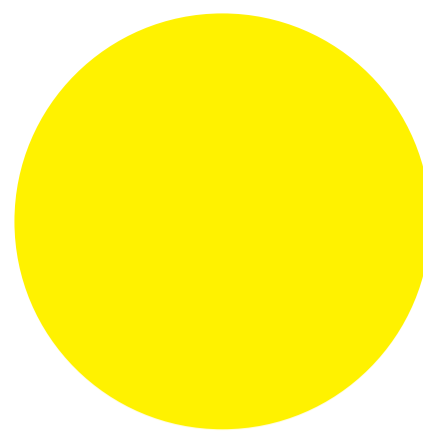




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# Iran Daily



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Vol. 7345 • Saturday, July 22, 2023 • Tir 31, 1402 • Muharram 4, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

## Muslims strongly condemn new desecration of Qur'an in Sweden

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Women raise copies of Muslims' holy book, Qur'an, as they participate in a demonstration against the desecration of the book in Sweden, in Beirut, Lebanon, on July 21, 2023.  
● IBRAHIM AMRO/APP

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ  
وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

They wish to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, even though the unbelievers may detest it.

سورة النور  
Holy Quran 24:17

usj moqawama



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MP 7 >

**Iran karatekas bag five medals at Asia C'ships on first day**

**Sports Desk**

Iranian karate athletes snatched two gold medals at the 2023 AKF Senior Championships currently taking place in Malaysia. On the opening day of the competition, Behnam Dehqanzadeh clinched the first gold for Iran's team in the Senior Kumite Male -55kg category. His victory came after a hard-fought battle, defeating Jordan's Omar Shaqrah with a score of 6-4 in the final. Prior to cruising to the final, Dehqanzadeh showcased his prowess by defeating opponents from Turkmenistan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia

in earlier rounds.

Adding to Iran's success, Atousa Golshadnezhad also stood tall as she secured a gold medal in the Senior Kumite Female -61kg division. She outclassed her Emirati opponent Sarah Alameri with a convincing 3-0 victory, earning the title of Asia's champion in her category. Iran's karate contingent continued to shine, with Amir Mehdizadeh earning a bronze medal in the Senior Kumite Male -67kg category. Meanwhile, Fatemeh Sadeqi in the Kata Female and Abolfazl Shahrjedi in the Kata Male secured their places on the podium, finishing third in their respective events.

**Iran raps US for blocking its bid to host maritime event**

**International Desk**

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani strongly condemned the US move to prevent Iran from hosting an international maritime event in October, saying that Washington once again revealed its arrogant and colonial nature. Iran had proposed to host a shipping event in Tehran in late October this year, in conjunction with an annual maritime day hosted by the UN's International Maritime Organization (IMO), which was accepted in 2015 by the IMO's Executive Council. However, Iran's offer to host the event was rejected after a proposal led by the US to rescind the bid was approved in a

vote at the UN shipping agency's council on Thursday.

Kanaani said that the US move showed that Washington recognizes no limits in politically abusing the United Nations' technical and specialized agencies. The Iranian official denounced the US for ignoring the majority vote of the IMO member states.

The US, in a working paper seen by Reuters and submitted to the IMO's Council, which is meeting this week, proposed rescinding the decision. It alleged in the paper, which was co-sponsored by Britain, that "Iran has seized, or attempted to seize, commercial vessels with no pretext, warning or prior justification."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia, Iran  
working on  
strategic  
deal

**MEHR** - Preparing the draft of a new interstate agreement on the Iran-Russia strategic partnership continues, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said. Maria Zakharova made the remark in response to questions about possible complications in drafting the treaty after the protests of the Iranian side in connection with the joint statement by Russia and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

IRGC warns  
against  
unloading  
Iranian oil

**PRESS TV** - The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy warned that any oil company unloading hundreds of thousands of barrels of seized Iranian oil sitting in a Greek tanker off the coast of Texas would be held accountable.

Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri said on Thursday, "The era of hit and run is over," adding that if they hit, they should expect to be struck back.

Fierce  
dust storm  
hits SE Iran

FARS

**IFP** - A dust storm packing winds of up to 126 kilometers per hour hit the city of Zabol, in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, in the early hours of Friday.

The storm decreased visibility to 400 meters horizontally, according to the director of meteorology for Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

An emergency official for the province said around 1,000 people had sought medical help because of the dust storm within the last three days. Dozens more had to be hospitalized.

# Muslims strongly condemn new desecration of Qur'an in Sweden

## International Desk

Muslim-majority nations and governments expressed outrage over the second incident of a state-authorized desecration of their holy book in Stockholm, Sweden, in less than a month.

Salwan Momika, a Sweden-based Iraqi refugee who burned a copy of the Qur'an in Stockholm on June 28 under the protection of the Swedish police, stomped and kicked another copy of the Qur'an, but left the protest outside Stockholm's main mosque without burning the holy book.

Following the announcement, millions of Muslims took to the streets of Iran and other Muslim-majority countries to voice their strong condemnation of the desecration.

In a communiqué issued after the rallies on Friday, the demonstrators called on the Iranian Foreign Ministry to reconsider diplomatic relations with the Swedish government in tandem with other Muslim countries.

Momika's fellow Iraqi citizens, who were angered the most, even stormed the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad early Thursday, overran the diplomatic compound, and started a small fire. The embassy staff had been evacuated a day earlier in anticipation of the strong response.

Hours later, Iraq's prime minister cut diplomatic ties with Sweden in protest over the desecration of the Islamic holy book, Press TV reported.



Salwan Momika, who stomped on a copy of the Qur'an, is escorted by police to a location outside the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, on July 20, 2023.

AFP

The Iranian Foreign Ministry also summoned the Swedish ambassador to Tehran and conveyed the Islamic Republic's vehement condemnation of the heinous act.

Following repeated desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden, Iran's Foreign Min-



ister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian wrote to Antonio Guterres on Thursday, urging the UN secretary-general to take a hard line on such acts of religious sacrilege. Amir-Abdollahian reminded the UN chief that Momika's previous act of sacrilege had caused "serious harm"

to the sentiments of Muslims and other followers of divine religions across the world. "The shock and concern about such insulting actions are on the rise," the foreign minister added. Iran strongly denounces the Swedish authorities' issuance of their approval

for the provocative act, the letter went on. In a telephone conversation on Thursday, Amir-Abdollahian and his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein strongly condemned the desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden, calling for an urgent meeting of the Organiza-

tion of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the matter. The two diplomats described the defiling of the Qur'an as an insult to rationality and freedom of speech and condemned the irresponsible behavior of the Swedish government.

## Escalation of tensions in no one's interest



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

## OPINION

Following Robert Malley's removal from his position as the US special representative for Iran affairs, recent news regarding the stances of Washington and Tehran indicates a shift away from earlier optimism and a non-productive trajectory between the two sides. Despite political analysts foreseeing a positive turn in negotiations between Iran and the United States following the king of Oman's visit to Iran in late May, current developments suggest that both nations are heading toward increased tensions. The dismissal of Malley, who was known for his successful talks with Iranian parties in Oman, Qatar, and New York, has altered

the course of events in both countries. Instead of constructive engagement, the United States continues to assert unfounded claims against Iran. Recently, they announced plans to deploy more ships and soldiers to the Persian Gulf, citing Iran's alleged destabilizing activities as a pretext. Last week, a senior official from the US Defense Department stated that they will increase the use of F-16 fighter jets in the region to protect ships from Iran's actions.

Moreover, the United States, with Britain's support, exerted pressure on the United Nations to revoke Tehran's hosting of the World Maritime Day. This further exacerbates the strained relations between the nations. In addition to these developments, the US federal prosecutor has issued an order to auction 800,000

barrels of Iranian oil, which was allegedly seized by American forces. Responding to this move, Alireza Tangsiri, the commander of the IRGC Navy, issued a stern warning. He declared that any American oil company attempting to remove the oil from the tanker would be held accountable, and he also held the US responsible for these actions. With these recent events, the prospects for productive dialogue between Iran and the United States appear dim, and both sides seem to be heading toward an escalation of hostilities.

Iran's Defense Minister Mohammadreza Ashtiani responded to the deployment of American warships and fighters to the Persian Gulf, asserting that the Islamic Republic is currently at a stage of authority and capability where it cannot be threatened by anyone. He

emphasized that Iran plays a significant regional and international role. While Iran has been managing regional tensions in West Asia with an interactive approach and striving for de-escalation, the recent threatening positions and behavior of the United States toward Iran are concerning. The reasons behind America's hardening stance may stem from Israel's isolation in the region, internal rivalries within the United States, or the ambiguous situation of the war in Ukraine. Regardless of the origins, the path taken by the United States and Europe toward Iran does not appear to serve the interests of any party involved. Expectations were that the United States would support the de-escalation process in the West Asian region by endorsing the agreement between Iran

and Saudi Arabia. However, there are concerns that the escalation of tensions between the United States and Iran could have ripple effects on regional dynamics, potentially leading to the return or intensification of instability in the Middle East. This situation is not in the interest of the United States, especially considering its ongoing competition with China and entanglement in the conflict in Ukraine. In the event that the United States persists in its tension-inducing positions toward Iran, Tehran is prepared to utilize its capabilities to respond. The continuation of the current situation could further complicate Tehran-Washington political dialogue regarding the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal and the lifting of sanctions. The failure of US Democrats to reach an agreement or political

understanding with Iran would likely be a serious blow to their prospects in the upcoming presidential elections.

Alternatively, it is possible that these threats and tension-causing positions from America are part of a verbal or psychological warfare strategy to strengthen their position in potential political talks and win concessions from Iran. However, historical experience has shown that such tactics have not been effective. The past years of maximum pressure imposed by the United States against Iran have not succeeded in forcing the Islamic Republic to back down from its nuclear program. Hence, both sides should acknowledge that escalating tensions will not lead to a reasonable solution for managing disputes. Resuming stalled talks with greater seriousness would be a more viable approach benefiting Iran, America, the region, and Europe.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Ulyanov: Prospects of JCPOA revival currently dim

The prospects for restoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal, are currently extremely dim, said Russia's permanent envoy to the international organizations in Vienna. Mikhail Ulyanov made the remarks in an interview with the Russian newspaper Izvestia, published on Friday, according to Mehr news agency. He reminded everyone that negotiations on the

restoration of the Iranian nuclear deal were held in Vienna from April 2021 to March 2022. "A detailed decision was then prepared, which provided for the phased lifting of all US sanctions against Iran and the simultaneous return of Tehran to those parameters of its nuclear program that were included in the JCPOA," he said. However, he added, "the favorable and appropriate moment" was lost, and absolutely nothing

has happened in the last year and a half. The Russian diplomat noted that the problem lies mainly in the position of Berlin, London, and Paris, as well as Washington, which unilaterally withdrew from the deal back in 2018. "In my opinion, they are making a strategic mistake, because the issue is in limbo, and tensions can escalate at any moment, bearing extremely unpleasant consequences," Ulyanov warned.

# N Korea threatens nuclear retaliation over US displays of military force



North Korea said on Thursday deployment of US aircraft carriers, bombers or missile submarines in South Korea could meet criteria for its use of nuclear weapons, state media KCNA reported, citing the country's Defence Minister Kang Sun Nam. The comments raise the stakes as each side steps up displays of military force in a standoff over the isolated country's nu-

clear weapons and ballistic missile programs, Reuters reported. The defence minister's statement also accused the United States and South Korea of escalating tensions in the region while criticizing the first meeting by their Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG). "The ever-increasing visibility of the deployment of the strategic nuclear submarine and other strategic

assets may fall under the conditions of the use of nuclear weapons specified in the DPRK law," the statement said. DPRK is short for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Kang's remark was aimed at the nuclear-armed Ohio-class US ballistic missile submarine that arrived at a port in the southern city of Busan

earlier this week. "The phase of a military clash on the Korean Peninsula has surfaced as a dangerous reality," the KCNA report said. South Korea's Ministry of National Defense said on Friday the NCG meeting and the deployment of the USS Kentucky were "just defensive countermeasures" against the North's nuclear and missile threats.

The KCNA report came after a US soldier crossed the border into North Korea on Tuesday at a time of heightened tension between the two Koreas and the United States. North Korea has yet to comment on the incident involving the US soldier. Last year, the state codified a new, expansive nuclear law declaring its status as a nuclear-armed state "irreversible".

## Zelenskiy sacks Ukraine's ambassador to UK after criticism



President Volodymyr Zelenskiy dismissed Vadym Prystaiko as Ukraine's ambassador to Britain on Friday, days after the envoy publicly criticised the president. A presidential order, which said Prystaiko had also been removed as Ukraine's representative to the International Maritime Organization, gave no reason for the dismissal, Reuters reported. In an interview with Sky News last week, Prystaiko was asked about remarks by outgoing British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace suggesting Kyiv should show more gratitude for weapons deliveries from its allies to fight Russian forces.

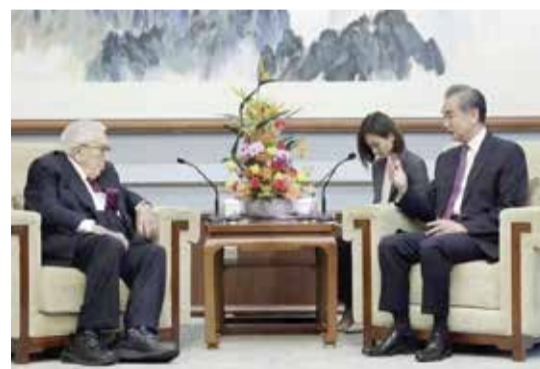
Zelenskiy responded by saying Ukraine was always grateful to Britain, a staunch ally. He was also quoted by British media as saying Wallace could let him know how to express his gratitude or how "we could get up in the morning and express our words of gratitude to the minister." Asked whether Zelenskiy was being sarcastic, Prystaiko told Sky there was "a little bit of sarcasm" when the president "said that each and every morning he will wake up and call Ben Wallace to thank him." "I don't believe that this sarcasm is healthy," he said, adding that the Russians "have to know that we're working together." Zelenskiy's order did not say who would replace Prystaiko, 53, an experienced diplomat and former vice prime minister who had held the post as ambassador to Britain for three years.

Ukraine's ambassador to the UK  
Vadym Prystaiko  
TOM NICHOLSON/REUTERS

## White House regrets Kissinger had better access in Beijing than US officials

The White House on Thursday expressed regret that Henry Kissinger was able to get more of an audience in Beijing than some sitting US officials, after the former top diplomat held talks in China. Kissinger - an architect of normalizing ties between Washington and Beijing in the 1970s as secretary of state and national security advisor in the administrations of Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford - was welcomed warmly as an "old friend" by Chinese President Xi Jinping on Thursday amid efforts by Beijing and Washington to mend frayed ties, Reuters reported.

The White House said it was aware of the trip but that it was a private visit by a citizen. As part of those meetings, Kissinger, 100, also met with China's top diplomat Wang Yi and with defense minister Li Shangfu, who has declined direct talks with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. General Li, appointed in March, remains sanctioned by the US over his role in a 2017 weapons purchase from Russia's largest arms exporter, Rosoboronexport. Chinese officials have repeatedly said they want those sanctions, imposed in 2018, dropped to facilitate discussions. "It's unfortunate that a private citizen can meet with the defense minister and have a communication and the United States can't," said White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby. "That is something that we want to solve. This is why we continue to try to get the military lines of communication back open because when they're not open and you have a time like this when tensions are high, miscalculations also, then the risk goes high." Kirby said that administration officials "look forward to hearing from Secretary Kissinger when he returns, to hear what he heard, what he learned, what he saw." Tensions between the world's two largest economies have heightened over a range of issues, including the war in Ukraine, Taiwan and trade curbs. Washington has tried to reestablish communication channels on these and other issues through recent high-profile diplomatic visits.



In this photo released by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, former secretary of state Henry Kissinger (l.) meets with Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi in Beijing on July 19, 2023.  
AP

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**UN: World moving toward new multipolar era**



AP - Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the world's nations Thursday that the post-Cold War period is over and the world is moving toward a new multipolar era already marked by the highest level of geopolitical tensions and major power competition in decades. He warned that these divisions are undermining the cornerstone of the UN - having all countries work together to solve global challenges.

**Erdogan urges West to address Russia's expectations**



AFP - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called on "Western countries to follow up on Putin's expectations over the Black Sea grain deal, as he warned Moscow's withdrawal from the wartime initiative would have a significant negative impact. He said Friday he wants to convince his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to re-join the agreement on Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea.

**British PM avoids wipeout in local polls**



REUTERS - British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's governing Conservatives lost two strategically important parliamentary seats on Friday but unexpectedly retained former leader Boris Johnson's old constituency in a setback for the opposition Labour Party. The Conservatives' narrow victory in Uxbridge and South Ruislip gave Sunak some breathing space to try to narrow Labour's large lead in the polls by tackling inflation and a cost-of-living crisis before a national vote expected next year.



Cloud Forest  
safarzon.com

# Shahrud, a heaven for nature lovers

Iran is a four-season country, however since the country's lack of water is often discussed, the general perception is that Iranians live in the middle of a desert and are constantly facing drought and its subsequent problems. But in every corner of Iran you can find an amazing landscape and a pristine nature. The city of Shahrud, in Semnan Province, is the only place in Iran from various directions of which you can reach a mountain, a forest and a desert in 30 minutes, and a sea in less than three hours, IRNA wrote.

Shahrud, which is the second largest city of Semnan Province, lies on the route link-

ing Tehran to the holy city of Mashhad.

From the north, it is surrounded by the Alborz Mountains, and from the south, by the arid salty deserts. The river of Tash, after crossing this town, reaches the south deserts. The weather on its mountainous areas is cold, while it is somewhat temperate in other parts of the city.

If you travel south for 30 minutes from Shahrud, you will reach a vast desert called *Torud*, having beautiful palm groves, the residents of which make a living from camel breeding.

And if you travel north for 30 minutes, you will encounter a

forest like those spread across the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran.

There is a cold and snowy region at a distance of one hour from the east side of the city, the climate of which is similar to that of Kurdistan and Lorestan provinces.

In the city of Mojen and the Tash-e Olya village, located at a short distance from western Shahrud, you will encounter people wearing jackets and warm clothes in late July and early August. They have to turn on heating devices at night.

Cloud Forest (Abr Forest) is among the well-known natural attractions and one of the most extraordinary sights of Shahrud; it is a place where

the sky seems to have approached the earth.

The forest is one of the oldest in the world, dating back forty million years, belonging to the Jurassic period. It is a continuation of the lush forests of the north, and has an area of 35,000 hectares. One of the main features of this forest is its high altitude; as it has low temperatures in hot seasons. The average maximum temperature in this forest is 20°C, while the nights and early mornings are very cold.

Shahrud, with numerous green and old plane trees, has several beautiful parks which are among its well-known attractions.

The oldest plane tree of the

city, called *chenar-e sookhteh*, (*chenar* means plane tree) is located in the middle of a square with the same name. The tree has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

A variety of animal and plant species live in the forest which is covered with clouds for most days of the year.

All the valleys leading to the villages are full of fruit orchards.

If you go there in the summer, various types of seasonal fruits such as apricots, peaches and cherries will delight your eyes.

Khaar Turan National Park,

located in the region, consists of three major parts: a protected area, a national park, and a wildlife refuge. It is the second-largest protected area in Iran, having rare animal and plant species.

The biosphere reserve of Khaar Turan National Park, known as the Africa of Iran, is the largest in Iran.

No matter where you are in the country, you have access to at least one direct road to Shahrud. Moreover, the Shahrud railway is one of the busiest in the country.



A view of Shahrud  
cestujlevne.com

## Chogha Mish pre-Sassanid settlement in Khuzestan Province



Mound of Chogha Mish from the south

Chogha Mish in lowland Susiana (in modern-day Khuzestan Province), is the largest pre-Sassanid settlement in northeastern Susiana, and is strategically located between the outlets of the large perennial rivers of Dez and Karun in the plain.

Closer to the site are two important tributaries of the Dez River, the Siah Mansur, some 10km to the west, just west of Jundi Shapur, and the Shur, slightly less than 1km to the east Mish.

The mound of Chogha Mish consists of a truncated cone-shaped high mound to the north overlooking a large terrace to the south. The summit of the high mound is at elevation 100.54m above sea level. It is about 27m above the surrounding plain and over 30m above the riverbed of the Shur, to the east.

Its western edge is fairly regu-

lar, but on its northeast, east and southeast sides it has four irregularly shaped lobes separated by deeply eroded gullies.

Eleven seasons of excavations at the site provided a long, uninterrupted prehistoric sequence of cultural development in southwestern Asia.

Chogha Mish is therefore uniquely qualified to demonstrate at a single locus a series of major developments that took place during the entire Neolithic period in southwestern Asia.

These developments include the gradual appearance of central places, increasing specialisation and improvement in the production of material culture, changes in subsistence economy, and the emergence of chiefdom and proto-state societies.

The earliest cultural phase discovered at Chogha Mish, the Archaic

Susiana, dates to 6,800 BCE.

Cultural phases much earlier than the basal levels of Chogha Mish were accidentally discovered in the nearby mound of Chogha Bonut. The continuation of the Archaic period thus will have to be sought at Chogha Mish.

The initial occupation of Chogha Mish is marked by the presence of the earlier painted-burnished variant and its developed version, the standard painted-burnished ware. Sometime during the Archaic Susiana phase 1, the painted-burnished variant completely disappeared.

### The standard painted burnished ware

Ware was associated with other artefacts, for example, the tiny T-shaped figurines, which occur both in Susiana and Dehluran to the north.

Striking parallels can be found in the pottery and figurines from the distant sites in the Iranian central plateau. The T-shaped figurines are frequently interpreted as belonging to a Zagros complex but they have a wider distribution since we have closely similar material far to the northeast of Iran.

Architectural remains of this phase at Chogha Mish were inconclusive.

They consist of poorly preserved pisé and mud brick wall fragments, beaten earth surfaces and several cooking installations. The use of long bricks continued into this phase. As in the earlier and later phases, the floors of the cooking installations were covered with fire-cracked rocks. No change in the subsistence economy was noted from the previous phase.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'Chogha Mish', from a book entitled, 'Persian Antiques Splendor', edited by T. Stollner, R. Slotta, and A. Vatandoust, published by German Mining Museum. The photo were taken from the book.

# Iran crowned FS champion for clean sweep of Asian U20 wrestling titles



## Sports Desk

A total of eight medals – including three golds – across 10 weight classes saw Iran clinch the freestyle crown at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships in Amman.

Despite being the second best against the Indians in four head-to-head final show-downs, Iranian boys still finished atop the standing with 191 points, adding the freestyle triumph to the Greco-Roman crown in the Jordanian capital.

India settled for the runner-up spot with 180 points, with Kazakhstan in third place on 160

points.

On Thursday, Amir-Ali Pouladi rounded off a glittering campaign for Iran with the super-heavyweight gold thanks to a 7-2 victory over Mongolian Nambardagva Batbayar in the 125kg final.

Iran's first gold of the afternoon came in the 92kg weight class, where Mohammad-Mobin Azimi defeated Sherzod Poyonov of Uzbekistan 8-2 in the final.

The two golds came after Ali-Abbas Rezaei had outmuscled Japanese Taishin Yamaji 8-0 to walk away with the ultimate prize of the 70kg contests on the preceding night.

However, Indian opponents proved to be intimidating for the Iranian boys, who managed only one victory in six bouts against the wrestlers from the new Asian wrestling force – a last-four win by technical superiority for Pouladi over Rajat Ruhel.

Ebrahim Khari left Amman with the 57kg silver after a 7-4 loss to Udit Udit, while a second final showpiece featuring Iranian and Iranian wrestlers saw Ebrahim Elahi suffer a 9-1 defeat against Singh Jaskaran. Sagar Jaglan added another gold to India's medal haul with a 6-3 win against Iranian Farzad Safi Jahan-Shahi in the

79kg final.

Amirhossein Alizadeh also left the mat empty-handed against Mukul Dahiya in the 86kg final – falling to a 3-0 defeat – as India topped the medal table with a remarkable five gold medals, as well as three bronzes – followed by Iran and Kazakhstan, which finished with double golds and six bronzes. Meanwhile, Iranian Hossein Mohammad-Aqaei took the fifth silver medal for the country, when he was beaten 10-0 by Kazakhstan's Yer Khan Bexultanov in the 74kg final.

Iran's hard-fought freestyle title followed an emphatic run at the Greco-Roman event

in Amman, where all Iranian wrestlers finished their campaigns with a medal to help the country cruise to the title with 205 points – 25 points clear of second-place Uzbekistan.

Mohammad-Morad Ashiri (60kg), Ahoura Bouveiri (67kg), Abolfazl Choubani (87kg), Amir-Reza Akbari (97kg), and Fardin Hedayati (130kg) bagged five gold medals in their respective weight classes.

Mohammad-Mehdi Miri took the 72kg silver, with Ali Ahmadi Vafa (55kg), Reza Qeytasi (63kg), Alireza Abdevali (77kg), and Yasin Yazdi (82kg) leaving the event with four consolation bronzes.

## VNL Finals:

# History-making Japan routs Slovenia to meet Poland in the semifinals

## Sports Desk

Japan picked up where it had left off in the preliminary round,

coming out on top against Slovenia in straight sets to become the first Asian team to progress to the semifinals of the Volleyball Nations League.

Prolific outside-hitter and captain Yuki Ishikawa – the top scorer at this year's event with 232 points – chipped in a game-high 27 points to inspire the Japanese

to an emphatic 26-24, 25-18, 25-22 victory in Gdansk's Ergo Arena in Poland on Thursday. Yuji Nishida also contributed with 12 points for Japan, which won 10 in 12 outings to finish second to USA in the 16-team table of the previous round, while middle-blocker Alen Pajenk and Tine Urnauth had 12 points apiece for the Slovenians.

Japan will square off against host Poland today for a place in Sunday's final showdown. The European heavyweight walked away with a straight-set victory over the Asian powerhouse in the preliminary round but today's game will be a different task for the host as Japan had already secured a place in the VNL Finals before heading into the dead-rubber against Poland in the final game of Week 3.

Later on Thursday, a 16-point performance by Polish outside-hitter Aleksander Sliwka led the home side to a 3-0 (26-24, 25-21, 25-20) win against volleyball giant Brazil.

Wilfredo Leon Venero (11 points) and Mateusz Bieniek (10) also finished in double figures for Poland, while Alan Souza and Ricardo Lucarelli topped the scoring for the Brazilians with 15 and 10

points respectively.

The other last-four clash today will see reigning world champion Italy go head-to-head with USA – last year's VNL runner-up. USA defeated France in a five-set thriller (25-21, 25-18, 17-25, 24-26, 15-9) on Wednesday to avenge the defeat against the Tokyo Olympic gold medalist in last year's final.

Matthew Anderson scored 22 points for the Americans, with Thomas Jaeschke and Torey DeFalco respectively finishing on 16 and 12 points.

In the absence of injured outside-hitter Earvin N'Gapeth, Jean Patry led the scoring chart for France with 17 points – followed by Barthélémy Chinenyeze (16 points) and Nicolas Le Goff (14). Elsewhere on Wednesday, Italy made a quick work of Argentina in three sets (25-17, 25-13, 25-14) to advance into a second successive semifinal – thanks to a 15-point display by Alessandro Michieletto.

Daniele Lavia and Yuri Romanò had 12 and 11 points for the world champion, while Agustin Loser tallied 10 points for the South Americans, whose first-ever appearance in the VNL Finals came to an early finish.



Japanese players celebrate a point during a victory over Slovenia in the Volleyball Nations League quarterfinals in Gdansk, Poland, on July 20, 2023.

● FIVB

## Iran to play Bulgaria in September friendly



● FFIRI

## Sports Desk

Iran will play Bulgaria in a friendly game in September's FIFA international break.

Amir Qalenoee's men will fly to the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv to square off against their host – ranked 77th in FIFA Men's Ranking – at the Hristo Botev Stadium on Sept. 7, Mohammad-Mehdi Nabi, the vice-president of the Iranian Football Federation, confirmed on Thursday. Qalenoee, who replaced Portuguese head coach Carlos Queiroz following last year's World Cup, is tasked with steering the Iranian national team in next January's AFC Asian Cup in Qatar, where the three-time champion will be chasing a first title since 1976.

Iran is drawn alongside the United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and Palestine in Group C of the continent's flagship international event.

In his first matches back on Iran's bench after 16 years, Qalenoee lead his team to a 1-1 friendly draw against Russia and a 2-1 victory over Kenya in a couple of friendlies in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in March, before his side came out on top Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and host Uzbekistan to win the trophy at the inaugural CAFA Nations Cup in June.

Iran stood 22nd – second to Japan in Asia – in the latest FIFA Ranking – released on Thursday – with 1556.59 points.

Australia (27th), South Korea (28th), Saudi Arabia (54th), and reigning Asian Cup champion Qatar (59th) followed Iran in the AFC member states' ranking.

## Man Utd sign keeper Onana from Inter

REUTERS – Manchester United have signed Cameroonian goalkeeper Andre Onana from Inter Milan on a five-year contract with the option of a further year, the Premier League club announced on Thursday. Sky Sports said United will pay 51 million euros (\$56.70 million) for the 27-year-old plus four million in add-ons.

"Manchester United has a long history of incredible goalkeepers, and I will now give everything to create my own legacy in the coming years," Onana said in a statement.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Iran's foreign debt shrinks by 27%



**TASNIM** – Iran's foreign debts were reduced to \$6.282 billion in the last Iranian year (ended on March 20), showing a 27.6 percent decrease compared to a year before.

In its latest report, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) released statistics related to the last month of previous year (February 20-March 20) which also indicated the settlement of \$2.393 billion of the foreign debts of the country.

## EU lawmakers drop call for cap on power plants' windfall revenues



**REUTERS** – The European Parliament's energy committee agreed to drop a proposal to cap power plants' windfall revenues if Europe faces another energy price crisis, a measure the energy industry had strongly opposed.

The European Union is negotiating reforms of its electricity market, designed to expand renewable energy and protect consumers from price spikes.

## Iran to form international aviation consortium: VP



**ISNA** – An Iranian vice president unveiled plans for the formation of a joint consortium with other countries in the aviation and aircraft industry.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet session, Iranian Vice President for Science and Technology Rouhollah Dehqani Firouzabadi said a working group on manufacturing homegrown commercial airplanes has held several meetings so far.

## Iran, Iraq labor ministers discuss cooperation, joint investment

Iran's Minister of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare Solat Mortazavi, in a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart, Ahmed al-Asadi, expressed the country's willingness to engage in joint investment development with Iraq.

Mortazavi emphasized Iran's readiness to collaborate in areas of labor, social welfare, and the exchange of technical and vocational training experiences, according to [mcls.gov.ir](http://mcls.gov.ir).

Referring to the religious and cultural commonalities between the two countries, Mortazavi expressed hope for a successful Arbaeen rally this year, emphasizing its significance in showcasing unity among the Islamic Ummah.

Describing Iraq as a friendly and brotherly nation, the Iranian minister conveyed his ministry's keen interest in expanding economic cooperation with Iraq.

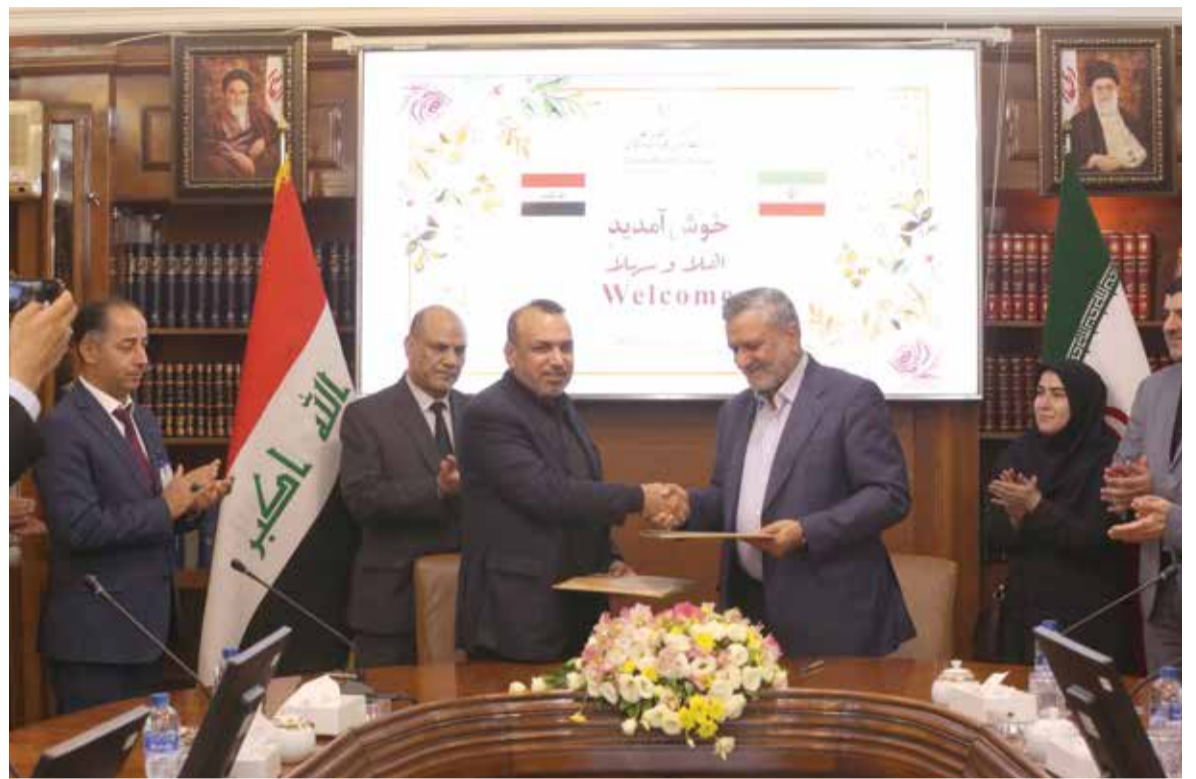
For his part, Al-Asadi acknowledged Iran's progress in various industrial sectors and expressed hope for sharing its successful experiences with the Arab country.

He also announced the launch of cooperation between the social security funds of Iran and Iraq, aiming to increase joint investments.

The initial steps for this collaboration will be taken in the near future.

Meanwhile on Friday, the secretary of Iran's Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones unveiled plans to inaugurate a joint free trade zone with Iraq at the common border by March 2024.

Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki said that the prime minister of Iraq has proposed a region in the Arab country's Wasit governorate for the joint free trade zone, which is located in the vicinity of Mehran border crossing in Iran's western Ilam province.



The feasibility studies for the launch of the joint free trade zone are underway, he added.

Abdolmaleki noted that Iraq can export its products to the other parts of the world through Iran and

have access to the Indian Ocean and international waters via Iran's free and special economic zones.

Steps have been taken to bolster economic ties between Iran and Iraq, he concluded.



● IRNA

## Economy Desk

The caretaker of the Anzali Commercial-Industrial Free Zone announced that

nine foreign investment packages, worth about two trillion tomans (\$40 million), have been approved for the free zone.

## Iran to attract \$40m in Anzali FTZ: Official

Talking on the sidelines of the Second Exhibition of the Investment Opportunities and Export Potentials of Iran Free and Special Economic Zones in Mashhad on Friday, Akbar Niazi told IRNA that the purpose of inaugurating the Anzali Commercial-Industrial Free Zone was to establish commercial and economic relations with Russia. "The infrastructures of

the Anzali Free Commercial-Industrial Zone have been provided through the Caspian port, and despite some problems, the communications set-up with Russia and the Eurasian region has been established through the rail line to the Caspian port, which will be put into operation in the coming months." The docks that have been installed in the Caspian

port are built inside the sea water, as the receding sea water will not prevent the operation of the port, the official noted. "Considering that the connecting point of the International North-South Transit Corridor in Iran is located in the Caspian port, we hope to boost commercial and financial relations with Russia and the European Union," he concluded.

## NPC lauds completion of Iranian petchem project



● SHANA

The managing director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) termed the recent inauguration of Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex project a "valuable" symbol of Iranian manufacturers' capabilities. Morteza Shahmirzaei said the implementation of the giant project in southwestern Iran was put on the agenda about two decades ago, and its executive operations started adjacent to Gachsaran, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Shana reported. The project witnessed ups

and downs during the long period but its operations were accelerated in recent years, he noted.

He also stated that the current administration's strategic policy focuses on the fast move toward completing the petrochemical industry's value chain.

Shahmirzaei explained that different reasons, including supply of feedstock, were behind the slow implementation of Gachsaran petrochemical project, adding that the complex is fed with Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refinery which processes the collected associated petroleum gases and produces valuable products, including ethane.

According to him, 1.25 million tons of ethane produced annually by Persian Gulf Bidboland Gas Refinery are transmitted to Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex, and ethylene and C3+ needed by downstream plants are produced

in the next stage of production cycle. Ethylene functions as an intermediary and is used in various industries such as polymers, synthetic fibers, solvents, lubricants, antifreezes, and alcohols, Shahmirzaei explained, saying the world's largest ethylene production line is in Iran.

Gachsaran Petrochemical Complex tops the country's olefin projects in terms of homegrown equipment, as more than 83 percent of its systems and parts have been manufactured by Iranian experts, he continued. The project has generated job opportunities for over 3,000 people during its construction stage, and for 1,000 people directly during its operation stage. Having an annual capacity of one million tons of ethylene and 84,000 tons of C3+ production, the olefin project was put into operation with an investment of some 1.3 billion euros.

## Iran-EU five-month trade nears €1.9b: Eurostat figures



● IRNA

Trade between Iran and the European Union (EU) member states reached €1.869 billion in the first five months of 2023, according to data released by the European Union's statistics office Eurostat.

Based on the Eurostat data, trade between the two sides fell 10 percent in the said five months, in comparison with the same period last year, when the figure stood at €2.073 billion, reported Mehr news agency.

The EU's exports to Iran from January to May 2023 stood at €1.517 billion, registering a decrease of six percent compared to the same period last year, when EU exports to Iran were €1.61 billion.

The European Union's imports from Iran also reached €352 million in the first five months of 2023, with a 24 percent decrease compared to the same period last year. EU imported €463 million of goods from Iran in January-May 2022.

# Subsidence raises alarm for many parts in Iran: *MP*



Sadeq  
Dehqan  
Staff writer

Mohammad-Saleh Jokar, a member of Iran's Parliament, issued a stark warning about the escalating environmental crisis of subsidence, a phenomenon that is wreaking havoc across various regions of the nation.

Jokar elucidated that subsidence, the sinking or settling of the ground's surface, is a direct consequence of long-term droughts and the excessive depletion of the underground water sources. "This environmental anomaly," he cautioned, "could precipitate catastrophic damages and disasters in diverse settlements and regions, thereby necessitating urgent action to secure stable water sources and facilitate water transfer to drought-stricken areas."

Iran has been grappling with a significant decrease in rainfall, leading to a surge in the digging of deep wells to extract water from underground aquifers. "Regrettably, the scanty rainfall is insufficient to replenish the depleted water reserves, resulting in the exhaustion of underground aquifers," Jokar said, adding, "This inability to counterbalance the pressures on



FARAROU

the ground has triggered subsidence and the formation of deep fissures in water-deficient areas."

Jokar further expounded that the repercussions of land subsidence have manifested in numerous central, desert, and low-water regions of the country.

"This subsidence poses a grave threat, akin to an earthquake, capable of inflicting extensive damage to settlements and infrastructures in both urban and non-urban areas, thereby jeopardizing the country's capital."

The solution, according to Jokar, lies in the creation of sustainable water resources. He advocated for

the utilization of seawater as a viable means to offset the water scarcity in these regions. He highlighted that many of the high-risk areas, predominantly located in the central and southeastern parts of the country, have limited access to stable water sources, with the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea being the only exceptions.

"The desalination and transfer of seawater to arid regions could potentially alleviate the water shortage," Jokar proposed. Desalination and seawater transfer have been adopted as a solution by numerous countries grappling with water scarcity. In recent years, water transfer

projects from the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman have been initiated in Iran. "If expedited, the transferred water could be utilized for drinking, sanitation, agricultural, and industrial purposes, thereby effecting a significant transformation in the arid and water-scarce regions of the country."

However, Jokar warned that failure to address this issue promptly could lead to dire consequences, including increased subsidence threats, continuous droughts, and large-scale migrations due to uninhabitable conditions caused by water shortage. "In the country's Seventh Development Plan, com-

prehensive plans have been outlined for the implementation of water transfer projects from the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea," he said, acknowledging that the progress of these projects varies across regions, with some areas witnessing good progress while others lagging behind.

He conceded that the government is grappling with a dearth of financial resources for the swift implementation of these projects. However, he suggested that in the mineral-rich low-water regions, the mineral revenues could potentially be leveraged to fund these water transfer projects.

## National event on family and popular culture underway



### Social Desk

The secretary of the National Event of Family and Popular Culture said Saturday that the event is the country's biggest festival that celebrates family and culture.

Farnaz Hooshyar Parsian, adviser and executive assistant to Iran's vice president for Women and Family Affairs, provided details on the event, saying it will continue for one year, ISNA reported.

Hooshyar said popular culture should be an Iranian family's biggest helper, adding that media productions are very important, and therefore, "Media and family is one of the festival's key sectors," she said.

She said the goal is to re-examine Iranian family culture and revive the original identity of the Islamic Iranian family while paying attention to the family ecosystem in governance and education by producing media content.

"This approach will create good moments and memories for families of all social classes, focusing on issues that are sometimes neglected," she said.

The event intends to identify, promote, and support the Iranian family ecosystem and highlight the family's role in society based on an Iranian Islamic model, Hooshyar said.

She noted that the event is the result of collective efforts by cultural institutions, social innovators, family experts, and popular activists.

She explained that the office of Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs is the main organizer, working with various government agencies and departments, which include: The public culture council, women, and family headquarters; Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts; state broadcasting; Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; Ministry of Information and Communications Technology; Department of the Environment; Tehran Municipality; Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults; and Iranian National Tax Administration.

Workshops are planned to be conducted on topics like family media, management, success, Islamic fashion and lifestyle, culture and intangible heritage, games and leisure, family dining, environment and family, health, population, and family vitality.



## Barakat Foundation, ICYF launch skill-learning initiative

### Social Desk

In a move aimed at improving skill levels and fostering job creation among young individuals in Islamic countries, the Barakat Foundation and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) have signed a memorandum of understanding.

The signing ceremony took place on Friday morning, July 21, in the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including the vice president of social affairs of Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO), the CEO of Barakat Foundation, the president of the ICYF, and several senior managers from both organizations. The CEO of Barakat Foundation, Mohammad Torkmaneh, highlighted the foundation's role as a development institution that has effectively em-

powered people through various measures. He emphasized that Barakat Foundation's activities have spanned over 16,000 villages across Iran's provinces, resulting in the employment of 1.2 million individuals. Job creation and economic empowerment, in line with the vision of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, have been key priorities for the foundation.

Torkmaneh further revealed that Barakat Foundation has successfully established over 300,000 small and micro projects, with more than a thousand facilitators operating in different provinces of Iran. Notably, the foundation has invested \$100 million in knowledge-based companies present in ten provinces, and a total of \$5.4 billion over the past 14 years

through the executive headquarters of EIKO.

"The decision to collaborate with the ICYF was the result of negotiations that commenced a year ago. Thirty webinar sessions and one in-person meeting were conducted to establish the partnership," Torkmaneh said, expressing that the objectives outlined in the memorandum align closely with Barakat Foundation's goals, emphasizing the shared focus on poverty eradication across all Islamic countries.

The CEO of Barakat Foundation emphasized that the memorandum primarily aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences. He highlighted the foundation's unique activities, which have set it apart from other countries. He also expressed readiness to combat pov-



erty in Islamic countries and expressed hope for fruitful outcomes through diligent follow-up. The first step outlined in the memorandum involves organizing an event in Iran, which will showcase the foundation's initiatives and the active participation of young people from Islam-

ic countries. Taha Ayhan, the president of ICYF, stressed the importance of skill development and job creation for societies. He commended Barakat Foundation's efforts in these areas, particularly in terms of skills development and market access measures.

Ayhan expressed hope that all young people in Iran would benefit from the collaborative measures. The memorandum emphasizes the significance of training programs for young individuals, aiming to assist them in finding suitable positions in the labor market.

## AZERTAC lauds IRNA for launching Azeri website

IRNA – Vugar Aliyev, the Chairman of Azerbaijan State News Agency (AZERTAC), lauded the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) for its recent decision to launch an Azeri language website.

The move is seen as a positive step that could further strengthen bilateral relations between the two news agencies, as mentioned during a meeting between Aliyev and his Iranian counterpart, Ali Naderi.

In his statement, Aliyev expressed optimism about the potential for the news agencies to expand their mutual relations, indicating a desire for the bilateral ties to return to their previous levels.

IRNA, which boasts a rich history spanning almost 90 years, currently disseminates its news and productions in Persian as well as nine other languages, including English, Arabic, Urdu, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, and Turkish.

The launch of the Azeri website is expected to further diversify its reach and engage with the Azerbaijani-speaking audience more effectively.

The positive response from AZERTAC and the potential for enhanced cooperation between the two news agencies mark a significant development in media relations between Azerbaijan and Iran, fostering a spirit of collaboration and shared communication goals.

● License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453  
● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684  
● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5  
● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com  
● Website: www.irandaily.ir  
newspaper.irandaily.ir  
irandaily@icpi.ir  
● Email: irandaily@icpi.ir  
● Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of Shahid Mottahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran



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# Iran Daily

6 2607571900044 > [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir) | [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

Vol. 7345 ● Saturday, July 22, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

## Russia to issue electronic visas for Iranians, others

Arts & Culture Desk

The Press Service of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation announced that tourists from certain countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, will be able to obtain electronic visas for Russia in less than a week.

According to Russian news sources, the ministry stated that, as per the government's directive, citizens of European countries, Iran, Japan, Turkey, China, North Korea, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Bahrain, Kuwait, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore will be eligible to apply for electronic visas, IRNA reported.

As reported, the issuance time for Russian visas within this framework will be less than six days



from the date of application.

The ministry clarified that electronic visas can be obtained through the internet for tourists, guests, or business trips, as well as participation in scientific, cultural, sports, and other events. According to the announcement, these electronic visas will be issued by a diplomatic mission or consular

office of the Russian Federation, and foreign nationals will need to submit their applications through a special website of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Based on this information, electronic visas will allow tourists to enter Russia once and will be valid for a maximum stay of 60 days from the registration date.

## 'Fifty Thousand' to compete in Tunisia, Panama

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian short film 'Fifty Thousand,' directed by Hamed Karivand, will compete in two prestigious international film festivals, in Tunisia and Panama.

In Tunisia, 'Fifty Thousand' will be vying for recognition at the 5th edition of the Cinétoile International Short Film Festival, taking place from July 20 to July 25.

This annual event, launched in 2018, is renowned for presenting a diverse selection of films, providing inclusive opportunities for participants of all backgrounds, with a particular focus on engaging young talents.

Furthermore, the film will also feature in the esteemed Panama Series Festival, a short film festival held for the past two years in the picturesque landscapes of Central



America's Panama. This festival serves as a portal to the realm of innovative filmmakers from across the globe, offering emerging directors a fresh platform to showcase their creative prowess. The festival kicked off its activities on July 21, creating a vibrant atmosphere for filmmakers and enthusiasts alike.

'Fifty Thousand' narrates the poignant story of a

young boy residing with his father in a humble abode within the bustling city, as he confronts an array of challenges in his journey through life.

The remarkable cast of this short film includes Farzin Rahmanpour, Mohamad Kianian, Elaheh Jaami, Mehdi Parhizkar, and Amirhossein Qalandari, whose compelling performances have added depth to the narrative.

## Iran's ancient 'wind catchers' beat the heat naturally

Tall, chimney-like towers rise from centuries-old adobe houses in Iran's desert city of Yazd, drawing in a pleasant breeze for residents of one of the hottest cities on earth.

The wind catchers, called *badgirs* in Persian, are just one of the engineering marvels inhabitants have developed in this ancient city in central Iran – where temperatures reach well over 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in the summer, Barrons wrote.

And, unlike energy-guzzling air-conditioners, they're cost and carbon-free.

"For centuries, before we had electricity, they made it possible to cool dwellings," said Abdolmajid Shakeri, the provincial deputy of Iran's cultural heritage and tourism ministry.

The oldest of the city's 700 wind catchers dates back to the 14th century, but the architectural feature is believed to date back as far as 2,500 years when the Persian Empire ruled over much of the Middle East.

"The *badgirs* played a key role in the city's prosperity," said Shakeri about the desert city that was a caravan stop on the ancient Silk Road.

"Thanks to them, people lived at ease," he added, describing how the wind catchers pull fresh air into buildings and allow hot air to ventilate out through large vertical slots.

Majid Oloumi, the head of Dowlatabad garden, home to a towering 33-metre (100 foot) wind catcher – one of the tallest in the world – described the

cooling method as "totally clean because it uses neither electricity nor polluting materials".

UNESCO listed Yazd as a World Heritage Site in 2017, describing the city as a "living testimony to intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival".

The bioclimatic architecture which provides thermal comfort for the people of Yazd has attracted interest elsewhere on a heating planet.

"*Badgirs* demonstrate that simplicity can be an essential attribute to sustainability," said Paris-based architect Roland Dehghan Kamaraji, who has studied Iran's wind catchers.

"It goes against the common misconception that sustainable solutions need to be complex or high-tech."

At a sustainable urban community called Masdar city in the United Arab Emirates, buildings have been "designed to make use of the natural ventilation for cooling, like *badgirs*," he said.

Similarly, ventilation inspired by "termite mounds, an approach similar to that of *badgirs*" were built atop Eastgate Centre, a shopping mall and office complex in Harare, Zimbabwe.

However, Yazd's unique architectural traditions have largely been abandoned at their birthplace.

"Unfortunately, our ancestral heritage has been forgotten," especially since the emergence of air conditioners, said Oloumi. Yazd's old town is a labyrinth of narrow streets and roofed alleyways. Its centuries-old edifices made of clay, mud-brick and adobe all provide insulation against the torrid heat.

But the old houses stand in sharp contrast to modern cement buildings and multi-lane roads.

"Today, house architecture imitates that in other countries, and cement-based construction does not correspond to the climate of Yazd," he added.

Kamaraji says bioclimatic architecture has waned due to economic constraints and modern construction methods that

"largely favor the use of energy and fossil fuel intensive materials".

Another sustainable architectural feature of Yazd is its system of underground aqueducts called qanats, which transport water from underground wells, aquifers or the mountains. "These underground aqueducts have great utility," said Zohreh Montazer, an expert on the water system. "They constitute a source of water supply and make it possible to cool the dwellings and to preserve food at an ideal temperature."

Iran is estimated to have around 33,000 operational qanats today, a significant drop from the 50,000 in use in the mid-20th century.

UNESCO says the decline in qanats is driven in part by the drying up of underground water sources due to overconsumption.

Iranian authorities have in recent years sought to rehabilitate the qanat of Zarch – considered the longest and oldest, dating to some 3,000 years ago.

The water network – which stretches over 70 kilometers across Yazd, and runs at a depth of around 30 meters – stands as a reminder for Yazd's residents of the challenges ahead.

"The day when fossil fuels run out," said Montazer, "we will have to return to these methods."

## Pic of the Day



Mothers across the country gathered on Friday (July 21) at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, holding their infants to mark the 'Husseini infants' ceremony in commemoration of Ali Asghar, the six-month-old baby boy of Imam Hussein (PBUH), who was the youngest person martyred in the Battle of Karbala.

● IRNA

