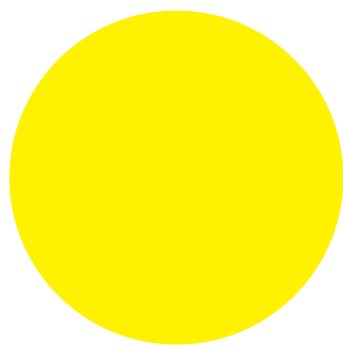


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FEATURE REPORT
EXCLUSIVE



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People take part in a ceremony to mark 40 days after the burial of Iran's martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran on August 18, 2026.

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False-flag operation aimed to turn Iraqi Kurdistan against Iran

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

The office of Iraqi Kurdistan Prime Minister Masrour Barzani and the residence of the head of the Kurdistan Region's security and intelligence agency came under a drone attack on Sunday, which Kurdistan Region officials claimed had been launched from Iranian territory. Iranian Foreign Ministry officials, however, rejected the claim and described it as "suspicious." Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's office said an investigative committee had been tasked with determining the location and origin of the drone launches. Amid regional tensions stemming from the US



Emad Abshenas

and Israeli aggression against Iran, the incident has raised suspicions about the possible involvement of other actors. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Emad Abshenas said that given the Kurdistan Region government's opposition to the presence of US and Israeli forces and the use of its territory against Iran, such a false-flag operation was an attempt to turn the regional government against the Islamic Republic.

IRAN DAILY: Given the Kurdistan Region officials' claim that the drones were launched from Iranian territory, and Iran's rejection of the allegation, what scenarios have emerged regarding the origin of the attack and those behind it?

ABSHENAS: Iranian officials have stressed that if Kurdistan Region officials have evidence, they should present it. This ap-

pears to be part of a false-flag operation by Israel. In fact, it was carried out by Israel and the US, and the aim is to create divisions between Iran and the Kurdistan Region.

If Iran had carried out the attack, it would have claimed responsibility for it. Iran has never denied its actions whenever it has carried out an operation, and when it does not claim responsibility, that means it had nothing to do with it. This applies both to operations conducted in the Kurdistan Region against opposition groups and terrorists based there, and to operations against other countries that provide bases to Israel or the US to launch attacks against Iran.

What would the planners of such an operation gain from it, and what could their objective be?

One objective could be to provoke the Kurdistan Region government against Iran. The re-

gional government is strongly opposed to the presence of these terrorists, but its hands are tied because of US and Israeli influence in the area and the presence of US bases.

US forces and weapons are brought in without the authorities' knowledge, and no one knows what the US flights are carrying. According to some reports, Israel and the US had also established bases in desert areas in western Iraq, from where US and Israeli drones and aircraft would launch missiles at Iran, attack Iran and refuel. The Iraqi resistance even shot down one or two of these refueling aircraft over Iraq.

Unfortunately, Iraqi territory and airspace have now been taken over by the Americans and Israelis. Since the Kurdistan Region government is strongly opposed to this situation, they want to somehow provoke the regional government against Iran.

On the other hand, reports have emerged about the role of Kurdistan Region officials in relaying messages between Tehran and Washington. In any case, the Americans are trying to establish contact with Iran and send messages through every possible channel. If such reports are accurate, this operation could have been aimed at undermining that mediation role. Israel was certainly very unhappy about it and may therefore have wanted to send a warning to the Kurdistan Region.

Could the attack be linked to broader regional developments and efforts by some parties to open new fronts against Iran?

Yes. Such an operation is also intended to open new fronts against Iran, in addition to creating divisions between Iran and the Kurdistan Region. Even before the war began, according to reports, the US and

Israel brought terrorists from various parts of the world to the Kurdistan Region. Some of them are ethnically Kurdish, while others are not Kurdish at all but are there dressed and presented as Kurds.

They had all been prepared to attack Iran before the war began, and the Americans had stationed them in the Kurdistan Region. Both [US President Donald] Trump and [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu officially announced that they had sent weapons to these groups to create unrest inside Iran.

Given the sensitive relations between Baghdad and Erbil and Tehran, and Iraq's efforts to prevent the country from being drawn into regional conflicts, what impact will this incident have on Iran's relations with the central Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Region?

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Strait of Hormuz to remain shut until US meets Islamabad MoU conditions: *Qalibaf*

International Desk

The Strait of Hormuz will remain shut until the US meets the conditions of an interim deal signed with Iran in June, the top Iranian negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Tuesday. These conditions include the US lifting its blockade of Iranian ports, lifting oil sanctions, releasing Tehran's frozen assets, and ending threats and military operations on all fronts, Qalibaf told parliament. The memorandum of understanding, clinched on June 17, quickly unraveled over a dispute about control of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway through which a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flowed before the war. Under the MoU, Iran and the US had committed to negotiating a final deal — covering broader issues such as the fate of Iran's nuclear program and sanctions

— in a maximum of 60 days, extendable by mutual consent. The US began attacking Iran in July after Washington violated the terms of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, which was meant to permanently end the war that the US and Israeli regime unleashed against Iran in late February. The understanding had recognized Iran's rights and sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, and said Iran was responsible for removing restrictions that it has imposed over the Strait of Hormuz for vessels affiliated with aggressors and their supporters since the start of the aggression on February 28. However, the US attempted to undermine Iran's sovereignty by establishing an unsafe corridor near the Omani shores. The unlawful US measure prompted Iran's firm response to re-impose restrictions on the



An Iranian woman walks along the seashore as vessels are seen in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, in southern Iran on August 10, 2026.

● AFP

Strait of Hormuz. Tehran says any movement in the strategic chokepoint must be conducted under Iranian arrangements, as per the understanding. Qalibaf also warned that Iran is prepared to "inflict an even heavier defeat on the enemy" in case of fresh violations. He identified the understanding as "a document of the United States defeat in the legal and political spheres." The enemy accepted the understanding "out of desperation to end the war," he added, noting how Iran's decisive and successful retaliation against the aggression forced Washington to announce a unilateral cease-fire on April 7 and then agree



to the understanding. Qalibaf described subsequent

violations by the US of the understanding as its efforts at

"compensating for its heavy political defeat."

Tehran condemns Erbil drone attack as false-flag operation

International Desk

Iranian officials condemned a drone attack targeting the office of Iraqi Kurdistan Region prime minister, urging Kurdish authorities to remain vigilant against false-flag operations. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a post on X on Monday described the incident as reckless and urged Kurdish officials to remain vigilant against false-flag plots designed to sow discord between neighbors. The warning came after two explosive-laden drones hit the personal office of Masrour Barzani and the residence of the head of the Kurdistan Region's Security and Intelligence Agency in the Pirmam district of Erbil. No casualties were reported. The Kurdistan Counter-Terrorism Service claimed the drones had been launched from Iranian territory, an assertion that Iranian officials have firmly rejected.



Abbas Araghchi
● AFP

"Nothing justifies the reckless attack on PM Barzani's office. Kurdish friends should be vigilant against false-flag ploys to sow discord between neighbors." "We protected our Kurdish friends against Saddam and DAESH, and we're thankful for the security they've provided on our border," he stated. Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei also addressed the matter, calling the attack a "highly suspicious development." Baqaei said Iran condemns the reported strike on Barzani's office in Erbil and believes it could be a false-flag operation intended to incriminate

the Islamic Republic.

In a telephone conversation with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein, Araghchi expressed surprise at the attack and stated that he had no information indicating the drones originated from Iranian territory. The office of Iraq's Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi said he had "directed the formation of an investigative committee tasked with identifying the sources and launching points of the attack that targeted the office of" Barzani. Iran's Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf will travel to Iraq on Wednesday for talks with officials in Baghdad. Ghalibaf will head "a high-level parliamentary delegation to discuss regional developments, strengthen strategic cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad and explore joint solutions to contribute to stability and security in the Middle East," Fars news agency said.

Iran holds ceremony to honor martyred Leader 40 days after his burial

National Desk

Thousands of Iranians from all walks of life gathered at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla to pay their respects for the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on the 40th day after his burial. A significant number of government and military officials as well as Ayatollah Khamenei's three sons took part in the ceremony. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, Judiciary Chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei and the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Quds Force Esmail Qaani were among the officials who attended the ceremony. Waiving Iran's flags and flags decorated with the images of the martyrs of the recent US-Israeli aggression, participants chanted slogans to honor the memory of the martyred leader and emphasize the continuation of the path of the martyrs and resistance against the enemies. They also called for revenge for the "blood of the martyrs". Similar ceremonies will also take



place at the holy city of Qom on August 19, and at the shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH) in Mashhad the following day. The body of the martyred Leader was laid to rest next to the holy shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad on July 10, after days of massive farewell and funeral ceremonies in Tehran, Qom, as well as the Iraqi holy shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. The body was received by a massive crowd from across Iran and dozens of countries when it arrived in Mashhad. Millions of mourners brought several days of nationwide mourning to their climax in Mashhad, as the final farewell ceremony for the martyred Leader concluded at the holy mausoleum of Imam Reza.



A woman holds a picture of martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and his granddaughter Zahra Mohammadi Golpayegani in a ceremony held in Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla to mark 40 days after their burial in Tehran on August 18, 2026.

● ISNA

Ayatollah Khamenei was assassinated in a joint US-Israeli strike on Tehran on February 28, 2026, at the outset of a 40-day unprovoked war of aggression against Iran. Qalibaf vowed that the Islamic Republic will not let the blood of the martyred Leader and other martyrs of unprovoked American-Israeli aggression against the nation "go unavenged."

Qatar says Hormuz agreement crucial for US-Iran talks to resume

Qatar, a key mediator in the stalled US-Iran talks, said Tuesday that an agreement between Iran and Oman over the Strait of Hormuz would make it easier to resume negotiations to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. After war broke out between the United States and Iran in late February, Tehran effectively shut the strait, which normally carries one fifth of the world's LNG and oil during peacetime, AFP reported. Iran and Oman, both coastal states bordering the strait, have for weeks been discussing the future of navigation through the waterway, with Tehran saying the geographical coordinates of the route envisaged by both countries "have been agreed upon".



Majed Al Ansari
● mofa.gov.qa

"We are also awaiting an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and Iran regarding the Strait, which would enable us to return to the framework of negotiations," Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed

Al Ansari told reporters.

"The agreement over the Strait of Hormuz would make it much easier for us to resume the talks between the United States and Iran," he added. A memorandum of understanding signed between the two sides in June effectively collapsed over management of the strait. On Monday, Iran said that talks were "continuing in a serious manner" and views were being exchanged on the text of a "joint statement". US President Donald Trump threatened to bomb Oman if it "gets in the way" of a deal with Iran on Hormuz, and called for Tehran to surrender in a war that has become a growing political burden at home.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Pezeshkian calls for development plans based on Iran's territorial advantages, limits



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) chairs a meeting with agricultural experts and practitioners in Tehran on Aug. 78, 8682.
● [president.ir](#)

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Tuesday that Iran's development plans must be based on the country's actual territorial strengths and limitations, as the nation faces severe water scarcity and mounting climate pressures.

"Development plans must be based on the country's real territorial advantages and limitations," Pezeshkian told a meeting of agricultural experts and practitioners. He called for a shift toward "producing less water-intensive products, improving the efficiency of existing resources and facilities, reforming cropping

patterns, and making better use of the country's untapped capacities." Pezeshkian said Iran's current situation demands a realistic approach to policy-making, pointing to a range of imbalances, climate-related challenges – particularly limited water resources – and the consequences of ongoing conflict. Iran has remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks on the country in late February, with a 40-day campaign that heavily targeted civilians and infrastructure. Attacks on Iranian infrastructure resumed on July 11 and continued for several weeks. The country's southern ports are also under a US naval blockade imposed by President Donald Trump in mid-April to pressure Tehran into an agreement. At Tuesday's meeting, agricultural representatives outlined Iran's existing capacities and constraints, presenting

projects aimed at expanding production and ensuring sustainable food supply through domestic resources. Discussions focused on practical steps to strengthen food security and reduce dependence on imports and foreign-currency allocations, in line with the country's climate conditions and limited water resources. Topics included expanding red meat, poultry and aquaculture production, reforming cropping patterns, raising farmland productivity, promoting water-efficient crops, and applying modern, knowledge-based production methods. Participants also called for reviewing traditional production methods, improving agricultural input efficiency, maximizing existing capacities, and activating untapped potential in the sector. Their proposals emphasized reducing water consumption, boosting productivity, and strengthening domestic production. Pezeshkian welcomed the proposals, saying the country's greatest need is for capable, knowledgeable and motivated people who can address its problems without being held back by administrative red tape and bureaucracy. He urged that ideas be turned into specific, actionable programs and told the attendees, "Submit your executive and operational plans to the government; the government will support them." The president also stressed that environmental requirements must be met in agricultural development, saying ecosystem sustainability should be given serious attention in project design and implementation. "Production projects should not disrupt ecological balance or intensify environmental damage," he said. Pezeshkian reiterated government support for practical, workable projects in agriculture and food security, pledging full backing for effective operational plans and promising to remove administrative obstacles to their implementation. He also emphasized the need for public participation, particularly from local and rural communities, saying maximum use should be made of people's capacity and that conditions should be created for villagers and agricultural producers to actively engage in both designing and implementing projects.

TPO chief sees Tehran construction expo boosting Iran, regional building sector

Economy Desk

A major construction industry exhibition in Tehran can help advance the sector in Iran and the region and lead to the development of construction projects and related equipment, Iran's Trade Promotion Organization chief Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi said in a message to the event. The 26th International Exhibition of Building and Construction opened on Tuesday with 600 Iranian and foreign companies taking part. It will run through Aug. 21 at the Tehran International Permanent Fairgrounds. Dehqan Dehnavi said the exhibition provides an opportunity for construction industry professionals to learn about the latest technologies, modern construction methods, new building materials, smart-building equipment, mechanical and electrical systems and specialized engineering services. He described the event as one of the largest exhibitions in the Middle East and the largest in Iran in the construction sector, saying companies from Iran and other countries were taking part.



Companies attending the exhibition can introduce their products to new markets and explore potential cooperation with foreign companies, he said. He said Iran's construction market had significant potential because of domestic demand and that the exhibition could help expand the market for knowledge-based companies. He also pointed to Iran's potential to export construction materials and products, saying the country had competitive advantages in global markets because of its abundant raw materials, inexpensive energy, relatively low labor costs and the quality of its products. Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan are among the biggest importers of Iranian construction materials, he said, adding that geographical proximity, lower transportation costs and favorable customs tariffs make those markets attractive for Iranian exports. Iran also has the capacity to export at least 1 million metric tons of steel structures a year, given its production of high-quality and competitive steel, Dehqan Dehnavi said. He said exports of construction materials could become a major source of foreign-exchange revenue and an important driver of economic growth, but structural barriers and external problems continued to hamper the sector's expansion. Effective cooperation between the government, trade institutions and exporters, as well as compliance with domestic and international legal requirements, was necessary to develop the sector's export potential, he said. The exhibition, organized by Iran's Cooperative Chamber, covers building materials, equipment and machinery, doors and windows, elevators and escalators, mechanical and electrical installations, smart systems, safety equipment, architecture and modern design, and knowledge-based products.

Iran-Oman trade must rise multiples of current level, joint chamber head says

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and Oman should expand severalfold from its current annual volume of under \$5 billion, given that Iran's trade with the neighboring United Arab Emirates exceeds \$26 billion, the head of the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday. Jamal Razeghi told a meeting of the provincial government-private sector dialogue council in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province that while Iran-UAE trade stood at roughly \$26 billion per year, bilateral trade with Oman had yet to surpass the \$5 billion mark. "Iran-Oman relations have continued unabated since before the Islamic Revolution (1979), but in practice, insufficient attention has been paid to developing trade with this country," Razeghi said, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

He said bilateral trade had grown at an annual rate of 30% to 40% over the past three years, but added: "Despite this growth, the absolute value of trade remains low and has stayed below \$5 billion." Razeghi said the private sector had for years called for diverting a portion of Iran's trade away from the UAE and toward Oman, but that for various reasons, such a shift had not been permitted. He also outlined disruptions caused by Iran's heavy reliance on UAE trade routes during the recent conflict. A large share of the country's trade had been channeled through the UAE's Jebel Ali port, he said, and when the UAE announced that even Iranian vessels would not be allowed to load or unload cargo there, a significant portion of trade effectively ground to a halt. "This year, in particular, the country's farmers suffered serious losses in ex-

porting their products, and we also faced major difficulties in importing essential goods," Razeghi said. "Policymakers should learn from this experience and avoid concentrating the country's trade on a single destination." Iran's southern ports remain under a US naval blockade imposed by former President Donald Trump in mid-April, part of an effort to pressure Tehran into an agreement following a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. After a several-week pause following the signing of a memorandum of understanding, strikes on Iranian infrastructure resumed in mid-July, and the blockade was also reinstated. Iran has been seeking to diversify its logistics routes to counter growing restrictions on trade corridors, redirecting cargo operations to northern ports as well as to ports in Pakistan, India and Oman after activity at Jebel Ali was disrupted during wartime conditions.

Trade deficit hits \$2b as exports plunge 24% y/y, customs head says

Economy Desk

Iran's non-oil exports reached nearly \$15 billion and imports \$17 billion between March 21 and Aug. 16, with exports down an average of 24% compared with the same period last year, the head of Iran's customs administration said on Tuesday. Speaking at the 43rd meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce's board of representatives, Foroud Asgari said import policies had prioritized goods designated as foreign-exchange priorities, leading to reduced imports of some non-essential or lower-priority items, IRNA reported. Asgari said mobile phone imports had dropped sharply. Some 3.16 million handsets were imported during the first five months of last year, compared with about 1 million in the same period this year, representing a roughly 70% decline in value. The Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade's current priority is to supply raw materials needed by manufacturing units, Asgari said,



adding that import policies were therefore focused on goods that directly feed into the production cycle. He said 25,000 vehicles had so far been cleared through customs, up 67% from the same period last year. Turning to basic goods at the country's ports, Asgari said about 9.5 million metric tons of the country's total 39 million tons of imports were basic commodities, of which 4.5 million tons were currently held at 13 ports. About 3 million tons of basic goods were at Imam Khomeini port and about 1 million tons at 12 other ports, he said. Asgari added that 145,000

Iran Customs Administration chief Foroud Asgari (8th R) speaks at the 09rd meeting of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce's board of representatives on Aug. 78, 8682.
● [IRNA](#)

tons of goods were currently being unloaded, while about 500,000 tons were waiting at anchorage for unloading. He stressed the need to streamline port and customs operations to ensure the timely supply of the country's needs, saying the customs administration was working to ensure that clearance of basic goods and priority items continued without interruption.

False-flag operation aimed ...

My impression is that they themselves understand what is going on. They know the Americans and the Israelis well, and it is unlikely that they will fall into the trap set by the US and Israel. Israel has a special unit within Mossad that carries out false-flag operations. Its job is to create discord and conduct operations in the name of other countries. Israel has been highly active in this regard.

The drone attack on Egypt's Damietta port in late July can be cited as an example. Another example is Ukraine's targeting of an Iranian vessel in the Caspian Sea. In reality, such an action was carried out in Israel's interests and to threaten ties between Iran and Russia.

What steps can Iran take to prevent tensions with Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region from escalating and stop the incident from turning

into a political crisis? Is Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf's trip to Baghdad aimed at clarifying this issue? Qalibaf's visit is aimed at addressing the issue and clearing up misunderstandings. Also, if the Kurdistan Region and the Iraqi government want, Iran can also suggest to help with the investigation so that they can establish with certainty that the attack did not originate from Iran.

Revisiting Iran's 1953 coup d'état after 73 years

Confluence of domestic crisis, rivalry of great powers



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Despite all of that, Iranians will not forget the great service that Mosaddegh did for their country prior to the coup in standing up to exactly the same great powers. However, it is worth revisiting the event to go over the exploited weaknesses of a nationalistic movement that was monumental and a source of admiration for the region and later, the Non-Aligned Movement. The coup d'état of August 19 was not limited merely to the fall of Mosaddegh's cabinet; rather, its consequences cast a shadow for years upon the political structure, foreign relations, and social transformations of Iran. Nevertheless, concerning which factors precipitated the coup, the extent of the contribution of domestic dissensions, the performance of Mosaddegh's cabinet, the precise objectives with which the United States and Britain entered this affair, and the role of forces such as the court, the military, and the Tudeh Party, divergent perspectives continue to exist. In the forthcoming exclusive interview of Iran Daily with Shadab Asgari, a researcher, author, and scholar of the history of the revolution, we commence with this question: whether the coup d'état of August 19 was exclusively the result of foreign interference or whether a constellation of domestic and foreign factors contributed to its formation and success; a query whose response could facilitate a more precise comprehension of one of the most destiny-shaping occurrences in the contemporary history of Iran.

Shadab Asgari



Seventy-three years subsequent to the coup d'état of August 19, 1953, this event persists as one of the most paramount and contentious junctures in the contemporary history of Iran. On that day, the cabinet of Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh, the then-prime minister of Iran who, during the movement for the nationalization of the petroleum industry, had withstood British influence and petroleum interests, collapsed following a series of political developments and orchestrated domestic and foreign operations, and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi once again consolidated his position.

The role of the intelligence organizations of the United States and Britain in this event, in conjunction with domestic political dissensions and fractures, constitutes one of the most significant axes of discussion concerning this occurrence.

IRAN DAILY: Given that much has been said and written concerning the coup d'état of August 19, in your estimation, what were the most significant predisposing factors of this coup? Should the nationalization of Iran's petroleum industry and the threatening of British petroleum interests, in addition to American apprehension regarding the proliferation of Communism — even though Mosaddegh's movement was not communist — be regarded as the principal factors, or did other issues also exist?

ASGARI: These factors are certainly significant, but from my perspective, all of them, in actuality, revert to a series of more profound factors. One of the most crucial matters is Dr. Mosaddegh's performance and some of his political errors, which laid the groundwork for the success of the coup. In my conviction, one of Dr. Mosaddegh's initial errors was his disregard for Iran's historical experience and the warnings that were conveyed to him by certain political forces. In Iran's contemporary history, numerous instances existed that demonstrated foreign powers, in their relations with Iran, act exclusively on the basis of their own interests. For example, during the Second World War, Iran, despite having declared neutrality, was subjected to occupation by British and Soviet forces. At that juncture as well, the Iranian cabinet endeavored to alleviate the concerns of the foreign parties, but ultimately, the interests of the great powers proved determinative. From this perspective, one of the essential lessons of history is that, in international relations, one ought not to rely solely upon the promise or support of a foreign power.

You alluded to Dr. Mosaddegh's errors. In your view, what were his most significant errors? I regard several instances as significant. First, disregard for certain political warnings and recommendations. Second, decisions that were adopted concerning the structure of power and the Parliament. Third, the method of his confrontation with the Shah and, finally, excessive trust in the United States. Concerning the Parliament, one of the significant issues was Dr. Mo-

saddegh's decision to dissolve the Parliament. His critics maintained that this action could eliminate certain of the legal instruments for controlling the cabinet and, simultaneously, augment the Shah's authority in the domain of appointing and dismissing the prime minister. This decision was adopted under circumstances in which the rift between the nationalist and religious forces was also widening, and this rift, in practice, weakened the coalition that had been formed during the movement for the nationalization of the petroleum industry.

In this context, to what extent was the dissension between Dr. Mosaddegh and Ayatollah Kashani influential in weakening Mosaddegh's cabinet?

In my opinion, it was extremely influential. At a certain juncture, the nationalist and religious forces had been situated alongside one another, and this very unity constituted one of the significant factors in the power of the national movement. Gradually, however, this unity weakened, and the distance between these two movements increased. When such a fracture emerged, it was natural that foreign forces could also exploit it. Had this political and social coalition been preserved, the conditions for the cabinet's opponents would have been considerably more difficult.

How do you evaluate the military's role in executing the coup?

The military was the determinative factor. Mosaddegh possessed a popular base of support, but after distancing himself from Ayatollah Kashani, he lost a portion of that base. The Shah, at that juncture, also did not possess a notable popular base. Consequently, under circumstances in which both sides confronted limitations from a social standpoint, it was the organized power of the military that could determine the outcome.

In my conviction, one of Mosaddegh's significant errors was that he did not demonstrate the requisite sensitivity toward the military's command structure and the individuals who occupied critical positions. At that juncture, individuals such as Brigadier General Ataollah Kiani and Asadollah



Sanii were present at important military echelons, and I contend that the presence of untrusted individuals in sensitive positions could have proven perilous for the cabinet. The issue is that, in critical conditions, the cabinet ought to exhibit greater sensitivity regarding the degree of loyalty and performance of those situated at the highest military and security levels.

Subsequent to the failure of the coup attempt of August 16 and the Shah's flight, why was Mosaddegh's cabinet unable to exploit this opportunity?

In my view, this constitutes one of the most debatable points in the affair. Following the failure of the initial attempt, the Shah departed the country. Under such circumstances, the cabinet could have controlled the situation by adopting more decisive decisions. Had the Shah been arrested at that juncture, or had the possibility of his continued political activity and communication been eliminated, naturally, the conditions could have been entirely

different. Such an occurrence, however, did not transpire. Mosaddegh, in his confrontation with the Shah and the forces affiliated with him, entertained numerous considerations, and this very matter afforded the opposition forces the opportunity to reorganize themselves.

Alongside the United States and Britain, the Tudeh Party and the apprehension concerning the proliferation of its brand of Communism also constitute among the reasons stated concerning the coup. To what extent do you regard this factor as significant?

The Tudeh Party was assuredly one of the significant factors in the political atmosphere of that period, but I contend that one ought not to exaggerate its role in the manner that is sometimes stated in official Western narratives. Fear concerning Communism existed, but from my perspective, the principal issue was not merely confrontation with the Soviet Union. The great powers sought to preserve their desired order in the



A notable pro-Shah strongman and thug called Shaban Jafari (C), commonly known as Shaban the Brainless ("Shaban Bimokh"), leads his men and other bribed street thugs during the coup of August 19, 1953.
● psr.ir



Subsequent to the Second World War, the United States played a role in political transformations and coups in numerous Latin American countries and other regions of the world. From this perspective, Iran was not an exception. The issue for the great powers was that an independent political model ought not to emerge in a country such as Iran; a model that could also serve as an inspiration for other countries.

region. In the years subsequent to the Second World War, the United States gradually supplanted Britain's position in numerous regions of the world. Consequently, Iran likewise became an arena in which the United States desired to consolidate its presence and influence.

Therefore, you contend that fear concerning the proliferation of Communism alone cannot supply a complete explanation for the coup d'état of August 19?

Precisely. If the issue were merely confrontation with Communism, one would have to explain why certain other political forces were not similarly confronted at that same juncture, or why, subsequent to the coup, the Tudeh Party's military network was extensively suppressed. From my perspective, three objectives ought to be considered: preventing the formation of an independent political model in Iran, preserving petroleum and economic interests, and, furthermore, consolidating Iran's strategic position and that of the Persian Gulf region. Iran possessed immense geographical significance, and its adjacency to the Soviet Union and its proximity to the Persian Gulf doubled the country's importance for the great powers.

How was the role of the United States and Britain in the coup divided? Did any competition exist between them?

Competition, in that direct sense, did not exist; rather, it appears that their interests ultimately converged. Britain possessed a long history of influence in Iran, but subsequent to the Second World War, the United States gradually acquired a more dominant position. August 19 can be regarded as a significant juncture in the consolidation of America's more direct presence in Iran's political and security structure. Thereafter, Iran's security and intelligence institutions also gradually developed with the assistance and training of foreign advisors.

Can it be asserted that the coup d'état of August 19 was exclusively an action against Mosaddegh's cabinet, or was it considered part of a broader American strategy in the world?

The Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq (front-L) is being sentenced to prison in December 1953 after a CIA-backed coup cemented the rule of the shah.
● AP

I regard it as part of a more extensive process. Subsequent to the Second World War, the United States played a role in political transformations and coups in numerous Latin American countries and other regions of the world. From this perspective, Iran was not an exception. The issue for the great powers was that an independent political model ought not to emerge in a country such as Iran; a model that could also serve as an inspiration for other countries.

Instances such as Cuba and Yugoslavia demonstrate that nationalist and socialist movements, under conditions of external pressure, might be propelled toward other camps. Consequently, the great powers did not desire a model independent of the two principal blocs of the Cold War to take shape.

In this context, what role did the Soviet Union play? Can it be stated that the Soviet Union had, in a certain sense, allowed the coup?

I contend that the Soviet Union did not adopt a position toward Iran's transformations that could be construed as serious support for Mosaddegh's cabinet. Concerning the existence of a formal agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States or Britain regarding

the coup, of course, one must speak with caution and examine more documents; but, from a practical standpoint, the Soviet Union's conduct during that period was not such that one could state it stood alongside Mosaddegh's cabinet with all its capacity. Economic issues and disputes concerning Iran's assets, as well as Soviet interests in northern Iran, are also noteworthy in this context.

One of the significant questions is that, if the Parliament had been dissolved, why did the attempt of August 16 fail?

On August 16, the Shah issued a decree dismissing Mosaddegh, and this decree was communicated to him by Colonel Nasiri; Mosaddegh, however, did not accept it, and Nasiri was arrested. Subsequent to the failure of this attempt, the Shah departed the country. At that juncture, the determinative factor, more than the popular base of either the Shah or Mosaddegh, was the structure of military power. The Shah did not possess an extensive popular base, and Mosaddegh had also lost a portion of his social base as a consequence of his dissension with the religious forces. Consequently, whoever could align the military with himself would acquire the upper hand.



People supporting the Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq participate in a demonstration after the failed coup attempt of August 16, 1953, in Tehran, Iran. ● THE GUARDIAN

What effect did the Shah's departure from Iran have on the course of events?

The Shah's departure created a significant vacuum in the structure of power. Had the Shah been arrested at that juncture, the conditions might have been entirely altered. Mosaddegh's cabinet, however, did not undertake such an action. A portion of this issue can be related to Mosaddegh's own character and background. He hailed from an aristocratic and courtly family,

and perhaps this very background caused him to entertain greater considerations in his confrontation with the Shah. In contrast, the experience of the 1979 Islamic Revolution demonstrated that, when the military structure confronts a political transformation, the manner in which political leaders deal with the military can prove determinative.

What were the most significant consequences of the coup d'état of August 19 for Iran's political structure? Can a connection be established between the coup and the 1979 Islamic Revolution?

In my opinion, a very serious connection exists. The coup d'état of August 19 facilitated the ground-

work for the formation of a more extensive type of political and security dependency upon the United States. Subsequent to the coup, American influence gradually increased in Iran's political, military, and security structure, and in subsequent decades, this dependency transformed into a serious issue for certain segments of society. The subject of capitulation right for American counselors and citizens is also examinable within this very framework. This matter, which was implemented in the 1960s, reinforced sentiments of humiliation and the impairment of national sovereignty among certain segments of society. For this reason, I contend that August 19 ought to be regarded as one of the significant factors in the formation of the political and social groundwork for the 1979 revolution.

That is to say, had the coup d'état of August 19 not occurred, could the trajectory of Iran's history have been different?

One cannot assert with certainty what would have transpired, but the probability that the trajectory of Iran's political developments would have been different was extremely high. The coup weakened the confidence of a portion of society in political and democratic process-

es and, conversely, augmented American influence and the security structure of the state. This process ultimately engendered extensive dissatisfactions that, in subsequent decades, became one of the significant grounds for the revolution.

In conclusion, is there any point that you believe has received insufficient attention in the examination of the coup d'état of August 19?

In my view, one of the most essential lessons of August 19 is that, in politics, one cannot address issues with naïveté. Politics is the arena for the calculation of power and interests, and if a government does not take threats seriously, the opportunity for redress may be lost. Mosaddegh, in certain instances, trusted excessively in the goodwill of the opposing party and conceived that one could proceed with foreign powers on the basis of logic and political agreement; while they were pursuing their own interests. This lesson is not exclusive to the year 1953. In foreign policy, whenever any indication of threat or foreign interference exists, one ought not to take it lightly. Historical experience demonstrates that disregard for such issues can entail extremely costly consequences for a country.

Setting record straight on Mosaddegh, nationalization of Iran's oil

By Nicolas Gorjestani
Former senior official of the World Bank
ANALYSIS

In recent years, particularly on the anniversaries of the late Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh's passing, the Nationalization Day of Iran's Oil Industry, and the coup d'état of August 19, 1953, we have witnessed writings and discourses that have criticized Mosaddegh with considerable vehemence. As long as the official documents of foreign institutions and governments remained classified, one could debate these criticisms and claims as hypotheses; however, with the declassification of the preponderance of pertinent documents, we ascertain that these assertions are for the most part predicated upon misunderstandings rather than upon logical reasoning grounded in documented evidence and scientific method. The objective of the present essay is to respond to these criticisms and to execute a comprehensive dissection of the key misunderstandings based upon multiple years of research and the review of hundreds of official documents that have been published in my book (for the specifications of documents cited in the essay, refer to the book). I shall address the question of why, after more than seven decades, certain individuals persist in distorting Mosaddegh's legacy.

Was the nationalization of the oil industry erroneous?

This assertion rests upon four misapprehensions and historiographical oversimplifications, a few of which include:

1. Did Iranian experts lack the capability to manage extraction operations and to exploit the complex installations of the Abadan refinery? This claim is utterly incongruent with the realities and the assessments of senior



Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh walks toward the tomb of the first US president George Washington during his visit to the United States. ● tichs.ir

foreign and domestic experts. For example, the senior experts of the World Bank, who had evaluated the operations of the Abadan refinery in 1951, arrived at the conclusion that local experts had efficiently inaugurated operations and possessed the capability to administer operations at lower levels up to approximately the middle capacity of the refinery. Furthermore, Alton Jones, the president of the American petroleum company Cities Service, who likewise evaluated the Abadan refinery's operations in 1952, deemed a mere 10 foreign technicians sufficient for restarting the refinery's installations up to a higher capacity. In addition to this, three young Iranian engineers who were active at the refinery at that time have confirmed this evaluation for me. According

to one of these gentlemen, Iranian engineers had succeeded in starting up one of the most complex petroleum machinery items newly arrived at that time, called the cracker, without any foreign assistance. This occurred despite the fact that British experts, prior to their departure from the refinery, had perpetrated sabotage upon several of its key installations in order to impede the resumption of operations.

2. It is claimed that it would have been preferable to reach an accommodation with the former "private" petroleum company, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), so that foreign exchange revenue from petroleum exports would not have been interrupted. One must examine what the documented evidence states on this matter. Critics who assert that it would have been preferable for Mosaddegh to have permitted the former company to participate as a partner in the operations of the National Iranian Oil Company, so that the country's petroleum rev-

enue would not have been cut off, were in fact prepared to retain a colonial power within the country so that it might continue its nefarious enterprise.

3. Many critics at that time, and even today, misconstrue the nationalization of petroleum as a financial or economic matter. It is occasionally claimed that it would have been preferable for the company to have remained in Iran and for Iran's petroleum revenue to have continued. However, for Mosaddegh, correctly, the question of oil constituted a political and moral issue — that is, the right of sovereignty and ownership of a nation over its natural resources. The conflict between Iran and Britain over petroleum did not conclude auspiciously because Britain's objective was the control of petroleum operations and the perpetuation of colonialism in Iran. Churchill was prepared to offer Iran a few additional shillings per barrel of petroleum, but he was not prepared to cede complete control of operations, exports, and finances to Iran. Simultaneously, Mosaddegh insisted that, in accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum Nationalization Law, Iran should retain control of operations in its own hands. The crucial point is that the positions of Churchill and Mosaddegh were irreconcilable because control of operations is not a matter over which one can bargain; one cannot, so to speak, say, let us split the melon in half; a country either possesses control of petroleum operations or it does not; here, the concept of flexibility for a solution predicated upon a half-and-half formula possesses no practical meaning. Mosaddegh was prepared to negotiate concerning compensation and other related subjects, but not concerning national sovereignty. The internal memorandum of the World Bank on this matter is ex-

ceedingly illuminating. It basically said that the former company and the British government cannot permit the loss of control of operations — whether temporary or long-term; the Iranians know this and will resist. Furthermore, it is occasionally asserted that petroleum was not "nationalized" but rather "statized". If the critics' meaning is that extraction and refining operations did not fall into the hands of the private sector; these gentlemen must specify whether, at that time in Iran, there existed a private sector capable of providing the colossal capital required for petroleum operations and of administering its complex installations. At that time, Iran's private sector in the industrial domain consisted of a few relatively small enterprises with extremely limited operational capacity. That private sector lacked the capacity to produce even rudimentary industrial products, let alone the capability to administer the complex installations of petroleum extraction and its exploitation at the Abadan refinery, which was, at that time, the largest refinery in the world. In reality, only the state sector possessed the capacity for investment and management of petroleum operations in Iran. Only the state sector could safeguard Iran's national sovereignty in the name of the Iranian nation. Additionally, one must consider that ownership of petroleum resources and their exploitation operations in the majority of countries, even today, resides with governments. In the world, only in a few limited cases (the United States and Canada) does ownership of petroleum resources lie in the private sector; and only in a few other limited cases have exploitation operations of petroleum resources been managed by the private sector.

The conflict between Iran and Britain over petroleum did not conclude auspiciously because Britain's objective was the control of petroleum operations and the perpetuation of colonialism in Iran. Churchill was prepared to offer Iran a few additional shillings per barrel of petroleum, but he was not prepared to cede complete control of operations, exports, and finances to Iran. Simultaneously, Mosaddegh insisted that, in accordance with the provisions of the Petroleum Nationalization Law, Iran should retain control of operations in its own hands.

The full article first appeared in Persian on Donya-e-Eqtesad.

Handball coach confident of Iran's Asian Games prospects despite missing overseas players

Sports Desk

Nenad Kljaić, the Croatian head coach of Iran's men's handball team, says he is full of confidence in his squad's ability to deliver at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, even though his team will have to do without key overseas players.

The men's handball competition at the multi-sport event will kick off on September 20, with Iran drawn into a daunting Group B alongside Bahrain, South Korea, Kuwait and Kazakhstan. Bahrain won the Asian Championship title in January, while Kuwait finished third in the continental competition. South Korea, meanwhile, is one of Asia's traditional powerhouses in the sport, having won the Asian Championship crown on a record nine occasions, and will regard the Asian Games as part of its preparations for January's World Championship in Germany.

With the Asian Games not being part of the International Handball Federation's international calendar, Iran will have to compete at

the event without players such as Pouya Norouzinejad, Mehran Rahnama and Seyyed Alireza Mousavi, who all play in European leagues.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a training session in Tehran earlier in the week, Kljaić acknowledged the challenges ahead but remained bullish about his team's potential.

"We have very tough training sessions ahead – this is our hardest camp yet," he said. "I know it's difficult for the players to endure, but we have no choice. This is a crucial part of our preparation for the Asian Games. Of course, there have been mistakes early on, but that's what training is for – to identify and correct them."

Kljaić emphasized that time is still on Iran's side, with roughly one month remaining before the Games begin. Friendly matches, he noted, will also be vital in sharpening the squad's form. "Our young players will surprise many in Nagoya," added the Croatian, whose team will visit Serbia for several warm-up matches before the Asian Games.



Iran's Pouya Norouzinejad, pictured against Japan during January's Asian Handball Championship, will not be part of the national team squad at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

● AHF

"We will play three matches against Serbian Premier League teams, one against a Romanian side, and one against a Croatian club – all of them at a very high level. These games will be extremely beneficial for us,"

Kljaić said.

Reflecting on the broader state of Iranian handball, Kljaić pointed to the country's untapped potential as a key reason he accepted the job in June. "I watched the last Asian

Championship, and I am sure that by moving on from older players and trusting fast, young talents, Iran can achieve its goals," he explained. He justified the intense physical and mental demands of training by say-

ing, "If they are not put under pressure in training, they won't be able to handle match conditions or make the right decisions when it counts." When asked about Iran's medal hopes at the Asian Games, Kljaić did not shy away from ambition, though he admitted the absence of overseas-based players would be felt. "It would have been a completely different story if we had them available, but even with this group, we have a good chance," he said. "If we can avoid powerful teams like Japan and Qatar until the quarterfinals, I believe we can reach the semifinals."

He concluded with a defiant message of intent: "I have full faith in my team. I am optimistic, and I don't leave anything to chance. We are going to fight – and we are going for a medal."

U20 Wrestling World Championships: Iran finds Greco-Roman solace with triple bronzes



Iranian wrestler Amirmahdi Saeidi-Nava (red) is seen in action against Ukraine's Nestor Baran in the Greco-Roman 77kg quarterfinals at the U20 World Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Aug. 16, 2026.

● IAWFIR

Sports Desk

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers bagged three bronze medals at the U20 Wrestling World Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Monday.

A day after all four Iranians failed to reach the final in their respective weight classes, dealing the country a massive blow to its bid for a fifth successive team title, Ali Gharibi, Amirmehdi Saeidi-Nava and Amirhossein Nematzadeh managed to finish their campaigns with something to cheer about.

Representing Iran in the 63kg division, Gharibi bounced back from a 4-1 semifinal defeat to Russia's Salim Kazmakhov to edge out Georgia's Giorgi Tchikaidze 1-1 on criteria in the bronze-medal bout, adding to the gold medal he won at June's U20 Asian Championships.

Kazmakhov settled for silver following a 9-7 loss to Uzbekistan's Ku-vonchbek Ismoilov in a thrilling final, while Azerbaijan's Tural Ahmadov

took the other bronze.

Saeidi, meanwhile, having suffered a 7-1 loss to Azerbaijan's Javidan Nahmatov in the 77kg semifinals, defeated Kazakhstan's Yerkebulan Anapiya 5-3 to win one of the bronze medals. Hungary's Zalan Csaba Toplak claimed the other bronze, while Armenia's Samvel Terteryan secured a 1-1 win on criteria over Nahmatov in the final.

In the 87kg division, Nematzadeh, who was beaten 5-1 by Armenia's Lurik Petrosian in the quarterfinals, secured his second international bronze following another podium finish at the Asian event.

The Iranian overpowered Kyrgyzstan's Mirsaid Iunusov 7-1 in the first round of the repechage and was then awarded the bronze medal after his Austrian opponent, Paul Maier, withdrew from the third-place bout because of injury. Japan's Taizo Yoshida defeated Petrosian by superiority (8-0) in the final to win his country's first

Greco-Roman gold medal in the history of the U20 Worlds, while American Aidan Squier finished joint third alongside Nematzadeh.

Amirhossein Abdevali, who also entered the tournament as the reigning U20 Asian champion, crashed out in the 130kg quarterfinals on Sunday after a shock 6-5 loss to Egypt's Essam Anwar Hussein, as Iran missed out on the superheavyweight podium for the first time in a decade. However, former U17 world champion Armin Shamsipour kept Iran's hopes of winning a gold medal alive after reaching the 55kg final on Monday, thanks to a 3-1 victory over U23 world bronze medalist Khojia-kbar Kuchkarov of Uzbekistan.

There was further disappointment for the Iranian squad elsewhere on the day, as Iliya Alikhani was forced into the repechage in the 67kg division, while Ahmadreza Mohammadian (72kg) and Amirsam Mohammadi (97kg) suffered early exits.

WT President's Cup: Iranians finish with seven poomsae medals

Sports Desk

The first day of the WT President's Cup – Asia 2026 in Lahore, Pakistan, saw Iranian athletes collect seven medals, including a women's gold through Yasaman Limouchi, across different poomsae categories.

Limouchi enjoyed further success by adding an individual freestyle silver to her gold in the

recognized category.

Elsewhere, Mobina Sharifimaher bagged double bronze medals in the women's recognized and freestyle events, while Yassin Akbari bounced back from an early exit in the men's recognized event to claim silver in freestyle.

Morteza Zendedel, meanwhile, won silver in the men's recognized event before going on to take bronze in freestyle.



Iran's Yasaman Limouchi won the women's recognized poomsae gold and the freestyle silver at the WT President's Cup – Asia 2026 in Lahore, Pakistan.

● taekwondo.ir

AFC Champions League Elite: Esteghlal, Tractor avoid Saudi heavyweights in league stage

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League clubs Esteghlal and Tractor were handed favorable draws for the upcoming AFC Champions League Elite, with both sides avoiding the Saudi Pro League heavyweights in the league stage.

The draw for the revamped 32-team competition took place at the AFC headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Tuesday, where the two Iranian top-flight clubs were given identical pathways in the West Zone. Both clubs will play their home fixtures against Qatar

Stars League champions Al Sadd, Uzbekistan's PFC Neftchi, Emirati club Al Wasl and Al Shamal of Qatar.

Esteghlal and Tractor will also play away to Emirati duo Al Ain and Shabab Al Ahli, as well as Qatar's Al Gharafa and Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor.

The league stage will kick off on September 14.

The top eight finishers in each of the West and East league stages will advance to the round of 16.

Meanwhile, the draw for the group stage of the AFC Champions League Two was also held, with Iran's Golgothar Sirjan drawn in Group B alongside UAE's Al Jazira, Bahrain's Al Muharraq and Turkmenistan's FC Arkadag. The top two teams in each of the eight groups will advance to the knockout stage.

AFC Women's Champions League: Bam Khaton off to emphatic start in preliminaries

Sports Desk

Bam Khaton FC put on a commanding performance to beat Tajikistan's FC CSKA Dushanbe 3-0 in their AFC Women's Champions League 2026/27 preliminary stage clash on Monday.

The Iranian top-flight champion took a two-goal lead in the first half and wrapped up the match after keeping a resurgent CSKA in check to get its Group E campaign off to a confident start in Hisor, Tajikistan.

Striker Sara Didar gave Bam Khaton the upper hand in the ninth minute



when she picked up a cross from Fatemeh Shaban on the right and half-volleyed past a hesitant Ayishatu Simpson in goal.

Simpson palmed away a stinging effort by Roujin Tamrian

in the 32nd minute but failed to prevent Maryam Dini, who latched on to Shaban's cross, from steering a point-blank header into the back of the net in the 37th minute.

CSKA trooped out a more de-

termined side after the break as Erika Ackon forced Khaton keeper Raha Yazdani into a full-length save in the 54th minute and Ruziguli Hasan saw her header cleared on the line minutes later.

The six-time Tajikistan champions, nonetheless, was unable to repel Khaton's pressing and was punished in the 71st minute when Didar broke free of the defense and headed home from close range following a corner.

Simpson managed to keep the scoreline respectable with several crucial saves as Bam Khaton closed the match on a high note.

Khaton will meet Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr Club on Thursday before facing Jordan's Etihad Club, which played to a 2-2 draw against Al Nassr, on Sunday.

Iranica Desk

The director of the Chehel Sotoun World Heritage Site in Isfahan has announced plans to assess the potential for restoring the historic garden of the complex in cooperation with the city's Parks and Green Space Organization, using historical documentation and a scientific approach. Mostafa Hadipour said the management of the garden's green spaces is shifting from an "experimental" approach to one based on scientific research and historical documentation, IRNA wrote. "Our main goal is to restore the authenticity and historical identity of Chehel Sotoun Garden by studying historical documents and incorporating the findings into the restoration plan," he said. Hadipour noted that maintenance of Chehel Sotoun

Garden in the past was largely based on experience, but said efforts are now underway to adopt a more scientific approach by drawing on historical documents and working with specialists. Regarding efforts to restore the garden's original characteristics as a Persian garden, he said one issue under review is the possible replacement of lawns with flower beds. "We are looking for historical evidence to determine what types of vegetation were used around the pools and in the garden's green spaces in earlier periods," he said. Based on preliminary findings, some sections appear to have been covered with lawns rather than flower beds, which may not fully correspond with the garden's historical identity. "We have raised the issue with the restoration project's consultants so that,

Scientific restoration planned for Chehel Sotoun Garden

after the documents are reviewed and the proposal is approved by the strategic council, these elements can be restored to their original form during the restoration phase," Hadipour said. He described the garden as a prominent feature of Iranian architecture that flourished during the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods and continued in Safavid gardens. Chehel Sotoun, he added, is an example of this art, combining elements such as water, architecture, greenery and ornamentation in an integrated garden design. The Chehel Sotoun Palace

Museum was built in Isfahan during the Safavid period, in the 11th century AH. One of the complex's notable features is its collection of paintings by Reza Abbasi, a prominent Safavid-era artist whose works in the Persian miniature style decorate the palace's halls. Iran has nine gardens inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as part of the Persian Garden serial property, which was registered in July 2011. Two of the nine gardens — Chehel Sotoun in Isfahan and Fin Garden in Kashan — are located in Isfahan Province.



IRNA

Ardabil Province tops Iran in foreign tourism development

Iranica Desk

The director general of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Ardabil Province has announced that the province has ranked first nationally in an evaluation of foreign tourism development for the second consecutive year. Jalil Jabbari said the achievement was based on the results announced by the Foreign Tourism Evaluation and Development Department of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in the area of foreign tourism marketing and devel-



Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili Shrine Ensemble
IRNA

opment for the past Iranian year (ended March 20, 2026), according to IRNA. Ardabil Province also

ranked first in foreign tourism marketing and development two years ago, and maintaining the

position demonstrates the department's continued efforts to promote the province's tourism potential beyond Iran's borders, he said. Jabbari added that Ardabil's tourism attractions and potential have been promoted nationally to a considerable extent in recent years, with the results reflected in the growing number of domestic tourists visiting the province. However, more efforts are still needed to develop foreign tourism so that, as conditions in Iran and the region improve, the province can attract more international visitors.

He said national and international events and festivals have been held in recent years, bringing greater attention to tourism in the province among residents and travelers than in previous years. Meanwhile, Moslem Shojaei, director general of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts' Foreign Tourism Marketing and Development Department, announced the results of the evaluation of provincial departments' performance in foreign tourism marketing and development.

He said Ardabil maintained its strong performance, ranking first nationally among provincial departments for the second consecutive year, while Qazvin and East Azarbaijan ranked second and third, respectively. Shojaei said the results of last year's evaluation showed the continued implementation of targeted approaches by provinces active in the international tourism sector and the extent to which their measures were aligned with policies and guidelines issued by the ministry's tourism deputy. He added that Ardabil's first-place ranking and its continuation from the past year demonstrated the province's ongoing capac-

ity-building, planning and follow-up efforts in foreign tourism marketing and development. With a rich heritage of historical and cultural attractions, including the UNESCO-listed Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili Shrine Ensemble and Saein Stone Caravanserai, as well as more than 900 registered immovable historical sites on Iran's National Heritage List, Ardabil Province is considered one of the country's major destinations for domestic and international tourists. Located in northwestern Iran, Ardabil Province comprises 12 counties and is one of the country's main destinations for domestic and foreign tourists.

Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad qanats preserve ancient wisdom

Iranica Desk

For centuries, people living in the rugged Zagros Mountains have relied on a remarkable method of bringing water from deep underground to the surface. Known as the qanat, or Kariz, the system was developed without energy-intensive pumps or costly modern technology. Instead, it was based on a sophisticated understanding of geology, groundwater behavior and gradients, combined with knowledge passed down from one generation to the next. For ancient communities, qanats were far more than simple water-conveyance structures. They formed the backbone of a complex engineering and social system that supported settlement, agriculture and sustainable living. Wherever qanat water reached the surface, it helped create the conditions for cultivation and development. In many parts of Iran, the emergence of villages and the growth of historic settlements were closely linked to these underground water channels. Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, despite its rugged mountainous ter-

rain, steep slopes and deep valleys, is also home to this ancient water-management heritage. Qanats once supplied a significant share of the water needed by local communities and farmland across the province, and remarkably, some have continued to flow centuries after they were built. Today, however, these largely silent engineering masterpieces face serious threats from both environmental and human pressures, including prolonged droughts, sharp declines in groundwater levels, uncontrolled drilling of deep and semi-deep wells, encroachment on legally protected qanat corridors, construction projects and, most critically, the loss of traditional qanat-building knowledge. As a result, a significant number of the province's qanats have either completely dried up, suffered devastating collapses or require urgent restoration and rehabilitation. Ali-Asghar Atashfaraz, deputy head of tourism at the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said Iran has a long and distinguished history of intelligent water management.

He noted that the Iranian Plateau, particularly its arid central regions, has faced water scarcity since ancient times, prompting Iranians to develop innovative and exceptional methods to support settlement, agriculture and sustainable water supplies. "One of the most important and strategic measures taken by Iranians throughout history was the safe transfer of groundwater to areas where it was needed," Atashfaraz said, adding that qanats were certainly among the most important and effective inventions for this purpose. He explained that constructing a qanat required a highly precise understanding of water engineering, hydrology, soil science and geology, as well as an in-depth knowledge of groundwater behavior. Determining where an underground aquifer flowed, where it offered the greatest yield and pressure, and how its water could be brought to the surface with minimal evaporation required a sophisticated body of specialized local knowledge, he said. Pointing to the importance of Iran's historic qanats internationally, Atashfaraz

said the central Iranian plateau contains numerous major qanats that demonstrate the ingenuity of Iranians in mastering the technique. Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, he added, also has a long history of using this traditional method. He identified the qanat of Tombi village in Charam as one of the province's important, strategic and ancient qanats. More than 50 shafts have been identified along its route, and firm evidence dating to the Parthian period has also been found there, indicating its remarkable antiquity. Numerous qanats have been identified across the province, Atashfaraz said, adding that architectural remains and other evidence of these structures can clearly be seen in the Dehdasht Plain and various tropical parts of the province. Unfortunately, he said, many of these qanats have disappeared or collapsed because of neglect, while the life-giving flow of water through others has been permanently cut off. The surviving qanats demonstrate the evolution and advancement of qanat-building techniques in the province, he said.



IRNA

While their construction methods are in many respects similar to those found elsewhere in Iran, the province's difficult mountainous environment has given them distinctive and particularly resilient characteristics. In mountainous areas, groundwater is generally found deep in valleys, making access difficult. Under such conditions, constructing qanats was one of the most ingenious ways to access underground water and convey it by gravity to places where it was needed, including fields and settlements, Atashfaraz explained. He also pointed to an important ancient qanat in

the historic Dehdasht Plain, saying a major qanat system there supplied a substantial portion of the water required by the city and the historic fabric of Belad Shapur during periods of prosperity under the Ilkhanid and Safavid dynasties. The remarkable qanat passes through a gypsum formation, but thanks to its precise engineering, its original water was fresh, palatable and suitable for drinking, he said. Despite being more than 500 years old, the qanat still has the potential to supply water to the area. Atashfaraz described the loss and interruption of traditional qanat-building knowledge as one of the

most important and painful concerns surrounding the future of the systems. "Unfortunately, very few people today have the expertise to professionally excavate and dredge qanats using traditional methods," he said, adding that this valuable knowledge has not been adequately passed on to younger generations and engineers. He stressed that, given declining precipitation, successive droughts and the complex water challenges facing the Iranian Plateau, the rehabilitation of qanats as sustainable water resources should receive far greater attention from the government and relevant agencies.



Kamal Garden in Tabriz to become hub for Iran's cultural luminaries

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT

In the southern part of Mehraneh River and west of Bilan-koh Bridge in Tabriz, north-western Iran, a historic garden is being restored and redeveloped with an ambitious cultural purpose: to turn it into a center dedicated to the country's literary, mystical and artistic luminaries.

Kamal Garden is regarded as one of Tabriz's most valuable historic sites. Once a khanqah – a place where members of the Sufi orders meet and do their spiritual rituals – and a gathering place for prominent mystics and poets of the eighth century AH (14th century), the site is now the resting place of several major figures in Iran's cultural history, including Kamaleddin Masoud Khujandi, the 14th-century Persian Sufi and poet; Kamaleddin Behzad, the renowned Persian artist of the 15th and 16th centuries who was one of the most prominent miniature painters in the history of Iranian art; Sultan Mohammad Tabrizi, an Iranian painter at the Safavid court in Tabriz in the 15th and 16th centuries; and Sultan Mahmoud Mojalled, a 16th-century master of book illumination who worked at the royal library in Tabriz.

The site was added to Iran's national heritage list in 1998 under No. 2056.

Ramin Asbaqi, head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Tabriz, told Iran Daily that the department planned to restore, organize and expand the histor-

ic site.

"The development project is aimed at turning Kamal Garden into a center for introducing the great figures of Iran's literary, mystical and artistic heritage," Asbaqi said.

The garden is also known as "Two Kamals" because it contains the tombs of Kamaleddin Masoud Khujandi and Kamaleddin Behzad.

The site's importance goes beyond its age and architecture. Dating back to the eighth century AH, it is also a place where the cultural legacy of several of Iran's most influential artists and thinkers has come together. "Following the acquisition and clearance of properties surrounding the complex, a comprehensive development plan for Kamal Garden has been put on the agenda," Asbaqi said.

The aim is to organize the grounds and turn the historic site into a center for presenting the literary, mystical and artistic figures of Iran, allowing the cultural treasure to be passed on to future generations.

"Kamal Garden is a valuable legacy of the Jalayirid Sultanate and a testament to the inseparable bond between Iranian mysticism and art," Asbaqi said. "Through these development projects, we are seeking to bring to greater prominence Tabriz's cultural identity, which has endured through the ages."

The history of the garden is closely linked to Kamaleddin Masoud Khujandi. Historical documents attribute the site to the mystic and poet, who chose Tabriz as his home after making a pilgrimage to Mecca.

"Sultan Hussein Jalayir, the ruler of the time, gave Khujandi a garden in Valyankoy, present-day Bilankoh, and built a khanqah there, laying the foundations for what would become the current

site," Asbaqi said.

Khujandi himself referred to the garden in his poetry in almost paradise-like terms, describing it as being "half a farsakh from paradise."

Farsakh is an old measure of length which is equal to about 5 to 5.5 kilometers

"From the 14th through the 16th centuries, the garden remained a gathering place for mystics, poets and artists. After Khujandi died in 1400, he was buried in the same khanqah," Asbaqi said. The presence of tombs and underground burial chambers for mystics and their followers in the khanqahs of Azerbaijan was common between the 14th and 16th centuries, underscoring the special status of the site.

In later years, other prominent figures were laid to rest beside Khujandi, including Kamaleddin Behzad, the celebrated painter and a leading figure in the revival of the Herat and Tabriz schools of miniature painting, as well as Sultan Mohammad Tabrizi and Sultan Mahmoud Mojalled, two leading masters of book illumination and binding during the Safavid era.

"The structure that now houses the tombs was originally a crypt. The central vault has a very shallow arch, a feature that



A general view of Kamal Garden in Tabriz, northwestern Iran

experts regard as evidence that the original khanqah once stood on the floor above it," Asbaqi said.

Based on the architecture, construction details, the type and dimensions of the stone and brick materials, and the way the vault is covered, experts date the structure to a period cor-



responding to similar buildings from the 13th to 15th centuries. "The conical dome that now crowns the structure was added by the Cultural Heritage Organization in 1988 and is clearly later than the original building. Photographs taken before the dome was built are preserved in the archives of the Cultural Heritage Organization of East Azerbaijan Province," Asbaqi said.

Inside the building are two marble gravestones installed in 1974 over the graves of Khujandi and Behzad.

"Their earlier coffin-shaped tombstones are now kept in the stone inscriptions section of the Azerbaijan Museum," the local official said.

Behzad, who was born in Herat around 1460, lost both his parents as a child. He was subsequently taken under the care of Amir Ruhollah, known as Mirak Heravi, a skilled painter and li-

brarian at the court of Sultan Hussein Bayqara, who taught him the art of miniature painting.

Behzad lived through a turbulent period in Iranian history, yet his work and artistic style had such a profound influence on Iranian miniature painting that his name came to stand alongside the greatest artists in the field.

"His tomb at Kamal Garden therefore carries significance beyond the site's architectural and historical value, serving as a reminder of one of the most important figures in the history of Iranian art," Asbaqi said.

Kamal Garden thus stands not only as a legacy of the Jalayirid era and a testament to the enduring connection between Iranian mysticism and art, but also as evidence of the continuity of Tabriz's cultural identity through the centuries.

Picture gallery in Astrakhan reveals civilian impact of US-Israeli war on Iran

Social Desk

An exhibition of more than 100 photographs depicting the consequences of US and Israeli military strikes on Iran has opened in the Russian city of Astrakhan, drawing local officials, cultural and religious representatives and residents.

The exhibition, titled "The catastrophic consequences of the military aggression of the United States and the Israeli regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran", is being held at the Arsenal building of the Astrakhan Kremlin and will remain open to the public until September 20, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The photographs present a chronological account of the attacks and their aftermath, including a US Tomahawk missile strike on a primary school in the southern Iranian city of Minab on February 28, in which 168

people, most of them primary schoolchildren, were killed.

Other sections focus on attacks on civilian infrastructure, including bridges and power plants, as well as medical staff, ambulances and hospitals. Photographs also show damage to religious sites belonging to Abrahamic faiths and to historic and cultural sites.

Iranian Consul General in Astrakhan Ahmad Heydarian said the exhibition sought to present the "bitter and painful realities" of the US-Israeli war on Iran that began in late February, particularly their impact on civilians. "This exhibition is not simply a collection of images, but a visual account of the lives of people who, during this military aggression, lost their homes, security, peace and sometimes their loved ones," Heydarian said.

Acting Head of the Representative Office of the Russian Foreign Ministry

in Astrakhan, Oleg Kolomin, said the images had made preparing a formal speech difficult and that he preferred to express his feelings.

"The international community should see what happened to children and educational and cultural centers, and why those responsible for these attacks have so far neither accepted responsibility nor apologized to the victims," he said.

Kolomin said the aim of the war had been to break the morale of the Iranian people and force them to surrender, but that it had backfired produced a "reverse result".

Minister of External Relations of the Astrakhan Region, Vladimir Golovkov, said each photograph represented human lives and families who had lost loved ones and called such exhibitions necessary to inform the international community about the consequences of war.



Igor Sedov, chairman of the Astrakhan City Duma, said the exhibition was important for both Iranians and Russians and that efforts would be made to bring more residents, particularly schoolchildren and young people, to see it.

He described the photographs as a "peaceful weapon" in the struggle for peace and called for stronger ties and cooperation between Iran and Russia.

Local Russian officials and Iranian Consul General in Astrakhan Ahmad Heydarian (3rd L) visit picture gallery on the US-Israeli war on Iran in Astrakhan, Russia, on August 18, 2026.
● IRNA

Aleksey Bulychev, director of the Astrakhan Museum and Reserve, said he had been deeply affected by the photographs as both a father and a historian.