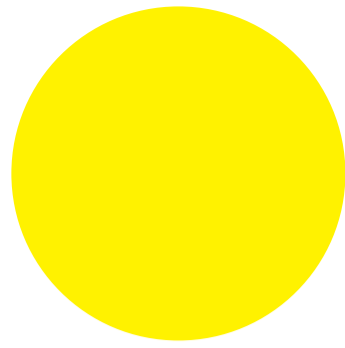


Pezeshkian vows to promote public, private sectors' engagement in economy



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Chinese transit train to enter Iran, bolstering trade routes



## Economic Desk

A Chinese transit train will enter Iran from Incheh Borun Crossing in northeast of the country after crossing Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, the Iranian ambassador to China has said. "In continuation of the efforts of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran to strengthen the transit position of the country in the transfer of Chinese goods to West Asia and Europe, the departure of the Xi'an train towards Tehran began during a ceremony," Mohsen Bakhtiar wrote in a post on the social network X on Sunday.

"After passing through the territories of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, this train will enter the territory of Iran from Incheh Borun border crossing within 10 days," the Iranian ambassador added.

In a recent post on Monday, the envoy mentioned his visit to Shaanxi Province to attend the train's departure ceremony, stating that meetings were conducted with senior provincial officials, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and proficient companies in the province to explore enhancing collaboration in scientific and technological, academic and research, economic, cultural fields, and the utilization of capabilities.

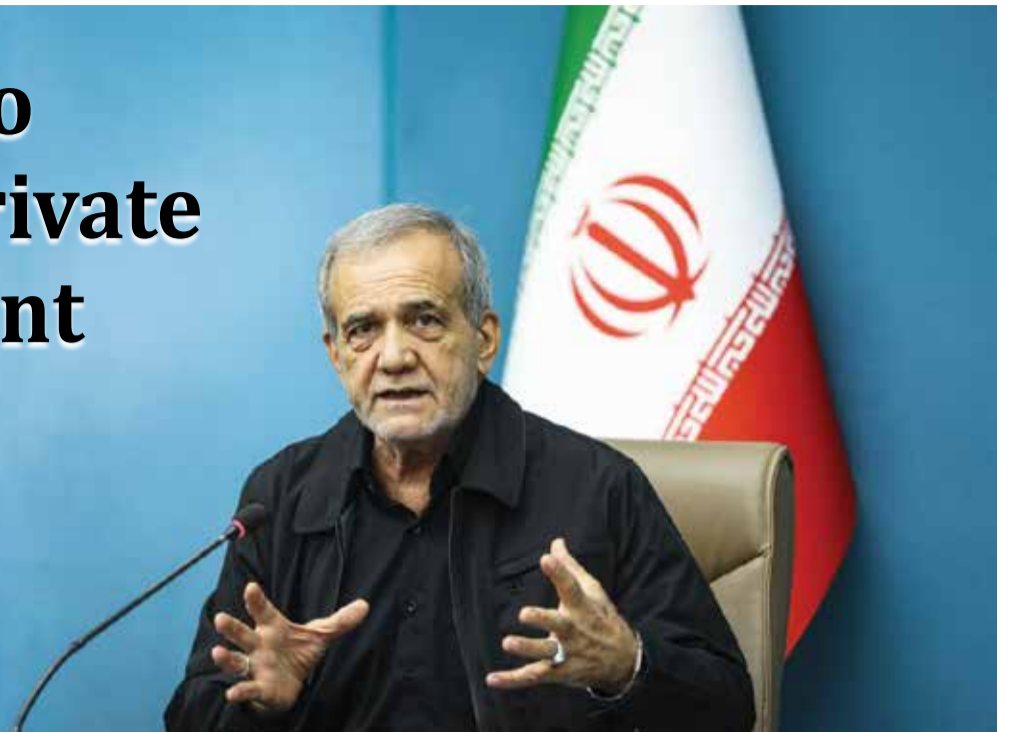
## 400 Iranian trucks stuck at Afghanistan border

As many as 400 Iranian trucks carrying diesel from Iraq to Afghanistan have been stuck at the border for more than three weeks. The drivers have reportedly been stranded in Iran's eastern neighboring country for more than three weeks due to Afghanistan's refusal to accept the cargo, IRNA reported.

The trucks are carrying Iraqi diesel exported to Afghanistan.

According to the drivers, no valid reason has been given by the Afghan authorities about the delay of these trucks.

## Pezeshkian vows to promote public, private sectors' engagement in economy



IRNA

## Economic Desk

President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian has pledged to pave the way for public and private sectors' participation in the fields of economy and production.

During a meeting with a group of members of labor unions, Pezeshkian said, "Production is the backbone of the country's economy, and be assured that without your participation, help, and cooperation, solving these problems is impossible,"

IRNA reported.

"I promise to provide a suitable platform for the participation of the public and the private sectors in the economic and production realms," he added. He criticized the current livelihood situation of the Iranian people and stated, "The current situation in Iran is not worthy of the Iranian nation, and we must all do our best to improve this situation."

Pezeshkian said the government's duty is to create coordination and a suitable envi-

ronment for public and private sector participation in solving economic and production issues, stressing, "I do not promise to solve all problems because such a task is beyond my capacity and even that of the government, but I promise to create and maintain a suitable environment and coordination for your participation and that of the private sector and producers to work together to address the infrastructural problems of production and the country's economy."

Emphasizing the need to move past factional disputes and power struggles, the president-elect said, "I am ready to give opportunities, resources, and authority to anyone who has the ability and capacity to solve problems, but I will make it a condition that if they fail, they must be accountable."

"The government's duty is not to enter the field of production but to create a suitable environment for industrial, productive, and commercial activities. However, the government

is obliged to heed and address the situation of the less privileged and the poor; this is the government's duty," he said.

Pezeshkian emphasized that achieving these goals takes time and requires the assistance of all experts, academics, thinkers, and specialists from inside and outside the country, stating, "We will strive with all our might to lead the society in a direction that is worthy and dignified for the people and preserves their dignity and honor."

## Sri Lanka settles \$60m of Iranian oil debt with tea



## Economic Desk

Cash-strapped Sri Lanka has cleared \$60 million of its \$251 million debt to Iran for oil purchases through exporting tea to the Middle Eastern nation, Sri Lankan media outlet Ada Derana reported on Tuesday, citing the CEO of a leading state-run tea company.

Nearly 5,000 tons of globally popular Ceylon Tea were exported to Iran to settle under a tea-for-oil deal, said Tea Board Chairman Niraj De Mel, noting that the trade grew by nearly 270% compared to 1,850-ton shipments in the same period last year.

The tea-oil swap was agreed upon in late 2021, but exports were delayed by Sri Lanka's economic crisis that forced then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down in July 2022.

The island nation defaulted on its \$46bn foreign debt in April 2022 and secured a \$2.9 billion bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) early last year. The barter deal allows sanctions-hit Iran to avoid having to use scarce hard currency to pay for imports of popular tea. It also has allowed Sri Lanka to pay with tea, as the country is short of foreign currency.

Sri Lankan officials have already said that the trade does not break US sanctions on Iran, since tea is a food item and the deal has not involved Iranian blacklisted banks.

The agreement alleviates Sri Lanka's financial burden and strengthens trade ties between the two nations, Sri Lanka's Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industries said in a statement.

Ceylon tea, known by the island's colonial-era name, is the highest-earning crop in Sri Lanka in terms of foreign currency deals, bringing in some \$1.3 billion annually. The tea is typically shipped to Iran via the United Arab Emirates.

## Iran's agricultural exports grew 24% in Q1 calendar year

## Economic Desk

Iran's agricultural exports, aided by a free trade agreement, surged by 24% in the first three months of the Persian calendar year that started on March 20, the deputy head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran said on Tuesday.

"The exports of agricultural products amount to \$1bn in the three-month timespan, posting a 24% rise comparing with the corresponding period a year earlier," Mohammad-Sadeq Qannadzadeh was quoted as saying by Tasnim News Agency.

Qannadzadeh added that shipments also soared by 19% weight wise from March 20 to June 20.

According to the official, cereals came top of the list with a 200% increase in exports.

He attributed the growth to the implementation of a "temporary" free trade deal Iran signed with the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in late December. The EEU comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia.

"Around 37% of Iran's agricultural exports come from trade with the EEU," Qannadzadeh said.

He pointed out that Iran's agro-exports would see "bigger leaps" once the trade deal, which is now on a preferential basis, becomes fully operational.

The official also noted that Iran's imports of such items dropped by 17% in the March-June period.

"The decline suggests that policies made by the Agriculture Ministry were accurate," Qannadzadeh said.

Iran ready to meet BRICS energy demands: **Senior MP**

A senior Iranian lawmaker has said the Islamic Republic is prepared to supply BRICS member states with oil and gas to meet their growing energy demands. Rouhollah Mousavi from the Iranian Parliament's Internal Affairs and Councils Commission,

who was in Russia to attend a BRICS parliamentary forum, told local Iranian media's correspondent in an interview that Iran is capable of selling oil and gas to BRICS countries in exchange for banking and trade services, Mehr News Agency reported.

Mousavi said that during the two-day visit to Russia, headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the Iranian parliamentary delegation held meetings with delegations of other BRICS countries. The MP added, in those meet-

ings, the Iranian delegation called for the expansion of banking and trade exchanges within BRICS, while also stressing the need for the de-dollarization of economic transactions. Mousavi stated that Iran's membership in BRICS is mutually

beneficial for both Iran and the other emerging economies in the alliance. He explained that Iran, given its abundant resources, can provide oil and gas to the BRICS countries to meet their energy needs, and in return, other

member states can take steps to meet those of Iran's in various banking and trade exchange sectors. BRICS countries are influential in the global economy as they account for 40% of the world's population, 30% of global GDP, and 17% of world exports, the Iranian parliamentarian asserted.

# Sa'adat School, a cornerstone of education in southern Iran

## Iranica Desk

Bushehr, a port city in southern Iran, experienced significant advancements in economic and cultural domains during the Qajar period, earning recognition as the most esteemed commercial port in southern Iran. Consequently, the city emerged as a pivotal hub for cultural metamorphosis. The inception of the first modern school in southern Iran within this port marked a crucial cultural milestone in the region. The renowned Sa'adat School, known for its distinguished alumni, has evolved into a cultural-historical center, boasting a rich legacy and influential role, making it a revered educational institution in the country.



● [aftabnews.ir](http://aftabnews.ir)

● YJC

● YJC

Historically, Sa'adat School stands as a cornerstone of education in southern Iran, ranking as the fifth enduring school in the country and a key tourist attraction in Bushehr. Given its significance in promoting cultural awareness and progressive teachings among the locals, the school holds a special place among the city's historical landmarks. The architectural charm of Sa'adat School, akin to the captivating allure of Bushehr's

urban fabric, underwent restoration in 2014.

## Establishment

Sa'adat School was initially founded by Ahmad Khan Daryabegi, the governor of Bushehr, at the heart of the city. Initially housed in the residence of Haj Mohammad Hossein Safar, the school, initially known as Sa'adat-e Mozaffari, came into being through financial aid from

Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar. The school commenced operations in 1900, drawing intellectuals and students to its premises.

## Evolution and impact

Despite facing initial skepticism from the community, Sa'adat School flourished, attracting students and scholars alike. The school's expansion necessitated a more suitable structure, leading to the construction of a

spacious complex outside the city center. This new building, completed in 1901, transformed Sa'adat School into a thriving educational center, accommodating a growing number of students and garnering attention beyond the region.

## Legacy and recognition

Over the years, Sa'adat School produced numerous notable figures in politics, literature,

history, and social sciences, solidifying its status as a prominent educational institution of its time. The school's profound impact prompted the people of Bushehr to designate the 9th of March as the National Day of Bushehr in honor of its founding. In recognition of its historical significance, Sa'adat School was officially registered as one of Iran's national monuments on January 31, 2000.

## Sections of Sa'adat School

Presently, Sa'adat School comprises two sections: a modern educational wing for students and a historical-cultural section open to visitors. The historical segment showcases rooms adorned with photographs of alumni and notable personalities, while the Sa'adat Art Gallery within the complex offers a glimpse into traditional crafts and artwork available for purchase.

# Mysteries of Aspakhu Fire Temple in North Khorasan Province

## Iranica Desk

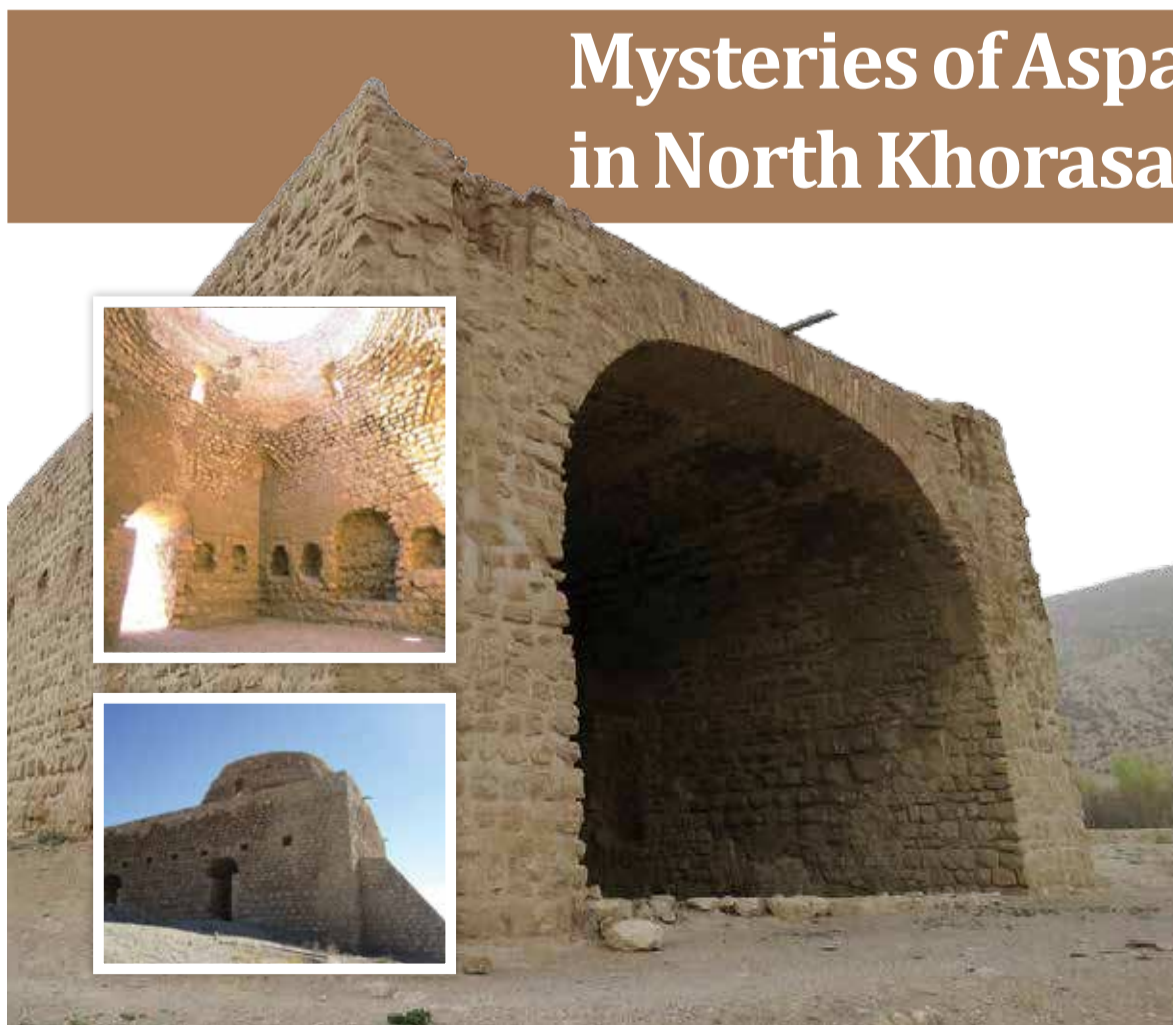
Aspakhu Fire Temple is one of the oldest ancient monuments in North Khorasan Province. This historical building is located on a hill, on the road from Bojnourd to Golestan Forest and in the southern part of Aspakhu village.

According to archaeologists, based on excavations and discovered documents, the construction of this fire temple dates back to the Sassanid era. Near Aspakhu village and the fire temple, there is a cemetery that differs in terms of burial and tomb-making from Muslim burials, as the graves are family-based. These evidences indicate that specific Zoroastrian tribes lived in this area and this historical building belonged to them. The reason for this naming is the thriving of horse breeding in this region (in Persian, *asb* means horse). The locals of this area also recognize the Aspakhu Fire Temple as a church, but so far no documents have been found indicating the presence of Christians in this area. The main entrance of the fire temple is constructed in the form of a tall ivan and the dome of the house is embedded on its western side. In the northern and southern walls of the fire temple, there are nine small rectangular

niches. Each niche measures approximately 30 by 40 centimeters and is topped with three sturdy wooden beams sourced from Alborz trees. This temple boasts three entrances and exits, symbolizing the core Zoroastrian principle of "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds." Constructed using rubble stone, sarooj, and small wooden beams, the architecture of this fire temple draws inspiration from a fusion of dome and ivan styles commonly found in historical and Islamic structures.

The Aspakhu fire temple features a circular mihrab, a fire pit, and a domed ceiling with vents for smoke to escape.

Due to the presence of a fire pit and smoke outlets in the ceiling, this temple was probably constructed by Zoroastrians. The interior of the fire temple is square-shaped with entrances on the northern, southern, and eastern sides. Noteworthy architectural elements of the Aspakhu Fire Temple include two blind windows on the northern and southern facades of the ivan. The fusion of dome and ivan in this temple serves as a significant architectural symbol of Khorasan Razavi Province during the Sassanid era. Discovered by a team of archaeologists in 1966, the Aspakhu Fire Temple was officially listed on Iran's National Heritage List.





US President Joe Biden holds a press conference in Tel Aviv during a solidarity visit to Israel on October 18, 2023, days after Hamas's October 7 attack on the occupied territories.

● BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

# Actual war or psychological war?



The lack of strategic calculations about Israel's engagement in a war with Lebanon and the absence of a clear vision thus far have pushed the US towards freezing the status quo on Israel's northern front.

By Faezeh sadat Yousefi  
Guest contributor

## OPINION EXCLUSIVE

*As the flames of war rage more and more fiercely with each passing day in the north of the occupied territories, the United States seeks to prevent not only the escalation of tensions but also the risk of a full-blown regional war, even if it would be for the briefest of moments. This is due to the shifting regional balance in favor of the resistance and the evolving security dynamics in West Asia.*

*The White House, the "ironclad" ally of the Zionist regime, has employed its full diplomatic, military, and financial might to bolster Israel in the Gaza conflict. Yet, they find themselves deadlocked in devising an overarching strategy for the war, with no clear path to extricate Israel from its self-made quagmire. Even the recent cease-fire proposal — riddled with criticisms from Hamas and ambiguities about whether it halts hostilities and whether its conditions for making the truce permanent can be fulfilled — has failed to gain traction among the disputing parties. Consequently, the frenzied efforts of the White House have portrayed the US as ineffective in its support for Israel on the global stage. This indicates that the US lacks a well-defined plan with a clear vision to navigate itself and Israel out of the escalating tensions in the region.*

*Adding to this failure, the Zionist regime has fallen short of achieving any of its proclaimed objectives, such as destroying Hamas or securing the release of captives, despite wielding its full political and military might against the besieged people of Gaza and the Palestinian resistance. This bitter realization along with the humiliating defeat of its armed-to-the-teeth army against a modestly equipped military group, which is under stringent siege, cast serious doubts on the prospect of engaging in another battle with the formidable and seasoned Hezbollah group.*

### Challenges for US

In the prevailing circumstances, a large-scale war with far-reaching dimensions against the Lebanese resistance would not only exacerbate Israel's predicament but also heighten threats to American bases and interests in the region, ultimately challenging America's influence.

Hence, the US has repeatedly underscored its determination to prevent an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah fighters stationed in southern Lebanon, advocating for a negotiated end to the conflict. Following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the anxious deployment of Western and American forces to the occupied territories to bolster Israel's shaky security, a challenging path was laid for the West. After the onset of attacks by the Lebanese resistance, France and the US dispatched envoys to Lebanon, aiming to pressure Hezbollah into retreating from the border and ceasing hostilities through internal channels. However, these attempts not only fell flat but also backfired as Hezbollah intensified its heavy attacks on northern regions, thwarting the plot.

A significant source of the US's primary fear, by their own admission, is the unpredictable nature of the resistance ring's assistance to Hezbollah in Lebanon. From the outset of the Zionist regime's recent threats against Lebanon, resistance groups in Iraq and Yemen vowed to fight side by side with Hezbollah should Israel invade Lebanese soil. Presently, it is not just Hezbollah but a united front of resistance that stands against the Israeli army. Resistance groups from Yemen and Iraq have already executed several coordinated operations within the occupied territories, targeting strategic locations such as the port of Eilat.

Of notable importance is the strengthening of Hezbollah's deterrence capability through its sustained heavy and precise attacks in recent weeks, inflicting substantial losses on the Zionists. While the Lebanese resistance was incrementally advancing its operational capabilities as per its strategy, the assassination of its commanders

prompted a shift in tactics, leading to the deployment of advanced weaponry. This has imposed substantial and ongoing costs on the Israeli army and cabinet.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's stern warning to the Zionist regime regarding any fantasies of direct confrontation with Lebanon tops the list of Tel Aviv's concerns. Iran has unequivocally stated that, in the event of an all-out military offensive, all options are on the table, including the full mobilization of all resistance fronts. This threat was gravely perceived in both Tel Aviv and the White House. The punitive response of Iran's Operation True Promise, with its extensive and precise missile strikes on the occupied territories, altered the offensive plans against Israel and marked a turning point in the nature of the threat posed to the Zionists and their allies. It also augmented the resistance's deterrence against them. Another Israeli concern is the inability to accurately gauge Hezbollah's military and weaponry capabilities in Lebanon, impeding Tel Aviv's tactical planning for attacks. What has become evident to the occupiers is that Hezbollah is more than just an armed group; they possess a formidable arsenal of 150,000 missiles, including precision-guided ones, as well as vital intelligence about Israel's missile defense systems. Some of these missiles have not only penetrated the Iron Dome but also successfully targeted the regime's alleged defense system, along with its spying apparatus.

Therefore, any miscalculation about waging war on Lebanon will have region-wide repercussions, and its escalation will by no means benefit the US or, secondarily, the Zionist regime. While Israel may initiate the conflict, they will not control its outcome. This reality is evident in the protracted nine-month-long war with the Palestinian resistance in Gaza, which remains under a complete siege and has not culminated in a decisively advantageous position for Israel.

Consequently, the lack of strategic calculations about engaging in a war with Lebanon and the absence of a

clear vision thus far have pushed the US towards freezing the status quo on Israel's northern front. Previously, the White House endeavored to prevent Hezbollah's attacks on Israel through negotiations and diplomatic pressures exerted by its envoys, aiming to neutralize the threats posed by the resistance movement in Israel's north. For Israel, victory entails pushing Hezbollah back from the border by 7 to 10 kilometers and significantly degrading its military capabilities to facilitate the return of war refugees to their homes in the north. However, Hezbollah's resolute response, both on the battlefield and in diplomacy, which underscored their steadfastness in following their strategy in the Gaza war and their readiness to confront any aggression, has prompted significant shifts in Israel's decision-making circles. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of the Hezbollah movement, has repeatedly warned that Hezbollah is fully prepared and does not have any constraints for engaging in a war with Israel. He has emphasized the movement's unwavering determination to stand with Gaza and the Palestinian people until victory is achieved.



Smoke billows behind a house following over-border attacks from Lebanon, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, in Katzrin, the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, on June 13, 2024.

● AYAL MARGOLIN/REUTERS



A rocket launched from Lebanon to Israel over the border, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, is intercepted on June 13, 2024.  
● GIL ELIYAHU/REUTERS

Regardless, the disarray in decision-making within the joint war room of Israel and the United States, coupled with the absence of a clear path to end the war and, more crucially, the fears of widespread conflicts with the regional resistance forces, have placed the White House's efforts to defuse tensions with Lebanon in an uncertain timeframe.

#### Divided opinions in Israel

On the other hand, the discord between political and military factions in Israel presents a significant impediment to the prospect of war. While many Tel Aviv pundits and officials caution Netanyahu and his extremist cabinet members about the potentially devastating consequences of war for Israel, the latter group remains adamant about initiating another military confrontation. According to the latter group, Israel can no longer tolerate Hezbollah's near-daily rocket and drone launches from the borders. Moreover, the Israeli cabinet aims to return its citizens to their homes in the north before the commencement of the new school year in the fall.



Israeli firefighters work following rocket attacks from Lebanon, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, near the border on its Israeli side, on June 13, 2024.  
● AVI OHAYON/REUTERS

Numerous Hebrew analysts emphasize that attacking Lebanon jeopardizes the Zionist regime's continued existence. Avigdor Lieberman, in this context, acknowledges that Israel has fully diminished its deterrence capability, referring to the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's chief of staff, which went unanswered by the group in that case. In contrast, he says, the assassination of any Hezbollah member today provokes a fierce response. Retired Israeli army general Itzhak Brik shares a similar sentiment, asserting that if the Israeli army has failed to defeat Hamas, it will be unable to overcome Hezbollah, either. Undeniably, the October 7 attack has fundamentally altered Israel's perspective on external security threats. The Atlantic magazine advises Zionist leaders to reflect on history and recall that, even when Hezbollah was less powerful than it is today, Tel Aviv never achieved the victories its officials promised in past wars with Hezbollah. This American media outlet further references Amos Oz, a Zionist writer, who asserted in one of his books that Menachem Begin, the former prime

minister of the Zionist regime, believed he could once and for all clear out the region in his favor. Based on this misguided notion, he dispatched Israeli forces to Beirut with the aim of obliterating the Palestinian resistance. However, this war proved to be a strategic calamity for the regime. It led to the cancellation of the normalization agreement in Lebanon, strengthened Syria, and bolstered Iran's presence in Lebanon.

#### Reviving futile strategies

The White House's chaotic and convoluted situation has prompted pundits to prescribe a singular solution for the United States: severing the communication channels among resistance groups to prevent them from synergizing their power and to split their joint military actions. This proposal aligns with one of America's primary strategies, particularly after the resistance's triumph in the global war against Syria, which weakened America's foothold in West Asia and threatened Israel's deterrence. This strategy has entailed direct and indirect military assaults and leveraging political influ-

ence in various countries to pressure the resistance and hinder its expansion and empowerment in the region. However, the failure of these endeavors was laid bare by the unified resistance attacks on Israeli and American positions following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, bewildering the West. Moreover, America's inability to forge a global coalition against Yemen and the lack of cooperation from countries, especially regional allies, coupled with the relentless attacks by the Yemeni resistance despite US-UK assaults on Yemen, underscore the ineffectiveness of America's strategies. Similarly, the resistance attacks from Iraq, despite strikes on their bases, continue unabated. The reiteration of these outdated and tested prescriptions by political circles is a testament to the failure of America's political schemes in the region. The US, self-proclaimed as the world's policeman, finds itself flustered by the might of the resistance and has lost its grip on the region. Thus, the most significant thing that the US, despite its lofty claims, is left with is its failure to provide "iron-clad" support to the Zionist regime.

# US divide, rule no more

Washington's Persian Gulf allies embrace Iran



By Finian Cunningham

Journalist, scholar

## OPINION

*In a sign of major geopolitical realignment, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states sent warm congratulations to Iran on its newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian.*

*Saudi King Salman welcomed the news of Iran's election winner last weekend and said he hoped that the two Persian Gulf nations would continue developing their relations "between our brotherly people". That olive branch from Saudi Arabia to Iran is an unprecedented diplomatic development — one that will trigger alarms in Washington whose primary goal in the Middle East has been to isolate Iran from its neighbors.*



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) delivers a speech at the Jeddah Security and Development Summit (GCC+3) on July 16, 2022, as US President Joe Biden listens.  
● SPA

There were similar cordial official messages from Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Bahrain. Together with Saudi Arabia, these oil-rich states comprise the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). There is much talk now of the Persian Gulf Arab bloc normalizing relations with its Persian neighbor. For his part, President Pezeshkian — a heart surgeon by profession — says he wants to prioritize peaceful regional relations.

For decades, since the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Persian Gulf Arab states have viewed the Islamic Republic with deep suspicion and hostility. For one thing, there is the sectarian tension between Shia Islam, as professed mainly by Iran, and the Sunni Islam that dominates the Persian Gulf Arab states.

There is also the visceral fear among the Arab monarchies that the revolutionary politics espoused by Iran might infect their masses, thereby threatening the rigid autocracies and their system of hereditary rule. The fact that Iran holds elections stands in stark contrast to the Persian Gulf kingdoms ruled by royal families. So much for President Joe Biden's mantra about the US supposedly supporting democracy over autocracy.

The United States and its Western allies, in particular, the former colonial power Britain, have exploited the tensions in the Persian Gulf to exercise a divide-and-rule policy. The British are past masters at playing the sectarian game in all their former colonies from Ireland to Myanmar and everywhere in between, including the Middle East.

Taking a leaf out of that imperialist playbook, Washington has historically fuelled fears of Iranian expansionism. This has ensured Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf neighbors remain under US "protection," which is vital for maintaining the petrodollar system that underpins the American dollar as the international reserve currency. Without the petrodollar privileges, the US economy would implode.

Secondly, the Persian Gulf is an eye-watering huge market for American weapons exports, from overrated Patriot air defense systems to overpriced fighter jets.

In short, the policy of the US and its Western allies was and is to promote a Cold War in the Persian Gulf between the Arab states and Iran.

The schismatic animosity cannot be overstated. The Arab monarchies

were habitually paranoid about Iran infiltrating their societies. Saudi Arabia and the other Sunni rulers conducted severe repressive policies towards their Shia populations. In 2010, an explosive exposé by Julian Assange's WikiLeaks organization showed the then-Saudi ruler King Abdullah pleading with the United States to launch military attacks on Iran. The Saudi monarch described Iran as "the head of the snake" and he implored the US to decapitate the Islamic Republic.



Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (R) shakes hands with Bahraini Foreign Minister Rashid Al Zayani in Tehran, on July 23, 2024, on the sidelines of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit.  
● mfa.gov.ir

Fast forward to the present Saudi ruler, King Salman, a half-brother of the deceased Abdullah, who is now calling for fraternal relations with Iran — as are other Persian Gulf Arab states. Saudi heir to the throne, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also extended his congratulations to Iran's new president and went further to propose regional security cooperation. The Saudi heir reportedly told President Pezeshkian: "I affirm my keenness on developing and deepening the relations that unite our countries and peoples and serve our mutual interests."

This is an astounding turnaround for positive relations. Crown Prince MbS was the main instigator of Saudi's disastrous war on Yemen in 2015, which was prompted by his fear of Iran's alliance with the Houthis in Saudi's southern neighbor following the landmark international nuclear deal with Tehran.

Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Sunni states were also instrumental in pursuing the US-led covert war for regime change in Syria against Iranian ally Bashar al Assad. That proxy war effort was a defeat for the US side after Russia and Iran stepped in to defend Syria.

What's happening here is a major geopolitical realignment. Russia,

Iran, China, and others have put a decisive marker down, spelling the end of US and Western hegemony.

It is clear that the US-led so-called "rules-based global order" is nothing more than a dead-end scam imposed on the rest of the world. All empirical evidence shows that the primary enemy of international peace and security is the US hegemon and its Western vassals.

The US-instigated proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is recklessly pushing the world to the abyss of a nuclear catastrophe. Elsewhere, in the Middle East with the Western-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and the relentless belligerence of NATO in the Asia-Pacific toward China, it is increasingly evident what is the source of international conflict and chaos — US-led Western imperialism.

The Persian Gulf Arab leaders may not be reacting out of democratic sensibilities. But they must surely know that the writing is on the wall for American hegemony and its destructive death wish to survive at all costs. The world is changing dramatically to a new multipolar order where the majority of nations are trying to come to a peaceful coexistence.

Last year, China brokered a historic

rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. All of these parties know that the US disorder of hegemonic Cold War division is unsustainable and ultimately self-defeating for those who adhere to it.

The Saudis know that the Eurasian economic engine is driving the world economy, and the embrace of the Global South of a multipolar order is hammering nails into the coffin of Western hegemony.

Saudi Arabia and the other Persian Gulf Arab states are signing up as new members of the Shanghai Cooperation Council, which also includes Russia, China, Iran, India, and Pakistan, among others.

King Salman and other Arab leaders are finally realizing that Uncle Sam's patronage is like putting a loaded gun to your head. As that old American war criminal Henry Kissinger once reputedly remarked with his trademark cynicism: being an enemy of the US can be dangerous, but to be an ally of Uncle Sam is absolutely fatal. The days of Washington and its Western minions playing divide and rule are over because they have discredited themselves irreparably.

*The article first appeared on Eurasia Review.*

# Azmoun in limbo after skipping Leverkusen training



● PRESSE SPORTS

## Sports Desk

Sardar Azmoun faces an uncertain future as the Iranian striker is yet to decide on his next move after spending a season on loan at AS Roma from Bayer Leverkusen.

The 29-year-old completed the regular performance diagnostics on Sunday for his parent club, though he did not show up for the German domestic double winner's first training session ahead of the new campaign on Monday – much to the surprise of club's managing director.

"You don't just have to do the performance diagnostics, you also have to train," said Simon Rolfes, adding: "He was there yesterday, but not today, so we have to clarify what's going on."

The Iranian international bagged three goals and four assists in 29 games across all competitions for the Giallorossi last term but the Italian capital club, which failed to secure a Champions League spot for next season, refused to make a permanent bid for

the striker.

Rumors keep swirling around Azmoun's future with German newspaper Kicker reporting the Bundesliga side is keen on cashing out on the Iranian asset, who joined from Zenit St. Petersburg for €2.5 million in January 2022 and went on to register five goals and assists apiece in 44 appearances during a difficult season-and-a-half spell marked by injury setbacks.

Spanish club Sevilla is believed to be interested in signing the striker as "a potential successor to departing candidate Youssef En-Nesyri," according to Kicker.

A couple of clubs in the Emirati and Qatari top flights have also made inquiries about Azmoun, who is tied to the Leverkusen contract until summer 2027, with the German side waiting for a concrete offer from a club willing to pay €10 million for the Iranian.

Azmoun's future might be far from decided but one thing is for sure: The Bayer partnership is set to end in the coming weeks in any case.

## Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship:

# Iran looking to continue continental dominance

## Sports Desk

Iranian boys will be chasing a record-extending seventh title – third in succession – for the country at the Asian U20 Volleyball Championship, starting next Tuesday in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Head coach Gholamreza Mo'meni-Moqaddam's side could be facing some tricky tests when taking on China, the Chinese Taipei, and Qatar in Pool B of the competition.

The 16-team event will serve as qualification for the 2025 World U21 Championship, with the top four teams of the tournament punching their tickets for the global showpiece next summer.

Emran Kook-Jili, Pouya Aryakhah, Abolfazl Mahdian, Seyyed Matin Hosseini, Morteza Narimani, Matin Seqli, Arian Mahmoudinejad, Taha Behboudnia, Armin Qelichniazi, Shayan Mehrabi, Ali Eshqinour, and Morteza Tabatabaei will be the Iranian players in Surabaya – seven of whom were part of the squad

that reached the final showdown of the world under-19 event in Argentina last year, only to suffer a four-set defeat against France.

On his team selection approach, Mo'meni-Moqaddam: "Our top priority was to pick players with the professional mindset and those who could provide backup to the senior team in the near future. The national team is set for a rejuvenation process and we have to inject fresh blood to the squad within the next two or three years."

Several players were also in the team when Iran fell short against Japan in the Asian under-18 final in 2022 and the head coach says they "are eager to make amends for that defeat."

"Japan, China and South Korea have been our traditional rivals in the continent and we will have to make sure we will deliver our best performance against them in the tournament," added the Iranian coach, who steered the country to world under-21 crown last year.



● SEPIDE ABDOLHAY/volleyball.ir

# Southgate resigns as England manager after Euro 2024 final defeat



● CHRIS BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

**THE GUARDIAN** – Gareth Southgate has announced he has stepped down as England's manager after eight years. The Football Association had hoped he would extend his contract after he led the team to the final of Euro 2024 but Southgate has decided to seek a new challenge.

"As a proud Englishman, it has been the honour of my life to play for England and to manage England," Southgate said. "It has meant everything to me, and I have given it my all. But it's time for change, and for a new chapter. Sunday's final in Berlin against Spain was my final game as England manager."

The 53-year-old is England's most successful manager in terms of consistent major tournament performance. England also reached the European Championship final

in 2021, losing to Italy, and a World Cup semi-final in 2018, when they were beaten by Croatia. In his other World Cup, the team were eliminated by France in the quarter-finals. Newcastle's Eddie Howe, the former Brighton and Chelsea manager Graham Potter and the former Bayern Munich and Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel are near the top of the FA's shortlist to succeed Southgate. England's next fixtures are against the Republic of Ireland and Finland in the Nations League in September.

"The squad we took to Germany is full of exciting young talent and they can win the trophy we all dream of," Southgate said.

Southgate spent much of the Euros under huge pressure after poor England performances in the group stage and in the last 16 against

Slovakia. He had empty beer cups thrown at him and boos directed at him after England drew 0-0 with Slovenia in their final group match. After the Slovenia game Southgate said he understood "the narrative towards me" but that it was "creating an unusual environment to operate in".

Southgate took charge of England, initially on a caretaker basis, in September 2016 after Sam Allardyce's sudden departure. He had indicated he thought his time would be up if England did not win in Germany.

Other candidates in the FA's thinking are likely to include the former Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino, Lee Carsley, the England Under-21 manager, and the former England internationals Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard.

# US not an 'honest mediator' in Gaza crisis: *Iran*

## 'Unilateralism cannot provide solutions for problems'

Iran's acting foreign minister says the United States is not an "honest mediator" in the issue of Palestine and Gaza as Washington is the biggest arm supplier to the Israeli regime.

Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in an interview with Newsweek and in response to a question about the role of the United States in ceasefire negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

"We believe that, in this regard, the United States of America is not an honest mediator regarding the issue of Palestine and Gaza. And what is the reason for this claim? Because, today, the United States of America is the biggest and the most important country that is providing the Zionists with these state-of-the-art fatal weapons in order to kill the innocent and helpless people across Gaza and Palestine, including women, children and youths as well as elderly people," Bagheri Kani said. "If the Americans are honest about the mediation, it is not necessary for them to make a big deal, it would just be enough to stop the delivery of fatal weapons to Israel."

Bagheri Kani said that

definitely the United Nations Security Council, which is majorly in charge of ensuring and safeguarding global peace and security, should make use of all its potentials and capacities to stop Israel from continuing its atrocities and killings of the innocent people of Gaza, particularly women and children.

The top Iranian diplomat is in New York to take part in two debates at the UN Security Council (UNSC), which will discuss multilateralism and Palestine, respectively.

"The engagement and participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the highest level in these two United Nations Security Council meetings indicate the significance that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches to multilateral mechanisms and to the pivotal role of the United Nations when it comes to establishing stability and promoting peace in the world."

### Unilateralism

The Iranian official said that in recent years and on different occasions, it has been proved that unilateralism cannot bring about any solutions for the existing problems in the world. "For instance, some years



Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (R) speaks during an exclusive interview with Newsweek at the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York on July 14, 2024.

● RENAE WHISSEL/NEWSWEEK

ago, in very tense negotiations, Iran as well as other countries reached a deal, which was called the JCPOA, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, back in 2015. But it was this unilateralism that, without any logic, [US] withdrew from this international agreement and instead of following and being committed to a solution. This unilateralism created a kind of deadlock regarding this important

issue," he said. He also cited the Israel's ongoing genocidal war in Gaza as another consequence of unilateralism. "Another example is the fact that it is for more than nine months that the Israeli Zionist regime is committing crimes, genocide and aggression against the people of Gaza. In this regard, the unilateralism, which is led by the United States of America, has not only failed in bringing

a solution to this global issue and problem, but at the same time the US has been sending and delivering state-of-the-art fatal weapons to Israel in order to continue these atrocities, killings and genocide," he said.

"So, we believe that through multilateralism we are able to create a world that is more just, more transparent, more democratic and more stable," the Iranian official said.



The Republican Party formally nominated Donald Trump as its presidential nominee for a third cycle in a row, cementing his status as the GOP standard-bearer nearly a decade after first ascending to the top of the party.

The selection represents a



Former US president Donald Trump raises his fist as he arrives on the first day of the 2024 Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 15, 2024.

● BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP

## US Republicans formally name Trump their presidential nominee

remarkable moment for the former president, who over the last three years has faced denunciation for the Jan. 6 riot, multiple criminal indictments, political setbacks — and just this weekend, an assassination attempt, Politico reported.

Trump is the first convicted felon to become a major-party presidential nominee. His nomination Monday came as no surprise, as an overwhelming majority of convention delegates were already pledged to support Trump after he dominated

the primaries. Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina and former Republican challenger to Trump, released her delegates earlier this month and encouraged them to back Trump in Milwaukee. Members of his party, including some presidential hopefuls, denounced Trump after the Jan. 6 insurrection and his attempts to overturn his 2020 loss to President Joe Biden. He was seen by some as politically toxic after Republicans lost the House and Senate during his

presidency. Trump was also partially blamed in 2022 for Republicans' failure to win back the Senate and smaller-than-expected margin of victory in winning the House. Then came a series of criminal indictments. In New York, he was convicted in May for covering up hush money payments to a porn star. In Washington and Georgia, federal and state prosecutors brought charges related to his effort to subvert the 2020 election. And in Florida, he was charged

for hoarding classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and then obstructing the probe. Trump on Saturday evening survived a shooting that federal law enforcement officials say was a likely assassination attempt. Saturday's shooting at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, killed one rallygoer and wounded two others. A bullet pierced Trump's right ear, and a Secret Service sniper team shot dead 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, who was identified as the gunman.

## Four Pakistanis killed in shooting near Oman mosque

At least four Pakistanis were killed and another 30 wounded in a shooting near a mosque in the Omani capital Muscat, officials said Tuesday, a rare attack in the otherwise stable Persian Gulf sultanate.

Monday's mosque attack, which has yet to be claimed, came as Shia Muslims were marking Ashura to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

"The Royal Oman Police have responded to a shooting incident that occurred in the vicinity of a mosque in the Al-Wadi Al-Kabir area" of the capital, police said in a statement. The force gave an initial toll of four killed and "several" wounded.

"The authorities are continuing to gather evidence and conduct investigations to uncover the circumstances surrounding the incident," police added on X. The area was cordoned off on Tuesday, with journalists unable

to access the mosque, an AFP photographer reported. Oman has a population of over four million, more than 40 percent of whom are expatriate workers, most of them from south Asia, according to government figures.

Such an attack is rare in Oman, which regularly plays mediating roles in regional conflicts. The spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry in a statement on Tuesday condemned the shooting incident.

## China 'ready' to work with new Iranian gov't

China said it appreciates Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian's recently announced favorable stance on the countries' relations, voicing Beijing's readiness to work with the Islamic Republic's incoming administration. Foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian made the remarks at a news conference on Monday, Press TV reported. He was responding to a question concerning an article written by Pezeshkian on Saturday, in which the president-elect had said that

the Islamic Republic "looks forward to more extensive" cooperation with China. Pezeshkian had also noted that China had consistently stood by Iran during challenging times, asserting, "We deeply value this friendship." China is willing to cooperate with the future Iranian officials to promote the steady and long-term development of the countries' Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement, he added. China is Iran's largest trade partner. Both countries are subject to

different levels of illegal sanctions imposed by the United States. The countries signed the landmark 25-year partnership agreement in March 2021 in a bid to strengthen their long-standing economic and political alliance. The deal, which had been announced during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Tehran back in 2016, sets the outlines of Sino-Iranian cooperation in political, cultural, security, defense, regional, and international domains for the period in question.

## Azerbaijan reopens embassy in Iran



A man paints the gate of the new Azerbaijan Embassy in Tehran, on July 15, 2024.

● AFP

Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran has resumed work more than a year after a deadly attack that soured ties between the two neighbors, Iranian state media reported.

The official IRNA news agency on Monday announced the reopening of the embassy in a new location "following the negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan."

It added that the Azerbaijani ambassador and diplomats had also returned to Iran.

The Azeri website NEWS.AZ also on Monday quoted Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry as saying that its embassy in Iran had started work at a new address in Tehran.

"Iran has taken appropriate measures to ensure security in front of our new embassy building in compliance with its obligation on diplomatic protection," the Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said.

The Foreign Ministry said relevant measures are currently being taken to organize consular services at the new building.

In January 2023, a gunman stormed into Baku's Embassy in Tehran, killing a diplomat and wounding two embassy security guards.

Tehran strongly condemned the attack, saying the motives for the violent action were "personal."

In April 2023, Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said it had notified the Iranian ambassador that four employees of the Iranian Embassy were declared personae non gratae.

Iran followed suit by expelling four Azerbaijani diplomats a month later.

The resumption of the embassy's work will contribute to the further development of Azerbaijan-Iran relations based on mutual respect and good neighborliness, and the implementation of the agreements reached between the two countries, Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said.

Millions of Muslims worldwide commemorated Ashura, a remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Shia Muslims in Iran and other countries are taking part in mourning rituals for Imam Hussein who was martyred along with his 72 companions in the Battle of Karbala in southern Iraq in 680 AD after fighting courageously for justice against the much larger army of the Umayyad caliph, Yazid I, Press TV reported. Ashura mourners, who are dressed in black, beat their chests, march in mass processions, listen to elegies, and hold noon prayers, with benefactors distributing votive foods. Every year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from different countries head to the city of Karbala, which hosts Imam



## Shia Muslims unite in grief on Ashura

Hussein's holy shrine, to mark Ashura in ultimate magnificence. Ashura is the culmination of 10-day mourning ceremonies that are observed in the lunar month of Muharram. The Muharram rituals symbolize the never-ending and unwavering stance of truth against falsehood and humanity's struggle against injustice, tyranny and oppression, the cause for which Imam Hussein was martyred. On the eve of Ashura, known as Tasu'a, mourners remember Abbas ibn Ali (PBUH), Imam Hussein's half-brother, who was martyred shortly before Imam Hussein as he tried to bring water to women and children in Imam's camp, who had had no water to drink for days due to a siege by the enemy forces.

### Farshchian's 'The Evening of Ashura' added to Nat'l Cultural Heritage List



**Arts & Culture Desk**  
 Iranian master miniaturist Mahmud Farshchian's renowned painting, 'The Evening of Ashura,' has been added to the country's National

Cultural Heritage List. The decision was announced by the General Director of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism of Khorasan Razavi, Seyed Javad Mousavi. The painting created in 1976,

depicts the tragic events of the day of Ashura in 680 AD, when Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions were martyred in Karbala. The painting is a powerful expression of grief and a significant work of art in the Persian miniature style. Farshchian, a celebrated artist, donated the painting to the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum in Mashhad, Iran, in 1990. The museum currently holds 13 of his paintings, including other works related to the tragedy of Ashura, such as 'Ali-Asghar (PBUH)' and 'The Standard-Bearer of Truth.'

### Iran battles Aedes mosquitoes, diseases they carry

**Social Desk**  
 The spread of the Aedes mosquito in Iran has become a growing concern for health authorities, with 40 cities now affected and active mosquito control efforts underway in 87 locations across the country. The Aedes mosquito is a vector for several diseases, including dengue fever, yellow fever, chikungunya, and Zika, none of which have a vaccine or definitive cure, IRNA wrote. According to Shahnam Arshi, head of the Center for

Infectious Disease Management, environmental improvement, public education, and awareness are the most important ways to prevent Aedes-borne illnesses. Arshi noted that the Aedes mosquito, specifically the Aedes aegypti species, has the potential to cause explosive epidemics, as seen recently in Bangladesh where 2,600 patients were hospitalized in a single day. Iran has a long history of battling malaria, and climate change has once again made it a concern in

several provinces. Arshi highlighted the differences between the Aedes and Anopheles mosquitoes, emphasizing that the former bites during the day, typically outdoors, in the early morning, or at dusk. He advised people in affected areas to stay indoors during these times and wear long-sleeved clothing if they must go out. The Aedes mosquito has already infected 149 people in Iran since April 26, with 130 of those cases being imported from the

United Arab Emirates. The mosquito is particularly attracted to dark environments, such as discarded car tires in waste dumps, and its eggs can survive for up to a year and a half. Arshi emphasized the importance of environmental improvement and individual protection measures, as the number of health workers and resources for spraying are limited. The Aedes mosquito has already reached southern Iranian islands, including Kish, Bandar Lengeh, Hormuz, and Qeshm, and there are concerns that an outbreak could lead to the closure of these areas and restricted travel.

## Millions in tears for Imam Hussein

