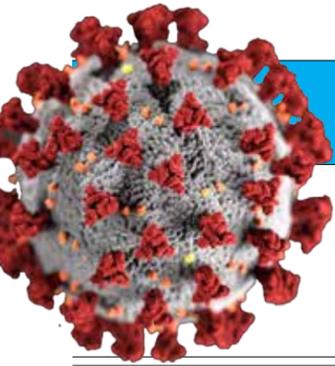


## Iran registers COVID-19 death-free day



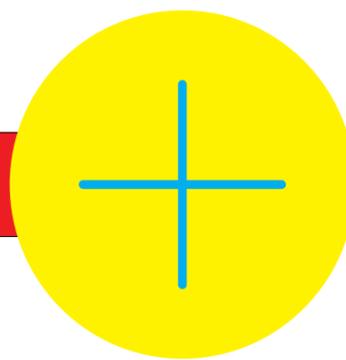
An Iranian nurse patiently treating COVID-19 patients.

**IRNA** – The number of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in Iran stayed unchanged at 144,633 with another death-free day over the past 24 hours, Iran's Health Ministry announced on Saturday.

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# End of Qatar's football project or just the start?

**REUTERS** – The muffled anger from the fans was evident outside Al Thumama Stadium after Qatar's 3-1 loss to Senegal on Friday and hours later they were out of the World Cup to become the second host country to suffer that fate after South Africa in 2010.

Qatar has prepared for the finals since getting the hosting rights in 2010 by spending a reported \$200 billion to put on a "gathering for all mankind", as the title of the opening ceremony said, but it was all over for the team in 180 minutes.

"This whole team should be changed," a Qatar fan told Reuters outside Al Thumama stadium, without revealing her name.

In the tournament's opening match, the 2019 Asian Cup winners did not live up to expectations and conceded twice in the first half to lose 2-0 against Ecuador after a disappointing and shaky performance, with lots of fans leaving before the end.

The team may have paid the price for the Qatar FA's decision not to allow national team players to feature for their clubs in the local league this season and to devote themselves solely to preparations for the big event.

At times, fatigue and nerves were evident in Qatar's performances, as in the first minutes of the opening match when goalkeeper Saad AlSheeb would have cost his team an early goal had it not been for the intervention of VAR.

Qatar did not have a shot on target against Ecuador and that continued in the first half against African champions Senegal.

Some fans expected coach Felix Sanchez to make changes in the second half against Ecuador to help his team get back into the match but he only switched two players midway through the half and a couple near the end when it was too late.

Sanchez said after the Ecuador match that nerves had got the better of his team and that games at the World Cup were completely different to any other matches, whether

friendlies or official ones such as the Asian Cup final.

Football project

On the eve of the crucial Senegal game, Sanchez said the team had prepared psychologically for the possibility of an early exit from the tournament.

"We are a small country, the smallest to host the World Cup, and we are aware of the fact that we may be knocked out early, but that doesn't mean the end of the football project," he said.

"I am confident that Qatar will continue their project to maintain a strong team, compete and qualify for the upcoming tournaments," he added.

Against Senegal, Sanchez made three changes to the starting lineup, including bringing in goalkeeper Meshaal Barsham.

Once again, individual errors shattered Qatar's hopes when defender Boualem Khoukhi's fluffed effort to clear the ball allowed Boulaye Dia to pounce and the striker rattled the ball into the net at the near post to give Senegal a halftime lead.

What Sanchez warned about before the match regarding a lack of concentration happened when Senegal's Famara Diedhou netted with a glancing header from a corner just after the break.

Qatar at least got on the scoresheet in the 78th minute when substitute Mohammed Muntari fired home his country's first ever goal at a World Cup on their debut in the tournament.

But six minutes later Senegal's Bamba Dieng swept home a pass from fellow substitute Iliman Ndiaye for the African side's third goal, consigning Qatar to the bottom of Group A.

When the Netherlands later drew 1-1 with Ecuador, it was the end of Qatar's hopes in the World Cup. They have one match remaining against the Dutch on Tuesday.

Qatar will seek to defend the Asian Cup when they stage the finals, although no date has been set for that tournament yet after China withdrew as hosts due to the COVID situation.

The question remains though as to whether it's the end of the Qatari football project or just the start.



JENNIFER LORENZINI/REUTERS

## Ceramics from Ilkhanid Period

The exploratory incursions of the Ilkhanids (Mongols) into Central Asia and Iran around 1219-20 were cataclysmic, especially for Khorasan and lands of the east. Great cities such as Balkh, Herat and Neyshabur are said to have been entirely destroyed and their inhabitants massacred. Terrifying reports of piles of severed heads spread further panic.

Later chroniclers report staggering numbers of slain whose exaggeration reflects the fear and horror experienced at the time.

Kashan, a minor town but the major pottery centre during the pre-Mongol period, was apparently spared the slaughter, pillage and destruction experienced elsewhere, but the effect on the manufacture and trade of luxury ceramics was marked.

This is clearly seen in those pieces dated by inscriptions. Dozens of vessels and tiles survive for the two decades up to 1220, but then abruptly cease: Less than a handful of dated vessels are known from the early 1220s; then there is a gap for some forty years. Tile-making seems to have fared better, as a distraught population seemingly sought some solace and redemption in the renovation and decoration of holy shrines. Individual dated lustre tiles, each indicating a scheme of tiling of dozens

or even hundreds of tiles now lost, are scattered through the next four decades. Three substantial schemes date to after the Mongol incursions: The earliest to 1225 from Qom, a large mihrab to 1226, relocated in the 15th century from an unknown building to the Masjid-e Maydan in Kashan, and another large multi-tile mihrab installed in Mashhad. They show that the Kashan workshops were still able to produce high-quality work, and that funds for their acquisition were forthcoming from a traumatised people.

### The Impact of China

The two Mongol regimes who ruled Iran (the Ilkhans) and China (the Yuan) were related through their joint descent from the great Mongol warlord Genghis Khan.

This familial relationship eased communication and trade between them, and for the first time substantial quantities of luxury Chinese goods arrived in Iran, figured silks, books, porcelain and more. Iranian potters took heed of these new fashions, and like their fellow artists involved in the illumination and illustration of books, the weaving of textiles or decoration of metalwork, adopted new motifs and new approaches to ornamentation. We suddenly find lotus flowers, phoenixes and dragons done in a Far-Eastern manner, and we see animals cut off by the frame of the image. All these are sure signs of an Ilkhanid date. Chinese glazes and shapes were regularly copied too, and this heralds a change from the delicate and refined vessels of pre-Mongol date to more robust, thicker-walled pieces: Pierced decoration and translucency are now rarely found. Chinese celadons had long been imported into the Middle East but few had reached Iran before this period — now a flood arrived, and the much admired greyish-green colour and the patterns were copied using an opaque greenish or turquoise glaze. A low dish with flat rim reveals its Chinese celadon prototype in the small uplift at the rim's edge, though the original glaze colour is not replicated here. Gently flaring bowls, with painted indications of lotus petal patterns on the exterior, can also be traced back to Chinese celadons which have incised or carved petals.

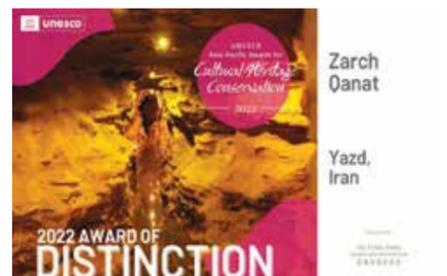
There are other changes which may have been prompted by Chinese practice, albeit more subtly so. A striking difference between pre-Mongol and Ilkhanid pottery is the adoption of a sombre colour scheme, to the extent that the great scholar Arthur Lane dubbed it 'the age of blue-and black'.



• 'IRAN: Five Millennia of Art and Culture' (Berlin Museum of Islamic Art)

## Iran's heritages win 2022 UNESCO awards

**UNESCO BANGKOK** – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced Yazd's Sadoughi House and Zarch Qanat among the winners of this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.



Yazd's Sadoughi House received the Award of Merit and Zarch Qanat won the Award of Distinction during a ceremony held in Thailand.

The historical house, dating back to more than 300 years ago, was mended a while back and now is called the Cultural House of Shahid Sadoughi. The Qajar-era house is constructed based on architectural style of Yazd with clay and mud materials. Its thick clay walls that act as heat and cold insulation and provide the residents with pleasant air in summer and warm air in winter. Dating back to the pre-Islamic Era, the Zarch Qanat is the longest one in Iran and the world. It is the life-giving artery of Zarch city in Yazd. It made the area habitable by providing the desert-crucial element of water to the people and farmers.

The Zarch Qanat is a plain one with a length of 100km. Its mother well is 90 meters deep and has more than 2,000 well shafts. Zarch is a city located 15km west of Yazd in central Iran.

At the 40th UNESCO World Heritage Summit held in Istanbul in July 2016, the Zarch Qanat, along with 10 other Iranian qanats, was registered on the World Heritage List.

"The awards are able to give people a sense of pride and ownership of their own heritage. It is encouraging to see the increased number of entries received this year, given that we are still in recovery period from the global COVID-19 pandemic. This year's submissions have once again brought up interesting discussions regarding the trends in cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region. We are seeing a greater attention to cultural landscapes including heritage infrastructure systems that are very compatible with a sustainable development approach to our cities and rural areas," said Chief of Culture Unit at UNESCO Bangkok Feng Jing.

Thirteen projects from six countries – Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Nepal, and Thailand – have been acknowledged for awards by an international jury in this year's awards program. Jury deliberations were carried out in November 2022, when members reviewed a total of 50 entries from 11 countries across the Asia-Pacific region.

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation has been supported by a partnership between UNESCO and Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation since 2021. Under this strategic partnership, Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation is supporting five awards cycles (2021-2025) and an accompanying series of specially tailored capacity-building activities amplifying the regional impact of the awards program.