

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian
experts visit ...

GETTY IMAGES

Iran and Afghanistan are locked in a dispute over the Hirmand water supply, which rises in the Hindu Kush Mountains west of Kabul and flows in an arc southwest until it empties out into the Hamoun wetlands, located in Iran's arid Sistan and Baluchestan Province. Following more than a century of rifts, the two countries signed a treaty in 1973 to establish a means of regulating their use of the river.

Iran must receive an annual share of 820 million cubic meters from the Hirmand under the accord, which Afghanistan has grossly violated in letter and spirit, endangering the lives of many Iranians who rely on Hamoun wetlands for drinking water, agriculture, and fishing. Iran recently rejected the Afghan claim of water shortage by publishing satellite images of water behind the dams built on the Hirmand.

"According to the [1973 Helmand River] Treaty, we can verify the other side's claim of water shortage," Iran's special envoy on Afghanistan affairs Hassan Kazemi-Qomi said in an interview on Sunday.

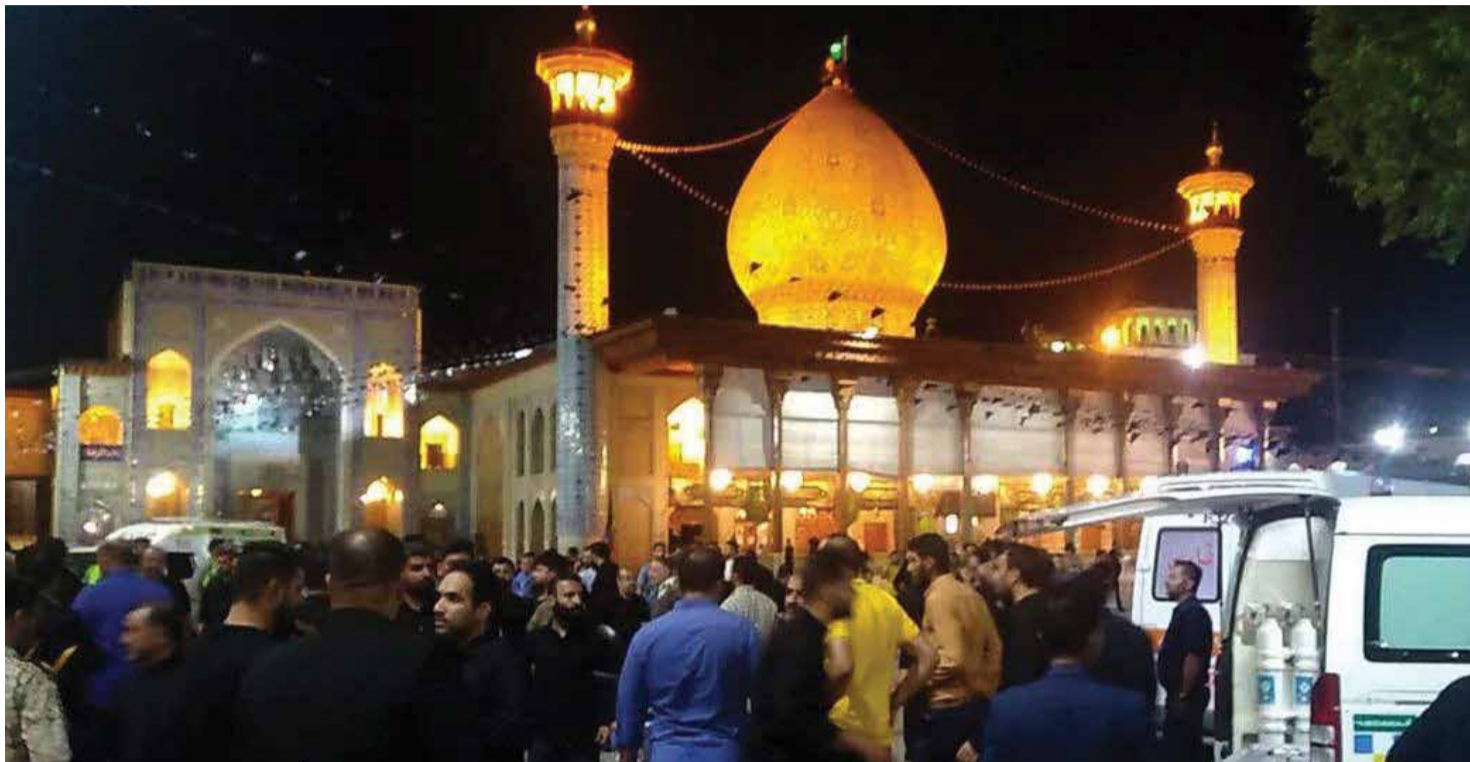
During a visit to Sistan and Baluchestan back in May, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned Afghanistan rulers that Tehran will in no way tolerate a violation of the rights of the people of the province.

Israel furious
Iran won
release of
funds

IRNA – Israel's former and current officials have expressed fury over a recent prisoner swap deal between Iran and the United States that also included the release of Iranian frozen funds in South Korea worth several billions of dollars.

On Saturday, the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a statement, criticizing Washington for reaching an agreement with Tehran. Israel's position is known: Arrangements that do not dismantle Iran's nuclear infrastructure will not stop its nuclear program and will only provide it with funds, the statement said.

Terrorist opens fire at Shiraz shrine, at least one killed



National Desk

At least one person was killed and eight others injured in a brazen terrorist attack at a Shia shrine in Iran's southern city of Shiraz on Sunday.

Media reports suggested that the assailant opened fire on Shah Cheragh Shrine's guards after he failed to force his way into the holy place.

A deputy provincial governor said the gunman was arrested.

The death toll could rise as local officials said two of those injured were in critical condition.

On October 26, 2022, a Daesh-affiliated gunman barged into the shrine, killing 15 pilgrims before he was shot and injured by security forces. The terrorist later died of his wounds in hospital.

Promising start for upcoming vote

Over 48k register to run for Iran's parliamentary elections



IRNA

Political Desk

More than 48,000 people have registered to run for Iran's parliamentary elections, a spokesman of the electoral headquarters said Sunday.

According to Mohsen Eslami, a total of 48,847 individuals, nearly 13% of whom women, entered their details into an online election registration system to officially register for the upcoming vote scheduled for March 1, 2024.

Also among the hopefuls were around 230 current lawmakers.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has emphasized the significance of elections as a pivotal avenue to bolstering Iran's power. He has outlined four specific strategic aspects – namely, "voter turnout, security, cleanness, and competition" – for the authorities responsible for overseeing the elections.

Mohammadreza Gholamreza, the political deputy minister of the interior, confirmed that these four strategic pillars have been communicated to the relevant bodies.

Under the provisions of a newly enacted law by the Iranian Parliament, the process of candidates pre-registering their personal information commenced eight months ahead of the elections. The one-week window for pre-registration concluded

Sunday. As per the law, candidates need to input their information into the designation system during this phase, failing which they would be ineligible to proceed with their candidacy.

The significant number of hopefuls, yet to be vetted by the Constitutional Council, vying for the 290 seats in Iran is being perceived by the organizers as a positive sign indicative of a captivating and highly competitive vote. I

"The remarkably enthusiastic participation of applicants signifies that we are poised for highly competitive election with huge turnout," Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said.

Traditionally, elections in Iran are contested by two main factions – the conservative and reformist blocs – each with its own internal diversity. While the various factions within the conservative camp have already signaled their readiness to engage in the

forthcoming race and have their candidates registered, the reformists have yet to take a clear stance. Although certain reformist figures and parties have extended their support to the registration of reformist and independent candidates, the question of whether the reformists will present a unified electoral list remains unresolved. The Reformist Front has yet to take a clear position. Conversely, based on expert opinions and media analysis, it is evident that different segments within the conservative factions will lock horns to get the upper hand in the legislative body. Some experts suggest that lists could coalesce around prominent political figures.

Political analyst Nasser Imani, in an interview with Iran Daily, emphasizes the need for patience in determining the affiliations of registrants to particular parties or political heavyweights, as this insight

would help assess the elections' political composition.

According to Imani, reformist candidates will indeed show up, but the decision to either present a combined list or allow individual competition among their candidates remains uncertain.

Imani, however, contends that the nature of electoral competition is not exclusively contingent on the existence of a reformist electoral list. He suggests that, in the upcoming elections, the focal point of competition will likely be prominent political personalities rather than strictly adhering to factional lines.

In his view, lists revolving around figures like President Ebrahim Raisi, Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, conservative figure Saeed Jalili, or former parliament speaker Ali Larjani, a moderate heavyweight, might vie against one another for prominence.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran FM to visit Riyadh; Saudi Consulate opens in Mashhad

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will be traveling to Riyadh on Thursday, August 17, while the Saudi Consulate-General in Mashhad has officially resumed its activities.

The trip is set to have a bilateral agenda and is in response to the recent visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to Tehran, reported Iran Nuances, citing a source.

Bin Farhan traveled to Tehran on June 17, 2023, and met with both the Iranian foreign minister and president.

Mohammad Beheshti Monfared, the head of the Foreign Ministry's representative office in Khorasan Razavi Province, announced on Sunday the official launch of the Saudi Con-

sulate-General in a hotel in Mashhad, Iran's major northeastern city, as its temporary site.

Alireza Enayati, the new Iranian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Abdullah Saud al-Anzi, the new Saudi Arabian ambassador to Iran, have both received the agreement from target countries, but have not yet been stationed in their new postings. These two ambassadors are expected to be deployed soon.

The report added that Saudi diplomats in Tehran have been operating in Espinas Palace Hotel for several months while the Saudi Embassy undergoes repairs. Similarly, the Saudi Consulate-General in Mashhad has been active for several months and continues to operate in a hotel in the city.