 10th session of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee in Islamabad in August 2026, where both sides also agreed to deepen economic cooperation and remove barriers to trade expansion.

He said Pakistan offered significant opportunities for cooperation in industry, agriculture, mining and technical and engineering services.

Petrochemical products, liquefied gas, steel, and tiles and ceramics are among Iran's key exports to Pakistan, he added.

Siadat-Nasab also highlighted the potential of Pakistani ports to facilitate Iranian trade.

"Using Pakistan's ports can create new routes for exporting Iranian goods, facilitating imports and accessing regional and international markets, and this opportunity should be used effectively," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of understanding the Pakistani market, he said Iranian exporters could gain a considerable share by identifying local demand and offering high-quality products at competitive prices.

He expressed hope that greater use of private-sector potential, improvements in logistics infrastructure and stronger provincial cooperation, particularly in Bushehr province, would help increase economic exchanges between the two countries.

Iran and Pakistan are expected to finalize a free trade agreement by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, an Iranian trade official said on Saturday, as the two neighbors seek to expand bilateral trade, which currently stands at about $6 billion.

Mehdi Siadat-Nasab, deputy head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization's East Asia and Subcontinent Office, told the IRNA news agency that trade between the two countries was continuing and negotiations on the free trade agreement had reached their final stages following progress in talks and the exchange of lists of goods covered by the deal.

"With the agreement reaching its final stage and its implementation, Iran-Pakistan trade will increase through the facilitation of trade relations and a reduction in customs costs," he said.

Iran and Pakistan currently have a preferential trade agreement, and further agreements are expected to help expand bilateral commerce.

According to the latest figures, formal and informal trade between the two countries totals around $6 billion, Siadat-Nasab said, adding that the figure could exceed $10 billion given their considerable economic potential and opportunities for expanding commercial cooperation.

The two countries have also set a target of increasing their annual bilateral trade to $10 billion. The goal was reaffirmed at the 10th session of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Trade Committee in Islamabad in August 2026, where both sides agreed to deepen economic cooperation and remove obstacles to trade expansion.

He said Pakistan offered significant opportunities for cooperation in industry, agriculture, mining and technical and engineering services.

Petrochemical products, liquefied gas, steel, and tiles and ceramics are among Iran's main export potentials in the Pakistani market, he added.

Siadat-Nasab also highlighted the potential of Pakistani ports to facilitate Iranian trade.

"Using Pakistan's ports can create new routes for exporting Iranian goods, securing imports and accessing regional and international markets, and this opportunity should be used effectively," he said.

Emphasizing the importance of understanding the Pakistani market, he said Iranian exporters could gain a considerable share by identifying local demand and offering high-quality products at competitive prices.

He expressed hope that greater use of private-sector potential, improvements in logistics infrastructure and stronger provincial cooperation, particularly in Bushehr province, would help increase economic exchanges between the two countries.

Tehran, Yerevan sign technology cooperation deal

Economy Desk

Iran and Armenia have signed a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation in telecommunications, artificial intelligence, space technology, cybersecurity and joint investment, according to IRNA.

The agreement was signed during a meeting between Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi and Armenian Minister of High-Tech Industry and Artificial Intelligence Davit Tadevosyan, where the two sides discussed ways to strengthen technological ties and develop joint projects, IRNA reported."

Proposed areas of cooperation include fiber-optic networks, frequency spectrum management, particularly in border areas, and alternative routes for international data traffic. The discussions also covered artificial intelligence, data analytics, semiconductor design, the Internet of Things, industrial automation and space technology. The two countries also discussed cooperation in digital government services, digital identification, postal and logistics services, technology transfer and joint investment in equipment manufacturing and assembly.

Hashemi invited his Armenian counterpart to visit Iran in the next two to three months to follow up on the agreements and visit technology companies, research centers and the Payam Special Economic Zone, the report said.

Tadevosyan highlighted the potential for closer technological cooperation and continued exchanges of knowledge and expertise between companies and specialized institutions in the two countries.

He also said next year would provide an opportunity to assess data exchanges and hold a joint conference on artificial intelligence, following the DigiTech Expo 2026.

How Iran can ...

Domestic production and international trade should support each other, not compete.

Page 1

Washington may expect economic hardship to widen divisions inside Iran and force a change in policy. Yet prolonged pressure also carries costs for neighboring economies. Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan have commercial interests in maintaining access to the Iranian market. Iran should build on these shared interests through practical cooperation, avoiding steps that turn disputes into regional security crises.

Diplomacy remains necessary, even when an agreement appears distant. Any serious negotiation would need to address the sequence of steps, the scope of sanctions relief and credible arrangements to prevent a return to confrontation. Regional countries and major powers could help provide political assurances. Diplomacy is more likely to work when Iran has room to manage economic pressure and its partners see a stable, predictable counterpart.

Iran cannot afford to treat sanctions as a temporary problem that will disappear with a political agreement. The pressure may continue for years, and economic policy has to reflect that reality. Expanding trade with neighboring countries, securing alternative payment channels and making domestic production more competitive are not separate projects. They are all part of reducing the economy's exposure to external pressure. This will take time, and it will not prevent economic losses. But the more trading partners and options Iranian businesses have, the less room Washington will have to disrupt the country's economic activity.

Lake Urmia's water area quadrupled in a year

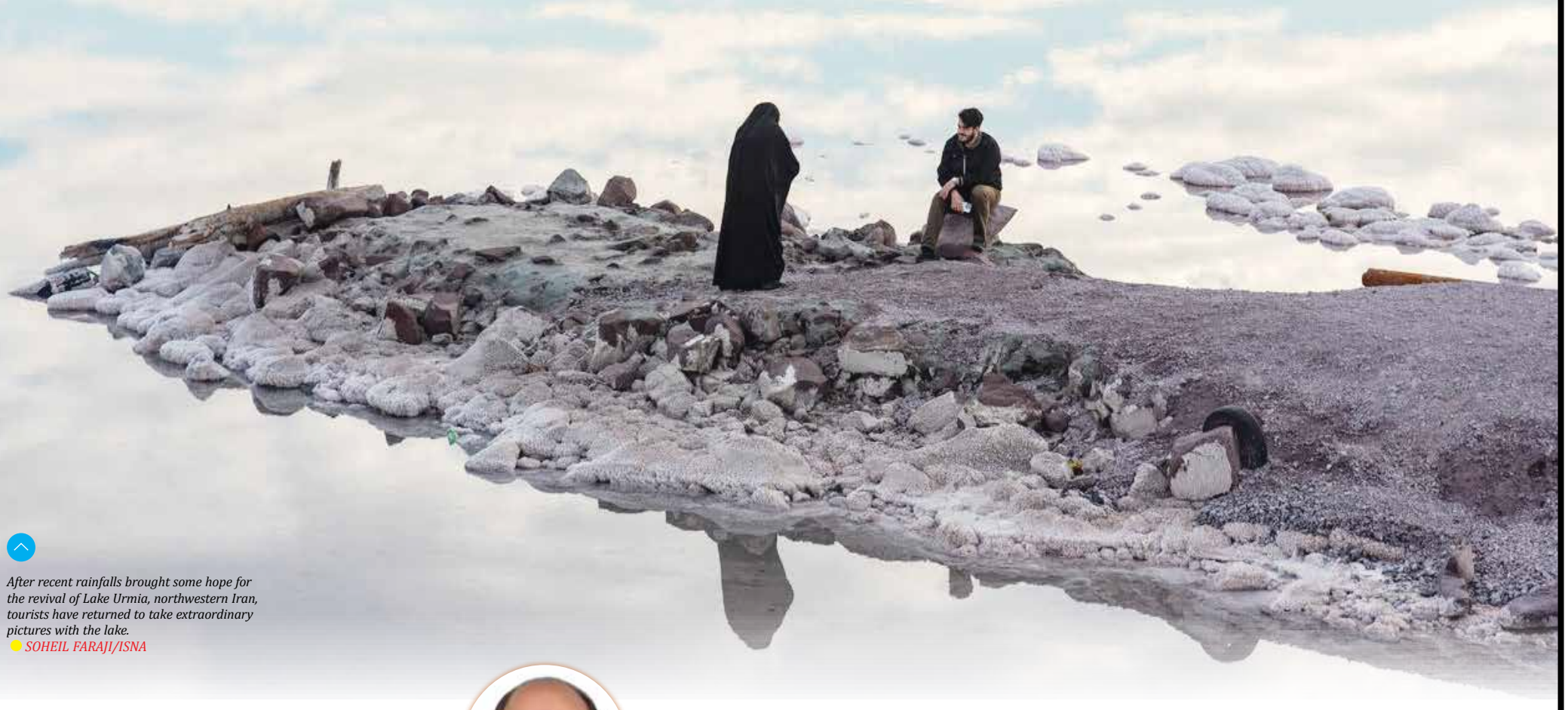
Let's not forfeit opportunity for revitalization



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

After several years of drought and a worrying reduction in the water level of Lake Urmia, substantial precipitations in recent weeks and, in particular, the precipitations of the past several days have once again vivified hopes for the return of life to the largest endorheic lake of Iran. Reports suggest a significant increase in the water expanse of the lake; so much so that its water expanse, per the declaration of Urmia University's Lake Urmia Research Institute, has attained approximately 2 thousand square kilometers from around 460 square kilometers at the analogous juncture of the previous year.
In the estimation of experts, this conspicuous alteration, albeit an auspicious indication of the natural capacity of the lake for the return of water, does not signify its revival. The continuation of periodic droughts, elevated evaporation, excessive extraction from water resources, and the development of agricultural lands still are reckoned among the most significant threats to this ecosystem. In their conviction, the recent precipitations must be accounted a precious opportunity for the rectification of the consumption pattern and the management of water resources, an opportunity that, if not accompanied by planning and practical measures, may be forfeited with the return of the arid period.
In this context, Iran Daily has conducted an exclusive interview with Kamran Zeinalzadeh, head of the Lake Urmia Research Institute, concerning the latest condition of this lake, the impact of the recent precipitations, the prospect of the coming months, and the requisites of its sustainable revitalization. You can read the detailed text of this dialogue in the following:



After recent rainfalls brought some hope for the revival of Lake Urmia, northwestern Iran, tourists have returned to take extraordinary pictures with the lake.
SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA

IRAN DAILY: The recent significant rainfalls, particularly in the past several days, have brought auspicious tidings concerning the condition of Lake Urmia. There is even discourse of a multifold rise in the volume and expanse of the water of the lake. In your estimation, what changes have these precipitations made in the condition of the lake?

ZEINALZADEH: At present, we're dealing with the El Niño phenomenon, which has been accompanied by exceedingly favorable rains in the country. El Niño is formed when the waters of portions of the equatorial Pacific Ocean become warmer than the norm and alter the atmospheric patterns of the world. El Niño is formed thousands of kilometers away from Iran and in the Pacific Ocean, but in Iran, El Niño sometimes raises the probability of greater precipitation in autumn and winter.

In the current water year, which starts from September 25, in comparison with the analogous period of the previous water year, we have had a substantial increase in the quantity of precipitations. Even in comparison with the long-term average, the quantity of precipitations evinces an augmentation of around 35%.



Kamran Zeinalzadeh

This condition is a golden opportunity that nature, by the grace of God, has placed at our disposal. We, after a severe period of drought, have encountered exceedingly favorable rainfall in the previous year and the current year, which are even beyond the normal.

If we wish to compare the condition of the lake with the analogous period of the previous year, at that time, the water expanse of the lake had attained less than 500 square kilometers and around 460 square kilometers, but now, this expanse has grown to approximately 2 thousand square kilometers. In other words, the water expanse of the lake has become about four times greater, which is an exceedingly auspicious occurrence and demonstrates that Lake Urmia possesses the capacity for return and revitalization.

Of course, we must also consider an important point. During the past 15 to 20 years, by reason of the sedimentation of salts and the evaporation of the hypersaline water of the lake, alterations have occurred in its bed. The salts have settled, and consequently, the bed of the lake has acquired a more planar configuration. This tray-like surface assists the dispersion of water. Therefore, although we now confront a water expanse of approximately 2 thousand square kilometers, we must not think that the lake has returned to its former condition and depth. In reality, we observe a substantial portion of this alteration in the apparent expanse of the water and not necessarily in its depth. From the perspective of water volume as well, the estimations advanced in this context indicate that there are now two to two and a half billion cubic meters of water in the lake; of course, the quantity of water may be less than this volume, but the current quantity is exceedingly better in comparison with the previous year since at the analogous juncture of the previous year, this quantity had attained around 300 to 400 million cubic meters.

In your previous interview and those of other experts, the condition of the lake was described as exceedingly disquieting, and even some were of the conviction that it could no longer be designated a permanent lake. May the recent precipitations be accounted a miracle and a divine blessing that has once again vivified hope for the revitalization of the lake?

Precisely so. These precipitations are a divine blessing and an opportunity that nature has placed at our disposal. Of course, we do not know until when this process will continue. We reside in a semi-arid region and naturally may again experience successive periods of drought.

Therefore, I must emphasize that the lake has not yet been revitalized and one cannot even state that it has completely entered the path of revitalization. Nevertheless, the recent rainfalls have demonstrated to us the power of nature and have proven that if we also possess prudence and manage water resources correctly, we can, with the assistance of nature, supply at least the water requisite for the preservation of the ecosystemic function of the lake.

At present, there exist more than 800 thousand hectares of cultivated and orchard lands in the catchment area of Lake Urmia, a substantial portion of which is under irrigated cultivation. This figure is exceedingly thought-provoking. However much precipitation we may have, if we cannot control water consumption, we will still confront a negative balance of water resources in the catchment area.

The major portion of the water that we now observe in the lake is under the influence of direct rain upon its surface. Of course, we must not neglect positive measures such as the dredging of rivers and the control of sluices and water conveyance paths; measures that have assisted water to be conducted more readily toward the lake. Nevertheless, we are still at a great distance from the favorable condition. We must be able to diminish approximately one to one and a half billion cubic meters of agricultural water consumption annually at the catchment area.

> Of course, we must also consider an important point. During the past 15 to 20 years, by reason of the sedimentation of salts and the evaporation of the hypersaline water of the lake, alterations have occurred in its bed. The salts have settled, and consequently, the bed of the lake has acquired a more planar configuration. This tray-like surface assists the dispersion of water. Therefore, although we now confront a water expanse of approximately 2 thousand square kilometers, we must not think that the lake has returned to its former condition and depth.

It appears that, notwithstanding all warnings, the development of agriculture and the expansion of the cultivated area in the region still continue. Why, despite the water scarcity crisis, has this process not ceased?

I have always emphasized this matter that in previous years, in particular in the Persian calendar years of 1400 to 1403 (circa. 2021–2025), conditions forced us to practically depart from environmental priorities, and the supply of agricultural water surprisingly became one of the principal concerns.

You, who are present in Tehran, recall well that at various times, the water behind the principal dams of Tehran attained a minimum, and what difficult and stressful days we experienced for the supply of potable water.



Artemia, also known as brine shrimp, has become active anew and resumed their life cycle in Lake Urmia following recent rainfalls.
SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA

Similar conditions, of course with differing intensity, existed in the catchment area of Lake Urmia.

Notwithstanding these conditions, when you examine the news pertaining to the region, you observe that the export of products such as apples, sugar beets, fodder, alfalfa, peaches, and other agricultural products still occupies the forefront of the news. This region, in a condition in which it confronted severe water deficiency and water stress, was reckoned one of the major exporters of water-intensive products to other provinces and even abroad, and this process still continues. This contradiction demonstrates that we have not yet seriously apprehended the reality of the water crisis and its dimensions, and this matter has not found its true position in our planning. We must alter the course. Alternative livelihoods, the creation of new occupational opportunities, the development of service activities, and the utilization of border capacities must be placed on the agenda. One cannot, in a region that confronts a serious water crisis, still emphasize the development of activities that are dependent upon high consumption of water resources.

In spite of all of these matters, we must not neglect the positive occurrence that has now transpired in nature. Today, in comparison with previous years, we observe the lake with a substantial water expanse, and even its islands again experience indications of life. Birds have returned to this habitat, they lay eggs, and beautiful scenes of the return of life in the region have taken form.

Given the international significance of Lake Urmia and that this water expanse is one of the important habitats of migratory birds and diverse animal species, has not the time arrived for international supports for its revitalization to be pursued more seriously?

Precisely so. Lake Urmia is covered by the Ramsar Convention and is reckoned a protected habitat of international significance.

Of course, our country possesses considerable capabilities with respect to scientific capacities, specialized human resources, experience, and hardware facilities. We possess this capacity to accomplish many of the requisite measures within the country. Our principal problem pertains more to the weakness of integrated management and the matter of the governance of water resources.

Yet, the utilization of international capacities, the experiences of other countries, and the facilities of global organizations can accelerate the process of the revitalization of the lake.

In previous years as well, collaborations with entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been undertaken.

One of the successful examples of these collaborations is an activity that the Urmia University's Lake Urmia Research Institute has commenced during the past four years with the assistance of the FAO. This program is executed with the objective of promoting novel methods and eliciting the participation of beneficiaries in the preservation of water and soil resources.

Within the framework of this scheme, several pilots of smart agriculture and smart irrigation are being executed in the plains of Nazlu and Baranduz and also in the regions of Naghadeh, Mahabad, and Miandoab.

Of course, it is necessary that the Ministry of Agriculture pursue the matter of the promotion of novel methods and soft measures more seriously. Furthermore, the national working group must move toward the creation of a structure that ultimately conduces to the integrated management of water resources.

Until such a structure takes form and the two important ministries, Agriculture and Energy, enter the field seriously, we will still confront difficulties. In sum, movements have commenced and favorable measures are in progress, but the extent of collaborations and international communications is still at a distance from the expected level, and greater effort must be undertaken in this context.

If we return to the precipitations of the past several days, what precisely has been the impact of these precipitations upon the alteration of the condition of the lake? Is the fourfold increase of the expanse of the lake principally the result of these recent rainfalls?

The statistics that I presented to you indicate that the rise in the water expanse of the lake in comparison with the previous year has been substantial. The precipitations of the past several days as well have had a direct impact upon the amelioration of the condition. Of course, one must not attribute all of this augmentation solely to the rainfalls of the past several days because prior to these rainfalls, the lake had already attained a substantial level of water intake by reason of the favorable precipitations of the current water year.

The more important and more auspicious point is that predictions indicate that the major portion of the principal precipitations of the coming water year is still en route. We anticipate a precipitation-rich autumn, and in all probability, winter as well will be accompanied by favorable snowfalls.

If we can, alongside these rains, exercise greater control over the rivers and conduct a greater share of the runoffs toward the lake, in particular in the non-agricultural season, we can create a favorable water reserve in the lake prior to the commencement of the warm season.

This matter is exceedingly important, for summer is reckoned the most difficult season for Lake Urmia. In this season, we practically have no considerable water inflow, and on the other hand, the quantity of evaporation attains its maximum. For this reason, we usually confront the minimum water expanse of the lake at the end of summer.

In previous years, conditions were such that we practically could no longer speak of a lake with a natural character; for a lake that possessed the capacity of about 12 billion cubic meters of water, when only a few hundred million cubic meters of water remain in it, loses a major portion of its ecological character.

Nevertheless, we hope that with the forthcoming precipitations and, in particular, a snow-rich winter, the condition of the lake in the coming year will be far better than in the current year. If the government undertakes the requisite measures and the people also cooperate, we can utilize this opportunity for the storage of greater water in the lake.

> In previous years, collaborations with entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have been undertaken. One of the successful examples of these collaborations is an activity that the Urmia University's Lake Urmia Research Institute has commenced during the past four years with the assistance of the FAO. This program is executed with the objective of promoting novel methods and eliciting the participation of beneficiaries in the preservation of water and soil resources.



Boats are lined up again for use by tourists who'll come visit Lake Urmia, northwestern Iran, on November 13, 2026.
SOHEIL FARAJI/ISNA

If in the coming years as well, we witness rains analogous to the current water year and managerial measures are also pursued with seriousness, may one be hopeful that Lake Urmia will attain the condition of revitalization?

Without doubt, the continuation of rains has a direct impact upon the amelioration of the condition of the lake. But the reality is that we have not been as successful as we ought in the matter of the prevention of the development of agricultural lands and land-use changes, and for this reason, our dependence upon precipitation has become exceedingly great.

The condition at present is such that if precipitation occurs, the condition of the lake ameliorates, and if we do not have favorable precipitation, given the quantity of consumption and extraction of water, the condition will again move toward crisis.

Of course, we must not necessarily think of the precipitations of the previous year and the current year as a sustainable climatic process. Our region possesses a semi-arid climate, and we must not anticipate that henceforth, we will encounter abundant and continuous precipitations every year.

It is possible that climatic changes and novel atmospheric patterns will impact this process, but in this context, the experts of the Meteorological Organization can better pronounce upon the prospect of the coming years.

In sum, we must not imagine that the climate of the region has suddenly transformed and that henceforth, we will always confront favorable precipitations. Therefore, we must, along with hopefulness for the continuation of precipitations, also pursue managerial measures and the rectification of the water consumption pattern so that we can still have Lake Urmia as a living water expanse upon the map.

You have directly followed the condition of Lake Urmia for more than two decades and have conducted research in this context for years. Given the current condition, are you more hopeful concerning the future of the lake in comparison with the past?

I have a good feeling about the fact that the awareness and attention of the people, farmers, and officials has changed a lot within the past two decades. Today, the matter of water and its impact upon the lives of people, and also the consequences of environmental destruction, have become more tangible for society.

We in the Lake Urmia Research Institute have been active in this region for approximately 15 years, and we now observe that the farmers themselves, spontaneously and consciously, seek methods that diminish water consumption without any decline in their yield and quantity of production.

The objective is that even despite lesser water consumption, they get to have greater production, diminish the extent of the utilization of fertilizers and agricultural pesticides, and simultaneously boost their product yield. This alteration of attitude is extremely precious. I hope that relevant officials and organizations as well will work alongside this movement with greater seriousness so that we can, with the collaboration of all sectors, delineate a better prospect for the future of the lake.

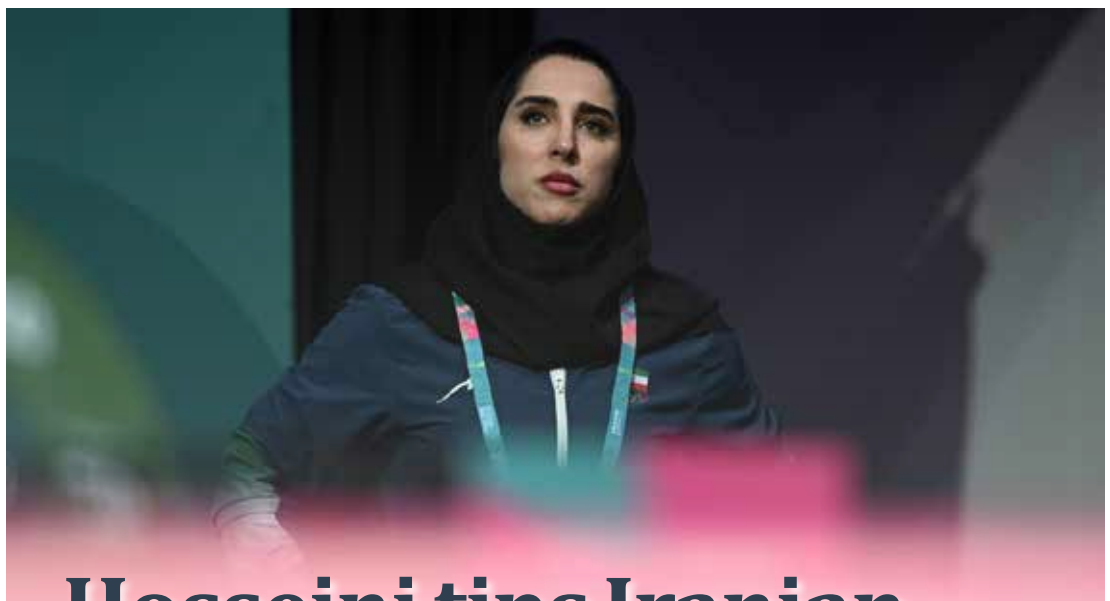
Nature has now assisted us and has placed a renewed opportunity at our disposal. I predict that in the coming year as well, we will witness a far greater water expanse in the lake. If the precipitations that are predicted for the continuation of autumn, winter, and early spring materialize, the water expanse of the lake may even attain around two times the current level.

This opportunity permits us, with the favorable storage of water prior to the commencement of the coming summer, to have a lake with a better condition and an acceptable water reserve at the end of the current water year; so much so that the lake can also receive the rainfalls of the following year, and the cycle of desiccation and the loss of its ecological life not be repeated. This process assists the lake to take a breather and to be able to preserve its condition.

You have devoted years to the study and pursuit of the condition of Lake Urmia and naturally have had difficult days upon this path. Seeing this quantity of water and the return of hope to the region in recent days, what sentiment has it engendered in you? Did you imagine that one day the lake would again experience such a condition?

The reality is that, given the experience of the former condition and the desiccation of the lake, and today with the observation of these auspicious precipitations and the water-covered surface of the lake, the hair of my body stands on end from the intensity of emotion. The water-abundance of the lake and the waves that have again taken form in it have engendered a sensation of liveliness and hope not only in me but among the people of the region. I occasionally encounter Iranians who have traversed kilometers of road and have come to this region from distant locations to see the lake filled with water again. This occurrence truly imparts hope to us.

I hope that these precipitations will continue, that the grace of God will still encompass this region, and that we can correctly utilize the opportunity that has been placed at our disposal. We must endeavor more than in the past and convey a greater share of water resources to the lake.



Hosseini tips Iranian women weightlifters to vie for global glory

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iranian women's weightlifting has come a long way in just a few years, reaching heights that might once have seemed difficult to imagine. Initially, the sport was fighting to prove that Iranian women could take up weightlifting and change prevailing perceptions. Today, it has progressed to winning medals at major Asian competitions and competing at the World Championships.
A special place in this journey is held by Seyyedeh Elham Hosseini, who made history in 2019 by winning a bronze medal at the Naim Süleymanoğlu International Weightlifting Tournament in Turkey, becoming the first Iranian woman to win an international medal in the sport. Now serving as head coach of the national team, she is leading the next generation of Iranian women weightlifters.
Today, the country's women's weightlifting program has moved beyond the stage of establishing itself and proving its potential. At the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, Reyhaneh Karimi and Mahsa Beheshti won historic bronze medals, providing the first major signs that the sport could become a reliable source of medals for Iranian women's sports.
The presence of young and under-20 lifters in the national team, record-breaking performances at domestic competitions and medal-winning displays on the Asian stage have raised hopes that, with proper planning and sustained support, Iran can improve its standing at the global level in the coming years.
However, reaching the level of the world's leading nations, such as China and North Korea, will require stronger infrastructure, effective talent identification, the development of specialist coaches and more opportunities for international competition.
According to the national team head coach, achieving these ambitions will depend not only on the athletes' talent but also on careful planning, effective management of their preparation and genuine support for the sport.
In an interview with Iran Daily, Hosseini – also a 2022 Asian champion – says she believes Iranian women have the ability to compete at the highest levels, but turning that potential into world and Olympic medals requires planning for bigger ambitions from today.

IRAN DAILY: When you claimed bronze at a 2019 competition, women's weightlifting in Iran was still in its early stages. Did you ever imagine that Iranian women weightlifters would make such progress in the years that followed?

ELHAM HOSSEINI: We were at the beginning of the journey back then, and our primary task was to introduce the sport, change perceptions and prove that Iranian women could take up weightlifting and achieve success on the international stage.

We did not have the facilities, experience, number of athletes or infrastructure that we have today. We started with great enthusiasm and passion, but also faced considerable limitations.

My medal was more than just a personal sporting achievement for me. I felt that we had taken a step along a path that could make things easier for the girls who would follow us. Honestly, I never imagined that, within a relatively short period, we would see Iranian women standing on Asian podiums and winning valuable medals.

The true value of a medal and a sporting success becomes clear when it helps create a pathway for others, rather than remaining an isolated achievement attached to one athlete's name.

Do you believe the sport has moved beyond the stage of establishing itself and now has the potential to become one of Iran's medal-winning disciplines in women's sports?

Women's weightlifting has certainly moved beyond the stage of establishing itself. Today, we are no longer simply aiming for women's participation in the sport; we are talking about producing results, competing and setting targets at the Asian and global levels.

Recent medals at major continental and international competitions have demonstrated that the sport has genuine potential and that its growth is neither accidental nor temporary.

However, I do not believe that winning a few medals alone means we have reached our desired position. We must turn these achievements into a sustained trend. That means developing athletes at the grassroots level, building a strong talent pool and ensuring that we remain competitive at major events.

A considerable number of current national team members are young athletes under the age of 20. How far do you think they can progress at the Asian and global levels?

I am very optimistic about the current generation because several of our athletes are still young and have considerable room for improvement in terms of technique, strength, competition experience and sporting maturity.

The records some of these girls have already posted at such a young age show that, if their development is properly managed, they can become top-level athletes in Asia and around the world.

However, talent alone is not enough. Competing at the highest level of world weightlifting requires years of targeted training, scientific planning, effective management of competition pressure, injury prevention and experience against the world's best.

I believe we have athletes in this generation who can become contenders for world medals in the future. This is not simply an expression of optimism; it is based on the ability, records and potential we have seen from them in training and competition.

At the World Championships in Ningbo, China and North Korea claimed all the gold medals in the women's events, underlining their superiority over other nations. What do you attribute this dominance to, and what path should Iranian women's weightlifting follow to close the gap with these powerhouses?

China and North Korea have strong, well-established weightlifting systems. Their success is not limited to having one talented athlete or benefiting from a good training cycle. Behind their results are extensive talent identification programs, careful athlete selection, specialist coaches, technical expertise, international experience, strong domestic competition and professional structures.

We must be realistic about what it will take to catch up with these countries. A gap that has developed over many years cannot be eliminated in the short term, but it can be narrowed.

The most important thing is to ensure that our plans are not limited to participating in one competition or winning a single medal.

We have the talent; what we need is a stronger system for developing it.

Iran had only two female representatives at the World Championships in Ningbo, while many established weightlifting nations fielded much larger teams. Why are we still unable to send more women weightlifters to such competitions?

Sending athletes to the World Championships, particularly those capable of genuinely competing at that level, requires a combination of conditions. These include the number of competition-ready athletes and their records, as well as funding, travel arrangements, planning and the federation's policies.

The reality is that, in some weight categories, the number of athletes in the country capable of making a meaningful impact at world-level competitions is still limited.

On the other hand, if we want to increase the number of our representatives, we must provide more facilities and opportunities for preparation and participation in qualifying and international competitions.

In my opinion, broader representation at the World Championships should be one of our development goals. As the number of quality athletes increases and domestic competition becomes more intense, we will have greater options when selecting the team.

Reyhaneh Karimi and Mahsa Beheshti won two historic bronze medals at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. However, Karimi finished 10th at the World Championships despite improving her national records. How do you assess the performances of these two athletes?

Reyhaneh and Mahsa delivered valuable and commendable performances. These medals were the result of the athletes' own efforts, alongside the support provided by the federation and the hard work of the coaching staff.



IWFIR

As for Reyhaneh, improving her national records at the World Championships and finishing 10th demonstrated her own progress, while also highlighting the extremely high level of competition around the world.

This shows precisely why improving on our previous performances alone is not enough to win world medals; we must close the gap with world-class records at a faster rate.

These two athletes can serve as excellent role models for the next generation, and we must build on their success as a starting point for bigger goals.

For Iranian women weightlifters to achieve success at the Asian and global levels, should we mainly wait for the current generation to reach its peak, or do you believe infrastructural shortcomings must also be addressed more seriously?

An athlete can reach her full potential only if she develops in the right environment. If we want Iranian women's international results to improve consistently, we must invest in our current athletes while also improving the overall development structure of the sport.

We must also pay particular attention to educating grassroots coaches, because a significant part of the national team's future is shaped in clubs, not just at national team training camps.

If we want to achieve major success, we must recognize that it requires long-term planning and genuine support.

The current generation can deliver the results of such investment, but future generations must have a stronger foundation than the one available today.

With the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics approaching, how optimistic are you about Iranian women weightlifters' prospects of qualifying for the Games?

I believe qualification spots are within our reach, but this will require very careful planning, participation in qualifying competitions, effective management of their records and targeted preparation.

On the road to the Olympics, even the smallest planning mistake can cost an athlete a major opportunity.

As for winning an Olympic medal, we must take into account the gap in records and the standard of our rivals.

I do not want to promise medals simply out of emotion. We must move forward based on a thorough analysis of our competitors, the records required and the development path of our athletes.

Nevertheless, I believe that, with an appropriate preparation program, we can eventually look beyond qualification and compete for higher positions as well.

The important thing is to set ambitious targets while ensuring that the plan to achieve them is realistic and professional.

How do you see the future of Iranian women's weightlifting overall? Can we expect to win medals at the World Championships and Olympic Games in the coming years if the current progress continues?

I see a bright future for Iranian women's weightlifting, but that future depends on the decisions we make and the steps we take today.

We must continue along this path with greater consistency, planning and support to ensure that our successes are not limited to particular periods and that we can eventually win medals at the World Championships and the Olympic Games.

My message to young female weightlifters is to believe in themselves, their abilities and the path they have chosen. Weightlifting is not a sport in which success comes overnight. It requires patience, discipline, continuous training, the ability to endure hardships, trust in coaches and a structured, carefully planned approach.

The path may be smoother for today's generation than it was when we first started the sport, but considerable effort is still required to achieve major ambitions.

Speaking from my own experience, the most important thing is never to let today's limitations determine the boundaries of tomorrow's dreams.

There was a time when we simply hoped to participate in an international competition. Today, our girls are standing on podiums.

I hope that one day we will see Iranian women win world and Olympic medals. That is a goal we must start working toward today and take responsibility for making it a reality.

New standards planned to improve quality of handicrafts



ravaghehonar.com

Iranica Desk

Iran plans to introduce a system of incentive-based standards for handicraft products and workshops to improve quality assessment, increase consumer confidence and bring greater transparency to the market, a senior official said.

Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Barzin Zarghami announced the plan following a joint meeting with the head of the National Standards Organization of Iran (INSO).

He said the initiative would initially be implemented through an incentive-based standards scheme, enabling handicraft workshops and products to be graded in accordance with established criteria, according to IRNA.

Zarghami noted that the diversity of handicraft products and the specialized nature of the sector often make it difficult for consumers to assess product quality and determine fair prices.

The proposed standardization scheme is intended to address these challenges by providing buyers with greater assurance and helping distinguish quality products from substandard ones, he added.

He said it was agreed at the meeting that product assessment and conformity evaluation would be pursued more systematically in cooperation with the National Standards Organization, drawing on its existing regulations and technical guidelines.

The initiative will involve the Handicrafts Department and its provincial directorates, which will work together to implement the proposed standards.

Zarghami pointed out that general criteria had already been developed for more than 100 major handicraft products, providing a foundation for the implementation of the scheme.

He added that consultations were under way to determine whether conformity certificates would be issued to workshops and producers under existing technical regulations or whether the initiative would proceed through the incentive-based standards mechanism.

The official also said a review of existing handicraft standards was planned, stressing that cooperation between the two organizations would help establish a more reliable system for assessing product quality and addressing consumer concerns.

Kurdish weddings bring families, communities together

Iranica Desk

In Kurdish culture, a wedding is more than a ceremony marking the beginning of a couple's married life. It is a social occasion that brings together families, relatives, and even neighbors in an atmosphere of joy, music, and communal participation. What distinguishes Kurdish weddings from many other wedding traditions is the collection of local customs and distinctive practices that accompany the celebrations, from the earliest stages of marriage arrangements to the final moments of the festivities.



tabiat.ir

Each custom has its own significance, from the informal visit by the groom's family to the bride's family, to the display of the bride's trousseau, the songs sung on the henna night, colorful Kurdish attire, and the traditional group dance known as Govend. These traditions, however, vary across Kurdish regions, from Sanandaj and Mahabad to Baneh, Marivan, and Kermanshah.

In some Kurdish families, an informal visit known as Sarzanî takes place before the formal marriage proposal. During this visit, the groom's mother or sister goes to the prospective bride's home, usually under the pretext of a friendly or family visit. The purpose is to become better acquainted with the family, the young woman's behavior, and her living circumstances.

If the visit is received positively, the groom's family proceeds with the formal proposal. On this occasion, the groom's father, uncle, or another senior family member, accompanied by other relatives, visits the bride's home. They usually bring sweets, chocolates, flowers, and sometimes gold jewelry.

Following initial discussions and an agreement between the families, a ceremony known as Qoldan is held. At this stage, a ring is exchanged between the two families, and the agreement to marry takes on a more formal character through the hosting of guests and the serving of refreshments. The ceremony marks the beginning of a new stage in the relationship between the two families.

In some Kurdish families, a trusted intermediary plays an important role in discussing the bride's dowry and resolving disagreements. Rather than having the two families negotiate every financial detail directly, a distant relative or another respected person trusted by both families may take responsibility for conveying proposals and facilitating discussions. This approach can help prevent direct confrontation and avoid hurt feelings if one family does not accept a particular proposal.

The role of intermediaries and respected elders is not limited to the marriage proposal. During wedding preparations, disagreements may also arise over the number of guests, expenses, or the timing of the ceremonies. In such situations, respected elders from both families try to resolve differences through discussion and compromise.



tabiat.ir

In some parts of Kurdestan Province, one interesting custom is the display of the bride's trousseau before the main wedding celebration. In the past, the trousseau often included kilims, Jajims, locally woven textiles, copper utensils, kitchenware, Kurdish clothing, shawls, and traditional fabrics. These items would be arranged in the groom's home or another location for female relatives and neighbors to come and view.

Handwoven textiles and traditional household items hold a special place in this custom, as they reflect the craftsmanship and taste of the bride's family. In this way, the trousseau serves not only a practical purpose but also represents the connection between family life and Kurdish traditional arts.

The henna night (Hanabandan) is one of the most memorable parts of a Kurdish wedding. In some regions, women from the groom's family bring henna to the bride's home, along with sweets, a mirror, and candles. Women from both families gather together and celebrate the occasion by singing traditional songs. Henna is applied to the bride's hands, and in some families, a separate henna ceremony is also held for the groom.

One of the most distinctive features of the henna night is its mixture of joy and sadness. Alongside singing, dancing, and celebration, the bride's mother and other close relatives may also shed tears.

Some traditional songs performed on this night refer to the bride's departure from her parental home and her transition into a new stage of life. For this reason, the henna night is not simply a joyful celebration; it is also a ritual that reflects family emotions and deep personal attachments.

Govend is one of the most distinctive expressions of joy and solidarity at Kurdish weddings. This traditional group dance is accompanied by local music, particularly the sounds of the dohol (drum) and zurna (a double-reed wind instrument). Its rhythms and styles vary across different parts of Kurdestan Province.

Live music is one of the defining features of Kurdish weddings. In many celebrations, the sound of the Dohol and Zurna sets the atmosphere, while traditional rhythms bring guests together in the spirit of Govend.

Even at many modern weddings, where contemporary music and orchestral bands are featured, traditional Kurdish music continues to hold its place. Some celebrations dedicate part of the program to traditional Kurdish songs and another part to Persian pop or modern Kurdish music.

In many Kurdish towns and villages, the groom's family travels together to the bride's home as part of a wedding procession. Decorated cars, honking horns, and the participation of relatives are familiar features of this tradition. In some rural areas, the procession may also involve horses or people walking together, sometimes accompanied by dancing along the way.

The bride's attire is another beautiful feature of Kurdish weddings. Traditional women's clothing commonly includes the Kras, a long dress with a full, pleated skirt; a colorful fabric belt; and a Klaw, a traditional headpiece sometimes decorated with coins and sequins.

In many families, the bride wears both a modern white wedding dress and traditional Kurdish clothing during the celebrations. With their varied colors, beautiful fabrics, and local embellishments, these garments give the wedding a distinctive appearance. In some areas, such as Mahabad and Bukan, traditional Kurdish attire remains an important part of wedding celebrations for many families.



instagram

Another notable aspect of Kurdish weddings is the participation of female relatives and neighbors in preparing the food. In some areas, cooking for a large number of guests begins one or two days before the ceremony, with women from the extended family gathering to prepare meals and organize the reception.

Kalaneh (a traditional Kurdish flatbread), Koofteh Kermanshahi (Kermanshahi stuffed meatballs), Aash-e Maash (mung bean soup), local soups, and homemade sweets such as Klicheh are among the foods prepared for celebrations and family gatherings in some regions and households.

At some Kurdish weddings, guests give the bride and groom monetary gifts at a designated moment during the celebration. The money may also be placed on a special tray. In some areas, this custom is associated with the idea of Yari, or mutual support. It serves two purposes: helping the couple with the expenses of starting their married life and expressing the guests' affection and respect for the bride, groom, and their families.

Like many social traditions, Kurdish wedding customs have changed in recent years. In the past, some celebrations could last for two or three days, whereas today, in many cities, weddings are often limited to a single evening.

Wedding halls have increasingly replaced homes, courtyards, and open spaces. In some cases, limited space in these venues restricts the opportunity to perform traditional group dances in their entirety. The contents of the bride's trousseau have also changed, with some younger couples preferring essential household items or financial assistance instead of numerous and expensive possessions.

Despite these changes, traditional music, Govend, Kurdish clothing, and the henna night remain important features of many Kurdish weddings.

License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency
Publisher: Iran Cultural & Press Institute
Chair of ICPI Board of Directors: Sadegh Hossein Jaberi Ansari
ICPI CEO: Ali Motaghian
Senior Editor-in-chief: Hadi Khosroshahin
Editor-in-chief: Asgar Ghahramanpour

Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 84711560
Address: 208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran
Advertising Dept. Tel/Email: +98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com
Website: www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir
Email: irandaily@icpi.ir

Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Vol. 8271 ● Sunday, November 22, 2026 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

To the girl who never came home

Seven-year-old Raha Zarei was among the children killed in the U.S.-Israeli missile attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab, southern Iran on February 28. On World Children's Day, November 20, her mother, Fariba Bastam, has written an open letter to the conscience of the world, remembering her daughter and the dreams she never had the chance to fulfill. In her letter, Bastam calls on the international community to remember the children killed in Minab and demand justice and accountability. Below is her letter:

A letter from Fariba Bastam, Raha's mother, to the conscience of the world

Today, the world celebrates children: their little smiles, paint-stained hands, colorful schoolbags and dreams that deserve the chance to come true.
But I am a mother from Minab. Today, instead of kissing my daughter's forehead, I am left with the memories of her final days. My share of this day is not the sound of a child's laughter, but the heavy silence left by a little girl who never came home.
My daughter's name was Raha. She was seven years old, a little girl with a pink backpack and a green dress who set off for school each morning with the hope of learning. She dreamed of becoming a dentist. She wanted to treat the toothaches of children in disadvantaged communities and bring smiles back to their little faces. Who could have imagined that a girl whose dream was to ease the pain of others would herself fall victim to a violence for which there is no cure?
Raha was killed in the deadly U.S.-Israeli attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab, southern Iran on February 28 alongside children who had barely begun to learn the alphabet of life.
That day, it was not only the small bodies of children that were buried beneath the rubble. Their schoolbooks, unfinished drawings, unfulfilled dreams and a future that could have made the world a more beautiful place were buried too.
I am a mother. And to be a mother is to see a future in your child's eyes until your very last breath. But how can I speak of the future when my daughter's future was taken from her?
Today, on November 20, the world speaks of children's rights: the right to life, safety, education and the opportunity to grow. But I ask: How much protection can these rights offer against missiles? What can conventions designed to protect children do when schools are reduced to rubble? And where is global justice when school desks stand as silent witnesses to the loss of young lives instead of being filled with students?
Did the children of Minab have as much right to life as children anywhere else in the world? Was an Iranian girl's dream of becoming a dentist worth less than the dream of a child in another part of this planet?
I am not asking the world for pity. I am demanding justice. I am demanding an impartial account of the truth and accountability from those responsible for this tragedy. No power should be so great that the deaths of children go unanswered.
To the United Nations, UNICEF, human rights organizations and all free-thinking people around the world, I say: Do not mark World Children's Day without hearing the voices of Minab's children. Do not speak of children's rights while remaining silent when a child is killed. Do not allow these children's names to be lost amid the noise of politics and war.
My dear Raha,
Today is your day. I should have been buying you balloons, fixing your hair and asking you about your dreams. You were supposed to grow up, wear a white coat and treat the pain of other children. But now all I have is the doctor's coat you never got to wear, the pink backpack you will never carry again and a dream that was taken from you when you were just seven.
My daughter, perhaps I could not bring you home from the skies of war, but I will not let your name disappear into the silence of the world.
I will be your voice until the day the world understands that no cause, no border, no political agenda and no power is worth more than a child's life.
Childhood knows no borders. A mother's tears are a language shared by all humanity.
In the name of life, in memory of Raha and all the children of Minab.

Fariba Bastam
Mother of Raha Zarei

Tehran book fair to return in December after war disruption

Arts & Culture Desk



Visitors browse books at the 35th Tehran International Book Fair in Tehran, Iran, in May 2024.
FATEMEH AMUZAD/MEHR NEWS AGENCY

Iran's 37th Tehran International Book Fair will open on December 23, seven months later than its usual spring schedule, after wartime conditions forced organizers to cancel the in-person event in May and move it online.
The fair, one of Iran's biggest cultural events, is usually held in May in Tehran. Organizers opted for a virtual format this year, following the 40-day war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran in late February.
Mohsen Javadi, the fair's head and deputy culture minister, said on Wednesday that the event would begin on December 23, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Imam Ali (PBUH). The registration call for publishers is expected to be issued in the coming days, he said.
Officials later considered several dates for an in-person event, including November and December. In October, the policy council ruled out holding it during Iran's Book Week, saying overlapping events could undermine the quality and promotion of both programs.
It initially moved the fair to December, before organizers announced the December 23 opening date.
Javadi called the fair "the country's most important cultural event," saying it helped create social vitality and supported the publishing cycle.
"Staging an event of this scale required cooperation beyond the Culture Ministry and the Iran Book and Literature House, and urged publishers and other institutions to help ensure a high-quality event," he added.
Details on the venue, duration and international program have not yet been announced.

Japanese children invited to send peace drawings to Minab students



Arts & Culture Desk

A cultural campaign in Japan is inviting children to draw pictures carrying messages of peace and friendship for Iranian students, in memory of pupils killed at a school in Minab, southern Iran.
The Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran, killing 168 people, most of them children.
The "Peace Picture Letter" campaign was launched by Iran's cultural office in Japan to mark World Children's Day on November 20. It invites Japanese children aged 3 to 15 to create drawings on the theme of "My Dear Peace" and send them as messages to an Iranian friend.
Participants can submit their artwork through four channels: a dedicated website, the LINE messaging app, email and postal mail. The deadline for entries is December 14, 2026.
According to the organizers, the original drawings will be collected and transferred to the Melal Cultural Center before being donated to the school in Minab.
Small gifts from Iran will also be presented to selected participants.
The campaign aims to build connections between Japanese and Iranian children and offer a way for young participants to express solidarity with the students in Minab through art.
Organizers are publicizing the initiative through the cultural office's website, its events section, mobile application and social media accounts on Instagram, X and LINE.
The campaign reflects an effort to use children's artwork as a shared language across national borders, bringing messages of friendship and empathy to students affected by the loss of their classmates.

UNESCO approves sustainable urban planning chair outside Tehran

Social Desk

UNESCO has approved a chair in urban planning and sustainable development at Semnan University in east of Tehran.
According to Iran's National Commission for UNESCO, it is the first UNESCO chair in the natural sciences to be established outside Tehran.
The chair will advance research into sustainable urban development and develop integrated models for designing and planning human settlements.
Its priorities include aligning urban planning research with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, promoting responsible land use and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to settlement design.
It will also seek to strengthen local identity, reduce the environmental impact of human settlements and foster cooperation among universities, policymakers and local communities.
The chair's responsibilities include producing and publishing open-access educational materials and developing policy tools and solutions to promote sustainable settlement patterns.
Omid Rezaeifar, a faculty member at Semnan University, will lead the initiative.
The new chair is expected to expand the university's international academic cooperation in urban planning and sustainable development and strengthen links between academic research and local community needs.
Semnan University, located in northeastern Iran, began operating in 1974 as the Semnan Higher School of Technology. It was upgraded to university status in 1993.
The university is a major higher education and research institution in Semnan province. It has five academic campuses, around 400 faculty members, 14,000 students and nearly 300 fields of study, and is active in education, research and technology.



An undated file photo shows Semnan University in northeastern Iran
semnan.ac.ir