

MFA DIGEST

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



Maragheh Observatory, East Azarbaijan, Iran

Issue #100 February 16-28, 2025

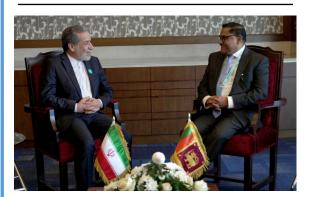


MFA NEWSLETTER

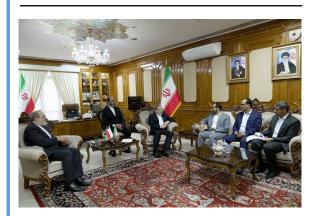
Iran's Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi who was in Muscat to attend the Eighth Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Conference, met with his Omani counterpart Seyed Badr al-Busaidi as well as India's Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, his Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba and his Sri Lankan counterpart Vijitha Herath. Mr. Araghchi also met Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi Secretary-General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) and the Spokesperson and Head of the Negotiation Team of Yemen's National Salvation Government, Mohammad Abdulsalam.



Meeting with Indian Foreign Minister



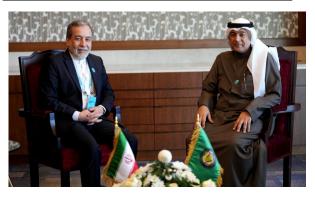
Meeting with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister



Meeting with Mohammad Abdulsalam



Meeting with Omani Foreign Minister



Meeting with PGCC Secretary-General



Meeting with Nepalese Foreign Minister



MFA NEWSLETTER

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi also traveled to Geneva to attend the high-level meeting of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Disarmament Conference. On the sidelines of the meetings, Mr. Araghchi met Antonio Guterres the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as Armenian Foreign Mionister Ararat Mirzoyan, and counterparts from Bahrain (Abdul Latif bin Rashid Al Zayani), Indonesia (Sugiono), Kuwait (Abdullah Ali al-Yahya), Venezuela (Yvan Gil Pinto) and Cuba (Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla).



Meeting with Bahraini counterpart



Meeting with Armenian counterpart



Meeting with Indonesian counterpart



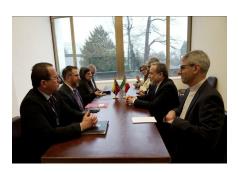
Meeting with Kuwaiti counterpart



Meeting with Antonio Guterres



Meeting with Cuban counterpart



Meeting with Venezuela counterpart



Renowned Iranian Luminaries

NASIR AL-DIN AL-TUSI



February, 23, is the National Commemoration Day of the outstanding Iranian philosopher, scientist, and mathematician Nasir al-Din Tusi.

Born in 1201 in the city of Tus, Iran, Tusi made significant contributions to various fields of study, including mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and ethics. He is best known for his work on the development of trigonometry, as well as his contributions to astronomy and physics.

Nasir al-Din Tusi was a polymath who excelled in both academic and practical fields. He served as a court official for various rulers in the Middle East and played a crucial role in the establishment of the Maragheh Observatory, one of the most advanced astronomical observatories of its time. UNESCO designated 2008 as the year of the Maragheh Observatory, and steps were taken to inscribe this observatory in the list of UNESCO's tangible heritage. Tusi's works had a lasting impact on scientific thought in the Islamic world and beyond.

Nasir al-Din, the renowned Persian polymath, is also considered one of the most prolific authors of the Islamic Golden Age. He wrote over 150 books in Arabic and Persian, covering a wide range of subjects, including the Islamic religion. Among his many notable works are Arabic translations of ancient scholars such as Archimedes, Euclid, and Ptolemy.

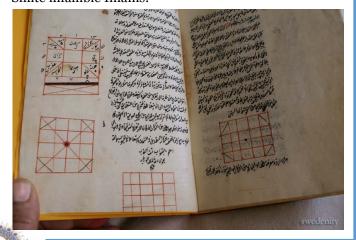
In the Eastern world, Nasir al-Din is known as a "hakim" (wise man) and is cherished for his contributions to the evolution theory, as well as

advancements in astronomy, mathematics, and trigonometry. He was the first scientist to write a treatise on spherical trigonometry independent from astronomy, titled Treatise of the Quadrilateral. His works helped establish trigonometry as a separate branch of mathematics, distinct from astronomy.

Nasir al-Din Tusi, an influential astronomer, is known for inventing the Tusi-couple, a geometrical technique designed to study the latitudinal motion of inferior planets. The Tusi-couple, created in 1247, replaced Ptolemy's equant and was later utilized by Nicolaus Copernicus in his work, De Revolutionibus. Al-Tusi's legacy includes the Treasury of Astronomy and the Ilkhan Tables, completed in 1272, which accurately depict planetary movements. Furthermore, al-Tusi's astronomical instruments, like the astrolabe, were crucial in Islamic astronomy. He was the first to suggest that the Milky Way was made of small, clustered stars, a discovery later confirmed by Galileo Galilei.

Some of the famous books of Khawaja Nasir al-Din al-Tusi are Commentaries on Ibn Sina's Esharat, Tajrid al-'Itiqad, Al-Tazkirah al- Nasiriyah, Akhlaq-e Nasseri, Jawahar al-Faraiz, Book on Astronomy, Principles of Logic, Twenty Chapters on Astrolabe in Foreign Sciences, etc. Khawaja's writings were published in Latin in London in 1652 CE, and some of his works have also been published in Egypt, India, and Iran.

Khawaja Nasir al-Din Tusi passed away in Baghdad on June 26, 1274, and his body was transferred to Kadhimiya and buried next to the tomb of the two Shiite infallible Imams.





Iran's Destination

MARAGHEH OBSERVATORY



Maragheh observatory in northwest Iran is a must-see destination for history buffs and ones interested in medieval astronomy.

Construction of the site commenced in the mid-13th century under the patronage of Hulagu Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, who selected Persian polymath Nasir al-Din Tusi as the director of the observatory.

Abundant evidence suggests astronomers at Maragheh carried out complicated programs in observational and computational astronomy to update the Ptolemaic parameters.

Experts say ideas initiated by the Maragheh school created a considerable impact beyond the Islamic territories and influenced the astronomical revolution of the 16th century.

According to the UNESCO Astronomy and World Heritage Webportal, Maragheh observatory represents a new wave of scientific activities in the Islamic world in the 13th century, it had a key role in the development of some sophisticated pre-Copernican non-Ptolemaic systems for explaining the planetary motions, and it was the model for several observatories that were built in Persia, Transoxiana, and Asia Minor up to the 17th century.

In addition, the Maragheh observatory represents a turning point in the development of alternatives to Ptolemy's planetary models that were compatible with Aristotelian cosmological principles. These elaborate models, together with further innovations developed at the Samarqand observatory and later at Damascus, found their way to Europe and formed a critical part of the mathematical tools that enabled Copernicus to create the heliocentric model of the universe.

The scientific institute had the main building for the observational equipment, some auxiliary buildings, and accommodation quarters.

As mentioned by the UNESCO Astronomy and World Heritage Webportal, the observatory had a library that is said to have contained about 400,000 volumes. A team of astronomers, most of whom were invited from different parts of the Islamic world, were responsible for the design and construction of the astronomical instruments, as well as for conducting observations and performing calculations.

After the death of Tusi in 1274, the Maragheh observatory was supervised by his son and remained active until the end of the 13th century. However, following the death of Hulagu Khan in 1265 and his son Abaqa in 1282, it lost its powerful patrons and had become inactive by the beginning of the 14th century.





Society & Culture

IRAN-INDONESIA MOVIE WEEK 2025 HELD IN INDONESIAN CITIES



Iran & Indonesia Movie Week 2025 was underway in Indonesia, screening eight films from both countries.

The opening ceremony of the event, which was held on February 21, was attended by the Ambassador of Iran to Jakarta Mohammad Boroujerdi, and Indonesian Minister of Culture Fadli Zon as keynote speakers along with other officials, artists, and enthusiasts from the two nations, ILNA reported.

The organization of the film festival is part of a series of commemorations of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Iran.

"This is an achievement that reflects the long-term commitment of our two countries in cooperation, mutual respect, and cultural exchange," Fadli Zon said.

For his part, Mohammad Boroujerdi said that cinema has the capacity to exchange cultures. "When Iran and Indonesia celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations, I believe culture is the most humane aspect of diplomacy supported by the two countries. The potential is much greater to highlight the culture of the two countries as implementing cinema projects and joint film production," he said.

IRAN CULTURAL WEEK IN QATAR

The Cultural Week of the Islamic Republic of Iran was underway in Doha, Qatar.

"The event showcases various aspects and manifestations of Iranian-Islamic art and civilization to a wide Qatari audience," the Deputy for the Development of Scientific and Cultural Cooperation at the Islamic Culture & Relations Organization Hossein Divsalar was quoted as saying by IRNA.

"Sixty distinguished Iranian artists and athletes from various fields present the country's unique historical and civilizational capabilities," he added.

"Renowned artists in various artistic fields, including music, Nastaliq calligraphy, illumination (Tazhib), fashion and clothing, leather engraving, painting, embroidery, miniature painting, ring-making, enamel work, marquetry (Moarraq), Khatam inlay work, Iranian toy production, Thuluth calligraphy, fabric engraving, 3D puzzles on fabric, embossed carpets, watercolor painting, metal engraving, ethnic clothing, miniatures, pottery, tilework, floral and bird painting, handicrafts, video games, and sculpture are showcasing Iranian skills and culture in the Qatari capital," Divsalar stated.





Society & Culture

IRAN, TURKEY DISCUSS JOINT LIBRARY PROJECTS, CULTURAL EXCHANGE



In a meeting held at the Majlis Library, Museum and Documentation Center on Sunday, Hicabi Kırlangıç, the Turkish ambassador to Iran engaged in discussions aimed at expanding cultural and library collaborations between the two nations.

The meeting, attended by Masoud Moienipour, the Head of the Iran's Parliament Library, was part of ongoing efforts to explore avenues for cooperative initiatives.

They also exchanged views on potential areas of mutual cooperation. Proposals discussed included the exchange of books, restoration of manuscripts, digitization of works, and the organization of joint training courses. Moreover, Moienipour presented the ambassador with a collection of books and materials related to Turkey, further emphasizing the goodwill between the two countries.

Moienipour highlighted the significance of cultural cooperation between Iran and Turkey, showcasing the rich resources of the library and stressing the need for enhanced academic exchanges and library cooperation.

IRANIAN, QATARI CULTURE MINISTERS EMPHASIZE EXPANSION OF CULTURAL COOPERATION

The Iranian minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyed Abbas Salehi met his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Thani and the two sides emphasized the operational expansion of cultural cooperation and the formation of a committee to facilitate these collaborations, IRNA reported.

Referring to the deep cultural commonalities between Iran and Qatar, Salehi described the friendly relations between the two countries as a valuable opportunity for joint cultural cooperation.

He pointed to the cultural exchange agreement signed in the presence of the Presidents of Iran and Qatar, stating that holding Iran's Cultural Week in Qatar is an important step toward implementing this agreement.

The Iranian Culture Minister proposed the formation of a joint working group comprising the Iranian embassy, cultural attaché, and the Qatari Ministry of Culture to identify and implement cultural and artistic initiatives, particularly in the field of books, ensuring their completion before Qatar's Cultural Week in Iran.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IRAN TO HOST WANA CONFERENCE FOR SHORING UP SCIENCE AUTHORITY



Iran is to host the 4th International Conference of West Asia and North Africa (WANA), an attempt that seeks, as the head of the well-known Iranian stem-cells research institute Royan says, to shore up the country's science authority.

Head of Royan Institute Abdolhossein Shahroudi says the institute aims to revive the WANA region's scientific identity by expanding connections with research centers and universities, especially in neighboring countries, to foster regional and global scientific networking.

Deputy Head Parvane Afsharian says the 4th edition focuses on stem cells in regenerative medicine, covering new approaches in cancer medicine, bioengineering, cell therapy, gene therapy, artificial intelligence, and computer biology.

Nearly 150 professors in 3 consecutive years participated in the event. 90% of the invited professors come from countries out of WANA. Royan Institute has co-authored about 90 theses and produced 1,100 articles.

Infertile couples from 23 countries come to Iran as a health tourism destination-last year, 500 couples. As with cell therapy, gene therapy, and the use of stem cells, Iran ranks first in the region.

The event's previous editions were held in Mashhad, Isfahan, and Urmia. The next conference will be held in Kish Islands, southern Iran, from May 3 to 4, 2025.

IRAN READY TO FURTHER REGIONAL CO-OP TO TACKLE SDSS

Attending the first regional dialogue on enhancing inter-regional co-op on sand and dust storms (SDSs), Sediqeh Torabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), has voiced Iran's readiness to expand collaborations with regional countries to combat SDSs.

The official also proposed establishing a regional fund, and an expert work group, as well as holding annual meetings for the countries affected by adverse consequences of SDSs.

Organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the meeting was held on February 18 and 19 in Doha, Qatar, IRNA reported.

It brought together senior government officials from nine countries in West Asia including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait to address challenges caused by SDSs, and their adverse consequences on the environment, agriculture, transportation, energy, and health.

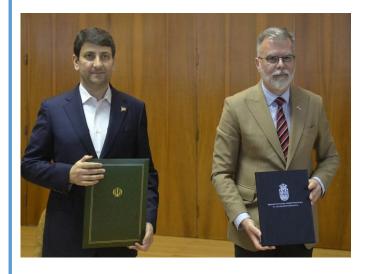
During the meeting, officials discussed ways to enhance regional and international cooperation to address these challenges and reviewed the latest studies and successful practices to address sand and dust storms, with a focus on enhancing early warning mechanisms and adapting to climate change.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

TEHRAN, BELGRADE INK MOU IN ICT SECTOR



Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology, Sattar Hashemi, and his Serbian counterpart, Dejan Ristic, have signed a memorandum of understanding to foster cooperation in the information and communication technology sector.

An Iranian delegation headed by Hashemi paid an official visit to Belgrade at the invitation of Ristic, on February 25-27.

Hashemi also held a meeting with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic. During the meeting, the president announced his willingness to enhance cooperation with Iran in all sectors, particularly ICT.

Iran is an important and influential country in West Asia; Serbia is interested in expanding collaborations with Iran in different sectors, including ICT, data transfer, and artificial intelligence, Mehr news agency quoted Vucic as saying.

The official lauded Iran's progress in the field of space communication, designing, building, and launching sensing and communication satellites.

Referring to Iran's capacity and manufacturing facilities in establishing fiber optic factories in some countries, the President of Serbia expressed interest in benefiting from this capacity.

Under the MOU, the two countries will promote their cooperation and exchange technical expertise, experience, and experts in scientific and educational centers that are operating in the ICT sector.

IRAN, BELARUS TO SET UP JOINT SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE IN SPRING



Farhad Yazdandoost, an official with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and Dmitry Koltsov, the Belarusian ambassador to Iran, have agreed on establishing a joint scientific committee in the upcoming spring.

Highlighting cooperation opportunities in basic and applied sciences, including physics, chemistry, and advanced technologies, the Belarusian official welcomed the promotion of scientific collaborations with Iran.

He also pointed to the joint committee held in January 2024, which stressed fostering scientific and technological relations. The official went on to say that since 2016, the two countries have also agreed on mutually recognizing higher education degrees.

Referring to a memorandum of understanding on boosting technological cooperation signed by the two countries in 2023, the official further highlighted the need to expand scientific and technological collaborations.

For his part, Yazdandoost said the significant progress of the Iranian private sector in cooperation with Belarus in various fields underscores the importance of developing cooperation among knowledge-based companies, start-ups, and biotechnology.



SOCIETY & CULTURE

ITALY READY TO ASSIST IN PRESERVING ISFAHAN'S HISTORICAL SITES, AMBASSADOR SAYS

MEHR NEWS AGENCY

Italy welcomes collaborating with Iran on archaeological projects and the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Isfahan's historical monuments, according to Rome's ambassador to Tehran, Paola Amadei.

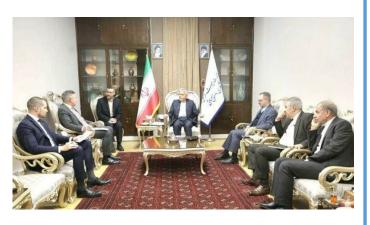
During her first visit to Isfahan, Amadei said that Italy has a history of successful cooperation in the restoration of the city's cultural heritage.

"Our past collaborations have been productive, and upon arriving in Isfahan, I visited the Abbasi Grand Mosque. I saw firsthand the contributions of Italian archaeologists who have worked to preserve and restore the site for visitors," Mehr quoted the Italian envoy as saying on February 26.

The ambassador emphasized Italy's willingness to expand its involvement in archaeological projects across Iran, particularly in Isfahan. She noted that several projects related to the preservation, revitalization, and restoration of historical sites could benefit from Italian expertise.

Moreover, she highlighted opportunities for academic exchange, stating that Italy is ready to facilitate the participation of Iranian students in training programs in archaeology, architecture, and historical restoration, further strengthening cultural and educational ties between the two nations.

IRANIAN TOURISM MINISTER, GERMAN AMBASSADOR DISCUSS CULTURAL TIES



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has met with the German ambassador to Iran to explore avenues for strengthening cultural relations between the two nations.

During the meeting, Salehi-Amiri emphasized the longstanding cultural ties between Iran and Germany, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

"Both nations show mutual respect and positive sentiments toward each other. Strengthening these cultural ties is essential," the minister told Ambassador Markus Potzel.

He also highlighted the potential of German museums, particularly the Pergamon Museum, in fostering collaboration. "Why shouldn't artifacts from the Pergamon Museum be exhibited in Iranian museums, and why shouldn't Iranian museum collections be displayed in Germany? My proposal is to organize joint museum exhibitions, which could further enhance our cultural cooperation," Salehi-Amiri suggested.

Potzel, for his part, shared personal insights on Iranian culture's influence on his family, stating, "All members of my family have visited Iran and have been profoundly impacted by its culture. Personally, I am very familiar with Iran's cultural and social environment."

He also mentioned ongoing discussions with Iran's Foreign Ministry regarding reopening German consulates in Iran, expressing optimism that the new

Iranian administration could present opportunities for enhanced bilateral relations.

FOOD DIPLOMACY

IRANIAN COOKIES: PASHMAK



Pashmak is a traditional Iranian sweet, similar to cotton candy. It is made with flavored sugar syrup that is gently pulled until multiple thin and fragile threads are created. The final product resembles hair or wool, which is soft, yet dense and heavy, and is often referred to as angel's hair.

This traditional confectionery is believed to have originated in the Iranian city of Yazd, and today it is usually factory-produced. It is typically flavored with sesame, rose water, cardamom, orange blossom, saffron, vanilla, or pistachio. In Iran, it is not common to eat it on its own, and it is usually incorporated into other desserts.

Because of its unusual and decorative appearance, pashmak is often served on top of cakes, ice creams, puddings, and drinks. Although this sweet treat is mainly produced in Iran, it can occasionally be found in international supermarkets around the world, packed in firmly secured bags.

Ingredients: sugar, white flour, vinegar, oil





TRADE & ECONOMY

IRAQ BECOMES SECOND-LARGEST DESTINATION FOR IRANIAN EXPORTS: IRAN'S CUSTOMS





Iraq has emerged as the second-largest destination for Iranian exports, with over \$10 billion in goods shipped in the past ten months, according to Foroud Asgari, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Cooperation with neighboring countries, especially in the trade and economic fields, is one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Speaking in Khorramshahr during a meeting focused on fostering trade and economic prosperity in Khorramshahr and Abadan, Asgari noted that Khuzestan Province ranks third nationally in non-oil exports, with a total value of \$19.6 billion recorded in the first ten months of the current year.

Asgari also pointed out Iraq's proximity as a neighboring country, asserting that "given the border between Khuzestan Province and Iraq, we must leverage all legal avenues to enhance our export capabilities."

China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Turkiye, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are the main destinations for Iranian exports.

Iran and Brazil have agreed to expand their financial and banking relations, with a focus on using national currencies in bilateral trade and leveraging banking infrastructure for economic cooperation.

IRAN, BRAZIL AGREE TO ENHANCE

FINANCIAL AND BANKING TIES

According to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the agreement was reached during a meeting between CBI Deputy Governor Asghar Abolhasani and Tatiana Rosito, Brazil's Deputy Finance Minister and Chair of the BRICS Central Bank Deputies and Finance Ministers Meeting.

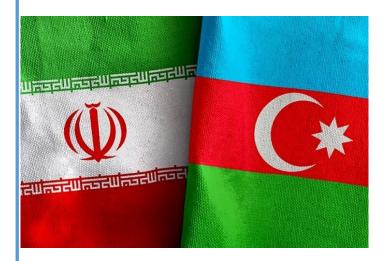
Brazil, as the current chair of BRICS, highlighted at the Cape Town summit in South Africa that strengthening financial and banking cooperation among member states using national currencies would be beneficial to all participants.

During the meeting, Abolhasani and Rosito discussed the significant financial and trade potential between Iran and Brazil, emphasizing the importance of increasing bilateral and multilateral monetary and banking cooperation, particularly through mechanisms available within the BRICS framework.

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TRADE & ECONOMY

IRAN, AZERBAIJAN TO ESTABLISH JOINT AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION COMMITTEE



Iran and Azerbaijan have agreed to establish a joint agricultural cooperation committee within the next month, the agriculture ministers of the two countries announced.

According to Mehr News Agency, Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeljeh and his Azerbaijani counterpart Majnun Mammadov discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector during a phone conversation.

Nouri Ghezeljeh stated that Iran is prepared to expand scientific and research collaborations, increase agricultural trade, and facilitate the transit of agricultural goods.

Mammadov emphasized the significant potential for cooperation between the two countries, stressing the necessity of forming a joint committee to advance collaboration in this sector.

The two ministers agreed that the joint committee will be established within a month, during which foundational agreements on various areas of agricultural cooperation and trade facilitation will be drafted and signed.

IRAN, ARMENIA TO EXPAND TRADE TIES



The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) has underscored the need to enhance trade cooperation between Iran and Armenia during a meeting with Armenia's deputy economy minister.

According to a Saturday report by TPO, Mohammad Ali Dehqan Dehnavi met with Armenian Deputy Economy Minister Edgar Zakaryan and Armenia's Ambassador Grigor Hovhannisyan, highlighting the strong friendship between the two nations and expressing Iran's willingness to expand trade relations.

Dehnavi noted that the trade volume target between Iran and Armenia has been set at \$3 billion, but there remains a significant gap to bridge before achieving that goal. "We are striving to reach this target," he said. Armenia's Deputy Economy Minister Edgar Zakaryan emphasized the historical friendship between the Iranian and Armenian people, saying this could play a key role in advancing economic cooperation between the two countries.

"Armenia is prepared to collaborate with Iran across various sectors to strengthen mutual trade relations," Zakaryan said.



SPORTS

IRAN CROWNED CHAMPIONS OF 2025 CAFA WOMEN'S FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP



Iran defeated Tajikistan 10-1 to win the 2025 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship for the fourth time.

Maral Torkman (two goals), Fereshteh Karimi (two goals), Roghayeh Soume'eh, Nasimeh Gholami, Mahtab Banaei, Zahra Kianimanesh, Fatemeh Hosseini, and Mahsa Alimadadi were on target for Team Melli.

Iran defeated Uzbekistan 9-0, Kyrgyzstan 10-0, and Turkmenistan 5-1.

Kyrgyzstan also came third in the tournament.

Iran's Maral Torkman was named as the tournament's MVP.

Iran have won four titles out of four editions.

The tournament, organized by the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA), was held in Dushanbe for the third time on Feb. 9 to 16.



SPORTS

IRAN WINS FREESTYLE WRESTLING TITLE AT 2025 UWW RANKING SERIES



Iran's freestyle wrestling team dominated the 2025 UWW Ranking Series tournament in Tirana, Albania, clinching the championship title with a total of six medals, including four gold.

This victory reinforces Iran's status as a global wrestling powerhouse, solidifying its position ahead of major international competitions, including the 2025 World Championships and the 2026 Olympics.

The tournament, held on February 27-28, was the second stage of the 2025 UWW Ranking Series. It attracted top-tier competitors from around the world, serving as a key event for seeding at future international championships.

Gold medalists: Ali Momeni (57kg), Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Kamran Ghasempour (92kg), and Amirhossein Zare (125kg).

Silver medalist: Erfan Alizadeh (97kg). Bronze medalist: Younes Emami (74kg).

Team rankings: Iran secured the championship with 135 points, followed by the U.S. (97 points) and Japan (93 points).



DISCOVER IRAN IN PICTURES

BIRDS AND ANIMALS IN IRAN'S SIRIK BAY

The images show migratory birds in Sirik (Azini) Bay, located 35 km from Sirik town in Hormuzagn Province. This bay serves as a habitat for numerous animals and birds.























