



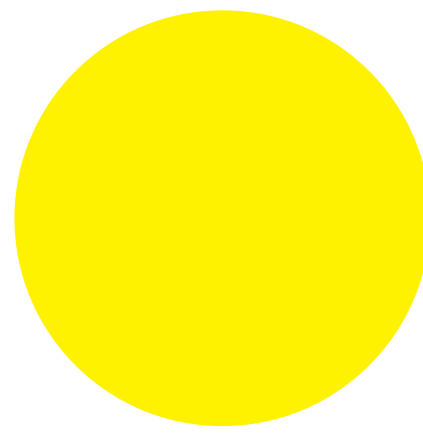
Iran's strike tips scales for Tehran's diplomacy

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# Iranians' Willpower Displayed

Leader hails Armed Forces' response to Israel 7 >



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei leads prayers with a group of commanders of the Iranian Armed Forces in Tehran, Iran, on April 21, 2024. [khamenei.ir](http://khamenei.ir)

## A glimmer of hope for diplomacy

By Mohammad Bayat  
Middle East affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Diplomacy and war go hand in hand. When a crisis worsens, reaching its peak and exposing its repercussions at various levels, the key players or parties involved often come to a realization that they need to re-evaluate their diplomatic strategies or military achievements to translate them into national gains through diplomatic channels. The Middle East region has been witnessing heightened tensions over the past seven months including Hamas' Operation Al-Aqsa Storm on October

7, Israel's devastating assault on the Gaza Strip, the Red Sea crisis, clashes between Hezbollah and Israel, and the ongoing countermeasures between Iran and Israel. It was anticipated that prior to the clash between Iran and Israel, diplomacy would step up its game and pave the way for ending the conflict. Numerous diplomatic endeavors by regional and international actors fell short of success due to the vested interests of the Israeli leadership. Historically, when regional and trans-region-

al stakeholders, especially Iran and the United States, aimed to de-escalate tensions and prevent conflicts from spiraling out of control, the far-right cabinet of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tended to disrupt these efforts and escalate the situation. In this context, Iran's drone and missile strike on specific Israeli targets on April 14 marked a significant turning point. Israel sought to fuel tensions to sabotage diplomatic attempts to end the hostilities. While Iran had previously exercised strategic

patience in response to Israel's repeated destructive and terrorist and Israel thought that Iran would stick to this strategy as a savvy player in the region. However, Iran's bold move, which put Israel's deterrence capabilities to the test, opened Tel Aviv's eyes to the miscalculation it had made. Iran also demonstrated its readiness to undertake such a high-stakes operation to protect its interests. Now, there is a glimpse of hope for diplomacy. Reports suggest that US President Joe Biden

is contemplating reviving the nuclear deal with Iran. The recent measures of the Group of 7 against Tehran may also signal a move toward diplomatic engagement. In 2012, the US managed to garner global support against Iran, with Israel hopeful that it could permanently dismantle Iran's nuclear program. However, ultimately, it was diplomacy that intervened and led to the 2015 nuclear agreement as tensions mounted. Regional and global fears about rising tensions in the Middle

East and Israel's recognition of Iran's defensive capabilities are creating a conducive environment for diplomatic efforts to take center stage in regional developments. Given that Washington prioritizes China and Russia over escalating tensions with Iran, diplomacy is poised to play a pivotal role. To focus more effectively on China and Russia, efforts should be made not only to end the conflict in Gaza and address the Palestinian-Israeli issue but also to reach a consensus with Iran.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Afghanistan's first rail cargo exported to Turkey via Iran



**TASNIM** - Afghanistan's first export shipment containing 1,100 tons of mineral ore was exported by train from Roznak station to Turkey via Iran.

In a statement, the Afghanistan Railway Department announced that this export included talc mineral exported to the city of Mersin, Turkey.

This is the first shipment of Afghanistan's "talc" that has gone to Turkey through Iran, the report added.

Spokesman for the Transportation and Aviation Authority of the Taliban government in Afghanistan Imamuddin Ahmadihad previously announced that import and export between Afghanistan and Turkey will be carried out by land route for the first time.

Hand-woven carpets and rugs, dried fruits and precious stones are among the goods exported from Afghanistan to Turkey and other countries.

## Tehran to renovate public transportation fleet with 2,000 EVs



**IRNA** - Tehran Municipality has announced to replace 2,000 old taxis with electric vehicles (EVs). Shadi Maleki, the caretaker of the Taxi Organization of Tehran, said that the measure takes place as part of plans to renovate the city's transportation fleet to help improve air quality.

She noted that under an agreement between her organization and Modiran Vehicle Manufacturing Company, owners of taxis older than 10 years can register for a supportive package to receive EVs in exchange for their taxis.

Some 27,500 taxis, as well as 5,000 vans, are scheduled to join Tehran's transportation fleet this year, the official said, adding that some 10,000 electric taxis will be supplied to the applicants in the first phase. The head of Modiran Vehicle Manufacturing Company has also said that an agreement has been signed for the supply of 2,000 cars. He noted that in the first phase, the company will supply 1,000 vehicles.

## Iran's imports of airliners at 66 in over two years to March



The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Iran announced imports of 66 airliners of different types from the date the current Iranian government took office in August 2021 till March 2024.

Most of the imported airliners were large wide-body planes, the CAA spokesman Jafar Yazarlou told IRNA on Sunday.

Also, seven light aircraft for training and transporting or-

gans of brain dead patients have been imported to the country, Yazarlou added.

During the mentioned period, five helicopters were imported to the country, he said, adding that 14 airliners have been overhauled and joined the Iranian airlines during the period.

So, in total, 92 airliners and helicopters have been imported to the country and overhauled since the begin-

ning if the current Iranian government.

Iran's civil aviation chief has announced that the country has developed its first passenger aircraft manufacturing factory.

Mohammad Mohammadi-Bakhsh, head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, made the remarks at a press conference held in Tehran on December 19, on the sidelines of the seventh

edition of the International Exhibition of Transportation, Logistics, and Related Industries.

"Today, we can say that the Islamic Republic is in possession of a [passenger] plane manufacturing factory," he said. Mohammadi-Bakhsh said the factory was hosting the manufacturing process of the country's first passenger aircraft, which he named Simorgh.

Iran's Roads and Urban Development Ministry, Defense Ministry, and Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade were involved in the aircraft's manufacturing process, the official said.

Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA) has been engaged in developing fighter planes since the late 1990s, including Azarakhsh (Lightning) and Saeqeh (Thunderbolt).

## Private sector supports weekends change to Friday-Saturday plan



By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou

Staff writer

## PERSPECTIVE

The private sector of Iran has begun efforts to persuade the Parliament and state-run sector to change the country's system of holidays into one more easily coordinated with global trade.

The head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) said on Sunday that "We expect the Parliament to consider the opinions of the private sector in determining the weekend holidays."

Mahmoud Najafi-Arab also claimed that in the private sector, you cannot find even one person who is ready to accept Thursday and Friday holidays.

He added that we have announced in different ways that instead of Thursday and Friday, Friday and Saturday could be suitable to be adopted as weekend in Iran.

Last week, the Social Committee of the Parliament approved the increase of the official weekly holiday to two days along with the reduction of four hours of

the employees' weekly work and added Thursday to the weekly holiday of Friday.

Since world economy goes on weekend holidays on Saturday and Sundays and Iranian Parliament plans to do so on Thursdays and Fridays, a four-day gap makes Iran fall behind global markets. The private sector in Iran supports the narrowing of the gap.

Currently, Iranian labor forces work an average of 44 hours a week, more than people do in all Asian countries or member states in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a club of the world's most advanced economies. According to the Parliament Research Center, per capita productivity in the country is low in comparison with other countries. Many experts believe the low labor productivity is the Achilles' hill of Iran's economy.

The problem with Iran's different holidays is also of a religious and cultural nature. Friday is the sole regular holiday while the other red-letter days are mainly religious observance holidays that rotate every year as their lunar calendar anniversary



saries are recognized in the country's official solar calendar.

Considering the economic conditions of the country, one of the most important things we must do is to pave the ground for the economic atmosphere of the country for more production.

The head of the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Khorasan Razavi Province believes that if there is a necessity to increase the number of days off per week, the number of working hours should not be interfered with, or at least the private sector should be excluded from this matter.

Firouz Ebrahimi has said

on Friday that closing on Saturdays instead of Thursdays will have a better effect on business activities of Iranians in the international arena from an economic point of view.

The decisions made by the Parliamentarians in the field of economic and social issues should be consulted with private sector, he believes.

Closing on Thursday means the disconnection of the country's banks along with the daily problems in foreign exchange transactions, Ebrahimi criticized saying that we expect Parliament to revise its recent decision.

## Iran to host economy ministers of African states: TPOI

Iran will host economy ministers from more than 40 African countries at the second Iran-Africa International Summit set to be held later this month, an official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said.

The deputy head of the international businesses promotion office of the TPOI pointed to the significance of trade with African states and added that African countries are home to numerous unknown trade opportunities and will play a leading role in global trade in the future, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Africa enjoys untapped resources that have not so far been introduced, Mohammad Sadegh Qanadzadeh said, adding that China and Turkey have increased the level of their trade with this continent. He further noted that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and Iranian Presi-

dent Ebrahim Raisi have placed special emphasis on expanding trade and economic relations with African states.

It is a matter of regret to say that Iran's trade with African countries has fallen into oblivion in the past four decades, so, the organization is trying to take effective steps to boost trade with Africa, he noted, Mehr news agency reported. Identifying and introducing the export potentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been cited as one of the main goals of the 2nd International Iran-Africa Summit, Qanadzadeh further stated. He pointed out that specialized business-to-business (B2B) meetings and various expert-level discussion panels including specialized steel industries, petrochemical and agricultural panels will be held on the sidelines of the summit.





# Khatam-kari, timeless artistry of Persian marquetry



TANIM NEWS AGENCY



dehbazar.ir

*Khatam-kari, also known as Persian marquetry, is a centuries-old art form that has captivated the world with its intricate patterns, vibrant colors, and meticulous craftsmanship. Originating in Iran, this artistic tradition has evolved over generations, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and artistic mastery of the Persian people.*

*At its core, Khatam-kari is the art of creating intricate geometric patterns and designs by skillfully inlaying thin slivers of wood, bone, or other materials into a base material, often wood or ivory. This intricate process involves cutting and shaping the various materials into precise shapes and meticulously assembling them into a unified design, creating a stunning visual tapestry that celebrates the beauty of symmetry, balance, and harmony, amazingiran.media wrote.*

## Historical roots and significance

The origins of Khatam-kari can be traced back to ancient Persia, where the practice of inlaying materials into wood and other surfaces was highly esteemed. As early as the 16th century, during the Safavid Dynasty, this art form flourished, with artisans creating exquisite marquetry pieces for royal palaces, mosques, and the homes of the elite. Over time, Khatam-kari evolved into a distinct art form, with various regional styles emerging across Iran. Each region developed its unique color palettes, motifs, and techniques, reflecting the diverse cultural influences and artistic traditions within the country.

## Intricate process

Khatam-kari is a labor-intensive and time-consuming art form that requires immense skill, patience, and dedication. The process begins with the selection of high-quality materials, including wood, bone, and sometimes precious metals or gemstones.

## Material preparation

The wood used in Khatam-kari is typically chosen for its strength, durability, and aesthetic appeal. Common woods include walnut, ebony, and teak, among others. These woods are carefully seasoned and prepared to ensure optimal workability and minimize warping or cracking.

Bone, often obtained from camel or cattle, is another material commonly used in Khatam-kari. It is meticulously cleaned, processed, and cut into thin slivers, which are then dyed in a range of vibrant colors using natural pigments derived from plants, minerals, and other sources.

## Design and pattern creation

Once the materials are prepared, the artisan begins the intricate process of designing the marquetry pattern. This involves drawing intricate geometric patterns, often inspired by traditional Persian motifs, such as arabesques, floral designs, and calligraphic elements.

The design is then transferred onto the base material, typically a wooden surface, where the intricate process of cutting and inlaying the various materials begins. Using specialized tools, including fine saws, knives, and chisels, the artisan carefully cuts and shapes the wood, bone, and other materials to fit the predetermined pattern.

## Assembly and finishing

The assembly process is a true test of the artisan's skill and patience. Each piece of wood or bone must be precisely positioned and fitted into the base material, creating a seamless and cohesive design. This process can take weeks or even months, depending on the complexity of the pattern and the size of the piece.

Once the marquetry is complete, the final step involves finishing and polishing the piece. This may involve applying a protective coating, such as lacquer or varnish, to enhance the colors and protect the surface from wear and tear.

## Khatam-kari in Persian culture and architecture

Khatam-kari has played a significant role in Persian culture and architecture, adorn-

ing some of the country's most iconic structures and objects.

Many of Iran's historic mosques, palaces, and other architectural wonders feature stunning examples of Khatam-kari. The intricate marquetry work can be found adorning doors, ceilings, walls, and furniture, adding a touch of elegance and grandeur to these magnificent structures.

One of the most famous examples is the Imam Mosque in Isfahan, which boasts exquisite marquetry work on its doors, pulpit, and other architectural elements.

The intricate patterns and vibrant colors of the Khatam-kari work complement the mosque's stunning tilework and calligraphic inscriptions, creating a harmonious blend of artistic traditions.

## Decorative arts and furniture

Beyond architecture, Khatam-kari has also been widely used in the creation of decorative objects and furniture. Intricate marquetry boxes, chests, tables, and mirror frames have been highly prized throughout Persian history and continue to be sought after by collectors and connoisseurs worldwide.

These objects not only showcase the artistry and skill of the Khatam-kari artisans but also reflect the cultural significance and aesthetic values of Persian art. Each piece is a unique masterpiece, representing the harmony of materials, colors, and patterns that have been perfected over generations.

## Global appreciation

While deeply rooted in tradition, Khatam-kari continues to evolve and adapt to modern times, reflecting the dynamic nature of Persian art and culture.

In recent decades, efforts have been made to preserve and promote this ancient art form, ensuring that the knowledge and skills are passed down to future generations. Khatam-kari workshops and schools have been established in various parts of Iran, providing training and opportunities for aspiring artisans to learn from master craftspeople.

Additionally, international exhibitions and cultural events have played a crucial role in raising awareness and appreciation for Khatam-kari among global audiences. These platforms have allowed artisans to showcase their work, fostering cross-cultural exchange and appreciation for this unique art form.

## Modern interpretations

While maintaining the traditional techniques and motifs, contemporary Khatam-kari artisans have also embraced innovation and experimentation. Some artists have incorporated modern materials, such as acrylic or metals, into their marquetry work, creating unique and visually striking pieces that blend tradition with contemporary aesthetics.

Moreover, Khatam-kari has found applications in various industries, from interior design and furniture making to fashion and accessories. Luxury brands and designers have collaborated with Khatam-kari artisans, incorporating intricate marquetry work into their products, further showcasing the versatility and timeless beauty of this art form.

Persian marquetry, or Khatam-kari, is a true testament to the artistic legacy and cultural richness of Iran. This intricate art form, which has captivated the world with its mesmerizing patterns and vibrant colors, is a celebration of patience, skill, and dedication.

From the intricate process of material preparation and pattern creation to the meticulous assembly and finishing, each piece of Khatam-kari is a labor of love, embodying the harmony of materials, colors, and geometric designs that have been perfected over centuries.

Whether adorning architectural marvels, decorative objects, or contemporary designs, Khatam-kari continues to inspire awe and appreciation, serving as a bridge between the past and present, and reminding us of the enduring power of art to transcend boundaries and connect cultures.

As we appreciate the exquisite beauty of Khatam-kari, we are reminded of the enduring human spirit, the pursuit of perfection, and the timeless allure of handcrafted artistry that has stood the test of time.



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The Chief Commander of the IRGC Major General Hossein Salami (R) and Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) walk past a Palestinian flag at a gathering in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 6, 2023.  
● MAJID ASGARIPOUR/WANA



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

After Iran's missile and drone retaliation against the Israeli regime, a number of Western officials, including the British and German foreign ministers, made their way to the occupied territories to stand by the regime. What were the motives behind these visits? What impact will Iran's military action have on the regional and neighboring countries that have ties with Israel? Shuaib Bahman, an expert in international affairs and the director of the Contemporary World Research Institute, provided some insights to Iran Daily in an exclusive interview.

West struggles to break free from Israel's crisis

# Iran's strike tips scales for Tehran's diplomacy



**IRAN DAILY:** Following Hamas's operation on October 7, numerous Western officials jetted off to Israel to pledge their allegiance to the regime. Recently, some European officials, like the foreign ministers of Germany and the United Kingdom, made similar visits to the occupied territories. How should we interpret these visits?

**BAHMAN:** These visits carry two-fold significance. First, they serve as a show of solidarity with the Israeli regime and the atrocities it committed in the Gaza Strip over the past seven months. The West continues to stand by Israel without denouncing the genocide it is perpetrating. The second aspect, however, pertains to the future of Israel and countering Iran's military measure taken on April 14. It appears that Israel finds itself in a tight spot where a significant direct strike on Iran's soil would invite a harsher retaliation and pose a tougher challenge. On the other hand, refraining from such action signifies an acknowledgment of defeat. So, in either scenario, Israel emerges as the ultimate loser. The visit of Western officials to Israel aims to explore avenues to navigate the regime out of its current complex predicament.

**Following Iran's military action, Western governments threw their weight behind Israel but also advised it against retaliating against Iran or targeting Iranian territory. Do you believe these gestures are part of the same strategy to bail out Israel?** That could very well be the case. As the initial rhetoric from Israeli

authorities and their threats of a direct assault on Iranian soil simmered down, discussions centered around alternative responses. This dilemma not only poses a challenge for Israel but also for Western nations, particularly Europeans. Given that the escalation of the turmoil in West Asia will inevitably spill over to affect Europe, it appears that they are keen on avoiding further escalation between Iran and Israel, at least for the time being. Europeans find themselves in a tight spot as well, torn between showing support for Israel and preventing the escalation of tensions.

**In this special case, America refrained from backing Israel's immediate retaliation despite restating its unwavering support. What realities does Washington's position imply?**

Washington's calls on Tehran and Tel Aviv to show restraint are influenced by its domestic considerations, including the upcoming presidential elections, and global diplomatic relations. Engaging in a fresh conflict would have adverse effects on domestic public sentiment and American voters. Moreover, persisting with a policy of unilateralism and unwavering support for Israel prompts countries in the West Asian region to bolster ties and collaboration with other global players like China and Russia. Another significant factor at play is the cost-benefit analysis. Should Israel and subsequently the United States engage in a conflict with Iran, America's vulnerability in the region would be increased. Numerous American military bases in the area would be made sus-

ceptible to Iranian attacks without yielding substantial gains for the US. This course of action would also undermine America's international standing. Consequently, the Americans are currently averse to direct military confrontation with Iran. Following the Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria, the US conveyed messages to Iran indicating a lack of intent for war and urging Iranian restraint. Naturally, Iran reciprocated with cautionary messages as well.

**Throughout decades of antagonism with Israel, Arab governments have largely avoided direct confrontations with Israel, particularly since the 1970s. Simultaneously, there exists a rift between Arab nations and their governments regarding support for Palestine. Do you believe that Iran's response to Israel's aggression will have a psychological impact on the region's governments and populace?**

Iran's military retaliation against Israel garnered widespread approval and elation among the region's populace. This sentiment is evident from online reactions seen in cyberspace. Many users lauded Iran's actions while scolding their own governments. Iran's missile and drone strike could amplify the voices of the Arab people demanding more overt and resolute backing of Palestine from their respective governments. Of course, due to the constrained political environments in these nations, these pressures might not significantly sway the governments, yet they are likely to elevate the status and reputation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

among the region's populations. Furthermore, the countries of the region got to witness Iran's prowess, deterrence capability, and independent foreign policy. Iran adopted a policy that no Arab nation can adopt.

In essence, Tehran's military action served as a strategic asset, bolstering Iran's diplomatic influence.

**Over the past few years, Israel has broadened its ties with some regional countries, including Iran's neighbors, and has even forged military ties. Do you reckon that the establishment of Iran's deterrence could have an impact on these specific ties?**

The core strategy of the Islamic Republic towards its neighbors revolves around enhancing ties and fostering peace and stability. However, the recent altercation between Iran and Israel could prompt a reassessment of the policies of these countries or certain neighboring states. They believed that cozying up to Israel would offer them a protective shield and potentially enable them to plot against Iran from behind this shield. For instance, Iran has clearly set boundaries in the Caucasus region. Going forward, these nations will adopt a more pragmatic approach towards the region and Iran. They have come to understand that relying on Israel does not equate to security. While the likelihood of these countries distancing themselves from Israel remains slim due to their foreign policy, they will undoubtedly reconsider the prospect of allowing Israel to use their territory or resources against Iran.

Iran's missile and drone strike could amplify the voices of the Arab people demanding more overt and resolute backing of Palestine from their respective governments.



# Strikes on Iran Can one demand 'restraint' while funding Israel?



By Belén Fernández  
Author, columnist

## OPINION

Early on Friday, Iran activated its air defence systems after reports of explosions in Isfahan province. According to Iranian state media, three small drones were shot down over the city of Isfahan. And while no one has officially claimed responsibility for the aerial attack and the Iranian government has not assigned blame, it is not difficult to hazard a guess as to its origins, given Iran's recent launching of hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel. This, mind you, took place purely in retaliation for the lethal April 1 Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria.

Early on Friday, Iran activated its air defence systems after reports of explosions in Isfahan province. According to Iranian state media, three small drones were shot down over the city of Isfahan.

And while no one has officially claimed responsibility for the aerial attack and the Iranian government has not assigned blame, it is not difficult to hazard a guess as to its origins, given Iran's recent launching of hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel. This, mind you, took place purely in retaliation for the lethal April 1 Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria.

United States media outlets have reported confirmation from anonymous US officials that Israel was indeed the source of the latest attacks. For his part, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani — chairman of this week's G7 meeting in Capri, Italy — has asserted that the US informed its Group of Seven partners that it had received a "last minute" warning from Israel re: impending drone action in Iran.

The action took place amid ubiquitous global calls for "restraint" to avoid further "escalation" in the region after the Iranian assault on Israel, which killed exactly zero people but saw Iran slammed with fresh US sanctions — something that obviously never happens in response to far more deadly Israeli behaviour.

For starters, since October 7, the Israeli military has slaughtered more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including over 13,000 children. And while this would appear to be "escalation" enough, it merely comes on the heels of nearly 76 years of Israeli ethnic cleansing and massacres in Palestine.

Among those now calling for "restraint" in the Israel-Iran showdown is US President

Joe Biden, who could perhaps make this call with a straighter face were he not the latest American head of state to be arming Israel to the hilt and thereby underwriting all manner of atrocities.

On Saturday, the US House of Representatives will vote on an additional \$26.38bn in "security assistance" to Israel — aid that Biden himself has been cheerleading, writing in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece on Wednesday: "Israel is our strongest partner in the Middle East; it's unthinkable that we would stand by if its defenses were weakened and Iran was able to carry out the destruction it intended this weekend."

Never mind Israel's monopoly on destruction in the area, which far predates this weekend. Rewind the clock, for example, to 2014 when the Israeli military killed 2,251 Palestinians in Gaza, among them 551 children, in a matter of 50 days. Over 22 days in December 2008 and January 2009, the same military killed about 1,400 Palestinians, 300 of them children.

Naturally, all such activity transpired with the full backing of the US.

In Lebanon, meanwhile, the US facilitated Israel's slaughter of about 1,200 people over

34 days in July and August of 2006 by rushing bombs to the Israelis and agitating against a cease-fire.

How then, at the end of the day, does one promote "de-escalation" when one is actively hurling money at a most unrestrained actor? Replying to recent global calls for restraint, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked the world for its concern and reiterated that Israel will do whatever the hell it pleases — as if we were not already aware of that.

Moreover, how does one even invoke the word "restraint" in the context of an all-out Israeli genocide in Gaza?

Not that the US itself has ever been very, um, restrained in the Middle East. Astronomical civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan come to mind — two blood-drenched locales where US aggression has made an absolute mockery of the US designation of Iran, instead, as a foremost "state sponsor of terrorism".

In the Islamic Republic, too, the US is guilty of downright terrorism — just recall that time in July 1988 when the US navy blasted Iran Air Flight 655 out of the sky, killing all 290 passengers

on board. Then there was the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s when the US assisted Iraq's Saddam Hussein in his efforts to gas the Iranians with chemical weapons — the same Saddam Hussein, of course, who would subsequently be inflated to the role of super-terrorist to justify terroristic US efforts abroad.

And American and Israeli collaboration with the exiled Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) — for years categorised as a terrorist outfit by the US itself — only renders the whole scene all the more, well, escalatory.

Now, the US Department of State warns citizens against travel to Iran "due to the risk of terrorism" — although Friday's drone action suggests that this "terrorism" might not necessarily be Iranian-perpetrated.

After all, as we've noticed, Israel doesn't do "restraint". And as Biden and his fellow powers that be continue to regurgitate tiresome and self-righteous calls for de-escalation in a region where the US and Israel have never exhibited restraint, we could start by de-escalating the hypocritical rhetoric.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



By Rawan Abhari  
Advocacy associate at Quincy Institute

## PERSPECTIVE

In light of Iran and Israel's recent retaliatory strikes, media focus has now turned to concerns of potential regional escalation and the awaited aid package from the US House of Representatives. Gaza and the war there appear to have moved off to sidebar status as a result.

It shouldn't remain there for long. While the world's gaze has been turned, the death toll of 50 to 100 Gazans a day since the Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria only underscores the ongoing severity of the situation.

Since the April 1 attack, the Israeli onslaught on Gaza has bred: revelations that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) created "kill zones" in Gaza, in which anyone can be shot; the deaths of seven international aid workers, who were killed in a targeted attack by the Israeli military; a mass grave found after the Israeli withdrawal from al-Shifa hospital that held at least 15 bodies after the two-week siege on the hospital; the deaths of at least 13 people after a strike targeted Al-Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza; and news that all of Gaza City's water wells had stopped

## Don't take your eyes off Gaza

functioning, according to Gaza's Government Media Office.

In the US, grassroots efforts to halt arms sales to Israel have not ceased, either. The uncommitted national campaign in the Democratic presidential primary has brought in nearly half a million

dollars to finance the effort, which aims to push the Biden administration towards a cease-fire in Gaza. The movement started in Michigan's Democratic presidential primary, where more than 100,000 voters cast ballots for "uncommitted" — sending a sig-

nal to the president's reelection campaign that he is out of step with his likely voters on the war in Gaza. Since then, other states — such as Minnesota, Washington, and Wisconsin — picked up the idea and rapidly organized to turn out people who wanted to send



A Palestinian boy carries a gas cooker as he walks amid the debris of a destroyed building in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip on April 18, 2024. AFP

Biden a message. On Tax Day this year, protests took place across the country to raise awareness about Israel's war in Gaza.

In Israel, massive protests continue in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, reflecting a significant challenge to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's increasingly embattled leadership. Demonstrators are furious with the prime minister and his cabinet for failing to secure the release of all captives taken during the events of October 7. Despite the release of 105 individuals during a temporary truce last year, 130 captives remain either deceased or in captivity with Hamas and other armed groups. Banners at the protests demand Netanyahu's resignation and call for new nationwide elections.

As of Friday, the House of Representatives was poised to advance the National Security Supplemental, including \$16 billion in aid for Israel. In their negotiations with Republicans, Democratic leadership held the inclusion of Gaza aid in any package as a "red line". Despite this, there is still a large segment of the Democratic party that does not support sending offensive weapons to Israel without assurances that its use will not violate any US laws or international laws related to war. House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Gregory Meeks has so far declined to give his sign-off on a sale of F-15s to Israel.

Additionally, in the midst of the procedural hurdles in passing the

foreign aid packages out of the House, eight Democrats introduced an amendment that would restrict US weapons transfers to Israel until a "full investigation" is completed into their use in Gaza. The amendment was blocked by the Rules Committee. This was just one of many amendments from Democrats that were critical of Israel's actions that were not ultimately made in order by the committee. The final vote of the Israel military aid bill, along with the others in the package, is slated for Saturday morning.

Israel finds itself in a precarious position, also engaged in a separate conflict with Hezbollah on its northern border while pledging to respond to Iran's strikes last week. However, Israel is absolutely taking advantage of the world's diverted attention. Recent discussions between the Biden administration and Israeli officials suggest some form of approval for a ground invasion in Rafah is still to come.

In the entirety of Gaza, from the dire famine in the north to the desperation of refugees now packed into the densely populated south, the upcoming days and weeks will be critical. It's essential to remember that at the root of both the Israeli and Iranian strikes lies the failure of Israel and Hamas to reach a cease-fire there. To this end, the world's attention should not waver.

The article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.



## AFC Futsal Asian Cup:

## Iran rallies past Bahrain to progress to last eight

## Sports Desk

Iran came from behind twice to beat a resolute Bahrain side 5-3 and book a place in the last-eight round of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup in Bangkok, Thailand.

Stepping into the game on the back of a first-day 3-1 win against Afghanistan, Vahid Shamsaei's men dominated the early stages at the Hua Mark Indoor Stadium, with Alireza Rafieipour hitting the post in the opening minute before Bahraini keeper Sayed Abbas produced a couple of fine saves to deny Mahdi Karimi and Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi.

The 12-time champion was stunned in the 10th minute when Ali Alaraibi gave Bahrain a surprise lead, only to see his goal canceled out by Rafieipour seconds later.

Bahrain struck again with two minutes left on the clock, thanks to Saleh Sanjar's close-range strike, and he could have doubled his side's advantage just before the break, but saw his effort from the second spot well saved by Iranian goalie Baqer Mohammadi.

Iran found a second equalizer through Karimi two minutes after the interval and took a first-time lead in the contest seven minutes later.

Ahmad-Abbasi bagged his third goal in the competition from a tight angle but Iran's lead was short-lived as Alaraibi drew Bah-



Iran's Mahdi Karimi (11) shoots during a 5-3 victory over Bahrain in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 20, 2024.

● FFIRI

rain level a minute later. However, Behrouz Azimi's left-foot effort on a corner-kick found the roof of the net to restore Iran's one-goal cushion with less than eight minutes left on the clock, and when Bahrain

opted for powerplay in desperate search of a late equalizer Ahmad-Abbasi was first to a poor pass by Mohamed Alsandi before sending the ball from his own half into an empty net. The result left Iran atop the Group

D table with maximum points, while Kuwait remained on course for a runner-up spot after a 3-3 draw against Afghanistan. "The game became tricky for us due to the pressure our players felt about advancing to the next

round. We performed well in the opening minutes, but after conceding a goal, we were forced into a defensive mode," said Shamsaei, whose team will be chasing a first Asian crown since 2018. A draw against Kuwait today will

be enough for Iran to win the group.

"I believe in my players. They delivered a decent performance today. We face a difficult situation as this is a World Cup qualifying tournament and I just want my men to know that if they play to their abilities, we will win every game," added the Iranian head coach.

The four semifinalists in Bangkok will book a place in the World Cup – starting mid-September in Uzbekistan.

"We made it hard for ourselves. We missed loads of chances in the first half and were caught off guard on the counterattacks. We still showed character to get back in the game," said Iranian skipper Ali-Asghar Hassanzadeh, who is after a fifth Asian trophy with the national team.

Elsewhere on Saturday, defending champion Japan bounced back from a first-day 3-2 defeat against Kyrgyzstan to beat South Korea 5-0, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan shared the spoils in a 2-2 stalemate.

Tajikistan is on top in Group C with four points, leading Kyrgyzstan on goal difference.

## Iran's Rezaei wins Asian canoe gold, books Olympic berth

## Sports Desk

Iranian Mohammad-Nabi Rezaei won a gold medal at the Asian Canoe Sprint Championships in Tokyo, Japan, to punch his ticket for the Paris Olympics in July.

Representing the country in the men's C-1 1000m final on Sunday, Rezaei clocked 4:10.980 minutes to beat Lai Kuan-chieh of the Chinese Taipei to the ultimate prize, with China's Miao Feilong taking the bronze.

This was a third medal for Iranian men in the championships

following Ali Aqamirzaei's double bronze-winning campaigns in the K-1 200m and 1000m events – with the latter success securing him a second Olympic berth after the Tokyo Games three years ago – as the country finished sixth in the team table. Kazakhstan topped the standing with 11 medals – including sixth golds – followed by Uzbekistan (10 medals, three golds) and China (four medals, two golds.)

Meanwhile, Iranian female rowers won a couple of Olympic quotas in the Asian and Oceanian qualification event in

Chungju, South Korea.

Two-time Asian under-23 gold medalist Fatemeh Mojallal, who was part of the quadruple sculls team that won a silver in last year's Asian Games, secured a spot in the French capital thanks to a third-place finish in women's single sculls event. Zeinab Norouzi and Mahsa Javer also built on a decent performance in the Asian Games, which saw the duo leave Hangzhou with a couple of silver medals, to finish as the runner-up in the double sculls contest and book their Paris tickets.



● yjc

## Taylor fails to reach Olympics after shock defeat in US trials



American wrestler David Taylor (l) is seen in action against Aaron Brooks in a freestyle 86kg bout in the US Olympic trials in State College, PA, US, on April 20, 2024.

● CENTRE DAILY TIMES

**USA TODAY** – One of the biggest stars in US wrestling has failed to qualify for the Summer Olympics.

In a shocking twist, two-time defending world champion and reigning Olympic gold medalist David Taylor will miss out on the 2024 Paris Games after losing to fellow Penn State product Aaron Brooks on Saturday night at the Olympic trials.

Taylor, 33, got an automatic bye to the final at the Olympic trials by virtue of his past performances, needing only to win two of three bouts against Brooks to lock up his spot on Team USA. But he came out flat in the first match at 86 kilograms Saturday morning, losing 4-1. And a 3-1 defeat to Brooks on Saturday night followed, stunning the crowd at the Bryce Jordan Center on the campus where they both previously starred.

"He's one of the first guys to make this program what it is," Brooks said. "It's been a blessing, being around him and watching what he does."

It was an almost unfathomable outcome

for the wrestler known by fans as "Magic Man," who has been arguably the most dominant male wrestler for the US over the past five years. Prior to this weekend's Olympic trials, Taylor had won 26 of 27 matches dating back to the start of 2019 and beat opponents by a combined score of 226-19. His lone loss came in the final of the 2021 World Championships against Iranian rival Hassan Yazdani. The two men were heavily favored to face off again in Paris, likely with a gold medal on the line.

Instead, Taylor becomes the latest US star to be foiled by the country's trials system, in which even the most accomplished athletes are forced to earn their place.

Only one athlete per country per weight class is allowed to compete at the Olympic Games.

Ultimately, Team USA's gold-medal hopeful was foiled by Brooks, a 23-year-old who just wrapped up his collegiate career with a fourth consecutive NCAA title.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei lauded the Iranian Armed Forces for displaying a commendable image of strength and military prowess during Operation True Promise against Israel regardless of how many targets were hit.

He made the remarks during a meeting with a group of high-ranking Iranian military commanders and figures in the capital Tehran on Sunday.

He said the high number of missiles and drones launched during Operation True Promise against targets inside Israeli-occupied territories is a secondary and peripheral matter, stressing that the main issue is the manifestation of the willpower of the Iranian nation and armed forces across the globe, Press TV reported.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian forces have sincerely and successfully managed to present a good image of their abilities and authority after punishing Israel, exhibited a commendable picture of the Iranian nation, and proved the emergence of Iranians' willpower in the international arena.

The Leader stressed that the latest developments have created a sense of grandeur and magnificence about Is-

lamic Iran in the eyes of the world and international observers.

He praised the efforts and activities of the IRGC, the Iranian Army, and police forces, calling upon the armed forces to continue their efforts and move to face hostilities and enemies by relying on innovative initiatives.

"We should not stop even for a moment because stoppage means backpedaling. Therefore, innovation in the production of weapons and methods, as well as knowledge of the enemy's strategies must always be on the agenda," the Leader stated.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched extensive missile and drone strikes last week on the Israeli-occupied territories. The series of retaliatory strikes, dubbed Operation True Promise, inflicted damage on Israeli military bases across the occupied lands.

It was in retaliation for the Israeli attack on April 1 against the Iranian consulate in Damascus, located next to the embassy building in Damascus's Mezzeh district.

The airstrike killed two senior Iranian military personnel who were on an advisory mission to Syria as well as five of their accompanying officers.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a group of high-ranking Iranian military commanders and figures in the capital Tehran on April 21, 2024.   
● khamenei.ir



Iranians' willpower displayed

## Leader hails Armed Forces' response to Israel

## Hamas: US military aid to Israel 'green light' for Gaza 'aggression'

International Desk

Palestinian resistance group Hamas on Sunday condemned the US House of Representatives' approval of billions of dollars in new military aid to Israel, much of which is to strengthen Israeli air defenses.

"This support, which violates international law, is a license and a green light for the Zionist extremist government (Israel) to continue the brutal aggression against our people," Hamas said in a statement.

"We consider this step a confirmation of the official American complicity and partnership in the war of extermination waged by the fascist occupation army against our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip."

On Saturday, the US House of Representatives approved \$13 billion in military assistance to America's ally, Israel, in its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Washington is already Israel's largest military supplier.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "much appreciated aid bill" showed strong support for Israel and "defends Western civilization".

The Palestinian presidency condemned the bill as "an aggression against the Palestinian people" and a "dangerous escalation".

The money would "translate into thousands of Palestinian casualties in the Gaza Strip" and the occupied West Bank, said Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Palestinian President Mah-

moud Abbas. "To continue arming Israel after an ICJ decision that finds that there is a possible risk of genocide and a United Nations Security Council resolution that calls for an immediate, sustained cease-fire ... from our opinion, risks complicity," said Bushra Khalidi, West Bank policy lead for Oxfam. Since October 7, the Israel war on Gaza has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians - most of them women and children. Israel carried out deadly strikes in Gaza overnight. The bodies of 13 people, mostly children, were recovered after an Israeli strike hit the home of a family near the southernmost Gaza city of Rafah, the agency said. Other people were believed to be under rubble. A separate Israeli strike on



a home in the Rafah area killed at least three people and wounded others, Civil Defense said. Resident Umm Hassan Kloub, 35, said her children screamed when they "woke up to a nightmare of an explosion". "Every second we live in terror, even the sound of Israeli aircraft doesn't stop," she said. "We don't know whether we will live or die. This is not life."

Violence has also flared in the Israeli-occupied West

Bank, where a two-year surge in clashes has further escalated since the war broke out. The Palestinian Red Crescent said Saturday that at least 14 people were killed during an Israeli raid on a refugee camp in the northern West Bank.

Separately, Israeli forces shot dead two Palestinian teenagers near the West Bank city of Al-Khalil, the Palestinian Health Ministry said on Sunday, bringing to at least 483 the number of Palestinians

killed by Israeli troops and settlers in the West Bank since October 7, according to ministry data.

The Israeli army claimed the two people had attempted to stab and shoot troops near the village of Beit Einun.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran forecasts floods, heavy rainfalls in 15 provinces

Social Desk

Iran's Water Research Institute has predicted floods and heavy rainfalls in the country's 15 provinces in the coming days. The institute has warned of heavy rainfalls in the provinces of Kerman, Yazd, Mazandaran, Semnan, Golestan, Isfahan, Fars, Tehran, Alborz, Markazi, Hamedan, Qom and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Sistan and Baluchistan and South Khorasan.

The southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan is already grappling with severe floods which have inundated the province southern cities and villages. At least 10 people have lost their lives in the floods.



## Iran president to visit Pakistan, Sri Lanka

International Desk

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi will travel to Pakistan and Sri Lanka to boost ties with the two Asian countries.

Raisi is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan's capital on Monday to meet his Pakistani counterpart Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said. Raisi will be accompanied by "a high-level delegation comprising the foreign minister... as well as a large business delegation," the foreign ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

During his visit Raisi will also meet Pakistan's prime minister, the chairman of the Senate and speaker of the National Assembly.

"They will also discuss regional and global developments and bilateral cooperation to combat the common threat of terrorism," the statement said.


According to the statement, Raisi will also visit major cities including Lahore and Karachi and focus on bilateral and trade ties. The countries will further strengthen ties and enhance cooperation in "trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, and people-to-people contacts", it added. Pakistan is counting on a joint gas project with Iran to solve a long-running power crisis that has sapped its economic growth.

A \$7.5-billion Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline intended to feed Pakistani power plants was inaugurated with great fanfare in March 2013.

Iranian president will also depart for Sri Lanka to meet the country's officials during a one-day visit.

He is also scheduled to inaugurate Tehran-assisted \$529 million worth Uma Oya multipurpose development project with 120MW hydro power generation capacity, official sources said.

It will be the first visit to Sri Lanka by an Iranian president after then President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit in April 2008.



**Notice of tender for export sale**  
No. Z/1403/01

**Golgohar Mining and Industrial Company**  
Hereby Golgohar Mining & Industrial Co. announces selling and export 70.000 metric tons of Pellet (%Fe:65.00) on basis of F.O.B at Shahid Rajaei Jetty Bandar Abbas - Iran. Interested bidders should find tender documents at Golgohar website: [www.geg.ir](http://www.geg.ir). All bids on conformity to tender instructions must be submitted no later than 10:00 A.M. on 27. Apr.2024 to Golgohar office in Tehran (Fatemi Ave. opposite of Laleh hotel building No. 273). Bidders are invited to the mentioned address of the seller with an introduction letter of interested buyer and personal identification of the representative. Tender results shall be announced at 10:00 A.M. on 27 Apr.2024 at the office of the Seller.

**GOLGOHAR MINING & INDUSTRIAL CO.**





## Art of architecture added to Fajr festivals: *Minister*

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance announced the inclusion of architecture in the Fajr festivals, making it a biennial event as of this year. During a meeting with members of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's Architecture Council on Monday, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili highlighted the significance of architecture in cultural events, IRNA reported. He stated that the National Document of Architecture and Urbanism has been referred to the Art Council

and is ready for presentation at the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution. Esmaili emphasized the collaboration with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and the Supreme Council of Urban Planning to advance discussions on architecture. He noted that the Tourism Ministry, along with cooperation from various cultural sectors including broadcasting, will play a pivotal role in this initiative. He underscored the need to

highlight historical classifications and contemporary differences in architecture, particularly between Safavid, Ilkhanid, and Seljuk periods. Esmaili added that contemporary lifestyle is significantly influenced by architectural styles, emphasizing the need for architectural aesthetics to align with cultural values. The minister concluded by address-

ing the detachment of architecture from Iran's artistic sphere and stressed the importance of reintegrating it into the field of art.

## Iran, Malaysian university sign MoU



Iran and Sultan Idris Education University in Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration in arts and culture. The Iranian cultural attaché, Habib-Reza Arzani, expressed satisfaction with UPSI's activities in the arts and offered Iran's cooperation in the global mosque art project, IRNA wrote. The MoU aims to facilitate cooperation in areas such as architectural arts and

the exchange of Iranian art professors. Additionally, on the occasion of Saadi Day, renowned Iranian poet, UPSI faculty members received Saadi's 'Golestan' book translated into Malay, and a memorial office for UPSI was inaugurated by Arzani. Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) is one of the top public universities in Tanjong Malim, Malaysia. It ranks 951-1000 in QS World University Rankings.

## Iran's 'Standing with the Wolf' nominated for award at New Delhi festival

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian documentary 'Standing with the Wolf,' produced by Saeed Nabi, was nominated for an award at the Asia Environment and Wildlife Film Festival and Forum, known as CMS VATAVARAN, in Delhi, India, in 2024. Directed by Saeed Nabi and Maryam Khadivi, the film received previous nominations for the Golden Panda Award in China and the Golden Sun Award in Spain, ISNA wrote. 'Standing with the Wolf' is an environmental-social documentary that aired as part of the series "Solitude" on Iran's Channel One.

The CMS VATAVARAN International Festival, set for June in Delhi, India, is recognized as Asia's premier environmental festival. It focuses on sustainable development and offers a platform for exploring nature through cinema screenings in New Delhi. The festival's twelfth edition aims to showcase the best environmental films from around the world, highlighting stories of nature and addressing critical environmental and developmental challenges. Categories for awards at the festival include water conservation, environmental protection, wildlife conservation, climate change, adaptation and livelihood.

Despite the constant threats and setbacks, Jalali remains loyal to his mission of preserving the environment and protecting endangered species, particularly the wolf population. The film takes viewers on a rollercoaster ride as Jalali battles with hunters and poachers, using his experience and knowledge to outsmart them at every turn. But Jalali knows that education is the key to making a lasting impact, and he decides to take his cause to schools, inspiring the next generation to stand up for the environment. The documentary offers a poignant reflection on the power of education and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of



adversity. With stunning visuals and an emotive soundtrack, 'Standing with the Wolf' is an unforgettable tribute to a true environmental hero."

### PICS OF THE DAY



Iranian daf (Persian frame drum musical instrument) players perform during '1000 Daf Ceremony' in Palangan, Kurdistan. The event drew a large crowd including locals, officials, and daf players from across the country.

