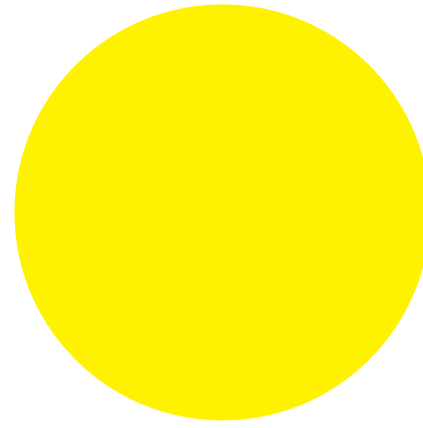




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# Iran Daily



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Vol. 7405 • Wednesday, October 11, 2023 • Mehr 19, 1402 • Rabi' al-Awwal 25, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

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**Iran, Sudan to resume diplomatic relations**

Iran and Sudan agreed on Monday to restore diplomatic relations, both said in a joint statement, seven years after they were severed and three months after a meeting between their foreign ministers. 7 >

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The first international exhibition of medical tourism will be held in Kurdistan Province in November. 3 >

## NEWS IN BRIEF

National  
economic  
growth to hit  
3% in 2023:

IMF



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest report on the World Economic Outlook estimated that Iran's economy would grow three percent by the end of 2023.

The monetary body also put Iran's inflation in 2022 at 45.8 percent and said the rate would increase to 47 percent in the current year, Tasnim News Agency reported on Tuesday.

According to the IMF, the balance of Iran's current accounts in 2023 would hit 3.4 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), 0.8 percent down from the previous year. Based on IMF prediction, Iran unemployment would remain single digit by yearend, though posting a 0.1 percent surge compared with a year earlier to reach 9.4 percent.

Iran's annual  
aquatics  
production  
to amount to  
1.4m tons

## Economy Desk

Iran's fishery production is estimated to hit 1.4 million tons by March 19, 2024 of which 620,000 tons pertains to aquaculture and the rest to fishing sector.

Hassan-Ali Qalibaf, an advisor to the head of the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) announced the above on Tuesday during his visit to western province of Kermanshah, according to ISNA.

The country's focus is on aquaculture sector to increase the fisheries production. Also the development on Makran and Beris coasts will be among Iran's fishery megaprojects in the next two years, according to the official.

The per capita consumption of aquatic products in the country is currently 13.8 kg per year which the figure is far from the global per capita consumption of aquatic products, which is over 20 kg.

Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO), is making efforts to increase the sea food consumption among the people in the country, the official added.

Raisi inaugurates  
four metro stations in Tehran

## Economy Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi opened four metro stations in Tehran amid efforts by his government to expand the public transport network in the capital city.

The stations opened on Tuesday by Raisi included three on Line 7 and one on

Line 6 of the Tehran Metro, IRNA reported.

The new stations expand the metro system in Tehran by 8.5 kilometers, according to a statement by the Municipality of Tehran, which controls the metro system in the city. It said the construction of the new lines had taken some eight years.

The Tehran Metro is currently 283 kilometers in length and has 154 stations.

In the opening ceremony, Raisi hailed efforts by young Iranian engineers and technicians to expand the public transport network, saying his government will increase its funding for subway projects to

increase the number of wagons delivered to the underground transport network in Tehran.

"Today, the focus of the efforts of Tehran Municipality officials in the field of transportation is to solve the two serious problems of traffic and pollution, and we are witnessing the round-the-clock efforts of

all related departments in the municipality," he added. Raisi also noted that the metro is one of the best systems for reducing travel time and costs, as well as helping to manage pollution. He added that it is also a safe and low-risk means of transportation and helps to reduce transportation accidents.

Iraq plans to import  
Turkmen gas via Iran  
in swap deal

Iraq may buy up to 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year from Turkmenistan following talks between officials of both countries held in Baghdad in recent days. Turkmen gas Chairman Maksat Babayev led a delegation to Baghdad over October 5-8 and held detailed negotiations with Iraq's Minister of Electricity Ziad Ali Fadel to supply Iraq with gas from Turkmenistan under a swap arrangement through neighboring Iran, Platts reported, citing a statement from the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On October 6, Iraq's Ministry of Electricity signed a memorandum of understanding to import natural gas from Turkmenistan during Turkmenistan's Minister of State visit to Baghdad, but details of the volume of gas were not provided.

An Iraqi delegation will visit Turkmenistan on October 25 to sign a supply contract to import natural gas from the central Asian country, the Iraqi prime minister's office said on Saturday.

Babayev is scheduled to attend the Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan forum in Ashgabat from October 25-27, where more talks will be held.

Iraq has been importing around 1.5 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day from Iran through two pipelines. Supply has been inconsistent given difficulties in transferring costs in US dollars to Iran because of US sanctions and increased domestic demand during summer.

NIOC outdoes regional countries  
in oil, gas exploration

Iran has surpassed regional countries in oil and gas exploration since its current government took office two years ago, said the head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr added that three oilfields — namely Hirkan in the northeastern province of Golestan and Tengoo and Genaveh in the southwestern province of Bushehr — as well as the Cheshmeh Shour gas field in the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi have been discovered in the two-year period, increasing the country's recoverable liquid hydrocarbons by more than 2.6 billion barrels, Shana reported.

The NIOC CEO said 3D seismic data acquisition operations have jumped by more than 300 percent under the incumbent government when compared with surveys carried out during the previous years, indicating Iran has excelled in the region's oil and gas exploration.

Last week, Oil Minister Javad Owji said Iran stood top among regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, in terms of exploration.

All wells drilled for exploration purposes under the current Iranian government have contained hydrocarbon, meaning that



the exploration success rate has stood at 100 percent, he continued. Given the latest discoveries, the reserve replacement ratio for liquid hydrocarbon is 87 percent, mentioned the minister. He explained that it means

if 100 barrels of crude oil and gas condensates are produced in Iran and consumed inside the country or exported to other countries, 87 barrels of that output have been replaced by newly-discovered deposits.

## Iranian exports to India up 9% in seven months

India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday announced a nine percent growth in Iran's export of goods to the South Asian country in the first seven months of 2023. The official statistics

indicated that India's trade exchanges with Iran from January to July 2023 reached \$1.171 billion, Tasnim News Agency reported. According to the report, India's exports of products to Iran in the first seven months

of the current year hit \$778 million, showing a 37 percent decline compared to the same period last year.

This is while India had exported \$1.243 billion worth of goods to Iran from January to July 2022.

India imported over \$393 million worth of products from Iran in the first seven months of 2023, registering a nine percent hike compared to last year's corresponding period.

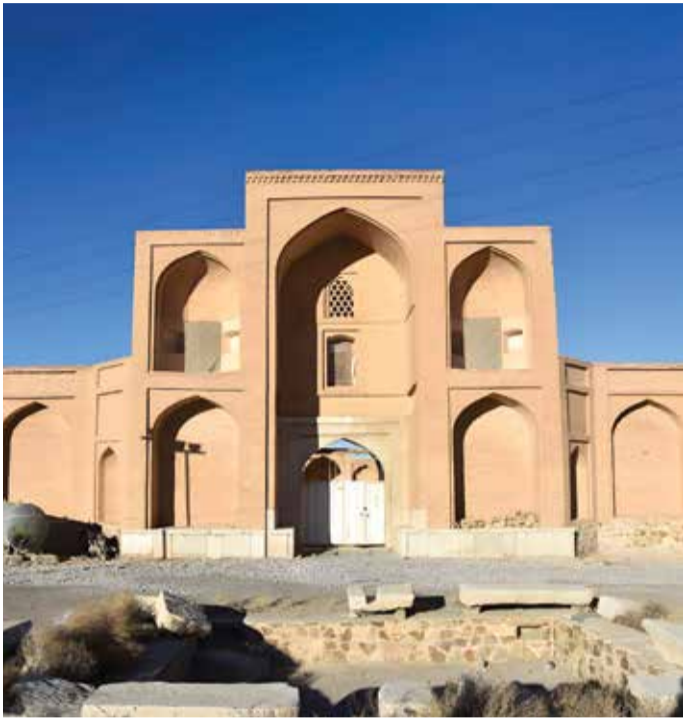
India had imported \$361 million worth of

products from Iran between January and July 2022. Rice, fresh fruits, and tea were among the main products exported from India to Iran during this period. In this timespan, India exported \$539 million, \$30 million, and \$18 million worth of rice, fresh fruits, and tea to Iran, respectively.

In return, Iran exported oil products, raw materials for producing paint, and various types of fresh fruits to India from January to July 2023, the report added.



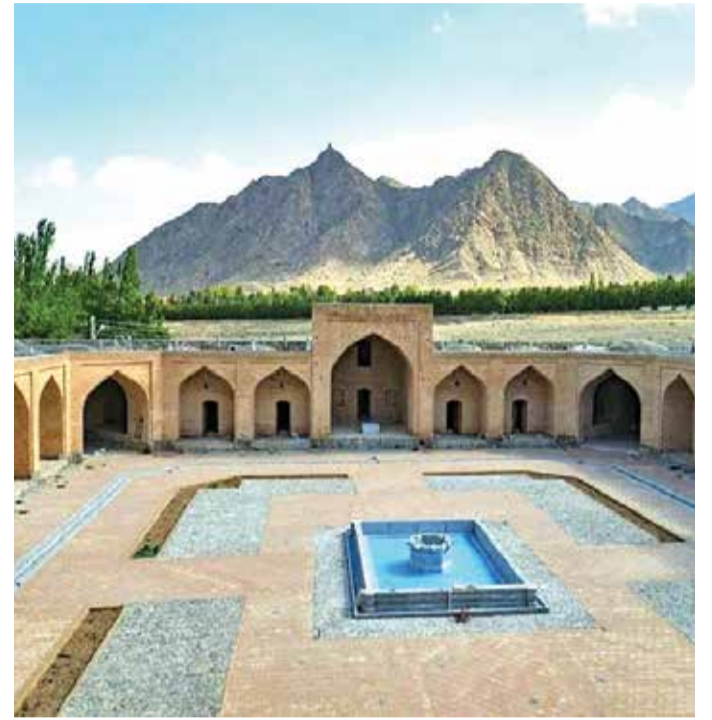
# Isfahan Province boasts eight world heritage caravanserais from Safavid era



Aminabad Caravanserai  
MEHR



Madar Shah Caravanserai  
wikimedia.org



Kuhab Caravanserai  
iranview.ir

## Iranica Desk

In the 45th session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, 54 Iranian caravanserais were recognized as world heritage sites. Isfahan had the highest number of recognized caravanserais among all provinces, with a total of eight. While this province boasts many caravanserais, only a select few were chosen for recognition as world heritage sites. These include the Gaz, Aminabad, Maranjab, Neyestanak, Kuhpayeh, Gabrabad, Sheikh Ali Khan, and Mahyar caravanserais.

Isfahan's status as the capital during the Safavid era is the main reason for its having the highest number of recognized caravanserais among all provinces in Iran. While the claim by French traveler, Jean Chardin, that there were 1,080 caravanserais in Isfahan during the Safavid era may be exaggerated, researchers have consistently noted that the Safavid era was a golden age for

caravanserai construction due to the flourishing trade at the time. As a result, more importance was given to the establishment of related facilities along the roads, IRNA wrote.

During the Safavid era, due to the importance of pilgrimage routes, especially the route from Isfahan to Mashhad, a large number of caravanserais were built.

During this era, caravanserai architects maximized space utilization and ensured compatibility with local climatic conditions. While the four-ivan (four-terrace) plan was the most common, they also designed regular and irregular polygonal structures, as well as two-ivan and circular buildings, demonstrating their creativity and innovation.

Aminabad Caravanserai in Isfahan is one of those that have been recognized as a world heritage site due to its octagonal shape and other features appreciated by experts, including authenticity. As during the Safavid era, great importance was placed on art, various forms

of it flourished, ranging from calligraphy and painting to architecture, tile-work, and other decorative elements associated with buildings, especially in Isfahan.

During this era, the progress of Iranian architecture was more evident than ever before, and caravanserais, as one of the public utility buildings in which the Safavid rulers invested, underwent transformations such as the addition of decorative elements.

Isfahan's caravanserais boast a rich history, with some possessing the necessary capacity and historical value to be included in the Iranian caravanserais dossier. However, due to various reasons, such as new and incomplete constructions within their boundaries, they have unfortunately been unable to be included in this esteemed dossier.

Hamid Binayi, a cultural heritage expert, said Isfahan's status as the capital of the Safavid era resulted in the region having the largest number of caravan-

serais. While this presented an opportunity to include more caravanserais from Isfahan in the dossier, some did not meet the necessary conditions.

Madar Shah Caravanserai of Murchehkhort, located 45 kilometers north of Isfahan, was considered one of the best caravanserais in the area. However, it was eventually removed from the list of caravanserais due to difficulties associated with preserving its boundaries and surrounding environment.

Binayi added that during the visits of cultural heritage experts, it was reported that construction activities were taking place around the Madar Shah Caravanserai, aimed at developing a roadside complex, which were encroaching upon the boundaries of the historical site.

"This is a four-ivan Safavid caravanserai that was built during the reign of Shah Abbas II. It is said that political delegations traveling to Isfahan would spend their last night at this location before arriving at the capital city and putting on

their formal attire," he added.

He noted that the caravanserai, which is located between Shahin Shahr and Isfahan, has now been converted into a tourist accommodation.

"We inspected all the caravanserais that met our criteria for necessary facilities. We held multiple sessions to discuss their situation and determine our preferred options. Our goal was to make informed choices and avoid selecting any caravanserais that could potentially pose challenges for the dossier," he said. He continued by referring to the Caravanserai of Shah Abbasi of Natanz, also known as Kuhab. He said, "The caravanserai is a very beautiful monument with a special plan and in an extraordinary area, but excessive interventions by investors have caused damage to the authenticity of the building."

From his perspective, caravanserais should be entrusted to the private sector with greater sensitivity and care, so that their authenticity is not compromised.

## Kurdestan Province to host first int'l exhibition of medical tourism



### Iranica Desk

The first international exhibition of medical tourism will be held in Kurdistan Province in November.

According to ISNA, the Director General of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Mansour Mehrzad announced that the exhibition will take place in the Provincial capital of Sanandaj, with the aim of introducing and developing the capacity of medical tourism in Iran, espe-

cially in Kurdistan Province. He added that the province has a great potential for investment in the fields of health and economy.

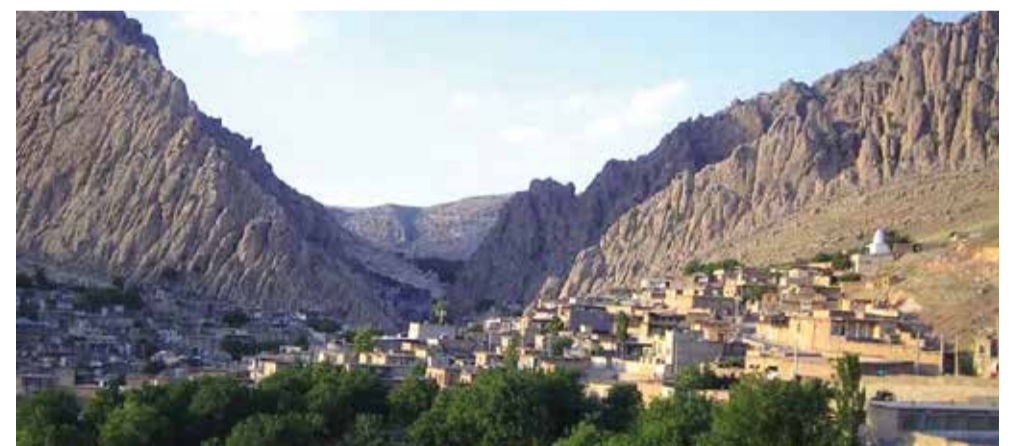
The exhibition will feature over 120 pavilions showcasing various commodities related to medical tourism, including beauty, dentistry, traditional medicine, herbal remedies, and medical equipment. The event will also host trade delegations and private companies from Kurdistan region of Iraq, Russia, Belarus, Oman, Turkey, and

Germany, and will include B2B meetings and workshops.

Mehrzad harbored hope that the exhibition will attract Iraqi tourists to the province and contribute to the development of tourism in the region.

The first international exhibition of health tourism in western Iran is being organized by the private sector in collaboration with relevant authorities, and will be held for three days from November 5 to 7 at the Permanent Exhibition Center of Kurdistan Province.

## Eslamabad-e-Gharb home to capital of Iran's oak forest



fararu.com

### Iranica Desk

Eslamabad-e-Gharb, in Kermanshah Province, which contains oak forests dating back a thousand years, is nowadays popular among tourists around the world. Head of the Cultural Heritage Department of this county claims that Eslamabad is the fifth village that travelers to the holy shrines of Iraq pass through during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, given to the popularity this region has gained.

"Various historical sites such as Sarab-e Harasam, a tourist destination village and Shian Dam, which is a tourist complex, has been built on this route to welcome the shrine visitors on their way back," he added.

He highlighted the fact that this county owns 350 historical sites and only 287 of them have been registered.

"In the center of Eslamabad village there is an ancient hill called Chogha Gavane, which due to researchers, dates back to 4,000 years ago," he said,

pointing out the three Fire Temples of Eslamabad are located in Palangard, Milmilaga and Shian villages.

He noted the importance of natural attractions, as an example of which are the oak forests of the region.

"The forest of oak trees starts from Sorkhak and Barzeh villages to 30 kilometers away, black drainage basin and can attract a lot of attention from nature lovers," he added, saying that brochures are being published to introduce this village.

Historic opportunity to choose

# What decisions will Arab governments make?

Some Arab countries like the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and even Sudan, which had previously signed the Abraham Peace Agreement with Israel, did not take a clear stance on Israel-Hamas conflict saying it is better for both sides to return to the negotiation table.

Regardless of what is happening on the battlefield, it should be noted that in the political arena, events have occurred that somehow indicate that the Palestinian resistance operations against Tel Aviv have altered the political landscape of the region, or at least, many regional countries do not know how to deal with a major ambiguity called "adopting a clear position." Since the first rocket and missile by Hamas landed in the occupied territories on Saturday, countries like Qatar and Egypt have openly stated their roles. For example, Doha, due to its long-standing relationship with Palestinian resistance groups, especially Hamas, condemned these at-

tacks as a provocation by Israel and its intermittent attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque. Even Monday, one of Hamas leaders announced that the Qataris had proposed to mediate in the prisoner exchange process between the two warring parties. Egypt, too, due to its traditional role in the Palestinian-Israeli dossier and because it has taken charge of managing the Rafah border crossing, has repeatedly offered mediation for the exchange of prisoners to Hamas, but so far, there has been no response to Cairo's request. However, some Arab countries like the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco, and even Sudan, which had previously signed the Abraham Peace Agreements with Israel, did not take a clear stance and only reinforced their incursion into Gaza, saying that both sides should return to the negotiation table. In this regard, the American website Axios reported, citing a U.S. official, that Antony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, had requested his counterparts in

some Arab countries that had signed agreements (the Abraham Accords) with Israel to condemn the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, but they did not act on this request. This is while in Riyadh, all political and security levels are actively working to de-escalate the bloody conflict in the occupied territories. Meanwhile, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan held a telephone conversation with Antony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State, and Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, emphasizing the need for cooperation to stop the tensions and Riyadh's opposition to targeting civilians, as well as the importance of all parties respecting international and humanitarian laws. But the reality is that most other Arab countries do not know how to position themselves regarding Israel and the current developments. In other words, it is not clear whether the Arabs should adopt a position "in favor" or "against" Tel Aviv.



# Multiple fronts of resistance catastrophe for Zionist entity



By Arafat  
Abu Zaid  
Lecturer in  
international  
relations

**PERSPECTIVE  
EXCLUSIVE**

For the second day in a row, the Palestinian resistance continued to engage in the Battle of Al-Aqsa, which was launched in response to the continuous violations by the Zionist occupation and its settlers against the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Many local, regional, and international positions have been taken. On the occupation side, Zionist analysts unanimously agreed that the extensive and sudden attack carried out by the Palestinian resistance indicates the collapse of Zionist security and political perceptions towards Gaza. This comes as they used to mock the statements of political and military officials regarding the “deterrence” of Gaza.

On the Palestinian front, popular support for the resistance continued, with people standing by it and supporting it.

On the regional level, the Islamic Republic renewed its support for the resistance through a phone call made by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to the leaders of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, Ismail Haniyeh and Ziyad al-Nakhalah, respectively. The Turkish president also took a position and called for a de-escalation of the situation between the two sides.

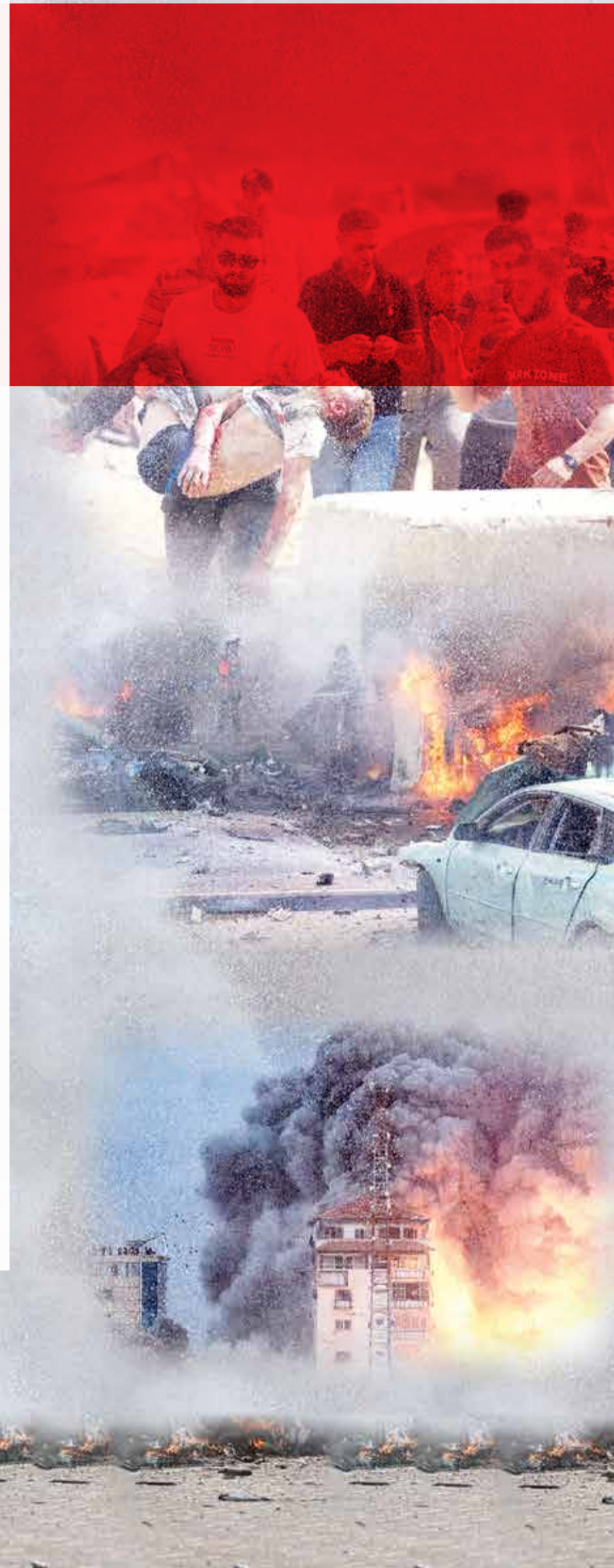
On the international front, the dangerous position of the US was revealed through its Department of Defense, which announced the sending of an aircraft carrier near the Zionist entity and providing it with an emergency military aid package. The resistance pressured the occupation by focusing its clashes on the border areas of the Gaza Strip, especially areas that have a number of military bases. The resistance also succeeded in replacing and reinforcing its forces that participated in the first day of the battle with new forces. This shows the creativity of the tactic used by the resistance and highlights its ability to send various equipment and supplies to the fighters inside the Gaza Strip despite the around-the-clock flights of the occupation’s warplanes over the Gaza Strip and their intensive airstrikes on residential buildings, which resulted in the deaths of many children, women, and older persons.

It can be said that the resistance’s decision to start the battle by targeting the top military leadership in the Gaza Strip and the southern region paralyzed communication and caused a real disruption for all the forces in the Gaza Strip and the Zionist forces on the outskirts of the Gaza Strip. The Israeli army announced this morning the names and pictures of 26 killed leaders and officers, including the commander of the Nahal Brigade, the commander of a communications unit, the commander of a company in the Internal Front Command, the commander of a multidimensional unit, the commander of a section and a military officer in the Internal Front, and a logistics

officer in Battalion 51. All of them were killed in the early hours of the battle. Unlike other leaders who were captured by the resistance, this has shown a great state of chaos in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, according to Hebrew media sources, there has been an increase in cases of injury and accidental killing. The settlers refuse to stop for their army, thinking they are Palestinian resistance members disguised in Israeli military uniforms. The army responds by opening fire when the settlers refuse to stop, believing that the settlers are Palestinian resisters.

The coming hours are crucial in the current confrontation, and the Zionists fear that the opening of multiple fronts, which they consider a catastrophe if it occurs, has begun to take shape on the ground. Hezbollah announced a military operation in three locations against the enemy with a large number of artillery shells and guided missiles, directly hitting the security and military establishment of the Zionist entity, which have not yet awakened to what is happening on the southern front. Therefore, the second day of the Battle of Al-Aqsa and the scenes circulating in official and social media serve as a new confirmation of the creativity of the resistance and its ability to change the equations.

In my estimation, the escalating and significant state of failure — which is beyond the capacity of the Zionist security and military establishment to bear — has led the mini-security council of the occupation to officially declare that it is in a state of war. Therefore, we will soon be facing Zionist coverage of the failure and collapse suffered by the Israeli occupation army. This coverage will aim to attempt to restore even a small part of the deterrence image that collapsed in the face of the resistance in Gaza. In the coming hours and days, the occupation has no choice but to continue its greater destruction and bombing of the infrastructure in Gaza and residential buildings as part of a policy of collective punishment to inflict the largest number of Palestinian casualties.



## UK, Ireland confirmed as Euro 2028 hosts



● REUTERS

BBC – The United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland will host the 2028 European Championship, UEFA has confirmed.

The joint bid ran unopposed after Turkey withdrew to focus on a bid with Italy for Euro 2032, which was also confirmed at a meeting in Switzerland.

Both bids ran unopposed but still needed official approval from UEFA.

The UK and Ireland focused on Euro 2028, with UEFA's approval, after they ended a plan to be Europe's preferred candidate for the 2030 World Cup.

It is understood that Cardiff's Principality Stadium will host the opening match of the 2028 tournament with the final at London's Wembley.

The Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales have never hosted a major football tournament.

Matches at Euro 2028 are set to be held at 10 different grounds, including Glasgow's Hampden Park and Dublin's Aviva Stadium. Belfast's Casement Park and Everton's Bramley-Moore Dock, the former unbuilt while the latter is still under construction, were also included in the bid.

England were one of the 11 countries to host Euro 2020 along with Scotland, as well as being sole hosts of the 1966 World Cup and Euro '96. England also hosted the record-breaking Women's European Championship in 2022.

While Italy had only bid for the 2032 tournament, Turkey had initially bid to host both Euro 2028 and 2032.

Turkey withdrew from the running to host Euro 2028 last week after their bid with Italy for 2032 was approved by European football's governing body.

They have 20 potential host stadiums, of which 10 will be chosen, five per country, by October 2026.

Turkey hosted June's Champions League final between Manchester City and Inter Milan at Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium, but a major international tournament has never been held in the country.

European champions Italy hosted the Euros in 1968 and 1980, while Rome's Stadio Olimpico was also used as a venue at Euro 2020.

Germany will host Euro 2024 with the most recent championship being played in 2021 instead of 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Staging a major tournament usually means the hosts qualify automatically.

But, when it comes to co-hosting, qualification for all five host nations is not guaranteed.

It is unlikely UEFA will offer more than two places, so three could miss out.

## FIVB Olympic Qualifying Tournament:

# Iran to pin hopes on a world-class coach after Rio fiasco



Iranian middle-blocker Mohammad Mousavi (6) and setter Mohammad-Taher Vadi (18) are seen in action against Brazil at the Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on October 7, 2023.

● FIVB



### Sports Desk

Iranian volleyball will lean towards bringing in a high-profile foreign coach for the national team after hitting rock bottom at the FIVB Olympic Qualifying Tournament in Rio de Janeiro.

The Asian powerhouse finished second from bottom in the eight-team table of Pool A – registering a single victory over Qatar – as the country's aspirations for a place in next year's Paris Olympics now appears to be fading away.

Germany was the surprise package of the group, mak-

ing a clean sweep of seven wins to finish above Brazil, with reigning world champion Italy in third. Poland, Canada, USA, and Japan also secured an Olympic berth as the top two finishers in Pools B and C.

The other five quotas will be decided through the FIVB Men's World Ranking by the end of the preliminary phase of 2024 Volleyball Nations League (VNL). Egypt will likely take the African slot for the Games, while the other four spots will go to the four highest-ranked teams, which have not qualified yet. As it stands in the FIVB

Ranking, Italy (third), Argentina (sixth), Slovenia (seventh), and Serbia (ninth) are the favorites to qualify for the Olympics, with Iran lagging behind in the 15th place.

Iran's qualification campaign was the latest episode in a disastrous five months under Behrouz Ataei – featuring a disappointing VNL run followed by a straight-set defeat against Japan on home soil in the Asian Championship final – which eventually led to the Iranian head coach stepping down from his role after a 3-1 defeat against the Czech Republic

midway through the tournament in Brazil.

His resignation came two years after he had become the first domestic coach on Iran's bench in more than a decade by taking over from Russian Vladimir Alekno following a group stage exit at the Tokyo Olympics.

Ataei's rejuvenated side got off to a flying start in the new era as it defeated host Japan for the Asian crown in 2021 and then went on to progress to VNL quarter-finals a year later.

Ataei was faced with the flip side of his job when the below-par results in the summer saw the pun-

its and former players in the country question his credentials for the rest of the way, urging the Iranian Volleyball Federation to make drastic changes in the coaching staff.

Mohammadreza Davarzani, the chairman of the federation, said at the time that he would avoid an "impulsive decision-making", as a hectic fixtures list – including an untimely participation at the Asian Games right before the Olympic qualifiers – was coming Iran's way.

However, in a statement after Sunday's five-set defeat against Cuba, the head of the federation conceded to

the "failed strategy [over the past two years]", while he vowed to "hire a world-class coach and put in all our efforts to succeed in next year's Volleyball Nations League and qualify for the Paris Olympics."

Several high-profile names have been brought up in the Iranian media in recent days – most notably Frenchman Stéphane Antiga, Italian Andrea Anastasi, and Belgian Vital Heynen, who led Poland to the world title in 2018 – though it might take a while for the Iranian volleyball governing body to mull over who will be in charge of the team next.

## Sepahan, Al Ittihad set for rescheduled encounter: Report

### Sports Desk

The AFC Champions League fixture between Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan and Saudi side Al Ittihad will be rescheduled for a new date, the Arabic edition of the Goal website reported.

The Group C game in Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium was called off right before the kickoff on October 2 after the Saudi Pro League giant reportedly refused to take to the pitch for unknown reasons.

In a statement later in the day, the Asian Football Confederation said the match was canceled for "unanticipated and unforeseen circumstances", adding: "This matter will now be referred to the relevant committees."

Goal added Sepahan could be fined by the AFC and the club will have to name a new home venue for the



Sepahan players and coaching staff leave the pitch after their game against Al Ittihad is called off at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on October 2, 2023.

● MORTEZA SALEHI/TASNIM

contest.

Al Ittihad wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, last week that the club was

informed by the AFC's organizing official that "the game would not take place on the scheduled date and

the team is allowed to leave the stadium."

Several sources, including the Iranian Fars and Tas-

nim new agencies, reported that the players of the Saudi side did not leave the dressing room due to a

bust of Iranian Quds Force General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a US drone strike near the Baghdad airport in January 2020, being placed at the entrance to the pitch.

"Everything was in place for a proper game of football but Al Ittihad came up with demands that were not sport-related at all," Sepahan CEO Mohammadreza Saket said afterwards. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said last Wednesday that the two countries have agreed on a second date for the encounter, while calling on the Asian football governing body to "act on a technical basis when deciding on the situation." Sepahan, third in the group with a point, will play away to Uzbekistan's AGMK on October 23, with Al Ittihad hosting Iraq's Air Force Club.

# Leader: Zionists will receive 'heavier slap'



## International Desk

Iran's Leader on Tuesday praised the Palestinian youth and masterminds of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against Israel for achieving a remarkable victory, rejecting as "miscalculations" the claims that the "epic" act was not a "Palestinian job".

"The usurping Zionist regime suffered an irreparable defeat both in terms of military and intelligence," Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei told a graduation ceremony of military cadets in Tehran.

Some US and Israeli officials had accused Tehran of being behind the attack. However, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Sunday that he had "not yet seen evidence that Iran directed or was behind this particular attack, but there's certainly a long relationship".

Ayatollah Khamenei said the Israelis should blame themselves for the defeat but instead, they have opted to play the victim.

The Leader said no Muslim nation in contemporary history has ever faced a regime as hostile and cruel as Israel. Neither has any nation been under as much pressure, siege, and shortage as the Palestinian nation.

"In addition, the US and the UK have not supported any cruel government as much they supported the fake regime" of Israel, he added. However, now that the evil and cruel enemy has received the slap, it has adopted a policy of playing the victim, he said, adding, "Others including the media of the global arrogance help it."

"The Zionists should know that after massacring the people of Gaza, they will receive a heavier slap."

## War crime

The Palestinian Health Ministry said Tuesday the Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 704 people and injured more than 3,900 people since the unprecedented operation by Hamas.

Israeli energy minister Israel Katz said on Monday that he had instructed authorities to cut the water supply to the Gaza Strip.

Secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights Kazem Gharibabadi denounced the move as a "war crime," Press TV reported.

## Nearly 200K displaced

Meanwhile, the UN humanitarian office said on Tuesday that nearly 200,000 people or nearly a tenth of the Gaza population have fled their homes since the start of hostilities, adding that it

is poised for shortages of water and electricity due to a possible blockade, Reuters reported.

"Displacement has escalated dramatically across the Gaza Strip, reaching more than 187,500 people since Saturday. Most are taking shelter in schools," Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, told a Geneva briefing, stating further displacement was expected as clashes continue.

The World Health Organization said that it had reported 13 attacks on health facilities in the Gaza Strip since the weekend and that its medical supplies stored there had already been used up. The organization on Tuesday called for a humanitarian corridor into the Gaza Strip as Israel imposes a siege on the blockaded Palestinian enclave.

Also, an AFP photographer and a non-governmental organization said Gaza's Rafah border crossing with Egypt — its only one not controlled by Israel — was hit by an Israeli airstrike Tuesday for the third time in 24 hours.

The regime's embassy in the US said on Tuesday that the death toll from Hamas's attack on Israel has now exceeded 1,000, AFP reported.

The EU and [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council called for sustained aid to the Palestinian Territories on Tuesday. "They stressed the importance of sustained financial support for UNRWA (the UN relief agency for Palestinians) and to continue humanitarian and development support for Palestinians in the occupied territories," said a joint declaration read out by EU foreign policy chief Jo-

sep Borrell.

This was while the first wave of US security assistance was on its way to Israel, announced White House national security spokesman John Kirby on Tuesday, adding that more US assistance is to come.

## Prisoner swap

Qatar said Tuesday it was too soon to start brokering talks on a potential prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas after the resistance group captured around 150 Israelis in the wide-scale surprise attack.

An American mayor has been slammed for promoting violence and Islamophobia, over his "abhorrent" remarks referring to pro-Palestine protesters as "extremists" who support "terrorism".

As fighting is underway between Palestinian resistance fighters and the Israeli regime, many have expressed their support for Palestine. Hundreds of people marched in Manhattan's New York City on Sunday to express their support for Palestine. Another pro-Palestine rally took place outside the Israeli consulate in New York City on Monday. It was organized by Within Our Lifetime, a Palestinian-led advocacy organization.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that in separate phone calls with a number of his counterparts from Muslim countries, he called for an immediate emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the Palestinian issue.

In a telephone conversation with OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha on Monday, he expressed Iran's readiness to play host to the emergency meeting.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iran, Sudan to resume diplomatic relations

REUTERS - Iran and Sudan agreed on Monday to restore diplomatic relations, both said in a joint statement, seven years after they were severed and three months after a meeting between their foreign ministers.

"Iran and Sudan decided to resume their diplomatic relations...the two sides also agreed to take the necessary measures to open their embassies in the near future and to exchange official delegations," the statement said. The decision "came after a number of high-level communications between the two countries and will serve their mutual interests", the Sudanese foreign ministry said.

Sudan, currently in the midst of a devastating war, joined seven other states in cutting ties with Tehran in support of Saudi Arabia in 2016, following demonstrations in Tehran and Mashhad protesting the killing of Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, which led to tensions between Tehran and Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to resume ties in March under a deal negotiated by China, raising expectations that Tehran and other Arab countries would fully re-establish diplomatic relations.

### Iran's work for refugees sets 'global example'

Iran is doing great work in terms of refugees and should be introduced as a model, announced the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"Also, a plan should be prepared, and we should ask for more funding according to the needs of refugees in Kerman," said Yumiko Takashima, IRNA reported.

In a meeting with the new representative of the UNHCR, Takashima said, "Only one percent of the aid provided for refugees comes from international organizations, and the other 99 percent comes from the Iranian government."

"My duty is to inform donor countries about the good work the Iranian government has been doing for refugees so that we can attract more funding," she added.

In another part of the meeting, the director general of foreign nationals and immigrant affairs of Kerman Province also mentioned the establishment of Bardsir City refugee camp's treatment plant, equipment of 35 schools with new facilities, distribution of 4,336 educational packages for refugee students, and the set up of solar panels in camp.

"But these measures do not meet the existing needs and the United Nations is expected to play a more active role regarding Afghan refugees in Iran," Rouhollah Khezripour added.

## Uncertainty in oil market after Israel-Hamas conflict

### International Desk

**PERSPECTIVE**

Fear of the expansion of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas to a regional war has jolted the global oil market in recent days and caused uncertainty in its future price.

Israel and Palestine are not oil producers, but the Middle East region accounts for almost a third of the global supply. It is home to some of the world's major oil producers, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as key

transit routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, which is known as the world's most important oil chokepoint.

Energy analyst Saul Kavonic told the BBC that global oil prices have risen "due to the prospect of a wider conflagration that could spread to nearby major oil-producing nations such as Iran and Saudi Arabia".

On Tuesday, oil prices eased after rallying more than 4% in the previous session, with traders cautious as they watched for potential supply disruptions.

Analysts believe that the conflict itself has no direct effect on the oil market. The main concern, however, is about the growing tensions between Israel and Iran. Iran is one of the main supporters of the Palestinian resistance groups and also a major oil producer in the region. Even though Iran has repeatedly announced its support for the Palestinian resistance groups, it has denied involvement in the ongoing conflict. Both the US and Israel have confirmed this, saying that

they have seen no evidence to support Iranian involvement. Caroline Bain, chief commodities economist at Capital Economics, says that Iran has been increasing oil production over the course of this year despite US sanctions.

"The US seems to have turned a blind eye to a steady increase in Iranian production, that... is going to be more difficult for the US to ignore going forward from here," she said.

Overall, Bain said, Capital Economics expected

demand for oil to exceed supply in the final three months of the year, and "that should support higher prices".

Vivek Dhar, an energy analyst, believes that Brent oil will ultimately stabilize between \$90-\$100 a barrel in Q4 2023, adding that the Palestine-Israel conflict raises the risk of Brent futures tracking at \$100 a barrel and above.

This may have forced the US to hold talks with Venezuela in a bid to control global oil prices. Sources

have told Reuters that Venezuela and the US have progressed in talks that could provide sanctions relief to Caracas by allowing at least one additional foreign oil firm to take Venezuelan crude oil under some conditions.

Conflicts in the world usually have a direct impact on the oil market. Last year, oil prices experienced a sharp rise, hitting more than \$120 a barrel in June following Russia's military operation in Ukraine.



REUTERS



Iran's Deputy Culture Minister for Arts Affairs Mahmoud Salari emphasized the significance of cultural diplomacy in fostering comprehensive cooperation.

He made the statement during the regional conference of cultural attachés of the Islamic Republic of Iran in neighboring countries, ICRO reported.

Salari stated that cultural diplomacy, especially with neighboring nations, serves as a strategy for enhancing political, economic, and social ties.

On October 7, Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili also highlighted the influential role of cultural power and its global resonance in cultural discussions.

He stressed the importance of family values as a common human heritage that unites nations.

Esmaeili also announced the dispatch of cultural attachés to Latin American countries and the renewed focus on the Latin American region within Iran's diplomatic efforts.

Regarding Syria and Palestine, Esmaeili mentioned active engagement and upcoming visits to strengthen cultural ties with these nations.

In the past two years, Iran has been highly active in the realm of cultural diplomacy, particularly through the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO). These efforts have resulted in increased interactions with cultural authorities of neighboring countries, he noted.

Esmaeili pointed out successful agreements and collaborations with Middle Eastern, Caucasian, and neighboring countries from the south of the Persian Gulf.

Numerous ministerial interactions, reciprocal visits, and regional and bilateral conferences have contributed to the expansion of cultural diplomacy, the minister continued.

The minister also highlighted the growth of Iran's cultural activities abroad, including joint film productions, cultural exchange events, and the signing of new cultural, artistic, and media agreements.

These efforts aim to facilitate cooperation across various sectors, including politics and economics.

Organized by ICRO, the conference began on October 7 and will continue until October 12, to strengthen cultural ties within the region.

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# Tourism can counter sanctions for Iran, Russia

Arts & Culture Desk

**Over the last two decades, Iran and Russia have expanded their ties in various dimensions, with tourism emerging as a particularly important factor for both nations. These ties have seen significant developments thanks to the introduction of a visa exemption policy for tourists from both countries. The agreement between the two sides regarding this matter was officially finalized in early July 2021.**

**In line with this agreement, citizens of both nations were given the opportunity to engage in tourist visits to each other's countries without the need for visas as long as they traveled in groups of up to 50 individuals and their stays did not surpass 15 days. The agreement went into effect in early September 2023, and the first group of Iranian tourists went to the North Caucasus region in Russia — which encompasses the Republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, and North Ossetia — without visas. Considering the strategic significance of their relations, which can only be described as a two-way street, the decision to cancel visa requirements and expand tourism connections between the two nations opens up various opportunities for both sides.**

**The movement of tourists between Iran and Russia has always been in progress due to their geographical proximity. In 2022, the number of Iranian and Russian tourists visiting the other country reached 42,400, which doubled compared to 2021. Moreover, in the first six months of 2023, Iranians had the fifth-highest number of tourists visiting Russia, after Chinese, Turkish, Turkmen, and German visitors. Meanwhile, even though most foreign tourists in Iran come from Iraq, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, and Kuwait, approximately 22,000 Russian tourists entered Iran with visas during the same six-month period.**



## Tourism's contribution to economies

The tourism industry is of great significance to both Iran and Russia. Prior to the global outbreak of COVID-19, Russia had seen more than 10 million tourists, generating an estimated \$10 billion in revenue. In September 2019, the former prime minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev announced a strategy to develop tourism in Russia until 2035, aiming to increase the country's revenue from the tourism industry from 3,158 billion rubles to 16,306 billion rubles by 2035, double the number of domestic tourist trips, increase the export of tourism services from \$8.9 billion to \$28.6 billion by 2035, and triple the investments in tourism by 2035. In 2022, approximately one million jobs were created in the tourism industry in Russia.

While the successful hosting of the 2018 FIFA World Cup had a positive impact on Russia's image globally, the conflict in Ukraine had repercussions for the country.

Tourism is one of the most important sources of income for both Iran and Russia. In 2021, prior to the Ukraine War, Russia had an income of approximately \$6.31 billion from tourism alone. This accounted for 0.28% of its GDP and nearly 18% of international tourism revenues in Eastern Europe. In 2022, despite limitations imposed on Russia after the Ukraine conflict, domestic and international tourism directly contributed 860 billion rubles to Russia's GDP. On the other hand, in Iran, the tourism industry accounted for about 4.6% of the country's

total economy in 2022. Foreign tourism income for Iran reached some \$1.9 billion in 2020, approximately \$2.5 billion in 2021, and \$6.2 billion in 2022.

The tourism industry is of the same great importance to Iran, which is among the world's most endowed countries in terms of historical, natural, and recreational tourist attractions. According to statistics, Iran enjoys more than 4,000 tourist attractions and is ranked 10th in historical and cultural attractions, fifth in natural attractions, and third in terms of handicraft diversity. Despite its high potential, Iran has not yet achieved a desirable status in the tourism industry, but in recent years, there has been an increased focus on the impact of this sector on the country's economy.

## Areas to improve

Tourism has always been a field of interest for both Iran and Russia, leading to mutual cooperation efforts in this field in parallel to their economic, political, and nuclear energy cooperation. For example, in April 2023, a memorandum of understanding on tourism cooperation was signed between the two countries. From cooperating on tourism, Tehran and Moscow aim to bring an increase in the number of tourists in both countries, develop human resources, promote innovation — especially regarding their attractions, cultural heritage, and natural and recreational resources — exchange experts, share experiences, create new maritime tourism routes, and provide information on the expansion, management, and development of various historical, cultural, nature-based, and adventure tourism.

In recent years, both countries have faced limitations in selling their energy resources in global markets due to Russia's involvement in the Ukraine conflict, the imposition of EU and US sanctions on Russia, the intensification of sanctions, and the launch of the "maximum pressure"

campaign against Iran on 2018, along with the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. The use of domestic currencies of both countries is important for the continued operation of the tourism industry between the two countries, which, in turn, can alleviate the impact of sanctions.

However, in addition to economic benefits, boosting cooperation in tourism plays an important role in the future of Iran and Russia's political and cultural relations and interests. Tourism plays a very important role in changing the perspectives of both countries towards each other, especially in terms of increasing communication between the two nations. As Iran's Envoy to Russia Kazem Jalali argues, "Some people inside Russia spread Iranophobia, and some others inside Iran spread Russiophobia. We believe that this Russiophobia has its roots in the propaganda of the West, which does not want these two countries to make the most of their capacities with each other's help."

So, it seems that expanding the tourism industry is vital for both countries, especial-

ly for Iran in the face of sanctions. For this reason, Mohammad-Hossein Sufi, the head of the Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, stated that Iran has proposed the cancellation of visas to more than 50 countries. A visa waiver between Iran and Russia can potentially increase the capacities of both sides and open a new horizon in their relations. To this aim, Iran should prioritize factors such as increasing flight capacity, developing infrastructure in related areas including transportation within the country, and better coordinating between security agencies including the police and tourism agencies.

On the Russian side, as Jalali said, it can only help to see "better behavior with Iranians at Russian airports, increased efforts to expand its tourism capacity, more flights for Moscow – Tehran and St. Petersburg – Tehran routes by airlines of both countries, and the expansion of Russian flights to other Iranian cities like Rasht, Tabriz, Sari, Kish, Shiraz, as well as the expansion of Iranian flights to the Russian cities of Astrakhan and Kazan."

