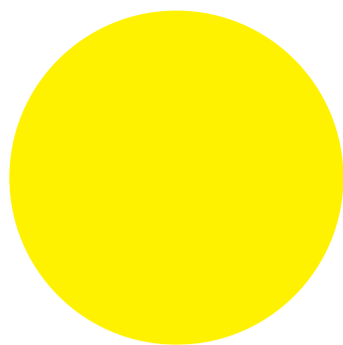


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US Pursues Syrian-Style Conflict in Yemen

Yemeni resistance challenges Washington's strategic plans



EDITORIAL

In a recent escalation, Israeli airstrikes targeted several infrastructures in Sana'a, Yemen. The development comes as the government in Sana'a has emerged as a significant security challenge for Israel. The statements from Israeli officials indicate the lack of an effective solution to the issue. The campaign initiated by the Yemeni people at the onset of the "Al-Aqsa Storm" has now reached its fifteenth month. Despite the temporary halt of the Israeli naval blockade, direct missile and drone attacks by Yemenis have continuously targeted Israeli-occupied territories, including Tel Aviv. The Sana'a government, despite facing numerous challenges such as sanctions, blockades, severe economic conditions, and security threats—including the potential activation of internal fronts with external support and continuous aerial assaults on military and civilian infrastructure by the US, UK, and Israel—remains steadfast in its support for the people of Gaza. To date, it has not retreated under pressure. Meanwhile, Israel, with American backing, has managed to temporarily neutralize other active fronts against it. This resilience has led to repeated statements from Israeli officials acknowledging the absence of an effective solution to halt Yemeni attacks. David Barnea's suggestion to strike Iran to contain Yemen or reports by Israeli media quoting military experts highlighting the distance and lack of sufficient intelligence as major obstacles reflect Israel's serious quandary. Similarly, Israeli reserve force General Eiran Ortal has stated, "Yemenis cannot be defeated by airstrikes alone; a ground operation is required, which Israel is incapable of undertaking." The reality is that factors such as the distance, lack of intelligence, absence of a significant target bank, unfamiliarity with the structure of Ansarullah resistance movement, and the complex geography of Sana'a-controlled areas have caused confusion among Israeli strategists and their allies. This has led Israeli officials to concede that deterrence against Yemenis is meaningless.

Another notable aspect is the brave and unprecedented stance of the Yemenis against the United States. Previously, Yemeni forces successfully expelled two American aircraft carriers (Gerald Ford and Eisenhower) from regional waters through bold missile and drone attacks. Recently, they also launched numerous missiles and drones against the third carrier, Harry Truman, in the Red Sea, resulting in the downing of an F18 Hornet fighter and the vessel's retreat northward. Unable to contain Yemen, Israeli officials have resorted to their traditional policy of assassination, which they have publicly announced. In this context, symbolic targets such as Yahya Saree, the emblematic figure of Sana'a's military operations, may be among prime targets. Additionally, notable Iranian advisors involved in the Yemen conflict could be on the assassination list. Ultimately, the assassination of Ansarullah's leader may also be considered by Israeli strategists. However, Israel's challenge in this approach lies in its incomplete understanding of Ansarullah's structure and key command figures, unlike its knowledge of Hezbollah. This lack of knowledge will likely render assassination policies ineffective in altering Ansarullah's operations. Instead, such actions could justify more severe Yemeni retaliatory measures. It is evident that Israel has encountered significant obstacles in its confrontation with Yemen. Due to various factors, including Yemen's preemptive resistance, Ansarullah's adherence to principles, the Yemeni people's resilient spirit, and the impracticality of a ground invasion, aerial attacks have little impact on the resistance movement's operations. Following the fall of Bashar al-Assad, anti-Ansarullah groups, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, have hoped to replicate the Syrian scenario in Yemen. Political maneuvers supported by the US have been observed. However, given the better condition of areas under the National Salvation Government, the strength of Yemeni fighters on the ground, and internal divisions among armed groups, the likelihood of successfully activating an internal front remains low.



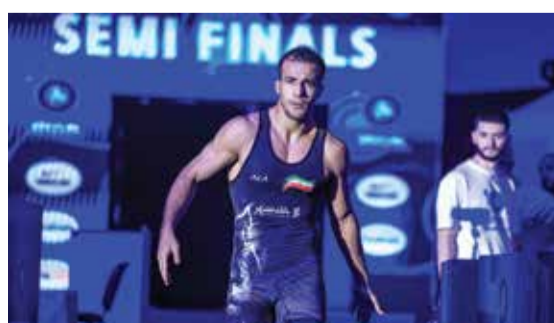
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**Law on 'Chastity, Hijab'
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**Ongoing struggle between
interventionism, isolationism
in US foreign policy**



By Mojtaba Babaei
US foreign policy expert

**OPINION
EXCLUSIVE**

In the 1930s, isolationism in US foreign policy allowed the country to avoid involvement in World War I. However, during the two-year period between Germany's initiation of the war in September 1939 and the US entry into the conflict in December 1941, the debate over interventionism versus isolationism was a central issue in American politics. Since then, questions about the role of the United States in the world have persisted: What should America's role in the world be? Should the US lead on the global stage? Should the US intervene in conflicts around the world that don't directly affect its interests?

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Pezeshkian calls for private sector involvement to promote blue economy

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, speaking at a session on the development of the blue economy on Sunday, emphasized the critical importance of maritime industries, particularly shipbuilding.

He noted that the current administration is highly focused on addressing challenges, opportunities and potentials in the sector, according to president.ir.

The president urged the formulation of a clear, up-to-date strategy tailored to current conditions and stressed that an effective plan requires a comprehensive understanding of the current state of maritime industries, with detailed development goals and achievements outlined for the next five years.

Pezeshkian highlighted the necessity of involving the private sector in maritime industries and emphasized the need to establish economic frameworks and commercial guidelines to support maritime-focused economic development plans.

Commenting on a report presented by relevant officials on the state of the country's commercial ships and

shipbuilding industries, the president tasked the ministers with overseeing shipbuilding and the head of the Plan and Budget Organization with examining the challenges in the sector.

He instructed them to develop a government framework for uplifting the industry and present it to the cabinet for approval in the coming days.

During the session, Ali Abdolizadeh, the president's representative for coordinating the implementation of maritime development policies and other officials delivered reports on the state of shipbuilding industries, its outlook, and the associated challenges.

The president directed related ministers to prepare a more detailed report for discussion in an upcoming meeting. Additionally, Head of the Plan and Budget Organization Hamid Pourmohammadi presented a report on the development of Chabahar and Makoran, highlighting opportunities for agricultural, road, and railroad expansion in the region.

Pourmohammadi, speaking at the session, pointed to Chabahar's capacities, stating that if the necessary resources and development plans are effectively implemented, the country could be-



come self-sufficient in banana imports. He added that fodder and dates produced in the region could significantly

transform the national economy.

The president instructed that the report be thoroughly reviewed and submitted

to the presidential office to facilitate decisions during his next visit to Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

ASEAN bent on meaningful engagement with Iran, all partners: *Envoy*

Economy Desk

Malaysia's ambassador to Iran highlighted the unwavering commitment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to constructive engagement with all partners, including Iran. The conference explored opportunities for engagement between Iran and the ASEAN, a 10-member organization established in 1967 by Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, later joined by Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Brunei, IRNA reported.

Speakers also included Iranian Ambassador to ASEAN Mohammad Boroujerdi and Khalil Shirgholami, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry's Department for International Studies; and Khairi Bin Omar, Malaysia's Ambassador to Iran.

Speaking during a conference in Tehran on ASEAN-Iran cooperation, Khairi Bin Omar outlined his country's priorities as it prepares to chair ASEAN in 2025. He emphasized that Malaysia is dedicated to advancing ASEAN's centrality and fostering cooperation within the region and beyond.

"We are deeply aware of the responsibilities entrusted to us," he said. "The theme of our chairmanship, 'Inclusivity and Sustainability,' introduced by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, is a vision that Malaysia is proud to support."

He also acknowledged the challenges in trade between ASEAN and Iran but noted the significant rise in Iranian tourist arrivals to ASEAN countries as an indicator of untapped potential. This underscores opportunities for collaboration in various sectors, he added.

"Malaysia will ensure ASEAN remains steadfast in its commitment to meaningful engagement with all partners, in-

cluding Iran," the ambassador concluded.

Iran-ASEAN significant partnership potential

Speaking at the conference, Boroujerdi emphasized Iran's significant potential for collaboration with ASEAN and highlighted the mutual benefits that such partnerships could bring. In his address, the Iranian ambassador to ASEAN stated that Southeast Asia holds a pivotal place in Iran's "Look East" policy. "The region's significance has driven Iran to expand its relations with ASEAN across political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. These ties extend beyond bilateral relations to cooperation within regional and international organizations," he said.

Iran has shown a strong interest in ASEAN over the past three decades, Boroujerdi explained.

In May 1999, Iran formally requested "sectoral dialogue partnership" with ASEAN.

However, in June 2000, ASEAN decided to defer all new partnership applications. Despite this, Iran appointed its first ambassador to ASEAN in 2011, formed a contact group of ambassadors from Economic Cooperation Organization countries in Jakarta in 2013, and joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2018.

Last year, Iran submitted a proposal signed by the late Iranian foreign minister requesting an upgrade in relations to "development partnership" with ASEAN.

Strengthening Iran-ASEAN ties

Boroujerdi noted ongoing efforts to showcase Iran's capacities to ASEAN members, citing discussions with ASEAN's secretariat, member state ambas-



sadors in Jakarta, and officials in ASEAN capitals.

"We welcome initiatives to enhance Iran-ASEAN interaction and have proposed several ideas, some of which are under active consideration," he said. Boroujerdi expressed optimism about further developments under Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN, stating, "I am confident that Iran-ASEAN relations will flourish and deepen during Malaysia's presidency."

ASEAN's broader role

Shirgholami, for his part, addressed the conference and expressed hope for strengthening Iran-ASEAN cooperation.

He emphasized the transformative nature of the 21st century, which he described as the "Asian Century," marked by dynamic global shifts and a rising emphasis on Asian and Southern countries identities. Shirgholami highlighted the shared traditions and interests of West Asia and Southeast Asia, underscoring their potential to foster empathy, synergy, and efforts for a more effective, inclusive, and equitable global order.

He praised ASEAN as a successful model of regionalism, suggesting it could serve as a blueprint for integration and collaboration in other regions, including West Asia.

"ASEAN's influence extends beyond its members, offering valuable insights for regional and global partnerships," Shirgholami concluded.

Minister: Tariffs on 78% of Iran-Eurasian trade reduced to zero

Economy Desk

The Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade announced significant developments in Iran's free trade with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), highlighting that 87% of goods traded between Iran and EAEU members currently benefit from zero tariffs.

Speaking on Sunday, Seyed Mohammad Atabak discussed the outcomes of his recent trip to Russia and participation in the EAEU summit in St. Petersburg, IRNA reported.

He emphasized that Iran's observer membership in the EAEU was a key item on the meeting's agenda, adding, "This membership is significant due to the large-scale economies of the member states and their collective \$900 billion trade volume globally."

Atabak noted that during the meeting, discussions were held with senior officials, including an Armenian deputy prime minister.

The minister also pointed out that the Iranian Parliament has ratified the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EAEU, and it has been approved by the parliaments of the five EAEU member states, including Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia.

On Iran's acceptance into the EAEU, Atabak stated, "Iran's inclusion in this union means our formal participation in all its sessions, enabling us to exchange trade information and discuss economic issues with other members."

Highlighting the role of the private sector in Eurasian countries, Atabak stressed the need to facilitate the private sector's involvement in these markets.

He noted a significant increase in Iranian exports to EAEU



countries in recent months, although he described the current level as insufficient.

The free trade agreement, the minister said, has the potential to multiply trade exchanges and commercial interactions.

"Eurasia offers a strong market for Iranian goods," Atabak added. "Additionally, Iranian technical and engineering services have considerable potential for expansion in these countries."

The minister further underlined the role of the Trade Promotion Organization in supporting the private sector by establishing marketplaces, fairs, and exhibitions.

"This effort should simplify consular procedures to enable private sector participation in exhibitions," he said.

Atabak announced that an upcoming exhibition in Tehran will feature participation from EAEU member states, with countries like Armenia and Uzbekistan already expressing interest in attending. Regarding the activities of Iranian techno-engineering firms abroad, Atabak stated that many of these companies have a proven track record in Iran and are well-positioned to expand into neighboring countries.

"However, the main challenge for these firms is obtaining guarantees for international

tenders, he said.

"President Massoud Pezeshkian is personally pursuing legislation to facilitate the issuance of guarantees needed for Iranian techno-engineering services to participate in international projects," he noted.

Iran-EAEU trade

Head of Iran Export Confederation Mohammad Lahouti announced that Iran's trade with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) increased by 20% in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (late March to late December 2024) compared to the same period last year.

Lahouti said in an interview with the IRNA on Saturday that the value of Iran's exports to EAEU member countries had reached \$1.5 billion in April-December.

Iran's imports from the bloc also rose to \$1.6 billion, he added.

Previous reports had suggested that imports of goods and commodities from the EAEU to Iran had increased by 16% year on year in the first 10 months of 2024 while exports from Iran to the bloc had risen by 8% over the same period. The figures showed that trade had nearly doubled since the implementation of a preferential trade agreement between the EAEU and Iran in 2018.

Exploring architectural wonders of Ebrahimabad Qanat

The Ebrahimabad Qanat stands as a remarkable symbol of Iran's rich history and engineering prowess. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it exemplifies the ingenuity of ancient Iranian water management. Located in Markazi Province, near Arak, this historic qanat showcases the advanced hydrological and geological knowledge of its creators. Situated about 30 kilometers northeast of Arak, Ebrahimabad Qanat is accessible via the Arak-Qom road. Visitors can follow signs to Ebrahimabad Village to explore this extraordinary site, which features impressive architectural and engineering elements designed to sustain life in an arid environment. More than just a water management structure, the qanat represents a sophisticated solution to the challenges of living in one of Iran's harshest climates, reflecting the ancient Iranians' deep understanding of hydrology and geology.

Historical background

Water scarcity has long been a critical issue in arid and semi-arid regions. The ancient Iranians addressed this by developing qanats — underground channels that bring groundwater to the surface using gravity and the natural slope of the terrain, eliminating the need for pumps. Ebrahimabad Qanat is a prime example, built to support agricultural irrigation and the daily water needs of the local community. Its blend of sustainability and clever design makes it a marvel of early engineering, surfiran.com wrote.

As one of the oldest qanats in Iran, Ebrahimabad Qanat was constructed when the landscape was largely barren. The local community undertook the ambitious project to create one of Iran's most complex qanats, uniquely featuring a conical structure. While the identities of the original builders remain unknown, their goal was to establish a reliable water source that would enable the community to thrive. This qanat transformed the local environment and laid the foundation for Ebrahimabad village's development.

Dating back to the Parthian period or even earlier, Ebrahimabad Qanat reflects the technological achievements of the Parthian Empire, particularly in water resource management. Although many stories about its origins have been lost, the vibrant Ebrahimabad village today owes much of its prosperity to this ancient water system, which irrigates over 96 hectares of farmland and serves as the village's primary water source. The qanat comprises multiple branches and features approximately 300 wells for ventilation and maintenance access. Since 2016, local villagers have diligently maintained these wells to ensure a continuous water supply. The main qanat reaches a depth of 114 meters and has a unique conical structure, making maintenance a significant challenge. Descriptions from a local well expert, who entered the qanat decades ago, depict it as an abyss of darkness, with only the sound of dripping water echoing within. Such accounts have deterred many villagers from venturing inside. Despite these challenges, the qanat remains a vital resource, showcasing the durability and foresight of its original builders.

Addressing water scarcity

In recent years, drought and water



scarcity have threatened the qanat's viability. However, local water management efforts and improved rainfall have helped stabilize the system. Managing this ancient structure requires substantial knowledge and respect for traditional engineering methods. Known as Haj Reza Qoli Qanat, it was constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries AH, making it nearly 900 years old. Its architectural ingenuity and uninterrupted water flow over centuries continue to fascinate scholars, engineers, and visitors interested in historical water management. The qanat's water source lies in the Haftad Qolleh Mountains, with two primary branches — eastern and western — spanning a total length of about 11 kilometers. The main branch features 311 wells, while two subsidiary branches contain 15 and 22 wells, respectively. This effective collection and transport of water over long distances reflect the impressive engineering principles employed by its original builders. In 2016, UNESCO inscribed Ebrahimabad Qanat as a World Heritage Site, recognizing it alongside ten other qanats in Iran for their representation of traditional water systems that facilitated sustainable human settlements in arid climates. Additionally, Ebrahimabad Qanat was registered as a

National Heritage Site of Iran in 2006, underscoring its significance to the nation's cultural and historical heritage.

Name origin

The qanat derives its name from Ebrahimabad village, likely named after an important historical figure. This name has persisted through both the UNESCO World Heritage designation and Iranian National Heritage records, serving as a reminder of the village's rich cultural heritage and its connection to ancient Iranian engineering ingenuity.

Architectural features

The architecture of Ebrahimabad Qanat is unique, distinguishing it from other qanats worldwide. It serves not only as an advanced water supply system but also as a testament to traditional Persian craftsmanship. The design reflects how ancient builders adapted to the environmental and geological challenges they faced.

One of the most remarkable features of Ebrahimabad Qanat is its conical water source, a rarity among qanats. Described by explorers about sixty years ago, this conical structure widens as one descends, providing structural stability and facilitating maintenance access to the deeper sections. The qanat's walls are constructed from stone masonry, secured with mortar made from lime and sand, enhancing its resilience against collapse and water erosion.

The water reservoir comprises several key components, including an entrance, a stairway leading to the Pashir (water collection area), a storage tank, and two windcatchers. These windcatchers are ingenious architectural elements that ensure adequate ventilation within the underground structure, helping maintain a cool temperature to preserve water quality. The reservoir was added in 1922 CE during the late Qajar period, utilizing traditional materials like stone, brick, clay, lime, gypsum, and sarooj — a waterproofing compound. The use of sarooj is particularly significant, as it provides excellent water resistance, crucial for the structure's long-term stability.

Geological aspects

Ebrahimabad Qanat passes through layers of conglomerate that filter and purify the water as it travels through the system, ensuring that clean, high-quality



● alibaba.ir

water reaches Ebrahimabad village. The qanat consists of one main branch and two subsidiary branches, known locally as Runa and Ghoshd. The qanat's total length of 11 kilometers showcases the technical ambition and skill of its builders.

Unique attributes

Ebrahimabad Qanat has been operational since the Parthian era, highlighting the exceptional engineering expertise of ancient Iranians — expertise that remains relevant today. Its conical shape resembles an inverted volcano, enhancing the qanat's structural integrity, stability, and ease of maintenance. Instead of molten lava, the qanat delivers fresh, life-sustaining water to the people of Ebrahimabad.

Engineering ingenuity

The conical form of the qanat offers numerous advantages. It supports stable pressure distribution, prevents potential collapses, and simplifies maintenance by improving access to lower sections. This thoughtful design exemplifies ancient Iranian engineers' understanding of hydrodynamics and their ability to address the region's geological complexities. The qanat's unique shape and continuous functionality underscore the cultural importance of preserving such engineering achievements for future generations.

Visiting Ebrahimabad Qanat

To visit Ebrahimabad Qanat, head to

Markazi Province, specifically Arak. Take the Arak-Qom Road and follow signs to Ebrahimabad village. Along the way, you'll pass landmarks such as Amir Kabir Garden Hotel and the villages of Malekabad, Qaleh Now, and Shahsavaran. The drive from Arak takes approximately 30 minutes, or 38 to 50 minutes during peak traffic, offering a chance to observe the natural landscapes of central Iran, highlighting the need for such an innovative water system.

Arak is accessible by both air and rail, with trains from Tehran, Mashhad, Qom, Ahvaz, Malayer, Semnan, and Shahroud providing convenient travel options. The distance from Arak Railway Station to Ebrahimabad village is roughly 42 kilometers, taking about 50 minutes by car or 1 to 1.5 hours in traffic.

Arak Airport offers three flights weekly, including routes to Mashhad. The airport is 40 kilometers from Ebrahimabad village, with a travel time of 35 to 55 minutes by car, depending on traffic conditions.

Best time to visit

The ideal time to visit Ebrahimabad Qanat is during early spring or late summer when the weather is most pleasant. It's advisable to avoid peak summer due to the intense heat. In spring and late summer, the surrounding nature is at its most beautiful, and the cool waters of the qanat provide a refreshing experience.



Law on 'Chastity, Hijab' from approval to implementation

What do opponents and proponents say?

Social Desk

The new law on the Islamic dress code in Iran, known as the law on Chastity and Hijab, has recently become a focal point in public attention. Its approval, method of implementation, timing, and social impacts have drawn a wide range of reactions from the public, officials, political and social figures, and experts.

The proposed bill regarding hijab was submitted by the Judiciary to the former government on April 28, 2024. The then-government approved the bill on May 16 and forwarded it to Parliament for approval and enactment into law.

On June 12, MPs voted 185 in favor, 30 against, and 7 abstained. On June 17, the general outline of the government's bill was approved by Parliament's Judicial committee with some amendments. Two months later, Parliament, citing Article 85 of the Constitution, formed a special committee to review the bill. On September 19, Parliament approved the bill for a three-year trial period and sent it to the Guardian Council, an entity tasked with vetting legislation and overseeing elections. According to Article 85 of the Constitution, Parliament can delegate the authority to draft experimental laws to its committees in cases of necessity, and these matters are then reviewed and approved by specialized committees.

About a month later, the Guardian Council announced that the bill contained ambiguities, such as financial burdens, and for this reason, returned it to Parliament. The bill went back and forth between Parliament and the Guardian Council several times. In mid-September, the Guardian Council finally approved the special committee's resolution, and the bill became law. As of December 14, this law had yet to be presented.

However, on this day, Iran's Supreme National Security Council called on Parliament to stop the process of implementing the hijab law.

The Secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council has requested in a letter to Parliament to stop the notification of the law and its implementation. Parliament's Presiding Board member Alireza Salimi announced.



According to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, "There is a lot of discussion about the hijab law. From an implementation standpoint, I have many questions and ambiguities."

Pezeshkian said, "We plan to engage in dialogue and interaction, maintaining both principles and consensus. We are working on it, and many issues are up for debate. They say if you want to ruin something, defend it poorly. Those who wish to implement this law need to have skill, belief, and capability, and I don't see such a case in our administrative system. I view such behavior as problematic. We need to sit down, discuss, and see how this is going to unfold." Responding to the president, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has called on the government to "submit a revised bill".

Opponents of the law on hijab believe that the law has numerous flaws and its implementation would pose significant challenges for the country. Supporters, on the other hand, emphasize that the law approved by Parliament must be implemented, and any issues should be addressed during its enforcement. What follows are statements from several lawmakers on both sides of the fence on this law.

Implementing flawed law would create problems

Beytollah Abdollahi, a parliament member, in opposition to the bill, stated, "The law on Chastity and Hijab has several flaws, and we should not create problems for ourselves, the country, and the establishment by implementing this law. The implementation of this law, due to its flaws, has also led to reactions from the president"

"It is clear that the three branches of the state [Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary] have differing views on this law, and to resolve these differences, the law on Chastity and Hijab must be reviewed and amended," the representative of Ahar in Parliament added.

"The president is not saying that he opposes chastity and hijab; rather, he is saying that the flaws and issues of this law must be addressed because the conditions for its implementation are not in place. We must act prudently in the discussion of chastity and hijab, as emphasized by the Leader [Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei], as well." Abdollahi pointed out, "The reality is that we should not create problems for ourselves, the country, and the establishment by implementing a flawed law on chastity and hijab. We must ensure that the law is implemented in a way that prevents misuse by certain individuals and is accepted by the majority of society." Referring to the financial pen-

alties included in the law for not wearing a hijab, he stated, "Perhaps setting penalties for traffic violations may be effective, but financial penalties for issues related to hijab will not yield the desired results. The issue of hijab is a cultural and religious belief, and it cannot be addressed through penalties."

"Instead of penalties and confrontation in the discussion of chastity and hijab, we should focus on cultural and educational efforts in this area and promote the hijab in society through cultural initiatives," Abdollahi added.

Pointing out the approval process of the law, the MP said, "This law was approved by a special committee under Article 85 of the Constitution, with the presence of only a few members of Parliament, and without public debate, it was sent to the Guardian Council for review as a parliamentary resolution."

"Given the importance of the hijab, the bill related to this issue should have been debated on

the floor of Parliament instead of being reviewed in a special committee under Article 85 of the Constitution. This would have led to a more thorough and expert discussion, resulting in a more mature law in this area being approved by Parliament."

Severity of penalties related to governmental fines

As a supporter of the law, the Deputy Chairman of the Commission on Article 90 of Parliament Hossein Ali Hajideligani said, "The severity of the financial penalties in this law is due to 'the four to six-fold increase' in the number of general penalties imposed by the government."

The lawmaker, acknowledging the flaws and issues in the law approved by the special committee, said: "This law, like any other law, is written by humans and may have flaws and errors." He added, "The issues with the law on Chastity and Hijab should be identified during its

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian stated, "There is a lot of discussion about the hijab law. From an implementation standpoint, I have many questions and ambiguities."

implementation. In such a case, the necessary legal measures for its amendment are provided, and we can propose and submit a bill for its revision."

Hajideligani further noted, "One of the significant criticisms of the law is the severity of the financial penalties stipulated in the law. In this regard, it is important to note that the determination of the number of fines is the responsibility of the government."

He pointed out, "The severity of the financial penalties in the law on Chastity and Hijab is due to the fact that the government increased financial penalties by four to six times at the beginning of its term, which made the financial penalties in the law on Chastity and Hijab appear more severe."

"According to the law, the government can increase financial penalties every three years. However, by the time the current government began its term, six years had passed without an increase in financial penalties. The government then increased the financial penalties for traffic violations by four to six times at the beginning of its term."

Charges more severe than actual wrongdoing

Osman Salari, a member of Parliament's Judicial Committee and one of the opponents of the law on "Chastity and Hijab", regarding the implementation of this law, stated, "The penalties stipulated for not wearing a hijab in the law do not match the offense, and the charges in this area are far more severe than the actual wrongdoing."

Referring to the parliamentary resolution on the Chastity and Hijab bill, he said, "This bill was approved by the Judicial Com-



mittee of the Parliament before, and if it had been discussed and reviewed by the current Judicial Committee, it would certainly have been opposed by the committee members."

The member of the Parliament's Judicial Committee added: "The charges and penalties stipulated in the resolution on chastity and hijab do not match the offense. For example, an initial penalty and a supplementary penalty are set for a single offense, which is not appropriate."

Salari emphasized that in the context of the hijab, we should focus on cultural initiatives and address the root of the issue,

stating that "we should create the groundwork for promoting the culture of chastity and hijab through education and cultural initiatives, not by imposing severe penalties to address non-compliance with the hijab." He further noted, "The issue of the hijab is a religious, legal, and ideological matter, and no one opposes it. We all emphasize the importance of maintaining the hijab, but the penalties stipulated in this resolution are very severe and do not match the offense."

He added, "In my view, it is necessary for the government to submit a revised bill for the

resolution on chastity and hijab to Parliament, or for the representatives to take up the task of revising this law."

Salari pointed out, "As I said, we do not oppose the principle of chastity and hijab and are in favor of the overall bill, but we do not find the charges stipulated in the content of this resolution appropriate."

Regarding the approval process of this law, the member of the Parliament's Judicial Committee stated, "This bill was reviewed and approved by the Parliament under Article 85 of the Constitution and, after being reviewed and approved by a special committee,

was sent to the Guardian Council for review without being debated on the floor of Parliament."

"A bill of this importance must certainly be debated and reviewed on the floor of Parliament, and all representatives should have a say in it, not be approved by a special committee with the votes of a few representatives and then sent to the Guardian Council as a parliamentary resolution," he added.

Salari concluded: "Moreover, the Leader has consistently emphasized the importance of cultural initiatives over the imposition of penalties. Setting such severe penalties in this resolution is

contrary to the directives and emphasis of the Leader."

Gov't should submit revised bill to resolve issues

Alireza Salimi, a member of the Parliament's Presiding Board and a supporter of the law, stated: "If the government has any issues or criticisms regarding the law on Chastity and Hijab, it should submit a revised bill instead of creating a fuss."

Referring to the criticisms raised regarding the law on Chastity and Hijab, Salimi stated, "The law on Chastity and Hijab, like any other law, is a human creation

and may contain flaws."

He added that the law was initially a bill, and "today the government can still submit a revised bill for its amendment. The comments of the president's legal advisor about the law on Chastity and Hijab suggest that he has not read the law."

"It would be better if the president's legal advisor read the text of the law on Chastity and Hijab once and then comment on it. If the government finds issues with the law on Chastity and Hijab, it should submit a revised bill in accordance with legal procedures," the member of the Parliament's Presiding Board stated.

Challenges in enforcing hijab law

Social Desk

The ongoing controversy surrounding the hijab law in Iran has not been limited to its latest draft. The bill on hijab has been criticized and opposed by various political figures, sociologists, and the general public since its early stages of review behind closed doors in the special committee of Parliament up until the present day as it has been transformed into law and moved closer to implementation. These objections have sometimes come from statesmen and law enforcers and at other times from religious leaders, heads of the three branches, and even official and cultural institutions of the country.

What did heads of branches say about hijab law?

After Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf announced the date for implementing the Chastity and Hijab law (Dec. 14), all attention shifted to the other two branches to hear what Iran's President Pezeshkian and Judiciary Chief Mohseni Ejei would say. Notably, the dissolution of the morality police and the enhancement of the hijab situation were key slogans and promises made by the president during the election campaign. First, Pezeshkian, who has repeatedly criticized the arbitrary and self-serving treatment of the public, spoke frankly about the ambiguities of the chastity and hijab law in a live televised conversation with the public broadcast by the state media.

The president said on this matter: "There is considerable debate surrounding this issue. They aimed to implement it early on when we arrived. From an enforcement standpoint, it remains quite ambiguous. We want to do the right thing, but intervention might exacerbate the situation. We plan to engage in dialogue to uphold our principles and values without compromising national unity and cohesion. In my opinion, many aspects of this law are questionable. Those advocating for its implementation must possess the skills and capabilities for enforcement, which I do not observe in the current executive system. We need to engage in dialogue."

Referring to the crimes outlined in the law, the president emphasized, "Suppose I am a taxi driver and a woman without a proper hijab gets into my car. What are we supposed to do? Punish both the driver and the passenger! Or, if I own a restaurant and a woman without a proper hijab enters, should I punish both the restaurant owner and that woman? Is this approach feasible? People who have no connection to them will also be dissatisfied. Our education and upbringing system in this area has problems, which we have not yet addressed. Now, we want to come here and solve the issue this way. Is that possible?" Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Ejei, the head of the Judiciary, while stressing the implementation of the law, also highlighted its flaws and signaled a positive intent to improve it. He said, "If there are shortcomings, they should be corrected. We are not saying that this law is divine revelation, but



● FARS

the law must be implemented. The law should be the final word, but it must be precise and enforceable."

Nasser Imani, a conservative political figure, believes that the head of the Judiciary is opposed to the law on hijab and chastity. He said, "If you pay attention to Mohseni Ejei's remarks, it seems that he is also not satisfied with this law or finds its implementation problematic."

On the other hand, those close to Qalibaf believe that the parliament speaker is also opposed to the hijab bill, a claim that can be substantiated in his recent statements. Although he stated that he defends the law on Hijab and Chastity on the grounds of respecting the Constitution and the votes of the representatives, he sent positive signals for amending the shortcomings of the law to the government. "This means that if there are indeed issues, the same law that approved this has also provided a pathway for its amendment. But a law is a law; we must be careful about this."

SCCR aligned with gov't

In recent days, the unprecedented statements of Abdolhossein Khosropanah, the secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (SCCR), regarding the hijab law have become noteworthy. Kowsarpanah's explicit opposition sent a positive signal to the government, indicating that it is not alone in criticizing the law. Some have even predicted that even if the law is enacted, the volume of concerns and criticisms may delay its implementation, at

least until some of its provisions are revised.

Kowsarpanah, speaking to a group of journalists, emphasized that the supreme council was not consulted about this law and stated, "If a driver picks up a woman without a proper hijab, he should be warned. If he doesn't warn her, the driver should be penalized. What offense has the driver committed? His livelihood is through driving. I see such issues in the law. These are the valid issues that need to be addressed. Recently, I heard the speaker of Parliament say that they are open to suggestions and amendments and will certainly consider them. Hopefully, they will finalize the law with these amendments, and the government, with its national unity approach, will implement it."

On-time warning to officials

Despite the fact that supporters of the chastity and hijab law, who are mostly from the hardline factions, emphasize the need for its swift implementation, opponents of the law are sounding the alarm about the challenges it could create once enforced. These opponents, who span the political spectrum from conservatives to reformists, highlight the severe financial penalties in the law and stress that many of its definitions, such as improper hijab or immodest clothing, are ambiguous and lack clear definitions.

As Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Mohammad Dastghaib, one of Iran's prominent clerics, wrote in opposition to the chastity and hijab

the Qur'an and hadiths?"

He added, "The result of such laws is only to increase public dissatisfaction. As you know, if a law that forces people to follow a religious command through violent means leads to a dislike of the religion itself, according to the principle of deterring through respect, such a law is contrary to the sacred Islamic law and has the opposite effect. As some other top Shia authorities also believe, mandatory hijab is not feasible; and with compulsion, the state of hijab in society will not improve." Ali Rabiei, the advisor to the president on social affairs, emphasized on the social media platform X that the implementation of this law is impractical and would lead to "civil disobedience."

Mehrdad Lahouti, a member of the Independent Bloc at Iran's Parliament, stated, "I see many flaws in the chastity and hijab law, and in a way, it pits people against each other. For example, when a person goes to a store, the seller cannot get into an argument with the customer. Since the chastity and hijab law was not the result of a decision by this parliament, I hope this parliament decides to address the flaws in the law."

Abbas Abdi, a reformist political activist said, "This law sets people against each other and against the state in the short term, but in the long term, it unites people against the government. It's not a situation where people will always fight each other; each will find their own way and direct their frustration towards a single

point."

Mohsen Gharavani, a conservative political activist and professor at the Qom Seminary, also expressed his concerns about the law, "Has the feasibility of implementing this law been assessed and measured? I don't know. It seems that this lack of assessment will also make the implementation of the law problematic. Another point is that some have said that this law will create a crisis, and this is somewhat evident."

Fate of hijab law after enactment

With the growing number of opponents to the implementation of the chastity and hijab law, the question arises: What will be the fate of the law after its enactment by the parliament speaker? As some political and legal figures have said, the government has delayed the law's implementation through consultations with the authorities. The government effectively delegated it to the National Security Council. The council then called on Parliament to stop the process of implementing the hijab law.

Fatemeh Mohajerani, the government spokesperson, also addressed the fate of the law's implementation in her most recent press conference, "The government has concerns and, as the implementing body, is currently in discussions and negotiations to reach a conclusion. This law aims to promote a certain behavioral standard, and we hope to reach a resolution."



Geraei revels in rollercoaster year, eyes further success in 2025

Sports Desk

Reigning world Greco-Roman wrestling champion Mohammad-Ali Geraei says he will be looking to build on his milestone achievement in 2024 to chase further glory over the next 12 months of his career.

Geraei's long wait for a maiden gold medal at the World Championships came to an end in October, when the 30-year-old Iranian defeated Hungary's Erik Szilvassy by superiority to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 82kg category in Tirana.

The triumph in the Albania capital took Geraei's personal haul to four world medals, following his three bronzes in 2017, 2019, and 2021.

"I only took part in the Iranian team trials 50 days prior to the world event and managed to secure a place in the national squad despite moving up to a new weight class," the former 77kg wrestler said in an interview with the official website of the Iranian Wrestling Federation.

"I am truly grateful to the federation and the Iranian coaching staff for their trust. The selection process gives every wrestler a fair shot, and the best one



● UWW

ultimately wins a spot in the national team," added Geraei.

Geraei enjoyed a dominant run in Tirana, cruising to comfortable victories over Indian Rohit Dahiya (8-0), Moldova's Mihail Bradu (7-2), and Japanese Taizo

Yoshida (14-6), before a 2-0 win against Georgia's former world junior and under-23 champion Gela Bolkvadze in the semifinals. "Years of experience with the national team in high-profile competitions helped me peak in my form

for the World Championships and win the elusive gold medal," said the Iranian.

However, 2024 could have held a totally different outcome for the Iranian, who began the year five months into a one-year suspension

by the United World Wrestling.

The punishment came after Geraei threw a bottle of mineral water on the mat during a 67kg bout – featuring his younger brother Mohammadreza and Kyotaro Sogabe of Japan – in

last year's World Championships to halt the contest and presumably buy the Iranian wrestler some time to restore stamina.

The international governing body of the sport lifted the ban in February and Geraei found a second

chance for a place in the Paris Olympics, though he eventually missed out on the Games after a last-eight defeat in June's Ranking Series event in Budapest.

"Sometimes things don't quite happen as you expect them to, despite all the dedication and effort you put in," Geraei said.

"My own mistakes cost me against the Japanese Olympic champion [Nao Kusaka] in last year's world event in Belgrade, and then I was unfortunate to miss the Olympics.

"However, I didn't lose hope. As I said, I made the most of my experience to succeed in Tirana. Now I'm eager for more in the 2025 World Championships," added the Iranian.

Geraei heaped praise on his fellow-Iranians for a most prolific Olympic campaign ever in Paris, where they collected a remarkable eight medals across 12 weight categories in the Greco-Roman and freestyle events.

"This was an unprecedented achievement in Olympic history for Iranian wrestling, as the country had settled for only one or two medals in some of the previous editions. Wrestling once again proved to be the most decorated sport for Iran."

'Bright future' for Iranian weightlifting after Asian junior triumph



● IWFFIR

Sports Desk

The future of Iranian weightlifting is "bright" after the country enjoyed a remarkable campaign at the recently-finished Asian Youth and Junior Championships in Doha, according to head coach Javad Naderi. All 12 members of the squad managed to step onto the podium in their respective events as Iranians boys grabbed 35 medals, winning the juniors'

title with 727 points.

Ariya Paydar spearheaded the country's medal haul in the Qatari capital, making a clean sweep of three golds thanks to a 169-211-380 record in the 109kg weight class.

Mehrab Davasari, Amirmohammad Rahmati, Hamidreza Zarei, and Amirhossein Sepah were also among the gold winners, as Iran finished with eight golds, 15 silvers, and 12 bronzes, coupled with 15

medals – including Hanieh Sharifi's double golds – in the women's draw.

"The future is bright for Iranian weightlifting, given all 12 contestants won at least one medal, which is an unprecedented feat for the country in the history of the competition," said the men's coach Naderi.

"The number of the Iranians' successful efforts was impressive, while, Davasari lifted 160kg in the clean & jerk discipline of

the youth 67kg category, which is a truly promising outcome for him," added the Iranian.

There were further outstanding performances for the Iranians, Naderi said, adding: "Zarei made an attempt for world record in the 96kg class, though he failed at the end.

"Hamidreza Mohammadi Tanha, meanwhile, was our sole representative in the +109kg event and proved to be an up-and-coming talent in the superheavyweight class. He has improved his personal records by 15 to 20 kilograms over the past 12 months," Naderi said.

The young Iranian finished on 177-225-402 to settle for triple silver medals.

Naderi still believes Iranians could have collected more gold medals in Doha, had it not been for some bad luck last-gasp slips.

"Sepah stood atop the podium in the 96kg snatch event and should have won the C&J gold, but failed in the very last second of his third attempt. Illia Salehipour could have also won a gold in the 89kg contests but saw his lift deemed as a foul by the judges. Alireza Nassiri, who won double silvers and a bronze in the 102kg, came short of the total gold by one kilogram."

Djokovic says Murray bringing fresh ideas as new coach

REUTERS – Novak Djokovic said his recently retired rival Andy Murray was bringing a unique perspective as his new coach and he was eager to put into practice what the duo have discussed when he begins his season in Brisbane.

Djokovic, a 24-times Grand Slam champion, added fellow former world number one Murray to his team last month and will work with the Scot until the end of the Australian Open next month before deciding on their future.

"He has a unique perspective on my game as one of the greatest rivals I've had. He knows the pros and cons of my game," said Djokovic, who spent 10 days recently with Murray preparing for the 2025 campaign.

Djokovic will be without Murray in Brisbane but the 37-year-old Serb is keen to get the most out of his new coach when they reunite ahead of the Jan. 12-26 Australian Open.

"He played until recently on the tour, so

he knows all the other best players currently in the world, the youngsters and the weaknesses and strengths in their game. I look forward to it, I really do," Djokovic said.

"I think he's bringing a fresh look to my game and I'll be able to benefit from that, no doubt, on the court. But also that champion mentality he has, I'm sure we'll match very well."

Djokovic opens his Brisbane campaign against Rinky Hijikata this week and is looking to win a 100th ATP singles title before his tilt at a record-extending 11th Australian Open crown.

The Paris Olympics champion is also planning a busier schedule in 2025, after his world ranking slipped to number seven.

"I'm planning to play a few more tournaments than I did last season," he said.

"Hopefully the level is also going to go up and as a consequence I'll be able to hopefully win a few tournaments and get my ranking higher."



● CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

Fiery plane crash kills 179 in worst airline disaster in South Korea

Iran condoles aerial mishap

International Desk

The deadliest air accident ever in South Korea killed 179 people on Sunday, when an airliner belly-landed and skidded off the end of the runway, erupting in a fireball as it slammed into a wall at Muan International Airport. Jeju Air flight 7C2216, arriving from the Thai capital Bangkok with 175 passengers and six crew on board, was attempting to land shortly after 9 a.m. (0000 GMT) at the airport in the south of the country, South Korea's Transport Ministry said, Reuters reported. Two crew members survived and were being treated for injuries. The deadliest air accident on South Korean soil was also the worst involving a South Korean airline in nearly three decades, according to the Transport Ministry. The twin-engine Boeing 737-800 was seen in local media video skidding down the runway with no visible landing gear before crashing into navigation

equipment and a wall in an explosion of flames and debris. "Only the tail part retains a little bit of shape, and the rest of (the plane) looks almost impossible to recognize," Muan fire chief Lee Jung-hyun told a press briefing. The two crew members, a man and a woman, were rescued from the tail section of the burning plane, Lee said. Investigators are examining bird strikes and weather conditions as possible factors, Lee said. Yonhap news agency cited airport authorities as saying a bird strike may have caused the landing gear to malfunction.

Worst crash since 1997

The crash was the worst for any South Korean airline since a 1997 Korean Air crash in Guam that killed more than 200 people, according to transportation ministry data. The previous worst on South Korean soil was an Air China crash that killed 129 in 2002. Experts said the bird strike report and the way the aircraft attempted to land raised more

questions than answers. "A bird strike is not unusual, problems with an undercarriage are not unusual," said Airline News editor Geoffrey Thomas. "Bird strikes happen far more often, but typically they don't cause the loss of an airplane by themselves." Many victims appeared to be residents of nearby areas returning from vacation, officials said. Jeju Air CEO Kim E-bae apologized for the accident, bowing deeply during a televised briefing. He said the aircraft had no record of accidents and there were no early signs of malfunction. No abnormal conditions were reported when the aircraft left Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Air-



port, said Kerati Kijmanawat, president of Airports of Thailand. The passengers included two Thai nationals and the rest are believed to be South Koreans, according to the transportation

ministry. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman extended Tehran's deep condolences to South Korea and Thailand, after the incident. In a statement on Sunday, Esmaeil Baghaei conveyed Iran's

commiserations and sympathy to the South Korean and Thai governments and nations, particularly to the families of the crash victims, wishing a speedy recovery for those injured in the tragic incident.

Lavrov: Iran-Russia partnership pact to boost cooperation opportunities

International Desk

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the signing of a new strategic agreement between Iran and Russia will create further opportunities for more cooperation between the two countries in various fields. Lavrov in an interview with Sputnik on Sunday that the text of the "big" agreement has long been ready and agreed upon by the parties. "The new 'big' agreement, the text of which has long been ready and agreed upon by the parties, is comprehensive, long-term and 'all-weather' in nature and in this sense does not require any adjustments," said Lavrov. Iranian ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali recently said Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will pay a visit to Russia next month to sign an agreement on a comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries. "The [Iranian] president will travel to Russia on January 17, and

during the trip the cooperation agreement between the two countries will be signed by Pezeshkian and [his Russian counterpart Vladimir] Putin," he said. The agreement is designed to legally consolidate the unprecedented progress in bilateral relations achieved by the two countries in recent years and record their entry into the level of strategic partnership, Lavrov maintained. "Of course, such a comprehensive document also has an international component," Lavrov added. Among other things, he said, the agreement pays special attention to strengthening interaction in the interests of peace and security at the regional and global levels and sets forth Moscow and Tehran's desire for closer cooperation in the areas of security, defense, the fight against terrorism and extremism, and countering many other common challenges and threats. Lavrov also said that the leader-



ship transition in Syria does not impact the mutual relationship between Iran and Russia. Back in December, armed militant groups, led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), took over Damascus and put an end to five decades of Assad family rule in Syria. Both Russia and Iran have been the main allies of the former government in Syria. Since 2015, bilateral relations between Iran and Russia have expanded significantly in economic, political, and regional domains. Both countries wish to elevate their relationship to a strategic level and open up new opportunities for cooperation.

IRGC pounds terrorist group's bases in southeast Iran

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force inflicted major losses on the so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group in the course of a counter-terrorism military campaign in the southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, striking the bastions of the militant outfit. Second Brigadier General Seyed Mohammad Hosseini, the Commander of the 110th Salman Farsi Special Operations Brigade, said on Sunday the operation has "seriously disrupted" the activities of Jaish al-Adl terrorists, Press TV reported. According to Hosseini, the commando unit of the IRGC Ground Force alongside other operations units from different parts of the country have managed to firmly respond to Jaish al-Adl's threats during the "Martyrs of Security" campaign over the past few months. "One of the most important achievements of the IRGC Ground Forces amid the Martyrs of Security exercise was the destruction of several terrorist cells and bases," Hosseini said. "The terrorists' safe haven, which was located deep inside the country, was detected and struck which seriously disrupted the activities of Jaish al-Adl terrorists," the senior IRGC commander noted. "During the aforementioned exercise, some of the main elements of the terrorist group

were identified, arrested, and eliminated, thus ensuring sustainable security in sensitive regions," Hosseini said. He also praised the desirable synergy between the tribal leaders, the IRGC Ground Forces, and local people in the fight against terrorist elements. Sistan and Baluchestan Province, which borders Pakistan, has witnessed several terror attacks targeting both civilians and security forces over the past years. Terrorist groups carrying out attacks against Iranian interests in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the country are believed to be linked to foreign intelligence services. On October 26, ten members of Iran's law enforcement forces were killed in a terrorist attack in the Gohar Kuh district of Taftan County in the province. The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group claimed responsibility for the assault, which was one of the deadliest in the province in recent months. The group has carried out numerous terrorist attacks in Iran, primarily in Sistan and Baluchestan. Its tactics include the abduction of border guards as well as targeting civilians and police stations within the province to incite chaos and disorder.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Ongoing struggle between ...

Over the past 79 years, the answers to these questions have been shaped by the ongoing struggle between the two ideologies of interventionism and isolationism in US foreign policy. During World War II, interventionism, influenced by several key factors, ultimately triumphed. First, the British government, struggling to prepare for war, needed US military support, especially to supply arms after the fall of Paris. Second, American Jews, given the atrocities committed by Hitler and the Nazis against their people, pushed for US involvement in the war. Third, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's personal ambitions played a significant role. At the time, there was no legal prohibition on serving more than two terms as president, and Roosevelt

was determined to prove he was the only one capable of confronting Germany. His third and fourth terms coincided with the global conflict. Alongside these catalysts, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor significantly weakened isolationist sentiment, leading to the US involvement in the war. After World War II, US interventionism, or internationalism, became more pronounced with the establishment of organizations like NATO, the United Nations, and global financial institutions. Interventionism continued to rise in US foreign policy, reaching its peak in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, which led to two decades of endless wars. Eventually, both US foreign policy and public opinion reached a common conclusion: interventionist policies are costly and often yield limited results,

with taxpayers bearing the financial burden. The decline of interventionism and the rise of isolationism can be traced to the 2016 election and the emergence of Donald Trump. Now, with his return to the White House, a new version of isolationism, known as the 2024 "America First" policy, will likely take center stage once again. As noted, the principle of "America First" has deep historical roots, and US political developments suggest that both interventionists and isolationists have a common red line: an attack on American soil, like Pearl Harbor or 9/11. In the current circumstances, where isolationism dominates US foreign policy, this variable is the only factor that could push isolationist policies to the periphery.

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+98 21 88548892-5
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Iran's cultural heritage heart of national identity: *Sprox*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's cultural legacy is not just about historical artifacts; it's the very essence of the nation's identity, according to government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani.

During a visit to the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, she highlighted the deep-rooted impact of Iran's cultural heritage, emphasizing its role in shaping the country's past, present, and future, IRNA wrote.

During her visit, she noted, "No society can rise above the stature of its ideas," highlighting the importance of intellectual development.

Mohajerani praised the center's 40 years of dedication to encyclopedic scholarship, expressing gratitude for its contributions to the cultural landscape of Iran.

She reminisced about how the volumes of the encyclopedia have always adorned her family home and extended her best wishes for the continued success of its scholars and staff.

During her visit, the spokeswoman toured the center's scientific sections,



library, reading room, and the Iraj Afshar Research Collection.

She acknowledged the profound impact of Iran's cultural and historical legacy on national identity, stating that these elements not only hold spiritual value but also play a significant role in show-

casing the country's rich history.

Mohajerani urged greater attention to be paid to cultural heritage, advocating for extensive promotion of Iran's achievements in this domain, particularly the efforts made to preserve and maintain this legacy.

Kish Island sees 104% surge in foreign tourist arrivals



The CEO of the Kish Free Zone Organization, Mohammad Kabiri, announced a remarkable 104% increase in foreign tourist arrivals to Kish Island over the past month compared to the same period last year.

In an interview with IRNA, Kabiri emphasized the organization's commitment to enhancing Kish as a prime tourist destination. He noted that the process of attracting international visitors has become more streamlined, with plans underway to develop new tourist routes. Recent additions include direct flights from Erbil, Baghdad, and other Iraqi cities. Kabiri also revealed that the first direct flight from Tajikistan to Kish is scheduled to commence

on January 4, 2025, a development attributed to discussions with the Tajikistan Ambassador in Iran.

The CEO highlighted the formation of a specialized committee aimed at boosting foreign tourism, focusing particularly on countries around the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

He expressed optimism that by the end of the year, direct flights from Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Iraq, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan will be established.

Kabiri reiterated the organization's dedication to making Kish Island an increasingly attractive destination for international tourists, ensuring that the island's potential is fully realized.

Remembering the day Iranian soldiers stood firm at Aras River against Soviet Union

By Zahra Keshvari
Staff writer

The Aras River sits so calmly in your eyes that you doubt it is moving. The hesitation creeps into your soul, making you wonder if the experts are wrong when they call it one of the most rebellious rivers in the world. It is so silent that you doubt the world has stopped at this very point, at this very moment. Then, question after question and doubt after doubt arise in your mind: Where and when did the Aras River fall silent in northwestern Iran? Was it at the point where news of the death of Abbas Mirza, the official defender of Iran's borders against the Russian Tsarist invasion, the resistance against the audacity of the Ottoman Empire, and the confrontation with the disobedience of Afghan commanders and the local rulers of Khorasan reached the Aras? Or was it on August 25, 1941, when three people stood on the iron bridge at the Iran-Soviet border and lost their lives to keep Iran safe? Perhaps the Aras River fell silent that day and took its sorrow to the depths of its 200-meter flow, when the Treaty of Baharestan was signed in a village by the same name on the other side, the side where we stood; the side of Iran. Maybe it swallowed its rebellion and dangerous

waves that day when the Treaty of Turkmenchay separated 14 provinces and states of the Caucasus from the motherland, and the northern parts of the Aras remained separated from Iran.

Border zero

A soldier stands atop a watchtower, parallel to the Iron Bridge of Jolfa, at the border crossing; there, just a short distance away, the Aras River marks the boundary between two countries, between two Jolfas; the Jolfa where we (the journalists) are guests, and the other Jolfa that lies across the river in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. At the foot of the watchtower, busts of three soldiers, three men who stood until the last bullet against the Russian army, a magnetic force that pulls you back to August 25, 1941; to that moment when the Aras River defined the border between Iran and the Soviet Union. The sorrow of the world falls upon your heart. It's as if you've reached those last 48 hours, wounded, a grief that settles upon you bit by bit; in the midst of a Russian army and three men standing on the side of their homeland. Your heart wants to reach back into history and change the story, or at least write it in a way that 59 years later, a family doesn't find the grave of their lost father; 70

years later, a mother doesn't cry at the border of Iran over her son's grave; a mother doesn't think her son has been taken to Siberia.

Ask them, those three without insignia, how did they leave everything behind and stand firm? When you fired your last bullet, did your feet falter? When the central government ordered non-resistance and the evacuation of border posts for the entry of the Allies? Ask Mosayyeb Mohammadi when he was shot, what was the last image he saw before his eyes? What did he tell his mother, his son, and his wife? Whom did he entrust his children to? When soldier Qeytaran (the fourth person at the Jolfa border post) went to get reinforcements, did they know no help would come? Then, when pain falls upon your soul, when the lump in your throat swells, ask those three border guards what they did until today you come in peace and comfort at the border of Iran and Nakhchivan, gazing at the iron bridge where the Tabriz-Jolfa railway was built in 1913. Ask yourself, Corporal Mohammad, Soldier Rasi, and Gendarmerie Hashemi, how many times have they told themselves the story of the bridge built without any welding or bolts, held together only by wooden pegs, for their fallen comrades. Perhaps Soldier Rasi has promised his four-year-old son, whom he left behind, and his seven-year-old daughter, who would forever wait for him, that the bridge is built in such a way that even in the most turbulent conditions, the Aras River remains two meters away from its raging waters. Then, strike your hand in regret that you don't know exactly what happened to them? Shouldn't you know their story? The story of

those who shaped your identity on August 25, 1941; which later became the National Day of Aras in the Iranian calendar. How did they stand for those last 48 hours against the Russian army? When did they fire their last bullet? The Aras remains silent, not answering. But the soul they put on the line to protect their land compels the commander of the 47th Russian Army to perform military honors, laying their bodies to rest in their homeland... It's as if these three intended to leave everyone in waiting. Perhaps the silence of the Aras comes from here. The Aras has stood here once, silent to every word and whisper. It's as if they have entrusted the story to you, to me, to him, to us. This is the story; three men who stood on a bridge at the border of Iran and Russia and gave their lives; like those five who stood on a bridge in Khorramshahr and forever remained in the minds of Iranians; five who crossed the bridge to prevent the advance of Iraqi forces or delay their movement. They passed on so that Iran would remain.

Sacrificed for Iran

Corporal Mosayyeb Mohammadi is laid to rest below the bridge, where he died because of the homeland; the place where he must have heard the murmur of the Aras River for the last time. Perhaps he heard the voice of his mother, Malek, asking for the thousandth time: "Where are you?" Malek, whose name was initially written on the grave of her lost son, later to be known as the mother of Mosayyeb, on whose tombstone only their names and the date of their martyrdom were written. The Aras weeps here. For it knows the pain of separation. It

understands loss. It has tasted wave after wave of sorrow in the Treaties of Turkmenchay and Gulestan. That night must have been stormier than any other night. That night, instead of all the women whose soldier did not return from the war, must have cried. But that day, every bullet took down several people; a mother, a father, a wife, and children. Several families in Tabriz. The Aras, as the symbol of Northwest Iran, must have wept bitterly. It takes time for someone to tell their families that their wait is not in vain. When Mosayyeb Mohammadi joined the army, his son Mohammad was four years old. He also had a little daughter. Malek, Mosayyeb's mother, after the Soviet invasion, wrote a letter to the border guards to get news of her lost son, but the letter remained unanswered, adding fuel to the fire in Malek's heart. Malek clung to every hopeful sentence and word. Occasionally, someone would come along who had seen Mosayyeb somewhere. For instance, someone told Malek that they had seen her son's liver in Baku. Malek never knew where her son's body was laid to rest. A photo published in the book "Jolfa from the Past to the Present" in 2007, reveals the tomb of the corporal to Mohammad, Mosayyeb's son, Mohammad's sister died at the age of 20 without ever setting foot on her father's grave. It is said that no photo of Mosayyeb remains.

The grave of two other border guards alongside the railway tracks that pass through the middle of the Iron Bridge, is located; somewhere between the watchtower and the border post of Jolfa; there where a few soldiers stand guard without

uttering a word to us; at the border of two Jolfas.

A soldier from Basmenj

The military service of Abdullah Shahriari from Basmenj Tabriz, began during World War II and the Allied occupation of Iran. He put on his soldier's boots, came to Jolfa, stood on the bridge facing the Russian troops, and never returned to Tabriz. Abdullah's wife waited for him until her last breath, opening every door that was knocked in the hope that it was Abdullah, only to find that he was not there. That bullet took down two people, Abdullah and the woman whose heart beat in his chest. Abdullah's grandchild, 59 years later, sees the grave of his grandfather on TV and asks himself, "What is my grandfather's grave doing in Jolfa?"

Three men, a sacrifice for the homeland

Mohammad Rasi Hashemi, when he joins the border guards, leaves behind a five-year-old son and a seven-year-old daughter; children who, along with their mother, waited for seven years for their father's return. Years later, they realize that their father had lost his life somewhere along the Aras River, allowing them to rest in peace, but due to the difficulty of the journey, they are unable to visit their father's grave. The Aras is right to be silent. The world here, in August 1941, watches the patriotism of three men, three without insignia, standing; at the place where the Free Trade Zone Organization wants to create a park for families and travelers at the border, so that they can hear the story of those three men, a sacrifice for the homeland, every day from the Aras. In the hope that the Aras will no longer witness, on both sides, the loss of a soldier.

Saipa Wheel Manufacturing Company Tender for Steel Wheel Rim Machinery

Saipa Wheel Manufacturing Company intends to purchase 6 steel wheel rim making machines. Interested companies are requested to offer their quotes based on the specifications mentioned in the attached RFP on our website www.kswco.com. Please receive the tender form and send your PI to commercial2@kswco.com by Jan 05 2025.

For further information please contact
Mr. Eftekharian: +989123134802