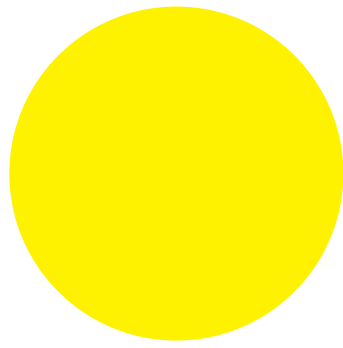




Over 3m Arbaeen pilgrims cross Iran's border into Iraq

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) poses for a family photo with a group of media chiefs after a meeting in Tehran to mark the National Journalist's Day on August 10, 2025.  
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# Pezeshkian: Iran neither surrenders to bullying nor achieves anything by fighting

## National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Iran will not surrender to bullying and will achieve nothing by fighting either.

Speaking in a meeting with the chiefs of Iranian media on National Journalist's Day, Pezeshkian said the enemy imposes new sanctions on the country on a daily basis to pose obstacles on the way of the country's progress. He underlined that many differences must be resolved with patience and prudence, because fighting will not lead to any results.

Since unilaterally withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear agreement in May 2018, successive administrations in the US have heavily relied on sanctions as the centerpiece of America's "maximum pressure" policy toward Iran, despite Tehran's full compliance with the multilateral deal.

On May 8, 2018, US President Donald Trump during his first term withdrew



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks in a meeting with the chiefs of Iranian media on National Journalist's Day in Tehran on August 10, 2025.

● [president.ir](#)

the US from the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and embarked on a confrontational policy against Iran.

The year 2025 saw Trump returning to the White House, after which he immediately reloaded his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran in a different form and shape.

The two countries decided in April to begin new round of negotiations to resolve a dispute over Iran's nuclear program. Tehran and Washington held five rounds of talks but an unprovoked aggression by the US and its ally, Israel, against Iran derailed the negotiations. During the talks, the US insisted on zero uranium enrichment in Iran. But the Islamic Republic underlined that it will not accept the US demand.



## President: Iran seeks 'constructive cooperation' with all countries

### International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Tehran seeks to expand "friendly relations and constructive cooperation" with all countries of the world.

Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting during which he received credentials from the new ambassadors of Ethiopia, Estonia, Djibouti, Laos, Cambodia, Burundi, Latvia, Myanmar, and Nepal.

The president said Iran is ready and interested in expanding relations with the mentioned countries in all political, economic, commercial, cultural, scientific, and technological fields, based on respect and aimed at ensuring mutual interests.

"On the path to development of peace, stability, tranquility, and welfare for all, we must cooperate, accompany, and have synergy with each other", he said. Touching upon the issue of Gaza, he said all countries, not least the Islamic countries, must make more serious efforts to stop Israel's crimes, lift the

blockade, and provide unlimited aid to the innocent people of Gaza.

"The massacre of innocent people and blocking their access to food, water, and medicine under the name of self-defense is an inhumane disaster," Pezeshkian said, stressing that the greater disaster is unfolding as Israel's crimes are being committed before the eyes of those who claim to advocate for human rights and democracy.

Nearly two years of Israel's brutal strikes on Gaza has killed more than 61,000 people in the besieged Palestinian territory. The regime has also imposed a restricted entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza for months, which has led to a widespread starvation. Nearly 200 Palestinians – half of them children – have lost their lives due to the forced starvation in Gaza.

The regime has also destroyed more than 88% of the Gaza Strip's total area and displaced two million Palestinians since launching its genocidal war on October 7, 2023.

## 'Hands off Gaza': Global rallies demand end to Israel's genocidal war

### International Desk

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators held rallies and marches in cities around the world in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, demanding an end to Israeli attacks on the besieged and bombarded territory as Israel-imposed starvation engulfs the entire population. Nearly two years of Israel's brutal strikes on Gaza has killed more than 61,000 people in the besieged Palestinian territory.

The regime has also destroyed more than 88% of the Gaza Strip's total area and displaced two million Palestinians since launching its genocidal war on October 7, 2023.

Israel's blockade on Gaza has also caused a widespread starvation in the Palestinian territory, which has claimed the lives of nearly 200 Palestinians – half of them children.

In Turkey's port city of Istanbul, thousands of protesters demanded more aid be allowed into the Strip, with organizers calling on the international community to take urgent action to end the humanitarian crisis.

Many also took to the streets in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to protest the blockade and Western support for Israel, demanding the immediate and unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

In London, the Metropolitan Police said it arrested more than 466 people at a protest on Saturday against

the British government's decision to ban the group Palestine Action.

British lawmakers proscribed Palestine Action under anti-terrorism legislation in July after some of its members broke into a Royal Air Force base and damaged planes as part of a series of protests. The group accuses the UK government of complicity Israeli war crimes in Gaza.

Protesters, some wearing black-and-white Palestinian scarves and waving Palestinian flags, chanted, "Hands off Gaza" and held placards with the message "I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action."

Several pro-Palestine rallies were also held across Spain, including in the capital, Madrid, to protest Israeli attacks and the starvation in the enclave. Carrying Palestinian flags, protesters shouted, "End to genocide".

In Switzerland's Geneva, thousands gathered at the Jardin Anglais to protest famine and malnutrition-related deaths in Gaza resulting from the Israeli blockade. The crowd staged a sit-in, shouting in English, French and Arabic to demand an end to international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians.

Large rallies showing support for those suffering in Gaza have also been held in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur.

Similar protests were also held in Germany, Chile and Argentina.

## Presidential advisor says Iran sensitive to security plans in Caucasus region

### International Desk

A political advisor to the Iranian president said on Sunday that Iran has no objection to the removal of obstacles facing transportation routes in the Caucasus region, but it is sensitive to plans that would involve transregional powers into the security framework of the region.

Mehdi Sanaei made the comments in a post on X in reaction to a US-brokered peace agreement reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia on Friday.

He warned against setting the stage for increased tensions in the "historic Caucasus region" through such agreements which has granted Washington development rights to a strategic transit route across the strategic area.

Sanaei underlined that Tehran welcomes peace among its neighbors.

On Friday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev signed the US-mediated peace deal at the White House.

The accord includes the creation of a transit corridor through Armenia to connect Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhchivan – a longstanding demand of Baku.

Under the deal, the United States will have development rights to the corridor – dubbed the "Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity" (TRIIPP) – in the strategic, resource-rich region.

Iran has long opposed the modification of



the corridor – often referred to as Zangezur – fearing it would cut the Islamic Republic off from the Caucasus.

In a statement on Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry welcomed "the finalization of the text of the peace agreement by the two countries" but expressed "concern over the negative consequences of any foreign intervention in any way and form, especially in the vicinity of common borders."

The statement added that such a move would "disrupt the security and lasting stability of the region."

Christian-majority Armenia and Muslim-majority Azerbaijan have feuded for decades over their border and the status of ethnic enclaves within each other's territories.

The nations went to war twice over the disputed Karabakh region, which Azerbaijan recaptured from Armenian forces in a lightning 2023 offensive, sparking the exodus of more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





# Iran launches 20 pharmaceutical projects to treat cancer, hepatitis

Economy Desk

A senior official at the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy announced that 20 pharmaceutical technology development projects have been set in motion this year (began on March 20, 2025), aimed at advancing novel drugs and diagnostic kits for gastrointestinal cancers and hepatitis. Speaking at a Sunday press conference to present a report on strategic technologies, Saeed Sarkar noted that such technologies can create bottlenecks for various industries and, in some cases, bring an entire sector to its knees, ISNA reported. "For instance, the petrochemical industry — worth tens of billions of dollars — would come to a standstill without access to catalysts," said the head of the Strategic Technology Development Center at the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy. The catalyst market is worth about \$600 million, but the technology had been under sanctions, he said, adding, "Fortunately, we managed to develop it domestically and push a major industry forward." Sarkar said that while diagnostic kits typically take about one year to reach fruition, drug production can take four to five years

before reaching the market. He stressed that strategic technologies strengthen national resilience and reduce vulnerability. They also lower foreign currency outflows and cut dependency on foreign currencies — an issue he called "extremely important" for the country. "We have identified these as strategic technologies capable of mitigating crises and vulnerabilities," he explained. Sarkar went on to say that the center houses four specialized headquarters, including Nano and Micro, Bio and Health, Cognitive Sciences, and Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine. Three of these four have extensive health-related activities. The Bio and Health headquarters, he said, operates entirely in the fields of health, pharmaceuticals, and traditional medicine. The Cognitive Sciences headquarters focuses on mental health and cognitive issues, which have gained significant global attention — including so-called "cognitive wars." The Nano sector, he added, plays a major role in health.

350 nano-based health products

"Currently, there are about 340 to 350 health products based on nanotechnology in the country, many of which have a robust market," Sarkar said. "Some are



even exported abroad." Highlighting advances in nano-technology-based pharmaceuticals, Sarkar noted that in the past year, three such medicines have entered the market — used for treating leukemia, pancreatic cancer, and severe fungal infections. Annual imports of these drugs were previously worth around \$6.5 million. The leukemia treatment "Midostaurin,"

the domestically produced pancreatic cancer drug, and a liposomal injectable for severe fungal infections are among them. Referring to their former high prices, Sarkar said these drugs once entered the country at exorbitant costs — between \$800 and €1,200 per dose — making them accessible only to the wealthy. "Now that they are produced domestically, the price has dropped

to about \$30, marking a 35-fold decrease. This ensures health equity and allows all segments of society to access them," he said. On investment in technology, Sarkar remarked that returns on technology development can be many times the initial investment. "The more advanced the technology, the greater the price difference and the higher the value of investment," he said.

## Government approves removal of four zeros from national currency



Economy Desk

The Iranian government spokesperson announced that a proposal to remove four zeros from the national currency (rial) was approved during Sunday's cabinet meeting. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the cabinet session, Fatemeh Mahajerani stated, "Consequently, 'toman' and 'qiran' will become the national currency units," IRNA reported. She added that the process of changing the national currency unit will be time-consuming, and both currencies will be used for a period of time. Last week, members of a committee of Parliament have voted in favor of the plan to reform the country's national currency and restoring an old currency subdivision named qiran. The head of the economic committee of the parliament said on August 3 that it had approved the outlines of a motion to remove four zeros from the rial. Shamseddin Hosseini said the new motion aligns with a government bill that had been approved in 2016 but was dismantled in 2023 when the parliament passed a new law on how the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) should be governed. Hosseini said the new motion creates a new rial, which would be equal to 10,000 current rials and would be subdivided into 100 qirans. Under the previous government bill, Iran was supposed to change the name and denomination of its currency, with the new currency toman becoming equal to 10 rials. The bill was approved as part of government efforts to streamline the national currency and to simplify financial transactions and accounting. To prepare for the bill, the CBI even issued banknotes with the last four digits in a much paler color to help the public gradually adapt to the planned changes. Iran's current administrative government announced earlier this year that it would revive the initiative as part of its economic reform plans.

## Breed improvement initiative launched for native Iranian buffalo

Economy Desk

The head of Animal Sciences Research Institute of Iran said plans are underway to improve the breeding of native buffalo and launch semi-industrial production, a step expected to boost red meat output and triple raw milk yields. Speaking to IRNA about the state of buffalo farming in Iran and globally, and the importance of genetic research, Hassan Khamisabadi said that genetic improvement of buffalo can boost red meat production and triple raw milk yields — a move that could pave the way for self-sufficiency in protein production, particularly red meat. Khamisabadi said buffalo is one of the domesticated animals that performs particularly well under Iran's climatic conditions, especially in certain provinces. Given climate change, the expansion of buffalo farming is being considered a suitable alternative for producing animal protein, as the species not only delivers good performance in hot and dry regions but also requires less feed. According to the institute head, global statistics estimate the buffalo population in 2024 at about 167 million head, ranking fourth among domesticated ruminants after cattle, sheep, and goats. He noted that 97% of the



world's buffalo are concentrated mainly in Asia — particularly in India, Pakistan, China, Egypt, and Nepal — while only around 3% are found in European countries such as Italy, Romania, and Bulgaria, as well as in Latin America. He described buffalo population growth trends in various countries as positive, adding that Iran has also seen healthy development in this sector. Given its potential in animal protein production, breeding programs and crossbreeding have been put high on the agenda. Khamisabadi stressed that the research institute, recognizing the strategic importance of buffalo, has undertaken multiple projects to revive, expand, and enhance the productivity of the species, aiming to tackle challenges such as population decline, late breeding, and low production efficiency in traditional systems.

Breeding native buffalo with Italian stock

Khamisabadi said the institute is running buffalo breeding and development projects at several research stations, including Safiabad in Dezful, Khuzestan. These efforts include registering and documenting breeds, and examining the impact of crossbreeding native buffalo with foreign breeds such as Italian buffalo on milk yield and composition — taking into account regional conditions, farming systems, and feed. He added that research shows crossbreeding native buffalo with high-yielding foreign breeds like the Italian buffalo can significantly increase milk production. In second-generation hybrids, daily milk yield averages around 18.7 kilograms, compared with about 5.5 kilograms for native Iranian buffalo — meaning crossbred buffalo produce nearly three times as much milk as their native counterparts.

## Iranian delegation in Pakistan pushes for stronger trade ties, joint ventures



Economy Desk

An Iranian economic delegation in Pakistan invited traders and businesses from the neighboring country to seize investment opportunities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In a meeting between officials from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Zahedan and Quetta, the Iranian side called on Pakistani traders and companies to take advantage of investment prospects in Iran, particularly in its free economic zones, IRNA reported. The session, hosted by the Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the capital of Pakistan's Balochistan Province, was attended by a delegation from the Zahedan Chamber of Commerce and Industry to review opportunities and challenges in Iran-Pakistan trade. Abdolhakim Rigi, head of the Zahedan Chamber of Commerce, together with Alireza Rajaei, acting Iranian consul general in Quetta, urged industrialists and the business community in Balochistan to explore partnerships with Iranian investors in the Mirjaveh Free Zone and engage in joint ventures. Members of the Iranian delegation said the Iranian government would provide all necessary facilities and incentives to kick-start joint investments with

entrepreneurs and investors from both countries. They stressed that achieving the target of \$10 billion in bilateral trade between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan depends on close cooperation between the two neighbors — particularly their private sectors. The delegation also congratulated the business community of Pakistan's Balochistan Province on the resumption of the Quetta-Zahedan flight route via Mashhad. Last week, the Airports Company of Sistan and Baluchistan announced the launch of Mashhad-Zahedan-Quetta flights by Iran Air. The service will operate weekly on Thursdays from August 7 to October 24. Pakistan's ambassador to Tehran said the direct Quetta-Zahedan-Mashhad flights will connect three historic cities, describing it as a long-standing demand of their residents. On the embassy's Instagram page on Sunday, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu wrote that the new route would boost trade, tourism, and people-to-people links in the region. "Given the geographical spread and economic needs, we will continue to expand air connectivity between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran," he said.



# Trump's new Middle East

## Or revival of Nixon-Kissinger Twin-Pillar Policy

By Edris Khosravi  
Guest contributor

OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE

The Middle East is a geographical region in Western Asia and is part of Afro-Eurasia, which extends from the Bab el-Mandeb Strait in the southwest to the Dardanelles Strait in the northwest, and from the east to the Himalayas and part of Karachi. The term Middle East was popularized by Alfred Thayer Mahan, an influential American naval officer and historian, after he used it in his article, titled "The Persian Gulf and International Relations," published in September 1902 in the *National Review*. The Middle East is a strategic region in terms of geography and energy, with 56% of the world's oil resources located in this region. After its founding in 1776, America turned its attention to the Middle East, but after World War II, it garnered worldwide attention. American foreign policy aimed at preventing Soviet influence in the region during the Cold War saw widespread support in various forms.

Among America's main priorities in relation to this goal was supporting Israel against its neighboring Arab countries, which were under Soviet protection at the height of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Soon, the United States replaced Britain as the main security sponsor of Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states in the 1960s and ensured a steady flow of Persian Gulf oil.

### Nixon-Kissinger's Twin-pillar Policy

With the announcement of the British forces' withdrawal from east of Suez and the Persian Gulf in 1967, the United States, as the Western superpower after World War II, gradually expanded its influence in the Persian Gulf to prevent Soviet influence in the region. With the emergence of a power vacuum and a change in the balance of power in the region, the United States officially announced its new role as the guardian of Western interests in the Persian Gulf. Given the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf in American foreign policy under the Nixon-Kissinger doctrine, a policy called the Twin Pillars was adopted by US president Richard Nixon while he was in office (1969-1974) to maintain dominance over the region at the expense of local governments. According to the plan, Iran formed the military pillar, and Saudi Arabia was the financial pillar. The Twin-Pillar Policy continued in the region for about 10 years, a successful example of which was the suppression of the Dhofar movement in Oman. With the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the loss of Iran as one of the two pillars, the United States' regional strategy in the Persian Gulf faced failure.

### Trump, new Middle East plan

Soon after the events of September 11, 2001, the United States attacked the Middle East



People walk past an electronic billboard that shows US President Donald Trump (r.) shaking hands with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman with the pro-normalization message "We are ready," in Tel Aviv on February 3, 2025.

● ARIEL SCHALIT/AP

“

In truth, Trump just wants the US economic costs to be borne by wealthy Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter. This is, above all, reminiscent of Nixon-Kissinger's Twin-Pillar Policy. On the other hand, he has unconditionally supported and armed Israel in order for it to, as he says, assume responsibility for ensuring the security of the Middle East, the same role Iran fulfilled as the military pillar during the Nixon era and the Twin-Pillar Policy.

Young Donald Trump shakes hands with then-former US president Richard Nixon at the Westin Galleria ballroom in Houston, Texas, the US, on March 11, 1989.

● RICHARD CARSON/  
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

under the pretext of confronting Al-Qaeda, and the idea of the Greater Middle East was proposed by President George Bush.

This plan was supposed to move the Middle East toward American modernity centered on Israel, within the framework of a liberal democratic system. Significant steps were taken to implement the Greater Middle East plan, but the Arab Spring in 2010 changed the course of developments. A wave of public awakening took shape instead of the Greater Middle East plan, which never moved beyond Syria — the battleground for competing global and regional powers.

After Donald Trump won the US presidential election in 2016, he demonstrated a willingness to use tricks to achieve his desires

and goals without adherence to any specific rules or principles. This still includes personalizing power and willingness to negotiate even with US enemies, demonstrated in his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin over Ukraine, or ending the Korean Peninsula crisis through relations with the North Korean leader. This indicated that he would also seek to dialogue and compromise with parties in the Middle East.

During his first term, Trump pursued normalization between Israel and Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, through the Abraham Accords. This led to formalized relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. However, these diplomatic gains were undermined by the October 7, 2023, attacks during his second term, which

disrupted the balance of the region. On his first foreign trip as US president earlier this year, he visited Persian Gulf Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, declaring that the future Middle East could be like Europe now.

In truth, he just wants the US economic costs to be borne by wealthy Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter. This is, above all, reminiscent of Nixon-Kissinger's Twin-Pillar Policy. On the other hand, he has unconditionally supported and armed Israel in order for it to, as he says, assume responsibility for ensuring the security of the Middle East, the same role Iran fulfilled as the military pillar during the Nixon era and the Twin-Pillar Policy.

Overall, Trump is seeking to

revive the Twin-Pillar Policy, where Saudi Arabia would assume the role of the economic actor and Israel the role of the military actor, but this plan has been met with failure so far. The reasons for the failure of the plan include the following:

- Israel has unresolved disputes with Arab countries such as Lebanon and Egypt, where any small incident can lead to a widespread conflict.
- Efforts to exclude Iran from any plan for the Middle East are doomed to failure due to Iran's strategic position.
- Israel will not be able to fulfill its role as the military pillar of this policy due to its lack of religious and cultural affinity with the region.
- The Palestinian issue still remains the main challenge between Arabs and Israel.





# An ailing, flailing, failing empire lashes out

By William J. Astore  
Retired USAF  
lieutenant colonel

**O P I N I O N**

As a retired US Air Force officer, I firmly believe in civilian control of our military. This country should be a nation of laws — not of special interests, oligarchs, or kings. Before committing our forces to battle, Congress should always declare war in the name of the people. Our military should indeed be a citizen-soldier force, not an isolated caste driven by a warrior ethos. And above all, the United States should be a republic ruled by law and shaped by sound moral values, not a greed-driven empire fueled by militarism.

Yet when I express such views, I feel like I'm clinging to a belief in the tooth fairy, the Easter Bunny, and Santa Claus. It feels idealistic, naive, even painful to think that way. Yes, I served this country in uniform for 20 years, and now, in the age of Donald Trump, it has, as far as I can tell, thoroughly lost its way. The unraveling began so long ago — most obviously with the disastrous Vietnam War of the 1960s and 1970s, though in truth, this country's imperial desires predated even the Spanish-American War of 1898, stretching back to the wanton suppression of indigenous peoples as part of its founding and expansion.

A glance at US history reveals major atrocities: the displacement and murder of Native Americans, slavery, and all too many imperial misadventures abroad. I knew of such realities when I joined the military in 1985, near the end of the Cold War. Despite its flaws, I believed then that this country was more committed to freedom than the Soviet Union. We could still claim some moral authority as the leader of what we then referred to as "the free world," however compromised or imperfect our actions were.

That moral authority, however, is now gone. US leaders fully support and unapologetically serve an ongoing genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza. They sell weapons to nearly every regime imaginable, irrespective of human rights violations. They wage war without Congressional approval — the recent 12-day assault on Iran being just the latest example.

(The second Trump administration has, in fact, launched almost as many air strikes, especially in Yemen and Somalia, in its first five months as the Biden administration did in four years.) Those same leaders have been doing a bang-up job dismantling the America I thought I was serving when I took that oath and put on second lieutenant's bars four decades ago. That America — assuming it ever existed — may now be gone forever.

**FUBAR: A republic in ruins**  
My fellow citizens, America is FUBAR (a term that dates from World War II). We are not faintly who we claim to be. Rather than a functioning republic, we are an ailing, flailing, perhaps even failing empire. We embrace war, glorify warriors, and profit mightily from the global arms trade, no matter the civilian toll, including tens of thousands of dead and wounded children in Gaza, among the latest victims of US-made bombs, bullets, and missiles. Signs of moral rot are everywhere. Our president, who



would like to be known for his budget cuts, nonetheless giddily celebrates a record trillion-dollar war budget. Our secretary of defense gleefully promotes a warrior ethos. Congress almost unanimously supports or acquiesces in the destruction of Gaza. Images from the region resemble bombed-out Stalingrad in 1942 or Berlin in 1945. Meanwhile, for more than two decades now, America's leaders have claimed to be waging a successful global "war on terror" even as they fuel terror across the globe. What do they think all those US weapons are for — spreading peace?

My wife and I cope through dark humor. We see news on cuts to Medicaid, the mentally ill in the streets, and crumbling infrastructure, and quip: "But Bibi [Netanyahu] needs bombs. Or Ukraine does. Or the Pentagon needs more nukes." That's why Americans can't have nice things like health care. That's why all too many of us are unhoused, in debt, out of work, and desperate. In 1967 — yes, that's almost 60 years ago! — Martin Luther King warned of exactly this: America's approaching spiritual death through militarism (aggravated by extreme materialism and racism). That death is visibly here, now. Washington is not even faintly committed to "peace through strength," a vapid slogan touted by the Trump administration, and an unintentional echo of George Orwell's dystopian "war is peace." It is committed instead to what passes for dominance through colossal military spending and persistent war. And let's face it, that warpath may well end in the death of the American experiment.

**Mediocrity of US generals**  
In this era of creeping authoritarianism and mass surveillance, perhaps the US is lucky that its generals are, by and large, so utterly uninspired. Today's American military isn't open to the mercurial and meteoric talents of a Napoleon or a Caesar. Not in its upper ranks, at least. One struggles to name a truly great American general or admiral since World War II. That war produced household names like George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton, and Chester W. Nimitz. In contrast, America's recent generals — Norman Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell of Desert Storm fame, Tommy Franks in Iraq in 2003, David Petraeus and Stanley McChrystal of the "fragile" and "reversible" Iraq and Afghan

"surges" — have left anything but a legacy of excellence or moral leadership, not to speak of decisive victory. At best, they were narrowly competent; at worst, morally compromised and dangerously deluded.

Mind you, this isn't a criticism of this country's rank-and-file troops. The young Americans I served with showed no lack of courage. It wasn't their fault that the wars they found themselves in were misbegotten and mismanaged. Twenty years have passed since I served alongside those young troops, glowing with pride and purpose in their dedication, their idealism, their commitment to their oath of service. Many paid a high price in limbs, minds, or lives. Too often, they were lions led by donkeys, to borrow a phrase once used to describe the inept and callous British leadership during World War I at bloody battles like the Somme (1916) and Passchendaele (1917).

Today, I fear that America's lions may, sooner or later, be led into even deeper catastrophe — this time possibly a war with China. Any conflict with China would likely rival, if not surpass, the disasters produced by World War I. The world's best military, which US presidents have been telling us we have since the 9/11 attacks of September 2001, stands all too close to being committed to just such a war in Asia by donkeys like Donald Trump and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth. And for what? The island of Taiwan is often mentioned, but the actual reason would undoubtedly be to preserve imperial hegemony in the service of corporate interests. War, as General Smedley Butler wrote in 1935 after he retired from the military, is indeed a racket, one from which the rich exempt themselves (except when it comes to taking profits from the same).

A disastrous conflict with China, likely ending in a US defeat (or a planetary one), could very well lead to a repeat of some even more extreme version of Trump's Make America Great Again campaign, amplified and intensified by humiliation and resentment. From the ashes of that possible defeat, an American Napoleon or Caesar (or at least a wannabe imitator) could very well emerge to administer the coup de grace to what's left of our democracy and freedom.

**Avoiding colossal act of folly**  
War with China isn't, of course, inevitable, but America's current posture makes it more likely. Trump's tariffs, his bombastic rhetoric, and this country's ex-

tensive military exercises in the Pacific contribute to rising tensions, not de-escalation and rapprochement.

While this country invests in war and more war, China invests in infrastructure and trade, in the process becoming what the US used to be: the world's indispensable workhorse. As the 10 BRICS countries, including China, expand and global power becomes more multipolar, this country's addiction to military dominance may drive it to lash out. With ever more invested in a massive military war hammer, impetuous leaders like Trump and Hegseth may see China as just another nail to be driven down. It would, of course, be a colossal act of folly, though anything but a first in history.

And speaking of folly, the US military, as it's configured today, is remarkably similar to the force I joined in 1985. The focus remains on ultra-expensive weapons systems, including the dodgy F-35 jet fighter, the unnecessary B-21 Raider bomber, the escalatory Sentinel Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, and Trump's truly fantastical "Golden Dome" missile defense system (a ghostly rehash of President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" proposal, vintage 1983). Other militaries, meanwhile, are improvising, notably in low-cost drone technology (also known as UAS, or uncrewed autonomous systems) as seen in the Russia-Ukraine War, a crucial new arena of war-making where the US has fallen significantly behind China.

The Pentagon's "solution" here is to continue the massive funding of Cold War-era weapons systems while posing as open to innovation, as an embarrassing video of Hegseth walking with drones suggests. America's military is, in short, well-prepared to fight a major conventional war

against an obliging enemy like Iraq in 1991, but such a scenario is unlikely to lie in our future.

With respect to drones or UAS, I can hear the wheels of the military-industrial complex grinding away. A decentralized, low-cost, flexible cottage industry will likely be transformed into a centralized, high-cost, inflexible cash cow for the merchants of death. When the Pentagon faces a perceived crisis or shortfall, the answer is always to throw more money at it. Ka-ching!

Indeed, the recent profit margins of major military contractors like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and RTX (formerly Raytheon) have been astounding. Since 9/11, Boeing's stock has risen more than 400%. RTX shares are up more than 600%. Lockheed Martin, maker of the faltering F-35, has seen its shares soar by nearly 1,000%. And Northrop Grumman, maker of the B-21 Raider bomber and Sentinel ICBM, two legs of America's "modernized" nuclear triad, has seen its shares increase by more than 1,400%. Who says that war (even the threat of a global nuclear war) doesn't pay?

Meanwhile, the Pentagon's war budget, soaring to unprecedented levels, has been virtually immune to DOGE cuts. While Elon Musk and his whiz kids searched for a few billion in savings by gutting education or squelching funding for public media like PBS and NPR, the Pentagon emerged with about \$160 billion in new spending authority. As president Biden once reminded us: Show me your budget and I'll tell you what you value. Far too often, America's leaders, whatever they've said in their election campaigns, have valued weapons and wars over almost anything else.

*The full article first appeared on TomDispatch.*

The most recent US presidents from left to right: George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and current US President Donald Trump  
● ELISE SWAIN/THE INTERCEPT

Images from Gaza resemble bombed-out Stalingrad in 1942 or Berlin in 1945. Meanwhile, for more than two decades now, America's leaders have claimed to be waging a successful global "war on terror" even as they fuel terror across the globe. What do they think all those US weapons are for — spreading peace?

The illustration shows US dollars raining over a picture of US President Donald Trump looking at an image of an F-47 sixth-generation fighter jet in the Oval Office at the White House.  
● FOX NEWS





# Azmoun wins Golden Ball in UAE Pro League Awards

## Sports Desk

Shabab Al Ahli striker Sardar Azmoun won the Golden Ball for Best Player of the Emirati ADNOC Pro League 2024/25 season, beating fellow Iranian Mahdi Qayedi and Sharjah's Brazilian winger Caio Lucas to the prestigious prize. In his debut season in Asian club football, Azmoun scored 11 goals and contributed six assists in 21 league appearances to lead nine-time champion Shabab Al Ahli to a second top-flight trophy in three seasons and secure a place in the league phase of the upcoming AFC Champions Elite season. "I'm so thrilled and feel incredible – maybe even too excited to sleep tonight!" Azmoun said after receiving the award, adding, "I want to thank everyone who made this possible: my teammates, the club president, the fans, the coach, my wife, and all those who supported me.

They played a huge role in my success and always encouraged me. I hope this journey continues and that I keep shining."

"My main goal is to shine again next season and win trophies with the team. I believe in this squad and these players. The challenges ahead are tough, but with this group, we can excel and keep winning titles. I love scoring goals, especially in the finals as it makes it all the more exciting."

When Azmoun left Bayer Leverkusen last summer to join Shabab Al Ahli, his move was widely regarded as the beginning of the end for the 30-year-old striker. However, a prolific campaign saw him bag 26 goals and 10 assists in 39 outings across all competitions as Shabab Al Ahli also won the UAE Super Cup and Qatar-UAE Challenge Shield. Azmoun was the joint leading marksman – alongside Caio Lucas – in the AFC Champions League Two with

nine strikes, though Shabab Al Ahli crashed out in the quarterfinals, courtesy of a shootout defeat against eventual champion Sharjah.

Azmoun's international teammate Qayedi, meanwhile, enjoyed an impressive loan season with Ittihad Kalba, registering 16 goals and seven assists in 23 league games – second-highest goal contribution in the Emirati top flight behind Al Ain's Togolese forward Kodjo Laba.

The Iranian international winger was also the third-top scorer and fourth-best assist provider in the league last season before securing a permanent move to Al Nasr from parent club Shabab Al Ahli in July.



Shabab Al Ahli striker Sardar Azmoun (R) poses for a photo with the Golden Ball for Best Player of the season during the UAE Pro League Awards in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on August 9, 2025. [uaeproleague.ae](https://uaeproleague.ae)



## Chengdu 2025 World Games:

### Abazari bags bronze as Iran finishes with double karate medals

## Sports Desk

Saleh Abazari settled for a kumite bronze as Iran finished with double karate medals at The World Games in Chengdu, China. Representing the country in the men's +84kg category, Abazari began his campaign with a 4-3 victory over American Eddie Sagilyan but fell to a 3-2 defeat against the host's Zhai Ang before sharing the spoils with Taha Mahmoud (2-2) to stand second to the Egyptian in the Pool B table and progress to the semifinals. Former Asian champion Abazari suffered a 4-0 setback against Ukraine's Ryzvan Talibov in the last four but still bounced back to come out victorious (6-4) in a rematch against Mahmoud in the third-place bout and win a consolation bronze. "Thank God I had a decent

performance in the third-place bout. I had beaten the Egyptian opponent several times before. He is the number one of the class in the world rankings, and I had to work hard to overcome a three-point deficit and beat him. I just want to dedicate this medal to my fellow Iranians," Abazari said after his victory over Mahmoud. "Saleh had a major finger injury before the Games but refused to undergo surgery," Iran head coach Shahram Heravi said, adding, "He truly deserved to win the gold here and I am sure he will shine again in the future tournaments." Elsewhere on Saturday, reigning Asian champion Atousa Golshadnejad was left empty-handed in the women's -61kg class following a 5-0 loss to Nour-sin Ali of Egypt. Golshadnejad had beaten the Egyptian fighter 2-1

earlier in the day, before victories over Laura Sivert (3-0) of France and Kazakhstan's Assel Kanay (3-2) saw the Iranian girl finish atop the Pool B standings. However, Golshadnejad was undone (2-1) by Japanese Sarara Shimada in the semifinals before the third-place defeat against Ali. Sara Bahmanyar had won a first medal for Iran in the kumite contests on the preceding night in Chengdu, defeating some high-profile karatekas – including reigning world champion Moldir Zhangbyrbay of Kazakhstan in the final – to walk away with the ultimate prize in the women's -50kg event. Former world bronze medalist Bahmanyar opened her account with a 4-0 victory over back-to-back European champion Ema Sgardelli of Croatia and then edged past against



Iranian karateka Saleh Abazari (L) poses with his kumite bronze medal alongside head coach Shahram Heravi at The World Games in Chengdu, China, on August 9, 2025. [IKF](https://ikf.org)

Zhangbyrbay by hantei (judges' decision) after it finished scoreless.



[iranaiba.ir](https://iranaiba.ir)

## Iranian boxer Chehreqani scoops Asian U19 gold

## Sports Desk

Iran's Ali Chehreqani finished his campaign at the U22 & U19 Asian Boxing Championships on a high note by claiming the 60kg gold medal in the men's under-19 age category in Bangkok, Thailand. Having beaten opponents from Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, and the host country en route to the final, the Iranian prodigy defeated Kazakhstan's Adil Tortbik in Sunday's showdown to walk away with the ultimate prize. Chehreqani's triumph added a fifth medal to Iranian

boys' haul in Bangkok, after Mahdi Rouzbehani (50kg), Ashkan Hashemi (65kg), Mohammad-Saleh Mesbahi (70kg), and Abbas Garshasbi (+90kg) had suffered last-four setbacks to settle for a consolation bronze. Amirreza Soltani (-55kg) and Arvin Shahbabaei (90kg), meanwhile, left Bangkok empty-handed following first-round defeats in their respective weight classes. Further glory is on the cards for Iran in the under-22 event today, as Sam Estaki takes on the Uzbek boxer in the final showpiece of the 85kg contests.



[gazetekayseri.com](https://gazetekayseri.com)

## Haitian striker Nazon joins Esteghlal

## Sports Desk

Esteghlal signed Haitian international striker Duckens Nazon on a three-year contract – reportedly worth €850,000 – the Persian Gulf Pro League club announced on Sunday. Nazon, 31, bagged eight goals and four assists in 33 Süper Lig appearances for Kayserispor last season, taking his tally to 10 goals and five assists across two seasons with the Turkish top-flight side. The former Coventry City and CSKA Sofia player, who has an impressive 40 goals in 68 international caps, is the 10th sum-

mer signing for the Tehran Blues, who have Portuguese Ricardo Sa Pinto back on the bench as the head coach and are desperate to improve on last season's ninth-place finish in the domestic league. Esteghlal's activity in the market gathered pace in recent days as the club secured the signing of Albanian international winger Jasir Asani last week, before former Real Madrid and Sporting CP goalkeeper Antonio Adán came in as a free agent, while young Iranian striker Saied Saharkhizan joined from Russian club FC Orenburg on a three-year contract.



# Semnan Province boasting rich legacy of historic urban fabrics

## Iranica Desk

Reviving old buildings, including historic houses, is considered a cultural and social necessity that strengthens the sense of belonging and pride in local history and culture. Accordingly, the identification of valuable historic houses in Semnan Province and their restoration process should be accelerated.

Entering an old building is like flipping through the pages of a diary filled with light and shadow. It feels as if time pauses at that very moment. The scent of aged wood and walls filled with memories awakens a sense of nostalgia and tranquility within you, IRNA wrote.

As you step into an environment surrounded by silence, you experience a strange feeling; your mind becomes immersed in thoughts and questions. This house was once full of noise and the flow of life, but now silence is its companion and soulmate. Watching the tall ceilings adorned with delicate patterns tells the story and reveals a space full of untold tales and hidden secrets. When the soft light shines through the old windows and gentle, playful shadows appear on the walls, it seems that every corner of the house has something to say.

Hearing the gentle sound of water trickling in the pool amid the overwhelming silence and seeing a lone tree beside the pool decorated with geranium and rose flowers takes your thoughts back to the days when this house witnessed the joyful and hard moments of life.

In short, every step inside a historic house is a journey into the heart of its history and culture. Every house holds a narrative of the sweet and bitter lives of our ancestors. Every house conveys a deep sense of connection with past generations and creates a cultural belonging in the heart. Historic houses are a legacy from both distant and recent pasts and serve as symbols of the authenticity, cultural identity, and



Taherian House  
● IRNA



Amir Museum Garden  
● IRNA



Kalantar House  
● IRNA



Tadayon House  
● IRNA

historical heritage of every society. With their unique architecture and distinctive decorations, they reflect the lifestyle, art, and technology of their time. Observing these houses fills the viewer with pride in their homeland and a deep respect for local history and culture.

Each historic house tells the stories and experiences of previous generations. Reviving and maintaining these houses is a valuable and strategic action in preserving cultural roots and preventing the forgetting of history. It also lays the groundwork for developing cultural and economic tourism, which strengthens social interactions, expands civilization and culture, and introduces Iranian

architecture and art on the international stage.

The first step in revitalizing historic houses is to identify how many valuable houses exist that have the potential for restoration and revival without losing their authenticity. To obtain this data, careful study, research, and review of historical documents, maps, photos, and related records for historic houses is necessary to create a comprehensive database. Some efforts are already underway in Semnan Province in this regard, but they need to be accelerated. The revival of historic houses helps preserve traditional architectural styles and techniques. These historic houses serve as

living examples for education and inspiration and, once restored, can function as museums, art galleries, centers for workshops and cultural events, eco-tourism lodges, traditional hotels, or educational centers specializing in architecture, restoration, and local history.

Historic houses can become local gathering spaces, community centers, or cultural hubs that strengthen social cohesion. Alternatively, they can serve as offices for small businesses, art studios, or handicraft shops. Semnan Province boasts diverse climates and natural features as well as a rich historical heritage with numerous ancient sites. It contains 11 historic urban

fabrics, about 100 intangible cultural assets, and over 1,833 identified historic, cultural, natural, and intangible sites.

Given the importance of reviving historic houses, it is expected that identifying and restoring historic houses in Semnan — known as the cradle of literature and mysticism — will receive even greater attention.

Semnan is historically known as “Dar al-Marhameh” (the hospitality place) due to its long history of hosting travelers along key routes. It is also Iran’s sole representative in the International Union of Tourism Cities along the Silk Road. The presence of architecturally ingenious caravanserais adapted to the climate

of each region reinforces this reputation.

From ancient times to today, Semnan lies along one of the main and busiest travel routes. Consequently, caravanserais were built to provide travelers resting places after long journeys or overnight stays.

In 2023, Semnan ranked second nationwide with five world-registered caravanserais, out of the 54 registered caravanserais in Iran, under the “Caravanserais of Iran” dossier.

Among Semnan’s world-registered caravanserais are three caravanserais in Meyami, one stone and brick caravanserai in Semnan, and one caravanserai in Garmsar.

## Grasping sense of time warp at mountain stronghold of Qamchqay

## Iranica Desk

Qamchqay Castle is situated in Bijar, perched atop a high mountain facing the Valley of the Kings, to the north of Qamchqay village in Karani District, within a protected area. The castle is notable for a stone relief featuring the Hieratic script — a writing system developed after Egyptian hieroglyphs. Some specialists speculate that the ancient Sumerians were the original founders of Qamchqay Castle.

Archaeological and historical evidence at Qamchqay Castle spans a broad range of eras, including remains from as early as 1000 BCE, with layers from the Sassanid, Seljuk, and Ilkhanate dynasties. Despite diverse signs from various periods, experts suggest the fundamental structure of the castle dates back roughly 2,500 to 2,000 BCE, visitiran.ir wrote.

Historically, Qamchqay Castle remained in use throughout the Parthian and Sassanid times,



● visitiran.ir

continuing until the attack by the Roman Emperor Heraclius on the Azargoshnasp Fire Temple at Takht-e Soleyman — which lies

100km north of Qamchqay Castle — after which the castle was destroyed. Spanning more than 5,000 sq.m,

the castle’s walls reach heights of up to 200m. Flanked by the valley on three sides and protected by surrounding heights, only the

northern side required defense, where remnants of a thick defensive wall made from stone, rubble, and mortar still stand,

complete with half-cylinder towers likely used as lookout posts — similar in style to the fortifications at Azargoshnasp. The main entrance was also on the northern side.

Below the remains of the northern defensive walls, additional structures from later centuries can be found along the riverbed. The underground shelter of Qamchqay Castle descends 41 steps, built of stone and located beneath the main structure. The castle was accessible from outside solely through a narrow pathway. It also houses an Ab Anbar (traditional water reservoir), accessed by a corridor that closely resembles the design of the Ab Anbar at Azargoshnasp Fire Temple in Takab.

Access to the castle is challenging and requires a local guide due to the difficult terrain. The surrounding deep valley and dramatic bends add to the site’s exceptional and awe-inspiring scenery.





# Over 3m Arbaeen pilgrims cross Iran's border into Iraq

## Social Desk

More than three million pilgrims have crossed Iran's borders to attend this year's Arbaeen pilgrimage, the commander of Iran's national police announced Sunday. Arbaeen, a major Shia Muslim event commemorating the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), draws millions annually to the holy city of Karbala in Iraq, IRNA reported. The pilgrimage, marked by a mass walk toward Karbala, has seen a significant surge in numbers this year. "From the start of this year's operation, over three million pilgrims have crossed our borders," said Commander Ahmad Reza Radan during a visit to the official Khosravi border crossing. He added that more than 1.3 million

pilgrims have already returned to Iran. Khosravi Border Terminal, a key gateway between Iran and Iraq, accounted for nearly 450,000 departures and about 120,000 arrivals, Radan noted. He highlighted the improved facilities and better weather conditions at Khosravi compared to other crossings such as Shalamcheh and Mehran, calling it "a reliable and convenient choice for pilgrims." The commander emphasized that the border's welfare services and infrastructure allow pilgrims to pass through "with speed and ease." Thanks to coordination between the Kermanshah governor, police, and border officials, services at Khosravi have been enhanced this year. Development plans are underway to further improve conditions for pilgrims next year.

Radan urged those planning to travel in the remaining days before Arbaeen to choose Khosravi crossing, assuring that security forces are fully committed to ensuring their safety. The Khosravi border is Iran's oldest official crossing to Iraq for pilgrims heading to the holy shrines in Karbala and Najaf. Historically part of the Silk Road, it remains a strategic gateway linking Iran to Baghdad and beyond. The border town of Qasr-e Shirin, with over 27,000 residents and more than 186 km of Iraq border, hosts Khosravi and Parvizkhan crossings. It offers 14 lodging facilities with 322 rooms and 1,200 beds to accommodate travelers. Last year, about one million pilgrims crossed Khosravi during Arbaeen, and this year's figures have doubled, signaling the growing importance of this route for the pilgrimage.



● IRNA

## Iranian students bag top prizes at Yakutsk, Seoul science contests



## Social Desk

Iranian students took home top honors at two global innovation events in Russia and South Korea in July, the Iranian Education Ministry. The teams competed at the Yakutia International Science Fair (YISF) from July 6 to 9 in Yakutsk and the World Invention Creativity Olympics (WICO) from July 17 to 19 in Seoul. The dual triumph underscored Iran's growing presence on the international science stage, with young inventors

showcasing projects from AI-driven waste segregation systems to seizure-predicting medical devices. Both contests drew hundreds of participants from more than two dozen nations, offering what officials called "a global stage" for emerging talent. At YISF, which brought together 129 teams from 10 countries, Mehran Rajabi and Alireza Jafarnejad won first place in physics, astronomy and engineering for their "EcoNet Bin," an AI-powered, IoT-enabled waste sorting system. Siblings Moeid and Helena Rajabi took second place for a smart child safety solution using IoT and image processing. Third place went to a team led by Artin Radmatin for a project on magnetic gears in process systems. Zhina Aminorroaya-Karlalani won a special prize for her "UVGuard

Grooming Brush." In the mathematics, computer science and IT category, Artin Salari and Amir-Abbas Kavosi Amin ranked second with smart glasses for the blind using real-time object detection, while Ilia Majidzadeh Heravi and Parsa Karimi Yazdi placed third for a deaf communication app called "CommunityMate." At WICO, hosted by the Korea University Invention Association, 313 teams from 28 countries competed. Radin Abbasi and Sam Rashidi won gold for "NannyBot," a humanoid robot designed to manage children's activities through IoT. Silver medals went to Matin Hayati for seizure prediction via EEG frequency band analysis and to Raman Nafarieh for research on plant nanogels in skin cancer treatment.

## Pezeshkian: Farshchian's name will remain 'forever' in Iran's cultural history

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that master painter Mahmoud Farshchian's name will remain "forever" in the nation's cultural history, issuing a tribute after the 95-year-old miniature artist died in the United States. Pezeshkian's statement positioned the artist's death as a profound cultural loss, emphasizing that Farshchian had breathed "fresh spirit" into Iran's ancient painting traditions while elevating the country's profile on the world stage, IRNA reported. "Without doubt, the memory and name of Master Farshchian and his brilliant works will remain like a shining jewel in the history of culture and art of this land," the president wrote in his condolence message released through the government information portal. The president specifically praised three of Farshchian's masterpieces, The Evening of

Ashura, 'Kawthar,' and 'The Guarantor of the Gazelle,' describing them as mirrors of "love, faith and the glory of Islamic Iranian culture and Shiite history." Pezeshkian called the Isfahan-born artist's passing a "bitter loss" for Iran's artistic community and cultural enthusiasts nationwide. He extended formal condolences to Farshchian's family while highlighting the painter's role as both guardian and innovator of Persian miniature art. The presidential tribute underscored Iran's efforts to project cultural soft power through its artistic heritage. Pezeshkian emphasized that Farshchian had not only preserved "the authenticity and glory of Iranian painting" but had also brought international recognition to the country through his "unparalleled innovation and taste." Farshchian died Saturday after battling pneumonia, according to the Iranian Academy of Arts.



The artist had lived in the United States for years while maintaining strong ties to his homeland's cultural institutions. Pezeshkian called on future generations of artists and students to carry forward Farshchian's "glorious and valuable school" of painting. Born January 24, 1930, in Isfahan, Farshchian carved out a unique position in modern Iranian art by revitalizing miniature painting for contemporary audiences. His works frequently drew from Islamic narratives and Shiite religious themes, resonating deeply with Iran's cultural identity.

## Iranian radio productions named as finalists in ABU Prizes 2025

## Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian radio works have advanced to the final round of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Prizes 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The ABU Prizes, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, are among the region's most prestigious media awards, ILNA reported. The finalists from Iran include the radio documentary 'The Hidden Path', produced by Zahra Sarbazi for Radio Iran; the audio feature 'Far East, Near East', written, directed and hosted by Mohsen Rasuli for Radio Goftogoo; and the radio drama 'Autumn Dream', written and directed by Fereydown Mehrabi for Radio Namayesh. These works will compete in their respective categories—documentary, pod-

cast/audio feature and long-form drama, under this year's theme, "Journey". 'The Hidden Path' follows two young Iranians through their "secret" illegal migration, capturing their hopes and fears both before departure and years later, offering a powerful, time-spanning contrast. 'Far East, Near East' explores the cultural and economic spread of South Korea's "Hallyu" wave, juxtaposing it with perceived neglect of Iran's rich cultural legacy. 'Autumn Dream', a loosely adapted radio version of Nader Ebrahimi's novel 'Once Again the City I Loved,' was performed and recorded in Studio 8 of Radio Namayesh with Mehrabi leading a radio ensemble in Tehran. Final winners across radio and television will be announced during the ABU annual general assembly, scheduled for September of this year in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

## Shapouri wins best director at Milan Gold Awards

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ashkan Shapouri took home the Best Director Award at the Milan Gold Awards on August 9 for his drama 'The Last Tango with Pari'. The festival jury praised Shapouri's "classic, ambitious direction" and awarded him for creating a gripping dramatic atmosphere. Shapouri dedicated the prize to the children of Gaza, highlighting the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region, IRNA reported. The film is a dark romantic drama that follows Mahour, a theater makeup artist caring for her father who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. The film holds the record at

the Los Angeles Hollywood Festival with nominations in 11 artistic categories. Shapouri's work has also won the Best Screenplay award at the Athens Film Festival earlier this year and earned accolades at other international festivals, including Route 66 (USA), Athens (Greece), and Love Film Festival (USA). The film's power lies in its simple yet striking portrayal of Alzheimer's, a subject close to Shapouri's heart. "Ten years ago, I was making a film in a nursing home, where some patients had Alzheimer's. I wanted to tell a story about an Alzheimer's patient," he said. Shapouri explained that his own grandmother struggled with the disease



for years, which motivated him to bring this story to the screen. A Belgian doctor who watched the film recommended it to medical colleagues and families of Alzheimer's patients for its sensitive depiction. Shapouri reflected on why the film resonated with audiences and judges alike, "The bridge it builds with viewers through straightforward storytelling

and its subtle romance moved the jury deeply." Regarding his decision to dedicate the award to Gaza's children, Shapouri said, "What Israel is doing is sheer destruction. The injustice against the children and people of Gaza is a humanitarian disaster. We cannot stay silent." He called on filmmakers with a global voice to speak out against such tragedies.