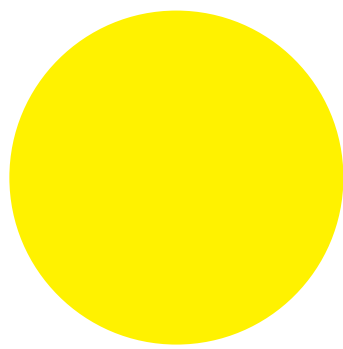


Iran marks national Physician's Day with tributes to Avicenna



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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (4th R) and his cabinet members visit the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini in Tehran on August 23, 2026 on the first day of country's Government Week.

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US-Iran deadlock

Importance of offensive policy in international system



By Hossein Kazemi
International affairs analyst

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The international system is undergoing a transition and the subsystems of this system — namely, regional systems — are also in transition, leading to a redistribution of power among actors. Until this process is fully completed and a definitive balance among the powers is established, stability in regional systems or the subsystems of this regional order should not be expected. At present, neither at the level of the Persian Gulf region, nor in West Asia, nor across the international system as a whole, has the distribution of power and balance taken a form. Therefore, there is effectively no reason to expect the war to stop or the conflict and confrontation among actors in the Persian Gulf region and

around the Strait of Hormuz to come to an end. Stability and consolidation of the Persian Gulf regional order, and movement toward an environment of peace, will come when a balance has been established in the Persian Gulf and the pattern of power distribution among the actors in the region has been consolidated. Current wars are no longer merely military conflicts, but a combination of military, economic, security, political, legal, cyber and cognitive warfare. Therefore, the naval blockade, military attacks and other measures that the US is taking against Iran should not be viewed separately. Together, they form a system of actions and reactions among actors confronting one another. Given that an order has not yet even emerged, let alone become institutionalized, and that the Persian Gulf regional order is genuinely in a state of transition, if

the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered a rational actor, then according to the principles of international relations, its foreign policy should effectively take on an expansionist or offensive character so that it can secure maximum national interests for itself during this transition in the international system. Therefore, Iran's strategy in this hybrid war should combine different approaches, adopting a multifaceted strategy in diplomacy, military affairs and dealing with economic pressure. In practice, Iran is doing exactly that. Its strategy combines pursuing the diplomatic track along with military pressure and economic resistance. This includes setting up alternative channels in response to maximum pressure, seeking to impose maximum counter-pressure, in a positive sense, on the economic costs facing the US and the global economy, while, in a negative sense, seeking to circumvent

sanctions and the economic blockade. At the same time, it is seeking to shift its military doctrine toward an offensive posture, which Iranians describe as defining defense through attack — effectively, defending themselves through offensive action. Iran has therefore learned to combine strategies and tools that, like other actors in the international system, it must use in these hybrid wars, and none of these tools or approaches alone can achieve its objective. As such, the diplomatic track will definitely continue, in the sense that, by consolidating its power, Iran will seek to turn its military and security gains into tangible returns. For this reason, the diplomatic track will continue even in the middle of a war, including if the war escalates.

Iran's shift to defensive posture

What drives Iran from a defensive posture toward an offensive

one, however, is not simply a reaction to an action. Rather, it is the nature of this transition in the international system that is pushing Iran in this direction, as it sees that neither the order nor the balance of power has been consolidated. The US and Israel, because of domestic issues, including elections in Israel and the US midterm elections, need to stabilize their economic situation and establish a degree of stability that will allow them to achieve the victory they are seeking. When a war breaks out, for example, it has a major impact on gasoline prices in the US, pushes up fuel prices and puts reserves at risk. As a result, voters in the US who pay taxes will rethink their support for the governing party. To keep these issues under control until the elections, the US and Israel are unlikely to want a war, unless a major change occurs on the battlefield. Iran, by contrast, knows that if

the governing parties in the two countries get through the elections successfully and return to the international arena with greater strength, the domestic backing they gain after the elections could pave the way for more severe attacks on Iran aimed at establishing a new order in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. For this reason, Iran, as a rational actor in the international system, is expected to consider a preemptive and offensive move. One possible scenario could be for Iran to influence, at least, the election results and the strength of the governing parties, thereby somewhat reducing the intensity of the war, although it cannot affect the fundamental nature of the war because the conflict is taking place as a result of an upheaval in the balance of power, not because particular individuals are in power in these countries.

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Pezeshkian: Iran standing firm despite facing 'full-scale war'

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that Iran is facing a "full-scale economic, military and security war" but has stood firm and is striving to serve its people. He made the remarks during a visit to the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, and on the first day of Government Week as the United States has declared new economic sanctions against Iran to exert more pressure on the country after it failed to achieve its goals in the battlefield. Pezeshkian acknowledged the immense pressures facing the country while expressing pride in the nation's resilience. He said the government is making every effort to overcome the difficulties. "We are trying with all our

might, but we are sorry that problems still exist. The country is in a full-scale economic, military and security war. The enemies openly declare that they are imposing the harshest and most terrifying sanctions against Iran, but we have stood firm and are trying to serve the people in the face of this unequal war," he said.

Economic pressure

Pezeshkian highlighted the enemy's open efforts to isolate Iran internationally, saying, "When the enemy openly says it is negotiating with Muslim governments not to deal with us to force our surrender, what clearer statement could there be? We must recognize that we are in a full-scale war." He called on the nation to unite and support one another just as they did during the Sacred Defense

era of the 1980-88 war imposed on Iran by the Iraqi regime. On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump announced new economic measures against Iran and warned that countries that maintain economic engagement with Tehran would face consequences. Trump said on his Truth Social platform that he was announcing "the most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country!" He added that any country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports, or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face tremendous economic consequences. Pezeshkian also referred to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in February, saying that the country's adversaries had assessed that Iran would collapse

like Venezuela in a short time. "Not only did this not happen, but Iran became a power that amazed the world with the resistance, solidarity and cohesion of the Iranian nation," he added.

Islamabad understanding

Addressing a recent Pakistan-mediated memorandum of understanding between Tehran and Washington, signed on June 17, the president said the agreement was the result of a "technical consensus" among all those who had a hand in the matter. "What happened in the process of the MoU, after lengthy discussions and negotiations, was a technical consensus of all those who had a stake in the matter: fighters who fought on the battlefield, managers who safeguard-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini in Tehran on the first day of Government Week on August 23, 2026.

● president.ir

ed the country's security, and executives who implemented the decisions," he stated. "If we stood firm and did not bow to the enemy, it was because of these individuals. They were the ones who sat together and reached a framework, finding it aligned with 'expediency, dignity and wisdom.' Those who deny this either do not understand the details or have no hand in the matter." He stressed the need for everyone to abide by collective decisions, saying that once a decision had



been made and an agreement reached, everyone must stand by it and act accordingly. The 14-point agreement signed in June aimed to

lay the groundwork for a permanent peace deal, but Washington repeatedly violated the agreement, re-imposing oil sanctions and continuing military strikes.

Pakistan's army chief to visit Tehran today to 'help boost regional peace'

International Desk

Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir will travel to Tehran on Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry said, as Islamabad tries to mediate a resolution to end ongoing tensions between Iran and the United States. Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a statement Sunday that Munir would lead a delegation to the Iranian capital "as part of efforts to strengthen Iran-Pakistan bilateral cooperation". The visit was also part of "Pakistan's ongoing efforts to help consolidate peace and security in the region", the statement said. Pakistan brokered a Memorandum of Understanding between Iran and the US on June 17 that required both sides to end all hostilities and prepare for further negotiations on more important issues. However, the US violated the deal by conducting deadly aerial assaults on Iran and imposing a naval blockade of the country. In response to the violations, Iran closed the strategic Strait of Hormuz which is one of the world's



most important energy transit routes. The United States has now imposed new sanctions on Iran after it failed to achieve its goals during its aggression against Iran. A Pakistan source told Reuters that the talks in Tehran would also address recent developments in the conflict, including US President Donald Trump's threat of tougher sanctions on Iran. "He (Munir) will discuss peace under Islamabad's MoU, Trump's warning and the situation after the Pakistan-Turkey-Saudi Arab Agreement and Houthi (Yemen's Ansarullah) issues with Iranian leaders," the source said. The visit will coincide with a Monday announcement on details

related to the planned sanctions which US officials have said would be "the toughest sanctions in history" on Iran. Pakistan had previously played a pivotal role in securing the April 8 ceasefire that brought an end to the 40-day illegal US-Israeli aggression against Iran. During a telephone conversation on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Munir discussed the latest regional developments, as well as effective ways to enhance peace, stability and security in the region. Iran thanked Pakistan for its war-time support for the Islamic Republic and its role in mediating a war-termination deal between Tehran and Washington. The Iranian foreign minister also held a separate phone conversation with his Egyptian counterpart, during which both sides discussed the latest developments in the West Asian region, including the situation in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea regions, and the latest diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions in the region.

FM downplays Trump economic warfare as 'old US bullying tactic'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Trump's economic pressure campaign against Iran is part of Washington's longstanding "bullying" tactics. "Economic warfare is a recurring scenario and the same old bullying tactic in American policy," he said. "It's a familiar movie that we've seen many times, and we know how to deal with it," Araghchi said on the sidelines of a visit by the cabinet ministers to the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini. He said Washington's renewed use of military threats and claims of possible attacks showed that it was "desperate in the face of the Iranian nation" and had "no new solutions". "They must know that there is no other way but to speak respectfully to the Iranian people and find a solution based on justice and honor," the Iranian foreign minister said. US President Donald Trump announced new economic measures against Iran on Wednesday, accompanied by a warning that countries maintaining economic engagement with Tehran would face consequences. Trump said on his Truth Social plat-



form that he was announcing "the most crushing economic operation ever taken against any country!" He added that any country that allows its financial institutions, businesses, airports, or government entities to provide any type of lifeline to Iran will itself face tremendous economic consequences. Iran's top security chief said that the Islamic Republic will neutralize the US economic pressure, including by responding to countries that join an American "economic war" against the country. "We will neutralize the economic war. America is backed into a corner. Either they honor their commitments, or they will have to struggle to get out of that corner, which will make the situation worse," Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei said during a televised interview on Saturday.

Iran slams France's decision to expel diplomats as unjustifiable

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that France's decision to expel two Iranian diplomats is "not justifiable", describing it as a reaction to a "completely legal and consistent with international law" measure taken by Iran. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei warned that such actions would be damaging to the relations between Tehran and Paris. On August 18, France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot declared two employees of the Iranian Embassy in France persona non grata in response to what he called the "extremely serious attack" committed by the Iranian

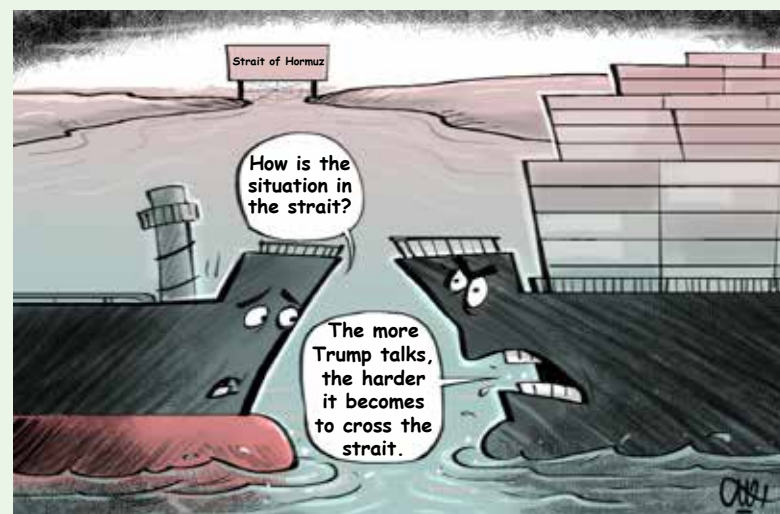
security services against two employees of the French Embassy in Iran on July 19. On Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry declared two French diplomats working at the French Embassy in Tehran persona non grata over activities deemed contrary to international law and the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The French diplomats were briefly detained in Tehran after they were found at a meeting linked to a security investigation. France accused Iranian security forces of mistreating the diplomats, while Tehran rejected the allegations and said they had been questioned over "unconventional" conduct. Iran's Intelligence Ministry said the

two diplomats had "extensive records of violations and conduct contrary to domestic laws and diplomatic obligations." Baqaei said on Sunday that the activities of two French diplomats in Iran constituted "unacceptable interference" in the country's internal affairs. "We acted as soon as we felt that the French Embassy in Tehran had acted beyond its responsibilities and what is stipulated in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and that their actions constituted interference in Iran's internal affairs," he told reporters. He said Iran had formally announced that the two diplomats must leave the country and would not be allowed to return.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Major gas field holding 7.5 tcf discovered in southern Iran



tensive sectors,” he said. The discovery could provide Iran with an additional source of natural gas at a time when the country is seeking to expand domestic production and meet growing demand from industry and the power sector. Iran has relied on domestic investment and expertise to develop its oil and gas fields since 2018, when the US imposed sweeping sanctions on the country’s energy sector. The find is part of an ongoing, concentrated exploration push stretching from southern Fars province into northern Bushehr province. The site sits adjacent to the Pazan gas field, where exploration resumed last year after an eight-year pause, leading to an additional 10 tcf in-place gas discovery and 200 million barrels of crude oil. Oil Ministry officials expect fields in this southern cluster to take roughly 40 months to fully develop before commercial production yields results. In October 2025, Paknejad announced the discovery of significant gas and oil reserves at the Pazan field in southern Fars province, describing it as capable of playing a major role in addressing Iran’s energy imbalance in the coming years.

Economy Desk

Iran has discovered a natural gas field in southern Fars Province with more than 7.5 trillion cubic feet (212 billion cubic meters) of gas in place, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Sunday. The field holds approximately 5.7 tcf (161 bcm) of recoverable gas, Paknejad told state television. The minister described the

discovery as equivalent to 15 years of production from one phase of South Pars, the world’s largest gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar. Paknejad highlighted a key advantage of the new find, saying the field, known as Takhteh, contains sweet natural gas, which has relatively low levels of sulfur compounds and is therefore expected to reduce development and operating costs.

He added that substantial volumes of gas condensates were also present at the field, which could bring “tens of billions of dollars” in new wealth to the country. “The immediate priority is to plan and carry out development work as quickly as possible so that the field can be brought into production in the shortest possible time and the extracted gas supplied to industry and other energy-in-

GSI starts studies to map Afghanistan’s mineral resources

Economy Desk

Iran has begun studies to identify Afghanistan’s mineral resources and establish a database of the country’s deposits, the head of Iran’s Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration Organization (GSI) said on Sunday. Afghanistan is one of the target countries for mineral studies and could in the future supply part of the raw materials needed by Iranian industries, said Mahmoud Fatemi Aqda, who also serves as deputy minister of Industry, Mine and Trade, according to ILNA. Plans to expand mineral cooperation within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) are also being pursued, given the region’s potential, he



added. Iran has about 35 of the 114 known mineral types worldwide, Fatemi Aqda said, adding that this potential could play an important role in developing the mining sector, creating wealth and moving toward a non-oil economy. Despite this potential, the

extent of exploration carried out in Iran remains below the country’s actual capacity, he acknowledged, noting that the value of mineral reserves discovered in recent years showed a significant share remained unexplored. “To make the most of the mining sector’s potential, we

need to expand exploration and attract new investment. At the same time, we should move toward a more participatory approach, drawing on the experience of developed countries,” he said. “We must create the conditions for the effective participation of the private sector in producing basic geological data and carrying out exploration projects.” He said about 66 exploration projects had been defined as part of the effort. “In the first stage, we will try, by implementing these projects accurately and systematically, to encourage greater private-sector participation in exploration and direct existing capital in parallel markets toward producing basic data and mineral exploration,” Fatemi Aqda said.

Oman, Flydubai seek new air route in southern Iran

Economy Desk

Oman and Dubai-based airline Flydubai have requested the establishment of a new air route in southern Iran, according to Iran’s Civil Aviation Organization. The proposed route is intended to facilitate and improve air traffic flows, attract more air traffic to southern Iran and meet the operational needs of users of Iranian airspace, Tasnim news agency quoted the organization as saying. The proposal was discussed at a Civil-Military Coordination (CMC) meeting, where the route was reviewed with the aim of improving air traffic

flow management, enhancing the efficiency of Iran’s air route network and creating more favorable conditions for flights covered by the requests, it said. Last week, CAO said that Flydubai and Air Arabia had resumed flights over Iranian airspace after receiving permits from the Iranian organization and coordinating with the air traffic control department of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company. The move followed continued negotiations and consultations aimed at facilitating and expanding the passage of foreign flights through Iranian airspace. The country’s airspace gradu-



ally reopened after a ceasefire was reached between Washington and Tehran on April 8, halt-

ing a 40-day conflict launched by the US-Israeli coalition in late February.

ECONOMIC LENS

Decarbonization: Development opportunity or trade protectionism



By Mohammadreza Hosseini Aliabad
Researcher in int’l economics

The global economy is entering a new phase in which carbon is no longer merely an environmental concern. It has become a strategic variable influencing international trade, investment, competitiveness, industrial policy, and geo-economic influence. As governments accelerate climate action, carbon emissions are increasingly becoming part of the rules governing access to markets. This transformation raises a fundamental question: Can decarbonization become a genuine engine of sustainable development, or could it evolve into a new form of trade protectionism? From the perspective of international economics, decarbonization should be understood as a structural transformation of the global economy. In the emerging economic order, the competitiveness of a product will depend not only on price, quality, and productivity, but increasingly on its carbon intensity, production technology, energy sources, and the environmental performance of its supply chain. Consequently, climate policy is becoming an integral component of trade and industrial policy. Investment in renewable energy, clean technologies, energy efficiency, low-carbon transportation, green infrastructure, and circular production can stimulate innovation, create new industries, attract investment, and generate employment. Countries that develop technological capabilities in these fields can move beyond being consumers of green technologies and become exporters and influential participants in emerging global value chains. However, the transition also creates a serious challenge for developing economies. Advanced economies generally possess greater financial resources, technological capabilities, and infrastructure for reducing emissions. Many developing countries, by contrast, face limited access to finance and technology and remain dependent on carbon-intensive production. Applying identical environmental requirements to economies with different levels of development may produce unequal consequences. This is where the boundary between legitimate climate policy and green protectionism becomes important. Environmental standards and carbon pricing can correct market failures, reduce carbon leakage, and encourage cleaner production. Yet if environmental requirements are designed in ways that disadvantage foreign competitors, they may function as non-tariff barriers to trade. A policy presented as environmental protection could consequently become a mechanism for protecting domestic industries. Carbon border adjustment mechanisms illustrate this dilemma. Such measures are designed to address differences in carbon costs between domestic and foreign producers and reduce incentives for carbon leakage. If producers in developing economies face additional compliance costs without access to affordable clean technologies and finance, their competitiveness may decline. The central issue, therefore, is not whether the world should decarbonize. The real question is how the transition will be governed and distributed. If the costs of decarbonization are concentrat-

ed in countries with fewer technological and financial resources, while the benefits are captured mainly by advanced economies, the green transition could deepen existing inequalities. Decarbonization is also becoming a major arena of geo-economic competition. Competition will extend beyond oil and gas to batteries, critical minerals, hydrogen, electric vehicles, renewable-energy systems, energy storage, and low-carbon manufacturing. Control over these technologies and resources may determine economic influence. Countries that build strong positions in green value chains will have greater capacity to shape international markets. For developing countries, the strategic response should therefore be proactive rather than defensive. Decarbonization should be linked to industrial upgrading, technological development, research and development, human capital, and export diversification. Without domestic technological capabilities, however, the green transition could create a new form of dependency in which developing economies import green technologies while absorbing the costs of stricter environmental standards. A fair transition consequently requires international cooperation on climate finance, technology transfer, carbon measurement, technical standards, and trade rules. Developing countries need opportunities to acquire the technologies and financial resources necessary to meet environmental requirements. Climate responsibility must therefore be matched by equitable access to the means required to fulfill it. The future economy is likely to be characterized by green competition. Successful countries will be those that combine emissions reduction with productivity growth, innovation, industrial competitiveness, and high-value global market participation. Decarbonization should be treated not simply as a regulatory cost, but as a potential development strategy. The legitimacy of the green transition will depend on whether it creates cooperation or exclusion. If climate policies are transparent, measurable, science-based, and non-discriminatory, they can support both environmental protection and fair trade. If they are used to shield domestic industries, restrict competitors, or consolidate technological dominance, the world may witness a new generation of protectionism — expressed not through traditional tariffs alone, but through carbon standards, sustainability requirements, and climate-related trade measures. The decisive question is therefore not simply who will emit less carbon. It is who will develop the technologies, establish the standards, control emerging value chains, and capture the economic benefits of the low-carbon economy. If decarbonization is built on cooperation, technology transfer, fair finance, and open trade, it can become a defining development opportunity of the twenty-first century. If not, the green transition may deepen inequality and create a fragmented economic order in which environmental ambition becomes another instrument of international competition.

Veteran pilot talks about fate of three comrades who struck US base

What made Al Udeid one of most intricate aerial missions?



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The destiny of the three Iranian pilots who participated in the March 2 operation of retaliating against the Al Udeid American air base in Qatar, even after the passage of several months, remains shrouded in obscurity; an obscurity that has acquired novel dimensions consequent to the discordant stances of Iran and Qatar. While Iranian authorities have recently asserted that the three pilots are alive in captivity, Qatar has repudiated this assertion and claims ignorance concerning their fate. In the meantime, the martyrdom of Brigadier General Majid Kazemi has been confirmed, and the remains of this distinguished pilot have been repatriated; however, the status of the other three pilots is indeterminate.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of experts, the operation of March 2, 2026, constituted, from a technical and military standpoint, an intricate and exceptionally perilous mission, an operation wherein Iranian combat aircraft, penetrating multiple defensive layers, infiltrated the Al Udeid base and successfully inflicted damage upon this consequential American installation.

To scrutinize the diverse dimensions of this aerial operation and also to conduct a technical assessment of the various probabilities concerning the fate of the pilots, Iran Daily engaged in an exclusive dialogue with Brigadier General Hossein Khalili, a veteran of the Air Force and a pilot who participated in numerous operations during the eight-year Sacred Defense period (Iraq-Iran war of the 1980s); the full transcript of which you shall read below:

Hossein Khalili



IRAN DAILY: In light of the divergent narratives advanced concerning the operation of March 2, 2026, and the destiny of the three Iranian pilots, if we wish to examine this affair from the perspective of a pilot and with a technical and military lens, what is your evaluation of this operation?

KHALILI: To analyze this operation, we must initially attend to the type of aircraft, the target, and the conditions in which the pilots were situated. The Sukhoi Su-34 aircraft is a semi-strategic fighter-bomber and ranks among the heaviest interceptor aircraft globally. This aircraft, in terms of both its physical dimensions and weight, as well as the quantity of ordnance it can carry, possesses considerable capability for such missions. Consequently, the selection of this aircraft for an assault upon a significant and strategic target, such as the Al Udeid base, is militarily comprehensible because the aircraft can transport a substantial volume of munitions.

To what extent was the operation, in terms of the design and the planning for the execution of an aerial operation, distinguished?

Apparently, the execution of the operation had been scheduled for March 1; however, its implementation was postponed by one day due to particular circumstances. In such aerial missions, the selection of the route customarily has tremendous importance. Fundamentally, a pilot endeavors to approach the target via a trajectory that minimizes the probability of detection. In this instance as well, it appears the route was chosen such that the aircraft would enter the vicinity of the Al Udeid base from a direction toward which the adversary's anti-aircraft defenses were not primarily oriented. For example, if the adversary anticipates an assault from a specific axis, it is natural that it would concentrate its radar and defensive systems more heavily along that same axis. Therefore, altering the angle of entry and approaching from an unanticipated direction can contribute to the mission's success.

Thus, could one assert that the initial success of the operation was largely contingent upon the surprise of the defenses?

That is correct. Surprise constitutes one of the critical factors for the success of any military operation. On this basis, the aircraft entered Qatari territory, advanced somewhat into the depth of the area, then adjusted their trajectory to reach the target and maneuvered from the southern sector toward their objectives at the Al Udeid base. This method resulted in the defenses having a diminished window for effective reaction because, from a defensive standpoint,



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the adversary anticipated the attack would originate from the north of the base, and the deployment and targeting of defensive systems had been concentrated in that area; however, our operation planners and pilots, through an astute maneuver, assaulted the base from the southern sector. This action also possessed another advantage: if our fighters had targeted the base from the northern sector, during their exit and alteration of course and heading back toward Iran, the adversary's defenses would have enjoyed a greater opportunity

to target our fighters; but when the bombardment was executed from the southern sector, our fighters had a direct trajectory for their return. Nevertheless, a crucial point exists; the moment the bombardment is executed, the element of surprise effectively dissipates. From that instant onward, all systems within the area become cognizant of the presence of the attacking aircraft, and the return mission becomes considerably more difficult. Up to this point, that segment of the mission which had been planned for the base's bombardment

was accomplished successfully. Another factor that rendered this operation more intricate was that one day prior to this operation, two of our F-5s, flying at low altitude and penetrating advanced American aerial defense systems, inflicted severe damage upon the infrastructure of a United States Air Force base in Kuwait and, having successfully executed the aerial assault, landed in Bushehr. Naturally, when an operation has been conducted in the region the preceding day, the alertness level of opposing forces increases, and the repetition of an operation within a short interval can elevate the probability of detection and identification. And this matter concurrently increased the risk of executing the operation at the Al Udeid base.

Therefore, could one assert that the more hazardous segment of the mission was perhaps subsequent to the execution of the bombardment and during the return?

Precisely. As long as you are approaching, you endeavor to remain undetected; but after releasing the bombs, you can no longer remain concealed. The region's radars, defensive systems, aerial patrol aircraft, and even naval vessels can enter the process of identification and interdiction. Furthermore, Al Udeid air base is not a conventional installation. It is a major American base and, naturally, possesses multiple defensive layers. There, a variety of defensive and radar

The compiled and edited photo shows the three Iranian pilots who successfully struck the American Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and whose fate remains unknown. From left to right, allegedly: Javad Salehi, Omran Behroushian and Abdolmajid Dashtian.

● rouydad24.ir



Another factor that rendered this operation more intricate was that one day prior to this operation, two of our F-5s, flying at low altitude and penetrating advanced American aerial defense systems, inflicted severe damage upon the infrastructure of a United States Air Force base in Kuwait and, having successfully executed the aerial assault, landed in Bushehr. Naturally, when an operation has been conducted in the region the preceding day, the alertness level of opposing forces increases, and the repetition of an operation within a short interval can elevate the probability of detection and identification.

systems exist, and in addition, aerial patrol coverage is also a consideration. American and Qatari aircraft can be present in the region. On the other hand, American naval vessels stationed in the area themselves possess radar systems and aerial coverage. In preceding years, when we flew in Iran's southern areas, even under conditions where the presence of American naval vessels was not as extensive as it is today, we observed that they could detect an aircraft from a considerable distance. Therefore, for an Iranian aircraft to be able to enter such a region, bombard the target, and then undertake the return trajectory was, operationally, an exceedingly complex undertaking.

One of the points noted concerning this operation was the extremely low-altitude flight of our fighters. What significance did this factor possess?

Low-altitude flight constitutes one of the methods employed to reduce the probability of radar detection. Extremely low-altitude flight (25 to 50 meters above the water's surface) or even in proximity to the ground, which not every pilot can accomplish, was also selected to evade radar detection and to complicate interception by missiles because, by flying at low altitude, the margin of error for missiles increases. However, a pilot at extremely low altitude must navigate with extraordinary precision, and the slightest error can precipitate fatal consequences. Therefore, the selection of low altitude demonstrates that the pilots endeavored to diminish the probability of early detection to the greatest feasible extent.

This operation naturally revives the memory of the flight of the martyr Abbas Doran over Baghdad on July 21, 1982, and his penetration of one of the densest Iraqi defensive networks, which, despite the mission's success, ultimately resulted in his martyrdom; what is your opinion?

Correct. From one perspective, one could even state that this operation involved extraordinarily risky conditions and, in certain aspects, could be even more perilous than the operation of martyr Doran during the Iraqi-imposed war because the existence of the multi-layered defensive network of the American Al Udeid base, the more advanced nature of the radar systems, anti-aircraft artillery, radar-guided surface-to-air missiles, continuous aerial patrols, and the presence of American naval vessels at a distance of 15 to 20 miles rendered the conditions for penetration into the operational area and its execution extremely challenging. If we wish to speak candidly and from a pilot's viewpoint, such a mission cannot be regarded as an everyday mission. A pilot knows that upon entering such a region, he confronts an assemblage of threats, ranging from defensive systems to adversary fighters and radar and naval coverage.



Martyred Majid Kazemi, one of the four Iranian pilots who conducted a successful operation against the American Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar and the only one whose martyrdom has been confirmed so far, poses for a photo. ● NOURNEWS

With this calculation, did the pilots accept this mission knowing that, in all probability, no return was possible?

The pilots, with complete cognizance that the probability of return was only 10% and that they effectively considered their death largely inevitable, embarked upon this mission. Nonetheless, they knew the mission had to be executed; that is the very characteristic that also existed in the great operations of the Sacred Defense period, wherein pilots, despite deeming the probability of martyrdom extremely high, still accepted the mission. And this constitutes the distinction between our combatants and pilots and the forces of the adversary. That which we designate as the culture of martyrdom is precisely this: that our combatant possesses no fear of confronting the enemy despite the inequality of equipment and the equations of warfare.

Given that the pilots have not returned yet but the attack upon the Al Udeid base was successfully executed, should this operation be considered an operational success? If an aircraft can enter an area with such a level of protection, strike the target, and accomplish its mission, then from a military perspective, this segment of the operation is considered successful. It is natural that in a combat operation, you also incorporate into your calculations the risk of losing the aircraft and crew. But in return, you may be able to inflict damage upon the adversary and execute the assigned mission, just as our pilots inflicted substantial damage upon the American Al Udeid base in Qatar.

One of the significant ambiguities concerns the fate of the three pilots about whom conflicting narratives have been put forward. From a technical standpoint, does the possibility of their survival and captivity exist?

Here, we must distinguish between definitive information and the analysis of probabilities. If the aircraft was downed and the pilots were able to eject, then from a technical standpoint, the possibility of survival and captivity exists. It is possible he landed in the region and was apprehended by forces present there. Consequently, given the presence of American forces at the Al Udeid base, the probability that the pilots were apprehended by American forces is not ruled out. Of course, this is an analysis, and for it to become definitive news, it requires credible information and official confirmation. It is even possible that if such an event occurred, the opposing side, for various reasons, might not announce the matter, particularly under conditions where the possibility of continued hostilities exists.

Of course, concerning the martyrdom of two of the pilots in those same days, narratives were disseminated; subsequently, however, the martyrdom of Brigadier General Majid Kazemi was officially confirmed, and the remains of this martyr were repatriated. In your opinion, to what extent are those earlier narratives reliable?

In such incidents, the information from the initial days is customarily incomplete. It is possible that, initially, based on preliminary evidence,

it might be surmised that two of the crew were martyred, and later, with the discovery of the aircraft's wreckage or new information, the details become clearer.

Regarding this incident as well, if the remains of one of the pilots have been found, this matter does not, in and of itself, signify that the status of all crew members has been clarified. Concerning the other individual or individuals, independent evidence must exist. Therefore, one cannot assert with certainty that all have been martyred or that the remaining are alive. Both probabilities must, from a technical standpoint, be examined until definitive information is clarified.

What is Qatar's role in this matter? If the operation occurred within Qatari territory, does the Qatari government necessarily possess knowledge of the pilots' fate?

The matter is somewhat complex. Iran has announced that the operation's target was the American base in Qatar and that, in reality, the engagement was with the United States, not Qatar. Therefore, Qatar might dissociate its direct responsibility from this incident.

If we assume one of the pilots has been taken captive, why might this matter not be announced?

In wartime conditions, information concerning prisoners of war and military personnel can be a matter of security. The opposing side might have various reasons for not announcing it. Moreover, if the two sides remain engaged, the matter of prisoners could subsequently arise in negotiations or prisoner exchanges. However, I emphasize that this is merely a probability, and to offer a definitive opinion on the pilots' fate, one must await official and verifiable information.

Finally, if you were to elucidate the importance of this operation from your own perspective, how would you describe it?

In my view, this operation should be considered within the framework of the greatest operations of Iran's Air Force. The matter is not merely about several aircraft going and bombing a target. You enter a region, with aircraft, that is under multi-layered radar, defensive, aerial, and naval coverage, and you know that subsequent to the mission's execution, the probability of return is extremely low. From this perspective, this operation, in terms of the degree of risk and the fearlessness of the pilots, ranks among the greatest aerial operations in the history of the country. Perhaps the most significant point is precisely this: that the pilots accepted the mission with full knowledge of the extraordinarily great dangers. When a pilot knows the probability of return is extremely low but still flies, this is not merely a military mission; rather, it demonstrates the magnitude of his commitment to the execution of the mission.



An undated aerial satellite view of the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar before the Iran war ● US ARMY



A satellite view of the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar following Iran's retaliatory operation in March ● THE NEW YORK TIMES



A US pilot, whose fighter jet was among the three that were mistakenly shot down by Kuwaiti forces during the Iran war, is being threatened by a pipe-wielding local after he survived the crash. ● X

U20 Wrestling World Championships:

Reality check as Iran falters in freestyle

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestling was handed a harsh reality check at the U20 World Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, after a run of poor results across different weight classes saw the country miss out on a top-three finish in the freestyle team standings for the first time in a decade. Abolfazl Rahmani settled for silver in the 92kg division on Saturday – a day after Ahoura Khateri had won bronze in the 61kg class – while Sina Khalili (70kg) and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (125kg) reached the final in their respective events. However, it proved far from enough for Iran – three-time champion in the past five editions – to even match last year's third-place finish, after six other members of the squad finished their campaigns empty-handed. A silver medalist at June's U20 Asian Championships, Mohammad-Mahdi Mamivand saw his 74kg campaign come to an end after just one bout following an 8-2 defeat against Germany's Manuel Wagin, while Tohid Nouri crashed out of the 97kg event after suffering an 11-0 defeat against Georgia's Konstantine



Iran's Arman Elahi (R) is seen in action during a first-round defeat against Kyrgyzstan's Nurtilek Zamirbekov in the freestyle 57kg category at the U20 Wrestling World Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Aug. 21, 2026.
● IAWFIR

Petriashvili in the second round. In 65kg, Ali-Asghar Tat fell to a 5-3 defeat against Russia's

Zalimkhan Umarov in the quarterfinals, with Asian U20 champion Sobhan Esmi losing 6-3 to Ukraine's Bohdan Oleksienko in the 79kg repechage. Abolfazl Shamsipour also failed to seize his repechage opportunity in the 86kg class, losing 4-0 to Kazakhstan's Askhab Khajiev, while Arman Elahi was knocked

out of the 57kg event following a 12-6 setback against Kyrgyzstan's Nurtilek Zamirbekov in his first bout. Rahmani, meanwhile, enjoyed an emphatic run by securing three successive superiority wins before being undone by a 5-2 defeat against Georgia's Sandro Kurashvili in the 92kg final.

Kurashvili used a last-ditch body throw to beat Rahmani. The Iranian led 2-0 with six seconds remaining when he glanced at the clock, and Kurashvili capitalized on the lapse in concentration, throwing him for four points with less than a second left on the clock. Iran, despite knowing there was still time for the

throw, desperately challenged the decision but lost.

The disappointing results left Iran languishing in sixth place in the team table with 51 points by the end of the penultimate day of action in the Slovak capital, meaning even two more golds through Khalili and Mohammadnejad on the final day would not see the country climb above fourth place. The United States all but secured a third successive team title after having seven wrestlers in the final, with Russia – eligible for team points for the first time since 2022 – followed by Japan and Kazakhstan in the next spots. The dreadful freestyle campaign came after Iran also had a Greco-Roman tournament to forget, at least by its own standards, earlier in Bratislava, missing out on a fifth successive team crown. Armin Shamsipour was the only Iranian gold medalist across 10 divisions, triumphing in the 55kg class, while Amirali Heidari (60kg), Ali Gharibi (63kg), Amirmahdi Saiedi-Nava (77kg), and Ali Nematzadeh (87kg) added four bronzes to the medal haul, as Iran settled for the runner-up spot with 109 points – 33 behind Russia, which collected three golds, two silvers, and one bronze.

Sports Desk

Iranian international striker Mahdi Taremi embarked on a new chapter in his career by signing for UAE Pro League club Al Wasl on Saturday, returning to Asian club football after seven prolific seasons in different European leagues. Al Wasl did not disclose the financial terms of the move for the 34-year-old Iranian, who joins from Greek giant Olympiacos on, according to Transfermarkt, a season-long contract. Taremi enjoyed an impressive debut campaign with Olympiacos last season, registering 16 goals – including two Champions League strikes against Real

Madrid and Bayer Leverkusen – and six assists in 39 appearances across all competitions. However, the Iranian opted to bring a premature end to his two-year contract after falling down the pecking order under Spanish head coach José Luis Mendilibar, who favored Moroccan international Ayoub El Kaabi as his first-choice striker. Taremi was first introduced to European football in the 2019/20 season, when he joined Portuguese top-flight side Rio Ave from Qatari outfit Al Gharafa. A remarkable tally of 21 goals – including 18 in Liga Portugal – and five assists in 37 games convinced Portuguese heavy-

weight Porto to secure his signing after just one season. Taremi spent four glorious seasons with Porto, helping the club lift seven domestic trophies – including a Portuguese league and cup double in the 2021/22 campaign – while he bagged 91 goals in 182 appearances to become the Dragons' third all-time top scorer behind retired Brazilian Mario Jardel and Colombian Jackson Martínez. His season-long spell at Serie A powerhouse Internazionale was hardly one to remember, as the Iranian was limited to just three goals and nine assists in 43 games – most of which came as cameo appear-

ances – in Nerazzurri colors. However, he became only the second Iranian to reach the UEFA Champions League final, after legendary Ali Daei, where Inter was hammered 5-0 by Paris Saint-Germain in the 2024/25 final. Al Wasl, meanwhile, has enjoyed a flying start to its domestic league season, sitting atop the table with six points from two games. The Emirati outfit will also be part of the West Zone's 16-team league phase in the expanded AFC Champions League Elite, where Taremi will likely lead the line against Iranian top-flight duo Tractor and Esteghlal.

Taremi signs for Al Wasl in Emirati top flight



● AL WASL FC

Piazza hails Iran's winning mentality after Cuba sweep

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Roberto Piazza praised his players for their winning mentality after they produced a dominant 3-0 (25-16, 25-19, 25-22) victory over Cuba in their second match at the Ufa Cup in Russia on Saturday. Piazza said Iran's approach from the opening point played a key role in securing the victory, with his side establishing comfortable leads early in the second and third sets. "The Iranian team really started well today. We entered the court with a mentality that showed we had come to win, and this was one of the keys to our success," said the Italian, whose team suffered a 3-1 loss to European powerhouse Russia in its first game in the four-team tournament, which also features Belarus. Piazza noted that Cuba had entered the match looking to avenge its previous de-



Iranian opposite Amin Esmaelnejad (10) spikes the ball during a 3-0 win against Cuba in Ufa, Russia, on Aug. 22, 2026.
● PAYAM SANI/volleyball.ir

feat to Iran, when the teams met in the Volleyball Nations League preliminaries in June, and collect valuable world ranking points. "The difference in this match was also related to the world ranking," he said. "We had previously beaten Cuba in France and earned good ranking points from that victory. Cuba came into today's match looking to make up for that result

and earn points." According to Piazza, Cuba started with almost its strongest lineup, including star middle blocker Robertlandy Simón. "Cuba started the match with almost its full-strength lineup, and Simón is a player of great importance to the team," Piazza said. "However, they later decided to make changes to the lineup, which, in my

opinion, was the result of an inappropriate mindset." The Italian coach emphasized that maintaining the right mentality was particularly important for Iran. "This is not necessarily the same for every team, but having the right mentality is very important for us," he said. "When we enter a match with this mentality, we can start the game very well." Iran raced to an 8-2 lead in the second set and opened the third with a 7-2 advantage, putting itself firmly in control on both occasions. "These starts show that Iran has the ability to score several points in a row and build an advantage from the beginning of a set," Piazza said. "In our current situation, this is the most important thing for us," added the Italian, whose side endured a dire VNL campaign, suffering nine defeats in 12 outings to finish 14th in the 18-team preliminary-round stand-

ings. Piazza's men are preparing for the upcoming Asian Championships, which will kick off Sept. 4 in Kitakyushu, Japan. As if Iran needed extra motivation to chase a fifth continental title in eight editions and avenge its 2023 final heartbreak against Japan on home soil, an Olympic qualification berth will also be on the line, with the champion securing direct qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games. Iran will get its Pool B campaign underway against New Zealand on the opening day of the competition, before taking on India on Sept. 6 and China on Sept. 9. The tournament will be followed by the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, which begin on Sept. 19, with Iran looking to secure a fourth successive men's volleyball gold at the multi-sport event.

FIBA U18 Asia Cup:

Iran beaten by Japan to finish sixth

Sports Desk

Iran settled for a sixth-place finish at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup after suffering an 88-83 defeat to Japan in Ahmedabad, India, on Sunday. Kaito Nakamura dropped a game-high 30 points to help Japan rally from a three-point halftime deficit and win the game. He scored 14 points in the fourth quarter alone, contributing to a 9-0 run that gave Japan a 69-58 advantage with 8:33 remaining on the clock. The lead grew to a game-high 13 points, at 82-69, approaching the final four minutes following an 11-0 run, with the Japanese forward scoring eight points during the surge. Mohammad-Yashar Kamal

Khaledi led Iran's scoring with 26 points, while Mohammad Shamsi and Amirreza Azari added 15 and 14, respectively. Iran secured comprehensive victories over Qatar (94-69) and Sri Lanka (110-42) before falling 96-58 to China to finish second in Group C and advance to the playoff round, where Ali Hassanpour's team defeated India 83-66 to set up a quarter-final clash with defending champion Australia. A 90-69 loss to Australia saw Iran miss out on qualification for next year's FIBA U19 World Cup and left the team to seek a consolation fifth-place finish. Iran bounced back to beat Chinese Taipei 105-84 in its first classification match on Saturday before falling short against Japan.

Valuable Ilkhanid stone inscription discovered in Nimvar

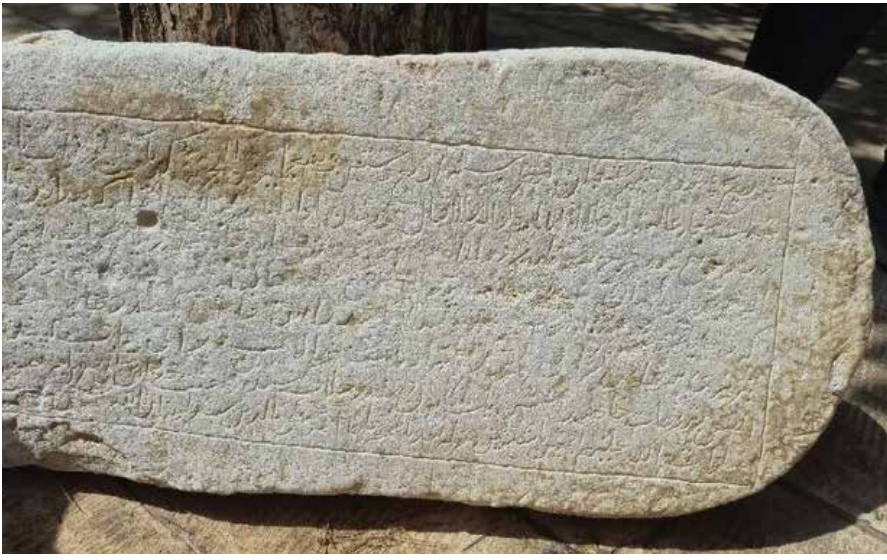
Iranica Desk

A valuable stone inscription dating to the Ilkhanid period was discovered during restoration work on the eastern entrance of Nimvar Grand Mosque in Mahallat, Markazi Province. Announcing the discovery, Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Mahallat, Mehdi La'lbar, said the inscription was found during restoration work on the mosque's eastern entrance and is of particular historical and research significance. The inscription measures approximately

85 by 34 centimeters and is 10 centimeters thick. Made of white travertine, it bears eight lines of carved text. Based on preliminary examinations, the artifact appears to be a stone endowment deed. However, a final assessment of its content and exact nature will require further specialized studies by experts and researchers in the field of epigraphy. Referring to the date inscribed on the stone, La'lbar said the inscription dates to 764 AH, indicating that it belongs to the Ilkhanid period. In cooperation with the board of trustees of Nimvar Grand Mosque and the Nim-

var Municipality, the historic stone was transferred to the Nimvar Municipal Museum for proper protection and preservation. The move is intended to prevent potential damage and provide an opportunity for further examination and introduction of the historic artifact. La'lbar emphasized the significance of the discovery, saying that the presence of numerous surviving Ilkhanid-era artifacts in Nimvar, together with the discovery of the inscription, points to the city's importance and prosperity during the Ilkhanid period. The artifact could provide valuable infor-

mation to researchers about the city's historical, cultural, religious and architectural background. He concluded by thanking the board of trustees of Nimvar Grand Mosque and the Nimvar Municipality for their cooperation, stressing that protecting historical artifacts discovered during construction and restoration projects requires the cooperation and vigilance of all institutions and citizens. He added that every historical artifact can serve as a valuable document for understanding the region's cultural identity and heritage.



● fararu.com

Iranica Desk

Unlike many of Iran's archaeological sites, where ancient monuments stand apart from the surrounding landscape, Taq-e Bostan was conceived as a harmonious blend of architecture and nature. Sassanid kings deliberately chose this location at the foot of a lush mountain beside a perennial spring — a setting admired not only for its natural beauty but also for its strategic position along one of the empire's most important trade and communication routes. The site's name reflects this unique character. Taq refers to the rock-cut arches carved into the cliff, while Bostan means garden, alluding to the verdant surroundings. Together, they evoke a landscape where monumental architecture and nature exist side by side — a defining feature that continues to captivate visitors today. Located about five kilometers from the center of Kermanshah, Taq-e Bostan is easily accessible and surrounded by several of the province's other historical attractions. Its convenient location and scenic setting have made it one of western Iran's leading tourist destinations. The Sassanid Empire is widely regarded as one of the most remarkable periods in Iranian history, distinguished by its artistic achievements, architectural innovation, and political influence. Sassanid rulers commissioned monumental rock reliefs to commemorate military victories, reinforce the legitimacy of their reign, and celebrate royal ceremonies. Taq-e Bostan represents one of the last and most accomplished examples of this artistic tradition. Historians believe its location along the ancient route linking the Iranian Plateau with Mesopotamia ensured that travelers, merchants, and foreign envoys would witness the grandeur of the Sassanid state firsthand. The nearby spring and fertile landscape also made the site an ideal setting

for royal ceremonies and hunting expeditions. These combined features transformed Taq-e Bostan from a commemorative monument into a powerful symbol of imperial authority. According to archaeological and historical research, most of the site's reliefs were carved between the

and distinctive crowns while holding swords. Pahlavi inscriptions beside the figures identify each ruler. What makes these carvings particularly remarkable is the extraordinary attention paid to detail. Rather than simply portraying the rulers' faces, Sassanid artists

presents him with the ring of kingship, and Anahita, the ancient goddess associated with water, fertility, and purity. More than a depiction of a royal ceremony, the composition reflects the Sassanid belief that divine approval legitimized the monarch's authority. Beneath this scene, Khos-

Historians believe these reliefs also carried a political message. By portraying the king as a successful hunter, they projected qualities such as courage, strength, and the ability to govern—virtues considered essential for an ideal ruler in Sassanid political culture. Despite the passage of

rounding site have been undertaken to safeguard this invaluable legacy. Today, Taq-e Bostan belongs not only to the people of Kermanshah or Iran but to the shared heritage of humanity. Every relief and inscription preserves a chapter of history, demonstrating how art can contin-

Today, the combination of towering mountains, flowing water, mature trees, and monumental rock reliefs creates a landscape unlike any other archaeological site in Iran. This close relationship between history and nature encourages visitors not only to admire the monuments but also to spend time enjoying the surrounding parkland. Taq-e Bostan welcomes visitors throughout the year, although spring and early autumn are generally considered the best seasons to explore the site. During these months, Kermanshah enjoys mild weather, and the lush greenery enhances the beauty of the ancient carvings. Even in summer, the spring and shaded green spaces provide a pleasant escape from the heat. Winter offers a dramatically different atmosphere, as snowfall occasionally blankets the Sassanid reliefs in white, creating striking scenery despite colder temperatures. Situated within the urban area of Kermanshah, Taq-e Bostan is easily reached and can be combined with visits to other cultural and historical attractions, including the city's traditional bazaar, Tekyeh Biglarbeygi, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk, and several local museums as part of a one-day or multi-day itinerary. Taq-e Bostan is far more than a collection of ancient rock carvings. It is a living testament to the artistic brilliance and political power of the Sassanid Empire, where history, architecture, culture, and nature converge to present one of the most compelling chapters of Iran's past. Every relief tells a story of power, religious belief, artistic mastery, and the daily life of a civilization that once ruled much of the ancient world. Together with its ever-flowing spring and tranquil natural setting, these monuments offer visitors an experience that extends beyond archaeology, forging a meaningful connection between the past and the present.

Taq-e Bostan is Kermanshah's timeless treasure



● blogsazan.com



row II is shown mounted on his famous horse, Shabdiz. The horse is portrayed in full armor with meticulously carved harnesses and military equipment, making it one of the finest representations of a horse in ancient Iranian art. Scholars have long praised the relief for its remarkable sense of movement, anatomical precision, and attention to detail. The interior walls of the Great Ivan contain some of the most celebrated artistic works of the Sassanid period. They depict Khosrow II participating in royal boar and deer hunts, though the carvings were intended to convey far more than scenes of recreation. The king appears surrounded by attendants, musicians, rowers, elephants, horses, and soldiers. With exceptional skill, the sculptors captured the movement of animals and boats, the king's archery, and the energy of the hunt so vividly that the scenes appear almost alive.



centuries, Taq-e Bostan remains one of Iran's most significant historical landmarks. It is not only a favorite destination for tourists but also an important site for researchers specializing in history, archaeology, architecture, and art. Because the reliefs are exposed to the elements, they face constant threats from rainfall, temperature fluctuations, air pollution, and natural erosion. Preserving the carvings and continuously monitoring their condition has therefore become a major responsibility for Iran's cultural heritage authorities. In recent years, restoration projects, scientific assessments, and improvements to the sur-

ue to speak across nearly seventeen centuries. If the Sassanid reliefs are the soul of Taq-e Bostan, its crystal-clear spring is undoubtedly its beating heart. Water emerges continuously from the mountainside before flowing into a natural pool that refreshes the surrounding landscape. Many scholars believe the perennial spring was one of the principal reasons Sassanid rulers selected this location. In ancient Iranian culture, water held profound spiritual significance, symbolizing life, prosperity, and divine blessing. Its presence beside royal ceremonies would have reinforced these sacred associations.

fourth and seventh centuries CE during the reigns of rulers including Ardashir II, Shapur III, and Khosrow II (Khosrow Parviz). Today, these carvings serve as some of the most valuable visual records of ancient Iranian clothing, weaponry, coronation rituals, and stone-carving techniques. One of the first monuments visitors encounter is the Small Ivan. Although modest in size compared with the rest of the complex, it holds exceptional historical importance. Inside the chamber stand the carved figures of two Sassanid kings — Shapur II and Shapur III. Both monarchs are depicted wearing elaborate royal garments

carefully rendered the folds of their garments, intricate jewelry, and elaborate crowns. These details have made the Small Ivan an invaluable source for understanding Sassanid costume and artistic craftsmanship. Adjacent to the Small Ivan stands the Great Ivan, the largest and most impressive section of the complex. Constructed during the reign of Khosrow II, one of the Sassanid Empire's most celebrated monarchs, it is widely regarded as a masterpiece of pre-Islamic Iranian rock carving. The upper section of the ivan features Khosrow II's coronation scene. The king stands between two figures: Ahura Mazda, who



Iran marks national Physician's Day with tributes to Avicenna

Social Desk

Iran commemorated Physician's Day on Sunday with ceremonies honoring Avicenna, the 11th-century Iranian physician and philosopher, as newly qualified doctors gathered at his tomb in Hamadan to take their professional oath, IRNA reported.

August 22 is recognized in Iran as Avicenna's birthday and is designated as Physician's Day in the country's official calendar. At a ceremony at his tomb, doctors, academics and medical graduates gathered to pay tribute to the scholar. Newly qualified doctors pledged to "use their knowledge and abilities to serve the people and protect the health of Iranian society."

Culture Minister Abbas Salehi described Avicenna as "one of the most comprehensive and brilliant peaks of reasoning in the Iranian-Islamic tradition" and "an open horizon and a firm

logic for intellectual life."

"Avicenna should be studied in today's context, in connection with culture, within diplomacy and in response to the needs of today's world," Salehi said in a message marking the occasion. Salehi said Avicenna represented "one of the highest embodiments of the well-rounded human being", whose work brought together philosophy, medicine, logic, mathematics and literature. He said the world today needed Avicenna's broad outlook more than ever to "build bridges between disciplines, languages and human experiences and see the world in its meaningful entirety."

Avicenna, known in the West by his Latin name, was born in about 980 in Kharmathen near Bukhara, in present-day Uzbekistan, and died in Hamadan in 1037 at the age of 58.

He produced about 450 books and treatises, of which around



Medical students toss their caps up during a ceremony in Hamdan, western Iran to mark Physician's Day on August 23, 2026.

● TASNIM

240 survive, including works on philosophy and medicine. His 'Book of Healing' was an encyclopedia of philosophy and science, while 'The Canon of Medicine' became a major medical reference.

The Canon was translated into European languages from the 12th century onward and remained an important medical textbook in Western universities until about two centuries ago. Avicenna studied in Balkh and was taught by Abdullah Natteli. He was already regarded as highly knowledgeable in the sciences of his time by the age of 18 and began writing in his early twenties.

His later years were marked by political upheaval. After



Mas'ud of Ghazni's assault on Isfahan, Avicenna left the city

with Ala al-Dawla and traveled toward Hamadan. He fell se-

riously ill during the journey and died there.

Iranian documentary Baby Digital wins Pasolini award in Italy



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian documentary Baby Digital, which ex-

amines the effects of excessive screen use on children's development, has won the 2026

Pasolini Award at the Lucania Film Festival in Italy.

Directed by Mohammad Ahmadi, the documentary was made with the Institute for Cognitive and Brain Sciences (ICBS) at Shahid Beheshti University (SBU) and the Center for the Treatment of Autistic Disorders (CTAD), IRNA reported on Sunday.

The film looks at the effects of prolonged and early exposure to mobile phones, tablets and television on chil-

dren's neurological development, including cognitive and executive functions, communication and social skills, behavior and emotional regulation, attention and interaction with their surroundings.

A key focus is the difference between autism spectrum disorder and some developmental and behavioral problems linked to excessive exposure to digital media.

The documentary stresses that develop-

mental disorders require a specialist and comprehensive assessment and that "one cannot judge the presence or absence of a developmental disorder solely on the basis of how much a child uses a mobile phone, tablet or television".

The film also highlights the importance of a child's age, the length and pattern of digital media use, and the extent to which screen time replaces real-life interaction, play and

physical activity.

Professor Hamidreza Pouretmad, founder of ICBS and CTAD, Dr. Saeid Sadeghi, head of the Psybera Lab, and Dr. Monireh Mansouri, head of the Animal Neurodevelopmental Laboratory, were among the specialists involved in the film's scientific development, along with the CTAD team.

The project brought together scientific research, clinical experience and documentary storytelling, its makers

said.

The award marks an international success for the film and its production team and offers an opportunity to highlight Iran's scientific and clinical work on children's neurological development, autism and digital media.

Baby Digital was produced to raise awareness among Iranian families about the effects of excessive digital media use and has been made available to the public free of charge.

US-Iran deadlock...

An offensive move could also push Iran's adversary toward setting lower-level targets than it might otherwise choose based on its assessment of Iran's capabilities.

The second scenario could be for Iran to use this opportunity to shift the situation toward greater dominance of diplomatic tools and to secure concessions through diplomacy. This will depend on what capabilities Iran has, as well as the state of its vital and strategic reserves and its defensive preparedness.

Purpose of US pressure policy

The new US blockade and sanctions are not intended to achieve a complete victory for Washington. Given the volume of sanctions imposed on Iran over several decades, the Americans know that sanctions alone cannot enable the US to achieve its objectives inside Iran. Sanctions will have some effect in weakening Iran's domestic capabilities. Given their domestic and electoral circumstances, and their desire to rebuild their strength, the Americans will increase sanctions, economic pressure and the blockade as much as they can, and then, after ensuring that they have safely got through the

elections, they will assess what types of attacks Iran can withstand. Even under these circumstances, they do not necessarily seek to change Iran's behavior and force it into negotiations. On the contrary, they seek to use this period, when they need both to moderate the war and to achieve their domestic objectives, to keep pressure on Iran so that they can build on that pressure and better achieve their goals in the next war.

Therefore, for several reasons, Iran is compelled to act offensively in response to US actions in the region. One is the sharp decline in oil sales as a result of the blockade, which is placing economic pressure on Iran. Another is the US effort to get oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran seeks to establish its own particular security order for the strait. One other issue is the threat of attacks on Iran's infrastructure by the US, which Iran threatening US infrastructure in response. Yet another is the formation of alliances that can effectively be interpreted as support for US and Israeli operations. Alliances such as the one signed between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey are not formed against Israel because, in that case, they would have to

stand alongside Iran. They are therefore aimed merely at controlling tensions, although their effectiveness and performance remain questionable. All of these factors are effectively pushing Iran toward creating deterrence through offensive action.

How China may act

The absence of a balance of power in the Persian Gulf will cause these tensions to continue, and powerful countries with stronger infrastructure will have greater resilience in war. At the same time, moving the war away from a conventional regional conflict toward asymmetric warfare will help countries with less capacity and resilience. In this equation, countries involved elsewhere in tensions, including China, are assessing where it would make sense, in terms of costs and benefits, for them to enter the struggle of changing the regional order.

Statements by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian show that the Chinese do not yet believe the Americans can fully establish the balance and pattern of power distribution they want. If they feel that the situation is moving in that direction, and if China is considered a rational

actor, it will most likely move in through various means: first in the diplomatic and legal arenas, then through military and security support, and, if the situation becomes more sensitive, potentially through military intervention. This is because a change in the Persian Gulf regional order would have a profound and continuous impact on West Asia and the international order. The maximum share of power will belong to whoever can control the vital flows of data, materials, energy, human resources and money and finance. The Strait of Hormuz is truly a unique global asset that affects all five of these major flows to varying degrees. For example, its share of energy flows is close to 20%, while instantaneous financial clearing is affected through the presence of cables, at a level of around 50% to 60%.

For now, however, the Chinese may step into the game in order to exercise control through mediation. As is known, Pakistan is acting as a mediator in the negotiations as China's representative. While also taking its own interests into account, the country that is supporting Pakistan's mediation efforts to scale back tensions over the Strait of Hormuz through diplomatic and political means is China.

Iran must be able to convince China, which is currently pursuing passive resistance during this transition in the international system, that the system may be moving toward the emergence of a new order and once that order becomes institutionalized, other countries will no longer be able to adopt an expansionist foreign-policy posture and will have to go back to a state of self-restraint. Otherwise, given China's interests, it is highly unlikely that Beijing would want to provide strategic assistance as one ally to another.

It is important to note that China, as a trading partner, is already providing assistance in response to the three fronts that the US has opened against Iran. For example, in response to economic blockade and sanctions pressure, China, as a country that purchases more than 80% of Iran's exported oil and has designated independent refineries and ports for this purpose, is effectively supporting Iran. Diplomatically, China is also supporting Iran through the positions it takes against condemnatory resolutions at the UN Security Council. In the military sphere, too, China has so far provided limited military support to Iran.