



Islamic Republic of Iran  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Center for Public Diplomacy

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# MFA DIGEST

*The holy month of  
Ramadan*

 Nasir-ol-Molk Mosque; Shiraz, Fars

# MFA NEWS

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, visited Switzerland twice in late February and held two rounds of sanctions-lifting negotiations with the United States. Araghchi also met Rafael Grossi Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as the Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis, The Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi and President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric. He also addressed the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.



**Phone calls with Iran’s FM**

Iran’s Foreign Minister held telephone conversations with his counterparts from Oman, Egypt, Saudi, Qatar, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Russia and The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).



# SOCIETY & CULTURE

## Ramadan, the important God's Party in Iran

Ramadan is the holy month for Muslim people around the world, which is the 9th month of Arabic lunar calendar. It is not just abstaining from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset, but it is also considered a big spiritual reflection to ourselves to understand what is going on inside and outside of our body. It reminds us what life looks like for people who suffer from less fortune and motivates us to appreciate more of what we have as a blessing.

We call this month the month of God's party because firstly, Muslims believe that in this month, the Quran, our holy book, is inspired by Prophet Mohammed in the night called Ghadr night (literally meaning night of destiny). Secondly, in this month, people reflect on themselves a lot, and the police report also proves the lower rate of criminal commitment in this month.

The fasting ritual starts with eating 'Sahari' before sunrise, and we break our fast after sunset with a sip of hot water or tea in our 'Iftar time.'



If you decide to explore Iran during this time, you will be surprised with the variety of special meals that you have this chance to try just at this time of year.



In Islam, being on fast is not obligatory for people who travel, women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or during their aunt Flo's visiting time, for children, and for people suffering from sickness. But all of the mentioned people are expected to respect the people, who are on fast.



Iftar time (After sunset when you are free to eat & drink) is usually a party time when the family gets together, and they break their fast with tea, date, cheese, and all mentioned meals.

Sometimes, close to Iftar time, someone rings the bell, and you get a bowl of Sholeh Zard as NAZRI. Nazri (free food) is considered holy for anyone who eats it or makes it; it is given free by individuals and private groups as a way of completing an offering made to Allah.

**Happy Ramadan!**



## Quranic gathering

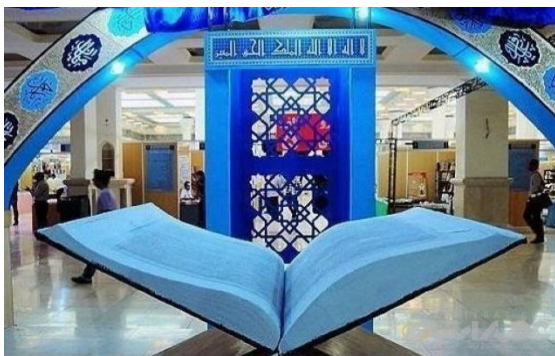
The Quranic gathering was held in the presence of Imam Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, and a group of distinguished Quran reciters, on Feb. 19, 2026 at the Imam Khomeini (ra) Hussainiyah.



During the gathering, Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his gratitude for the high quality of the recitations performed.

## 33rd International Holy Quran Fair opens in Tehran

The formal launch marks the start of the country's largest annual Quranic event, featuring 11 exhibition sections and three sales halls with 70 specialized booths.



This year's exhibition covers a wide range of themes, including the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), social hope and vitality, national unity, Islamic Revolution values, contemporary sciences, mosque-centered culture, ethical consumption, modesty and hijab, enjoying good and forbidding wrong, and the lives of prophets.



The international section hosts participants from 20 countries, with activities spanning artistic, scientific and cultural products, alongside 20 specialized international panels. Two prominent foreign Quranic figures will also be honored.



# SCIENCE

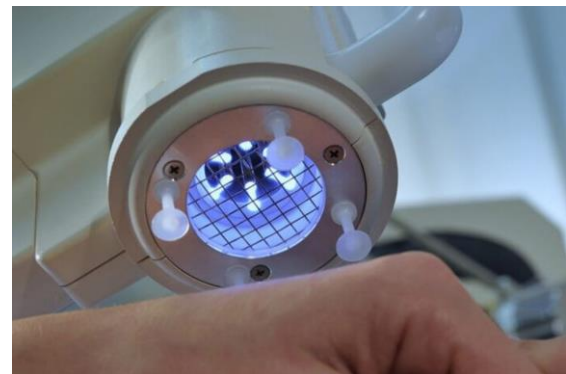
## Iran inaugurates 16th cold plasma wound treatment clinic

The 16th specialized wound treatment clinic based on cold plasma technology was inaugurated in Firouzabad in the presence of Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami and Fars Governor Hossein-Ali Amiri.

The clinic was officially opened at Hazrat Qaem (AS) Hospital in Firouzabad County, Fars Province, with the participation of provincial and local officials.

The center provides wound treatment using modern scientific methods and international equipment, relying on cold plasma technology.

The devices used at the clinic feature the latest global technologies and were supplied and launched in cooperation with the AEOI.



## Laureates of the International and Youth Kharazmi Awards Honored

On Monday, February 16, 2026, the 39th International Khwarizmi Award (KIA) and the 27th Kharazmi Youth Award (KYA) were held at the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, bringing together senior government officials, distinguished scientists, and leading researchers from across the country.

The ceremony was attended by Mohammad Reza Aref, First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Fatemeh Mohajerani, Spokesperson for the Government; Hossein Simaei, Minister of Science, Research and Technology; and Alireza Ashori, Secretary of the 39th

International Khwarizmi Award and President of the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST).

During the ceremony, the laureates of the 39th KIA and the 27th KYA were officially announced and recognized for their outstanding scientific and technological achievements, reflecting the Awards' longstanding commitment to excellence and innovation.



# IRAN COMMERCE

## Iran's foreign transit of goods reaches 17.6m tons

Iran's foreign transit of goods reached 17.6 million tons in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2025 to January 22, 2026), showing a 4.63 decrease compared to the same period last year.



According to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI), 17.6 million tons of foreign goods were transited via Iran between March 21, 2025 and January 22, 2026,

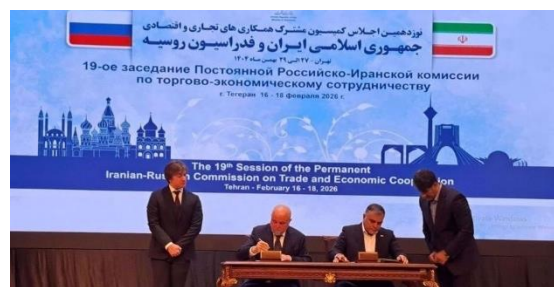
Following the Israeli imposed war against Iran on June 13, 2025, foreign transit of goods via Iran had reduced up to 15 percent, compared to the last year's corresponding period.

The TPOI added that 15.6 million tons of foreign goods was transited via Iranian soil in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year, showing a 6.84 percent decline compared to the same period last year.

## Iran, Russia sign cooperation document, four MOUs on trade, energy

Iran and Russia have signed a cooperation document and four memoranda of understanding (MOUs) following two days of expert-level discussions in Tehran.

The documents were signed during the 19th session of the Permanent Iranian-Russian Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, chaired by Iranian Minister of Petroleum Paknejad and Russian Minister of Energy Sergey Tsivilyov at the Oil Ministry's building.



The signed documents include two MOUs between Iran's National Standard Organization and its Russian counterpart, one MOU concerning research activities with the Oil Industry Research Center, and a fourth MOU in the field of social affairs, signed by Iran's Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare.

Following the signing, Paknejad and Tsiviliyov responded to questions from journalists in a press conference.

Focusing on energy and oil, he highlighted ongoing projects between Iran and Russia in the development of seven oil and gas fields under four contracts with Russian companies. Some of these projects have already reached production, demonstrating the tangible outcomes of their investments.

Economic ties between the two sides further expanded in March 2025 when Iran implemented a free trade deal with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

### **Iran to fast-track corridor projects; connectivity guarantees regional security**

President Masoud Pezeshkian says Iran is firmly committed to accelerating the implementation of vital transport infrastructure projects, stressing that connectivity will guarantee the security of all regional countries.

During the event, held at the IRIB International Conference Center and attended by Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh, seven memoranda of understanding and agreements were signed between the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructures Company of Iran and domestic and foreign investors to expand rail and road corridor infrastructure.



Ambassadors from the Republic of Iraq, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Armenia and Qatar, as well as the UN representative in Iran, attended the event.



# PERSIAN CUISINE

Ramadan is highly observed by fasting Iranians. It is considered as the month to strengthen family bonds and thank God for His blessings.

Iranians traditionally break their fast with dates and a cup of tea or hot water. Tea, bread, cheese, fresh vegetables, 'Zoolbia' and 'Bamieh' (two traditional Persian sweets coated in sugar syrup), Halva, Sholeh Zard (Persian Saffron Rice Pudding), Ash Reshteh, and Halim as well as various kinds of soups are commonly served at 'Iftar' time.

## 'Zoolbia' and 'Bamieh' Recipe

These traditional Iranian sweets go hand in hand. Wherever there is Zoolbia, there will be Bamieh too. Both are soaked in a delicious saffron and rosewater syrup for a few seconds to absorb the delightful flavors. These sweets are very common in Iran during the month of Ramadan and are usually served for iftar (the evening meal) with some freshly brewed tea.



**For Zoolbia:** Mix the cornstarch and yogurt in a medium bowl using a spoon. Add the flour and rosewater and mix to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let it sit for at least 2 hours at room temperature and up to 4 hours in the refrigerator.



Uncover the bowl with the zoolbia batter and add the baking soda and 1 tablespoon room-temperature water. Stir very well for 2 to 3 minutes. The batter will be a bit bubbly. Let the batter sit at room temperature for another 20 minutes to become smooth. Transfer the batter to a squeeze bottle.

Pour 1/2 inch of oil into a small frying pan and heat over medium heat until shimmering. To test if it's ready, drop a little bit of the batter into the oil--it should puff up and float right away.

Turn the heat down a notch so it doesn't become too hot. Squeeze the batter into the oil in a circular pattern, crisscrossing occasionally to create a floret-like pattern 3 to 4 inches wide (it doesn't have to be perfect).

Fry until golden on the bottom, 5 to 10 seconds, then flip using a chopstick or slotted spoon and fry until golden on the other side, another 10 seconds.

Transfer the zoolbia to the warm saffron syrup and submerge for a few seconds, then transfer to the cooling rack to allow excess syrup to drip off. Repeat with the remaining batter.

**For the Saffron syrup:** Meanwhile, sprinkle the saffron on the ice cubes and leave it at room temperature until the ice melts. This will be your bloomed saffron.

Put the sugar, lemon juice and 1 cup water in a saucepan over medium heat and bring it to a simmer. Lower the heat to medium low and simmer until the syrup starts to thicken a bit, about 10 minutes.

If you see sugar crystals on the sides of the saucepan, dip a pastry brush in some water and brush down the sides.

Add the rosewater and 1 tablespoon of the bloomed saffron to the syrup (reserve any remaining bloomed saffron in the refrigerator for another use). Simmer until the syrup is the consistency of warm honey (thicker than maple syrup), about 5 more minutes. To check the consistency of the syrup, pour some of it on a small plate and wait for 2 minutes. Rotate the plate and if the syrup does not run easily, it's ready. Cover to keep warm and set aside.



**For Bamieh:** Put the butter, 1 1/2 teaspoons of the saffron syrup and 1/2 cup water in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Bring to a simmer. Once the mixture starts simmering with small bubbles, add all the flour at once and start mixing using a rubber spatula.

Turn the heat to low. Keep mixing, folding and spreading the dough in the saucepan over low heat until the dough is smooth, 6 to 7 minutes. Transfer the dough to a medium mixing bowl and let sit until it's almost at room temperature, about 10 minutes.

Break the egg in a small bowl and whisk it with a fork. Add the egg to the dough and start mixing using an electric hand mixer until the egg is fully incorporated into the dough. The dough will be very sticky.

Transfer the dough to a piping bag with a star tip.

Pour 1/4 to 1/2 inch of oil into a large frying pan. Brush both blades of a pair of kitchen scissors with oil. Hold the piping bag over the room-temperature oil in the frying pan, squeeze out the dough into the oil and cut every 1 inch with the scissors. Don't overcrowd the pan since the pastry will puff when fried. If necessary, work in batches. Place the pan over medium-low heat and wait for it to bubble around the dough.

After about 8 minutes, the bamieh pieces will start to puff up and float on the oil. Turn them with a slotted spoon and cook until golden on all sides, 5 minutes more. Immediately transfer the bamieh to the saffron syrup with the slotted spoon.



# SPORTS

## Iran's Greco-Roman wrestling team win championship title

The Iranian Greco-Roman wrestling team claimed the championship title at the Zagreb Open 2026, a United World Wrestling (UWW) Ranking Series event, securing three gold medals and four bronze medals.



According to the Public Relations Department of the Wrestling Federation of Iran, the first UWW Ranking Series event of 2026 took place in Zagreb, Croatia, from February 4 to 8, with Greco-Roman competitions concluding around February 7-8.

Meanwhile Iran will send a skilled, credentialed roster of 12 athletes—three in men's freestyle, nine in Greco-Roman—to the 2026 Muhamet Malo tournament in Tirana, Albania.

The tournament will serve as the second United World Wrestling

Ranking Series event of the season, according to Tehran Times.

The tournament spans five days, with weight classes running from start to finish in one day, unlike the two-day format seen at the World Championships.

## Iran climbs to fourth place in FIFA Futsal Ranking Update

Iran's men's futsal team is in fourth place in the latest FIFA Futsal World Rankings released on Thursday.

The national Iranian team which became top Asian team again a few days ago, left behind the team of Argentina.



Brazil ranked first with 1703 points followed by Spain and Portugal with 1576 and 1565 points, respectively.

Iran which was in the fifth place in the previous rankings, moved up one spot with 1523, replacing Argentina with 1521 points.

On 07 February, Iran's national futsal team secured its 14th AFC Futsal Asian Cup championship following an intense final against the host nation, Indonesia. The match, held in Indonesia, ended 5-5 after regulation and extra time, sending the game to a penalty shootout. Iran triumphed 5-4 in the shootout to secure the championship.

Iran has long dominated the Asian futsal scene, with the latest triumph reinforcing its position as the leading team in the continent. With 13 previous championships, this win adds to the national team's long-standing excellence in the sport.

### **Women's fencing premier league in Iran**

The first round of the Women's Fencing Premier League competition in Foil weapon was held at the national fencing teams camp in Iran on February 16, 2026.



### **Iran Muaythai team clinches 12 medals at Abu Dhabi Masters 2026**



Made up of 11 male and female athletes, the Iranian team delivered standout performances across multiple weight categories during the ongoing competitions taking place from February 6 to 15 in the UAE.

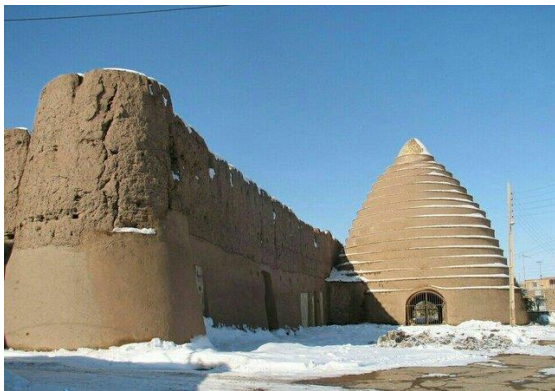


One of the highlights of the tournament came in the women's division, where Shahsanam Sedighi, Iran's sole female representative, captured gold with a convincing victory over Romania's Andrea Sirbu. She also topped the Wai Kru category to complete a golden double.

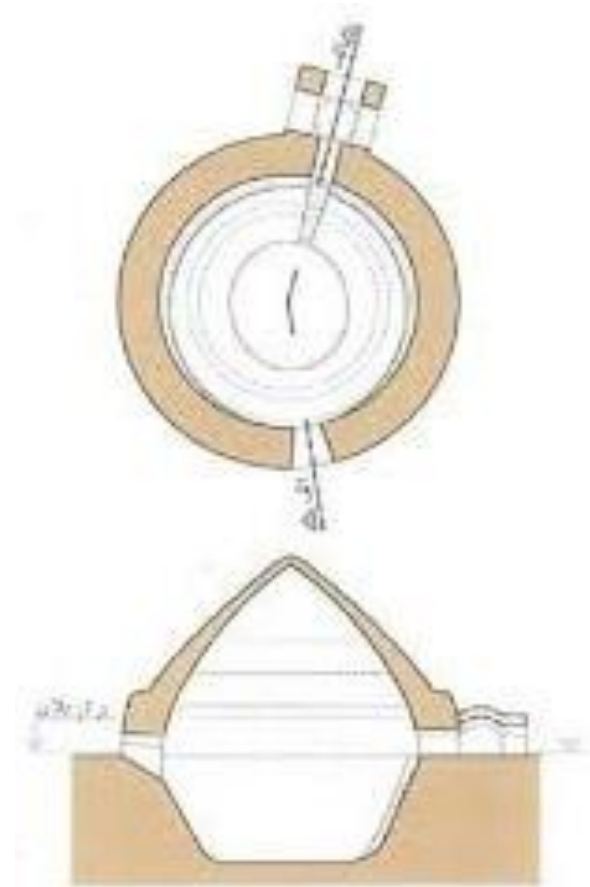
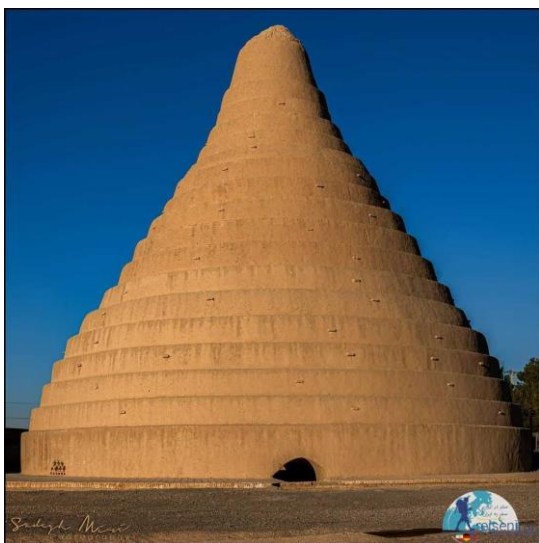
# DISCOVER IRAN

## How Iranians made ice thousands of years before Europe

For centuries, people living in Iran's central plateau found ways to deal with extreme heat without machines, electricity or fuel.



One of the most practical solutions was the yakhchal or ice house, a structure designed to produce, store and distribute ice in some of the hottest and driest parts of the country.



Long before refrigerators existed, ice was available year-round in cities such as Yazd, Kashan, Isfahan, Kerman and Birjand. The system depended on climate, careful construction and seasonal routines rather than technology in the modern sense.

A typical ice house consisted of three main elements: a high shading wall, a shallow freezing pond and a deep underground storage chamber covered by a thick dome.

# HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN IN IRAN





**Sholeh Zard (Persian Saffron Rice Pudding)**