



Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf stands amidst the ruins of Beirut on Saturday, October 12, 2024. He is surrounded by residents and reporters.

## Qalibaf's visit to Beirut a bold show of Iran's commitment to supporting Lebanon

بكم نمضى و ننتصر!

### New cross-border payment system pitched at BRICS meeting in Moscow

TEHRAN - Russia has proposed a new cross-border payment system to be conducted among BRICS countries to circumvent the western financial system, according to the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Mohammadreza Frazin, who visited Russia to attend the 2nd BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors Meeting, said this new system includes developing a network of commercial banks that can conduct banking transactions in local currencies as well as establishing direct links between central banks.

"The BRICS Payment system was proposed with the aim of creating a settlement platform for cross-border payments based on Real Time Gross Settlement Systems (RTGS) and considering Central Bank Digital Currency Tracker (CBDC) mechanisms," Farzin explained.

Referring to the necessity of using artificial intelligence in electronic banking and Iran's readiness to transfer its experiences to BRICS members, he said: "We believe that due to the political desire and will that exists in the BRICS group and the technical and infrastructure investments that have been made, we can move towards creating financial communication systems specific to BRICS which can facilitate cross-border payments among the members, and finally increase the speed, reduce the costs, and create a more competitive environment." ▶ Page 4

### Israeli airstrike on Iranian medical facility in Lebanon an undeniable war crime: envoy

TEHRAN - Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Irvani, has strongly condemned Israel's recent airstrike on an Iranian medical facility located near the Lebanon-Syria border, calling it a clear violation of international humanitarian law and an undeniable war crime.

In letters sent to UN Security Council President Pascale Baeriswyl and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Irvani described the attack as a "heinous and flagrant violation" of international law. "This egregious strike on a humanitarian aid facility is not only a war crime but an attack on life-saving relief efforts aimed at supporting those suffering under relentless aggression by the Israeli regime," Irvani wrote.

The attack, which destroyed a vital hospital established by the Iranian Red Crescent to aid displaced Lebanese civilians, has drawn international outrage.

The facility, established by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, was meant to provide critical medical aid and relief to Lebanese civilians affected by the ongoing conflict, which has intensified with Israel's military actions in the region. ▶ Page 2

### Qalibaf's Lebanon visit heartens Lebanese in countering US-Zionist arrogance

By Sondos al-Assad

BEIRUT - Amidst the hostile propaganda that has failed to present Iran as a marginal party in the ongoing Israeli war on Lebanon, the trip of Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf to Lebanon and his inspection of the bombarded areas in Beirut heartened the Lebanese. The visit also once again highlighted Iran's keenness to empower Lebanon and to make every effort to confront the U.S.-Zionist arrogance.

This policy has been underway since the victory of the Islamic Revolution. In parallel, other states have relentlessly colluded to weaken Lebanon and empower the occupiers to breach Lebanon's security and sovereignty.

Before Operation "Al-Aqsa Flood", the US-Zionist enemy, with absolute Western support, has been systematically trying to force the peoples of West Asia to accept the "deal of the century." Iran, however, has aborted this colonial attempt and has exposed the fragility of the occupying entity. ▶ Page 3

### Hamas slams Nazi-like siege of north Gaza

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Northern Gaza is witnessing severe Israeli bombing and attacks targeting infrastructure and what remains of homes.

A complete siege and the isolation of areas from one another has entered the seventh consecutive day.

There have been 268 casualties over the past 24 hours, the Gaza health ministry said on Saturday, the majority of them in the north.

Experts believe Tel Aviv is trying to cleanse the entire north of Gaza via death or starvation to make it a closed-occupied military zone.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has said that no food aid has entered the north since October 1.

On Saturday dawn, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) issued new evacuation orders in the Jabalia area, home to the enclave's largest refugee camp.

But the IOF attacks and restrictions meant nobody could leave the camp which has been subject to continuous artillery shelling since Friday night, resulting in many deaths and injuries. ▶ Page 5

### Hezbollah's indomitable spirit: Painful lesson awaits Israel

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Since launching a brutal military campaign in Lebanon last month, Israel has concurrently carried out psychological warfare operations in a desperate attempt to tarnish the image of the Hezbollah resistance movement.

Hezbollah and Israel began trading fire a day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Gaza on October 7, 2023. Netanyahu issued the order after Hamas conducted Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, a surprise military attack in southern Israel which dealt a severe blow to the regime.

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced in northern Israel and southern Lebanon amid the exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah over the course of the Gaza war which has so far left more than 42,000 Palestinian people dead.

Israel launched a massive bombing campaign in Lebanon on September 23 which was later followed by a ground invasion of the country's south. Israel also assassinated Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in an airstrike on a neighborhood in southern Beirut on September 27. ▶ Page 5

### Maritime heritage: key to future tourism and development

TEHRAN - The Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Caspian Sea have provided Iran with unique opportunities to drive and boost economic growth in terms of sea-based tourism.

The uniquely distinct northern and southern coasts of Iran are well-positioned for maritime tourism given their great natural beauty, inviting seaside climates, and extensive coastlines. However, what they need is the development of infrastructure and facilities required for the expansion of the sector.

The country's extensive coastline includes 750 km along the Caspian Sea and around 2250 km along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, each situated in distinct regions with different seasonal qualities and recreational opportunities. ▶ Page 6



### President Pezeshkian officially starts new academic year

The new academic year started officially on Saturday in a ceremony at the University of Tehran with the presence of President Masoud Pezeshkian. The ministers of science and health also attended the ceremony.

Addressing the audience, the president said that universities and students have the capability to reach the country to the peak of science and technology.

In the academic year 2022-2023, the number of university students in the country stood at 3.249 million, a decrease of 2.7 percent year on year.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025 has placed 85 Iranian universities among the top institutions compared to 75 universities in 2024.

### The evolving debate: Iran's nuclear policy and regional security concerns

By Xavier Villar ▶ Page 2

### The ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence

By Soroush Saki ▶ Page 7

### A year of Operation al-Aqsa Flood

By Sim Zahra ▶ Page 5

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## US responsible for continued Israeli crimes

In an analysis, Etemad pointed to the crimes of Israel with the American support and wrote: Now it is obvious to everyone that it is not just the occupying regime that is fighting the oppressed nations. Western countries, particularly the United States, are strategic supporters of Israel. They are the chief supplier of weapons to Israel. Israel would have suffered crushing blows in Operation True Promise I (in April) if there had been no air defense support from the Western countries. In Operation True Promise II, since other countries (Westerners) were not present to defend Israel and the technique and equipment were different the strikes were more effective. Therefore, America is the main factor in maintaining the continuation of the crimes of this fake regime. If America decides not to continue supporting, the end of the regime would be near. In the recent developments in the region, we tried to take reasonable measures through secret and open negotiations. Both strategic encounters and professional negotiations took place. What is important is maintaining the balance of power in the relations between the parties. If we are to enter strategic talks with America one day, it may be today.

## Donya-e-Eqtesad: America under the pressure of Persian Gulf Arabs

In a note, Donya-e-Eqtesad discussed Israel's possible attack on Iran and Arab countries' concerns about it. It said: As the tensions between Iran and Israel are intensifying and concerns are growing over a large-scale war, three Persian Gulf sources told Reuters that the neighboring countries in the Persian Gulf are lobbying Washington to prevent Israel from attacking Iran's oil sites because they are worried that their oil facilities will come under fire from Tehran's allies if the conflict escalates. As part of their attempts to avoid being caught in the crossfire, Gulf states including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are also refusing to let Israel fly over their airspace for any attack on Iran and have conveyed this to Washington, the three sources close to government circles said. Israel has promised Iran will pay for its missile attack on October 1 while Tehran has said any retaliation would be met with vast destruction, raising fears of a wider war in the region that could suck in the United States.

## Araqchi to head to Baghdad on Sunday, Iraqi media reports

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi is set to depart Tehran for Baghdad on Sunday, according to Iraqi media reports.

The Middle East News website, citing sources within the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, confirmed the visit for Sunday. Araqchi's trip to Baghdad follows a whirlwind tour of the region, including visits to Lebanon and Syria, as well as Saudi Arabia and Qatar last week. His schedule also reportedly includes an official visit to Cairo in the coming days to discuss mutual concerns and regional developments with Egyptian officials.

This flurry of diplomatic activity suggests

## Jam-e-Jam: Diplomacy against war

In an article, Jam-e-Jam dealt with Foreign Minister Araghchi's diplomatic trips to regional countries. It wrote: The purpose of Araghchi's trip to regional countries, especially Saudi Arabia, is to consult on developments in the region and help stop Zionist regime's crimes. Araghchi's trips to the regional countries are taking place in a situation where the fake regime of Israel is trying to depict Iran as the source of instability in the region and present its crimes as legitimate. On the other hand, Iran has repeatedly declared that it is fully prepared for a military confrontation with the Zionists in line with legitimate right to defend itself and its brothers in the Axis of Resistance, and welcomes any diplomatic mechanism and proposal to reduce tension. But Netanyahu needs more crimes in the region to stay in power and get political and economic support from Washington. In such a situation, the Muslim countries in the region should stop neglect and ignorance as soon as possible and join Iran's stabilizing plans to save their religious brothers from the current fatal situation.

## Farhikhtegan: Ceasefire is the most pressing issue in the region

In a commentary, Farhikhtegan addressed the ceasefire plan and Iran's role in it. The paper said: The main purpose of the Iranian foreign minister's regional trips is to reach a ceasefire agreement to prevent the escalation of tensions in the region. In this framework, Saudi Arabia is considered an important destination because just before the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, Saudi Arabia was in the process of normalizing relations with Israel. But the Al-Aqsa Storm and the pressure from Arab countries have postponed it. But now Saudi Arabia is worried about the increasing tensions in the region and has put a ceasefire plan on the table. Iran's role in this plan has a clear international message, proving Iran does not intend to increase regional tensions. Currently, the position of Arab countries is very important for the United States to agree on a ceasefire. Now the most serious idea is the initiative of the Gulf Plan, which has come to support the Palestinian National Authority. Of course, Israel has not accepted it. However, this issue is now very serious. For this reason, the position of countries like Saudi Arabia is very important.



Iran is actively engaging with regional players, to address key issues in a region brought to the precipice of war by the Israeli regime's continued aggressions.

## Iran preparing to forge new economic alliances with neighbors, says president

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has announced that significant agreements related to energy, transportation, and regional cooperation are nearing completion.

His remarks came following a diplomatic mission to Turkmenistan, where he underscored the cultural and economic significance of the visit.

Pezeshkian emphasized fruitful discussions held with Turkmenistan's leadership, highlighting the imminent finalization and signing of agreements during an upcoming economic working group in Tehran next month. These agreements aim to bolster cooperation across vital infrastructure and economic sectors between the nations.

Additionally, the president detailed talks with Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, focusing on accelerating joint projects in energy, railways, desalination systems, and petrochemicals. Discussions also encompassed regional developments, with a call for heightened regional cooperation among neighboring countries to

foster connectivity.

Highlighting further diplomatic engagements, Pezeshkian noted meetings with the presidents of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, where plans were made for joint working groups to convene in Iran.

These groups will focus on increasing regional cooperation and enhancing economic ties. This collaboration, according to Iranian officials, could help mitigate the effects of ongoing international sanctions on Iran.

These initiatives are also poised to strengthen regional ties and enhance economic collaboration, offering potential solutions to mitigate the impacts of international sanctions on Iran.

The president expressed optimism that these diplomatic efforts will yield tangible results, reinforcing Iran's connectivity within the region and paving the way for sustained economic growth and stability through strategic partnerships with neighboring countries.

## U.S. imposes new sanctions on Iran's oil, petrochemical sectors

TEHRAN – The United States has introduced a fresh wave of sanctions targeting Iran's oil and petrochemical industries, following Iran's retaliatory missile attacks on Israeli military and intelligence facilities earlier this month.

The sanctions, announced by the U.S. Treasury Department on Friday, are aimed at intensifying financial pressure on Iran, restricting its ability to generate revenue from its energy exports, which the U.S. claims are used to support regional Resistance movements and fund "destabilizing" activities across West Asia. As part of the new measures, the Treasury Department designated 16 companies and 23 vessels involved in the transport of Iranian oil and petrochemical products as blocked property. These sanctions specifically target what the U.S. has described as a "shadow fleet" of tankers used to evade restrictions and export Iranian petroleum.

In a statement, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen emphasized that the sanctions are in direct response to Iran's recent attacks on Israeli targets. "The United States



The front of the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington, D.C.

is taking decisive action to further disrupt the Iranian regime's ability to finance and conduct destabilizing activities," Yellen said.

She pointed to Iran's alleged nuclear development, ballistic missile program, and use of drones as key concerns. Yellen vowed that the U.S. would continue to impose further sanctions if necessary to hold Iran "accountable." Secretary of State Antony Blinken echoed Yellen's remarks, stressing that the U.S. remains committed to curbing Iran's

access to energy revenue.

The sanctions were imposed in line with the Stop Harboring Iranian Petroleum (SHIP) Act, a bipartisan U.S. law designed to penalize foreign entities involved in the trade of Iranian petroleum products. The law, which was recently delegated by President Biden to the Departments of the Treasury and State, is part of broader efforts to isolate Iran economically.

Iran, for its part, has condemned the U.S. sanctions as part of an ongoing economic war. Tehran maintains that

its military programs, including its missile development, are defensive in nature. Iranian officials have criticized the U.S. for attempting to undermine Iran's sovereignty and said the sanctions are unfairly punishing the Iranian people. The missile attacks that triggered the new U.S. sanctions took place on October 1, when Iran launched a series of missiles at Israeli military and intelligence bases.

The strikes were in retaliation for the assassination of several key figures, including Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, Hezbollah's Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and a senior commander of the Iranian Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Abbas Nilforooshan.

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh described the operation, dubbed Operation True Promise II, as a success, claiming it achieved more than 90% of its objectives and was conducted in accordance with international law.

The U.S. officials have signalled that more anti-Iran sanctions could follow in the future out of support for Israel.

## Israeli airstrike on Iranian medical facility in Lebanon an undeniable war crime: envoy

From page 1 ▶ The attack, which destroyed a vital hospital established by the Iranian Red Crescent to aid displaced Lebanese civilians, has drawn international outrage.

The facility, established by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, was meant to provide critical medical aid and relief to Lebanese civilians affected by the ongoing conflict, which has intensified with Israel's military actions in the region. The hospital, equipped with 200 beds, advanced medical technology, oxygen production units, and essential medical supplies, also included two mobile bakeries, food packages, and other necessary relief materials. According to Iravani, the facility's supplies were entirely destroyed in what he described as a "savagely and terrorist attack."

The Iranian envoy stressed that the International Committee of the Red Cross had

been formally notified of Iran's intentions to set up the aid facility. "Despite the clearly humanitarian nature of the hospital and its vital role in assisting displaced civilians, it was deliberately targeted and destroyed," he said.

"The deliberate targeting of medical and humanitarian facilities by the Israeli regime is an undeniable war crime," Iravani stated. He urged the Security Council to condemn the attack in the strongest possible terms and take concrete steps to prevent further violations. "In the face of ongoing genocidal war and relentless aggression by the Israeli occupying regime, it is imperative that the international community uphold its duty to protect civilians, humanitarian aid workers, and medical facilities. These egregious crimes must not go unanswered."

Iravani's call for action comes amid escalating

tensions in the region, with Israel's military operations causing widespread destruction.

Since the start of its offensive in October 2023, Israel has repeatedly targeted healthcare and educational institutions in Gaza. Numerous hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities have been bombed, with hundreds of educational institutions—including 65 run by the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)—either damaged or completely destroyed.

Despite repeated calls from the UN Security Council for an immediate ceasefire, Israel has continued its aggressive military campaign, which critics say is aimed at eradicating the Palestinian population in the besieged Gaza Strip. The ongoing strikes have sparked global criticism, with many accusing the Israeli regime of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

## The evolving debate: Iran's nuclear policy and regional security concerns

of the centrifuges used for enriching uranium in recent years, accumulating a significant stockpile of material close to the category of weaponry. The genocidal actions and crossing of all red lines by Israel in the past year have created a consensus on the necessity of opening a debate on Iran's nuclear doctrine.

Against this backdrop, Foad Izadi, an expert in international affairs, raised a troubling question during an interview: "Currently, when Zionists, who possess nuclear weapons, are killing people in Gaza in this manner and have no ethical restrictions, asserting that their main enemy is Iran and that they possess weaponry that Iran does not, shouldn't Iran consider a change in its military doctrine?"

This question underscores the impact of regional events on Iran's defensive policy, emphasizing that the strategic decisions of the Islamic Republic are not immutable. Rather, they are subject to constant review and change, while still maintaining certain non-negotiable principles such as independence, autonomy, and a ummatic vision.

In May 2024, Sayyed Kamal Kharrazi, chairman of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, declared that if the Zionist regime dared to damage Iran's nuclear facilities, "our level of deterrence would be different." Kharrazi emphasized that while the country has no intention of producing a nuclear bomb if it were threatened, "they might be compelled to change their nuclear doctrine."

Recently, high-ranking military officials have indicated that if Israel decides to attack nuclear facilities, a revision of Iran's nuclear doctrine and policies, as well as a deviation from previously announced considerations, would be possible. This perspective has generated extensive debate on the necessity of adjusting the country's

nuclear strategy.

National security experts, such as Abolfazl Bazargan, consider that revising the nuclear doctrine is the "only way to control tensions in West Asia." In an interview with a local media outlet, Bazargan underscored that "nuclear capability has proven to have a significant impact on the level of competition, as well as on the ability to manage rivalry and tensions, contributing to stability in the region among adversaries."

Until recently, the topic of nukes had been practically closed to public debate, due to a fatwa issued in 2003 by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei that explicitly prohibited the production and use of nuclear weapons

Bazargan also highlighted that Iran is not a normal state and, therefore, security issues must be addressed appropriately. "The presence of U.S. nuclear vessels in the Persian Gulf and their bases around Iran, which have repeatedly threatened us with a nuclear attack, further increases our perception of the need to develop nuclear capabilities," he added. In this context, many experts point out that possessing nuclear capabilities allows competitors and enemies, despite their antagonism, to maintain their rivalry at a manageable level. To date, the Islamic Republic has singularly managed

to establish effective deterrence without possessing nuclear weapons. Thus, the construction of nuclear armaments is not considered a critical issue for the country, but rather a defensive incentive.

Hassan Khomeini, a cleric and grandson of the founder of the Islamic Republic, also addressed the need to enhance Iran's deterrent capabilities at a time when threats from Israel and the United States are particularly relevant. His intervention underscores the growing urgency of a debate on Iran's nuclear strategy, which could define the future of regional policy and the country's national security.

In a significant development, 39 members of the Iranian parliament have sent a letter to the country's National Security Council requesting a review of the Islamic Republic's defensive doctrine, as well as the authorization and resources necessary for the construction of nuclear weapons. From the perspective of these lawmakers, the acquisition of an atomic bomb by Iran would provide substantial capability to support Palestine and resistance movements. They believe that having a nuclear arsenal would be an invaluable resource for confronting enemies like Israel, which does not respect any limits in their actions.

The current context in the region, characterized by an unrestrained Israel that has crossed numerous red lines, has catalyzed a public debate on the nuclear doctrine that, just a few months ago, would have seemed unthinkable and unnecessary. Whatever path the Islamic Republic chooses regarding its nuclear doctrine, the call for change is growing stronger, reflecting widespread concerns about national security in an increasingly unstable regional environment.

# With you we will go on and triumph

## Qalibaf's visit to Beirut a bold show of Iran's commitment to supporting Lebanon

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – A thick pall of smoke hung heavy over Beirut as Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, at the controls of his own plane, touched down at Rafic Hariri Airport on Saturday.

The Iranian official then walked through the smoldering ruins of the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital. The once-vibrant neighborhoods have been under constant Israeli airstrikes in the past 15 days after the regime assassinated Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah using 85 tons of American bombs.

The residents emerging from their damaged homes to catch a glimpse of the parliament speaker told reporters that they were feeling joy and hope for the first time since losing their beloved leader. "It feels good," said a young mother as she stood next to her two children on the shattered porch of their home, "to know we're not forgotten."

Hossein Pak, an Iranian journalist reporting from Lebanon for the past year, says Qalibaf's visit to Beirut, with Israeli fighter jets and drones still raining down on civilians, was an unexpected but deeply appreciated move.

"This is where the Iranian parliament speaker chose to be," Pak stated, his camera panning across the piles of rubble just meters away from Qalibaf, who was surrounded by a throng of people. "Less than 48 hours ago, Israel bombed this very area. The enemy drones are still circling overhead. Visiting such a place to show support for the Lebanese takes courage. It's not for the faint of heart, it's something



only a true fighter would do."

Qalibaf is a seasoned veteran of both Iranian politics and the military. At just 22 years old, he commanded a division of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) during the Iran-Iraq war. After years of distinguished service in the IRGC, including a stint as commander of the IRGC Air Force, he transitioned to the political arena. To many in Lebanon, Qalibaf is known as a close friend of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's legendary anti-terror commander who vanquished Daesh terrorists in West Asia during the 2010s.

Qalibaf's visit followed closely on the heels of another high-profile trip by a former IRGC member, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who had also made the journey to Beirut under the same perilous conditions.

Both Qalibaf and Araqchi told reporters in Beirut that their presence in the Arab country was a show of support for the Lebanese.

"I have come from Tehran, bearing the warm greetings of the Iranian people, and especially the message of the Leader of the

the northern parts of the occupied territories through unabating successful attacks.

Israel understands that Hezbollah will not relent its attacks until a ceasefire is established in Gaza. With Benjamin Netanyahu showing no signs of agreeing to a ceasefire anytime soon, the Israeli regime is seeking to find a way to militarily defeat the Resistance group. The first, and perhaps most critical, step in this plan is to demoralize the Lebanese fighters. The assassination of Nasrallah on September 27 marked the first stage of this strategy. The second phase aims to convince Hezbollah fighters that Iran, the mainstay of the Resistance, has abandoned them.

Iran's decisive missile attack against Israeli military bases in the occupied territories on October 1 dealt a heavy blow to this narrative of abandonment. With Iran's highest-ranking officials risking their lives to travel to Beirut, the disjoint Israel hopes to create between Tehran and the rest of the Axis of Resistance is becoming more and more unlikely.

"This trip serves as a powerful demonstration of support for the people of Lebanon and the Axis of Resistance. The Islamic Republic has made it clear that it will stand with the Resistance and the oppressed nation of Lebanon, no matter the circumstances. We believe lasting peace in the region can only be achieved through unwavering strength and a clear willingness to defend against threats," expressed an Iranian lawmaker when asked about Qalibaf's Saturday visit to Lebanon.

Islamic Revolution, to the people of Lebanon," the parliament speaker said while addressing a press conference outside Iran's embassy in Beirut following a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart. "Iran stands firmly with the Lebanese nation and government in these challenging times. We will fully support the decisions of the Lebanese government, people, and Resistance."

### A look at the bigger picture

The recent flurry of high-ranking Iranian officials arriving in Beirut, one after another, must be understood within the larger context of the current regional landscape and the ambitions of Israel and its Western allies.

Tensions are at a boiling point as Israel, having reduced Gaza to rubble, now sets its sights on replicating that destruction in other parts of the region, particularly Lebanon. Despite failing to decisively defeat Hamas, the images of devastation in Gaza present a manufactured narrative of victory. Israel's focus now shifts to its other major adversary, Hezbollah, which has effectively cleared Israelis from

achieve the declared goals of the genocidal war in addition to widening the psychological and security crises among the colonial Zionist settlers. This means that the enemy has lost the alleged power of "secure Israel" on which it has always relied to attract the Zionists around the world.

The Iranian diplomacy has also contributed to destroying Ben-Gurion's doctrine and bringing shame to the elite of the "invincible" army, imposing exorbitant military and security expenses on the main supporter and financier, the colonial U.S.

Whether this war was long or short, it was bound to happen. It is no exaggeration to say that a large part of what is happening was preplanned by the U.S. and Israel. However, the Axis of Resistance with Iran's support has been committed to the necessity of counter this notorious hegemony since Quds Force commander Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani was assassinated in Baghdad in January 2020.

### Qalibaf's visit highly appreciated by the Lebanese

Qalibaf's visit is of particular importance as it came amidst extremely complex political and military escalation, and amidst intensive efforts to stop the aggression against Lebanon and elect a president who enjoys the support of all Lebanese after the position was vacant for nearly two years.

A large segment of the Lebanese, except those who back the American-Israeli plan to eliminate Hezbollah, appreciate Iran's sincere efforts to confront the brutality of the U.S.-Zionist war.

They view the visit as the best evidence of Iran's standing – as it has always been – with the righteous Lebanese resistance. It is a clear challenge to the comprehensive land, air and sea blockade that Washington and Tel Aviv are trying to impose on the Lebanese people, just as they did in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the pro-U.S.-Israel media has spared no effort in a coordinated manner to circulate anti-Iran narratives that falsely accuse Tehran of betraying and abandoning the Lebanese people. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the Lebanese appreciate the Iranian role in curbing the U.S.-Israeli aggression. They highly understand that Iran enjoys exemplary political wisdom and prudence in its foreign policy. Iran knows well that the US-Zionist threat is not just aimed at the Palestinians and Lebanese but at the entire people in West Asia, including the dear Iranian people who are suffering from American-led sanctions.

On the other hand, there are pro-U.S.-Israel mercenary regimes that generously serve these colonial interests and are not ashamed of their complete connection to this vicious axis. We and Iran are in the same trench, which is the Axis of Resistance. It is independent Iran that refuses to be "Israel's policeman in the region."

It is an existential war in every sense of the word, and the true victory is for the honest, steadfast, free nation that bravely and patiently resists imperialism. The Iranians along with the Lebanese, the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Iraqis, the Yemenis, and the rest of the free nations are on the right side of history.



From Page 1 ▶ Besides, Iran has also helped to bring down the myth of the "Iron Dome" and the Western military superiority after targeting strategic positions inside the occupied Palestinian territories during "Operations True Promise 1 and 2".

(Iran's retaliatory attack is a legitimate right according to Article 51 of the UN Charter.)

Over the past year, Iran's diplomacy has further frustrated the Western narratives regarding the Palestinian cause, as it has tipped the scales in favor of the Palestinian resistance on strategic, tactical and cultural levels.

For his part, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's leading of Friday prayers confirmed Iran's commitment and sincerity to friends and members of the Axis of Resistance. In addition, it demonstrated Ayatollah Khamenei's wisdom and firmness in confronting the US-Zionist hegemony, emphasizing that Iran will not hesitate to punish "Israel" if it dares to launch any adventurous assault against Iran.

Besides, Iran's diplomatic efforts have demonstrated Israel's disastrous failure to

## Pezeshkian congratulates Kais Saied on re-election as Tunisian president

TEHRAN – In a message to President Kais Saied of Tunisia, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian extended his warm congratulations on Saied's re-election for a second term.

Pezeshkian's message praised Saied's leadership, noting that his re-election reflects the confidence of the Tunisian people in his governance over the past five years.

"I sincerely congratulate Your Excellency on your re-election as the President of the friendly and brotherly country, the Republic of Tunisia," Pezeshkian wrote. He further remarked that the victory symbolizes the trust Tunisians have

in Saied's policies and achievements, as well as their aspirations for the country's continued progress under his leadership.

"The outcome of this election is a clear testament to the people's faith in you and the programs implemented during your first term," the message continued. "It shows their hope for the continuation of this path, which has been aimed at fostering growth and prosperity for Tunisia." Pezeshkian also reiterated Iran's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations with Tunisia, stating that Iran is ready to work closely to expand cooperation between the two nations.

In closing, Pezeshkian offered his best wishes for President Saied's health and success, as well as prosperity for the people of Tunisia: "I pray to Almighty God for your continued health and success in achieving your noble goals, and for the well-being and dignity of the people of Tunisia."

Kais Saied secured his second term in office with a resounding 90.69% of the vote, according to official results from the Tunisian presidential election. This victory marks a significant mandate for Saied, as he leads the Arab-African nation through a crucial period of political and economic challenges.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# IRAN IN FOCUS

OCTOBER 13, 2024

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### AFC's decision leaves Iranian Football in limbo

TEHRAN – In a move that has sparked widespread controversy and disappointment, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has decided to strip Iran of its home advantage for an upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifier against Qatar. The match, originally scheduled to be held in Iran, will now take place at a neutral venue in the United Arab Emirates due to what the AFC has described as "prevailing security concerns."

The Iranian Football Federation has vehemently protested this decision, arguing that the security situation in the country is stable and that there is no justifiable reason to relocate the match. The federation has also pointed out that other countries in the region have hosted international matches amid similar security concerns, raising questions about the impartiality of the AFC's decision.

"We are deeply disappointed and stunned by the AFC's decision," said an Iranian football federation official. "We have provided ample evidence to demonstrate that Iran is a safe and secure host for international football matches. This decision seems to be politically motivated rather than based on genuine security concerns."

Beyond the immediate impact on the Iran-Qatar match, the AFC's decision has far-reaching consequences for Iranian football.

Iranian clubs, including Persepolis, Esteghlal, Tractor, and Sepahan, have also been forced to play their home matches in the AFC Champions League at neutral venues. This has put these teams at a significant disadvantage, as they are deprived of the support of their home fans and the psychological boost that comes with playing on familiar turf.

Critics argue that the AFC's decision sets a dangerous precedent and undermines the principles of fair play. They contend that the organization is applying double standards, as it has been more lenient in its assessments of security situations in other countries.

As Iranian football fans and officials continue to express their outrage over the AFC's decision, it remains to be seen whether the organization will reconsider its stance. The controversy has raised serious questions about the AFC's commitment to fair play and transparency.

### Iran to play Qatar at Maktoum bin Rashid Stadium

TEHRAN – Iran national football team will face Qatar in Dubai's Maktoum bin Rashid Stadium.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has decided to strip Iran of its home advantage for an upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifier against Qatar.

The match was originally scheduled to be played in Mashhad's Imam Reza Stadium.

On Thursday, Team Melli was held to a goalless draw against Uzbekistan in Group A and remained in second place.

### Iran drop two spots in FIFA Futsal Ranking

TEHRAN – Iran futsal team moved down to sixth place in the world ranking list published on Friday. Team Melli, who were knocked out by Morocco from the 2024 Futsal World Cup, have dropped two spots in the ranking.

In the new ranking published today by FIFA, Brazil dominates the list.

Portugal came second in the ranking, followed by Argentina, Spain, Kazakhstan, Iran, Morocco, and Russia. Ukraine are the ninth in the list followed by France.

### Romanian coach Reghecampf linked with Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Romanian coach Laurentiu Aurelian Reghecampf has been linked with a move to Esteghlal football club.

He began his coaching career in Romanian club Snagov in 2009.

The 49-year-old coach has also led Emirati clubs Al Wahda and Al Wasl.

Reghecampf has coached Romanian giant Steaua Bucuresti and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal.

He has most recently worked as head coach in Al-Tai in the Saudi First Division League.

Esteghlal are without head coach since parting ways with Javad Nekounam two weeks ago.

### Iranian rowers win medals in Asian Rowing C'ships

TEHRAN – Zeinab Norouzi claimed a gold medal in the 2024 Asian Rowing Championships on Saturday.

She crossed the line in a time of 08:02.721 in the lightweight single sculls.

Uzbekistan's Malika Tagmatova (08:17.538) and Hong Kong Leung Wing Wun (08:21.397) claimed silver and bronze medal, respectively.

Fatemeh Mojallal of Iran won a silver medal in the women's single sculls, clocking 07:50.701.

China's Wenxian Zhang won the gold with 07:47.782 and bronze medal went to Hong Kong's Wing Yan Winne Hung with 07:56.583.

Iran's Kimia Zareei, Fatemeh Mojallal, Mahsa Javar and Zeinab Norouzi also grabbed a silver medal in the women's quadruple sculls.

Team Melli finished in second with a time of 06:56.550, followed by China with 06:47.285 and Vietnam with 07:07.390.

The competition is being held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from Oct. 10 to 14.

### Khatoon into AFC Women's Champions League QF

TEHRAN – Bam Khatoon football team of Iran advanced to the AFC Women's Champions League 2024/25 quarter-finals after a 2-1 win against Thailand's College of Asian Scholars in their final Group B tie on Saturday.

The win secured the Iranian side second spot behind Melbourne City FC of Australia.

College of Asian Scholars caught the visitors off guard in the 30th minute with Kurisara Limpawanich delivering a deft through pass to Waengoen, who beat her marker and the onrushing Yazdani to slot home the opening goal.

Bam Khatoon, however, responded in the 35th minute when Negin Zandi made her way into the box unchallenged before cutting the ball back to Shahnaz Jafari, who squeezed her effort past a stunned College of Asian Scholars keeper Yada Sengyong.

Both teams had missed chances after the restart with Limpawanich pulling her effort just wide of the left post in the 46th minute, while Zandi wasted a chance to put Bam Khatoon ahead a minute later.

The Iranian side had a great chance in the 62nd minute but Sara Didar's long range effort was saved by Sengyong.

Bam Khatoon's perseverance was finally rewarded in the second minute of added time with Ghanbari striking home off Didar's headed pass to secure the win.

### Karim Bagheri returns to Persepolis

TEHRAN – Karim Bagheri returned to the Persepolis football club as an assistant coach.

Bagheri had parted ways with Persepolis in July last year.

The former captain of Persepolis was named the team's assistant on Thursday.

Bagheri has played a key role in helping Persepolis win titles in recent years.

The 51-year-old will assist Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido Fernandez in the 2024-25 Iran Professional League (IPL).

## New cross-border payment system pitched at BRICS meeting in Moscow



### Iranian, Russian Chief bankers hold talks in Moscow

Prior to attending the BRICS meeting on Friday, Farzin met and held talks with his Russian counterpart Elvira Nabiullina in Moscow.

During the meeting, the two sides explored avenues for strengthening monetary-banking cooperation between the two countries.

The second meeting of governors of central banks of BRICS countries was held in Moscow on Friday. Russia, China, India, Brazil, and South Africa are founding members of BRICS, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Ethiopia joined the BRICS group of emerging economies in 2024.

Farzin left Tehran for Moscow on Thursday morning to take part in the second meeting of the governors of central banks of the BRICS member countries and also conduct bilateral negotiations with his counterparts on the sidelines of the conference.

Russia will host first-ever summit of BRICS+ from October 22 to 24 in Tatarstan city of Kazan. There, the founding members of BRICS—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—will formally welcome into their fold five new members: Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

From page 1 ▶ Referring to the BRICS economic outlook and the role of member countries in it, the CBI governor stated: "The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the new members of BRICS, enjoyed acceptable GDP growth in 2023 and 2024 despite the existing restrictions."

Farzin further emphasized that the BRICS countries account for 41 percent of the world's population, 26 percent of the land area in the four continents, and in total produce more than 25 percent of the world's oil and 50 percent of the world's iron ore.

"We hope to witness a stronger, more stable, fairer, and more balanced world by increasing strategic coordination among BRICS members, and BRICS definitely has the ability, capacity, and potential to do so," he noted.

## Iran's steel ingots export stands at \$730m in 6 months

TEHRAN- The value of Iran's steel ingots export stood at \$730 million in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 22), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported.

As reported, the country exported 5.7 million tons of steel products worth \$2.9 billion in the six-month period.

Steel products export in the first half of this year indicates 14 percent drop in value and 13 percent fall in weight, as compared to the first half of the previous year.

The World Steel Association (WSA) announced in its latest report that steel production in Iran during the first quarter of 2024 registered a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

The report added that the volume of steel production in the world in the 3-month period has risen by 0.5 percent.

More than 469 million tons of steel was produced across the world in January-March 2024, 161.2 million tons of which was produced in March 2024.

Iran has produced 7.6 million tons of steel from January to March 2024, showing a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year, according to Mehr news agency.

China, India, Japan, the US, Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, Brazil and Iran were the world's top 10 steel producers in the first quarter of 2024.

Production of steel in Iran increased by 5.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19), as compared to the preceding year, according to the ISPA.

According to the latest data released by the ISPA, the country's steel production reached 29.334 million tons in the previous year.

Of the mentioned amount, 18,452,000 tons were billet and bloom and 10,882,000 tons were slabs; Billet and bloom production increased by 9.2 percent and slab production increased by 0.7 percent in the previous year.

According to the ISPA data, the production of sponge iron also increased by 8.5 percent in the previous year in comparison to the figure for the preceding year.

Iran improved its global standing in steel production, becoming the ninth-largest producer in January 2024, according to new data released by the WSA.

The Islamic Republic produced 31.1 million tons of crude steel in 2023 to account for 58.4 percent of West Asia's total production in the mentioned year, according to the WSA.

The West Asian nations reviewed in the WSA report, including Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, managed to produce 53.2 million tons of steel in 2023.

The country's steel production increased by 1.8 percent in 2023 as compared to the previous year, when the production stood at 30.6 million tons, based on the WSA data.

## Dates worth \$78m exported in H1

TEHRAN- Iran exported \$78 million of dates in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported.

As the IRICA has reported, the value of Iran's agricultural products export increased by 26 percent during the first half of this year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

According to the IRICA report, the country exported 3.2 million tons of agricultural products worth \$1.7 billion in the first half of the current year, also indicating 20 percent rise in terms of weight, year on year.

The value of Iran's exports of agricultural and foodstuff products increased by 22.5 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade has said.

According to Ruhollah Latifi, Iranian producers managed to export about \$6.3 billion worth of the mentioned products in the said year.

As reported, agro-food products accounted for 12.8 percent of the country's total non-oil exports in the previous year.

Iraq was the top destination for Iran's agro-food products in the mentioned year importing \$1.986 billion worth of the said items.

The Arab neighbor accounted for 31.5 percent of the total exports of food and agricultural products from Iran.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood in second place, importing \$751 million of the mentioned products, followed by Russia with \$521.5 million.

The value of Iran's total foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.17.8 billion in the last Iranian calendar year.

# Monthly production of petroleum products rises 10%

TEHRAN – Production of petroleum products in Iran has increased by 10 percent in the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (August 22-September 21) compared to the previous month, according to a report published by the Supervision Office of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO).

Based on the SEO data, the production of oil products increased from 5.317 million cubic meters in Mordad (the fifth month) to 5.865 million cubic meters in Shahrivar, IRNA reported.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in its latest report (in mid-September) has said Iran produced 3.277 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil in August, registering a 4,000-bpd increase compared to the previous month.

As reported, Iran has maintained its place as OPEC's third-biggest oil producer after Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

Based on secondary sources,



Iran produced 3.273 million bpd of crude oil in July, the report said.

The Islamic Republic's average crude output for the second quarter of 2024 stood at 3.238 million bpd indicating a 59,000 bpd increase compared to the figure for the first quarter of the year, the report said.

The report put the average Iranian crude output for 2022 at 2.554 million bpd, while the average output in 2023 was 2.859 million bpd.

Iran's average crude oil price decreased by \$6.94 per barrel in Au-

gust compared to July, according to the report.

According to OPEC, Iran's crude oil was sold at \$78.8 per barrel on average in the mentioned month, while the price was \$84.57 in July.

Back in April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that Iran's oil production in 2023 saw an increase of 500,000 bpd in comparison to the previous year, reaching 3.1 million bpd.

According to the IMF data, the oil sector of Iran's economy recorded a noteworthy growth of 15 percent in

2023. Over the three years of late President Ebrahim Raisi's tenure, this sector experienced a double-digit growth; therefore, the oil sector saw 10.1 percent, 10 percent, and 15 percent growth respectively in 2021, 2022, and 2023.

It is predicted that Iran's oil production will increase by another 100,000 bpd, reaching 3.2 million bpd in 2024.

Iran's gas production also increased from the equivalent of 4.8 million barrels of oil per day in 2022 to the equivalent of 5.1 million bpd in 2023. According to IMF, the figure is expected to rise by 300,000 bpd to reach the equivalent of 5.4 million bpd in 2024.

Iran exported 1.4 million barrels of oil per day in 2023, indicating an increase of 500,000 barrels compared to its oil export data in the previous year, and it is expected that in the current year, an additional 100,000 barrels would be added to Iran's oil exports, reaching 1.5 million bpd

## 40 rural areas connected to national power grid since late March



TEHRAN – The latest data released by the Iranian Energy Ministry shows that over 40 new rural areas have been connected to the national power grid since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

As IRNA reported, during the mentioned period the development and improvement of electricity distribution network in 2,300 villages was also completed.

According to the Iranian Energy Ministry, over 98 percent of the country's rural population currently have access to electricity through the national power grid.

The ministry has also managed to supply electricity to 7,500 nomadic households in 20 provinces across the country since the beginning of

the current Iranian calendar year.

According to the Energy Ministry data, electricity has been supplied to 21,000 nomadic households over the past three years.

Currently over 99.8 percent of the country's rural population is supplied with electricity through the national power grid.

Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi has recently said that his ministry is pursuing 14 major plans to prepare the country's electricity sector for passing next summer's peak consumption period.

Speaking at a meeting with managers of the country's electricity sector, Aliabadi said: "Maintaining water reserves for maximum use of the capacity of hydroelectric power plants, developing the capacity of renewable power plants, performing power plant overhauls on time, removing the limitations of the power grid, and paying special attention to promoting consumption awareness are among the measures that the ministry is going to take to pass the next year's peak summer period."

The minister stated that the stable supply of electricity during the next year's peak consumption period depends on the timely repairs of the

power plants in the current year, adding: "It is also necessary to create new ways to engage people in consumption management programs by raising awareness."

Emphasizing the necessity of the strict implementation of the programs set with the aim of providing stable electricity in the coming winter and next summer, he said: "Due to the reduction of electricity consumption in the cold season of the year, it is necessary to pay special attention to the timely repair and eliminating power plant problems so that we can produce and supply electricity with the maximum available capacity at the peak consumption period of the next year."

The official further pointed out the importance of informing and reforming the mechanisms of dialogue with the people about the electricity industry and stated: "One of the major challenges of the country's electricity industry is the high consumption of a small group of subscribers in various sectors, especially the household sector. We need to draw new mechanisms for interaction and dialogue with the people while increasing their awareness in this regard, to increase their participation in consumption management and optimization."

## Over 2,330 ha of lands provided for National Housing Movement units in H1

TEHRAN- As announced by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Ministry, 2,336.7 hectares of lands have been provided for the construction of National Housing Movement units across the country in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21).

As IRNA reported, 527 hectares of the mentioned figure were allocated in Tehran province, 150 hectares in East Azarbaijan province, 396 hectares allocated in Kermanshah province, and 1,260 hectares in Fars province.

In early September, Hamid Pour-Mohammadi, the head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), said that the National Housing Movement is the major development plan of the government.

As announced in late July by the former minister of transport and urban development, 2.6 million units of the National Housing Movement were under construction throughout the country.

Mehrdad Bazrpash said that these units in different models are being built in the country, some

of them have been delivered and the rest are in different stages of progress. The National Housing Movement is one of the major policies of the 13th government in the housing sector, and according to this policy, the construction of four million residential units is planned in four years. It is one of the projects through which the government is trying to help low-income individuals in society become homeowners.

Deputy Transport and Urban Development Minister Hadi Abbasi-Asl has emphasized the acceleration in implementing the Housing Construction Leap Law to achieve the goals of the 13th government.

In late September 2023, Bazrpash announced the launching of a program for allocating free land (in the framework of the National Housing Movement) to young couples in order to help them build houses.

The National Housing Movement to construct four million housing units in four years is one of the major plans of the current government in the housing sector.

According to the plan, out of

these four million residential units, 3.2 million units will be constructed in cities and 800,000 units in villages. After the National Housing Action Plan (started in 2018), the National Housing Movement is the government's second major program to provide affordable housing units for the low-income classes.

The operation for the construction of 209,212 residential units of the National Housing Movement began in February 2022.

The ceremony to begin the mentioned operation and also to launch some development projects in the housing sector was attended by a former Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi.

Also, in July 2022, the minister inaugurated a project for the construction of the first group of affordable housing units for laborers under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

On September 10, 2023, 1,278 units of the National Housing Movement were handed over to the applicants in a ceremony attended by Aref Norouzi, the acting director of the Headquarters for Executing

the Order of Imam Khomeini. The mentioned units were delivered to the applicants in five provinces throughout the country.

The Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to construct 100,000 units under the framework of the National Housing Movement.

According to Norouzi, the headquarters also completed and handed over 2,000 such units back in April, 2023.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the official said construction of the National Housing Movement units is underway by the Headquarters for Executing the Order of Imam Khomeini in 27 provinces.

Late President Ebrahim Raisi stated that the National Housing Movement is the flagship project of the 13th government to meet the needs of the people, and in addition to the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, all relevant organizations are also striving to achieve it.

## 'Iran needs \$200b of investment by 2031 to achieve economic goals'

TEHRAN – The new Head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) says the country needs \$200 billion of investment by 2031 to achieve its economic goals, Mehr News Agency reported.

Hojatollah Seyedi expressed hope that the SEO could play a significant role in providing the mentioned investment and supply 50 percent of the mentioned figure.

"The main mission of the Securities and

Exchange Organization is to facilitate capital formation, and one of its tasks is to protect the rights of investors. Capital is formed when the investor feels protected and supported," he said.

By Sim Zahra

TORONTO - A year after the launch of "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" (OAF), the Axis of Resistance remains steadfast and firm in the battlefield, whilst the Zionist regime has yet to achieve their goals. It's without a doubt that Hamas's decision to launch this operation on October 7, 2023 changed the trajectory of the battlefield forever. This operation marked the beginning of the downfall of US imperialism and Zionism.

Four months into OAF, Hamas published a memorandum titled "Our Narrative... Operation Al-Aqsa Flood." This document included the motivation behind this operation. Hamas questioned the world, that after the following what did the world expect?

- The Zionist plan to Judaize Al-Aqsa Mosque
- The Zionist plan to annex the West Bank and Al-Quds entirely
- The detainment of Palestinians in "Israeli" jails,
- The seventeen-year-long blockade on the Gaza Strip
- The expansion of settlements and increased settler violence against Palestinians
- The millions of Palestinian refugees who seek to return to their homeland
- The failure and complicity of superpowers and the international community

On November 24, 2023, the first day of the prisoner exchange deal, the Palestinian resistance



successfully freed 39 Palestinian women and children from Israeli jails, which included 15 prisoners under the age of 18. On November 25, 2023, the second day of the exchange deal, the Palestinian resistance was successful in the liberation of 39 more Palestinian prisoners which included 33 prisoners under the age of 18.

## Israel dictates its victories over the killing of women and children.

Hamas rightfully took the initiative to defend their land and their people, to free their land and their people when the rest of the world remained complicit. The Palestinian resistance simply fulfilled and continues to fulfill their religious obligation by taking a stance against this occupation when the rest of the world failed to do so.

A year has passed and the Zionist regime refuses to accept

any more deals from the Palestinian resistance. Settlers have had dozens of demonstrations demanding a prisoner exchange, just last month over 500,000 settlers took to the streets demanding that a deal be made with the Palestinian resistance.

What exactly has this regime achieved militarily? This is a regime that dictates its victories over the killing of women and children. The more barbaric their crimes get, the closer they are to their demise. During their failed ground invasion in November 2023, they declared victory over Al-Shifa hospital claiming that it was a "Hamas command center." This was simply a desperate attempt to make it appear that they had achieved something militarily. In reality, all they have done is commit violent crimes against Palestinians inside a hospital.

While the occupation forces were focused on their failed ground invasion, the Palestinian resistance was successfully targeting Zionist tanks with "Al-Yassin 105" shells. For the past year the Palestinian resistance has

been documenting their achievements and showing the world that they are fully capable of dismantling this Zionist regime. On the other hand, the Zionist regime humiliated themselves with their failed propaganda videos claiming that a calendar held the names of "Hamas terrorists".

With this honorable operation, the Palestinian resistance has exposed the hypocrites, normalizers, sectarians and the international community. Falsehood has been exposed and the truth continues to prevail. Above all, the Palestinian resistance has lit a spark into the believers' hearts who are determined to stand by them and will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for this cause, for the sake of their brethren and for the sake of their Lord.

The Axis from Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Iran have all played a crucial role in supporting the Palestinian resistance.

Syria has been a persistent supplier of weapons to the resistance. In addition, Syria has hosted the Palestinian factions and leaders of the resistance; military barracks were opened for them and leaders have graduated there (Ahmed Jibril). Syria continues to support the resistance by supplying them with arms and by targeting the Zionist regime.

Lebanon's Hezbollah joined the battlefield on October 8, 2023. Since then, Hezbollah has driven out over 60,000 settlers from the occupied north, this number only increases as the resistance in Lebanon continues to defend their sovereignty from Zionist colonizers.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Hezbollah's indomitable spirit: Painful lesson awaits Israel

From page 1 ▶ Israel said the offensive was aimed at removing Hezbollah from the border area and allowing evacuated Israelis to return to northern Israel.

According to the Lebanese Health Ministry, more than 2,200 people have been killed as a result of Israel's acts of aggression against the Mediterranean nation since October last year.

In addition to massacring Lebanese people, Israel has waged propaganda against Hezbollah. The Netanyahu regime has tried to convey the impression that the offensive has forced Hezbollah to acquiesce to its demands.

But Hezbollah has not only escalated its missile attacks on Israel by targeting sensitive military sites but it has also inflicted significant damage on the regime's ground forces on the battlefield in southern Lebanon.

On Friday, Hezbollah issued a statement stressing that it will not stop fighting until Israel ends its aggression against Lebanon and Gaza.

"The Islamic Resistance is committed to its covenant and promise to its supreme and most holy martyr, His Eminence the Secretary-General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah (may his holy secret be sanctified), that the settlements in northern occupied Palestine will remain free of settlers until the war on Gaza and Lebanon stops," the statement said. It is a reference to Israel's failed attempts to return settlers to northern Israel.

The statement also warned Israelis to stay



away from military bases in cities such as Haifa.

## Hezbollah has stressed that it will not stop fighting until Israel ends its aggression against Lebanon and Gaza.

"The Israeli enemy army uses the homes of settlers in some settlements in north of occupied Palestine as gathering positions for its officers and soldiers, and its military bases that manage the aggression against Lebanon are also located inside settlement neighborhoods in major occupied cities such as Haifa, Tiberias, Acre, and others."

It added, "These homes and military bases are targets for the missile and air force of the Islamic Resistance, and accordingly we warn

the settlers against being present near those military gatherings in order to preserve their lives until further notice."

Israel's air and ground attacks against Lebanon are in line with its attempts to cover up military setbacks on the Gaza battlefield.

Since the start of the Gaza onslaught, Netanyahu has vowed to eliminate Hamas. But it has failed to achieve this goal.

To divert attention away from such military setbacks and its genocidal war on Gaza, Israel invaded Lebanon.

But the Israeli army's inability to make progress in the ground operations in southern Lebanon suggests a recurrence of the big and costly mistakes it has made during the Gaza conflict.

## Hezbollah has warned Israelis to stay away from military bases in cities such as Haifa, Tiberias and Acre.

Israel is sinking deeper into the quagmire of the Gaza war more than a year after attacking the Palestinian territory.

The regime is now in a new quagmire. But this time, resistance forces will give a painful lesson to the Israeli occupiers which could hasten the collapse of the apartheid entity.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Hamas slams Nazi-like siege of north Gaza Israeli army committing heinous crimes against civilians

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- Northern Gaza is witnessing severe Israeli bombing and attacks targeting infrastructure and what remains of homes.

A complete siege and the isolation of areas from one another has entered the seventh consecutive day.

There have been 268 casualties over the past 24 hours, the Gaza health ministry said on Saturday, the majority of them in the north.

Experts believe Tel Aviv is trying to cleanse the entire north of Gaza via death or starvation to make it a closed-occupied military zone.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) has said that no food aid has entered the north since October 1.

On Saturday dawn, the Israeli Occupation

Forces (IOF) issued new evacuation orders in the Jabalia area, home to the enclave's largest refugee camp.

But the IOF attacks and restrictions meant nobody could leave the camp which has been subject to continuous artillery shelling since Friday night, resulting in many deaths and injuries.

Most footage from Jabalia posted online by reliable social media platforms shows dead women and children or the injury of women and children.

In a statement on Saturday, Hamas condemned the Israeli "Nazi occupation's massacres" that targeted a civilian area in Jabalia late on Friday, killing at least 22 people and wounding more than 90.

The United States stands accused of allow-

ing its closest ally in the region to commit the most heinous of crimes against humanity with total disregard for international humanitarian law.

"These massacres are a continuation of the ongoing criminal genocide against our people, shielded by American support," the statement said while warning the increasing murder of civilians was an attempt to "punish the population for their resilience and rejection of displacement."

"The ongoing Nazi terrorist crimes, now in their second year, demonstrate to the world that this rogue, fascist entity is bloodthirsty and seeks revenge through further genocide against our people in Gaza and the Lebanese population."

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

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Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## Palestinians hail Nicaragua's decision to cut ties with Israel

Managua's move "a courageous step towards isolating fascist entity"



The Palestinian Foreign Ministry has welcomed the decision by Nicaragua to sever diplomatic relations with Israel, citing its genocide in Gaza.

"The Ministry considers this position as a reflection of Nicaragua's high level of responsibility as a member of the international community, by taking concrete steps to halt the ongoing aggression against the Palestinian people and other peoples in the region, as well as to uphold their right to live in freedom, security, dignity, and peace," it said in a statement.

"The Ministry hopes that this decision will serve as a model to other friendly governments to take similar measures, as a means of holding Israel accountable for the genocide it is committing against the Palestinian

people, and as a reaffirmation of the grave consequences of allowing Israel to continue to enjoy impunity with no accountability – a situation that has enabled this war to escalate to unprecedented levels."

Hamas also called Nicaragua's move "a courageous step towards isolating this fascist entity, criminalizing its behavior, and exposing its widespread violations of international laws and humanitarian norms."

Similarly, the Islamic Jihad Movement hailed Nicaragua's action, attributing it to Israel's massacres against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine also applauded the decision, viewing it as a welcome step towards Israel becoming internationally isolated.

## Erdogan: Israel 'most direct threat' to regional and global peace

Israel is the "most direct threat" to regional and global peace, and those tasked with safeguarding world peace must put an end to this threat, Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters aboard his returning flight from Serbia and Albania.

Erdogan also warned that Israel is not only targeting stability in Palestine, but also in Lebanon, "seeking to spread unrest to the surrounding region," Anadolu reported.

Ankara is monitoring Tel Aviv's actions and any potential steps towards Turkey through its intelligence agency, Erdogan stated, add-

ing that Israel's aggressiveness cannot be ignored.

"Dreams of Netanyahu, and his gang will turn into a nightmare," said the Turkish leader, adding: "Palestine will be free and Lebanon will remain free."

He further said that the Gaza genocide has taken place before everyone's eyes, and has taken its place among the "humanity's historic shames."

"Those who stand with the Zionist terrorist organization called Israel will carry marks of this shame for generations," he added.

## Norway condemns Israel for 'brutal warfare'

Norway on Saturday voiced strong criticism against Israel's "brutal warfare" in Gaza, accusing Tel Aviv of violating the rules of war.

"Israel's brutal warfare in Gaza includes indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, as well as measures that prevent the population from receiving humanitarian aid. This is in violation of the rules of war," Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide said in a statement, Middle East Monitor reported.

The Israeli authorities are still largely preventing access to food and necessary emergency aid, he said. The UN warned that without increased access for humanitarian aid and commercial food trade, "Gaza will experience full-scale famine by November," Eide added.

"Civilians, the sick and wounded must receive protection, food and essential medical assistance," the minister stressed.

## Iraqi resistance group threatens to hit Israeli, US bases

Iraq's anti-terror group Kataeb Hezbollah has warned against the use of Iraqi airspace to attack Iran, saying it would launch retaliatory strikes against Israeli and US bases in case of any violation of the Arab country's sovereignty.

Abu Ali al-Askari, a senior security official with Kataeb Hezbollah, made the remarks in a statement on Saturday, amid speculations that Israel may attack Iran's oil facilities in response to Iranian ballistic missile attacks that targeted the regime's military sites earlier this month, Press TV reported.

"We reaffirm that any targeting of our country, Iraq, or the use of its land and airspace to target the Islamic Republic of Iran, will not limit the response of Kataeb Hezbollah to the Zionist entity alone but will also strike at American bases, camps, and inter-

ests in Iraq and the region," Askari said.

He went on to say that Iran's missile attack on Israel came in response to the occupying regime's genocide in the besieged Gaza Strip and its ongoing massacres against civilians in Palestine and Lebanon, stressing that Tel Aviv's threat to retaliate against Iran is with full support from the Western countries, including the United States.

The Iraqi official further noted that they will make sure "the world will lose 12 million barrels of oil daily" in case an energy war happens.

"As for what our Yemeni brothers will do in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and what our Iranian brothers will do in the Strait of Hormuz, only Allah knows," he added.

## Iranian artist wins A' Design Award for her 'Role of Imagination'



TEHRAN - Iranian artist Shahrbanoo Arabian-Larimi has won the prestigious A' Design Award in the Fine Arts and Art Installation Design category for her remarkable decorative plate titled "The Role of Imagination".

The announcement was made on Saturday by Atefeh Shabani, the deputy director of handicrafts at the Mazandaran province's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, ISNA reported.

According to Shabani, the award-winning piece is a handcrafted decorative plate designed in the shape of the sun. It features 10 interconnected polygons encircling the Earth, symbolizing humanity's pursuit of perfection. The design, rich in cultural symbolism, is inspired by Iran's ancient heritage, showcasing motifs that reflect the deep connection between Iranian art and civilization.

This project began in March 2022 and was completed in July 2023. Through the efforts of

this distinguished artist from Mazandaran, a deeply meaningful work of art has been created, one that will stand as a legacy for future generations, Shabani explained.

She added that the intricate design of the polygons, which represents the Earth being embraced as though by a mother, successfully conveys the essence of Iranian art and culture.

Arabian-Larimi's work serves as a testament to the creativity and skill of Iranian artisans, she added.

According to Arabian-Larimi, the decorative plate is made of copper, featuring ridges that form an octagonal shape, symbolizing the sun. These ridges represent human progress towards perfection, with each section reflecting the rich culture, literature, and art of Iran. The design includes verses from famous poets of past centuries and traditional Iranian motifs, such as roses and nightingales—symbolizing the beauty of Iranian gardens—as well as a depiction of polo, the oldest Iranian sport, representing the theme of lover and beloved.

"This versatile piece can be used for various purposes. If washed with water, even very old enamel objects will regain their original brightness and shine. It can be safely cleaned with warm or cool water using a sponge or other cleaning tools, maintaining its beautiful, bright finish," the artist explained.

The A' Design Award is an international competition held annually in Italy, aimed at recognizing and promoting outstanding designs from artists and designers around the world.

## Unseen portrait of Naser al-Din Shah to be unveiled in Tehran



TEHRAN - For the first time, an unseen portrait of Naser al-Din Shah of the Qajar dynasty will be unveiled to the public.

The painting, discovered among the belongings of the Sahebqaraniyeh Palace in northern Tehran, is set to be revealed on October 14 at the Blue Hall of the Niavaran palace complex, Mehr reported on Saturday.

The portrait has remained unseen until now, despite the existence of numerous images of Naser al-Din Shah, the report said.

Eyewitness accounts from Qajar courtiers, including Eyn al-Saltaneh, suggest that this painting is the closest depiction of the Shah's true likeness.

The portrait, recently restored by conservator Mahnaz Asadi, was identified by Naser al-Din Shah-era researcher Mohammad Reza

Behzadi, Mehr said.

It is believed to have been created by Kamal-ol-Molk, one of Iran's most renowned painters, though the figure may have been painted by another artist.

Naser al-Din Shah was assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani, a follower of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, also known as Seyyed Jamal ad-Din Asadabadi, when he was visiting and praying in the Shah Abdol-Aziz Shrine on May 1, 1896.

It is said that the revolver used to assassinate him was old and rusty and had he worn a thicker overcoat or been shot from a longer range, he would have survived the attempt on his life.

Shortly before his death, he is reported to have said, "I will rule you differently if I survive!" The assassin was prosecuted by the defense minister, Nazm ol-Dowleh.

Nasser-al-Din Shah's assassination and the subsequent execution of Mirza Reza Kermani marked a turning point in Iranian political thought that would ultimately lead to the Iranian Constitutional Revolution during his successor Mozzafar-al-Din Shah's turbulent reign.

The fourth Qajar monarch was buried in the Shah Abdol-Aziz Shrine, in Ray, southeast Tehran, where he was assassinated.

## Serbia welcomes growing number of tourists

With direct flights increasing and travel ties strengthened, Serbia is welcoming a growing wave of Chinese tourists. In response to the surge, the country is upgrading its infrastructure and enhancing services.

Nearly 100,000 Chinese tourists have visited Serbia this year, according to the Tourism Organization of Serbia. The number rose 72 percent from January to July, signaling a solid post-pandemic recovery.

"The National Tourism Organization of Serbia expects this year to surpass the record set in 2019," says the organization's director Marjia Labovic, adding that Serbia aims to make Chinese visitors among its most frequent international tourists.

According to Labovic, Belgrade remains the top destination for Chinese tourists. Famous landmarks include the Belgrade Fortress, Knez Mihailova Street and the Nikola Tesla

Museum. Many Chinese visitors also enjoy cultural tours, nature activities, spa tourism and Serbian gastronomy.

The introduction of direct flights between China and Serbia has further fueled this surge in tourism. "With visa-free access, travelers can make quick decisions to visit Serbia," Labovic says, noting that the country is investing in infrastructure, improving Chinese-language services and adding signage at key tourist sites.

Labovic says that the strong cultural ties between Serbia and China foster deeper mutual understanding. To further promote Serbia's attractions, the National Tourism Organization of Serbia plans targeted marketing campaigns in China, using popular social media and travel platforms.

(Source: China Daily)

# Maritime heritage: key to future tourism and development

From Page 1 ▶ Coastal tourism, often seen as an important part of an economic development strategy, refers to land-based activities such as swimming, surfing, sunbathing, and hydrotherapy.

This sector holds a high employment capacity, with each job in the field generating four additional jobs.

According to the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the value of the blue economy relating to sea-based development is estimated at around \$3 trillion. Coastal and maritime tourism is the largest sector of the EU blue economy in terms of gross value added and employment.

In fact, over half of the EU's bed capacity is located in regions with a sea border, Press TV reported.

Iran's maritime tourism, if developed properly, could tap into significant economic growth. With 190,000 square kilometers of sea area and 5,800 kilometers of coastline, Iran is a maritime country where marine economic development should be an integral part of the national economic development strategy.

This mirrors the global trend, where many economic strategies for coastal regions around the world include tourism as a key component.

For Iran, some of the ideal can-



didates for tourism development are the Hormuz and Qeshm islands in the Persian Gulf.

These islands have great potential to attract tourists due to their numerous historical monuments. The Persian Gulf, with its beautiful islands that serve as habitats for migratory birds, unique marine species, and marine corals, is rich in tourism potential. However, currently, only in a limited area of Kish Island, which is a free trade zone, are the sea's tourism capabilities being utilized.

Chabahar and Bandar-e Gavarer beaches along the Sea of

Oman are prime locations for science tourism, geomorphology and coastal geology, coral studies, fisheries, and diving, activities that have garnered global attention for their natural grandeur.

The Caspian Sea's coastline, coupled with its rolling Hyrcanian forests and historical relics, has long been a popular destination for nature lovers and hikers.

The region is dotted with resorts, ancient monuments, and attractive tourist destinations. Anzali, the most important seaport on the Caspian Sea, is renowned for its premium caviar

and links Iran to the Caspian and Eurasian states via sea, land, and air transport.

The benefits of developing Iran's maritime tourism are numerous.

By doing so, Iran can foster significant economic growth, provide jobs, and present a positive image of the country to international tourists. As half of the world's population lives within 100 miles of a coastline, and with coastal tourism poised to expand in the coming decade, Iran is in an excellent position to harness its maritime treasures.

## Restoration of wooden doors at 14th-century Varamin mosque begins

TEHRAN - The restoration of the wooden doors of the Jameh Mosque of Varamin has officially commenced, marking a significant step in the extensive renovation of the 14th-century place of worship.

According to reports from the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Varamin, the restoration project is now entering a new phase with the establishment of a technical and operational workshop for the preservation work.

On Friday, Mohammadreza Tajik, head of the department, emphasized the importance of this national heritage site. "This initiative is part of a comprehensive restoration plan for the Jameh Mosque of Varamin," he stated.

Tajik noted that the first phase of the restoration involved cleaning and reinforcing the tiles and inscriptions on the mosque's southern portico. The second phase, which focuses on the wooden doors on the northern and eastern sides of the mosque, has officially begun. With dedicated efforts from the contractors, the restoration is expected to be completed within ten days.

The Jameh Mosque, a significant religious and historical landmark, is listed among Iran's national heritage sites, underscoring the importance of its preservation for future generations.

According to the official, the Jameh Mosque of Varamin is an example of a four-iwan mosque, featuring an inscription dated 722 AH (1322-23 CE). Its construction began under the order of Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh (Oljeitu) and was completed during the reign of Sultan Abu Sa'id Bahadur Khan, the last ruler of the Ilkhanid dynasty, a division of the Mongol Empire that encompassed the present-day countries of Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia, as well as parts of Iraq, Turkey, Af-



ghanistan, and Pakistan.

"The mosque showcases exquisite craftsmanship in brickwork, tilework, stucco with Islamic designs, and calligraphic inscriptions, reflecting the highest levels of artistry and beauty."

The terms "Jameh Mosque", "Masjed-e Jameh" and "Friday Mosque" are used in Iran for a grand communal mosque where mandatory Friday prayers are performed: the phrase is used in other Muslim countries but

only in Iran does it designate this purpose.

Until 1220s, Varamin was an agricultural center of Ray, which is now situated in southeast of mother Tehran.

The raiding of Ray by the invading Mongols caused a flux of migration and economic growth during the subsequent Ilkhanid rule. Thus, Varamin developed into an urban center.

A Vizier of Ilkhanid Abu Sa'id, named Yusuf Quhadhi built the Jameh Mosque of Varamin. Other significant monuments from this era, include mausoleum of Imamzadeh Yahya, Aladdin Tower, Imamzadeh Shah Husayn, and Sharif mosque.

At the turn of 14th century, Varamin started to decline due to Timurid Empire armies' invasions.

Varamin is located in the southeast of Tehran province in an even plain at a height of 918 meters above sea level.

**INVITATION TO ONE STEP INTERNATIONAL TENDER**

**Second Announcement**

**55/03/16318**

**12/10/2024**

**AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES COMPANY**

The Agricultural Support Services Company, hereinafter will be referred as ASSC, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Jihad-Agriculture of I.R. of Iran, is considering the purchase of **3x50000±5% MTS** of Granular Di Ammonium Phosphate (**GDAP**) through renewal of one step international tender.

All of the qualified and interested companies are invited to receive tender documents from **Saturday** dated **12/10/2024** until **Wednesday** dated **16/10/2024** (5 working days) from our purchasing committee (located at the 9<sup>th</sup> floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

The bidders are requested to submit their letters of introduction, along with remittance bill of IRI. Rials 1,200,000 to ASSC's account no. 4001039704005791 with SHEBA no. IR250100004001039704005791 at the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran through payment order of SATNA or PAYA with the 30-character identification code of 33903978226350065000000000000000

The bidders are required to submit their sealed and stamped envelopes containing offers latest on **Saturday** dated **16/11/2024** (during official working hours) to our security office, located on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Meanwhile the meeting for the opening of the envelopes will be on **Sunday** dated **17/11/2024** at **14:00** with the presence of bidders' representatives in our purchasing committee (9<sup>th</sup> floor, no. 1, fourth alley, Gandhi St., Tehran, Iran).

- 1- The bid bond value should be at **€545001** or in equal value of that in any other foreign currencies, except US dollars, based on the Telegraphic Transfer rate of the basic and essential commodities on CBI's ETS website, [www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir](http://www.fxmarketrate.cbi.ir), on 2/10/2024 for each lot of 50000 MTS ± 5% in bank guarantee.
- 2- The bidders are permitted to submit the bid bond in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the value of bid bond for each lot of 50000 MTS ± 5% will be **IRR 171,900,281,075** which must be only submitted by the bidders.
- 3- After approval of ASSC's Financial Manager, the bidders are permitted to use their previous and definite outstanding claims as the bid bond.

**For more information, you may refer to our website [www.assc.ir](http://www.assc.ir), and <http://iets.mporg.ir> or contact us by phone no. 00982188776325.**

**Public relations and international affairs of agricultural support services company**

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# Iran attends meeting of BRICS health ministers

TEHRAN –An Iranian delegation headed by deputy health minister Alireza Raeisi participated in the 14th Meeting of Ministers of Health in Moscow on October 10–11.

The participants discussed ways for enhancing cooperation in the field of health and treatment, utilizing new medical technologies, developing industries associated with production of advanced medical equipment, and improving the quality of education in health sector, IRNA reported.

The event also focused on the challenges and threats facing healthcare in BRICS, as well as the outlook for cooperation in new areas such as nuclear medicine, combatting antimicrobial resistance, and public health.

The establishment of a BRICS Medical Journal and BRICS Medical Association, the creation of an Integrated Early Warning System for Preventing the Risk of Mass Infectious Diseases in BRICS, the BRICS Tuberculosis Research Network and BRICS Vaccine Centre, and regulatory cooperation were among other main topics discussed.

During the meeting, Russian health minister Mikhail Murashko said that the main objective of the meeting is to bolster physical and mental health in BRICS member states through enhancement of intra-BRICS cooperation.

The official emphasized that Russia supports the joint produc-



tion of medicines and the establishment of early warning systems for diseases in the BRICS member states.

Addressing the meeting, Raeisi highlighted Iran's commitment to promote global health and expand cooperation with BRICS member states.

With the slogan 'health for all', Iran has always underscored fair access to medical services for everyone throughout the country, particularly in remote areas, Raeisi noted.

The official went on to propose collaboration in the field of health and treatment research, as well as fair access to medicine and vaccine globally.

The meeting ended with adoption of a joint declaration.

On the sidelines of the event, Raeisi held a meeting with his Russian counterpart.

The officials explored avenues

for boosting cooperation in health sector including medical and pharmaceutical fields.

## Health cooperation with SCO, BRICS

The fourth coordination and consensus meeting of the special working group for boosting cooperation with the BRICS and SCO was held on August 17 in Tehran, the health ministry website reported.

During the meeting, Mohammad-Amir Amirkhani, the deputy director of the health ministry's department for international affairs, said the health ministry is planning to strengthen collaborations with the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the BRICS inter-governmental organization.

## Knowledge-based companies manufacturing medications

Some 600 medical equipment companies are active in the coun-

try, producing around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market. Medical equipment manufacturers in the country produce and supply over 10,000 types of medical equipment to domestic and foreign markets. Now, various pieces of laboratory equipment are manufactured at prices much lower than the same foreign products.

Iranian knowledge-based companies have succeeded in producing recombinant drugs which are mainly used for treating hard-to-treat diseases such as cancers, MS, hemophilia, and viral diseases.

Medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually, according to Iran's Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters.

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country.

## Increase in export

In the first half of the current Iranian year that started on March 20, the country has exported medicines worth \$104.6 million, an increase of 19.7 percent year on year.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Unfazed by Israeli attacks, IRCS to set up another field hospital in Lebanon

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is planning to set up another hospital in Lebanon after the Zionist regime targeted a field hospital set up by the IRCS in an airstrike on Friday.

Condemning Israel's attack as a clear violation of humanitarian law, the head of the IRCS, Pirhossein Kolivand, said "All the essential items including foodstuff, medicines, as well as ambulances are burnt in fire".

However, "We will set up another field hospital to provide health services to people impacted by war in Lebanon," the IRCS website reported.

Shipments of humanitarian aid along with relief teams will be dispatched to Lebanon soon. Basic goods like cooking utensils and canned food are among needed items.

## 'Clear example of war crimes'

Iran has vehemently condemned Israel's attack on a medical facility on the Syria-Lebanon border, labeling it a "clear example of war crimes."

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei stated on Thursday that the strike, which destroyed a 56-bed field hospital, ambulances, and all medical equipment, demonstrates Israel's disregard for international law.

The hospital, established to assist displaced Lebanese on the Syrian-Lebanese border, was clearly marked with the Red Crescent flag and symbols. Despite this, the Israeli attack left the facility and its supplies, including food, medicines, and medical equipment, completely destroyed.

Baqaei called for global condemnation of the attack, urging international bodies like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to take action.

He also stressed the urgent need for international aid to support the thousands of Lebanese displaced by Israel's recent aggression.

This incident comes amidst a wider pattern of Israeli attacks targeting medical facilities and educational institutions in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Since the start of the Gaza war on October 7, 2023, Israeli forces have specifically targeted the enclave's healthcare and education sectors, bombing hospitals, schools, colleges, and universities, including 65 run by UNRWA.

Despite the UN Security Council's call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, Israel continues its offensive, aiming for the complete eradication of the Palestinian people trapped in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Also reacting to the Thursday attack,

Kolivand confirmed that the hospital was marked with the IRCS flag, IRNA reported. "We intend to file a complaint against Israel through international forums."

The official made the remarks during a meeting with the UN Resident Coordinator of Iran, Stefan Priesner. The Iranian official condemned the brutal attacks of the Zionist regime on Gaza and Lebanon, the IRCS website reported.

Referring to Israeli crimes, including targeting civilian areas, killing civilians, and attacking ambulances and rescue forces, hospitals, and health centers, the official warned about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Lebanon and the possibility of genocide.

He called for the immediate intervention of the United Nations to bring an end to the attacks.

Kolivand also presented a report on the shipment of humanitarian aid by the Iranian Red Crescent Society to Lebanon.

Highlighting the urgent need of the Lebanese for medicine, medical equipment, food, and essential items, Kolivand announced the IRCS's readiness to dispatch more shipments of humanitarian aid. He also stressed the need for active participation and cooperation of the United Nations in the field.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Relief foundation plans to provide 200,000 jobs for the deprived

Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation plans to create 200,000 jobs in order to facilitate income generation for the deprived, as soon as the required budget is provided, Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki, deputy director of the Foundation has said.

He went on to say that some 70,000 job opportunities will open up through entrepreneurs who started their own businesses using the Foundation's loans.

Currently, there are about 400,000 entrepreneurs in the country, he said, adding, only if each of them employ 10 job seekers, the country's unemployment problem will be solved.

## ۲۰۰ هزار فرصت شغلی برای مددجویان کمیته امداد امام ایجاد می‌شود

معاون اشتغال و خودکفایی کمیته امداد امام خمینی (ره) گفت: در صورت تأمین به موقع منابع مالی می‌توان با توجه به برنامه ریزی های انجام شده ۲۰۰ هزار فرصت شغلی تا پایان سال ایجاد کرد. حجت الله عبدالملکی روز جمعه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: از این تعداد فرصت شغلی ۷۰ هزار مورد از طریق راهبری شغلی کارآفرینان ایجاد خواهد شد. وی با اشاره به اینکه هم اکنون ۴۰۰ هزار کارآفرین حرفه‌ای در کشور فعالیت دارند، تصریح کرد: به لحاظ راهبری اگر هر یک از ۴۰۰ هزار نفر کارآفرینان حرفه‌ای موجود در کشور بتوانند برای ۱۰ نفر بیکار اشتغال ایجاد کنند، می‌توان گفت که در مجموع چهار میلیون فرصت شغلی ایجاد می‌شود که به صورت کامل مسئله بیکاری حل خواهد شد.

## The ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence

By Soroush Saki

TEHRAN - Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer a thing of the future—it's here, shaping our daily lives in ways many of us don't even realize. From improving medical diagnoses to customizing online shopping experiences, AI is being used to simplify complex tasks and help us make better decisions. However, while AI offers enormous benefits, it also comes with significant ethical challenges that we must address.

Like a double-edged sword, AI has the potential to either create positive change or cause harm, depending on how it's used. As AI becomes more prevalent, it's crucial to examine the ethical dilemmas it presents and how they could affect society.

### The promise of AI

AI is already making significant impacts in several areas. For instance, in healthcare, AI helps doctors analyze patient data and make faster, more accurate diagnoses. In education, AI systems are personalizing learning experiences, helping students progress at their own pace. In finance, AI helps banks detect fraudulent activity and manage risks more effectively.

The main strength of AI lies in its ability to process and analyze vast amounts of data at lightning speed. This ability allows it to recognize patterns and trends that humans may miss, enabling more informed decision-making. But with this immense power comes great responsibility.

### Ethical concerns of AI

Despite the many advantages AI brings, it also raises important ethical questions. Here are a few of the key concerns:

#### 1. Unintended bias and discrimination

AI systems learn from the data they are given, but if that data contains biases, the AI may end up making unfair decisions. For example, facial recognition software has been criticized for performing poorly on people of color, leading to instances of misidentification. Similarly, AI tools used in hiring could unfairly favor certain groups over others, leading to discrimination in the workplace. Without careful oversight, AI could unintentionally reinforce social inequalities.

#### 2. Job losses and automation

While AI can handle repetitive tasks efficiently, this also means it could replace human work-



ers. Jobs in industries such as manufacturing, retail, and even customer service are at risk of being automated, leading to widespread unemployment. While AI will create new opportunities in some sectors, the transition may leave many workers behind, especially those without the skills to adapt to new roles.

#### 3. Privacy and surveillance

AI's ability to track and monitor individuals raises serious concerns about privacy. Governments and businesses can use AI to collect vast amounts of data on people, analyzing their movements and behaviors. While this can improve security, it also opens the door to misuse. If not carefully regulated, AI-powered surveillance could lead to a future where personal privacy is eroded.

#### 4. Accountability and transparency

AI systems often operate as "black boxes," meaning that it's difficult to understand how they arrive at certain decisions. This lack of transparency can be problematic, especially when AI makes high-stakes decisions, such as in healthcare or law enforcement. If something goes wrong, it's not always clear who should be held accountable—the AI, its developers, or the organizations using it. As AI becomes more integrated into critical decision-making processes, establishing clear guidelines for accountability will be essential.

#### 5. Loss of human control

In some cases, AI technologies can function autonomously without human oversight. Autonomous vehicles, drones, and even AI systems in warfare raise concerns about the loss of human control. For example, should machines be allowed to make life-or-death decisions on the battlefield? These questions challenge our sense of morality and responsibility, making it essential to consider how much autonomy we are willing to give machines.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Iran marking Disaster Risk Reduction Week

TEHRAN –Disaster Risk Reduction Week kicked off on Saturday and will conclude on Friday, October 18.

Educating children will empower them to protect themselves and share what they have learned with their families and communities. Hence, each day of the week focuses on a specific topic.

Saturday, October 12, 'Empowering children and adolescents, and the role of schools in building resilience'

Sunday, October 13, 'Empowering children and adolescents; the role of the family in building resilience'

Monday, October 14, 'Empowering children and adolescents; community resilience'

Tuesday, October 15, 'Empowering children and adolescents; the role of social media in promoting resilience'

Wednesday, October 16, 'Empowering children and adolescents; the role of computer games in promoting resilience'

Thursday, October 17, 'Empowering children and adolescents to adapt to climate change and protect the environment'

Friday, October 18, 'Empowering children and adolescents; promoting the culture of preventing accidents and disasters'

This year, the theme of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, observed annually on October 13, focuses on the role of education in protecting and empowering children for a disaster-free future.

Many disasters, often worsened by climate change, pose significant threats to the well-being of children and youth.

UNICEF reports that around one billion children worldwide are at extremely high risk due to climate impacts and related disasters.

In addition to the risk of death and injury, children face further challenges in the form of disruptions in schooling, nutrition, healthcare, and

protection issues in the aftermath of a disaster.

To protect children from disasters, countries need to consider their vulnerabilities and requirements when developing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.

It is equally important to empower children and youth and provide them with the opportunity to contribute to disaster risk reduction.

In an effort to secure a better future for the next generation in the country, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Climate Change Secretariat have launched an initiative, titled Green DADRAS, to promote students' climate literacy.

A total of 11,536 high school students, girls and boys aged 12 to 15 years, from across Iran will benefit from the educational program.

By raising awareness and promoting proactive measures, the IRCS and UNICEF aim to create a positive environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable future for all.

The newly launched Green DADRAS Initiative, guided by the Climate Change Secretariat of the IRCS, has equipped 46 master trainers from the Youth Organization of the IRCS to lead educational sessions on climate change for these school students.

These dedicated trainers will train 824 provincial trainers across the country to finally empower over 11,000 high school students within DADRAS teams, focusing on critical topics such as drought and floods.

The initiative will enable these students to design and implement impactful climate change-related campaigns within their schools and communities.

Having received education on the importance of climate change, these young minds will then be equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to protect their environment.



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OCTOBER 13, 2024

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Patience is a fitting cover, and wisdom is a sharp sword. So cover your ugly conduct with patience, and kill carnal desires with wisdom.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:49 Dawn: 4:47 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:10 (tomorrow)

## Ammar festival honors resistance journalists with special award

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The 15th edition of the Ammar Popular Film Festival has dedicated a special award to journalists who bravely report on resistance movements, the organizers have announced.

The award is named in honor of prominent Palestinian journalist and activist Wafa Aludaini, who was martyred along with her family in an Israeli air strike in late September, the secretary of the festival Marzieh Hashemi said during a press conference held in Tehran on Saturday.

"Naming the special award after Wafa Aludaini is a powerful symbol of resistance. It reminds journalists working toward a noble goal that they may face danger and even martyrdom, yet they continue to bravely pursue truth and justice. Therefore, we invite everyone from around the world to participate," she added.

This special award will be given to those journalists and media professionals who are doing investigative work in Lebanon or Palestine, or anywhere else in the world and have been active in the field of documentary and news, she explained.

"We are witnessing genocide in Gaza and Lebanon, and the narrative is crucial to wake people up. We need documentary filmmakers to bring this to attention of the world. Now is the time to shine light on this issue with great effort, while the Western networks are doing the opposite." This festival aims to highlight voices that often remain unheard in mainstream media, providing a platform for creators to share their cinematic narratives with a broader audience, she concluded. In the main section of Ammar Popular Film Festival, filmmakers can submit a variety of works, including narrative films, documentaries, animations, clips, television productions, internet programs, and innovative video and image

productions utilizing artificial intelligence.

This year, the themes of the competition focus on the subjects such as the "Global Upsurge of the Dispossessed," "New World Order," "Victorious Republic," "Justice," "Iranian Dream," "National Memory," "Economic Warfare," and "Cultural Warfare." These topics underscore the festival's commitment to fostering discussions surrounding justice, freedom, and the rights of marginalized communities. Artists and filmmakers interested in participating are encouraged to register their entries by November 1.

The Ammar Popular Film Festival seeks to showcase diverse artistic contributions and support movements that transcend borders through art. The festival's mission is to amplify voices that challenge oppressive narratives and encourage active engagement from all sections of society. Over its 14 previous editions, the Ammar Popular Film Festival has focused on elevating the voices of people who have remained resilient against agendas aimed at promoting apathy and distortion. It regards art as a vehicle for unity, urging individuals to gather around the common principles of justice and equity. This year, the festival aims to further explore the dynamic interplay between societal struggle and artistic expression, emphasizing that all communities, regardless of geographic, ethnic, or social boundaries, have a vital role in creating and consuming art. Ammar Popular Film Festival was established in 2010 by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures to honor film and art products promoting topics such as resistance and revolution. It was named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The 15th edition of the festival will be held in Tehran and several other Iranian cities in December.

## Cartoon of Day



The Horror of War

Cartoonist: José Alberto Rodríguez Avila from Cuba

# Contemporary Iranian art achieves \$2m in sales

TEHRAN- The 21st edition of the Tehran Auction, a prestigious event dedicated to contemporary art in Iran, concluded with an impressive total sales figure of 1.2 trillion rials (\$2 million).

The online event, which was held on Friday, saw 132 out of the 140 artworks up for bidding successfully sold, ISNA reported.

The artworks featured in this online auction achieved impressive sales, nearly doubling the total from a comparable online auction held last year, the report added.

The event successfully sold 132 of the 140 pieces available, with 51 artworks exceeding their highest estimated bids, while 81 pieces sold within the range of estimated minimums and maximums.

The auction displayed 140 pieces over three days, including 115 paintings, 17 sculptures, and eight photographs, allowing art buyers to make their purchases during the specified online window.

Top sales figures included an untitled piece by Monir Farmanfarmaian that incorporates mirror work, reverse painting on glass, and plaster on wood from the 1970s, reaching a staggering 116 billion rials (\$194,000), followed by Aydin Aghdashloo with his work titled "Summer, Winter" from the "Occidentals" series, at 112 billion rials (\$187,000).

The third highest was Reza Derakhshani's painting, "Counting Days and Nights, Every Day and Every Night," which sold for 101 billion rials (\$168,000).

Other notable sales included works by Parviz Tanavoli and Farideh Lashai, which sold



An untitled mirror work by Monir Farmanfarmaian (left), "Summer, Winter" by Aydin Aghdashloo (right up), "Counting Days and Nights, Every Day and Every Night" by Reza Derakhshani (right down)

for 70 billion rials (\$116,000) and 51 billion rials (\$85,000), respectively.

In this edition of the auction, eight artworks from Farideh Lashai, Hossein Mohajoubi, Javad Nobahar, Sadeq Tirafkan, Mostafa Dashti, Reza Bakhshi, Ahmad Rafi, and Anahita Qasemkhani went unsold.

Additionally, artworks from 36 artists made their debut in the Iranian art market, including Mehrdad Fallah, Kasra Golrang, Ladan Boroujerdi, Raika Milanian, Reza Nosrati, Paria Farrokhi, Hossein Khoshraftar, Morteza Yazdani, Shiva Babai, and Ali Beigiparast.

Other newcomers included Keyvan Beiranvand, Nasim Hosnbakhshan, Alireza Jedi, Sudeh Davood, Mohammad Mehdi Tabatabai, Mohammad Mastan Dahi, Anahita Qasemkhani, Hossein Markazi, Mani Mehrzad, Masoud Aslani, Mina Ghaziani,

Sassan Nasiri, Avin Farahadi, Sanaz Dezfoulian, Sara Abasian, Omid Khakbaz, and Yadgar Khayyam. The previous Tehran Auction, held in July, focused on modern and contemporary art, achieving a remarkable sales figure of over \$3 million.

At the auction, which included 115 works by modern and contemporary Iranian artists, 107 pieces, over 93 percent of the offered lots, were sold at over 1,900 billion rials (\$3.175 million).

The event presented 99 paintings and calligraphic paintings, 12 sculptures, and four photos. A total of 65 buyers participated in the auction, 15 of whom did so for the first time. Of the 115 sold lots, 41 items were sold at prices higher than 10 billion rials (\$16,667).

The highest-grossing piece at the auction was a painting titled "End of an Era" from the "Memories of Destruction" series

by Aydin Aghdashloo which was sold for \$205,333.

The second most expensive work was a piece of mixed media on canvas by Farhad Moshiri titled "Black Numbers on White", realizing \$187,000.

An untitled calligraphic painting by Mohammad Ehsai was also among the top three works of the auction, sold for \$183,333.

The first of its kind in Iran, the Tehran Auction was launched in 2012 as an independent and private initiative to introduce the best in Iranian art, ranging from established and emerging Iranian artists to art collectors and the global audience.

It aims to address the increasing interest in modern and contemporary Iranian art and facilitate the acquisition of quality works in reliable ways.

## Iran's Parliament speaker presents cultural gifts to Tajikistan's President



"The Dastgahs of Persian Music" collection by the Iranian musician and composer Hossein Alizadeh

TEHRAN-Iran's Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf presented valuable cultural gifts to Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon during his two-day visit to Dushanbe, October 9 and 10.

Upon returning from the trip, Qalibaf wrote on his official X account that he had presented Emomali Rahmon a copy of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh as well as the collection "The Dastgahs of Persian Music" by the Iranian musician and composer Hossein Alizadeh, IRNA reported.

The collection, which was recently unveiled,

contains 17 CDs and 13 music books on 13 dastgahs. It is the result of more than 40 instrumentalists and singers in about four years.

Dastgah is the standard musical system in Persian art music, standardized in the 19th century following the transition of Persian music from the Maqam modal system. A dastgah consists of a collection of musical melodies, gushehs.

Alizadeh, 73, is a classical composer, researcher, teacher, and tar, setar, and shurangiz (Persian instruments) player who has made numerous recordings with prominent traditional vocalists including Mohammadreza Shajarian and Shahram Nazeri.

From his beginnings in folk music in East Azarbaijan Province, he soon discovered the "Radif," the classical Iranian repertoire, which he masters like no other.

He has held many concerts in and outside the country and performed with two national orchestras, as well as with Aref Ensemble, Shayda Ensemble, and Masters of Persian Music group.

He studied music at the Tehran University of Art. Later, he continued his studies at the University of Berlin, where he majored in composition and musicology.

The Shahnameh (literally meaning "The Book of Kings") is a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi between 977 and 1010 CE.

Consisting of some 50,000 distiches or couplets (two-line verses), the Shahnameh is one of the world's longest epic poems, and the longest epic poem created by a single author.

It tells mainly the mythical and to some extent the historical past of the Persian Empire from the creation of the world until the Muslim conquest in the seventh century.

Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the greater region influenced by Persian culture such as Armenia, Dagestan, Georgia, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan celebrate this national epic.

The work is of central importance in Persian culture and Persian language. It is regarded as a literary masterpiece, and definitive of the ethno-national cultural identity of Iran.

## Gabriel García Márquez's last novel published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez's last novel "Until August" has recently been published.

Lega Press in Tehran has brought out the book with a translation by Majdeddin Mahmoodi Arsanjani, Mehr reported.

It was originally published posthumously on March 6, 2024, on the 97th birth anniversary of the renowned writer.

"Until August" was basically planned to be a collection of four stories. García Márquez had worked on the novel at least since 1997.

However, he put aside work on other stories. He never

completed the novel. Towards the end of his life, he began to suffer from dementia.

Due to his memory issues, he could no longer follow the plot of the novel, and therefore could not complete it.

The manuscript of the novel was placed in an archive at Ransom Center after García Márquez's death.

Originally, his family decided not to publish the incomplete novel. However, in 2022, his sons re-read the drafts of the novel, of which there were five.

Although García Márquez had requested that his sons ensure the destruction of the novel, they found literary worth in the novel, and chose to edit and release it.

The novel tells the story of Ana Magdalena Bach, who has been happily married for twenty-seven years and has no reason to escape the life she has made with her husband and children.

And yet, every August, she travels by ferry to the island where her mother is buried, and every time takes a new lover.

Across sultry Caribbean evenings full of salsa and boleros, lotharios and comen, Ana journeys further each year into the hinterland of her desire and the fear hidden in her heart.

It is the only novel on a female protagonist by the Nobel Prize-winning author of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" (1967) and "Love in the Time of Cholera" (1985).

Gabriel García Márquez was a novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter and journalist. Known as "Gabo" in his native country, he was considered one of the most significant authors of the 20th century.

He wrote many acclaimed non-fiction works and short stories, but is best known for his novels.

His works have achieved significant critical acclaim and widespread commercial success, most notably for popularizing a literary style labeled as magical realism, which uses magical elements and events in order to explain real experiences.

Some of his works are set in a fictional village called Macondo, and most of them express the theme of solitude.