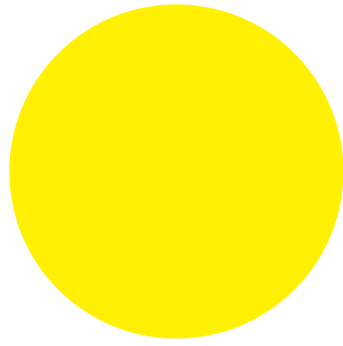


Iran 'closely monitoring' Israeli threats: **Air Defense** cmdr.



## **Pezeshkian:** Iran's policy is peace, interaction with world

### Iranian Cadet Judokas Bag Gold in Asian Championships after 10 Years



Paris Paralympics: **Teenage Rahimi wins taekwondo silver, gets Iran off the mark on Day 1**

Iran's representatives to the Asian Cadet Judo Championships have acquitted themselves honorably by winning a gold medal for the country after nearly a decade. The tournament began in Mungyeong, South Korea, on

Thursday and continued for another day until Friday in which Iran's Mohammad Mehdi Mazloomi (C) outshined all his rivals and received the gold medal of the +90kg weight category. Iran had four other represen-

tatives in the competitions, two of whom bagged bronze medals and two others finished fifth. The last time Iran had managed to snatch a gold medal in Asian Cadet Judo Championships was in 2015.

#### **Israel-Europe conflicts:** Exploring roots of their diverging interests

By **Mohammad Mahdi Mohammadi**  
International security researcher

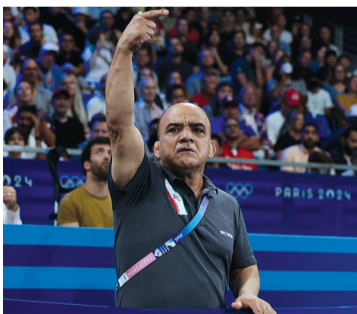
**EXCLUSIVE OPINION**

As the conflict in the Middle East lingers on and the war between Israel and Palestine persists, the tensions between Israel and Europe have become a significant issue that warrants examination. This raises the question: Why do these two sides have conflicting interests? The conflict between Israel and Europe in international relations stems from complex and intertwined issues, each contributing to broader tensions. These points of contention highlight the challenges in aligning the differing views and interests of the two sides.

#### **Israel-Palestine conflict**

The primary point of contention is the Israel-Palestine conflict. Historically, Europe has supported a two-state solution and has repeatedly criticized Israeli policies that appear to obstruct the peace process. European countries have consistently condemned Israel's expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank, viewing them as illegal under international law and a significant obstacle to peace. The European Union (EU) has sometimes taken measures to address this issue. In 2016, the EU issued a statement emphasizing that "all Israeli settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territory, including East al-Quds, are illegal under international law and constitute a serious threat to the two-state solution."

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**SPECIAL ISSUE EXCLUSIVE**

#### **'Untimely injury' 'lapse of concentration' cost Iranian wrestlers Olympic gold, freestyle coach Kaveh says**

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#### **Ink of calligraphy, rhythm of poetry bring Iran and India closer**

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#### **Taliban-ruled Afghanistan still in tatters on 3rd anniv. of US pullout**

By **Mehdi Ebrahim**  
Staff writer

**OPINION**

The withdrawal of US troops from crisis-ridden Afghanistan on August 30, 2021 after more than two decades of devastating American occupation and the commencement of the Taliban rule brought an abundance of hope, not to say chimera, to the Afghan men, women and children. However, as the clock ticked by, things started to take a different tack.

Almost three years ago, the news hit the headlines so shockingly that the Afghans came to believe they had been thoroughly extricated from the manacles of modern colonialism whose tentacles stretched all the way from the Oval Office to the heart of Kabul. Upon withdrawal, ordered by then US President Joe Biden, the American occupation forces left a legacy of destruction, destitute, famine, starvation and misery, deteriorating the already-precarious humanitarian situation across the war-ravaged country.

Nearly 50,000 Afghan men, women and children lost their lives in the 20-year war, in addition to tens of thousands of casualties among civilians, the Afghan military and national police, insurgents and others, according to the Costs of War Project at Brown University.

The abrupt pullout was accompanied by the Taliban military offensive overrunning the Afghan provinces one after the other and the eventual seizure of the capital, which caused the central government to collapse and President Ashraf Ghani to flee the country.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Minister appoints national oil company CEO**

Iran's new Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad appointed Hamid Bovard as CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), Iran's Oil Ministry news agency Shana reported on Thursday. "By order of the oil minister, Hamid Bovard has been appointed as deputy oil minister and CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company," Shana said. The minister also appointed members of the company's administrative board. Paknejad was approved as Iran's new oil minister on August 21, part of President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet.

Iran is a major producer within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Iran currently pumps an average of 3.6 million bpd of oil, according to latest government figures and international shipping data, despite sanctions imposed by the US that restrict oil exports from the country.

**Building, construction exhibition underway in Tehran**

The four-day 24th International Exhibition of Building and Construction Industries will wrap up in Tehran on Sunday.

The exhibition provides great chances for businesses, manufacturers, suppliers, commercial media, and other businesses in related sectors to put their products, services, technologies, and business ideas to show, IRNA reported.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by senior officials including Head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives Bahman Abdollahi. A sum of 800 domestic companies and about 200 foreign firms are displaying their latest products, services, and capabilities in this event.

Identifying new groups of customers in domestic and international markets, increasing profitability and growth of construction industries and artisans, supporting sales activities of construction materials and equipment, introducing modern construction industry methods and equipment are among the goals of holding the expo.

# Iran's dryland crop yield at 8m tons: *Official*



An official from the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture said crop yield from drylands across the country has reached some 8 million metric tons (mt) this year.

Faramak Aziz Karimi, who leads the ministry's office for grains and staple crops, said that the increase in dryland crop yield in Iran has been a

result of better planning and increased precipitation, reported Press TV.

Aziz Karimi noted that forage crop produced in dryland farms in Iran had reached an all-time high of 0.24 million mt, a figure he described as a major success for the country's agriculture sector. He said Iranian dryland farm-

ers had produced some 6 million mt of wheat, 1.2 million mt of barley, 0.34 million mt of legumes and more than 0.1 million mt of oil seeds and medicinal herbs this year.

Iran relies on dryland farming for a significant part of its wheat production. Latest government figures show total wheat purchases

from domestic farmers in Iran had reached over 11.5 million mt in the harvesting season that is nearing its end.

The country has seen a significant increase in its agriculture output and exports in recent years amid efforts by the government to diversify the economy away from oil revenues. Agriculture output in Iran rose

by nearly 20% in the calendar year to March to reach more than 130 million mt.

The Iranian customs office said earlier this week that the country had exported some \$1.453 billion worth of agricultural products in the five months to August 21, up by 33% from the same period last year.

## Iran enjoys enormous capacities for economic prosperity

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday highlighted Iran's capacities, citing the country's natural, abundant, and valuable resources, its strategic geographic location at the crossroads of the world's major trading routes, along with its extensive coastlines. Experts believe Iran's capacities are more than enough to generate economic prosperity. They cite the country's manpower as well as its natural and geographical features which enable it to realize a boom in production, Press TV wrote on Friday.

Iran is geographically located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe and Africa. It is flanked by the North-South Corridor on the one side and the East-West Corridor on the other where its nationwide railway network along with suitable road transport infrastructure and access to international open waters makes it a prime choice of countries for secure transporta-

tion and transit of goods.

By ramping up the cargo handling and completing the transit rail map through linking Chabahar on the Sea of Oman to Sarakhs on the border with Turkmenistan and Khorramshahr in southwest Iran to Basra in Iraq, Iran is forecast to generate \$26 billion in annual transit revenues.

This income, which is more than half of Iran's annual oil revenues, can trigger a boom in production and create jobs for more than 1.5 million people, beside ushering in a wave of construction and development in the populated areas where the railway passes.

Iran, a vast country and the most stable one in West Asia, is geographically located in the neighborhood of 15 nations whose population totals more than 600 million people. By the end of 2017, Iran's neighbors traded more than \$2 trillion a year, of which Iran's share was \$36 billion, or about 1.7% of the total.



Currently, Iran's annual oil and non-oil trade totals about \$100 billion. Experts say if the country increases its share of regional trade by only 5% through activating regional economic diplomacy and forging bilateral monetary agreements and indirect banking, it will be able to create trade in excess of \$100 billion with its neighbors.

This, they say, will set the basis for the creation of 4 million jobs in the country in the most pessimistic outlook. Moreover, the emergence of a market of this size will lead to a boom in domestic production. Iran also straddles the world's main orogenic belts, where some 104 billion tonnes of potential reserves of minerals, or 7% of the world's total, are locked in.

The country is home to some 68 types of minerals, which include 6% of the world's known copper reserves, 3.5% of lead and zinc, 10.5% of coal and 2% of iron ore deposits.

Their total worth is estimated at \$700 billion, which can generate added value in excess of \$4 trillion with investment in infrastructure development, processing and exports.

The discovery of oil and reliance on oil revenues consigned the extractives sector to oblivion even though it could generate several times more income than the oil sector with even less investment. The same goes for agriculture, which is one of the most important and strategic sectors in economic development, to which the

food security of a society is tied. There are about 37 million hectares of suitable agricultural land in Iran, of which 18.5 million hectares are currently cultivated. What the country needs is to promote scientific management and cultivation of agricultural lands in order to boost production and employment, strength food security and provide for abundant food and nutrition supplies.

One of the main inputs for production is energy. Many industrial powerhouses such as South Korea, Japan and European countries depend on foreign energy resources for production.

Iran is where more than 48% of the world's oil and gas is located. The country also possesses the world's largest oil and gas reserves combined. With its natural resources, mines, fertile lands, capable, educated, expert and committed human resources taken together, Iran is best placed for a leap in numerous development fields.

For this to realize, Iran has to put jihadist, tireless and scholarly management practices into the best use and bring together the indigenous capacities of various areas in order to turn the country's economy into a thriving and impregnable fortress.

## Israel-Europe conflicts ...

In separate statements in November 2023, Germany and France con-

**Page 1 >** demned Israel's continued settlement expansion in the West Bank, stressing that these actions seriously undermine efforts to resolve the conflict and achieve a two-state solution. European countries are often concerned about the scale and impact of Israel's military operations in besieged Gaza Strip and the West Bank. European criticism typically focuses on civilian casualties and humanitarian issues, calling for proportionality and caution. During the Gaza war in 2021, the EU formally urged Israel to exercise greater caution in its military offensives in Gaza and to respect international law to prevent civilian casualties. European countries generally support Palestinian independence and push for international

recognition of Palestine, which Israel opposes. This difference affects diplomatic relations and the EU's policies towards the Middle East.

### Human rights and international law

European countries repeatedly emphasize the importance of human rights and international law and criticize actions they believe violate these principles. European governments and organizations often express concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank, accusing Israel of disproportionate responses that exacerbate civilian suffering. Following the October 7, 2023 retaliatory attack by Palestinians, France criticized the scale and intensity of Israel's military response in Gaza, expressing concern over civilian casualties. After Israeli airstrikes in

Gaza led to widespread civilian deaths, French officials criticized Israel's conduct and called for adherence to international humanitarian law, urging measures to reduce civilian casualties. Several other European countries, including Ireland and Belgium, also expressed concern over the scale of Israel's aggression and civilian casualties in Gaza. They called on Israel to observe proportionality in its military responses and respect international humanitarian law. In November 2023, Sweden and Norway also voiced their concerns about the humanitarian conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, urging Israel to respect human rights and international humanitarian law. These countries also called for an immediate end to the blockade of Gaza and the provision of access to humanitarian aid. Europe typically supports

international institutions and resolutions that criticize Israeli policies. This includes backing the United Nations and various human rights organizations that frequently issue reports and resolutions condemning specific Israeli actions.

### Diplomatic relations and EU policies

Despite political differences, Israel and Europe have significant economic relations, including trade agreements and scientific cooperation. However, tensions can affect these relations, and there are sometimes discussions about limiting collaboration in response to specific policies or actions. In 2015, the EU decided that products produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank must be labeled so that European consumers can identify them. This move was interpreted as a form of soft sanctions against Israel's settlement policies. After the October 7, some European

countries sought to increase diplomatic pressure on Israel, with some even proposing economic sanctions. Back then, members of the European Parliament called on the EU to exert greater diplomatic pressure on Israel to ensure it adheres to international law. Some countries, like Spain, suggested that sanctions should be imposed on Israel if it continues the violation of human rights.

The conflicts between Israel and Europe are multifaceted, and the issues mentioned above illustrate the broad disagreements that have intensified between Israel and European countries, especially following the October 7, 2023 attack. These conflicts are evident not only at the political and diplomatic levels but also in public opinion and civil society. These tensions are unlikely to subside as long as Israel continues its actions, which are perceived as contrary to humanitarian principles.

# Stunning architecture of Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku

## Iranica Desk

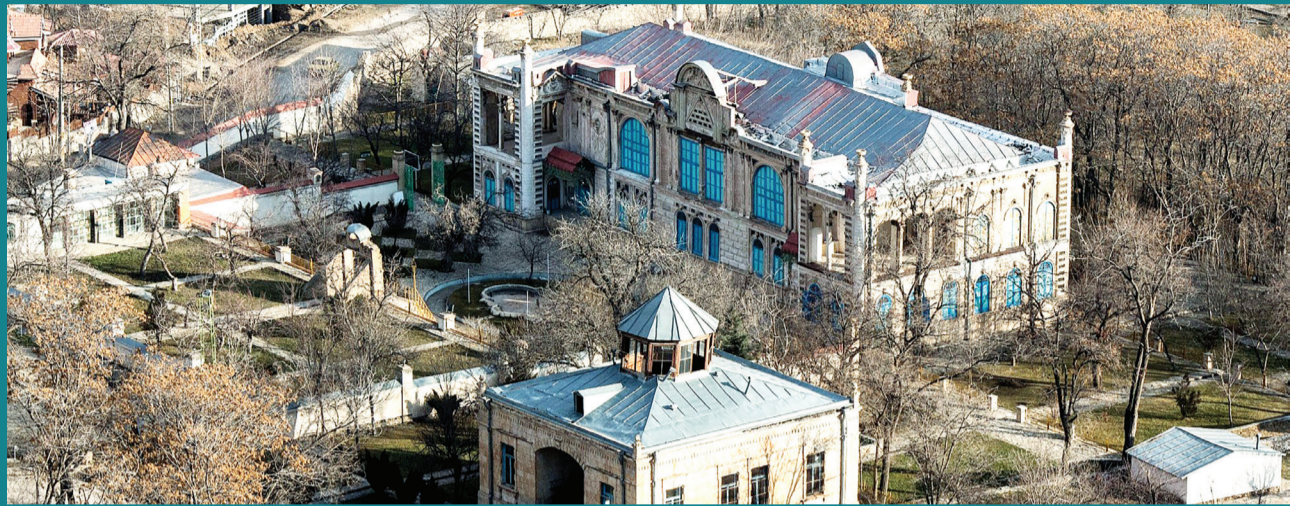
*The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku is a historical site and tourist attraction in West Azarbaijan Province, dating back to the Qajar era. This palace museum, which includes the palace building and an 11-hectare garden, houses the personal belongings of the commander of Maku. It is officially registered as a national heritage site in Iran on July 1, 1996. Baghcheh Juq is the name of a village located seven kilometers west of the city of Maku.*

*Construction of the Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum began during the Qajar period under the rule of Timur Pasha Khan and was completed after 30 years under Iqbal al-Saltaneh's rule.*

*This palace, known as one of the key attractions of Maku, served as the seat of governance for its commander. Notably, the name baghcheh translates to 'garden' in Persian, signifying its lush historical context.*

*The family of the commander of Maku resided at this location until 1974, after which the government purchased the complex. Subsequently, restorations and renovations were carried out in the palace and its surroundings, and since 1979, it has been open to the public. Since 1987, the palace museum has been managed by the provincial Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.*

*The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum is considered one of the most valuable and magnificent historical sites remaining in West Azarbaijan Province.*



## Architecture

The Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum features a large 2,500-square-meter building set within an expansive 11-hectare garden. The construction of this building represents a collaborative effort between Iranian architects and Russian design engineers, heavily influenced by Russian architectural styles due to the close relations the commander of Maku maintained with the Russians.

Upon entering the palace, visitors are greeted by a dusty carriage that belonged to the commander, along with his speaking platform. This platform includes a plastered terrace adorned with colorful bricks and a staircase.

The palace is magnificently designed with a symmetrical layout. Its architecture is a unique fusion of Iranian and foreign styles. The Iranian section is elegantly decorated with floral motifs and figures from the Qajar era, while the foreign section features wallpaper reminiscent of 19th-century Russian homes and exquisite European designs. The building's exterior is adorned with plaster statues that embellish the entrances and the plaster railings along the roofedge.

Surrounding the palace, part of the garden is enclosed by cast-iron fences and is home to a variety of trees, including mulberry, fig, walnut, cherry, almond, apple, and apricot.

In the western part of the palace, an oval-shaped pond can be found, and remnants of stone paving are visible in some areas. Additionally, a large pool in the garden serves as the source of a water channel that flows through various sections, creating a picturesque landscape.

On the first floor of the palace museum, there is a dining hall known as the Green Room. An interesting feature of this hall is its ceiling, which showcases paintings depicting the Persian table and Iranian men on one side, while the other side beautifully illustrates European dishes and foreign men and women.

Adjacent to the dining hall is a section that served as a waiting area and venue for official meetings. Undoubtedly, one of the most stunning interior spaces of this palace is the *howzkhaneh*, or Hall of Mirrors, which has hosted various events and celebrations. This area features exquisite mirror work on the walls and a water fountain in the center, creating a cap-

titivating atmosphere with the soothing sound of flowing water.

Access to other parts of the palace, such as the bedrooms, office, and royal sitting rooms, can be gained through staircases located on either side of the building. These staircases are adorned with beautiful stone statues. Throughout the second floor, visitors can find sofas, tables, and cabinets crafted by various foreign artists. A notable aspect of this building is the presence of unique double-glazed windows, whose colored glass possesses insect-repelling properties and converts sunlight into ultraviolet light, helping to keep insects away. These glasses were handcrafted by Iranian artisans during the Qajar era.

The palace features elegantly designed wall fireplaces, some adorned with floral motifs, while others showcase intricate stone carvings and plasterwork. These fireplaces were utilized for ventilation in the summer and as heaters in the winter. If you pay attention to the walls on the second floor of the palace museum, you will notice dried natural flowers placed within the walls in glass compartments. The age of these flowers is as old as the palace itself.

Each room in the building is named according to its color. For instance, the White Room served as the public hall, while the Green Room is the dining area. The bedrooms have retained some decorations from that era, featuring Polish furniture, Austrian carved cabinets, French steel furniture, and bronze and crystal chandeliers. Even the vanity table of Anali, the commander's wife, remains in this location.

The Baghcheh Juq Palace currently functions as a museum. The majority of the artifacts on display include the personal belongings of the commander of Maku, which were sent to him by various foreign courts.

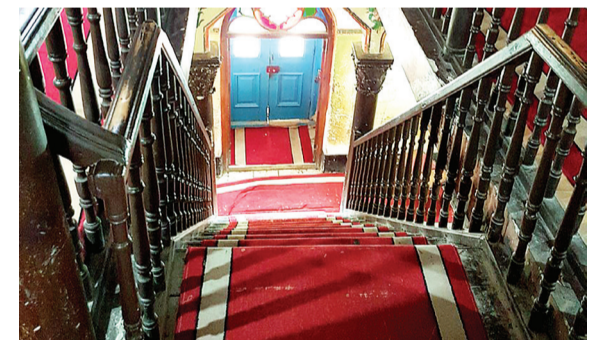
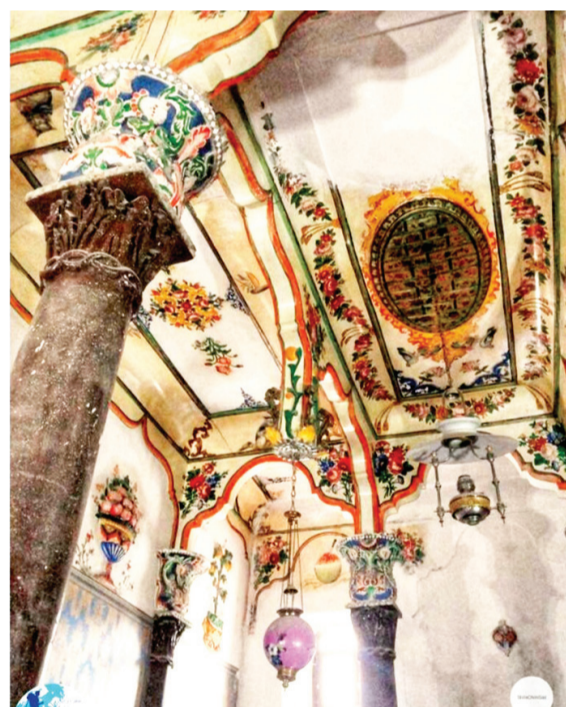
These items can be found on both the first and second floors of the building. The most significant artifacts in this museum include luxurious sofas and chairs made from reeds and rattan, adorned with bronze decorations and velvet upholstery, crafted by countries such as Poland, France, Austria, and Russia.

## Restoration

The restoration and renovation of the Baghcheh Juq Palace Museum in Maku took four years, during which the doors were closed to tourists. All costs for this restoration were covered by the Maku Free Zone Organization.

The restoration efforts encompassed the buildings, facilities, and ceiling, with the most significant work focused on the ceiling. In the facilities section, the construction of a boiler room was prioritized. Additionally, in the decoration section, which is

the most crucial part of the complex, various paintings at the entrance, the exterior, and the plasterwork on the eastern and southern sides were restored. Simultaneously, the adjacent stone structure, known as the Kolah Farangi Building, was also renovated.

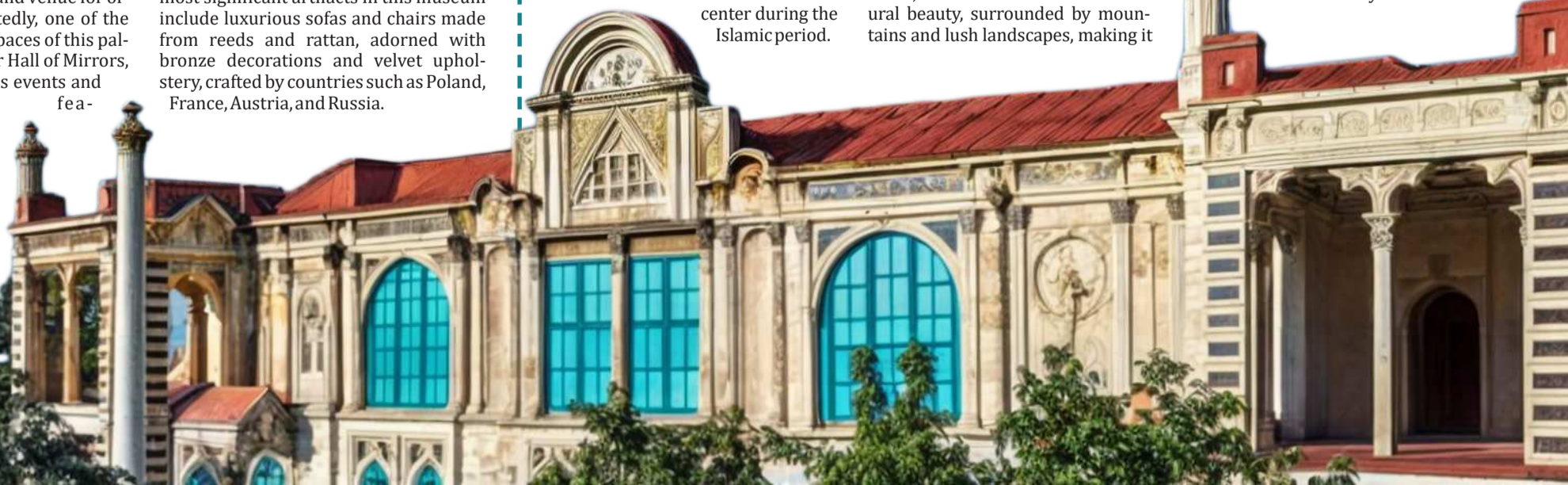


## Maku

Maku is a city located near the border with Turkey. It has a rich history that dates back to ancient times, serving as a significant trade route and cultural exchange point due to its strategic location. Historically, Maku was part of various empires, including the Achaemenid and Sassanid empires, and later became a vital center during the Islamic period.

The city is known for its historical sites, including ancient castles, churches, and mosques, reflecting its diverse cultural heritage. One of the notable landmarks is the Maku Castle which offers insights into the region's architectural history. In addition to its historical significance, Maku is renowned for its natural beauty, surrounded by mountains and lush landscapes, making it

a popular destination for tourists. The city also plays a role in contemporary trade and commerce, benefiting from its proximity to the border and the establishment of free trade zones. Overall, Maku is a city that beautifully blends history, culture, and natural beauty.



# 'Untimely injury' 'lapse of concentration' cost Iranian wrestlers Olympic gold, freestyle coach Kaveh says

By Sadeq Dehqan  
& By Amirhadi Arsalanpour  
Staff writers

Since Gholamreza Takhti and Nasser Givvehchi won a couple of freestyle silvers and Mahmoud Mollaqassemi, Abdollah Mojtavavi, and Tofiq Jahanbakht won triple bronzes in Helsinki 1952, wrestling has been the most prolific sporting event for Iran in the history of the Olympics.

Of the 88 medals won by the Iranian athletes at different editions of the modern Games, wrestlers take credit for 55, with 13 of the 27 golds clinched on the two-color circle mat.

Takhti and fellow-wrestling legends Abdollah Movahed and Emam-Ali Habibi had the Olympic golds under their belts in the 50s and 60s, before Rasoul Khadem, Alireza Dabir, Omid Norouzi, Hamid Sourian, Qassem Rezaei, Komeil Qassemi, Hassan Yazdani, and Mohammadreza Geraei all left the Games with the ultimate prize over the past three decades.

The Iranian sport apparatus had a superb display by the Greco-Roman and freestyle participants to thank for a most productive Olympic campaign in London 2012, while the wrestling competitions delivered four out of the seven medals for the country in Tokyo three years ago.

Following a quiet first week at the recently-finished Paris Games, all Iranians' eyes were on the wrestling competitions at the French capital's Grand Palais Éphémère, where the Greco-Roman team kicked off the country's realistic quest for Olympic glory.

Led by head coach Hassan Rangraz, the six-man squad

rose up to the occasion as Saeid Esmaeili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) notched up sensational gold medals, while Alireza Mohmadi (87kg) won a precious silver in only his second major senior event.

Amin Mirzazadeh, meanwhile, had to settle for the super-heavyweight bronze following a last-eight defeat against Cuban great Mijaín López, who went on to grab a record fifth Olympic gold.

The story, however, was a bit different in the freestyle contests, as the final outcome for the Iranian team was met with mixed receptions among wrestling fans and pundits in the country.

While four medals across five weight classes is by no means deemed as a failure, a first freestyle gold since Yazdani's triumph in Rio 2016 proved to be elusive.

Yazdani's quest for a coveted second Olympic gold, one that would have seen him become the most-decorated Iranian in the history of the Games, ended in vain following a 7-1 loss to Bulgaria's Magomed Ramazanov in the 86kg final – during which the wrestling sensation struggled with a recurring shoulder injury from the get-go, calling for treatment on several occasions throughout the six minutes of action.

Amirhossein Zare', meanwhile, widely regarded as the favorite for the 125kg gold in the buildup to the event, came short against familiar Georgian foe Geno Petriashvili in a thrilling final.

Elsewhere, Rahman Amouzad, who finished fifth in last year's World Championships, seemed to be back to his ruthless form in Paris as he crushed two reigning world champions in American Zain Retherford and Hungari-

an Ismail Musukaev, as well as European gold medalist Islam Dudaev of Albania to reach the 65kg final, though he was the third Iranian to suffer a final loss – stunned 10-3 by low-profile Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka.

Having convinced the Iranian coaching staff to pick him over two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour for the 97kg slot, young prodigy Amir-Ali Azarpira was the surprise Iranian medalist in Paris, bouncing back from a first-round loss to eventual gold medalist Akhmed Tazhudinov to beat American great Kyle Snyder for the 97kg bronze.

Younes Emami was the sole Iranian freestyle wrestler to leave the Games empty-handed following a technical-fall defeat against American Kyle Dake in the 74kg quarterfinals.

The Iranian freestyle head coach Mohsen Kaveh stepped down from his role last week, only eight months after being appointed to the job, and Dabir, the head of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, was quick to replace him by Pejman Dorostkar, from whom Kaveh had taken over last December.

Clearly frustrated by somewhat unfair criticism he received upon returning from the Olympics, Kaveh believes the Iranian freestyle squad had a decent campaign in Paris, though there would have been more jubilation in the medal haul, had it not been for an untimely injury blow and uncharacteristic errors in the final showdowns.

The following is what Kaveh had to say in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily two days before confirming the end of his short spell in charge of the national team.

”

While four medals across five weight classes is by no means deemed as a failure, a first freestyle gold since Yazdani's triumph in Rio 2016 proved to be elusive.



Iranian wrestler Amirhossein Zare' (red) and Georgian Geno Petriashvili react after the freestyle 125kg final at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 10, 2024.  
● IAWF



Iran's Amir-Ali Azarpira (red) is seen after the victory over American Kyle Snyder in the 97kg bronze-medal contest at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 11, 2024.  
● IAWF

**IRAN DAILY: What do you make of each Iranian wrestler's display at the Paris Olympics?**

**Kaveh:** The Olympic Games have been full of shock results over the years. That is why we worked hard in the training sessions to make sure the wrestlers would have the right mindset to deal with any unexpected incident coming their way in Paris.

I think the freestyle team had a relatively decent campaign, though I'll have to admit the final outcome could have been much better. Some pundits believe all five members of the squad were good enough to be among the gold hopefuls in their weight classes.

I'm sure Hassan Yazdani would have easily won the 86kg gold if it wasn't for his dislocated shoulder in the final. He truly showed great courage and determination to continue with one arm against the Bulgarian opponent and set an example for the younger generation of the Iranian wrestlers.

I also expected Amirhossein Zare' to win the 125kg gold but he simply had the worst day of his entire career in the final, not to mention the referees favored his opponent. Before the decisive four-point-er in the first period, Petriashvili should have been cautioned and given away a point for repeatedly hitting Amirhossein in the face. He then did everything to interrupt the bout when he ran out of steam in the second period. The whole course of the final would have changed if the refs had acted by the rules and punished the Georgian.

Rahman Amouzad and Amir-Ali Azarpira also produced some brilliant performances. Rahman was superb in the 65kg contests, though his Japanese opponent truly deserved the final victory. I knew Kiyooka's style would make him the toughest opponent in the 65kg class and when he took Rahman down, he managed to score eight points through successive leg laces in the space of 20 to 25 seconds. Rahman did a great job to claim emphatic victories over two world champions and a European gold medalist on his way to the final showpiece.

Azarpira, meanwhile, established himself as top contender in the 97kg class. He deserved to beat Tazhudinov in his first bout but couldn't control the final 40 seconds, though he was still superb to bounce back and overcome American Kyle Snyder in the bronze-medal contest.

In the case of Younes Emami, I think he had a tough job on his hand in the 74kg class, which featured seven to eight world-class wrestlers.

Let's not forget Younes beat Italian [two-time world champion] Frank Chamizo, who had been undefeated against the Iranians, in the first round and the scoreline could have been different against Kyle Dake if had a different approach in the first 60 seconds of the bout. Younes should realize that much more work needs to be done if he is to stand on the top podium in

the future events.

**Speaking of Emami, Alireza Dabir, the head of the federation, recently said he failed to live up to the high expectations in Paris and perhaps Iran should be looking for another 74kg wrestler in the upcoming tour-**

**naments. Do you agree with that?**

I still believe Younes is the best 74kg wrestler in the country, though young talents have been making significant progress. Ali Rezaei, for instance, is a member of the Iranian under-20 squad and had a great campaign in June's Ranking Series event in Budapest and was only beaten by Uzbekistan's Razambek Zhamalov, who went on to win the Olympic gold. Fariborz Babaei and Erfan Elahi are also among the rising stars of the class, though they will have to work hard to find the chance in the major international tournaments. Competitive sports are all about a number of contenders battling for one single position.





**Japanese lightweight wrestlers have proved to be experts in carrying out the leg-lace technique and that was what eventually cost Amouzad in the final. Didn't you warn him against Kiyooka's skills prior to the matchup?**

The leg lace was his main strength throughout the tournament. He had his unique style in performing the technique as he locked his head between the opponent's legs to roll him. The coaching staff had told Rahman all about the Japanese but he made the most of Rahman's lapse of concentration to secure the victory.

**Were you aware of Hassan Yazdani's injury threat before the Olympics? Did you ever think of sending Kamran Qasempour to Paris instead of him?**

We had a defined selection pro-

gram in place for the Olympics and Hassan was our priority in the 86kg class according to that process. He had secured the Olympic berth by winning the silver in last year's World Championships. His rival, whoever that was, should have won the domestic and Asian title to be given a chance in a head-to-head against Yazdani. Qasempour was not considered for the 86kg class in the first place as he was keen on taking a shot at the 97kg slot and Hadi Vafaei was ruled out of contention after he was beaten by a Kazakhstani opponent and failed to win the gold in April's Asian Championships. We sent Hassan to Budapest to see if he had fully recovered from the surgery on his shoulder. He looked fit and ready during the training sessions and when he eased to the gold medal in Hungary, we knew he would be our 86kg wrestler in the Olympics.

However, his shoulder was dislocated in the worst time imaginable. There was nothing we could possibly do about it as injuries are part of the sports.

**Did he show any signs of a recurring injury before the final?**

Not at all. Some were critical of us for not taping his shoulder during the competitions, but Dr. Kayhani, Hassan's surgeon and the head of the medical team in Paris, saw nothing unusual about his fitness when he was in action on the first day. Hassan did not even complain about any kind of pain in his shoulder before the final.

**Don't you think the Bulgarian was to be blamed for Yazdani's injury?**

I don't think that was the case. From what I saw from the mat-side whatever the Bul-

garian did was not intentional. He was a true gentleman. He was an unknown wrestler and did not imagine winning an Olympic medal but restrained in celebrating his final victory when he saw Hassan's situation.

**Some experts believe wrestlers can hardly recover from a shoulder injury and some of them are forced to call time on their careers. How do you think the recent setback may impact Yazdani's future?**

That is true but there have been exceptions over the years. Turkey's Taha Akgül and Uzbekistani Zhamalov kept on wrestling despite facing the same problem.

Tazhudinov is also dealing with a shoulder injury and will have to undergo a surgery. I think the important thing about the injury is to have a full recovery process after the surgery. It was Yazdani's own decision to take part in the Games as he was eager to win a second Olympic gold, though the silver was quite a feat itself.

**So, you mean Yazdani's to return to action was premature? Yes, as far as a proper rehabilitation was concerned.**

**Don't you think it would be better if his next surgery is carried out overseas.**

All I know is that the Wrestling Federation, Sports Ministry, and the National Olympic Committee will have to provide him with best facilities to get the required treatment, whether in the country or overseas.

**Does he have a chance to go to the next Olympics? Of course, why not.**

**Let's talk about Zare'. Did you ever predict him losing out the 125kg final in that fashion?**

The Georgian didn't see in his wildest dreams to come out on top against Zare'. He had blown it in the last two seconds of the final in the Tokyo Games three years ago. As far as wrestling skills go, he was no match for Zare'. Let's put it this way, an Olympic title is a big deal. Zare' missed out on a huge opportunity. He might not realize it now, and it will take some time before it sinks in.

**And then there was the Georgian's provocative celebration and the crowning gesture.**

His behavior was really annoying and didn't sit well with me. Anyone can celebrate their own win, but he was rubbing it in Zare's face, which I didn't think was cool. He was gloating and it didn't go down well.

**Zare' came out and said that the Georgian wrestler's move has fired him up to defeat him in the future encounters. What's your take on it?**

Zare' is a top-notch wrestler, and, no matter how you sliced it, he was expected to come out victorious on that day. If these two were to go head-to-head 10 more times, Zare' would likely beat him with

ease, even if not on his best day.

**As the head coach of the team, how many medals did you predict for the squad before heading to the Games?**

I was confident Hassan and Amirhossein would win the gold. I knew the other three would have their work cut out for them, given the number of top wrestlers in their weight classes, though Rahman and Amir-Ali eventually finished on the podium.

**How do you rate your team's performance in Paris?**

That is not for me to say. The United World Wrestling declared Iran as the champion with 83 points, though it went unnoticed. The Iranian team could only win a silver and bronze in Tokyo but the tally was three silvers and a bronze this time around. If we compare the Olympic results with last year's World Championships in Belgrade, we'll see that our guys have stepped up their game and made significant progress. Last year, we had Milad Valizadeh in the 57kg weight class, who finished eighth, and as a result, we missed out on an Olympic spot in that weight class. However, in the 65kg division, Rahman turned it around this year, building on his fifth-place finish last year to take home the silver medal at the Olympics, beating two world champions along the way.

Younes Emami was beaten by Russian Zaurbek Sidakov and Serbia's Khetag Tsalolov and this year he fell to American Dake, who's been a top contender for years. Either way, Younes came up empty-handed on both occasions. Meanwhile, Hassan Yazdani bounced back from a tough situation at the Olympics to repeat his silver medal from last year in the 86kg. Mojtaba Goleij was eliminated in the 97kg division at the world event, but Azarpira, who was knocked out in the 92kg class last year, turned it around this year, taking bronze in the 97kg class. It's no easy feat to take down Kyle Snyder, but Azarpira pulled it off. All in all, no matter how you slice it, our team's results were better than last year, but we still need to step up our game because we've got some talented young wrestlers in the pipeline.

The good thing about our team was that we had a young squad. Rahman, Amirhossein, and Amir-Ali were just 22 or 23 and already making waves in the Games. Even Hassan Yazdani, despite his current form, still has a lot to offer in the future.

**In Paris, the Iranian wrestling and taekwondo teams, both led by former champions as the head of the federation, stood out from the pack and delivered better results than the other teams. How much do you think their success can be attributed to having seasoned sports leaders at the helm?**

It has defiantly been a game-changer to have former champions and athletes in charge of the federations. Hadi Saei, the chief of the taekwondo federation, has done a great job and the results speak for themselves. The same goes for the wrestling federation. It has been on top of its game, with solid planning and preparation across the board, from youth to senior levels, in both freestyle and Greco-Roman. Hopefully, we can all pull together to help these young talents bring home even more medals in the future.



Iranian Younes Emami (L) is seen in action against Italy's Frank Chamizo in the freestyle 74kg first round at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 9, 2024. IAWF

Iran's Rahman Amouzad (blue) goes for a takedown against Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka in the freestyle 65kg final at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 11, 2024. IAWF

Iranian Hassan Yazdani (blue) and Bulgaria's Magomed Ramazanov lock horns in the freestyle 86kg final at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 9, 2024. IAWF

# Paris Paralympics: Teenage Rahimi wins taekwondo silver, gets Iran off the mark on Day 1

## Sports Desk

Unlike the Paris Olympics, Iranian fans did not have to wait too long for a first medal at the Paralympic Games in the French capital.

Representing the country in the taekwondo competitions, teenage sensation Zahra Rahimi enjoyed an emphatic run to the first day of action in Paris, only to fall short against Mongolian Surenjav Ulambayar.

Rahimi, 15, began her campaign in Grand Palais with a 13-2 vic-

tory over China's Shao Qian and then defeated Brazilian Maria Machado Stumpf 6-4 to reach the last four.

A 6-0 triumph over Georgian Ana Japaridze sent the Iranian to the final showdown, where she was beaten 5-2 and settled for the silver.

"I'm so thrilled to have won a first medal for the country in Paris, though I would have been much happier if it was a gold," Rahimi said after the final.

"I had to face some tough opponents today. The Mongolian was surely more experienced and

made the most of it to win the bout. I had a knee injury before the final and was not in my best form," added the Iranian girl.

"I'm young and will definitely set sights on the gold medal in the next Paralympics," said Rahimi, who will still be a teenager for the next edition of the Games in Los Angeles in four-years' time. Maryam Abdollahpour was the other Iranian girl in action in the taekwondo contests but was unlucky to miss out on the -47kg podium after a defeat in the third-place matchup. Abdollahpour was beaten by de-



Iranian girl Zahra Rahimi (red) is seen in action against Brazilian Maria Machado Stumpf in the women's taekwondo -52kg contests at the Paris Paralympics on Aug. 29, 2024.

## WORLD TAEKWONDO

fending champion Leonor Espinoza 19-9 in the quarterfinals but when Peruvian reached the final she was given a second chance in the repechage, where she was handed a walkover before falling

to Thailand's Khwansuda Phuangkitcha in the bronze-medal battle. "Our girls had some grueling bouts today. Abdollahpour had to face an Olympic champion in the first round, while Rahimi fought

the world number two and four. She was brilliant and I'm delighted she won a precious medal," head coach Atefeh Keshavarz said of the two Iranians' campaign in Paris.

## Yazdani set for up 18 months out with shoulder injury

### Sports Desk

Iranian wrestling great Has-san Yazdani will have to undergo a second surgery on his injured shoulder in a year and could face up to 18 months on the sidelines, Dr. Sohrab Kayhani, the head of the national squad's medical team said.

Yazdani, who had been out of action for eight months before June's Ranking Series event in Budapest, chased a second Olympic gold in Paris earlier in August, but had to settle for the silver after a 7-1 loss to Bulgarian Magomed Ramazanov in the 86kg final.

Yazdani showed no signs of an injury on his to final way but the problem flared up again in the final as the Iranian struggled with the problem from the get-go, calling for treatment on several occasions throughout the six minutes of action.

"Yazdani could be out for 12

to 18 months to have a full recovery," Dr. Kayhani told IRNA on Thursday, adding: "We're going to decide in the coming days if he should undergo the second surgery in Iran or overseas."

Asked if Yazdani had to have

more time of rehabilitation before making his return to action, Dr. Kayhani said: "His surgeon had cleared him to take part at the Games and his situation had been fully assessed in Budapest to make sure he wouldn't have any problem in Paris.

"I'm sure he will be fit and ready to compete again in the World Championships in two years," added Dr. Kayhani.



IAWF

## Alcaraz makes no excuses after shock U.S. Open exit

REUTERS - Carlos Alcaraz made no excuses for his shock second round exit at the U.S. Open on Thursday after the former champion crumbled to a 6-1 7-5 6-4 defeat at the hands of Dutchman Botic van de Zandschulp. Unseeded Van de Zandschulp was a huge underdog against a player who had won 15 straight Grand Slam matches and fans inside Arthur Ashe Stadium could scarcely believe their eyes as Alcaraz dished out error after error in the shock loss.

"I think my level stayed at the same point all the match, and it wasn't enough to win the match or to give

myself the chance to getting into the match or trying to give myself chances," he said.

"So, you know, what can I say? I didn't feel well hitting the ball. I think I made a lot of mistakes. When I wanted to come back or I think I wanted to come back, it was too late."

Alcaraz, winner of the last two Grand Slams at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, had made it to at least the quarter-final stage at every major in which he has competed since winning the U.S. Open two years ago.

But there were warning signs the 21-year-old, who won silver at the

Paris Olympics, was not firing on all cylinders in the run-up to Flushing Meadows, losing to Gael Monfils in the second round of the Cincinnati tune-up tournament.

"I came here with not as much energy as I thought that I was going to come. But, I mean, I don't want to put that as excuse," he told reporters.

"Probably I'm a guy or I'm a player that needs more days or more break coming into the good tournaments or the important ones. So I have to think about it, and I have to learn about it."

Van de Zandschulp will next face Britain's Jack Draper.

## Volleyball U17 World Championship:

# Iran routs Brazil for consolation after last-eight heartbreak

### Sports Desk

Iran is on course for a fifth-place finish in the FIVB U17 World Championship after an emphatic victory over Brazil in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Friday.

Having suffered a five-set defeat against Italy in the quarterfinals on the preceding night, Arash Sadeqiani's boys bounced back in style against the South American side, coming victorious in straight sets (25-9, 27-25, 25-15).

Outside-hitter Kamyab Abdollahifar chipped in a game-high 16 points for Iran, with middle-blocker Armin Asiaei contributing with 15 - including two aces.

"It was really tough for these young players to recover mentally in such a short time after a devastating loss to Italy, so they deserve credit for their performance today. Brazil has also been a decent team at this tournament and even led the Chinese Taipei by four points



volleyball.ir

at one stage in the fifth set of their quarterfinal game," Sadeqiani said. This was a fourth victory for Iran in Bulgaria.

Iran defeated Libya and Tunisia in three sets but a controversial 3-2 loss to Egypt saw the Asian

head into last 16 as the Pool B runner-up.

Iran then came out on top against Chile 3-0 (25-14, 25-16, 25,12) before Italy came from behind twice to beat Sadeqiani's side 20-25, 25-18, 21-25, 27-25, 15-9.



GEOFF BURKE/USA TODAY SPORTS

# Pezeshkian: Iran's policy is peace, interaction with world



Jonas Gahr Støre



Masoud Pezeshkian

President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran condemns any aggression in the world, stressing that the Islamic Republic's principled policy is to foster peace and friendship, prevent tensions and interact with world countries.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always tried to spread peace and friendship, condemned aggression anywhere in the world, and is ready to cooperate to stop wars, violence and insecurity in the world," Pezeshkian told Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre over phone, Press

TV reported.

The Iranian president criticized the US for violating the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and complained about the European parties' failure to fulfill their obligations under the accord.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran fulfilled all its obligations under the JCPOA, but it was the United States that, in addition to breaking the agreement and unilateral withdrawal from it resorted to increasing pressure and sanctions against our

country and nation and the European countries unfortunately did not implement even one clause of their commitments, contrary to expectations," Pezeshkian noted.

"Our policy is peace and friendship, avoiding tension and conflict, and interacting and expanding relations with all the countries of the world, but if our country is forced to do something under sanctions and pressure, then our approach and behavior will definitely move in another direction," he added.

He denounced the double

standards of the US and certain Western countries vis-à-vis human rights and democracy.

"America and some Western countries accuse other countries of violating human rights because of the mistreatment of one person, but they are not only silent toward the bloodshed against tens of thousands of innocent women, children, young and old in Gaza and the bombing of civilian areas, schools and hospitals by the Zionist regime, they also provide financial support and weapons to this regime. Which

criterion and logic is this compatible with?"

Pezeshkian appreciated the positions of the Norwegian government in support of the Palestinian nation, calling on the Norwegian prime minister to work more closely with other European countries to immediately stop Israeli atrocities against oppressed Palestinians in Gaza.

For his part, the Norwegian prime minister described relations between Oslo and Tehran as friendly and historical, stating that Norway has always considered Iran as a friend and wished for the development and prosperity of the Iranian nation and will continue to do so.

Støre also expressed concern about the uptick in tensions in the West Asia region, especially Israeli offensives against the residents of the besieged Gaza Strip.

"We have condemned Israel's war against Gaza and its disastrous consequences. Norway, along with Ireland and Spain, was among the first European countries to have recognized the Palestinian people's right to establish an independent state. We hope these bitter and unfortunate developments will come to an end as soon as possible," he noted.

## GCC chief: Council keen on consulting with Iran on regional challenges

### International Desk

Secretary-General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jassim Mohammed al-Budaiwi said the council is interested in consulting with Iran on the major challenges facing West Asia.

Budaiwi made the remarks in a phone call with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, during which Budaiwi congratulated Araghchi on his appointment as the new Iranian foreign minister.

Stressing that Iran plays an important role in enhancing peace and stability of the region, Budaiwi said GCC states are interested in consulting with Iran on the major challenges that face the region. Abbas Araghchi called for a "new phase" of mutual understanding and cooperation between Iran and the GCC.

Araghchi stressed that Iran is keen to promote its "friendly and brotherly" ties with the council and its member states. Relations between Iran and the GCC should enter a "new phase of mutual understanding and cooperation," Iran's foreign minister said.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has pledged that his administration would prioritize bolstering ties with neighbors.

"Under my administration, we will prioritize strengthening relations with our neighbors," Pezeshkian wrote in an article on July 12.

"We will champion the establishment of a 'strong region' rather than one where a single country pursues hegemony and dominance over the others," he added.

## Iran 'closely monitoring' Israeli threats: Air Defense commander

The Iranian Air Defense Force is closely monitoring the activities of adversaries, including the Israeli regime, as the force enjoys the highest level of readiness, said its commander.

"In the Air Defense Force, considering the aerospace threats from global arrogance, we have enhanced our air defense capabilities and remain vigilant against other threats; we are also closely monitoring

the wicked Zionist regime," Brigadier General Alireza Sabahifard said on Friday while addressing Friday prayers in Tehran.

General Sabahifard went on to highlight that Iran has well

fought off enemies' fiendish plots against its independence, freedom and the Islamic system, and this accounts for the rise in adversaries' animosity towards the Islamic Republic as the main pillar of

the Axis of Resistance.

The high-ranking commander pointed out that the Iranian Air Defense Force is currently at the "highest level of its self-sufficiency, preparedness and combat prowess."



## Taliban-ruled Afghanistan ...

The fall of the Afghan government gave the Taliban access to more than \$7 billion worth of American military equipment, as stated in reports submitted to US lawmakers and confirmed by the Pentagon. Facing an uphill battle, the Taliban announced an interim government in early September 2021.

The group had ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, imposing a self-proclaimed and apocryphal interpretation of Islam that deprived women of most of their rights by the deployment of cruel punishments, including public executions and amputations.

In the group's first official press conference, Zabi-

hullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesperson, sought to strike a moderate tone and said women would be permitted to work and study and "will be very active in society but within the framework of Islam."

Prior to the Taliban takeover, women and girls continued to experience gender-based discrimination and violence and after the

group took office, they lost many of their fundamental human rights despite reassurances from the Taliban that women's rights would be respected.

"Women employed in government ministries were told to stay at home while their male colleagues resumed work," Amnesty International said in a report following the Taliban's ascent to power. "There were reports of women being barred from their workplaces or sent home in different parts of the country... In some cases, women were reportedly escorted home from work by Taliban fighters and told that they would be replaced by their male relatives."

There used to be more than 20,000 women police officers in Afghanistan but most of them were discharged by the Taliban and only a fraction was retained to manage women's prisons.

As for the education sector, Taliban leaders announced that a "safe learning environment" was required before women and girls could return to education but boys were only permitted to resume school.

The UN Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) described in

a new report last month the erosion of women's rights as one of the most notable aspects of the Taliban rule, stressing that the Taliban issued a series of decrees that have systematically removed women from public life and decision-making positions in almost all sectors, and banned them from pursuing secondary and high-level education.

The report also stressed that the Taliban government bears responsibility for a high rate of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and violations of fundamental freedoms.

As per the rules on women's behavior in public, except for the capital and other urban areas, Taliban decreed in more conservative Afghan regions located in the south and east that all women should have a male chaperone when they travel more than 78 kilometers.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said in a report on August 15 that at least 1.4 million girls have been deliberately denied access to secondary education since the Taliban takeover, an increase of 300,000 since its previous

count in April 2023, with more girls reaching the age limit of 12 every year.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay underlined that UNESCO is "alarmed by the harmful consequences of this increasingly massive drop-out rate, which could lead to a rise in child labor and early marriage."

In the realm of food insecurity, UNICEF said 10 percent of children under five in Afghanistan are malnourished and 45 percent are stunted, meaning they are small for their age in part due to poor nutrition. Nearly 80 percent of people in Afghanistan were also reported to lack sufficient access to clean water.

Such cases of mismanagement alongside flagrant rights violations and curbs on personal freedoms have caused the international community to take what the Taliban say and promise with a pinch of salt.

The majority of Afghanistan's 45 embassies and 20 consulates across the world are still run by diplomats appointed by the country's former democratic government, remaining in a state of limbo and declining to work with the Taliban government.

The Taliban have severed

ties with many of Afghan embassies in Western countries, accusing them of being "loyal" to the country's former government. Cut off from Kabul financially, these embassies have struggled in recent years to pay staff and their bills.

The country's seat at the United Nations is still held by the former government, which was led by Ashraf Ghani, though the Taliban administration is seeking to claim that seat as well.

Still unrecognized by the international community, the Taliban are grappling to beat isolation by launching diplomatic ties with neighboring countries as part of attempts to garner formal recognition.

The Taliban have received informal recognition through establishing bilateral ties with countries such as Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan, and holding high-level meetings with officials from those countries. Less than a month away from the 3rd anniversary of a government formation by the Taliban, it has yet to be seen whether the former militants show a penchant for advocating civil rights as well as leadership roles for women in public and political life.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran names Kerman as its entry for D8 tourism capital



### Arts & Culture Desk

Kerman has been chosen as Iran's representative in the bid to become the tourism capital for the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, also known as Developing-8. Saeed Shahrokhi, the director

general of Kerman's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said Friday that Kerman has submitted a written proposal to become the D8 tourism capital, competing with Antalya, Turkey, and Lahore, Pakistan, IRNA wrote. Shahrokhi said Kerman has

the necessary advantages, including suitable tourism infrastructure, cultural heritage protection, innovation, safety and security for tourists, and cultural exchange, to represent Iran in the bid. He expressed hope that Kerman's chances of winning the

title would increase with the help of accurate and creative information, as well as cooperation from national, provincial and private sector authorities. The D8 Organization includes Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan.

## Iran attends int'l children's book congress in Italy

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is among the countries represented at the 39th International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Congress, which kicked off Thursday in the Italian city of Trieste. The congress, which runs until September 1, brings together dozens of speakers from around the world to share research and perspectives on children's and young adult literature. Iranian representatives are among the participants, with six speakers scheduled to present three papers during the event, IRNA reported.

Iran's presence at the congress highlights the country's growing engagement with international literary events. The IBBY Congress is one of the largest gatherings of its kind, with speakers from five continents, includ-



ing Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, and South America. The congress is being held under the theme "Join the Revolution! Giving Every Child Good Books!" and features a range of workshops and discussions on children's literature.

## Ink of calligraphy, rhythm of poetry bring Iran and India closer



Dorsa Mahforouzi presents her calligraphic rendition of Edward FitzGerald's translation of 'Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám', to Indian Ambassador Rudra Gaurav Shresth as a gift for the National Museum of India in Tehran on August 27, 2024.



Ambassador Shresth addresses an inauguration ceremony of the exhibition of 'Panegyrics to India in Persian Poetry' at Tehran's Mir Emad Museum within the Sa'dabad historical-cultural complex on August 27, 2024.

By Zohreh Qanadi  
Staff writer

The ink of calligraphy and the rhythm of poetry bring Iran and India closer again at Tehran's Mir Emad Museum. As India celebrates its 78th independence anniversary, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Indian Embassy in Tehran unites calligraphy and poetry at the Sa'dabad historical-cultural complex. Over 30 calligraphic works featuring Persian poems that sing the praises of India across a millennium come together in harmonious unity. The exhibition, titled 'Panegyrics to India in Persian Poetry', opened on Tuesday, August 27, with poems from poets of the 6th century to contemporary times, including Hakim Nizami (1141-1219), Hafez (1320-1389), and Saeb Tabrizi (1592-1676). The event promises a unique cultural experience and will run for three weeks. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Indian Ambassador Rudra Gaurav Shresth, Ambassador of Portugal, along with the management of the Sa'dabad historical-cultural complex and other Iranian calligraphers and

cultural figures, showcasing the calligraphic masterpieces of 34 contemporary Iranian artists. Ambassador Shresth, who translated the poems into English for this exhibition, revealed that a particular verse by the esteemed poet Nizami struck a chord with him, "Do you know why the elixir for eyes (کوهی) is black? Because it sweeps the path to India." "Firstly, it is Nizami, the oldest and most revered poet," the ambassador begins, elucidating that each poem is a beautiful testament to the friendship between India and Iran, reflecting the love and respect shared between the two nations. "But this poem stands out for its symbolic and poetic depth, capturing the essence of India's darkness as the source of beauty in the eye, he said. "I think all of them are very beautiful they are all in acclamation of India they're all very special to me. I think if I had to choose the one I could choose the poem from Nizami simply because it is the oldest of the collection and it speaks about the darkness of the Indian complexion has been the elixir of the eyes and I think that's a very beautiful thought."

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Ambassador Shresth said, "Persian calligraphy in India began after the advent of Islam, initially to preserve the Holy Qur'an." The ambassador discussed the history of calligraphy in his country, which was prevalent in the courts of kings and remains alive today. He expressed hope that this exhibition would mark the beginning of renewed cultural interactions in the fields of calligraphy and poetry. Shresth emphasized that Iranian and Indian calligraphers should become familiar with each other's work so that they can continue to create joint artistic works as they did in centuries past. "We need to create ways to find sponsors and supporters for this art so that calligraphy can extend beyond the personal realm. We should also systematize the teaching of this craft to the younger generation so that the tradition of our artistic ancestors continues in the present age." Last year, on the

occasion of India's Independence Day anniversary, a cultural program was held in Tehran titled: Indian Poets, Iranian Friends". This year, on the same occasion, these two art forms were combined, and poems describing India were showcased in the form of calligraphy. At this event, for the first time, a calligraphic rendition of Edward FitzGerald's translation (1859) of 'Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám', written by Dorsa Mahforouzi, was presented to the ambassador as a gift for the National Museum of India. Additionally, inscriptions of Qur'anic verse in *nasta'liq* script by Maestro Alireza Karami were also presented to the ambassador as a gift for the Indian museum. On August 15,

1947, India gained independence from the British rule after 100 years. In this regard, one of Rahmatollah Samanipour's calligraphic masterpieces features a poem by Sadeq Sarmad (1907-1960). In admiration of Mahatma Gandhi, the pivotal leader of India's independence movement, Sarmad penned: "Gandhi: His determination set India free, so that a flag could be raised in freedom."

Ambassador Shresth draws attention to Nizami's poem, which stands out for its symbolic and poetic depth, capturing the essence of India's darkness as the source of beauty in the eye.

