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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) shakes hands with Oman's Interior Minister Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi during a meeting in Tehran on October 27, 2025.
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Ifs & buts of new order in Mideast after October 7



By **Rahman Ghahremanpour**
International affairs analyst

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The debate over establishing a new regional order in the Middle East has once again taken center stage, particularly after the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit and the Gaza peace agreement. While the idea itself is hardly new, the United States appears eager to test its luck once more, convinced that, after the October 7 attacks, con-

ditions have been set for shifting the regional balance of power in favor of Washington and its allies in the Middle East.

Since the end of the Cold War, the notion of a "new Middle East order" has surfaced repeatedly on the agendas of both US and European policymakers. Yet every time, it has run into major obstacles, ultimately failing to materialize. Today, doubts about the feasibility of such an order remain as serious as ever.

The foremost obstacle is Washington's lack of balance in its foreign policy toward Israel and the Arab

world. The US has never maintained an even-handed approach to the Palestinian issue. Instead, it has offered unwavering political, military, and diplomatic support to Israel, routinely vetoing UN Security Council resolutions critical of Tel Aviv. The result has been deep and lasting mistrust among Arab nations, who believe the unbreakable and special relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv makes any balanced American policy in the region impossible.

A second major obstacle lies in the regional dynamics that have defined the Middle East over the past three

decades. The emergence of the Axis of Resistance has been among the most significant following the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, which, paradoxically, only strengthened this axis and empowered contrary to US intentions. The rise of this coalition seriously challenged Washington's Middle East policies and put forward a new solution to the Palestinian issue from the perspective of political Islam. In many ways, the October 7 operation was a concerted effort to weaken this axis and its approach to the historic Palestinian issue.

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Pezeshkian: Iran, Oman espousing each other in regional vicissitudes

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday hailed “long-standing and cordial” relations between Tehran and Muscat, stressing that the two West Asian countries have always stood by each other through the region’s ups and downs.

In a meeting with visiting Oman’s Interior Minister Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi in the Iranian capital, Pezeshkian stated that interactions between the two countries have always been built on brotherhood, mutual respect, and goodwill.

The Iranian president also expressed appreciation for Oman’s constructive role in regional affairs, saying that Oman’s efforts — especially its mediation between Iran and the United States — are worthy of praise and show the peace-seeking approach of the officials of the Persian Gulf country.

Pezeshkian also praised Oman’s “clear

and firm stance” in supporting the oppressed people of Gaza and condemning Israel’s crimes in the Gaza Strip as “highly valuable.”

“If all Islamic countries had supported the people of Gaza with such an approach, we would not be witnessing these bitter and tragic events in this region,” the Iranian president said.

Pezeshkian added that if Islamic countries stand united, they will turn into a great power that will safeguard the interests and security of Muslim nations and will ward off any aggression or violation against Islamic lands.

He expressed hope that the visit by the Omani minister would pave the way for further strengthening of the ties between the two countries, adding that Iran is ready to broaden its interactions with Oman in all scientific, economic, cultural, social, and political fields.

The Omani minister, for his part, appreciated Pezeshkian’s stance on expanding relations with Islamic



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) shakes hands with Oman’s Interior Minister Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi during a meeting in Tehran on October 27, 2025.

● **president.ir**

countries, saying, “This constructive approach from the Islamic Republic of Iran has always remained steady throughout past decades and has been pursued by Oman with the same spirit of brotherhood and goodwill.” Earlier in the day, the Omani official held a separate meeting with the Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani, during which they underlined the need to increase economic and security cooperation between the two countries.

The Omani minister also extended an official invitation to Larijani to visit Muscat.

Relations between Iran and Oman are among the oldest and most stable in



the Persian Gulf region. Despite regional tensions and shifting geopolitical alignments, Tehran and Muscat have maintained consistent, cordial, and pragmatic ties.

Oman has served as a key mediator by

hosting indirect talks, bridging communication gaps, and offering a neutral platform crucial to the high-stakes negotiations between the US and Iran on the Islamic Republic’s peaceful nuclear program in 2025.

Iran upbraids UN action vis-à-vis global developments

US, allies ‘biggest violators’ of UN Charter: *FM spox*



Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei addresses a ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the United Nations’ founding in Tehran on October 27, 2025.

● **IRNA**

International Desk

Iran on Monday criticized the United Nations’ treatment of recent developments in the Middle East region and across the globe, saying that the UN Security Council has failed to carry out its duties.

“The United Nations has not performed satisfactorily in its recent tests,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said during an address to a ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the United Nations’ founding.

“The (UN) Security Council, as the most important body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has fallen short of carrying out its duties, and this failure has negatively affected other aspects of the UN’s performance as well.”

Referring to a US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June, which killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians, Baqaei highlighted why Iran must hold the international community and the United Na-

tions accountable.

“Our country was attacked by the Zionist regime and the United States without any justification. In this test, the United Nations failed to perform effectively,” he underlined.

He further noted that the Security Council “due to US influence, was unable to issue even a brief statement condemning this aggression.”

“This same situation has been observed in other recent events, including the efforts by three European countries to reimpose terminated sanctions on Iran under the pretext of nuclear issues,” he added.

Despite clear biases within the UN Security Council and other bodies, and “unlawful and oppressive resolutions” against Iran, Baqaei said the country has “never torn apart the UN Charter in disrespect of its principles.”

“We have never considered the United Nations an ineffective body,” he said, contrasting Iran’s approach with the Israeli regime’s actions like threatening international court judges or designating the secretary-general as persona non grata.

“Now is not the time for retreat or inaction. We believe in justice, and

we have faith in a United Nations that truly represents the rights of nations,” he highlighted.

Baqaei elaborated that safeguarding international peace and security, alongside developing friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of people, were defined as the UN’s primary goals.

He lamented that from its inception, the UN’s principles have been subjected to “violation, arbitrary interpretation, and repeated abuse” by powers unable to free themselves from a “colonial mindset and delusion of superiority.” He pointed to the current global landscape, marred by endless wars, widespread injustice, and human dignity falling victim to greed and racism, as a consequence.

Baqaei also slammed “aggressive unilateralism” guiding the United States and its allies, which has plunged the world into unprecedented insecurity and chaos.

“Undoubtedly, the United States and some of its allies are the biggest violators of the principles and objectives of the UN Charter,” Baqaei stated.

According to Baqaei, the genocide in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Israeli regime’s military attacks on several countries, terrorist acts, and occupation of sovereign lands, all with the “full support and complicity” of the US and some European governments, created an atmosphere of “absolute impunity.”

Beijing insists on win-win cooperation with Tehran: *Envoy*

International Desk

China’s Ambassador to Iran Zhong Peiwu said his country insists on win-win cooperation with Iran to bring prosperity to the people of both nations.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, the Chinese diplomat said that Beijing is perusing the implementation of recent agreements reached between the leaders of the two countries.

China is Iran’s largest trade partner. The two Asian countries have expanded their relations in recent years, especially following the West’s illegal pressure on Iran due to its peaceful nuclear program.

Back in 2021, both countries signed a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement to further expand their cooperation in various fields, especially in economy.

“China and Iran agree on and practice multilateralism, and both countries hope to build a more equitable international order,” the Chinese ambassador said, adding that Tehran and Beijing have same positions on the issue which can establish a foundation for cooperation between the two countries.

Pointing to Iran’s tensions with the West over its nuclear program, Zhong said Beijing has always insisted that resolving Iran’s nuclear issue is only possible through political, diplomatic, and peaceful means.

“We oppose threats, coercion, and sanctions pressure. Certain countries insisted on triggering the snapback mechanism. This move was not constructive and has caused a serious setback in the diplomatic process concerning Iran’s nuclear issue.”

China calls on the United States and European



Zhong Peiwu
● **IRNA**

countries to show political goodwill, step up diplomatic efforts, bring the Iranian nuclear issue back onto the diplomatic track, and prevent any further escalation of tensions, he said. In 2015, Iran and world powers – including France, Britain and Germany – reached an agreement that saw the easing of international sanctions on Tehran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

But the United States, during Trump’s first term in office, unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and reimposed biting economic sanctions.

Tehran adhered to the deal until Washington’s withdrawal, and then began rolling back on its commitments.

The European parties to the deal also failed to fulfill their commitment to the agreement. Several rounds of talks to revive the agreement failed, and in August, the UK, Germany and France triggered the so-called “snapback” process on the pretext of Iran’s non-compliance with its obligations, leading to the re-imposition of the UN sanctions.

In a letter to the UN chief, Iran, China and Russia have denounced as “legally and procedurally flawed” the attempt by the three European countries aimed at restoring all UN Security Council sanctions against Iran previously lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal.

Russia says stands hand in hand with Iran against Western bullying

International Desk

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Moscow strongly condemns the bullying and coercive behavior of certain countries over Iran’s peaceful nuclear program, adding that Russia stands hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder with Iran.

“Over the past years, Russia and Iran have developed very deep, highly practical, and multifaceted cooperation, and I believe there is no mistrust between our countries,” Ryabkov told IRNA on the sidelines of the signing ceremony of the cooperation agreement among the Parliaments of BRICS member states in Moscow.



Sergei Ryabkov
● **IRNA**

“I hope those who are aware of the very difficult and challenging period that both our nations are going through will equally understand that Iran and Russia must stand even closer together.”

Ryabkov said that the Russian Federation is ready to strengthen its relations with Iran in all areas including economy, transportation and nuclear energy.

He also slammed the “bullying behavior” of certain countries toward Iran, saying, “The fact that some in the world — not only in the United States but also in Europe and the European Union — use Iran’s nuclear issue as a pretext for bullying and for resorting to military power against Iran runs counter to international security and the overall well-being of humanity. We strongly condemn this approach. We stand hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder with Iran.”

“We are also very grateful for all the support we receive from Iran — whether in the political sphere or in other areas. Such support is of great importance in this challenging period.”

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



NIPC targets domestic output of high-value petrochemical imports



Economy Desk

Iran plans to replace around \$2 billion worth of petrochemical imports with domestically made materials under its Seventh and Eighth Development Plans, said Deputy Oil Minister for Petrochemicals Hassan Abbaszadeh on Monday. Abbaszadeh, who also heads the National Iranian Petrochemical Co. (NIPC), said imported petrochemical products that downstream industries often struggled to source would soon be churned out locally. "Some \$2 billion worth of petrochemicals are imported annually," Abbaszadeh told the International Conference on Investment and Financing in the Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Industry in Tehran, according to Shana. "We have targeted these products for local production under the Seventh Development Plan (SDP), with the remainder to be rolled out during the Eighth Development Plan," he added, referring to two roadmaps that outlines Iran major policies in economy, security, education and foreign policy among others in the next nine years. The official noted that 66 projects were slated for completion by March 2029 under the SDP, requiring

around \$26 billion in investment. "These projects... are, on average, about 60% complete. So far, some \$13 billion has been invested in them, and satisfactory progress has been achieved," he added. The deputy oil minister underscored that ensuring a stable feedstock supply, attracting necessary investment, and securing reliable markets for petrochemical products were essential to sustaining growth in the sector. He also called for a "calm and stable business environment" to encourage private sector investors. "The focus of the petrochemical industry is on attracting investment from the genuine private sector," he said, noting that of the nearly \$92 billion invested in the sector to date, only about 15% of which coming from private investors. According to Abbaszadeh, 46 new petrochemical projects are ready for investment over the next decade. The SDP calls for expanding the country's annual petrochemical production capacity to 131 million tons, which now hovers around 100 million tons, with a particular focus on completing specific value chains that have remained underdeveloped.

Envoy: Pakistan, Iran near deal on barter trade mechanism



Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, holds a press briefing in Tehran on October 27, 2025.
● IRNA

Economy Desk

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, announced on Monday at a press briefing that the two countries have finalized a legal framework for a barter trade mechanism, signaling a significant step to boost bilateral commerce. "Recently, a legal framework for the barter trade mechanism has been finalized and will be implemented," Mudassir Tipu said. "This is a major development that will expand trade in multiple sectors," he added. He noted that the mechanism will eliminate financial transactions between the two countries, a measure specifically requested by Iran to enhance cross-border barter. While noting that negotiations on barter

exchanges are ongoing, the envoy said he plans to meet with Iranian officials to review and finalize the barter trade mechanism. On the operational details, Tipu said while general guidelines are in place, discussions are still ongoing about the implementation process and the specific goods to be traded, with decisions to be finalized by the business community. In addition to barter trade, Pakistan and Iran are in the final stages of signing a free trade agreement, according to the Pakistani official. He referred to a joint conference held last week in Pakistan, attended by Iran's Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq, which resulted in an agreement to reopen the transit route linking Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. During President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to the Pakistani capital earlier in August, a \$10 billion bilateral trade target was agreed between Tehran and Islamabad. Last year, bilateral trade reached \$3.129 billion, with \$2.423 billion in Iranian exports to Pakistan and \$700 million in Pakistani exports to Iran.

Tehran, Dushanbe agree on joint task force to digitize capital markets



Economy Desk

Iran and Tajikistan agreed to form a joint task force to digitalize capital market infrastructure and implement innovative financial projects during the "Bridge of Trust and Development" conference in Dushanbe on Monday. The agreement is part of a broader effort to expand bilateral cooperation in Islamic finance, green investment, and strengthened capital market supervision, IRNA reported. Green investment, a key focus of the collaboration, involves channeling funds into ventures that promote sustainability and environmental protection while still aiming for financial returns.

The specialized conference aimed to enhance financial collaboration between the two countries and strengthen their financial institutions. The event included technical sessions and professional training programs covering Islamic finance mechanisms, green investment, ESG principles (environmental, social, and corporate governance), and oversight of emerging markets. Iran and Tajikistan have maintained close economic and financial ties, with both countries seeking to strengthen capital markets, trade, and investment cooperation. In a related development on Saturday, Iran and Tajikistan agreed to expand cooperation in develop-



Officials from Iran and Tajikistan pose for a photo on the sidelines of the "Bridge of Trust and Development" conference in Dushanbe on October 27, 2025.
● IRNA

ing Tajikistan's capital market and establishing new exchanges. Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) expressed readiness to assist Tajikistan in setting up commodity exchanges and developing commodity-backed securities. According to SEO chief Hojatollah Seyyedi, the Saturday meeting marked "the beginning of deeper cooperation between the two countries to develop capital markets."

Khaf-Herat railway delivers first diesel shipment to Afghanistan

Economy Desk

Iran exported its first diesel shipment to Afghanistan via the Khaf-Herat railway on Sunday night, marking a new phase in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, a senior official from the Iran-Afghanistan Railway Development Consortium said on Monday. "The first shipment of diesel fuel, weighing 1,120 tons in 20 wagons, was dispatched through the rail border at Sham-

tigh," Mostafa Rezaei, CEO of the Iran-Afghanistan Railway Development Consortium, told IRNA. "With the arrival of the first cargo train at Rozanak station in Herat Province, a new chapter of economic and commercial cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan has begun." Rezaei added that, in the initial phase, the consortium is prepared to send over 30,000 tons of high-quality fuel monthly via the Khaf-Rozanak rail line. "Transporting these shipments without relying on road routes

and without border stops is an effective step to facilitate logistics and reduce trade costs," he said. He described the Khaf-Herat railway as a secure, sustainable, and efficient corridor for fuel exports. "This diesel export will not only boost bilateral trade but also pave the way for stable fuel and essential goods supply in Afghanistan, positively impacting Herat's energy market and stabilizing petroleum prices," he said.

According to IRNA, last year, 60,000 tons of export and transit goods were transported from Iran to Afghanistan via the Khaf-Herat railway and the Shamtigh border crossing. The Khaf-Herat rail link, connecting Iran's rail network to western Afghanistan, plays a key role in regional connectivity and forms part of an east-west rail corridor stretching over 2,000 kilometers from China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan through Iran and Turkey to Europe.



The Shamtigh customs and rail border crossing in southeastern

Khorasan Razavi Province was inaugurated in 2020.

Endless war in Middle East

Not learning from history or geography



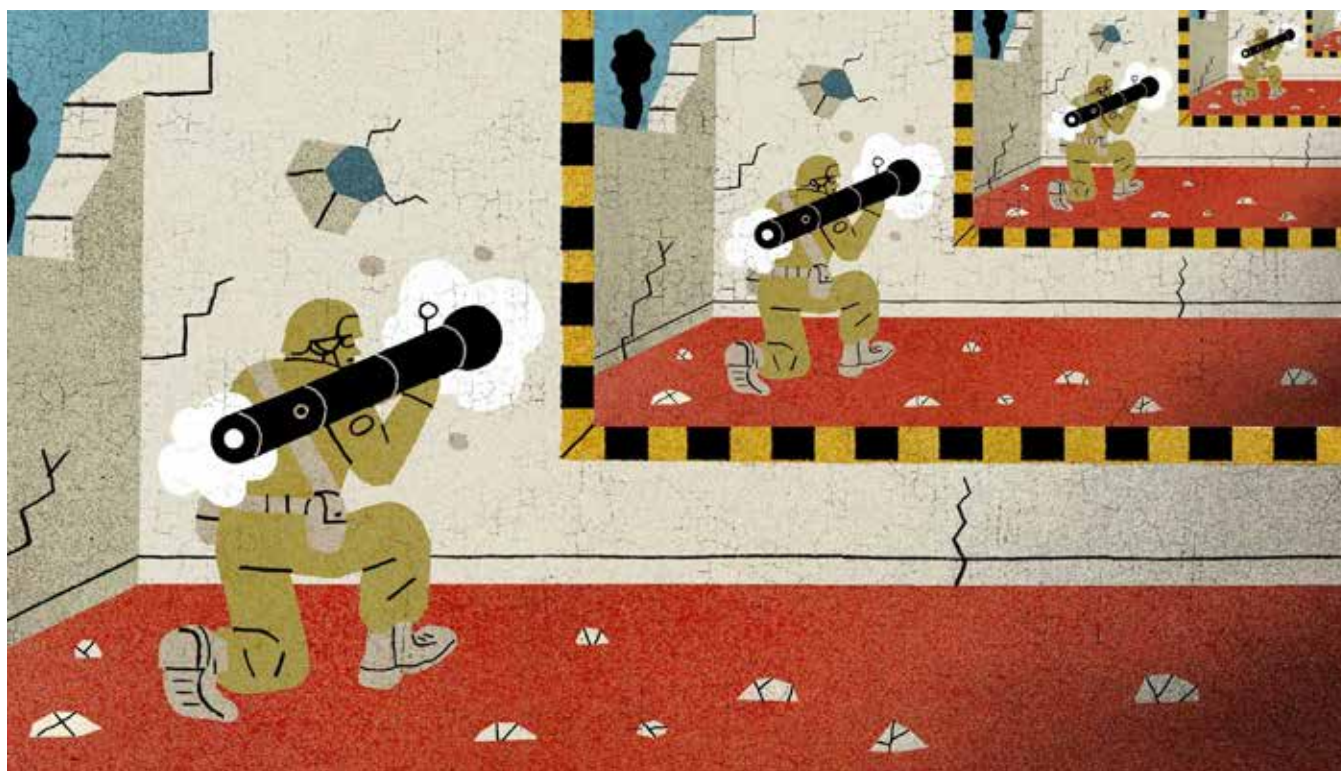
By Robert Home
Emeritus professor of
Land Management
at ARU

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Since the October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, the Israeli cabinet, increasingly isolated from international bodies, has retaliated with extreme measures to the extent of war crimes and genocide. The Israeli cabinet rejects such claims as anti-Semitism and serving the aims of Hamas, Iran, and its other enemies. The situation after October 7 is presented as a new chapter in the Middle East conflict, with the 100 years preceding it barely mentioned. Israel's enemies, especially Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran, are given the particular label of "terror" organizations, placing them beyond the normal rules of political behavior. Yet the very concept of "terror," especially since the US government declared a "war on terror" in 2001 following the 9/11 World Trade Centre attacks, has become increasingly confused, ill-defined, politicized, and self-serving. The UK Government now has over 80 organizations proscribed under its 2000 Terrorism Act, most recently the Palestine Action Group, whose supporters include many old-age pensioners appalled at Israel's actions in Gaza.

It is worth remembering that, before Israel declared itself an independent "state" on May 14, 1948, its "freedom fighters" also committed acts of terror in pursuit of its Zionist aims. Such acts included the assassination in 1944 of Lord Moyne (British resident commissioner in the Middle East), the bombing in 1946 of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem (headquarters of the British in mandate Palestine), and, within weeks of its independence, the now largely forgotten act of killing the United Nations Mediator in Palestine, the Swedish diplomat Count Bernadotte, in Jerusalem in September 1948, thereby declaring Israel's rejection of the UN-proposed partition arrangements. In the decades since then, Israel has embraced state terrorism, undertaking hundreds of "targeted assassinations" of its enemy leaders (and sometimes their families).

In spite of all this, Israel's war aims remain elusive and unachievable, including the elimination or "decapitation" of Hamas in Gaza. One cannot kill an idea, any more than the idea of Zionism itself can be killed. Those Gazans who survive the present onslaught from Israel are unlikely to become submissive, as Iran has shown in its reaction to the recent US bombing of its nuclear assets. The phrase "bomb them back to the Stone Age" attributed to American General Curtis LeMay in Vietnam in 1965, in the belief that this would bring the North Vietnamese to the peace table, only led to Nixon's bombing of Cambodia, and the Khmer Rouge killing fields where



● DAVID PLUNKERT/THE NEW YORKER

over a million people were killed from 1975 to 1979 as part of the broad, state-sponsored Cambodian genocide.

The October 7 attack was not a new chapter, but a response to the suppression (or "collective punishment") of the people of Gaza under increasingly heavy Israeli control since the 1967 war. It was nearly 40 years ago, in 1987, when a British politician (David Mellor) criticized the "inhumane" living conditions in Gaza, and the two intifadas (1987-93 and 2000-2005) followed, as well as the assassination of Rabin in 1995 in Israeli rejection of his "land for peace" initiative. The list goes on.

The present Israeli cabinet's hard-line strategy, even recently attacking Qatar, the failed diplomatic intermediary in the region, seems to contemplate a policy of endless war against most of its Middle Eastern neighbours, which it justifies in the cause of anti-Semitism and Zionism. "They make a desert and call it peace," in the words of the Roman historian Tacitus, quoting an enemy of Rome thus:

"These plunderers of the world, after exhausting the land by their devastations, are rifling the ocean: stimulated by avarice, if their enemy be rich; by ambition, if poor; unsatiated by the East and by the West: the only people who behold wealth and indigence with equal avidity. To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace."

To draw further upon classical Greek and Middle Eastern themes, one can draw in the so-called "black paintings" of the Spanish painter Goya. At the age of 75, alone, in mental and physical despair, deaf and alienated from the Spanish royal court, he painted them directly onto the walls of his house outside Madrid, never intending them to be seen by the public. Two of them speak to the never-ending Middle Eastern conflict. One is Saturn (or Cronos) devouring his own children, his face contorted by self-disgust, disturbed by a prophecy that one of his offspring would overthrow him — a future for the region's

young men, whether Arab or Israeli? Another depicts two men fighting each other with cudgels, trapped knee-deep in a quagmire, unable to see any way out. That painting apparently drew upon the myth of the Phoenician prince Cadmus, who sowed dragon's teeth in the ground, from which sprang a race of fierce, armed men who fought each other until the few survivors helped him build his new citadel of Thebes. By stirring up discord to reach peace, Cadmus became acclaimed in myth as a great hero and slayer of monsters.

So, what hope for the Middle East? Yet another legend is that of the Gordian Knot, tied to secure an oxcart to a post, and whoever could untie it would become the ruler of all Asia. When in 333 BC Alexander the Great encountered this challenge, unable to untie the knot, he cut it through with his sword, a bold act that became a metaphor for solving a complex problem with decisive, forceful action.

This opinion piece is being written on the (perhaps histor-

ic) day when states in the UN General Assembly officially recognized a Palestinian state, which just might be such an opportunity. The region faces many urgent challenges: impacts of climate change, population growth, food insecurity, and water scarcity, to name but a few. Israel, with its ingenuity and technological resources, could contribute so much and restore a sense of common humanity in addressing the region's needs. But the Israeli cabinet is still committed to an approach that can only be self-destructive if it continues in the face of huge international condemnation. To get past ancient hatreds and divisions towards such a future would mean turning swords into plowshares, according to the Old Testament Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:3. A contradictory view in Joel 3:10 calls the nations to a final, futile war against God and His people, converting their farming tools into weapons, but such human rebellion against God's judgment would be soundly defeated. How long do we have to wait?



These plunderers of the world, after exhausting the land by their devastations, are rifling the ocean: stimulated by avarice, if their enemy be rich; by ambition, if poor; unsatiated by the East and by the West: the only people who behold wealth and indigence with equal avidity. To ravage, to slaughter, to usurp under false titles, they call empire; and where they make a desert, they call it peace.



● "Duel with Cudgels" (1820-23) by Spanish painter Francisco de Goya
● wga.hu

Why is Israel unwilling to stop war in Middle East?



↑ Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, enters the Israeli side of the fence in Gaza City, Gaza, on October 7, 2023.
● HANI ALSHAER/ANADOLU AGENCY

By Behrouz Ayaz
Political analyst

**OPINION
EXCLUSIVE**

The Hamas attack on Israel on October 7 was a major turning point for the Middle East order. Israel sees this attack as a justification for destroying Hamas, bombing Gaza, the Islamic Republic, and its four Hs — Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis (Ansarullah), and Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Forces) — in the Middle East.

Given the skill of the leaders of these groups in sheltering in highly secure locations, it was not expected that Israel would be able to kill them quickly. This demonstrates Israel's high intelligence power and deep penetration into the intelligence organization of its adversaries. This also raises the question: how was Israel so terribly surprised by the October 7 attack? More specifically, how could an intelligence organization like Mossad, which knew the exact whereabouts of the Hezbollah and Hamas leaders, not have been informed of the October 7 operation in advance?

It seems that the October 7 operation was a project and an opportunity for Tel Aviv, rather than a surprise attack, through which it could target its enemies and advance its territorial expansion plan.

But can killing ideological opponents also kill their ideologies? Definitely, not. So, why is Israel unwilling to stop the war? In other words, what is the benefit of these unfinished wars for Israel?

Some analysts within Iran believe that the war has become an identity politics for Israel, through which it can achieve its internal cohesion. Israel cannot maintain its political and social integration without war. Some other Iranians see these endless Israeli wars in line with the ideology of Zionism, "from

the Nile to the Euphrates". Furthermore, this war is the best excuse for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to stay in power and delays his corruption cases in court. Still others see this war as a matter of regional hegemony and geopolitical competition. Tel Aviv does not see the current geopolitical order of the Middle East as being in its favor.

By considering the points above, one can understand the reasons for Israel's attack on Iran. The Islamic Republic has declared for years that it does not intend to produce nuclear weapons. However, Israel attacked Iran on June 13 under the pretext of a preemptive strike to prevent the production of nuclear weapons, precisely when Iran was in the middle of nuclear negotiations with the United

States. Despite declaring its pretext to be preventing Iran from building an atomic bomb, Israel targeted not just Iran's nuclear power plants, but also its missile launchers, training camps, prisons, and even helicopters that were used to combat border terrorists.

After Washington joined Tel Aviv in bombing the Natanz and Fordow nuclear sites (Iran's two main uranium enrichment sites), Trump claimed that they have destroyed Iran's nuclear power plants and pushed back the country's nuclear capability for years. Nevertheless, Israel emphasizes that it will attack Iran again, and that the next attack will be far more devastating than the last.

Meanwhile, Israel also attacked Qatar under the pretext of killing Hamas leaders.

It was in this context that Saudi Arabia signed a "mutual defense pact" with Pakistan for its security, which other Arab countries may also join. This plan seems to be coordinated by the US to control Israel and stabilize the Middle East, especially the Persian Gulf.

However, Netanyahu does not seem willing to stop the war. Netanyahu's speech at the UN proved that he not only does not want peace, but also intends to continue the war as he rejected the two-state solution proposed by many countries. Although European countries have endorsed the "two-state" solution and the official recognition of Palestine, the paradox is that Mahmoud Abbas, a Palestinian representative, was not allowed to enter the US and the UN.

Given all that was mentioned, the peace dove seemingly has no intention of coming to the Middle East, and the war will continue. Neither Hamas nor the Houthis in Yemen intend to surrender. Hezbollah will not lay down its weapons either.

As far as the Islamic Republic is concerned, Iranian officials point out that Trump and Netanyahu want peace through force. They rightfully ask, "How can Israel have the F-35 and we not have the deterrent, the ballistic missile? They want to take from us in peace what they could not take in war."

Everything hints at further tensions for the Middle East. This region is pregnant with massive developments that may sow the seeds of instability for many years to come.



↑ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holds a map as he speaks during the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York City on September 26, 2025.
● CHARLY TRIBALLEAU/AFP

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The Islamic Republic has declared for years that it does not intend to produce nuclear weapons. However, Israel attacked Iran on June 13 under the pretext of a preemptive strike to prevent the production of nuclear weapons, precisely when Iran was in the middle of nuclear negotiations with the United States. Despite declaring its pretext to be preventing Iran from building an atomic bomb, Israel targeted not just Iran's nuclear power plants, but also its missile launchers, training camps, prisons, and even helicopters that were used to combat border terrorists.

U23 Wrestling World Championships:

Mohammadnejad extends Iran's superheavyweight supremacy

Sports Desk

The superheavyweight category remained Iran's territory as Abolfazl Mohammadnejad cruised to the freestyle 125kg gold at the U23 Wrestling World Championships in Novi Sad.

Elsewhere on the penultimate day of the competition, Sina Khalili settled for silver in the 70kg class, while Milad Valizadeh (57kg) and Mahdi Yousefi (79kg) each claimed a bronze in their respective divisions.

An under-20 world silver medalist in August, Mohammadnejad was in a league of his own this time, scoring a total of 25 points while conceding only two across three bouts before outclassing Azerbaijan's Khetag Karsanov by technical superiority (11-0) in the final showpiece.

Mohammadnejad's triumph marked Iran's fourth major gold in the superheavyweight class in 40 days.

Amirhossein Zare' (freestyle) and Amin Mirzazadeh (Greco-Roman) defended their titles in September's Senior World Championships, while Fardin Hedayati captured a second consecutive Greco-Roman gold at the U23 Worlds earlier in Novi Sad.

"I faced some tough opponents here. I won a world cadet bronze last year and then had to settle for the junior silver [in August], so I gave



Iranian freestyle wrestler Abolfazl Mohammadnejad celebrates after his victory in the 125kg final at the U23 World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, on October 26, 2025.

● IAWFIR

Daudov, who competed as a neutral athlete.

Sunday's medals came after Mobin Azimi had grabbed the ultimate prize in the 92kg event on the preceding night.

Azimi scored three stepout points to defeat Russian Takhir Khaniev – competing as a neutral athlete – 5-3 in the final, adding the under-23 crown to his 2023 world junior gold medal.

Iran has already lifted the Greco-Roman team trophy in Novi Sad.

Hassan Rangraz's 10-man squad bagged six medals, including triple golds, finishing atop the standings in with 143 points – 47 clear of second-placed Ukraine.

Iman Mohammadi (72kg), Gholamreza Farrokhi (87kg), and Fardin Hedayati (130kg) were the Iranian Greco-Roman gold medalists, while Sajjad Abbaspour settled for silver in 60kg.

Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg) and Abolfazl Mohmadi (82kg), meanwhile, finished with consolation bronzes in their respective divisions.

everything I had to win the gold medal here," Mohammadnejad said after the final bout.

On how he has benefitted from training with Zare' in the national team camps, Mohammadnejad said: "Amirhossein has definitely been a great help. He has been guiding me since my teenage

years. We review techniques together in the senior team camps and he even gave me tips on one of the opponents I faced here."

Former U17 world champion Khalili, meanwhile, produced impressive performances to reach the final, but eventually fell to a 9-4 defeat against Kanan Heyba-

to of Azerbaijan, adding the silver to the Asian senior bronze he won in March.

Asian senior silver medalist Valizadeh recovered from a last-eight setback (11-5) against American Luke Lilledahl to outmuscle China's Liao Honghang (10-0) and Russian Aiandai Ondar (10-1) to

finish with a bronze.

Reigning Asian senior and world junior champion Yousefi got off to a losing start to his under-23 title defense, suffering a 7-0 defeat to American Levi Haines, but recovered in repechage to finish with a consolation bronze – thanks to a 13-3 win against Russian Davud



Olympiacos striker Mahdi Taremi (r) celebrates his goal with Ayoub El Kaabi during a 2-0 victory over AEK Athens in the Greek Super League in Athens, Greece, on October 26, 2025.

● olympiacos.org

Sports Desk

Iran international striker Mahdi Taremi scored his first goal in six appearances across all competitions to help Olympiacos defeat its familiar foe AEK 2-0 in an Athens derby at the Greek Super

Taremi back among the goals as Olympiacos beats AEK in Athens derby

League on Sunday.

Making his first top-flight start since leaving Inter for The Legend in August, Taremi found the net with a smashing header from a Daniel Podence set-piece to double the home side's lead in the 67th minute at the Karaiskakis Stadium.

This was Taremi's fifth goal in nine games in the Olympiacos colors.

The Iranian came off the bench to score twice on his club debut during a 5-0 win over Panserraikos on the opening day of the new league season, and netted another double to lead Olympiacos to a 2-1 victory over Asteras Aktor in the domestic cup on September 24.

Prolific Moroccan Ayoub El Kaabi gave Olympiacos from the spot in the 33rd minute, after Costinha's cross was headed by Taremi onto the raised arm of Domagoj Vida.

"I'm delighted that I scored. It was a fantastic night for the entire team. I don't think I was the man of the match, but I'm happy I was able to help the team," Taremi told Cosmote TV after the game.

On forming a front duo with El Kaabi, Taremi said: "Playing alongside him is a real pleasure; he's an intelligent and experienced striker who always knows exactly what to do on the pitch. The manager's decision to play us together up front was excel-

lent, and I'm glad that it paid off." Olympiacos head coach José Luis Mendilibar, meanwhile, was full of praise for Taremi, though he believes there is more to come from the Iranian once he reaches peak form.

"Taremi helped a lot because he won the penalty and scored a goal – he was decisive and important. He can offer even more, though, because I believe he's not yet in his best physical condition, because he didn't have a full preseason. He's not ready to play 90 minutes yet, but I'm sure he'll be able to give us a lot more in the future," said the Spaniard.

Asked if Olympiacos fans would see a Taremi-El Kaabi partner-

ship again, Mendilibar said: "The season is still in the early stages, and we have many matches ahead, so yes, we might see it again because they complement each other well. But we'll take things one match at a time."

"For a coach, the sweetest dream before a derby must be a 4-4-2 with both strikers scoring. The plan wasn't actually to play in a 4-4-2 – it was a 4-2-3-1. It may have looked like a 4-4-2 because Taremi played a bit deeper."

The victory saw defending champion Olympiacos move three points clear of its archrival in the league table, standing second with 19 points – one point adrift of PAOK, which defeated Volos 3-0 at home.

World Taekwondo Championships:

Barkhordari, Nasiri finish empty-handed with Iran's woes continuing in Wuxi

Sports Desk

Iran endured another disappointing day at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China, as Mehran Barkhordari and Saeideh Nasiri crashed out in their respective divisions on Monday.

An Olympic silver medalist in Paris last year, Barkhordari delivered strong performances – including a 2-1 victory over two-time Asian champion Jasurbek Jaysunov of Uzbekistan – to reach the quarterfinals in the men's -80kg event, only to

fall 2-0 (2-2, 8-7) to China's Xiang Qizhang, surrendering a 4-1 lead with 30 seconds remaining in the second round.

Making her World Championships debut, Nasiri secured back-to-back straight-round wins against Ana Belo of Timor-Leste and Azerbaijan's Minaya Akbarova in the women's -46kg category, before her run ended in the round of 16 against Costa Rican Jaycee Bassett, representing the World Taekwondo team. Mahdi Hajimousaei remains the only Iranian to have won a medal in Wuxi, settling for silver in

the men's -63kg class after an injury forced him to withdraw midway through final against Tunisia's Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi on Saturday.

The first day of the competition had seen Olympic champion Arjan Salimi and Nahid Kiani – a silver winner in Paris – suffer last-16 exits in the men's +87kg and women's -57kg classes respectively.

Mahla Momenzadeh, meanwhile, failed to add to her 2019 world silver, falling to Mah Teninba Fofana of France in the second round in the women's -49kg on Saturday.

On Sunday, Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani impressed with a second-round victory over former world champion Park Woo-hyeok of South Korea in the men's -87kg but fell to a last-eight exit in three rounds against Italy's Olympic bronze medalist Simone Alessio.

Mahdi Razmian's campaign in the men's -54kg ended in the second round after a defeat against Jordan's Jaafar Al-Daoud, while Melika Mirhosseini also crashed out in the second round, losing to China's Zhou Zeqi in the women's -73kg category.



Iran's Mehran Barkhordari, pictured at the Paris Olympics, suffered a last-eight exit in the men's -80kg class at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China.

● IRNA

Marivan keeps heritage alive through craft



Nazok Kari
● IRNA



Klash shoes
● IRNA



Wool shawls
● iribnews.ir

Iranica Desk

In the winding alleyways of Marivan, performance is not limited to the stage. Every home, workshop, and marketplace transforms into a living tableau of art and daily life. Here, creativity spills beyond the boundaries of the theater, into the hands of artisans who shape wood, yarn, and wool into expressions of culture, identity, and memory. Cultural events have long been recognized as engines of tourism and local economic growth — a role especially vital in regions like Kurdistan, where traditional crafts are deeply interwoven with everyday life. The gathering of artists, performers, and visitors in Marivan offers an opportunity to blend art, business, and community identity in a celebration of creativity and heritage, Mehr News Agency wrote. The 18th Marivan International Festival of Street Theater, taking place from October 26 to 30, features a diverse program including open competitions, children and youth performances, traditional rituals, international showcases, the “Nishtiman” (homeland) section, and educational workshops. The festival’s convergence of

national and international artists, alongside local spectators and tourists, provides an ideal setting to promote Marivan’s renowned handicrafts and encourage visitors to take home a piece of the city’s artistic spirit.

A city of crafts, creativity

Marivan is known not only for its cultural festivals but also for its rich tradition of handmade crafts. Visitors looking to explore and purchase local goods can visit the city’s main bazaar, the Zarivar Lake local market, or the Bashmaq border market. Among the most treasured local creations are the Daf and Tanbur, two iconic Kurdish musical instruments made by skilled artisans whose craftsmanship keeps centuries-old traditions alive. The fine woodcrafts of Kurdistan Province are among its most visually striking art forms. Known as Nazok Kari, this delicate craft involves creating functional and decorative objects from beautifully grained and colored wood. Through meticulous design and careful finishing, artisans produce intricate wooden pieces. Marivan’s artisans also produce an impressive range of handwoven goods. One of the most notable is the prayer rug (janamaz

or sajjadeh), woven from wool on traditional looms. Skilled mowj weavers can create two of these intricately patterned rugs in a single day, reflecting both practicality and devotion. Northwest of the city lies Zarivar Lake, surrounded by reed-filled wetlands where local women engage in reed weaving, turning natural resources into beautiful, functional mats. In the surrounding villages, residents also produce hand-knit woolen socks, known locally as Pojvaneh, prized for their warmth and cultural symbolism. Among Marivan’s most celebrated crafts is the Giveh, locally known as Klash — traditional Kurdish footwear made from cotton and thread. Lightweight yet durable, Klash shoes are cool in summer and warm in winter, perfectly adapted to the region’s climate. This centuries-old art earned Marivan global recognition in 2017, when it was designated a World City of Giveh by the World Crafts Council. Weaving traditions also thrive across Kurdistan. From kilim (flat-woven rugs) to wool shawls and Jajim, artisans combine two-ply dyed wool for the weft with cotton threads for the warp, producing textiles that

are both resilient and richly patterned. Other traditional crafts include embroidered hats, shawls woven from goat hair and sheep’s wool, and handcrafted jewelry and accessories — including necklaces made of clove buds and rosaries from wild pistachio (Baneh) wood. The vibrant Kurdish dresses and scarves, celebrated for their color and design, remain an enduring symbol of local identity.

Linking art, tourism, heritage

Tourism researcher Arash Nooraqaei highlights the connection between culture and sustainable tourism. He argues that well-planned artistic events — whether in theater, music, or visual arts — can play a transformative role in boosting local economies. “If a cultural event is conceptually strong, well-timed, and strategically located,” he said, “and if the organizing team takes a holistic approach, it can meaningfully enhance tourism and strengthen handicraft-based livelihoods.” Drawing a comparison, he added, “In Italy’s Murano Island, elderly women weave lace by the streets, and tourists are welcomed into glassmaking workshops. This is creative tourism

— where the true art lies not just in what is made, but in how it is shared. It’s not merely about selling; it’s about live performance and participation.” A handicraft researcher Farzad Rashidi also emphasized the potential of such events for economic growth in Kurdistan. “With its deep-rooted history, artistic heritage, and abundance of natural resources, Kurdistan offers exceptional diversity in handicrafts,” he explained. “If festivals like this are organized with foresight, they can greatly benefit the province during off-peak tourist seasons — boosting both income and return visitation.” Rashidi noted that during May and June, Kurdistan Province often experiences an overwhelming number of tourists, which can reduce service quality due to overcrowding. Strategic cultural programming in other months, he argued, helps balance tourism flow while sustaining local economies. He added, “Across the world, festivals — directly or indirectly — contribute to local prosperity. A festival with an 18-year history, such as Marivan’s, has certainly earned its audience.” Rashidi views Marivan’s designation as a World Craft City as an invaluable asset that must



Pojvaneh
● kurdkala.com

be managed wisely. “Everyone seeks to build a brand,” he concluded, “but Marivan already is a brand. The key lies in understanding the audience — using the presence of artists and tourists to showcase, promote, and sell local handicrafts in ways that honor their authenticity and sustain their makers.” As the curtain rises on the 18th Marivan International Festival of Street Theater, the city once again proves that in Kurdistan, art is not confined to the stage — it lives and breathes through the hands, hearts, and streets of its people.

Zargar offers rare glimpse into unusual Iranian village

Iranica Desk

Tucked away in the heart of the Qazvin plains lies a village unlike any other in the region. Its appearance, culture, and atmosphere bear little resemblance to surrounding settlements, making Zargar a remarkable destination for travelers seeking something truly extraordinary. The village’s inhabitants, with their European features, an unfamiliar language, and stories steeped in mystery, create an air of intrigue — a place where the past remains shrouded in ambiguity and every corner seems to hold a new tale. A drive of less than two hours from Tehran is enough to reach this village, which hides astonishing stories within its quiet streets and scenic surroundings. Located near Abyek in Qazvin, Zargar’s small population presents a striking contrast to typical Iranian villages. The locals, with light hair, colored eyes, and a language unknown to most outsiders, offer visitors a glimpse into a world that feels simultaneously familiar and foreign. These distinctive traits have led many travelers to describe Zargar as “a piece of



Europe in Iran,” highlighting its unique charm and cultural divergence, IRNA wrote. Among the village’s most fascinating features is the native language spoken by its people. The Zargaris converse in a tongue completely alien to outsiders, with clear roots in Indo-European languages. Known locally as Zargari or Romano, this language survives only within this small, tightly-knit community. For travelers with a passion for culture, linguistics, or literature, hearing the villagers’ everyday conversations is an experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere. The origins of Zargar’s inhabitants remain cloaked in mystery. Some accounts suggest that their ancestors



● borna.news

were European migrants who settled in this area centuries ago, while others maintain that the villagers are of Iranian descent, with their distinctive features and language arising from cultural and linguistic mixing over time. The

absence of definitive historical records, combined with these differing narratives, has only enhanced the village’s allure and enigmatic charm, drawing visitors who are fascinated by history and heritage. The village is home to roughly

800 residents. Most of the men work in livestock farming, agriculture, and beekeeping, while the women, in addition to managing household responsibilities, produce dairy products and handicrafts that reflect traditional skills passed down through generations. While intra-village marriages were common in the past, many young people today form family ties with individuals from other regions. Despite these modern changes, traditional customs and rituals continue to hold a central place in local celebrations and ceremonies, providing a living link to Zargar’s heritage. Reaching Zargar is relatively straightforward. From Tehran, travelers can take the Tehran–

Karaj freeway and continue toward Qazvin. After passing Abyek, a side road leads through the vast Qazvin plains and eventually to this distinctive village. With light traffic, the journey from the capital takes less than two hours, although travel time may be longer during holidays or peak travel periods. The village enjoys moderate weather throughout much of the year, making it accessible in all seasons. However, spring is widely considered the best time to visit, when the countryside is lush and trees burst into blossom, creating a vibrant and picturesque setting. Summer also offers a pleasant escape, as Zargar’s cooler temperatures provide a welcome relief compared to nearby cities. For those wishing to avoid crowds and enjoy a more serene experience, visiting midweek is recommended. Zargar’s combination of mystery, cultural uniqueness, and natural beauty has established it as one of Qazvin’s most intriguing destinations, offering visitors a rare glimpse into a village where the past and present coexist in a delicate, captivating balance.

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‘Iranian Garden’ reveals through watercolor dreams

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The ‘Iranian Garden’ is a painting exhibition that has recently unveiled a spellbinding collection of watercolor works by Mohammad Ali Saeedi at Tehran’s White Line Gallery.

The show features 15 paintings of varying dimensions, crafted with watercolor and mixed media, each offering a window into a world suspended between reality and imagination. In this series, Saeedi weaves the distinctive motifs of Iranian architecture with light, color, and a lyrical sensibility, drawing viewers into the enchanting and mysterious beauty of Persian gardens.

The exhibition remains open to art lovers until November 3 at White Line Gallery, Tehran.

Iran Daily caught up with Mohammad Ali Saeedi amid his exhibition. The full interview follows.

IRAN DAILY: Could you share your artistic background and what drew you to painting?

MOHAMMAD ALI SAEEDI: I was born in 1980 in Tehran. I hold a master’s degree in graphic design and am also a university lecturer. My fascination with painting began in childhood. My father was a collector, and our home was brimming with stamp albums. I would spend hours leafing through them, ab-

sorbed by the intricate patterns and designs. In those moments, an artistic sensibility quietly took root in me. From early on, I gravitated toward calligraphy, which I pursued rigorously, eventually mastering it. Photography and painting soon followed. Once I began painting, I became so enthralled that, despite being an energetic child, I would remain home for hours, absorbed in my artworks. This passion guided my educational and professional path, binding my career and life to painting.

Since turning professional at the age of 25, I have created 15 series of paintings on various themes, each comprising approximately 100 to 200 works. My art has been showcased in over 10 solo exhibitions and more than 80 group exhibitions.

Can you tell us how the ‘Iranian Garden’ series came about?

In addition to painting and photography, I have explored cinema, gaining experience in screenwriting, cinematography, and editing. These cinematic experiences shaped my narrative approach to art. At one point, I began writing a feature-length screenplay set in a village. The process deeply imprinted the story’s frames onto my subconscious. I would revisit each frame in my mind repeatedly, until the only way to quiet that mental imagery was to start painting those locations. Of course, on the canvas, these settings



MOHAMMAD ALI SAEEDI

took on the hues of imagination, rendered in various colors. The foundational inspiration came from Iranian gardens, and the works in effect portray locations and compositions drawn from Persian spatial aesthetics.

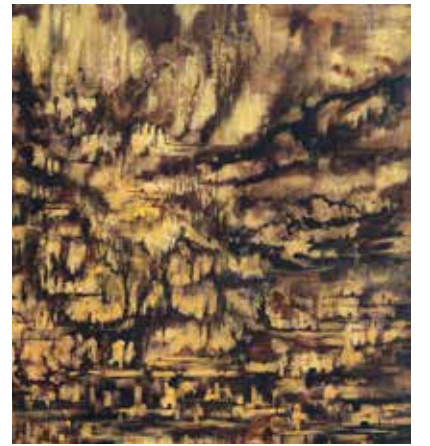
From a technical perspective, how do your works take shape on the canvas?

I begin each piece on canvas with a watercolor draft, exploring color combinations and spatial arrangements within that medium. I also work with acrylics in a watercolor-like fashion, seeking to create subtle variations of hue through-

out the painting. In each composition, I render Iranian spaces with distinct colors and designs, giving the series a rich and varied visual language.

In these Iranian gardens, the presence of humans seems almost absent. Why is that?

These paintings depict personal spaces within urban settings, often without traditional perspective. They represent locations from cities, as well as imagined spaces, offering expansive, open views of urban landscapes. While people could exist in these vistas, they remain unseen, allowing the architecture and atmosphere itself to tell the story.



Iranian documentary ‘Gene Hodge’ picked for UK’s Lift-Off festival



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Alireza Jamali Akhawan’s documentary ‘Gene Hodge’ was officially selected for the 10th edition of the Lift-Off

Global Network Film Festival in Iver, UK.

The festival, renowned for spotlighting emerging independent filmmakers, will run from December 1 to 15, 2025. ‘Gene Hodge’ is

scheduled to screen on November 3, 2025, ILNA reported.

The documentary follows a five-year-old boy who collects trash to support his family, only to face a life-altering accident. The film’s international distribution is managed by Solmaz Etemad.

The production team includes director of photography Masoud Ebrahimi Kashef, editor Ameneh Azad, and project consultant Ali Herati.

Established in 2011, the Lift-Off Global Network aims to provide a platform for independent filmmakers to showcase their work to global audiences. The Iver festival is one of several international events organized by the network, which also includes festivals in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Tokyo.

Iran, Iraq hold talks on fighting flood, drought

Social Desk

Iranian and Iraqi water officials met in Baghdad on Monday to discuss joint strategies to combat rising droughts and floods driven by climate change.

“We need practical cooperation to manage water scarcity and flood risks,” Mohammad Hajrasouliha, Director of Tehran’s UNESCO-affiliated Regional Centre on Urban Water Management, said after talks with Iraq’s Minister of Water Resources, Aoun Diab Abdullah, IRNA reported.

The meeting sets the stage for an international workshop on ‘Integrated Flood Management’ scheduled for November 6–8 in Baghdad. The event will gather regional experts to exchange knowledge and coordinate responses to extreme weather events affecting both countries.

Further discussions are planned for the 14th Governing Board meeting of the Regional Centre in Tehran on December 3, where Abdullah is expected to attend.

In a related initiative, Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, speaking at the 5th Con-



ference of Ministers Responsible for Water of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, called for reviving traditional water systems, including qanats and cisterns, using modern science.

“Fair and careful management of water is a moral and religious obligation for present and future generations,” he said.

Iran and Iraq, both facing worsening water stress, are seeking to move beyond technical cooperation toward coordinated regional policies that combine scientific planning with local knowledge.

Hajrasouliha said the talks were “an important step toward shared responsibility and practical solutions for water management” across the region.

Ifs & buts of...

Accordingly, some in the United States argue that, in the post-October 7 landscape, weakening the Axis of Resistance—led by the Islamic Republic of Iran—is a prerequisite for establishing any new regional order. President Donald Trump, echoing this belief, has pursued a strategy of “coercive diplomacy” toward Tehran—an approach that helps explain recent strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities. Yet history offers a cautionary tale. Before

the 2003 invasion of Iraq, American neo-conservatives made a similar argument: that removing Saddam Hussein would usher in stability and peace across the region. Reality proved otherwise. The war and its aftermath gave rise to extremist groups like ISIS, and led to failed states in Iraq and Syria. The ensuing chaos forced the US to scale back its military presence, with President Barack Obama ultimately fulfilling his 2008 campaign promise to withdraw American troops from Iraq.

For that reason, skepticism about the consequences of weakening Iran is well-founded. Diminishing Tehran’s influence could, paradoxically, fuel greater instability, much as it did in Iraq after 2003. In fact, the region’s dynamics make it impossible for an external power like the United States to impose order based on its own terms.

Perhaps recognizing this, the Trump administration over the past year has sought to pay more attention to the views of Arab states, especially members of the Persian Gulf Co-

operation Council. The signing of a defense pact with Qatar is the latest indication of this approach. Trump has repeatedly stated that the voices of Arab nations must be heard. No doubt, attracting Arab investment remains a clear priority for his administration, but he also understands that ignoring America’s Arab allies is unsustainable in the long run. Still, the prevailing sentiment across the region is that the pro-Israel lobby in Washington remains the main obstacle to a balanced Middle East policy. As long as this powerful

lobby can shape US decision-making, hopes for a stable and inclusive regional order will remain dim.

Thus, it can be concluded that Washington faces yet another rocky and arduous road in its quest to establish a security order in the Middle East—particularly given that its primary preoccupation is containing China. Any large-scale, long-term military presence in the Middle East aimed at establishing a new order could benefit China and diminishes American focus on the Indo-Pacific region.