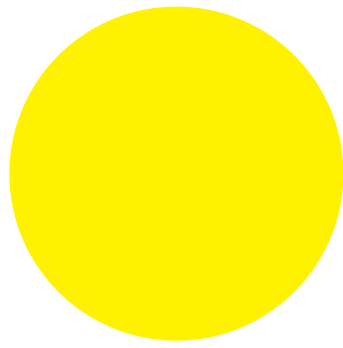


Trailblazing Iranian globetrotter Isa Omidvar dies at 96



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# Iran Daily

Vol. 8113 • Sunday, May 10, 2026 • Ordibehesht 20, 1405 • Dhu al-Qadah 22, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



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### CIA report exposes Trump's focus on personal credibility over US standing

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) acknowledged in an assessment that Iran still has the capacity to withstand a US naval blockade for several months without facing severe economic pressure. American intelligence agencies also say that despite repeated strikes, Iran still retains 70% of its missiles and 75% of its launchers. The assessment stands in stark contradiction to the official narrative promoted by US officials, who had claimed Iran's economy would be on the verge of collapse shortly after the blockade and that the country's military infrastructure had been extensively destroyed during the 40-day war. The contradiction has raised questions about the credibility of the White House narrative. In an inter-



view with Iran Daily, Omid Khazani, international affairs expert, said US President Donald Trump has been more concerned with preserving his personal credibility than America's standing, arguing that he has prioritized his own image over US national interests.

view with Iran Daily, Omid Khazani, international affairs expert, said US President Donald Trump has been more concerned with preserving his personal credibility than America's standing, arguing that he has prioritized his own image over US national interests.

**IRAN DAILY: What impact could this contradiction have on the credibility of the US president, the official White House narrative, and the confidence of Washington's allies?**

**KHAZANI:** Doubts had already been raised over the success of the blockade strategy. The United States has multiple intelligence and security institutions, and several reports had previously questioned whether such a blockade could succeed. Concerns had also been voiced earlier regarding the effectiveness of the siege itself. Imposing a blockade capable of triggering economic collapse on a country with roughly 9,000 kilometers of borders is practically

impossible. Beyond that, many of Iran's neighboring states act as economic outlets for Tehran, and Iran has managed sanctions through these channels for years.

The naval blockade also faced significant opposition within the cabinet itself because it would ultimately make the situation even more complicated, contradict expert assessments from security institutions, and remain unworkable in practice. The idea that this could become one of Washington's leverage points — by seizing a handful of ships and applying economic pressure to force Iran into granting concessions — has simply not materialized. During the past few weeks of the blockade, many vessels have continued to move along Iran's coastal strip, then pass into Pakistani coastal waters before entering India's maritime corridor and heading toward Southeast Asia.

Ultimately, Trump has shown that he is more interested in his own credibility than in America's standing, particularly in portraying himself as the best negotiator and the

most successful broker. The broader conflict itself does not truly serve US national interests. In effect, his personal image has been prioritized over America's national interests. This approach has also created deep fractures within the Atlantic alliance. Even the slightest criticism from figures such as the NATO secretary-general or Western European governments is met with a harsh reaction from Trump. That, in turn, has damaged both US national security and America's image among its allies.

**Why were official intelligence assessments ignored by the Trump administration in favor of non-expert calculations?**

Trump has a strong personality cult and tends to prioritize loyalty over expert opinion. The outcome is the sidelining of specialized assessments produced by relevant institutions. During his second term, Trump has clearly focused on satisfying a specific circle within the American power structure. Institutions such as the CIA, however, are

supposed to function on a bipartisan basis and are obligated first and foremost to uphold broader institutional concerns. Trump has been more interested in loyalty than in precise intelligence or accurate assessments. Agencies that are legally required to operate as bipartisan institutions cannot openly display that kind of loyalty because they are also accountable to Congress and the Senate.

Trump's personality cult is rooted in his transactional political style. He has never been a conventional politician operating through traditional party mechanisms and institutional procedures. He is a populist politician whose political machinery is driven largely by a loyal support base. This personality-driven approach leaves little room for cooperation through normal party procedures or decision-making based on party interests and broader national interests. Another possible reason for ignoring intelligence assessments may have been pressure from Israel.

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# Tehran asserts 'inherent right' to counter US naval moves: *UN envoy*



Amir-Saeid Iravani, Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, speaks at a Security Council meeting at UN headquarters in New York on April 7, 2026.

● AFP

near the port of Jask and the Strait of Hormuz, as well as attacks against several locations in Iran's coastal areas overlooking the waterway.

"These aggressive and provocative acts, which the president of the United States has openly acknowledged, constitute a clear violation of the April 8, 2026 ceasefire and a blatant breach of Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations," he noted.

Donald Trump announced the ceasefire on that day following 40 days of unprovoked aggression against Iran. He later ordered continuation of an illegal blockade of Iranian vessels and ports in violation of the ceasefire's terms.

The official cautioned that the consequences of continuation of such aggression could be "catastrophic," extending far beyond the region and undermining international peace and security, "for which the United States will bear full re-

sponsibility."

Iravani further expressed strong condemnation of the blockade, during which American forces have ventured repeated attacks against Iranian commercial vessels, resorted to their unlawful seizure, and taken those on board hostage.

"Such unlawful acts amount to piracy and violate the international law and the UN Charter," he asserted.

"Such conduct is wholly incompatible with the responsibilities of a permanent member of the Security Council that claims commitment to freedom of navigation. Rather than safeguarding maritime security, these actions undermine it and violate the fundamental principles of the international law."

Such inclination towards aggression, the official stated, indicates that the United States prefers coercion over restraint, diplomacy, and dialogue, which are urgently and immediately needed.

Iran calls on the United Nations to explicitly and unequivocally condemn the unlawful actions, and urge the United States to abide by its obligations under the international law and refrain from any further provocative actions, Iravani concluded.

## International Desk

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations underlined the Islamic Republic's "inherent right" to self-defense and taking due

protective measures in the face of the US's hostile measures targeting the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Amir-Saeid Iravani made the remarks in a letter addressed to the UN secre-

tary-general and the president of the world body's Security Council on Friday. The envoy cited aggressive military actions carried out recently by American troops against two Iranian oil tankers

## Iran maintains diplomatic path to achieve fair deal: *Ambassador*



Iranian Ambassador to Italy Mohammad Reza Sabouri (c) attends an international seminar on Iran held in Rome, Italy, on May 9, 2026.

● IRNA

prevent aggressors from achieving their goals by relying on its domestic defensive capabilities and internal cohesion.

Diplomatic efforts are underway to put an end to the conflict between Iran and the US in the region after both countries' first attempt failed to produce an agreement.

Qatar's prime minister called on Friday for renewed diplomacy on an agreement with Iran as he met in Washington with Vice President JD Vance.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani met with Vance and discussed Pakistani-led efforts to broker a permanent peace amid a shaky ceasefire.

The Qatari prime minister "stressed the need for all parties to engage with the ongoing mediation efforts, to pave the way for addressing the root causes of the crisis through peaceful means and dialogue, leading to a comprehensive agreement that achieves lasting peace in the region," the Qatari Foreign Ministry said on X.

## International Desk

Iran's ambassador to Italy emphasized that military campaign against Tehran has failed and the Islamic Republic, relying on its defensive capabilities and national cohesion, has kept the path of diplomacy open to achieve a fair agreement.

"While fully prepared to defend its national interests, the Islamic Republic continues to keep the diplomatic door open for a fair agreement, provided that aggressors learn from recent failures and respect international law," Mohammad Reza Sabouri said at an international seminar on Iran held in Rome on Saturday.

The Iranian ambassador added that pressures and hostilities of recent decades against Iran are not merely a political disagreement but arise from the major powers' efforts to control the world's strategic regions.

Referring to the acts of aggression against Iran by the US and Israel in 2025 and 2026, Sabouri said that after failing in campaigns of sanctions and Iranophobia, Iran's adversaries have resorted to military aggression to achieve their goals.

Sabouri said Iran entered negotiations in good faith, but the US and Israel betrayed diplomacy in the midst of the talks. He added that the Islamic Republic managed to

## CIA assessment says Iran can endure US blockade for months

### International Desk

A US intelligence analysis has concluded Iran could withstand for months a naval blockade that the US has imposed on Iran's ports, casting doubt on Donald Trump's claim that Tehran needs the war to end imminently.

The CIA assessment indicated that Iran would not suffer severe economic pressure from a US blockade of Iranian ports for about another four months, according to a US official familiar with the matter, suggesting that US leverage over Tehran remains limited as the two sides seek to end a conflict that has been unpopular with US voters.

The confidential report was delivered to officials in the Trump administration earlier this week, four people familiar with the document told The Washington Post. By storing some of its oil in floating storage aboard tanker ships and decreasing the flows in its oil fields, it has enabled its wells to remain functional, one person said. It may also be able to sell oil through overland routes by truck and rail, the report said. "There's a belief they could begin moving some oil via rail through Central Asia," one official said.

The CIA estimate that Iran could survive between 90 to 120 days — and maybe longer — before facing more severe economic hardship, the four people familiar with the analysis said. Tehran also retains 75 percent of its prewar inventories of mobile launchers and around 70 percent of its prewar stockpiles of missiles, a US official said. The intelligence runs con-

trary to president Trump's statements about the country's rapidly diminishing weapons cache.

The official said there is evidence that the country has been able to recover and reopen almost all of its underground storage facilities, repair some damaged missiles and even assemble some new missiles that were nearly complete when the war began.

Trump, however, offered a more upbeat assessment Wednesday.

"Their missiles are mostly decimated," he said. "They have probably 18, 19%, but not a lot by comparison to what they had."

The US imposed the blockade on Iran on April 13 after Pakistan-mediated talks failed to produce an agreement to end the US-Israeli aggression on Iran. After the blockade was imposed about a month ago, Trump and top officials in his administration suggested it would produce an immediate crisis for Iran's oil sector. Trump said last month that Iran's oil infrastructure could "explode" possibly within three days because the blockade meant Tehran could not export the oil it is pumping from wells.

That scenario did not materialize. But the naval blockade has prevented dozens of Iranian tankers off the coast from moving through the Strait of Hormuz.

US officials say the blockade is designed to cut off Iran's oil exports — the country's economic lifeline — and force Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and bow to US demands at the negotiating table.

## Parliament to hold first session since US-Israeli onslaught

### National Desk

Iran's Parliament is scheduled to convene today for the first time since the United States and Israel launched their aggression against Iran on February 28.

The session will be held via webinar, according to Abbas Goudarzi, spokesman for the presiding board of Parliament.

The last open session of Iran's Parliament took place on February 16, meaning the new meeting will be held after an 82-day hiatus.

According to Parliament, the session's agenda will focus on "market



turmoil, public concerns, and recent price hikes."

In its last session, Parliament had discussed amendments to the budget bill for the Iranian year 1405 (beginning March 2026).

The delay in holding parliamentary sessions has been attributed to "security issues," officials said.

The US and Israel initiated an unprovoked war of aggression against Iran since February 28 after assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several high-ranking military commanders.

During the aggression, the US and Israel targeted many governmental buildings, military sites and residential buildings across the country.

Attacks on government's sites forces the country's officials to cancel the public meetings.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

CARTOON



# Strikes on steel, petchem sectors failed to shake economy: *Veep*

**Economy Desk**

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said attacks by the "American-Zionist enemy" on Iran's steel and petrochemical industries during the Ramadan war had failed to disrupt the country's leading sectors, adding that reconstruction of damaged facilities was progressing faster than expected. Iran is accelerating the reconstruction and modernization of steel and petrochemical facilities damaged during the 40-day conflict that began in late February, Aref said Saturday in meetings with executives from Mobarakeh Steel and Persian Gulf Holding, according to Tasnim news agency.

He described Mobarakeh Steel as a key parent industry and a driver of national development, saying the company had been deliberately targeted because of its major role in Iran's economy.

"The American-Zionist enemy, in the Ramadan War, pursued a strategy of attacking the country's infrastructure and industries, targeting the steel and petrochemical sectors in an effort to create unemployment and destroy the country's leading industries, but this strategy also failed," he said. Referring to damage sustained by steel

industries, Aref said reconstruction and modernization efforts were proceeding faster than expected despite the losses, adding that the government would use all available resources to support the process.

He said Mobarakeh Steel was not merely a regional industrial unit, but a national and cross-sectoral enterprise that, in addition to production, had fulfilled its social responsibilities and remained one of the country's main economic drivers.

Aref also stressed the need for industries to prepare for critical conditions, saying Mobarakeh Steel should develop detailed plans to maintain production during crises and design clear post-war scenarios, as Iran would face different conditions after the conflict. Pointing to Iran's regional and international standing, Aref said recent developments had strengthened the country's position and that, according to some foreign analysts, Iran was now considered among the world's leading powers. The vice president said future planning should take into account as Iran's "superpower" position in the world.

In a separate meeting with executives from Persian Gulf Holding, Aref praised the petrochemical industries



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref meets with executives from Mobarakeh Steel Company on May 9, 2026.  
● [fvpresident.ir](http://fvpresident.ir)

company for its efforts to rebuild damage caused by enemy attacks and said reconstruction, modernization and rehabilitation of affected industries should proceed more rapidly so their impact would be reflected in the economy and people's livelihoods.

**Ministry pledges support**

Western sanctions on Iran, along with damage from recent military attacks on production infrastructure, have further intensified challenges facing the sector. In this regard, Iran's alloy steel producers have urged the government to exempt steel plants from electricity consumption restrictions this year, citing production disruptions at major facilities following US and Israeli attacks and warning of broader risks to the domestic market.

The group said imposing electricity restrictions — including outages, load shifting or demand cuts — would undermine efforts to replace lost output, deepen liquidity pressures and push



companies into severe financial distress, with potentially irreversible consequences for the broader steel sector. Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Saturday that the government was prepared to supply electricity to petrochemical and steel companies that had previously generated all or part of

their own power needs. According to Mehr news agency, Aliabadi said several power plants belonging to industrial units had been damaged during the war and that the Energy Ministry was ready to compensate for the shortfall using electricity generated by the national grid.

## US-Israeli war inflicts '\$335m direct damage' on IT sector



Deputy Communications Minister Ehsan Chitsaz addresses a meeting on damage inflicted on the digital economy during the recent US-Israeli war on May 9, 2026.  
● [IRNA](http://IRNA)

warned policymakers and decision-makers about the necessity of maintaining Internet connectivity for digital economy businesses under all conditions.

"From the perspective of the Communications Ministry, Internet connectivity should not be interrupted even in critical conditions," he said, adding that the issue had been repeatedly raised in previous meetings between digital economy activists and policymakers.

Internet access across the country was largely shut down from the early hours of the February 28 US-Israeli attack, with connectivity dropping to around 2% of prewar levels, according to monitoring groups. Since an April 8 ceasefire, authorities have gradually expanded limited access to selected users and entities, but most of the country's population of more than 90 million remains offline.

Despite the damage inflicted on communications infrastructure, Chitsaz said the national network remained stable during the conflict. He said communications between some Iranian islands and the mainland were temporarily cut during attacks in the Ramadan War, but in many cases were restored within hours.

Despite heavy pressure and casualties suffered by ministry personnel, the Communications and Information Technology Ministry managed to maintain the stability of the country's communications network, he added.

**Economy Desk**

Iran's information technology sector suffered \$335 million in direct damage during the recent US-Israeli war, excluding losses caused by Internet shutdowns, Deputy Communications Minister Ehsan Chitsaz said on Saturday.

"The direct damage to the information technology sector from the recent American-Israeli war amounts to \$335 million. This figure does not include losses caused by Internet disruptions," Chitsaz said at a meeting on damage inflicted on the digital economy during the 40-day war began in late February.

According to IRNA, more than 500 communications sites across the country were attacked during the conflict, causing service disruptions, although Internet connectivity in many cases was restored within hours.

The war also damaged fixed assets in Iran's digital economy sector, while missile strikes on technology and communications infrastructure created serious challenges, the report said.

Chitsaz described the shutdown of international Internet access as one of the main sources of damage to the digital economy during the war, adding that the telecommunications and com-

munications sector recorded losses of nearly \$25.6 million (4.6 trillion tomans), leading to direct declines in business revenues.

Abbas Ashtiani, head of the blockchain commission at Iran's ICT Guild Organization, had earlier estimated that the digital blackout imposed at least \$30 million to \$35 million in daily direct, indirect and opportunity costs on the country.

Chitsaz said e-commerce businesses suffered \$12.8 million (2.3 trillion tomans) in lost revenue, while large-scale digital businesses incurred losses of around \$30.6 million (5.5 trillion tomans).

He added that losses in the postal and logistics sector were estimated at \$4.3 million (780 billion tomans), while damages in the space sector and provincial businesses reached about \$10.6 million (1.9 trillion tomans).

Chitsaz said large digital businesses also suffered \$90.7 million (16.32 trillion tomans) in lost profits because of Internet disruptions.

He said years of underinvestment in the communications sector had left businesses vulnerable, resulting in both direct wartime losses and reduced resilience across the economy.

The deputy minister stressed that the Communications Ministry had repeatedly

## Iran's 2025 oil revenue surpassed \$45b, OPEC data shows

**Economy Desk**

Iran earned more than \$45 billion in oil revenue in 2025 despite intensified US sanctions and the return of Washington's "maximum pressure" policy, according to the latest report by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Tasnim news agency, citing the OPEC report, said the combined oil revenue of the group's 12 members fell to \$619 billion in 2025 from \$651 billion in 2024, marking the third consecutive annual decline in OPEC oil income.

According to the report, OPEC members' oil revenues declined

from \$828 billion in 2022 to \$678 billion in 2023, before falling further to \$651 billion in 2024 and \$619 billion in 2025.

Iran's oil revenue showed only a limited decline despite tighter US sanctions, with the country earning about \$45.335 billion from oil exports in 2025, compared with approximately \$46.776 billion in 2024, a decrease of around \$1.4 billion.

The report showed Iran's oil income had followed a relatively upward trend in recent years, with 2025 revenue standing roughly \$20 billion above the country's oil earnings in 2021.

Iran accounted for more than 7%



of total OPEC oil revenue in 2025, ranking as the organization's sixth-highest oil earner. Saudi Arabia recorded the highest oil revenue among OPEC members at \$213 billion, followed by Iraq with \$88 billion, the United Arab Emirates with \$73 billion, Kuwait with \$61 billion and Nigeria with \$54 billion.

## Transport projects proceed 'at full strength' under wartime strain

**Economy Desk**

Iran's transport and urban development minister said on Saturday that infrastructure, road maintenance, bridge construction and highway projects were continuing at full strength despite wartime conditions in the country.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of road maintenance and transport projects in northeastern Semnan Province, Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd praised road maintenance workers for their efforts during the recent US-Israeli imposed war, according to IRNA.

"Road maintenance workers stood by the country with solidarity and cooperation during the recent war, and some of them were martyred while serving," she said.

The country remains under wartime conditions. Following a 40-day conflict, Tehran and Washington reached a temporary ceasefire on April 8 through Pakistani mediation, though tensions remain high. Semnan Province, located along Iran's west-east and north-south transit routes, is considered one of the country's key regions for the development of road and rail transport infrastructure. On Sat-

urday, an additional 36 kilometers of the Garmsar-Semnan highway were inaugurated in the presence of the minister. According to ISNA, the highway is part of a 980-kilometer project designed to connect central and southern Iran to the country's northeast and ease bottlenecks along the transport corridor.

The road lies on the international east-west transport corridor and the Asian TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) corridor, linking the provinces of Qom, Tehran, Semnan and Khorasan Razavi while helping complete Iran's national highway network.

## CIA report exposes ...

The recent CIA report is not unique; similar assessments had been issued before. Even prior to the 12-day war, intelligence estimates suggested that Iran did not pose an immediate national security threat. Regarding uranium enrichment, the assessments indicated that Iran had not yet reached the breaking point and would need at least six months — with some estimates extending to a year — before reaching that stage. In that sense, Israel appeared to be the driving force behind the policy direction.

The US president remains highly unpredictable, but the primary logic behind his decision-making is minimizing personal political damage. In less than five months, the United States will hold its midterm elections. The greatest threat facing Trump personally is avoiding the fate of Richard Nixon.

If the current trajectory continues, and Trump keeps pressing ahead with the war despite assessments from bipartisan and higher-level institutions such as the CIA, while effectively imposing the costs of the conflict on American voters, the political risks for him will grow substantially. Gasoline prices in the US are now roughly 40% higher on average than they were three months ago, and in some states the increase has reached 50%.

That could push voters away from sup-

porting Republican majorities over the next five months. Should that happen, the political risks for Trump would rise sharply, including the possibility of impeachment proceedings. As a result, he appears to be looking for an exit plan in both the Middle East and the Iran file.

At this stage, de-escalation would logically be the preferred direction unless Israel once again creates a fait accompli on the ground. Trump would prefer to walk away with even a limited claim of success. The blockade itself was designed to create the impression that pressure had been applied, that the opposing side had backed down, and that concessions had been extracted from Iran. At present, Trump appears to favor reducing tensions, although there remains the possibility that he could once again be pulled back in by Israel.

**Could this push Washington toward changing course — moving away from maximum pressure toward crisis management and negotiations — or is there still a possibility of further escalation?**

# Iran circumventing maritime blockade through Afghanistan: **Businessman**

## 2.5-fold surge in truck crossings at eastern border



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Political and security developments along Iran's eastern periphery — particularly in Afghanistan — have consistently constituted one of the pivotal variables influencing bilateral commercial and transit relations. Following the ascendancy of the Taliban in Afghanistan during 2021 and the consequent transformation of the governance structure in Kabul, numerous economic observers felt profound skepticism regarding the future of Iran-Afghanistan exchanges. Nevertheless, the passage of nearly five years has demonstrated that border trade and economic relations have not only not failed to cease but have, in certain domains, been accompanied by growth and novel facilitations.

In this context, Iran's eastern borders — especially the Dogharoun Border Crossing in the Khorasan Razavi Province — play a central role in bilateral trade, serving as one of the most crucial conduits for land commerce with Afghanistan. The Khorasan Razavi Province, through the Dogharoun Free Zone's infrastructures and provincial collaborations with Afghanistan's Herat Province, has successfully handled a considerable volume of re-exports, transit operations, and even imports of essential commodities from Afghanistan.

To ascertain the most recent state of Iran-Afghanistan exchanges, border cooperations, matters pertaining to tolls, trade balance, strategies for circumventing maritime sanctions, and also transit capacities through Afghanistan toward Central Asia and China, Iran Daily has conducted an exclusive interview with the Vice President of the Joint Chamber of Commerce of Iran and Afghanistan Kazem Shirdel, the full text of which you will read below:

Kazem Shirdel



**IRAN DAILY:** Given the recent developments related to the US-Israeli war on Iran, what trajectory has the state of commercial exchanges between Iran and Afghanistan taken?

**SHIRDEL:** Our Afghan counterparts, at present, exhibit commendable cooperation with us regarding trade. In the past, within the mechanism of the transport fleet traversing between Iran and Afghanistan, both countries had imposed fees under designations such as “road

pass” and “soil money” for revenue generation; however, during the recent journey of the Governor of Khorasan Razavi Province Qolamreza Mozaffari to Herat and his meeting with the provincial governor there, these fees have been abolished. Currently, the Afghan side no longer collects money from that side, and soon the Iranian side shall also cease collecting this amount to take reciprocal action — a favorable development for augmenting commercial interactions between the two countries.

Another matter is the Dogharoun Free Zone, which is now working quite well. The Board of Directors has exerted substantial effort in this domain, and, at present, conditions along the Dogharoun transit route have improved considerably compared to the past. Previously,



Trucks move through a border crossing between Iran and Afghanistan, seen from the Afghan side.  
● IRNA

from Iran's side, there existed merely a single route for the passage of freight and passengers toward Afghanistan; now, however, three lanes have been established, and operations proceed in an orderly fashion. Consequently, the velocity of operations and the progression of exports, imports, and transit at this border have been accompanied by commendable facilitation.

If the Afghan side does the same within its own territory and prepares the environment and infrastructure, the speed of trade and exchanges will further in-

crease. The Iranian side has completed leveling, road construction, and asphaltting within the Free Zone; and, should the Afghan side perform similarly in the future, this will exert a significant influence upon accelerating exchanges.

With these facilitations and arrangements instituted, it is anticipated that truck crossings across the shared border will reach 2,000 vehicles per day. Before the recent war, daily crossings amounted to 600 to 800 trucks, which, given the country's needs during wartime, increased to approximately 1,400 crossings per day. Now, with the cooperation of provincial administrators from both countries and the preparation of infrastructures, it is hoped that crossings will reach 2,000 trucks per day, and the problems arising from truck halts at borders will be resolved completely.

**Given the maritime blockade and the economic pressure exerted by the United States within the Persian Gulf and international waters, to what extent can the increase in exchanges with neighbors such as Afghanistan, or through Afghan territory with other nations, prove efficacious in neutralizing these pressures?**

At present, the development of exchanges with the Afghan market, Central Asia, and the East is exceedingly critical because, in these regions, those restrictions that we encounter in the South and the maritime sector do not exist. Through the follow-ups undertaken by the governor of Khorasan Razavi and the directives of the presidency, the private sector has been activated to develop trade across these borders. The Afghan side possesses great merchants across various domains who operate with diverse countries, and this can unlock our trade routes to multiple nations.

One of our objectives within the Joint Chamber of Iran and Afghanistan is to negotiate with Afghan counterparts regarding the expansion of exchange capacity, circumvention of sanctions, and provision of essential commodities for both parties. Furthermore, negotiations have occurred concerning offshore cultivation within Afghan territory for water-intensive commodities, and we have achieved favorable results in the agricultural sector. Successful follow-ups have also been conducted for the importation of live livestock and meat from Afghanistan so that meat may enter the country at a more appropriate price. In totality, the prevailing circumstances represent an auspicious opportunity to tap the capacity of East Asia, Central Asia, and Afghanistan for exports, transit, and imports.

**At present, what is the state of the trade balance and the volume of imports and exports between the two countries?**

We must expand imports from Afghanistan to equilibrate the trade balance. Through Afghanistan, we must supply the country's needs — since our eastern neighbor possesses commendable



Through Afghanistan, we can trade with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. However, the primary objective is the opening of a trade route with China. In the past, the majority of Iran's trade with China and East Asia was conducted via maritime routes and Southern ports such as Bandar Abbas. Under prevailing conditions, however, it can be executed through a hybrid rail-and-sea route via neighboring countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.



The Governor of Iran's Khorasan Razavi Province Qolamreza Mozaffari meets with the Governor of Afghanistan's Herat Sheikh Noor Ahmad Islamjar at the Dogharoun border between the two countries on January 27, 2026.  
● IRAFIR



production capacity — so that the trade balance approaches equilibrium. The Afghan side itself has also declared readiness for greater trade growth. Thus far, trade has been nearly unilateral, and the trade balance has been approximately 90 to 95 percent in Iran's favor. Afghanistan possesses favorable products for export to Iran — such as livestock, cotton, and certain agricultural and animal products — but these encounter quarantine problems, which we are currently addressing; for instance, establishing a quarantine at the border for cotton entering. In the domain of dried fruits and nuts, which can be packaged in Iran and re-exported to other countries to generate added value and employment for us, they also possess substantial capacity. In this manner, the trade balance will become more balanced. Additionally, commodities that cannot enter Iran due to sanctions can first be imported into Afghani-

stan and subsequently dispatched to Iran.

#### Through Afghanistan, to which countries can export and transit be conducted, and to what extent does the development of commercial relations via neighbors assist Iran?

Through Afghanistan, we can trade with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. However, the primary objective is the opening of a trade route with China. We can establish robust connections with China via the Afghanistan and Tajikistan route and vice versa. Within the Badakhshan region, there exists potential for developing road and rail connectivity on the part of both Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Although the mountainous nature of the route has diminished operational velocity, Tajikistan is pursuing this matter with seriousness. Should the Badakhshan route open, goods will travel from China to Badakhshan, Afghanistan, and Iran — a route that is

both lower in cost and superior. Furthermore, via Kazakhstan and the Caspian Sea to the Amirabad Port and vice versa, we can also establish connections with China. In the past, the majority of Iran's trade with China and East Asia was conducted via maritime routes and Southern ports such as Bandar Abbas. Under prevailing conditions, however, it can be executed through a hybrid rail-and-sea route via neighboring countries such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

#### How do you evaluate Iran's trade strategy and policy under wartime conditions?

Due to wartime exigencies and the prioritization of meeting domestic needs over exports, we have imposed certain restrictions and bans on the exportation of some commodities. Nevertheless, we believe that the ban of trade items must be managed. If we abruptly ban the export of a commodity, a company that has,

for years, made a market for its brand in other countries shall suffer losses. Instead of export bans, we can supply domestic needs from other neighboring countries while, simultaneously, maintaining exports freely. Therefore, under current circumstances, we must act with special and targeted management so as not to damage exports. Moreover, in the realm of imports, beyond essential food and agricultural commodities, we must focus on raw materials and machinery to build the production infrastructure.

#### What is the current state of Iran's trade with the Afghan market, and to what extent does Iran supply Afghanistan's needs?

Afghanistan constitutes one of Iran's primary export destinations, particularly for the Khorasan Province in the East of the country. Last year, we exported approximately \$2,200,000,000 to Afghanistan, approximately 80 percent of which was

conducted via Khorasan because, due to the short distance, the cost of exporting from Khorasan is more economical. The average volume of bilateral exchanges is \$3,000,000,000. A portion of exports to Afghanistan occurs informally; for instance, Iranian saffron goes illicitly to Afghanistan and from there is exported to other countries under the label of Afghan saffron. The reason for this is that the exportation of Afghan products to India is tariff-free, whereas the exportation of the identical product from Iran to India incurs a high tariff. Hence, such commodities travel from Iran to Afghanistan and thence to India and certain other countries. On the other hand, Afghanistan procures a substantial portion of its required commodities through Iran and, due to its difficulties with Pakistan, has increasingly turned to Iran. Thus, all in all, Afghanistan is considered Iran's second trading partner and occupies a significant role in Iran's commerce.

# Is Pakistan looking for exit by attacking Afghanistan?



By Abhishek De  
Senior Assistant Editor  
at India Today

## OPINION

For three weeks, a fragile cease-fire between Pakistan and Afghanistan was in place as Islamabad burnt the midnight oil in mediating the Iran war. However, on April 27, Afghanistan's Taliban authorities claimed Pakistani mortars and missiles struck a university and residential neighbourhoods in the eastern province of Kunar. The timing of the purported attack, which came out of the blue and without any trigger, has raised questions if Pakistan was now looking for an off-ramp as peace talks between the US and Iran hit a dead end.

The bigger worry for Pakistan, however, is the looming prospect of the war in Iran restarting. The week before, Pakistan failed to bring negotiators from the US and Iran together for a second round of peace talks. Trump has asserted that "bombs will go off" if Iran fails to reach a deal. Tehran, on the other hand, has warned Persian Gulf nations of a "four-fold" retaliation if any of its energy facilities were targeted.

It has landed Pakistan in a spot. If the war resumes, it is most likely to drag in the Persian Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia. Before the cease-fire, Saudi Arabia, a key ally of Pakistan, was repeatedly hit by Iran.

#### Why the sudden attack

Now, it is no secret that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have a NATO-style defence pact that treats an attack on one as an attack on both. If Saudi Arabia is attacked again, a cash-strapped Pakistan will be forced to militarily assist Riyadh. Earlier last month, Pakistan was forced to send a massive military contingent comprising 13,000 soldiers and 12-18 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia as part of the deal.

If the war starts again, not only will it have military consequences for Pakistan, but diplomatically as well, as it would be forced to attack its ally, Iran. Getting dragged into an endless war also risks domestic backlash and instability.

Attacking Iran, a Shia Islamic country, will prove to be bad optics. Any action by Pakistan, which has around 20% Shia population, may lead to blowback. Experts suggest it is exactly the reason why Pakistan decided to start a fire by thrusting upon a war with Afghanistan. "After failing to mediate between Iran and the US, Pakistan has restarted the attack on Afghanistan," tweeted geopolitical expert Kiran Kumar S.

The sentiment was echoed by a Kabul-based journalist, Ali Latifi. "Islamabad's attempts to broker peace be-



Taliban soldiers look toward Pakistan from the Afghan side of the Torkham border crossing in February 2026.

● WAHIDULLAH KAKAR/AP

tween Iran and the US failed, and now Pakistan is once again launching strikes into urban Afghanistan," he tweeted.

#### Not the first such episode

The tactic by Pakistan, however, is not a first. In the past, too, Pakistan has escalated action on the Afghan front with the Taliban whenever it has faced pressure linked to the Middle East turmoil. On February 27, Pakistan conducted massive air strikes in Kabul and other Afghan cities — just a day before the US and Israel dropped bombs on Iran. It prompted a fierce retaliation by the Taliban, with Islamabad declaring it was in an "open war" with Kabul.

Afghanistan has long been accused by Islamabad of harbouring the Pakistani Taliban or the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan has accused the TTP of carrying out deadly attacks inside the country, with the latest being the suicide bombing at a mosque in Islamabad that killed over 30 people. This incident happened on February 6, weeks before Pakistan attacked Afghanistan on February 28.

Thus, by starting a conflict of its own with a militarily depleted Afghanistan, Pakistan could claim that it had a war to take care of. It gave Pakistan a reason



US Vice President JD Vance (c), walks with Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir (l) after arriving for talks with Iranian officials in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 11, 2026.

● JACQUELYN MARTIN/REUTERS



to avoid sending military assistance to Saudi Arabia.

Even if US President Donald Trump, who has warmed up to Pakistan, sought help due to its geographical proximity to Iran, Islamabad has an answer ready. As the Iran conflict escalated in mid-March, so did Pakistan's intensity of strikes in Afghanistan.

#### Mediation attempts fall flat

An uneasy calm returned to the border in late March after China mediated a cease-fire between the countries. It coincided with Pakistan taking an active role in playing a mediator between the US and Iran to end the war. Pakistan's advantage is that it has close ties with Trump and a working relationship with Iran.

On the other hand, Trump believed Iran was more likely to accept a cease-fire offer if it was delivered by a Muslim-majority neighbouring country. Initially, it worked. In the first week of April, Pakistan was able to bring a top-level US delegation, led by Vice President JD Vance, and the Iranian leadership to the negotiating table. It put Pakistan firmly in the spotlight. The optics of its army chief, Asim Munir, greeting Vance and the Iranian foreign minister gave Pakistan a chance to revamp its global image.

However, in subsequent weeks, Pakistan's efforts fell flat. The trust deficit with Iran widened, and Pakistan failed to convince Trump to accede to Tehran's demands, such as lifting the US naval blockade. Thus, a second round of talks in Islamabad had to be cancelled at the eleventh hour.

It has led to a sharp escalation in threats between Trump and Iran. Anticipating that the war might restart, Pakistan now seems to have fallen back on its classic tactic — attack Afghanistan. Monday's strikes in Kunar province partially destroyed the Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University and flattened civilian homes, killing nearly 10 people, Afghanistan claimed. Over 80 people, including women and children, are battling serious injuries. Pakistan, however, denied attacking the university, calling it a "blatant lie".

The reason behind the latest spurt of violence is not known. The pattern lays bare Pakistan's strategy of using Afghanistan to manage its external pressures. This is because the view within the Pakistani military is that Afghanistan is a manageable conflict zone. Thus, with mediation efforts in doldrums, and Trump threatening to bomb Iran, Pakistan has once again fallen back to restarting its conflict with Afghanistan.

The full article first appeared on India Today.



By starting a conflict of its own with a militarily depleted Afghanistan, Pakistan could claim that it had a war to take care of. It gave Pakistan a reason to avoid sending military assistance to Saudi Arabia. Even if US President Donald Trump, who has warmed up to Pakistan, sought help due to its geographical proximity to Iran, Islamabad has an answer ready.

## IWF World Junior Championships: Iran steals the show in heavyweight, beats the odds to defend men's title



Iranian weightlifters Abolfazl Zare' (1) and Hamidreza Mohammadi-Tanha make a lift during their triple-gold winning campaigns at the IWF World Championships in Ismailia, Egypt, on May 8, 2026.

### Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifters dominated the final day of the IWF World Junior Championships in Ismailia, Egypt, sweeping the gold and silver medals across the two heavyweight categories, as the country celebrated back-to-back men's title at the showpiece. A haul of six golds, seven silvers, and one bronze medal saw the Iranian eight-man squad stand atop the team table with 520 points – a tremendous achievement that came against the backdrop of the complications the team had struggled with in the buildup to the event. While the team's preparation had been massively hampered by the wartime situation in the country, the Iranian weightlifters – coached by former world and Olympic champion Sohrab Moradi – only arrived in Ismail-

ia on Tuesday after a visa delay had threatened to derail their title defense. Hamidreza Mohammadi-Tanha capped off Iran's emphatic run on the final day by completing a clean sweep of three golds in the +110kg weight class. Stepping onto the platform as the favorite to emulate his triple-gold winning campaign of last year in Lima, Mohammadi-Tanha delivered a six-from-six 180-221-401 performance to finish above his compatriot Taha Nemati, who settled for three silvers for a second straight year with 172-220-392. Turkish weightlifter Selahattin Altun finished third in the snatch with a 170kg lift, with Uzbekistan's Omadillo Olimov bagging the other two bronzes on 219-388. It was also an Iranian one-two in the 110kg division earlier in the day, with Abolfazl Zare' hitting

the 400kg mark in total for three gold medals. Zare, who had collected three medals – including the total silver – in the 102kg class in Lima, made five successful lifts for 180-220-400, ahead of his teammate Farhad Qolizadeh, who registered 179-208-387 to take his personal tally to five medals following last year's C&J and total silvers. Zare' jumped 11kg for his final attempt despite having won already. "He has done 185-226 in training," Sajjad Anoushiravani, president of the Iranian Weightlifting Federation, said of the 19-year-old's performance. "We are very strong at 110kg. We have four athletes all trying to qualify for the Olympic Games," added the former Olympic superheavyweight silver medalist, referring to Friday's medalists plus Amirhossein

Sepah and Alireza Nasiri, all aged 19 or 20. Nasiri won last year – his second junior world title – and set junior world records of 231kg in clean and jerk and 414kg on total at the Senior World Championships in Forde, Norway, last October. He will lift at the Asian Championships in India next weekend. Italy's Simone Abati secured the snatch and total bronzes in 110kg with 173-373, with China's Wang Guizhou, who bombed out in snatch, missing his first two clean and jerks before making the last effort on 207kg for a bronze medal. Iran's 'big four' collectively weighed 528kg and lifted 1,580kg – slightly up on last year in body weight and kilos lifted. Friday's feat came after Hamidreza Zarei had opened Iran's account in Ismailia by collecting a silver and a bronze medal in the

men's 94kg event on the penultimate day of the competition. The Iranian registered three successful lifts in the snatch but was unlucky to miss out on the podium – finishing fourth with 162kg – before a much-improved performance in the clean & jerk saw him secure silver with a 204kg effort. Zarei's 366kg tally earned him the total bronze – the third world junior medal of the Iranian's career, after the 96kg clean & jerk gold he won in Lima. Mohammad-Amin Habibi was the other Iranian in the 94kg class, finishing sixth in both snatch and C&J categories with 161kg and 187kg respectively, before placing fifth in the total standings. Amir-Mohammad Rahmati and Mohammad-Amin Davvand were the first Iranians on the platform in Ismailia, competing

in the men's 88kg division on Wednesday. Rahmati stood seventh in total with a 152-180-332 performance, while Davvand crashed out after three failed attempts in clean & jerk. "The long journey and lack of rest affected our first two athletes but the others were fine and performed well," added Anoushiravani, who Egyptian sports minister to thank, who, after prompting from the IWF president Mohammed Jalood, helped to clear the way for Iran's late entry into the competition. Egypt followed Iran in the men's standings with 427 points, with Venezuela in third on 380. In the overall medal table, which also featured the women's competition, China dominated with an impressive 19 gold medals, with Iran and Venezuela, which bagged five golds, in the following spots, respectively.

## Abdi set for Iran U23 job, Taj says

### Sports Desk

Hossein Abdi is set to be appointed as the head coach of the Iranian under-23 national team, Mahdi Taj, the chairman of the Iranian Football Federation, confirmed on Friday. Abdi, 59, will take over from Omidreza Ravankhah, who parted ways with the national governing body following a dreadful U23 Asian Cup in January, which saw Iran finish bottom of Group C with two points, failing to find the net across three games in Saudi Arabia against eventual semifinalists South Korea, Uzbekistan, and Lebanon.

"Hossein Abdi has been chosen to take charge of the under-23 national team. We held positive talks with him, and the appointment was well received by the federation's board as well," Taj told IRIB TV. The appointment will mark the third age-group national team job for Abdi, following decent spells with the U17 and U20 teams over the past three years. He led Iran to a last-four finish at the U17 Asian Cup in Thailand in 2023, securing qualification for the U-17 World Cup later that year in Indonesia. Iran began its World Cup campaign with a memorable 3-2 comeback victory over Brazil and went on to finish third in the group and progress to the round of 16 before falling to a shootout defeat against Morocco. Abdi's second spell was not quite as impressive as the first, as Iran made a clean sweep of three group victories at the U20 Asian Cup in China last year but crashed out after a shootout setback against Japan in the quarterfinals, missing out on a place at

the 2025 U-20 World Cup in Chile. "In many countries around the world, there is an established framework for developing youth teams, and we followed the same path. We appointed Abdi as the head coach of the under-17 team, and he built a squad from 300 to 400 players. That team managed to defeat Brazil at the World Cup and lost 2-1 to England in the dying minutes," Taj said. "That generation of players then stepped up to the under-20s and were unlucky to lose to Japan on penalties. Now we have decided to stay the course and move the entire team, still led by Abdi, up to the under-23 level," added the FFIRI chief. Abdi's first test in the new role will come at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in September. Iran will be hoping to secure a first football berth at the Olympics since 1976 when they take part in the 2028 U23 Asian Cup, where the two finalists will qualify for the LA 2028 Games.

## Asian Women's U16 Handball Championship: Iran to play Hong Kong in opener

### Sports Desk

Iran will be looking for a flying start at the inaugural Asian Women's U16 Handball Championship when they take on Hong Kong in Almaty, Kazakh-

stan, today. Thursday, respectively. The final day of the league phase will see Iran square off against Kyrgyzstan on Friday. As if the Iranian team needed added motivation to go all out for glo-

national Handball Federation. Reihaneh Hosseini, Fatemeh Shafiei, Aysan Biglari, Tamana Aram, Negar Rezaei, Niayesh Mansouri, Hasti Mirakhori, Aida Arab, Fatemeh Orangi, Nazanin-Zahra Bahralou, Dina Dezfouli, Fatemeh Dehqani, Maryam Zamani, Zahra Rastad, Yasna Yazdani-Moqaddam, and Sarina Rafiei are the members of the Iranian squad in Almaty, with Sheida Fallahi in charge as head coach. Despite a hampered buildup to the competition, caused by the wartime situation in the country – including damage to the national team's training facilities in Tehran – the team will still hope to add further glory to Iranian women's handball. The country enjoyed a gold-winning campaign at last October's 2025 Asian Youth Games in Manama before claiming an impressive bronze medal at November's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh.



IRIHF

stan, today. Featuring six teams, the tournament will be held in a round-robin format, with the top four in the table progressing to the semifinals. The Iranian girls will face the host team in their second outing on Monday, followed by games against Uzbekistan and China on Wednesday and

ry in Almaty, the event also serves as the qualification pathway for the inaugural IHF Women's U16 World Championship, with the two finalists securing a place at the global showpiece, scheduled to take place from October 15 to 24. The host country of the world event has yet to be confirmed by the Inter-

# Neglected treasury in Qarchak holds 7,000 years of history

## Iranica Desk

Few could have imagined that a site once regarded as little more than a dumping ground would one day emerge as a valuable historical treasure. The ancient Fardis Hill, located in the city of Qarchak in Tehran Province, has revealed evidence of human settlement dating back nearly 7,000 years, with later traces of Iron Age civilization.

Researchers have uncovered numerous traces of Iron Age civilization, including pottery kilns and a potter's wheel featuring a cylinder fashioned from animal horns. According to Mehr News Agency, these discoveries have provided archaeologists studying Iran's central plateau with valuable new insights into the daily lives and technological practices of the people who inhabited the region thousands of years ago.

Despite the site's historical significance, preservation efforts carried out during the 2000s

remained limited to temporary research and excavation activities. Majid Zhalehnia, head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Qarchak, said the site had been selected for excavation by the Cultural Heritage Research Institute, with the latest excavation season conducted in 2007. Artifacts discovered during the excavations were later transferred to the National Museum of Iran.

According to Zhalehnia, archaeologists had proposed converting the hill into an open-air historical museum. However, the project required substantial funding, preliminary studies, and the resolution of land ownership issues in the surrounding area.

"Efforts to secure funding and establish the site museum unfortunately did not succeed," he said. "Financial limitations and the presence of privately owned land around the hill prevented any serious implementation of the original plan."

Zhalehnia added that the hill has

now been left without adequate protection. Natural erosion and seasonal rainfall have caused parts of the site to collapse, while unauthorized construction activities in nearby areas continue to threaten the ancient remains. He noted that the historical artifacts and structures currently receive no permanent or systematic protection.

Fardis Hill stands as a symbol of Iran's ancient civilization and highlights the urgent need to preserve the country's cultural heritage. Experts believe the site could become an important destination for researchers, tourists, and history enthusiasts alike. However, without sufficient financial resources, conservation planning, and effective land management, such ambitions are unlikely to be realized.

Zhalehnia warned that unless serious measures are taken to preserve and restore the site, this valuable piece of cultural heritage could be lost forever.



● IRNA

## Rare fish owl observed in Pamemar village



● chn.ir

## Iranica Desk

A birdwatcher and wildlife photographer has said that the fish owl is a rare and significant species which, if provided with adequate security and food resources, could remain in the region permanently and successfully reproduce — a development he described as an indicator of the overall health and effective protection of the Pamemar ecosystem.

Sirus Rashno, a birdwatcher and wildlife photographer, told chn.ir that a birdwatching program was recently held in the ecotourism village of Pamemar in Khuzestan Province. He said the area, with its

unique natural features, rich biodiversity, and views over Dez Lake, is one of the most suitable locations in Khuzestan for the development of nature-based tourism and birdwatching.

Rashno noted that he, along with a group of birdwatchers, nature guides, and environmental experts, visited the scenic tourism village of Pamemar in Dezful. The main purpose of the visit, he explained, was to highlight the region's natural and cultural potential in tourism, handicrafts, and the identification of distinctive bird species.

He added that during the program, the fish owl — con-

sidered one of Iran's most valuable bird species — was observed alongside other birds such as swallows, stilts, and buzzards. In addition, wild goats and ibex were spotted in the surrounding highlands, indicating the ecological vitality of the region.

Emphasizing the importance of the fish owl sighting, Rashno said the species is particularly significant and can establish a permanent presence in the area and reproduce. He described this as a clear sign of the health and sufficient protection of the Pamemar ecosystem.

He further noted that Pamemar's geographical location, its overlook of the Dez

Dam reservoir, and its position within a protected area have made it especially attractive to birdwatchers, enabling valuable records of rare species.

Commenting on the role of birdwatching in nature conservation, the wildlife photographer said it is not only a method of documenting and introducing species, but also an educational and cultural activity that raises awareness among local communities about the importance of biodiversity conservation. Over time, he added, this process encourages villagers to see themselves as stakeholders in protecting the region's natural heritage and wildlife.

## Yazdi coffee; a ritual drink brewed in tradition, faith

## Iranica Desk

In the historic fabric of Yazd, where many ancient rituals and traditions remain an active part of daily life, coffee is far more than an ordinary beverage. Yazdi coffee is considered an integral element of the city's social and religious culture — a tradition that holds a special place in various ceremonies, particularly mourning rituals and traditional gatherings. Beyond hospitality, it functions as a form of collective cultural practice, often symbolizing respect, participation, and solidarity.

The tradition of coffee serving is most visible in the old districts of Yazd, such as Fahadan, Shah Abu'l-Qasem, and Chaharmenar, as well as in historic Husseiniyehs and Tekyehs across the city. During the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, especially in mourning ceremonies held to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions, the preparation and distribution of coffee form part of the hospitality arrangements. Those responsible for preparing it are usually experienced practitioners, and in some

ceremonies, the process follows specific rituals and is carried out collectively.

Yazdi coffee differs from common types of coffee both in taste and preparation. It is typically made with a blend of coffee, cardamom, rock candy (nabat), and sometimes aromatic spices, resulting in a sweet and spicy flavor profile. Cardamom is one of its defining ingredients, and its aroma plays a central role in shaping the identity of the drink. The coffee is usually prepared in large pots and then served in small cups to guests. The preparation method is also

distinctive and forms an essential part of its cultural identity. Ground coffee is boiled in a large volume of water over heat and left to simmer for several hours. Ingredients such as cardamom, rosewater, rock candy, and sometimes cinnamon are added to enhance its flavor and aroma. The long brewing time — often four to six hours — results in a thick, sweet, and highly aromatic beverage.

Based on historical records and oral accounts in Yazd, Yazdi coffee dates back to the Qajar era. Researchers believe it gradually entered the city's culinary cul-

ture through trade connections between southern Iran and the countries of the Persian Gulf, eventually adapting to local tastes and traditions. Over time, it evolved from an imported drink into an essential part of Yazd's social and religious rituals, to the extent that it is now closely associated with mourning ceremonies and religious occasions.

This tradition extends beyond drinking coffee; it encompasses a broader network of social relations and communal practices. In many gatherings, serving coffee creates opportunities for con-

versation, social interaction, and collective participation, contributing to the overall atmosphere of the event. In this sense, Yazdi coffee represents a clear example of the intersection between food, ritual, and social culture.

In recent years, attention to food-related traditions as part of intangible cultural heritage has increased, and practices associated with traditional coffee preparation and serving have been recognized as elements worthy of documentation and preservation. This highlights how even everyday customs can form part of a community's cul-

tural memory and local identity. Today, Yazdi coffee is no longer limited to religious and ritual contexts. It has also become a popular local souvenir and a recognizable culinary product of the city. It is widely available in souvenir shops and traditional herbal stores across Yazd and has gained attention from tourists in recent years. It is also served in many cafés, traditional teahouses, and roadside shops around the city, either freshly prepared or packaged. Its presence in public spaces shows that this tradition has adapted to contemporary life and the tourism industry while maintaining its ritual significance.

Despite the spread of modern coffee consumption habits and changing urban lifestyles, the tradition of Yazdi coffee continues in certain neighborhoods and religious ceremonies. Its persistence reflects the continuity of a local cultural practice that has maintained its place over time and remains an important part of Yazd's social life. Consequently, the "method of preparing Yazdi coffee" was registered on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2019.



● kojaro.com

# Russian publisher brings martyred Leader's memoir to broad new readership

## Arts & Culture Desk

Russia's largest publishing house, AST Publishing, has released a Russian-language edition of 'Cell No. 14,' the prison and exile memoirs of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei expanding the international circulation of one of the most widely discussed autobiographical works tied to Iran's revolutionary history, Iran's Ibn Sina Foundation for Islamic Studies announced on Saturday.

Issued in a 256-page Russian edition under the title 'Камера номер 14,' the book chronicles episodes from the late Iranian leader's detention, surveillance, and years of exile during the Pahlavi era. The publication was prepared in cooperation with the Ibn Sina Foundation for Islamic Studies,

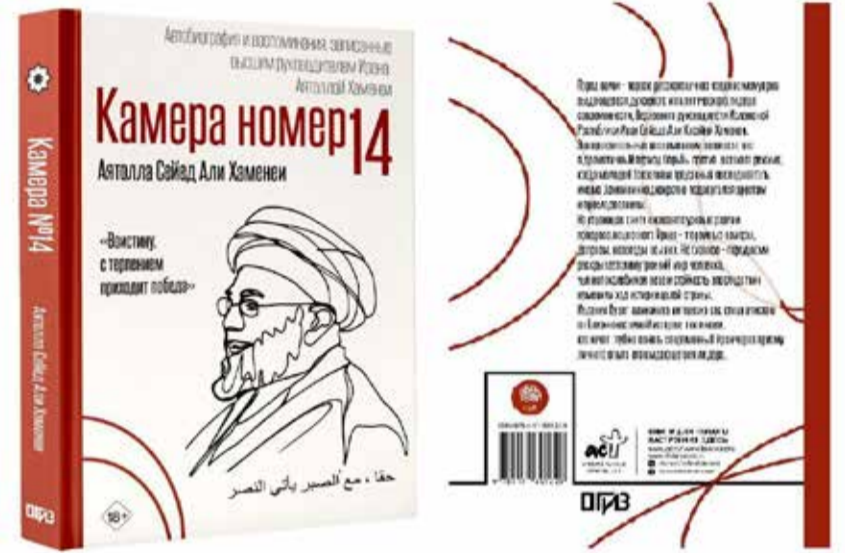
Sadra Publishing, and Islamic Revolution Publications. AST, which commands a major share of Russia's publishing market and distributes tens of millions of volumes annually, printed an initial run of 2,000 copies. The memoir has already reached bookstores and online retail platforms across Russia, according to the foundation.

Originally published in Arabic in Beirut under the title 'Inna Ma'a al-Sabr Nasra' ('Indeed, With Patience Comes Victory'), the work later appeared in Persian as both 'Cell No. 14' and 'The Blood of the Heart That Became Ruby.'

The memoir has since been translated into several languages, including Spanish, French, Portuguese, and English, broadening its international cultural footprint well beyond the

Middle East. The memoir blends autobiographical narrative with reflections on political struggle, imprisonment, faith, and resistance. Publishers described the work as an account aimed particularly at younger readers seeking a closer understanding of the hardships endured by anti-Pahlavi activists and revolutionary figures in pre-revolution Iran.

The release also underscores AST's continuing engagement with Islamic and Iranian texts. The Moscow-based publishing giant has previously issued Russian editions of the Holy Qur'an, Nahj al-Balagha (Imam Ali's sermons and letters), and an audio adaptation of Nahj al-Balagha prepared in partnership with Iranian cultural institutions.



# Trailblazing Iranian globetrotter Isa Omidvar dies at 96



## Arts & Culture Desk

Isa Omidvar, the veteran Iranian explorer, documentary filmmaker and one half of the famed Omidvar Brothers whose globe-spanning expeditions introduced generations of Iranians to remote cultures across five continents, died on Saturday at the age of 96 after an illness.

Born on December 23, 1929, Omidvar rose to prominence alongside his brother Abdollah Omidvar as one of Iran's first modern world travelers. Beginning in 1954, the duo embarked on a decade-long expedition that carried them from the Arctic and Antarctica to the Amazon rainforest and Africa's trib-

al regions, documenting disappearing communities and indigenous traditions through films, photography and ethnographic research, IRNA reported.

Traveling first on a 500cc British Matchless motorcycle and later in a Citroen vehicle gifted by the French automaker, the brothers adopted the motto "All Different, All Related," a phrase that became synonymous with their cross-cultural mission and humanistic outlook.

Ali Darabi, deputy minister of cultural heritage, described Omidvar as a symbol of "courage, knowledge and an insatiable thirst" for discovery. In a condolence message, he said the brothers "crossed the geograph-

ical and mental borders of their era" and left behind a rare archive of visual records from communities and regions that no longer exist in their original form. Iranian tourism officials said Omidvar had been due to receive a tribute during International Museum Day ceremonies on May 18 at the Omidvar Brothers Museum inside Tehran's Sa'dabad Cultural Complex, where artifacts, travel journals and expedition equipment from the brothers' journeys remain on display.

Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said the explorer's legacy would continue to inspire "adventurous and inquisitive generations."

Abdollah Omidvar, who later settled in Chile and became associated with the country's film scene, died in July 2022 at age 90. The Omidvar brothers are widely credited with opening a new chapter in Iranian travel literature and documentary storytelling, bringing Iran's cultural presence to audiences across the world decades before international travel became commonplace.

# Ancient tablets reveal Iran's urban civilization, archivist says

## Social Desk

Ancient Persian tablets and national archives offer vivid proof of Iran's sophisticated urban civilization and multicultural social fabric, senior cultural figure Ahmad Masjed-Jamei said on Saturday at a ceremony marking National Documents and Written Heritage Day in Tehran.

Speaking at the National Library and Archives of Iran, Masjed-Jamei, a member of Iran's National Archives Council and deputy head of the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, said even a single historical document could illuminate "a brilliant civilization," citing Achaemenid-era tablets that shed light on administration, art, and the role of women in ancient Iranian society, IRNA reported.

"These documents show an organized urban system," he said. "You see art in them, and you see several nationalities living together. One document can reveal a brilliant civilization."

Masjed-Jamei pointed to records describing women working in tailoring workshops under female management, saying the tablets captured details of daily life with unusual precision. "You see a woman returning to work after several months, and others realize she has had a child," he said.

He also underlined the political and historical value of official archives, saying Iran's documented records have helped defend the internationally rec-



ognized name of the Persian Gulf.

"If today we can defend the title 'Persian Gulf,' it is because it has been officially registered," he said, warning that the destruction of historical records remains one of the main threats facing cultural heritage.

Referring to the return of Achaemenid tablets to Iran after a US court ruling, Masjed-Jamei described the artifacts as especially significant because much of that historical period was not chronicled through conventional historiography.

Gholamreza Amirkhani, head of the National Library and Archives of Iran, called for archives to be integrated more actively into public life rather than remaining dormant in storage.

Member of Iran's National Archives Council and deputy head of the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, Ahmad Masjed-Jamei, speaks at a ceremony marking National Documents and Written Heritage Day in Tehran on May 9, 2026. ● IRNA

"The document should enter society," he said. "Its function and application within society are what give it meaning."

Amirkhani also described the institution as a secure national repository for both public and family records, particularly during wartime conditions, saying the archive belonged to "all people with every viewpoint."

# Iran doubles blood reserves as donor drive shields thalassemia care nationwide

## Social Desk

Iran has doubled its national blood reserves from five to 10 days following a strong public response to donation campaigns, ensuring uninterrupted care for thalassemia patients across the country, the head of the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization said during a visit to Tehran's Zafar Adult Thalassemia Clinic on Saturday.

Ahmad Gharehbaghian said the country's blood supply had reached a "stable" and "desirable" level, allowing hospitals and transfusion centers nationwide to fully meet the needs of

thousands of patients suffering from the hereditary blood disorder, according to IRNA.

He said Iran's national blood network remained fully operational during the recent imposed war, when many thalassemia patients temporarily relocated to other provinces. "Patients faced no problem receiving the blood they needed," he said, adding that transfusion centers across the country coordinated deliveries to host provinces and high-demand regions.

The official said southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, home to the country's largest thalassemia pop-

ulation, maintained sufficient reserves throughout the crisis. When local inventories came under pressure in provinces such as Hormozgan, Khuzestan, Tehran, Gilan and Mazandaran, additional units were dispatched through the national blood-sharing network.

Iran has nearly 20,000 thalassemia patients, many of whom require two to three units of blood every month to maintain normal daily life, Gharehbaghian said. In Sistan and Baluchestan alone, the number of patients is estimated at between 6,500 and 7,000, with monthly demand reaching up to 20,000 units.

He said all blood transfusion services are provided free of charge, while emphasizing that treatment and specialized medical care fall under the responsibility of hospitals and the Health Ministry.

Gharehbaghian also called for broader institutional and charitable support to improve facilities at the Zafar clinic, saying patients often face long travel routes, time-consuming treatment schedules and complications linked to limited healthcare access in remote regions.

He warned that hereditary factors, including consanguineous marriages,



continued to contribute to higher thalassemia rates in several southern and northern provinces, stressing the need for stronger public awareness campaigns.