

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Al-Aqsa Storm: Palestinian Resistance Humiliates Israel

*In a complex and surprising operation, Hamas killed more than a hundred Zionists and captured dozens*

*Hezbollah says the operation is a "decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalization with Israel".*



*"For the first time, the resistance movement decided to react against the occupiers and the military," a professor at Qatar University says.*

"Today, the wrath of our nation and righteous fighters is boiling over. This is your day to make the enemy understand that its time has come to an end," Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif stated.

### General Soleimani the most suitable international peace symbol: Iran FM

TEHRAN - Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Iran's Foreign Minister, has shown reaction after the Norwegian Nobel Committee gave the Nobel Peace Prize to an Iranian woman who has been convicted of multiple instances of law-breaking and plot against the ruling establishment.

"The most deserving symbol of international peace was the self-sacrificing general, who fought terrorism and the most violent criminals for two decades, and guaranteed the region and the world's security," the top diplomat wrote in a message on X on Friday.

He was alluding to Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top anti-terror commander.

General Soleimani spearheaded the Islamic Republic's military advice to Iraq and Syria for several years, beginning in 2014, while the Arab countries grappled with an unrelenting terror campaign unleashed by the Takfiri Daesh group. ▶ Page 2

### Report

### Behind the scenes of clear hostilities to Quran

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei said on October 3 that insults to the Quran cannot weaken it, yet the doers ruin themselves instead. He also called the Quran a book of wisdom, knowledge, and awakening which would only act as a threat to corrupt powers.

"Today, the hostility toward Islam is clearer than ever. There was hostility in the past, [but] today it is clear. An ignorant example of this hostility, which is seen today, is the desecration of the Holy Quran. You see a foolish, ignorant person doing this in public with the support of a government. What this shows is that the problem is not just what we are seeing in the open. It is not just about insulting the Holy Quran. They think they can weaken the Quran with these kinds of acts. They are mistaken. They are ruining themselves," said Ayatollah Khamenei on Tuesday.

### Insulting the Quran under the guise of freedom of speech

Freedom of speech is literally a hot topic in the world; some countries, under the guise of freedom of speech, allow insults to Islamic sanctities, ignoring the most basic morals.

Sweden and some other countries, under the pretext of freedom of speech, have permitted the preparators to insult Islam's sacred book, which has hurt the feelings of Muslims.

Their actions are absolutely disgusting; they desecrate the Quran and insult Islamic sanctities. ▶ Page 3

### Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee chairmen hold talks in Baku

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev held talks as the chairmen of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee in Baku on Friday to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the two sides negotiated over promoting cooperation, border facilities, joint rail and road projects, and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as part of developing mutual relations, the portal of the Iranian Transport Ministry reported.

The sides also discussed the details of an agreement to build a railroad passing through Iran that will link Azerbaijan with Nakhchivan. ▶ Page 4



### Freestylers win three golds at Hangzhou

TEHRAN - Younes Emami, Hassan Yazdani and Amirhossein Zare claimed three gold medals in the 2022 Asian Games on Saturday.

Emami defeated Japan's Kirin Kinoshita 9-0 in the final bout of the men's 74kg. He had defeated Kyrgyzstan's Orozbek Toktomambetov 7-2, China's Feng Lu 10-2 and Tajikistan's Magomet Evloev 9-3 on his way to the final.

Yazdani defeated his Indian rival Deepak Punia 10-0 in the men's 86Kg final bout. He had defeated Kyrgyzstan's Mukhammad Abdullaev 10-0, Dovletmyrat Orazgylyjov of Turkmenistan 10-0 and Mongolia's Byambasurengiin Bat-Erdene 10-0 in his previous matches.

And Zare beat Mongolia's Lkhagvagerel Munkhtur 7-0 in the men's 125Kg final bout. He had defeated Pakistan's Zaman Anwar 10-0, China's Buheerdun 10-0 and Kazakhstan's Yusup Batirmurzaev 11-0 on his way to the final match.

### Children's film festival kicks off in Isfahan

TEHRAN -The 35th edition of the International Film Festival for Children and Youth opened in the central Iranian city of Isfahan on Friday evening.

The ceremony was attended by Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, the Governor of Isfahan Seyyed Reza Mousavi, the Mayor of Isfahan Ali Qassemzadeh, and the secretary of the festival Majid Zeinolabedin as well as a large number of children and youth.

"The festival offers a unique platform for Iranian children to unite and collectively aspire towards achieving great heights," the minister said during the opening ceremony.

The education and development of the new generation of artists must include a fundamental incorporation of culture and art in their learning journey, he added. ▶ Page 8

## TEHRAN PAPERS

## A gaffe that revealed a disgrace

*In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in the yesterday's Iranian newspapers.*

Kayhan analyzed this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner and wrote: After declaring Narges Mohammadi as this year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, we saw congratulatory messages pour in from several Western politicians who seek to plague Iran with different seditions. The messages came from the Israeli intelligence minister, officials in the U.S., figures like Macron as well as dignitaries in NATO. But some Iranians who consider themselves to be sympathetic towards the people of Iran and claim to be after constructive reforms have also congratulated Mohammadi on the highly politicized prize. What seems to be interesting however is how some foreign media tried to declare the news. Some outlets were so unfamiliar with Mohammadi that they mistakenly posted the pictures of an Iranian actress that shares the same name and introduced her as the winner of this year's Nobel peace prize. This goes to show that the 2023 Nobel peace prize was given to Mohammadi in order to help the riots of last year stay in the news. It can be seen as a complete political step taken to harm the Islamic Republic. This should encourage some people living inside Iran to think whether they would like to continue agreeing with the policies of Western states and Israel.

## Iran: The alleged threat of the Zionists

In a note, the Iran newspaper discussed the importance of paying attention to the interfering factors in the Iranian-Saudi relationship. It wrote: Tel Aviv, which for years considered Iran an existential threat and Saudi Arabia a potential partner, has been seeking to form official ties with Riyadh under the pretext of combatting Iran. The restoration of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia which are two of the region's biggest rivals came as a complete shock to Israeli politicians. Therefore Western-Zionist parties that had been waiting for a normalization of ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel and were expecting Iran to become isolated found themselves facing a new approach by the Kingdom which has now decided to open its arms to Iran and defy all predictions. The reconciliation deal between the two countries was also a big disappointment to Netanyahu who thought he would be able to normalize ties with Bin Salman in the near future. The diplomatic achievements of Iran have forced Israelis to scrap their old vicious plans and come up with new ones. The regime has been trying to highlight unusual events relating to Iran and Saudi Arabia in order to prevent a full thaw from taking effect. For instance, Israeli-controlled media focused a great deal on a soccer match between Iran and Saudi Arabia that was canceled last week. All Israeli predictions have proven to be incorrect and now the regime is left with no real and concrete plans.

## Giving Noble Prize to a lawbreaker is 'politically motivated', Iran says

TEHRAN- Iran has denounced the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize being given to an Iranian woman who has been found guilty of repeatedly breaking laws as a "spiteful and politically motivated" action.

Nasser Kanaani, the spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said in a statement on Friday that the political action taken by the Nobel Committee was consistent with "interventionist and anti-Iran policies of some European countries."

The decision of the committee, he continued, was another link in the chain of the West's pressure against Iran and would only serve to strengthen the Iranian people's resolve to follow an independent course of action.

The awarding of the prize to Mohammadi, according to Kanaani, was a "disappointing deviation from its initial objectives."

Additionally, he attacked the Nobel Committee for making "incorrect and false claims" about what happened in Iran, which revealed "some European governments' approach to fabricate information and produce confusing and deviant narratives about internal developments in Iran."

Narges Mohammadi, 51, received the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday in Oslo in a political gesture. The Norwegian Nobel Committee said that she has been battling "against the oppression of women" in Iran and to "promote

## Siasat-e-Rooz: Iran's consultations to resolve the Caucasus crisis

In a commentary, Siasat-e-Rooz explained the strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the Caucasus crisis and quoted Kamal Kharazi, the head of the Strategic Council of Foreign Relations, as saying: Now that the Karabakh issue has been resolved, there is no more justification for requesting another corridor. Of course, countries can provide their communication routes to their neighbors in the form of transit cooperation, and such cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia is also defensible, but it is not necessary to establish such communication through threat and occupation. Since the Islamic Republic of Iran is aware of the importance of connecting Nakhchivan to the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it is even trying to provide such a connection from the territory of Iran to the Republic of Azerbaijan, and therefore it is working with Azerbaijan to build a 55-kilometer road and railway from the village of Agband in the Zangilan area in the south of Azerbaijan and near the border of Iran and Armenia, up to the city of Urdobad in Nakhchivan. Iran and Azerbaijan have reached an agreement that is being followed up. Since the Islamic Republic of Iran wants to establish peace and calm in the Caucasus region, it has been demanding that a meeting be held between the countries in the region and it especially has a great emphasis on the 3+3 format. This would help resolve disputes in the Caucasus region and create sustainable peace.

## Shargh: The new statement of the European troika

In an article, Shargh discussed the new statement of the European troika and said: Josep Borrell, the head of the European Union's foreign policy, declared in a statement that the European troika has no plans to cancel the sanctions against Iran, which were supposed to expire on October 18. Borrell has received a letter from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of three countries, England, France and Germany, in which they informed him about the implementation of Iran's obligations under the JCPOA. This European official, without referring to the Western side's disloyalties, repeated some projections and said that the foreign ministries of the three countries emphasize that Iran has not adhered to its obligations under the JCPOA since 2019 and they believe that this issue has not been resolved through the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism. "After many consultations, I realized that this issue remained unresolved due to differences of opinion," he said. At the same time, the participants emphasized their determination to find a diplomatic solution within the JCPOA framework. Borrell also said that he remains fully committed to continuing all possible efforts in resuming the full implementation of the JCPOA.

human rights and freedom for all."

Mohammadi has spent a large portion of her adult life in and out of jail, and she is now incarcerated in Tehran's Evin prison.

In 2016, a court of appeals in Iran upheld Mohammadi's 16-year sentence for conspiring to act against national security, spreading false information against the government, and founding and leading an unlawful association.

She was freed in 2020 but returned to jail in 2021 on charges that she had disseminated false information about the Islamic establishment.

According to Kanaani, as one of the founding members of the United Nations, Iran has always prioritized the objective of fulfilling peace at regional and global levels and has always worked to foster the culture of peace.

However, he noted, Iran never wants peace and its realization to be abused.

He emphasized Iran's goal of establishing global peace and justice via efficient and friendly international cooperation and peaceful cohabitation.

The spokesman asked the committee to avoid assisting in the implementation of some Western nations' false policies and instead give the Nobel Peace Prize to persons or organizations that "sincerely seek to promote the culture of peace and justice in the world."

## General Soleimani the most suitable international peace symbol: Iran FM

From page 1 ▶ The advice was vital in the 2017 victory over Daesh, which put a stop to the group's plans to wreak havoc over the whole region and well beyond. But in early 2020, a drone attack by the U.S. assassinated the general in close proximity to Baghdad International Airport.

Tens of millions of people from Iran and Iraq attended his burial in record numbers, and Amir Abdollahian said that this, together with the outpouring of sympathy from around the world after his martyrdom, "amounted to the most splendid and lasting peace prize in history."

Narges Mohammadi, an Iranian woman, was given the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize earlier on Friday by the Norwegian committee.

Mohammadi has spent a large portion of her adult life in and out of jail, and she is now incarcerated in Tehran's Evin prison.

Mohammadi was given a 16-year term in 2016 by an Iranian court of appeals after being found guilty of



conspiring to act against the country's security, spreading false information about it, and founding and leading an unlawful group.

She was freed in 2020 but returned to jail in 2021 after being accused of disseminating misinformation about Iran's Islamic establishment.

But according to the Norwegian committee, she had been battling "against the oppression of women" in Iran and "promote human rights

and freedom for all."

Entitlement of the prize to Mohammadi was received by the cultish Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), which is responsible for killing around 12,000 Iranian civilians and officials in violent attacks since the 1979 victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

In a Persian-language post on X, Israeli Intelligence Minister Gila Gamliel said he was "pleased" with her receiving the honor and added,

"We are victorious together."

Meanwhile, Iran's top human rights official maintained that the award had nothing to do with sustaining and developing global peace and creating a spirit of brotherhood among nations.

"This political reward has rather turned into a means of financial support for the illegal activities of some of its winners," said Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights.

He said those who were truly deserving a peace award were the Iranian nation, the victims of the West's unilateral sanctions, and the victims of the 1980-88 war waged by the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein against the Islamic Republic with the support of the West.

Therefore, Mohammadi, whom Gharibabadi referred to as "a criminal and a lawbreaker," and whose acceptance of the award has been warmly applauded by the MKO and the head of Israeli intelligence, did not deserve a peace prize.

## General says Iran ready to tackle terrorism with more vigor



TEHRAN - Major General Mohammad Baqeri, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, has stated that Iran is prepared to wage a more forceful war against terrorism and its causes.

The Iranian general made the remarks as he sent messages on Friday to Syrian General Abdul Karim Mahmoud Ibrahim, the chief of general staff of the Syrian Army, and Minister of Defense Ali Mahmoud Abbas.

General Baqeri's statements came after a drone strike on Thursday on a military academy graduation ceremony in central Homs Province killed at least 89 troops and civilians and wounded 277 others.

He called the attack a "great crime," sympathized with the families of the victims, and prayed for a speedy recovery of the injured.

The terrorist act exposed the wicked, criminal, and anti-human essence of Takfiri terrorists, as well as the scandal of their supporters, the top general remarked.

The instrumental and political use of terrorist groups will not be able to weaken the will of nations, instead, it will make them more determined to continue resisting until the elimination of terrorists and the failure of their supporters, the general pointed out.

He added that the governments that support these terrorists must be held accountable for "this great crime."

## Iran and BRICS in imagination of Western-minded!

By Abdol Rahim Ansari

TEHRAN-On September 25, the Middle East Institute (MEI) published an article titled, "Will BRICS membership recast Iran's foreign policy?," evaluating Iran's membership in BRICS from the point of view of Mahmood Sariolghalam.

Mahmood Sariolghalam, a professor and one of the advisers of the former president of Iran, Hassan Rouhani, is known as an extreme Western-minded analyst in Iran.

However, the best way to cool down after a tiring day is to read the articles written by Westernized thinkers against their homeland's interests and in support of the U.S. and Europe.

These followers, with superficial arguments, want to make the West a hero at any cost and weaken the challenges that the West faces. Whether such an approach has benefits for them or is only related to their mental dependence is not the subject of this article's main point, but it is funny that they have become more Catholic than the Pope. That is, Westerners themselves sometimes admit their failures, but their followers narrate the facts in a different way. Meanwhile, Iranian Western-minded analysts are in the forefront and despite being in the minority, by using the freedom of speech in the Islamic Republic of Iran, voice their beliefs.

Sariolghalam believes that Iran's membership in BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) cannot tackle Iran's economic woes because the secondary sanctions of the United States place enormous limitations on Iran's economic interactions coupled with Iran's refusal to sign the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). So, Iran's international financial transactions do not and cannot operate according to global procedures and standards.

The author points to Iran's "economic malaise, and economic mismanagement". This is while since Ebrahim Raisi took office as president, Iran has managed to grow economically, achieve great economic revenues, and export more oils through close cooperation with many countries including

those party to the SCO and BRICS.

Referring to Iran's policies, the author says "Iran has declared that its political identity is contrary to that of the Western world. Its leadership has articulated an interest in maintaining commercial and technological relations with Western countries, but when it comes to politics and culture, all decisions and operations are molded by local tradition and mired in inertia."

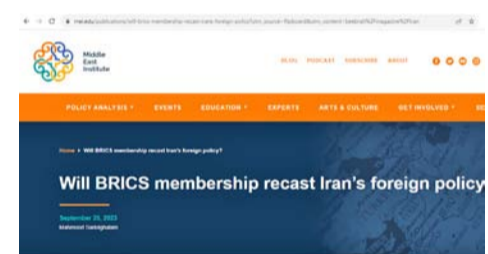
"Fear of overwhelming American and European soft power by the top echelons of such states is thus an essential factor in their decision to differentiate between commercial and non-commercial relations with Western countries. Consequently, to ensure a tighter grip on domestic control in China, Russia, and Iran, keeping the United States at bay is a priority for regime security," the author wrote as the reasons for Iran, China, and Russia's gathering together.

What has brought these three countries closer is more of the concern about the U.S. and security considerations rather than the connections that are related to their identity, according to the author.

To address the analysis on the MEI website, it can be said that nearly all countries have put trade and technology cooperation on their agenda like Iran and its Eastern allies, but in the case of culture and politics, it is the traditional structure of each country that adjusts relations with others in line with independence, security, and historical identity.

It is quite natural for great and civilized nations to resist the destructive cultural and political influences of the United States; no wise leader would allow the identity, independence and security of his country to fall under the conspiracies of the West, even if the westernized thinkers burn with anger!

Referring to the heterogeneity among the BRICS member countries, the author said that due to the lack of internal harmony among the BRICS members, Iran probably belongs to the camp that is afraid of the United States! He says "BRICS, like



Related By Region

the SCO, seems to be more of a reflection of a political temperament than a structure for building consensus and collective action. Both organizations are fundamentally shaped by Chinese and Russian political motives to project power outside of America's global reach, however ceremonial and ineffectual that may be. Neither organization enjoys internal harmony and commonality of purpose among its members."

Insisting on the political nature of BRICS, stressing the heterogeneity and the fractions on the BRICS alliances, ignoring the growing economic and security interactions within the group, along with closing eyes on the de-dollarization and reduction of the global dominance of the United States are the outcomes of the mind of an extremely Western-minded thinker!

Even India, enjoying close relations with the United States, has recently conducted its exchanges with the United Arab Emirates, which is also a traditional ally of the United States, with local currencies without the involvement of the dollar; interestingly, India is one of the main members of BRICS and the UAE has recently been invited to the group.

The United States, Europe, and the West in general will have no choice but to accept the reality of the multipolar world with the influence of important alliances such as SCO and BRICS. Undoubtedly, the imagination of the author cannot save American unilateralism. In this regard, emerging powers like Iran, China, and Russia will definitely play a key role in accelerating the emergence of multipolarism and American decline.

## Iranians celebrate Al-Aqsa Flood Operation

TEHRAN- Following a retaliatory and surprising operation by Hamas against the Israeli invaders early on Saturday, the Iranian people celebrated the occasion and shared their pride toward the Palestinian fighters.

Different cities in Iran, including

Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad, and Zanjan, witnessed the joy of people late on Saturday.

The festivities started at 7 p.m. during which people chanted "Death to the U.S." and "Labbaik Palestine." Iranian people also waved the flags of Palestine.



# Behind the scenes of clear hostilities to Quran

From Page 1 ▶ Indeed, when secular legislators allow insults to take place, who will hold the perpetrators accountable?

In the meeting with Serbian Parliament Speaker Vladimir Orlich on July 25, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that the insult to the Quran in Sweden and Denmark hurts the feelings of two billion Muslims in the world.

Later in the meeting, to top Iranian diplomat condemned the insult to the holy books and expressed hope that the insults to the Islamic sanctities would be stopped.

On January 21, Saturday, a number of extremist groups desecrated the Quran in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm, where, in an anti-Islamic act, the spokesperson of the Swedish police said that they had allowed the leader of the far-right Danish extremist party to burn the Quran.

The reckless action brought a sharp reaction from the Turkish government, summoning the Swedish ambassador in Ankara to the Foreign Ministry.

Later in Denmark, Rasmus Paludan, a far-right Danish-Swedish politician burned the Quran in Denmark near the Turkish embassy. In response to this action, Türkiye summoned the Danish ambassador and protested against such provocative actions and hateful crimes.

**Quran is a threat to corrupt powers**

Speaking on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Islam's Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, addressed the issue, saying, "They think they can weaken the Quran, but they are



wrong and they will end up hurting themselves."

He also called the Quran a book of wisdom, knowledge, and awakening which would only act as a threat to corrupt powers.

The Quran is considered a threat to corrupt powers because it condemns oppression and blames the oppressed for accepting oppression. It also awakens the people. Those who are hostile to the Quran, are against the awakening of individuals, they are against encountering oppression.

The teachings of the Quran threaten the American world order since the oppressed are blamed for accepting the oppression. The American world order, ignoring the rights of others, just seeks benefit for itself, and will not tolerate the awakening of other nations.

Regarding the widespread corruption within the Zionist regime, on May 8, 2005, Eliezer Goldberg, a retired Israeli judge and a civil servant, who had previously served on the Supreme Court of Israel as the State Comptroller said: "Governmental corruption is the greatest threat

Israel faces today."

Goldberg said that during his term as State Comptroller, he had repeatedly encountered the undesirable phenomena, but his warnings had not caused them to be uprooted. He was mainly referring to breaches of moral integrity.

He added that examples of this public dishonesty could also be found, including political appointments, favoritism in tenders, the employment of relatives, and various forms of cronyism.

On 19 February 2023, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) stated that only 32 percent of the public believed that the Zionist regime could cope with corruption.

Corruption among the political and military leaders of the Zionist regime started from the very beginning of the occupation of Palestine and the establishment of the fake Zionist regime. And corruption among the senior levels of the Zionist authorities is getting more and more widespread.

**Why are Zionists behind the insults to the Quran?**

On the repetition of burning the

Quran in the West, its causes, and the role of the Zionist regime in mandating such insults toward Islamic sanctities, Jafar Ghanadbashi, an expert on West Asian issues, in an interview with the International Quran News Agency on July 30 said that there are many causes for burning the Quran, but based on detailed analyses, the Zionist regime is behind the scenes.

Ghanadbashi said the Zionists have sought to desecrate the Quran for two reasons: the first reason is verses in the Quran that refer to Zionists' negative attributes and actions throughout history, which reveals their true nature, and the second reason is the inspiring role of the verses in Quran that have motivated the Lebanese and the Palestinians to resist and counter the tyranny of the occupying regime.

In this regard, Zionists tried to remove such verses from the Quran and publish a distorted Quran.

He added that the Zionist regime has concluded that the strength of the Palestinians and Lebanese is not from the teachings of communism, liberalism and Arab nationalism, but the source of inspiration for the Palestinian and Lebanese groups' resistance is the Quran.

Elsewhere, the expert noted that Zionists are currently more worried about the Quran. Therefore, by desecrating and insulting it, he noted, the Zionists tend to weaken the unity between Shiites and Sunnis.

Motivating to fight oppression and occupation, expanding the spirit of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, the Quran is considered a great obstacle toward the survival of the Israeli regime.

## IRGC chief: Those responsible for the Syrian military college attack will pay heavy price

TEHRAN – In a message to Syria's defense ministry and its army, the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps condemned the Thursday terrorist attack on a military college in the central province of Homs.

Major General Hussein Salami offered his condolences over the attack and declared those responsible for the heinous crimes will pay a heavy price. "The perpetrators will have to face a strong response from the faithful warriors and fighters of the Islamic resistance," he said.

The top commander also stressed that the international community expects international organizations, especially the United Nations Security Council, to fulfill their responsibility and deal with the foreign forces occupying the Syrian soil. He said the occupiers are doing everything to disrupt peace and security in the war-torn Arab country.

The Thursday attack which happened during a graduation ceremony resulted in the death of at least 100 people and injury of hundreds

of others. It was one of the bloodiest attacks carried out against the Syrian army over the past 12 years of conflict. The assault was also unprecedented in its use of weapons as it involved an explosive-laden drone which the Syrian government says was operated by terrorist groups funded by foreign states.

In response to the attack, Syrian authorities have launched heavy airstrikes on multiple positions of Tahrir al-Sham terrorists located in the province of Hama.

## EU committed to reviving Iran nuclear deal: Borrell

TEHRAN – Josep Borrell, The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has said that the EU is committed to working toward fully implementing the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

Borrell said in a statement that he discussed the full implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with the European signatories to the deal-France, Germany and the United Kingdom – collectively called the E3.

"I remain fully committed to

continue all possible efforts towards the resumption of the full implementation of the JCPOA, a matter that was also discussed in the consultations," the top EU diplomat said in the statement.

He also said, "On 14 September, I received a letter from the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom informing me about an issue concerning the implementation of Iran's commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)."

According to Borrell, the E3

foreign ministers accused Iran of not complying with the terms of the JCPOA.

He added, "The Foreign Ministers stated that Iran has been in non-compliance since 2019 and considered that this has not been resolved through the JCPOA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM). They expressed their intention not to take the steps regarding the lifting of further sanctions on JCPOA Transition Day on 18 October 2023."

The European accusation comes at a time when Iran reduced its

commitments under the JCPOA only after the E3 failed to honor their JCPOA obligations following the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal in May 2018.

Borrell stated, "Subsequently, as Coordinator, I consulted all JCPOA participants on the way ahead. Following these consultations, I note that as of today, the issue remains unresolved given the diverging views expressed. At the same time, participants reiterated their determination to find a diplomatic solution in the framework of the JCPOA."

## Iran backs large-scale Palestinian operation against Israel

TEHRAN – A top military adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has voiced Iran's support for the Hamas resistance group's military operation inside the occupied territories.

Speaking at the 6th International Conference of Solidarity with Palestinian Youth, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi hailed the operation as "glorious".

"We declare our support for this operation and we are confident that the Resistance Front also supports this move," Rahim Safavi said, adding that Iran will stand alongside the Palestinian resistance "until the liberation of Palestine and al-Quds".

Safavi also condemned the international community for its silence towards Israeli atrocities, explaining that such inaction has allowed Israel to carry out an organized massacre of Palestinian children.

"The latest statistics show that so far 37

Palestinian children have been slaughtered by Israeli soldiers. 2023 is said to be the bloodiest year for Palestinian children in the past year. These children have been martyred by direct bullets from Zionists, and on the other hand, a large number of Palestinian children and youth have been imprisoned and sentenced to heavy punishments".

Hamas began the biggest Palestinian operation against Israel on Saturday morning. The surprise offensive began with the firing of a barrage of rockets which have reportedly hit positions in Tel Aviv, Sde Boker, Arad, Dimona, and al-Quds. According to Hamas' armed wing more than 7000 rockets were fired from the besieged Gaza Strip on Saturday.

Several Palestinian fighters have also managed to infiltrate the occupied territories. Hamas's al-Qassam Brigades has announced capturing a number of Israeli soldiers and weaponry after its fighters entered occupied Palestine by land, sea

and air using paragliders.

"This storm which started from Gaza will spread to the West Bank and outside the country and all the places where our people and nation are present," Hamas Politburo Chief Ismail Haniyeh said, adding that the latest Palestinian operation has happened in response to Israel's desecration of the Al-Aqsa mosque.

The Islamic Jihad resistance movement also announced on Saturday that it has joined the operation and called on Palestinians everywhere to also join the fight against the regime.

Israeli medics have so far reported the death of 22 people and injury of almost 600 others.

Israel's prime minister reacted to the attacks by saying Israel is "at war". He has also responded by ordering the bombardment of several locations in Gaza City. At least one Palestinian was reported killed in the first wave of Israeli air attacks

## SPORTS

### Chess team finish top at Hangzhou

TEHRAN – Iran's men's chess team claimed a gold medal in the 2022 Asian Games on Saturday.

Team Melli consisting of Parham Maghsoudloo, Bardia Daneshvar, Mohammadamin Tabatabaei, Amirreza Pouraghabala and Pooya Idani beat South Korea in the ninth round to secure a gold medal at the 2022 Asian Games underway in Hangzhou, China on Saturday.

Iran continued to lead the standings with 14 match points (two MPs for a win and 1 for a draw) with India close on their heels with 13 MPs. The bronze medal went to Uzbekistan.

It was Iran's 13th gold medal in the Games.

Iran's men's volleyball national team, wushu athletes Afshin Salimi and Yousef Sabri, Sadeq Azarang in Kurash, discus thrower Hossein Rasouli, climber Reza Alipour, wrestlers Mohammadhadi Saravi, Amin Mirzazadeh, Younes Emami, Hassan Yazdani and Amirhossein Zare as well as Karate athlete Sajad Ganjzadeh had already won 12 gold medals.

### Iran's men's kabaddi win silver

TEHRAN – Iran's men's kabaddi team claimed a silver medal after losing to India 33-29 in the final match of the 2022 Asian Games in a controversial match on Saturday.

With one minute remaining, Pawan Sehrawat from the Indian team was forced to go in for a do-or-die raid. During his raid, Pawan went out of bounds without making contact with any Iranian defenders.

In response, Amirhossein Bastami and three other Iranian defenders rushed towards Pawan in an attempt to push him out.

This led to a moment of confusion, as it was unclear whether Pawan had been successfully tackled or not. Initially, Iran was awarded a point for their efforts to stop Pawan.

However, the Indian contingent, including players and officials, began arguing with the on-court umpire and the TV officials.

After further review and perhaps another referral, the officials decided to award three points to India. It's mentioned that the number of points could vary depending on the number of players who went out with Pawan. This decision led to protests from the Iranian team.

According to the old rule, India would get four (or possibly five) points, while the new rule would give one point to each team because one of the Iranian defenders (Bastami) went out of the line (self-out).

### Iran water polo come fourth

TEHRAN – Iran's men's water polo team lost to Kazakhstan 10-9 in the 2022 Asian Games third-placed match on Saturday.

Team Melli had defeated South Korea 15-4 and Thailand 26-7 and were defeated against China 15-7 in Group A. Iran advanced to the semifinal, beating Singapore 13-6 but lost to Japan 18-11 in the semifinal.

With more than 12,000 competitors from 45 nations and territories, the Asian Games has more participants than the Olympics.

Iran has sent 289 male and female athletes to the Games in 34 sports events.

### Goleij wins silver in wrestling

TEHRAN – Iranian wrestler Mojtaba Goleij won a silver medal in the 2022 Asian Games on Saturday.

Goleij lost to Bahrain's Akhmed Magomedov 6-0 in the final bout of the men's freestyle 97Kg

He defeated Uzbekistan's Magomed Ibragimov 13-7 and also emerged victorious over Mongolia's Gankhuyag Ganbaatar 4-2 and Alisher Yergali of Kazakhstan 3-1 to book a place in the final.

### Iran defeat Maldives in 2024 AFC Futsal qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran began their bid for a record-extending 13th AFC Futsal Asian Cup title with an 18-2 win over the Maldives in Group C of the 2024 Qualifiers on Saturday.

Iran, who were denied the 2022 title by Japan, were in their element against the Maldives at the Bishkek Arena with Saeid Ahmad Abbasi leading their charge with six goals - in the sixth, 23rd, 27th, 33rd and 35th (2) minutes, the-afc.com reported.

Captain Hossein Tayebi Bidgoli was also in fine form, netting in the 14th, 21st, 23rd and 39th minutes while Amirhossein Davoudi (5th, 15th) and Behroz Azimhematabadi (28th, 30th) scored two each.

Iran's other goals were contributed by Salah Aghapour (2nd), Mahdi Karimi (12th) and Mohammadhosseini Derakhshani (27th) with Saamin Mohamed Naseer of the Maldives scoring an own goal in the 30th minute in the emphatic win.

Maldives, who scored through Ali Haafiz (18th) and Ali Shiyah (32nd), will look to bounce back against Lebanon on Monday and Iran face Kyrgyzstan.

### Davoudi snatches silver in weightlifting

TEHRAN – Ali Davoudi of Iran won a silver medal in weightlifting in the 2022 Asian Games.

He finished in second place with 192-234-426 in the men's +109kg.

Bahrain's Gor Minasyan claimed the gold medal with 212-245-457 and bronze medal went to Uzbekistan's Rustam Djangabaev with 190-233-423.

With more than 12,000 competitors from 45 nations and territories, the Asian Games has more participants than the Olympics.

Iran has sent 289 male and female athletes to the Games in 34 sports events.

### Iran lose to Brazil in Volleyball 2024 Olympic Qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Brazil 3-0 (25-19, 25-20, 25-23) in Volleyball 2024 Olympic Qualifiers on Saturday.

Darlan Ferreira Souza led the Brazilian team with 12 points and Iran's Saber Kazemi and Mobin Nasri each scored eight points.

Team Melli will meet Cuba on Monday.

Iran had lost to Germany 3-1, Ukraine 3-0, Czech Republic 3-1, Italy 3-0 and defeated Qatar 3-1.

The 2023 FIVB Volleyball Men's Olympic Qualification Tournaments, alternatively the 2023 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup (for the tournament held in Japan) and also known as FIVB Road to Paris Volleyball Qualifier, are the three volleyball tournaments to be contested by 24 men's national teams of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), where the top teams will earn a place in the 2024 Summer Olympics.

### Esteghlal move to second place: PGPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team edged past Mes 1-0 in the 2023/24 Iran's Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL) Matchweek 5.

Meysam Teymouri scored an own goal in the 52nd minute in Rafsanjan's Shohadaye Sanat Stadium.

Malavan will host Nassaji on Sunday, while Persepolis meet Gol Gohar in Tehran.

Tractor lead the table with 12 points out of six matches.

## Luxembourg releases \$1.7b of Iran's assets



TEHRAN- Luxembourg released \$1.7b of Iran's frozen assets following a ruling issued by the European country's Supreme Court, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) reported on Saturday.

As reported, with the legal actions and follow-ups of the CBI, at the current stage, the legal obstacles to access 1.7 billion dollars assets of this bank in Luxembourg have been removed and this fund is now available to the Central Bank of Iran.

## Commodities worth over \$2.8b exported from Khuzestan province in H1

TEHRAN- Non-oil commodities worth \$2.885 billion were exported from Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), an official with the customs department of the province announced.

Behrouz Qareh-Beygi put the weight of exported commodities at 10.561 million tons, and said the six-month export indicates a 20-percent fall in terms of value, and a 35-percent growth in terms of weight, year on year.

He named petrochemicals, agricultural products, steel, construction materials, mechanical and electronic devices, aquaculture and food as the main exported items and United Arab Emirates, Iraq, China, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

Qareh-Beygi also announced that 6.737 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$4.172 billion were imported to the province in the first half of the present year.

As previously announced by the official, non-oil commodities worth \$6.584 billion were exported from Khuzestan province during the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Qareh-Beygi put the weight of exported commodities at 17.55 million tons, with a seven-percent growth year on year.

He named petrochemicals, agricultural products, steel, construction materials, mechanical and electronic devices, food and fishery as the main exported items, and the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, China, Southeast Asia, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as the major export destinations.

The official further announced that 18.021 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$10.677 billion were imported to the province in the previous year, with a 12-percent drop in weight, while a five-percent rise in value, as compared to the preceding year.

As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported 67.7 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$24.144 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year.

## TEDPIX drops 16,800 points on Saturday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 16,861 points to 2,052,887 on Saturday (the first day of Iranian calendar week).

As reported, over 7.867 billion securities worth 58.228 trillion rials (about \$119 million) were traded at the TSE.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

Ehsan Asgari, a stock market analyst, said that the government's measures for reducing the risks of trade in the capital market can help improve the market's trend in the long term.

"Now, in the stock market, we are witnessing a reduction in the risks threatening stock



Mohammad Rezvanifar said that the export of non-oil commodities in H1 increased by 29 percent in terms of weight.

The official put the country's value of six-month non-oil trade at \$54.6 billion.

He said the value of the Islamic Republic's non-oil trade in the first half of the current Iranian year increased by 4.84 percent compared to the same period last year.

In terms of weight, the country's foreign trade reached 82.3 million tons which was 23.78 percent more than the figure for the previous year's first half.

As the IRICA head announced, 17.6 million tons of goods valued at \$30.443 billion were imported into the country in the said period, indicating an 11.62-percent rise in terms of value, and a 6.89 percent increase in terms of weight, year on year.

The average value of each ton of exported goods in the first six months of the current year was \$356 and the average value of each ton of imported goods was \$1,729.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$6.9 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$4.5 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$3.0 billion, Turkey with \$2.4 billion, and India with \$1.1 billion.

Liquefied natural gas, liquid propane, and liquid butane were the top exported items in the said six months.

Meanwhile, the country's top five sources of imports in the first half of the current year were the UAE with \$9.0 billion, China with \$8.8 billion, Turkey with \$3.3 billion, Germany with \$1.1 billion, and India with \$987 million worth of imports.

Corn, smartphones, soybeans, sunflower seed oil, and rice were the top imported items in the period under review.

market transactions, which can have an impact on the improvement of market trend," Asgari told IRNA two weeks ago.

He pointed to the timely action of the government and the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) in amending the market's laws and regulations and said: "[considering these actions] the stock market can provide shareholders with higher returns than other markets."

The expert further pointed to some of the effective factors in reducing the volatility in the stock market and noted: "In the past few days, the prices of commodities in the global markets did not have a significant downward trend, and the currency market is also stable, and due to such conditions, export-oriented companies in the stock market have not been exposed to a high risk, which has been influential in changing the market trend."

# Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee chairmen hold talks in Baku

From page 1 ▶ As reported, the two sides signed a letter of intent for the construction of a bridge on the Aras River as the first step for constructing the mentioned railroad.

Based on the signed document, the Azeri side will fund the project for constructing a bridge for the railway line which will be built parallel to Aghband, which is a bridge for the passage of cars on the river.

Speaking at the meeting, Bazrpash said: "A general agreement was made in Astara and a memorandum of understanding was prepared. If the Azerbaijani side is ready, we can sign the memorandum in the next two days and get one step closer to concluding a contract."

"If the memorandum of understanding is signed, the designing of the railway sector can start parallel to the road design," the Iranian minister said.

The facilities will aim to increase freight transit through the countries and ease access to Nakhchivan.

Construction of the bridge is part of the memorandum of understanding between the governments of Azerbaijan and



Iran's Transport Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash (L) and First Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev shake hand after signing a co-op document in Baku on Friday.

Iran on the creation of new links between the East Zangezur economic region of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan through Iran.

The Azerbaijani deputy prime minister said the work is planned to be completed within a year.

Solving the banking problems of Iranian businessmen, issuing on-arrival visas with the aim of increasing passenger commute, and finalizing the preferential trade agreement were also among

the other topics that were raised in this meeting.

### Tehran-Baku ties significant for region

The Iranian Transport Minister also met with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev during his visit to Baku, in which Aliyev considered the friendship and cooperation of the two countries as an important factor for the entire region and emphasized on the development of the International

North-South Transport Corridor and the further expansion of its transmission capacity.

Based on the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of trade between Iran and Azerbaijan increased by 13 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20).

Iran-Azerbaijan trade was \$688 million in 14001, and \$608 million in 1400.

Components and parts, tubes, aluminum, packaged butter, potatoes, heaters, non-electric appliances, non-powder polyethylene compound, special polyethylene compound wire and cable cover, polyethylene film grade with specific weight, and iron and steel ingots were Iran's main exported items to Azerbaijan.

Milling machines, car gearboxes, gas generators for the simultaneous production of electricity and heat, lathes, air-generating units, presses for the production of chipboards, bending machines (presses), pipes, car engine control units, and sets of generators with compression piston engines were Iran's major imported products from its neighbor in the past year.

## Iranian economy to grow 2 times that of MENA in 2023: WB

TEHRAN - In its latest economic report on the Middle East [West Asia] and North Africa (MENA), the World Bank has predicted a 4.1 percent growth for Iran's economy this year, which is more than twice the average of West Asia and North Africa region.

"Growth in the Islamic Republic of Iran is forecast to maintain a moderate pace at 4.1 percent in 2023, slightly higher from 3.8 percent in 2022," the latest issue of the World Bank MENA Economic Update (MEU) published on October 5 said.

Based on the mentioned report, the growth of the economies in MENA is expected to fall sharply this year. The region's gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to plummet to 1.9 percent in 2023 from six percent in 2022, due to oil production cuts subdued oil

prices, tight global financial conditions, and high inflation.

Titled "Balancing Act: Jobs and Wages in the Middle East and North Africa When Crises Hit," the report says that the decline in growth in MENA this year is expected to be more pronounced in the oil-exporting countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Real GDP growth in these countries is forecast at 1.0 percent in 2023, down from 7.3 percent in 2022 as a result of lower oil production and reduced oil prices. In developing oil-exporting countries, growth is forecast to decline from 4.3 percent in 2022 to 2.4 percent in 2023.

Among the oil-importing countries in MENA, the tightening of global financial



conditions and high inflation continue to constrain economic activity. Growth there is projected at 3.6 percent in 2023, down from 4.9 percent in 2022. These results signal the end of the "tale of two MENAs" from 2022, in which the region's oil exporters were growing much faster than the oil importers.

## Iran, Burkina Faso sign 8 cooperation MOUs

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran and Burkina Faso have signed eight memorandums of understanding (MOUs) for cooperation in various fields including energy, town planning, higher education, and construction, IRNA reported.

The MOUs were signed during the two countries' first joint economic committee meeting which was held in Ouagadougou on Friday.

Work and social support, technical and vocational training, employment and entrepreneurship development, pharmaceuticals, energy and mining, environment and natural resources,

as well as science, research, and technology were also among the areas covered in the MOUs.

The first meeting of the Iran-Burkina Faso Joint Economic Committee was attended by an Iranian delegation headed by Iranian Minister of Labor and Social Welfare Solat Mortazavi.

Speaking at the event, Mortazavi expressed hope that the signed documents would lead to an increase in the level of economic exchange between the two countries.

The official noted that the two sides plan to expand their

cooperation in other areas as well.

During a meeting between Mehdi Zeyghami, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), and Issa Boro, the secretary general of the foreign ministry of Burkina Faso, in Tehran in late June, the Iranian side his country is willing to expand trade ties with Burkina Faso and export technical engineering services to the country.

In this meeting, the two sides emphasized the expansion of commercial relations in parallel with political ties and discussed the business plans that are to be presented in the upcoming Joint

Economic Committee meeting of the two countries.

According to Zeyghami, the expansion of business relations is not possible without the businessmen of the two countries getting to know each other, and it is necessary to hold conferences on the business opportunities of Burkina Faso and Iran for the businessmen of the two countries to get familiar with the two countries' markets.

Boro had earlier announced that the West African country is going to open an embassy in Tehran.

## Hydropower output up over 80% in 6 months on year



TEHRAN - The electricity output of Iran's hydroelectric power plants reached 4,750 gigawatt hours (GWh) in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), 80 percent more than the figure for last year's same period, IRNA reported.

According to Vahid Izadi, the deputy head of Iran Water and Power Resources Development Company (IWPCO), by carrying out timely maintenance of power plant units

and the management of reservoirs of the operating dams, the power plants have had the maximum production capacity for the summer peak period.

Izadi noted that the overhaul operations for the country's hydropower plants have currently started to make them ready for the next peak consumption period.

According to the latest data provided by the Energy Ministry, currently, 55 hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 12,169 megawatts (MW) are operating across the country.

The mentioned power plants every year generate 27,696 GWh of electricity on average.

Based on the provided data, 16 of the mentioned 55 power plants are located in the Caspian Sea basin, while 25 are located adjacent to the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea, one is near Urmia Lake, and finally, 13 are

located in central Iran.

Currently, 17 new hydroelectric power plants with a total capacity of 3,517 MW are also being constructed across the country, according to the Energy Ministry.

Iran's current power generation capacity stands at about 90 GW of which the share of hydroelectric power stands at nearly 16 percent.

Most of Iran's power generation capacity is supplied by thermal power plants. Currently, combined cycle power plants account for the biggest share of the country's total power generation capacity followed by gas power plants.

Increasing the country's power generation capacity and preventing blackouts during peak consumption periods have been among the Iranian Energy Ministry's top priorities since the current government administration took office in 2021.

## Exemplary exporters to be honored in National Export's Day

TEHRAN - Iran's exemplary exporters are going to be honored at the 27th National Export's Day ceremony which is due to be held on October 21 by Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), an official with

the organization said.

According to Mohammad-Sadegh Ghanadzadeh, the process of registration and evaluation of the top exporters has started a few months

ago, and one part of this evaluation includes self-declaration and another part includes the statistics regarding the companies' export performance, the TPO portal reported.

The ceremony is going to be attended by President Ebrahim Raisi, along with other senior officials including Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi, and the TPO head.

# Al-Aqsa storm: Palestinian resistance humiliates Israel

*At least 100 Israelis are killed*

By Ali Karbalaei

TEHRAN - After a week that saw thousands of Israeli settlers desecrating the al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied al-Quds (Jerusalem) despite warnings and the rising Israeli aggression in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian resistance in the besieged Gaza Strip has launched "OPERATION AL-AQSA STORM".

The operation, which began on Saturday morning, took Israel by surprise on multiple fronts. The operation is unprecedented in the past 50 years.

It was the biggest attack on the Zionist regime in 50 years. It is haunting the invaders of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. It came 50 years and a day after forces from Egypt and Syria caught Israel off-guard.

Battles were still taking place in 22 locations, according to Israelis.

The armed wing of Hamas said more than 5,000 rockets had been fired from the besieged Gaza into the occupied territories within a space of 20 minutes.

**What is certain is that Operation al-Aqsa Storm is a game changer.**

Israel's N12 News reported that at least 100 Israelis were killed. Israel's ambulance service added that the toll was expected to rise.

A senior Hamas leader has said that the group had captured enough Israeli soldiers during the unprecedented attack to make Israeli authorities free all Palestinian prisoners.



The head of a regional Israeli council northeast of the Gaza Strip has been killed in a firefight, according to the council. "The president of the regional council, Ofir Lieberman, was killed during an exchange of fire with [the resistance]" the Israeli Shaar Negev settlement council said in a statement.

As rocket barrages hit Israeli settlements and other sensitive sites, units of Hamas' armed wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, infiltrated into Israeli settlements and military bases.

Israel's ambassador to the UN has said that fighters, who infiltrated from a number of different points, "killed DOZENS of Israelis".

What Israel doesn't know is how many Palestinian resistance fighters had infiltrated from Gaza into the settlements.

According to Reuters, Israel's police chief said there were "21 active scenes" in southern occupied territories, indicating the extent of the surprise operation.

Israeli Minister of War Yoav Gallant said, "troops are fighting against the enemy at every location".

A video going viral on social media shows a section of the separation fence, dividing the Gaza Strip from the occupied Palestinian territories, wide open from what appears to be an explosive device.

Footage shows Palestinian resistance fighters on jeeps leaving the Gaza Strip and heading into occupied Palestinian territory for the first time in modern history amid chants of support and celebration by local residents.



For many Palestinian residents in Gaza, it was also a chance for them to step into the land of their grandparents.

Other footage circulating on social media appears to show clashes in the streets of Israeli settlements as well as gunmen in jeeps roaming the countryside.

Hamas media displayed videos of bodies of Israeli soldiers brought into Gaza by its forces, and Palestinian resistance fighters touring an Israeli town in jeeps.

At least one video going viral on social media shows the body of an Israeli on the back of a captured Israeli jeep that had been driven back into the Gaza Strip.

The al-Qassam Brigades announced control of the Kibbutz settlement and the Kerem Shalom military site east of Rafah.

Other footage shows Palestinians in control of Israeli military vehicles and Israeli tanks on fire near the separation fence. A Palestinian man can be seen taking a selfie in front of a burning Israeli military vehicle.

Footage of Israeli firefighters extinguishing a fire after a rocket



hit a parking lot in the settlement of Ashkelon is among various similar videos that have been broadcast.

In the settlement of Sderot, Israeli troops were engaged in clashes with the resistance fighters. In all the wars that preceded this one, the fighting has never gone beyond the besieged Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military has confirmed it is engaged in clashes with the resistance in several Israeli settlements and military bases near Gaza, with prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing to retaliate.

The Israeli army has not gained control of any of the locations Hamas fighters infiltrated in southern occupied Palestinian territories, according to Israeli media.

The Haaretz newspaper reported that settlers are still in shelters, and there are no Israeli security forces or medical staff on site.

Palestinians in Gaza expressed disbelief at the infiltration. One Gaza shopkeeper told Reuters "It is like a

dream. I still can't believe it".

It's not only a significant move for the Palestinian resistance but also reflects the messages of resistance leaders who said that they would take the war to the occupied territories, which many analysts in the region laughed off, implying that this was impossible.

Red alert warning sirens were activated in Tel Aviv, Sde Boker, Arad, and Dimona in the south, as explosions were heard by residents. In occupied al-Quds, rocket sirens sounded followed by the sound of explosions.

"We decided to put an end to all the crimes of the occupation. Their time for rampaging without being held accountable is over," Hamas said. "We announce Operation al-Aqsa Storm and we fired, in the first strike of 20 minutes, more than 5,000 rockets."

**Haniyeh called the operation historic and epic**

The Gaza-based Palestinian Islamic Jihad said its fighters have joined the operation as Hamas called on Palestinians everywhere to fight. It also called on resistance groups in Lebanon to join the fight against Israel.

"We are part of this battle, our fighters are side-by-side with their brothers in the Qassam Brigades until victory is achieved," Palestinian Islamic Jihad's armed wing spokesman Abu Hamza said in a post on social media.



Lebanon's Hezbollah has said it is following the situation in Gaza closely and is "in direct contact with the leadership of the Palestinian resistance".

Hezbollah also said the operation was a "decisive response to Israel's continued occupation and a message to those seeking normalization with Israel".

Hamas politburo chief Ismail Haniyeh has warned that "this storm which started from Gaza will spread to the West Bank and outside the country

and all the places where our people and nation are present."

Haniyeh called the operation historic and epic, saying the main reason for its start was the "criminal aggression of the Zionists in the al-Aqsa Mosque, which had reached its peak in recent days".

The highest-ranking Hamas military commander Mohammad Deif, who has survived multiple Israeli assassination attempts and announced the start of the retaliatory operation, said, "This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on earth."

He said Palestinian resistance forces struck numerous Israeli targets, including airports and military facilities.

"Today, the wrath of our nation and righteous fighters is boiling over. This is your day to make the enemy understand that its time has come to an end," the top commander stated.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Hamas spokesperson Khaled Qadomi said that the group's military operation is in response to all the atrocities the Palestinians have faced over the decades on top of them the desecration of Israelis at the al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site.

"We want the international community to stop atrocities in Gaza, against Palestinian people, our holy sites like Al-Aqsa. All these things are the reason behind starting this battle," he said.

Asked whether Hamas had taken Israeli soldiers and settlers hostage, Qadomi replied, "They are not hostages. They are prisoners of war."

He highlighted that the Israeli settlers are also occupiers, and according to international law, they are invaders.

"So the situation today is a war against invaders," he said.

Israel says it is at "war" and has begun bombing the Gaza Strip, with reports emerging of a large number

**For many Palestinian residents in Gaza, it was a chance for them to step into the land of their grandparents.**

of dead and wounded Palestinians at a Gaza hospital.

History has proven that these bombing raids by the regime mostly kill women and children on a very large scale.

Critics have previously accused Israel of using these war crime tactics to pressure the resistance to halt fire.

What is certain is that the events



that unfolded on Saturday are a game changer.

Mahjoob Zweiri, a professor at Qatar University, says events of the last few hours (on Saturday) have been "game-changing for the politics of the region".

"For the first time, the resistance movement decided to react against the occupiers and the military ... I think the Israeli side is facing a real challenge in tackling its image now. Also the narrative created by Hamas with regional and international players is interesting," he said.

## World reacts to Al-Aqsa Storm Operation

By Alireza Akbari

TEHRAN- Following the Israeli settlers' desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque and continued violence against Palestinians, Hamas launched a retaliatory and surprise operation against invaders on Saturday morning.

It was the biggest attack, codenamed Al-Aqsa Storm Operation, on the Zionist regime in 50 years.

The attack is haunting the invaders of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. It came 50 years and a day after forces from Egypt and Syria caught Israel off-guard.

European diplomats, turning a blind eye to the Zionists' crimes, have condemned the operation

The attack was condemned by some European countries, including Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Poland.

Meanwhile, some countries invited both sides to show restraint.

Qatar's foreign ministry issued a statement saying that Israel alone was responsible for the ongoing escalation of violence with the Palestinian people.



It called on both sides to exercise utmost restraint and calls on the international community to prevent Israel from using these events as an excuse to launch a disproportionate war against Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

"It goes without saying that we always call for restraint," said Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov.

The Saudi Arabian ministry called for an "immediate cessation of violence" between Israel and the Palestinians, the state news agency reported.

"We call for restraint from all parties," said Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry called for exercising maximum restraint and avoiding exposing civilians to further danger.

The adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Yahya Rahim Safavi, declared Iran's support for the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation.

"We will stay with the Palestinian fighters until the liberation of Palestine and Quds," said Rahim Safavi, the former IRGC chief.



The Lebanese Hezbollah issued a statement saying it was closely following the situation in Gaza and was in "direct contact with the leadership of the Palestinian resistance".

Hamas deputy chief Saleh al-Aroui told Al Jazeera that the group was holding a large number of Israeli captives, including senior officials. He said Hamas had enough captives to make Israel free all Palestinians in its jails.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said that the Palestinian people have the right to defend themselves against the "terror of settlers and occupation troops", the official news agency Wafa quoted him as saying.

The chief of Hamas's Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (IQB) Mohammed Deif said that the rocket fire marked the start of "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm", and called on Palestinians everywhere to fight the Israeli occupation.

Deif called the operation a "response" to the desecration of al-Aqsa Mosque.

"Women at Al-Aqsa Mosque were attacked and the sanctity of the Islamic site was violated despite the fact that we had previously warned the Zionists," Deif added.

The Israeli enemy did not accept our suggestion



for a humanitarian prisoner swap, and it keeps on committing atrocities in the West Bank on a daily basis, the commander stated.

"We've decided to say enough is enough," Deif said as he urged all Palestinians to confront Israel. "This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on Earth," he said in an audio message.

"We have already warned the enemy before. The occupation committed hundreds of massacres against civilians." He added hundreds were martyred or wounded this year "due to the crimes of the occupation."

"We announce the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, and we announce that the first strike, which targeted enemy positions, airports, and military fortifications, exceeded 5,000 missiles and shells," he continued.

From now on, security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and the Zionist enemy will come to an end, he warned, adding that today, the Palestinian nation pursues the path of uprising, resistance, and return once again.

Deif also called on his brothers in Islamic resistance movements in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen to contribute to the resistance in Palestine.

The commander added that it was time for a united Arab resistance, inviting everyone to mobilize to pursue the Palestinian cause.

"The time has come for the termination of occupation, and we ask the Islamic and Arab nations to move towards the borders of Palestine," he said.



Seyyed Ammar al-Hakim, the Leader of the National Wisdom Movement of Iraq, emphasized the right to defend oneself, the land and the sanctities.

He called the operation a "natural response to the Zionist soldiers."

Elsewhere, he said that the patience of the besieged dear Palestinians is over and they are outraged.

Al-Hakim stressed that it is the duty of the international community to put an end to the oppressive policies of the Zionist regime against the Palestinians.

The Iraqi Al-Hashd ash-Shabi issued a statement fully supporting the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation and said the achievements of the Palestinian resistance are result of the pure blood of the martyrs, especially General Qassem Soleimani.

Hadi Al-Amiri, secretary general of the Badr Organization, called on the Islamic nations to fulfill their moral responsibility in supporting the Palestinians in all fields.

He added that they follow the news of Al-Aqsa Storm operation with great pride.

He voiced the complete readiness of the Palestinian nation to assert their rights.

The Iraqi Al-Hashd ash-Shabi announced in a statement that the Al-Aqsa Storm Operation is a crushing reaction and a call of opposition to all the attacks of the Zionist invaders on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the residents of Al-Quds.

The Iraqi Al-Hashd ash-Shabi in its statement emphasized its full support for the Palestinian fighters and asked the nations and freedom-seekers to help the Palestinians in their just cause and to defend their lands and sanctities.

"What was achieved today is the fruit of a long work and a holy path, which was justified by the pure blood of the martyrs, especially Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and other martyrs."

## Iran considers renewing tourism ties with Egypt after four-decade rift



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ezzatollah Zarghami has said that the Islamic Republic is considering restoring tourism ties with Egypt.

Expanding tourism ties with Egypt is a useful way to strengthen bonds between the two nations, Zarghami said in an interview with IRNA on Friday.

A study on the restoration of tourism ties with Egypt has begun, he said, adding that the outcomes await the diplomatic decision of the foreign ministry.

Zarghami said expanding tourism relations with foreign countries and facilitating travel to Iran is a priority for his ministry,

which has suggested a visa waiver plan with 68 countries to the government.

Recently, the first group of Russian travelers visited Iran under a [bination] visa-free agreement and paved the way for the rest, he added.

Referring to a recent ceremony held in Riyadh to celebrate World Tourism Day, Zarghami said that his deputy Maryam Jalali Dehkordi attended the event and proposed the formation of a working group to abolish visa requirements between the two nations.

Earlier this year, Cairo and Tehran held several rounds of talks in Baghdad to discuss normalizing relations, which soured following Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Timgad, located to the north of the massif of the Aurès in a mountainous site of great beauty, 480 km south-east of Algiers and 110 km to the south of Constantine, is a consummate example of a Roman military colony created ex nihilo.

According to UNESCO, the Colonia Marciana Traiana Thamugadi was founded in 100 CE by Trajan, probably as an encampment for the 3rd Augustan Legion which, thereafter, was quartered at Lambaesis.

Its plan, laid out with great precision, illustrates Roman urban planning at its height. By the middle of the 2nd century, the rapid growth of the city had ruptured the narrow confines of its original foundation.

Timgad spread beyond the perimeters of its ramparts and several major public buildings are built in the new quarters: Capitolium, temples, markets and baths. Most of these buildings date from the Severan period when the city enjoyed its Golden Age, also attested by immense private residences.

A strong and prosperous colony, Timgad must have served as a compelling image of the grandeur of Rome on Numidian soil.

Buildings, constructed entirely of stone, were frequently restored during the course of the Empire: the Trajan Arch in the middle of the 2nd century, the Eastern gate in 146, and the Western gate under Marcus-Aurelius.

The streets were paved with large rectangular limestone slabs and, as attested by the 14 baths which still may be seen today, particular attention was paid to the disposition of public conveniences. The houses, of varying sizes, dazzle by their sumptuous mosaics, which were intended to offset the absence of precious marbles.

During the Christian period, Timgad was a renowned bishopric. After the Vandal invasion of 430, Timgad was destroyed at the end of the 5th century by montagnards of the Aurès.

The Byzantine Reconquest revived some activities in the city, defended by a fortress built to the south, in 539, reusing blocks removed from Roman monuments. The Arab invasion brought about the final ruin of Thamugadi which ceased to be inhabited after the 8th century.

## South Africa keen on post-pandemic tourism revival

South Africa's tourism sector has made substantive recovery and the number of international tourist arrivals is now 19 percent less than 2019 figures, said a South African government official.

Fish Mahlalela, deputy minister of South Africa's Department of Tourism, said the country received 4.8 million international tourists in the first seven months this year, a 70.6 percent increase when compared to the same period last year.

"These significant numbers paint a vibrant picture of South Africa's continued allure, an epitome of the global trend steering toward a post-pandemic recovery in travel," he said. "It is clear that our nation remains a destination of choice, captivating the hearts of many with its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes and remarkable wildlife. We are encouraged by these figures, they have surpassed our expectations."

Figures released by Statistics South Africa last week showed that income from tourist accommodation recorded a 29.1 percent year-on-year increase in July. Mahlalela said South Africa is still pursuing its target of having 21 million visitors by 2030.

"We must flip the script and drive a clear, well-illuminated united path to our destination marketing," he said.

South Africa is in the process of removing some barriers that may hinder travel,

including visa processing and the beefing up of security to ensure tourists are safe when they visit. Mahlalela said South Africa expects more tourists during the festive season.

Glenton de Kock, CEO of the Southern African Association for the Conference Industry, said South Africa has made recovery, which the association welcomes. He said China is a "great tourism source market" for South Africa that has potential to grow in the coming months, contributing to economic recovery, job creation and poverty alleviation.

"We expect more Chinese visitors after travel restrictions have been relaxed. Chinese tourists travel in big numbers and that is our huge source market," he said.

Zimbabwe, South Africa's neighbor, has also recorded some growth in tourist arrivals, income and investments. Between January and June, the country saw a 62 percent increase in international tourist arrivals, from 366,062 last year to 591,524 this year.

Keitumetse Setlang, executive manager of marketing at Botswana Tourism Organization, told China Daily that Botswana's tourism has recovered to 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels. She said the organization is working with the Chinese embassy in Gaborone and some tour agencies in China to bring more tourists to Botswana.

(Source: China Daily)

# Qalishuyan, a UNESCO-designated ancient ritual, observed in central Iran

TEHRAN—On Friday, hundreds of the locals performed one of their religious routines; Qalishuyan.

The annual ritual, which is inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, has long been observed in Mashhad-e Ardehal.

Qalishuyan, which is a longstanding tradition in the central Iranian town and surrounding villages, is a symbol of devotion and faith to the local communities.

The ritual starts in the morning when people come to gather at a mausoleum to sprinkle rosewater on a special carpet. Having completed the wrapping rituals, they deliver it to the people of Fin outside, who rinse a carpet in running water and sprinkle rosewater drops with neatly cut and beautifully decorated wooden sticks.

Passed down from generation to generation, Qalishuyan is practiced to honor the memory of Soltan Ali, a holy figure among the people of Kashan, Fin, and some other cities and villages nearby.

According to legend, the dead body of Soltan Ali was found and carried in a carpet to a stream, where it was washed and buried by the people of Fin and Khaveh. The venue is the mausoleum of Soltan Ali, where a carpet is washed in the



holy stream by a huge gathering.

The carpet is then returned to the mausoleum. People of Kashan contribute a prayer carpet, and some others celebrate their ritual the following Friday. These communities maintain oral transmission of the procedures but also recreate the tradition by adding new and festive elements.

An alluring destination, Kashan boasts a bunch of architectural wonders, an atmospheric covered bazaar, boutique hotels, and a UNESCO-registered garden.

Many travelers opt to bypass the delightful oasis city that is sprawled on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir on their journeys between Tehran and Isfahan provinces.

In addition, the ritual draws many visitors from across the country. In fact, religious tourism, which marks one of the oldest forms of traveling, is exclusively or strongly motivated by the rich culture of the nation.

Rich in spiritual tourism, Iran is home to hundreds of shrines, imamzadehs (tombs of descendants of one of the Twelve Imams -- the spiritual and political successors to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that sprinkles the Iranian landscape), mausoleums, churches, and even fire temples amongst other religious destinations which are dedicated to different faiths.

### Gateway to many sights

Kashan is situated on a route that connects Tehran to the giant

destinations of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd. Moreover, the ancient town is a gateway to many sights, stories, and surrounding attractive villages to discover. Amongst the highlights are the lavishly decorated houses of Brujerdi, Tabatabai, Ameri, and Abbasi.

Apart from cultural sites such as a domed bazaar, where travelers can find loads of Kashani traditions and souvenirs, they may escape the city for the UNESCO-registered Fin Garden, which is believed to be the epitome of Eden.

Kashan is highly famed for rosewater distillation ceremonies, which draw visitors from all over the country. Many believe traditionally distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories, probably due to shorter time intervals between the harvest and distillation practices. Golab or rosewater is a fragrant distillate of Mohammadi roses, which is used in dishes to flavor them or consumed as a religious perfume as well.

In addition, Kashan embraces some archaeological gems. Most importantly, the Tepe Sialk yielded interesting pottery pieces, metal tools, and domestic implements made from stone, clay, and bone that date from as early as the 4th millennium BC.

## Archaeological dig uncovers ruins of Sassanid temple in northern Iranian village

TEHRAN—A team of archaeologists in northern Iran has unearthed parts of a previously discovered fire temple, estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 CE–651).

Located in Arfa Deh, a mountainous village in Savadkuh county of Mazandaran province, the fire temple is believed to be abandoned in the early Islamic era "because there is no sign of deliberate destruction in this structure and the fire pit [of the temple] is found intact", archaeologist Abdolreza Mohajerinejad said on Friday.

"The fire pit, which bears plaster decorations, was discovered in the center of this building, which points to the religious usage of the building."

According to the architectural evidence, this fire temple was used until the 3rd century AH and several sections were added to it in several phases, Mohajerinejad said.

Having the famed structure of Chahar-Taq (which is an ancient square-shaped room sur-

mounted by a domed roof), the temple measures about 300 square meters and is made of stones, bricks (and a traditional mortar), the archaeologist added.

He said the ruined temple is located some five kilometers away from the cave of Sepahbod-Khorshid, which reportedly served as the latest Persian stronghold against the Arab conquerors in the region.

Initial traces of the temple were exposed some two years ago during the first archaeological season conducted on the Sassanid site, the report said.

Fire temple (locally known as Atashkadeh ("house of fire") is a Zoroastrian term for a consecrated building in which there is an ever-burning sacred fire.

After the Arab conquest of Persia, the majority of Persian fire temples were all either demolished (the ruins, if any remained, having since generally disappeared) or replaced by



mosques, some of which incorporated and effectively swallowed the older buildings.

The Sassanid era (224–651) is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under Sassanids, Persian architecture and arts experienced a general renaissance. Crafts such as metalwork and gem engraving grew highly sophisticated, yet scholarship was encouraged by the state. In that era, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

## Kordestan starts new campaign for medical tourism

TEHRAN—Iran's Kordestan is launching a new tourism campaign aimed at attracting international patients primarily from neighboring countries.

As part of the drive, it is getting prepared to host a vast exhibition in which more than 120 stalls would highlight the western province's achievements and capacities for the budding sector.

This exhibition seeks to spotlight the capacities of health tourism in Iran, especially in Kordestan province, on the one hand, and announce new opportunities for investment on the other hand, ISNA quoted a local official as saying on Saturday.



The event will be held in close collaboration with the private sector in Sanandaj from October 27 to 29, the official said.

The number of medical tourists visiting Iran is around one million people per annum, an official with the Health Ministry said in August.

"We consider this sector as health diplomacy, which is a suitable platform to develop the country's international interactions," said Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, who presides over the ministry's department for international cooperation.

Experts say Iran's medical tourism is a win-win opportunity both for the country and foreign patients, as they are offered affordable yet quality treatment services and the country gains considerable foreign currency.

The ancient country is known in the world as an affordable destination for health tourism, and the government is making a great effort to attract more

medical tourists in the years to come. Credible surgeons and physicians, cutting-edge medical technologies, high-tech medicine and diverse specializations, super affordable procedures, and finally its hospitable people, are considered Iran's trump card when it comes to medical tourism.

In the global scene, medical tourism is booming worldwide, as about 20 to 24 million people are traveling for medical treatments annually. Factors such as increased care needs over longer lifespans, rising healthcare costs, and constant pressures on some insurance industries are reasons behind why some opt to travel abroad.

## 700-year-old coin depicting Jesus and medieval king discovered in Bulgaria

Archaeologists in Bulgaria have discovered a 700-year-old silver coin depicting Jesus on one side and a Serbian king on the other in the southeastern village of Rusokastro.

One side of the so-called "silver penny" depicts Stefan Uroš II Milutin, a king of Serbia who greatly expanded his kingdom, alongside St. Stephen, the Burgas Museum, whose archaeologists are excavating the site, said in a statement translated from Bulgarian. The depiction of Jesus seated is shown on the other side of the coin. St. Stephen, who lived in the first century and was killed for his beliefs, was named a deacon by the 12 apostles.

This is the first time this type of coin has been found in Rusokastro, which was a town with a fortress at the time the coin was minted. The discovery shows that the coin had a larger circulation than previously realized archaeologists said in the statement.

Stefan Uroš II Milutin (reign 1282 to 1321) vastly expanded the Serbian kingdom into

southeastern Europe, the statement said. He was married as many as five times, and one of his wives was a Bulgarian princess. Milutin, also known as Holy King Milutin, was later canonized as a saint, and today his relics are kept in St. Nedelya Church in Bulgaria's capital, Sofia.

Parts of the coin's design are copied from coins that were minted in Venice. "As for the Christ, this coin is a direct copy of the seated Christ on Venetian coins," Julian Baker, an assistant keeper of medieval and modern coins at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford, England who is not involved in the excavations, told Live Science in an email. Coins from Venice had a reputation as one of the most stable currencies in the Middle Ages for the consistency of their silver weight, the statement said.

Venetian coins started showing a seated Jesus during the late 12th century and copied a similar image that was used in coins minted in the Byzantine Empire, Baker said. He added that "the seated

Christ became a very prominent iconographical device from the 9th/10th centuries and it is "no great surprise" that it is shown on coins.

This particular coin, with Jesus on one side and Stefan Uroš II Milutin on the other, is not unusual, Baker said. "This is quite a common coin produced by the medieval Serbian kingdom in a period in which they were able to mint coinage in large quantities thanks to the [silver] mines which [were] on its territory," Baker said. "Such coins are very commonly found in the southern Balkans, mostly in the western half" in countries such as Serbia and Greece, Baker said. "A find from eastern Bulgaria is a bit less usual but is still completely understandable."

Jesus was often shown on medieval coins and, at times, some scholars have interpreted the seat he sits on as being a throne.

Excavations at the site and analysis of the artifacts are ongoing.

(Source: Live Science)

# Lots of attention to rural development

BY Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN- Villagers and nomads play a vital role in the political, economic, and social developments of Iran. So, October 7 was declared in 2013 as the National Day of Village and Nomads.

Despite their low population, they have a great contribution to all-out national development.

Although oil, industry, and service sectors hold a significant share of the national economy, the rural and nomadic economy is considered an inexhaustible source for the nation, compared to exhaustible natural resources.

Living far from pollution and current problems of cities and being less dependent on oil resources, they play a critical role in sustainable development.

Villagers and nomads take the lead in providing food, food security, and healthy food production.

They have a major role in the tourism and handicraft industry and they are sources of many cultures and traditions in the country playing an important role in ensuring the country's security, especially in borders and remote areas.

Some 25 percent of the country's population lives in villages, producing around 70 percent of food for the domestic market.

Currently, more than 90 percent of agricultural and food products are produced in villages. Some 25 percent of the country's meat products and 35 percent of handicrafts, as well as a major part of organic dairy products, including vegetable



oil, milk, curd, and other materials, are produced by nomads.

In fact, the economy of the rural areas is not limited to agriculture; it includes various industries such as handicrafts, creative industries, clothing, processing industries, food, medicinal plants, carpentry, furniture, tourism, ecotourism, fisheries, carpets and rugs, and dried fruits.

Products of villagers and nomads are being presented in an exhibition named "Rusta Abad" (Developed Village), ISNA reported.

## Major problems

Amir-Hossein Madani, the vice president for rural development, referred to education as one of the main reasons for migration from villages to cities.

In most villages, children have to go to the city to study in high schools.

Urban development is the second reason. Villages with more than 3,000 households will be known as

cities that used to be villages and now have grown into cities.

The other issue is the people's livelihood. In fact, the inflation rate in the villages is higher than in the cities. Transportation is another problem.

Today nomads are facing difficult conditions due to drought and lack of sufficient water, pasture, and fodder for their livestock as one of the three main pillars of their lives.

## Measures taken

During the past two years, about 800 trillion rials (some \$160 million) have been invested in rural development, leading to the creation of around 670,000 jobs in villages and nomadic areas.

Some 30,000 construction projects have been implemented in rural areas within the last 2 years, which played an important role in persuading people to stay in their villages by increasing their incomes.

To find suitable product markets and cut out the middlemen, as one

of the problems of villages, there has been a plan through which 500 markets for rural products in high traffic and tourist routes will be considered.

The plan will eliminate middlemen and deliver products with higher quality and more reasonable prices to consumers.

Also, there are 11,000 villages that have mines; out of 6,000 closed mines, 500 mines have been restored so far and 3,000 more rural units are expected to be restored with the help of the government.

So far, 6,000 aqueducts have been studied to be restored and provide water. We have started watershed management in 30 parts of the country with the help of volunteers, covering an area of one million hectares.

From the calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017) to the year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022), some 450,000 people did return to the villages. In other words, they returned from the city to the village, and it has continued over the past two years since the administration took office.

Also, almost 900 bankrupt production units have been restored, and 5,700 economic units have been revived.

Various organizations including the National Development Fund, the Ima Khomeini Relief Committee, the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam, and the Housing Foundation have all provided loans with low rates to support villagers and nomads.

## WFP releases August report on Iran

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Iran  
Country Brief  
August 2023



TEHRAN - The World Food Program (WFP) has released a report, expounding on activities in Iran over the month of August.

In August, WFP food assistance reached 32,684 beneficiaries, which includes Afghan and Iraqi refugees.

Of this 28% were women, 29% were men, 21% were girls, and 22% were boys. Refugees are assisted with a staple food basket which includes fortified wheat flour (9 kg per person per month) and vegetable oil (900 ml per person per month).

In addition to this in-kind food assistance, WFP provides cash assistance to 7,733 Afghan and Iraqi refugee households each month.

In August, households headed by refugee men received Iranian Rials (IRR) 2 million (US\$ 5.3, according to the UN Operational Rate) per person.

Households headed by refugee women received a slightly higher monthly cash allocation, amounting to IRR 2.5 million (US\$ 6.7) per person due to limited access to working opportunities, leading to higher food insecurity.

To maintain beneficiaries' purchasing power amid deteriorating economic conditions, since June, WFP increased its cash assistance to vulnerable refugee women and men facing serious risks over their food security and well-being.

The school feeding and cash incentive distribution is suspended for July, August, and September due to summer school break.

According to recommendations from the February 2022 WFP and UNHCR Joint Assessment Mission, refugees with disabilities were granted

by WFP a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US\$ 2.7) in addition to their regular entitlement.

WFP implemented a pilot initiative in two settlements, Shahid Naseri of Markazi and Mohajerin of Semnan provinces, providing refugees with disabilities a monthly cash top-up of IRR 1 million (US\$ 2.6) on top of their regular entitlement. In August, the program successfully reached 92 beneficiaries out of the planned 100.

Meanwhile, according to WFP's 2022 report on Iran based on Interim Country Strategic Plan (2018-2023), Iran was one of the most affected countries by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the pandemic gradually abated and restrictions were lifted by mid-2022, the country continued to struggle with its severe negative socio-economic impacts, the report said.

In mid-2022, the Government decided to cut subsidies from staple food items. As a result, the prices of meat and poultry, dairy products and cooking oil increased fourfold overnight.

Inflation and increased prices of basic food commodities combined with local currency devaluation and reduced job opportunities due to a stagnating economy have significantly reduced the purchasing power of vulnerable groups including refugees.

Against this backdrop and despite the tightening of trade restrictions and external barriers, WFP Iran succeeded in meeting its plan of supporting over 32,000 refugees living inside 20 settlements with unconditional food assistance through a combination of locally procured in-kind food and cash-based transfers.

## Iran to attend WHO regional committee meeting

TEHRAN - A delegation led by Health Minister Bahram Einollahi is going to participate in the 70th session of the World Health Organization's Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean.

The event is planned to take place in Cairo, Egypt, from October 9 to 12, with the theme of 'United for a healthier future'.

The minister is scheduled to deliver a speech on regional health issues as well as achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of health despite sanctions.

On Tuesday, an election will be held for the position of director of the Eastern Mediterranean Region of the World Health Organization. Ali Akbari-Sari from Iran is among the nominees.

Also on Wednesday, the Kuwait government award for the control of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean region will be presented to Afshin Ostovar, the head of the Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Institute of Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

## Iran enhances regional health security

On May 12, Syed Jaffar Hussain, the World Health Organization Representative and Head of Mission in Iran, appreciated Iran for its efforts to

enhance health security in the region.

The WHO representative also thanked Iran for holding the 26th G5 High-Level Experts Meeting on Health Cooperation and the 1st Healthcare Leadership and Governance Training Program, IRNA reported.

G5 countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, plus the World Health Organization) took part in the meetings from May 6 to 10 with the theme of "Joint Work for Solving Joint Health Problems."

Addressing the opening ceremony, Health Minister Bahram Einollahi referred to the unity and cooperation of the countries in the fields of health, treatment, and medical education as a historical necessity.

Achieving, maintaining, and promoting health is never possible in a regional way and does not happen in an isolated region, but requires the cooperation of countries, especially neighboring countries, he stressed.

"To develop health in the countries of the group of five, we must look at health collectively and think about creating and promoting health in all countries.

The health sector of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan is tied to each other. Today, with the relations and cooperation that exist

in different sectors between the countries and neighbors, a disease is capable of penetrating all countries."

"Therefore, our unity and cooperation is a historical necessity so that the health indicators in the region can be improved and brought to the ideal point," the minister reiterated.

He went on to say that conditions should be provided so that professors, students, and scientists can easily communicate with each other and travel to each other's countries without hindrance and hold joint scientific conferences.

"Many incidents have happened in the region, such as this year's huge earthquake in Turkey and last year's flood in Pakistan, which unfortunately left many damages and deaths. These bitter incidents show the need for joint cooperation to help each other."

Health is the common link of the countries of the region and it can cause the unity and development of the cooperation of the G5 countries and also a prelude to the development of the health economy, he added.

"Iran has achieved many successes in the field of knowledge-based companies and is able to provide 99 percent of its pharmaceutical needs and 40 percent of its advanced medical equipment needs."

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## \$4m budget allocated to promote non-motorized transport

A total budget of 170 billion rials (around \$4 million) has been allocated to promote bike lanes across the capital city of Tehran, encouraging the residents to ride bicycles, Sakineh Ashrafi, deputy mayor of Tehran for planning, urban development and council affairs has said.

One of the main issues taken into consideration through the next year's budget bill, was development of non-motorized transportation, which focuses on active transportation and human powered transportation including walking and bicycling, she explained.

According to Tehran third development plan, biking as a green transport has been taken into consideration in order to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution, she further noted, ISNA reported on Sunday.

## تصویب اعتبار ۱۷ میلیاردی برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت

سکینه اشرفی معاون برنامه‌ریزی، توسعه شهری و امور شورای شهردار تهران از تصویب حدود ۱۷۰ میلیارد ریال اعتبار برای توسعه دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی در پایتخت خبر داد.

وی اظهار کرد: یکی از موضوعاتی که در بودجه سنواتی سال آینده شهرداری تهران به آن توجه شده، موضوع توسعه حمل و نقل عمومی غیرموتوری از جمله دوچرخه‌سواری همگانی است. به گزارش روز یکشنبه برگزاری ایسنا وی ادامه داد: در برنامه سوم توسعه شهر تهران، موضوع توجه به دوچرخه‌سواری به عنوان یک حمل و نقل پاک برای کاهش ترافیک و آلودگی هوا مورد توجه و تاکید قرار گرفته است.

## Over 300,000 illegal Afghan migrants deported



TEHRAN - Some 328,000 illegal Afghan migrants who had illegally entered Iran during the first half of the Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), were sent back through the borders of the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, IRNA reported.

The commander of Khorasan Razavi province's border police, Majid Shoja, said that 488,000 Afghans have officially and legally entered the country within the same period.

On August 1, more than 7,500 illegal Afghan migrants were deported to their home country.

In line with the policy to deal with illegal migration, the border police identified 7,563 undocumented Afghan nationals and sent them back to their country via the Dogharon border in Khorasan Razavi province," Shoja added.

"Foreign nationals should enter the country through legal and official gateways, otherwise they will be dealt with decisively."

Official statistics say around five million Afghan nationals live in Iran, about one million of them live in Khorasan Razavi province, mostly in the capital city of Mashhad.

For over four decades, Iran has been hosting one of the largest and most protracted refugee situations in the world and has provided asylum to refugees, mostly from Afghanistan.

The recent fast-paced turn of events in

Afghanistan has the potential to create additional population movements; internally displacing families and potentially driving them to neighboring countries to seek refuge.

Iran is home to over 800,000 registered refugees and some 2.6 million undocumented Afghans. Today, more than 500,000 Afghan children- including undocumented Afghans and those who have newly arrived in Iran are benefitting from Iran's inclusive education policies, one of the most progressive in the world.

Despite the sanctions and economic pressures, Iran continues its comprehensive policy of providing services to refugees, and this is appreciable, UNHCR's Officer in Charge, Inna Gladkova, said in November 2022.

The best solution and the most stable support system for refugees is that have access to schools and education just like Iranian nationals, she stated, IRNA reported.

Iran has taken effective and continuous measures to include all refugees, and the UNHCR also declares its readiness to fulfill its obligations, she noted.

In May, Robin Nandy, the representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Iran, said the country's comprehensive program for the protection of refugee children is encouraging.

Making investments in programs and services to better care for and support children affected by migration and asylum will reduce costs in the future, he added.

Emphasizing the important role of non-governmental organizations in supporting refugee and immigrant children and teenagers, Nandy expressed hope that holding educational workshops will lead to the promotion of children's rights and justice for children.



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## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*I appreciate an old man's cautious opinion more than the valor of a young man.*  
**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times » Noon: 11:52 Evening: 17:57 Dawn: 4:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:05 (tomorrow)

## Paintings of 10-year-old autistic savant on display at Niavaran Palace Museum

TEHRAN-The fourth solo exhibition of the young autistic savant Rastin Molaeizadeh titled "Regulus" is underway at Niavaran Palace Museum in Tehran.

Held on the occasion of the World Space Week, October 4 to 10, and the national children's week, October 8 to 14, the exhibit includes 16 paintings by the 10-year-old artist, showing the process of launching spaceships and details of the launchers, CHTN reported.

Autistic savants are people who suffer from a developmental disability yet demonstrate some cognitive ability, exceeding what most people can do. These abilities may involve, art, music, arithmetic, spatial skills, or calendar abilities.

Regulus, also called Alpha Leonis, is the brightest star in the zodiacal constellation Leo and one of the brightest in the entire sky. It is 77 light-years from Earth.

Rastin's works are a bold depiction of the authority of conquering space and the history of the journey to the galaxy.

Born in Tehran, Rastin was very playful but had speech delays and oral-motor problems as a child. At the age of two years and eight months, he was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS), which refers to a group of disorders characterized by impairment in the development of social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, imaginative activity and a limited number of interests and activities that tend to be repetitive. So, his therapies started immediately.

Since he was three, Rastin showed interest in the geometric relationship of objects and achieved creative arrangement with every geometric shape.

At the age of four, he started painting on the walls of the house and the next step was painting on all the ceramic surfaces of the house. After six months he began painting on paper.

When he was six years old, he became interested



in the space shuttles and this was the beginning of his endless passion for space technology. Scientific documentaries about astronautics and the launch process were among his favorite fixed programs, and many books with related images were provided to him.

Apart from design, Rastin had a great interest in making launchers and used Lego, cardboard, cans and any tool to create a 3D model.

At the age of seven, he learned school lessons at home, and with indescribable enthusiasm, he started robotics and astronomy courses in a well-equipped research center in Mashhad, along with the language class.

Since June, he has held three solo exhibitions in Mashhad. His ongoing exhibit will run until October 15 at Niavaran Museum Palace located at Shahid Bahonar (Niavaran) Square.

## Tehran's Vahdat Hall to host Iran's National Orchestra

TEHRAN - The first autumn concert of Iran's National Orchestra, titled "Paiizan", will be held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Thursday.

Under the baton of Homayoun Rahimian, the National Orchestra will perform a repertoire of popular pieces by famous Iranian composers, including Javad Marufi, Hossein Dehlavi, and Rouhollah Khaleqi during the concert, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Ali Abedin will accompany the orchestra as the santur soloist.

Iran's National Orchestra was founded in 1998 under the conduction of the renowned Iranian composer Farhad Fakhreddini.

Maestro Fakhreddini attracted a huge number of musicians, including legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian, to collaborate with the orchestra.

The orchestra had been formed by Persian traditional instruments, strings and woodwind instruments. During its history, the orchestra focused on Persian composers' compositions including pieces by renowned figures such as Fakhreddini, Ali Tajvidi, and Hossein Alizadeh among others.



In its last performance, the National Orchestra of Iran, conducted by Rahimian, paid tribute to Arbaeen with "Farewell" concert at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on August 30 and 31, marking the 40th day after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS).

Conducted by Rahimian, the concert was accompanied by prominent Iranian vocalist Hesameddin Seraj.



## Children's film festival kicks off in Isfahan

From Page 1 ► The education and development of the new generation of artists must include a fundamental incorporation of culture and art in their learning journey, he added.

The ministry is keen on partnering with the Farabi Foundation to implement cinema into the school curriculum and this would involve arranging dedicated sessions for film and cinema lessons, he explained.

He emphasized that cinema has the power to serve as a shared language between diverse nations and cultures and that the dynamic contributions of Iran's younger generation will be integral to the industry's ongoing advancement.

For his part, Zeinolabedin said that this year, more than 550 films

applied for the festival in the four competitive categories and national and international sections in the field of short and feature films.

After a meticulous selection process, a grand total of 68 films qualified for the final phase of the competition.

The inclusion of 835 children and youth jurors is a testament to Isfahan's children's fervor and eagerness for the festival, as well as the widespread support from the community.

The 35th International Film Festival for Children and Youth will run until October 12.

In the previous edition of the festival, which was held in 2021, the acclaimed Iranian drama "Yadoo" was picked as best film.

The film follows a teenage boy

named Yadoo living with his family and people under siege in the southwestern Iranian city of Abadan in the early days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The family is finally forced to migrate.

Produced by Mohammadreza Mesbah, the film brought Mehdi Jafari the Golden Butterfly for best director. Jafari also won the award of the International Centre of Film for Children and Young People - CIFEJ.

The award for best photography director was also given to Morteza Najafi for his collaboration in the film.

Iranian drama "Sea Boys", written and directed by Afshin Hashemi and Hossein Qasemi-Jami, won the award for best screenplay.

"Sea Boys" also was selected best film in the national competition.

Yasin Habibpur was selected as best actor for his role in the film.

The Croatian sci-fi "My Grandpa Is an Alien" co-directed by Marina Andree Skop and Drazen Zarkovic won the special award of the jury of children. Skop and Zarkovic also won the Golden Butterfly for best artistic achievement.

The special jury award was given to "Lucia" by Spanish director Juan Pato.

The best music award went to the Indian drama "Sumi" directed by Amol Vasant Gole. Rohan Rohan has collaborated as a composer on this film.

"The Silence of the River" by Peruvian director Francesca Canepa was named best short.

"My Grandmother Matilde" by Mexican director Miguel Anaya Borja was picked as best animation.

## National Museum of Tajikistan opens Hafez section

TEHRAN-Concurrent with the State Language Day in Tajikistan, October 5, the National Museum of Tajikistan in Dushanbe opened a new section dedicated to the works of the famous Persian poet Hafez.

The Hafez section in the museum generally includes manuscripts related to Hafez and copies of Hafez's divan, a collection of his surviving ghazals, IRNA reported on Friday.

At the opening ceremony, Iranian poet Mostafa Mohadesi-Khorasani recited some ghazals by Hafez and talked about the place of Persian language in the cultural convergence of the Persian and Tajik people.

It is the first time that an independent section for Hafez has been considered in the museums of Persian speaking countries.

Tajik, also called Tajiki Persian or Tajiki, is the variety of Persian spoken in Tajikistan and

Uzbekistan by Tajiks. It is closely related to neighboring Dari of Afghanistan with which it forms a continuum of mutually intelligible varieties of the Persian language.

Hafez works are regarded by many Iranians as one of the highest pinnacles of Persian literature. Hafez primarily wrote in the literary genre of lyric poetry or ghazals, that is the ideal style for expressing the ecstasy of divine inspiration in the mystical form of love poems.

Themes of his ghazals include the beloved, faith and exposing hypocrisy. Adaptations, imitations and translations of his poems exist in all major languages.

The launch of the Hafez section at the museum happened on the final day of the 11th Dushanbe International Book Exhibition "Kitobi Dushanbe 2023" (The Book of Dushanbe), which was held in the Tajikistan capital city, From October 3 to 5.



## Calligraphy sculpture by Iranian artist at Dubai Calligraphy Biennale

TEHRAN-An artwork by sculptor, calligrapher Amirshahrokh Faryoosofi has been selected for the first Dubai Calligraphy Biennale, which was launched October 1.

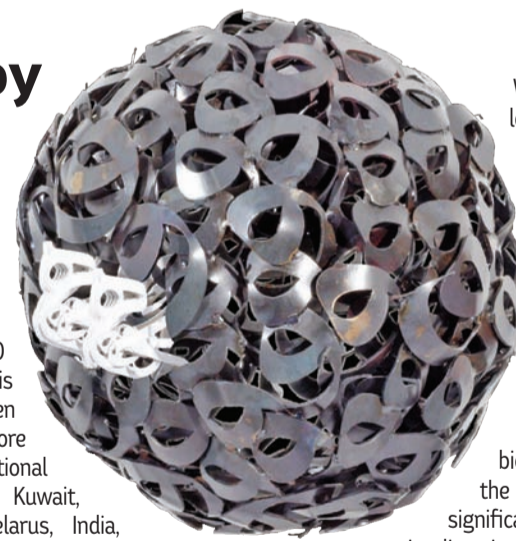
Entitled, "You Are the Life and the World," Faryoosofi's work is presented by Negar Art Gallery at the event, ILNA reported.

An iron round sculpture, the calligraphy sculpture elegantly captures the essence of Rumi's poem, symbolizing the profound connection between the soul and the world. It merges intricate calligraphy with a captivating black-and-white color palette, creating a visually striking composition.

Faryoosofi, 67, is a member of the Society of Iranian

Calligraphists and the Persian Miniature Society. He has held over 10 exhibitions in Iran. His works have also been showcased at more than 10 international exhibits in Tunisia, Kuwait, Turkey, Russia, Belarus, India, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the U.A.E.

The first Dubai Calligraphy Biennale is running in different locations across the city until the end of October.



Works of more than 200 local and international calligraphers and artists are on show through city-wide exhibitions in art galleries, public spaces and libraries.

The event features 19 exhibitions across Dubai, with a range of artists from various disciplines, languages and mediums.

One of the aims of the biennial is to shed light on the cultural and historical significance of calligraphy along with its diversity and relevance as an evolving art form and a rich source of inspiration for all creatives.

Photo: "You Are the Life and the World" by Amirshahrokh Faryoosofi

## Iranian short films to compete at Chicago children's filmfest

TEHRAN -Two Iranian short films will go on screen at the 40th edition of the Chicago International Children's Film Festival (CICFF).

"I'm a Man" by Amin Ali Shahsavari and "Hooves Beat" co-directed by Fargol Masruriad and Seyyed Hossein Zeitunnejad will go on screen at the festival, which will run from November 3 to 19.

"I'm a Man" follows the story of Hossein, a boy living with Dunn's Syndrome, who faces the challenges of economic hardship in his family while also grappling with his father's illness.

"Hooves Beat" tells the story of Tino, who lives in a border town in Kordestan with his parents and his beloved horse.

When the horse gets into danger, Tino has to make a life-altering decision.

The Chicago International Children's Film Festival (CICFF) is an annual event that showcases films from all over the world aimed at a young audience. Starting in 1983, CICFF is the largest event of its kind in North America. The festival selects films for several age groups ranging from toddlers to teenagers.

The festival offers an exciting range of events, including workshops, discussions with filmmakers, and special presentations, which enhance the festival's relevance and experience. The festival's primary aim is to

allow children to discover the world, its people, and its cultures through cinema. It provides a platform for young filmmakers to showcase their talent while offering an opportunity to meet and engage with industry professionals.

The CICFF has earned an excellent reputation for showcasing the very best in children's cinema, and it attracts a diverse audience from different parts of the world each year. The festival demonstrates the importance of experiencing life through the lens of a camera, securing its place as a vital resource for children's education and entertainment.



A scene from "Hooves Beat" co-directed by Fargol Masruriad and Seyyed Hossein Zeitunnejad