

A small investment of time with a big reward for everyone



By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

World Blood Donor Day, an annual event celebrated on June 14, aims to raise awareness about the importance of blood and plasma donation and express gratitude to voluntary, unpaid blood donors who are so generous with their life-saving gifts. The day was established by the World Health Assembly in 2005, and over time, this global event has become a major focus for action towards achieving universal access to safe blood. The slogan for the 2023 World Blood Donor Day campaign is "Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often."

Speaking to ISNA on the occasion, the head of Tehran Province Blood Transfusion, Dr. Montazer Shabbar, related the history of the establishment of the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization. Pointing out that the recorded history of blood transfusion in Iran dates back to the mid-1940s, he said, "Indeed, during that era, the nascent field of blood transfusion medicine and the pervasive unfamiliarity with this notion among the general populace made procuring blood from volunteers for

patient administration a challenging endeavor. Persuading individuals to contribute blood largely hinged on the physician's initiative."

He further elaborated that gradually, as the critical significance of blood transfusion in preserving patients' lives and the escalation of blood requisitions in medical facilities gained recognition, obtaining blood from volunteers proved insufficient to satisfy patient demands. "Consequently, the sole recourse was to offer monetary compensation in exchange for blood donations. Enterprises that purchased blood from individuals for nominal sums and retailed it at exorbitant prices to hospitals and medical centers began to flourish."

In such circumstances, it was evident that the clientele of these enterprises predominantly comprised economically disadvantaged individuals, particularly addicts and homeless persons, resulting in minimal oversight regarding the health and quality of the blood. Dr. Shabbar then underscored, "In light of the issues and complications stemming from the multiplicity of blood transfusion custodians, the profit-seeking activities of private enterprises, and



the preliminary blueprint for the establishment of an autonomous organization to streamline the blood supply system and blood products was conceived. Ultimately, the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization was inaugurated on July 31, 1974."

Negin Naamavari, 32, a "servant in white" as she calls herself, told an Iran Daily reporter that "Blood

donation is vital because it saves lives. Every day, hospitals and medical facilities need blood for various reasons, such as surgeries, cancer treatments, and trauma care." She points out that donated blood is a lifeline for patients in need, and a single donation can potentially save up to three lives.

Dr. Naamavari then explained the process as being simple and safe, saying,

"It involves four steps: registration, medical history and mini-physical, donation, and refreshments." As it happens, donors first register and provide some basic information. Next, they undergo a mini-physical and answer questions about their medical history to ensure they're eligible to donate. Then, the actual blood donation takes place, which usually takes about 10 minutes. Finally, donors

are given refreshments to help them recover and replenish their energy.

In response to a question about the side effects of blood donation, she replied, "Blood donation is actually a safe process, and the risks are minimal. Some donors may experience mild side effects like dizziness, lightheadedness, or bruising at the needle site – nothing serious." And even these side effects are

usually short-lived and can be managed with proper aftercare.

On World Blood Donor Day, let us all be reminded that blood donation is a simple, safe, and selfless act that can save lives. It is in everyone's best interest – who is also eligible – to consider donating blood regularly. "It's a small investment of time that can make a significant impact on someone else's life," she said.

52 weeks later: Earth after humankind is gone



By Carlton Basmajian
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Have you ever wondered what the world would be like if everyone suddenly disappeared?

What would happen to all our stuff? What would happen to our houses, our schools, our neighborhoods, our cities? Who would feed the dog? Who would cut the grass? Although it's a common theme in movies, TV shows and books, the end of humanity is still a strange thing to think about.

But as an associate professor of urban design – that is, someone who helps towns and cities plan what their communities will look like – it's sometimes my job to think about prospects like this.

So much silence

If humans just disappeared from the world, and you could come back to Earth to see what had happened one year later, the first thing you'd notice wouldn't be with your eyes.

It would be with your ears. The world would be quiet. And you would realize how much noise people make. Our buildings are noisy. Our cars are noisy. Our sky is noisy. All of that noise would stop.

You'd notice the weather. After a year without people, the sky would be bluer, the air clearer.



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The wind and the rain would scrub clean the surface of the Earth; all the smog and dust that humans make would be gone.

Home sweet home

Imagine that first year, when your house would sit unbothered by anyone.

Go inside your house – and hope you're not thirsty, because no water would be in your faucets. Water systems require constant pumping. If no one's at the public water supply to manage the machines that pump water, then there's no water.

But the water that was in the pipes when everyone disappeared would still be there when the first winter came – so on the first cold snap, the frigid air would freeze the water in the pipes and burst them.

There would be no electricity. Power plants would stop working because no one would monitor them and maintain a supply of fuel. So your house would be dark, with no lights, TV, phones or computers.

Your house would be dusty. Actually, there's dust in the air all the time, but we don't

notice it because our air conditioning systems and heaters blow air around. And as you move through the rooms in your house, you keep dust on the move too. But once all that stops, the air inside your house would be still and the dust would settle all over.

The grass in your yard would grow – and grow and grow until it got so long and floppy it would stop growing. New weeds would appear, and they would be everywhere.

Lots of plants that you've never seen before would take root in your yard. Every time a tree drops a seed, a little sapling might grow. No one would be there to pull it out or cut it down.

You'd notice a lot more bugs buzzing around. Remember, people tend to do everything they can to get rid of bugs. They spray the air and the ground with bug spray. They remove bug habitat. They put screens on the windows. And if that doesn't work, they swat them. Without people doing all these things, the bugs would come back. They would have free rein of the world again.

On the street where you live

In your neighborhood, critters would wander around, looking and wondering.

First the little ones: mice, groundhogs, raccoons, skunks, foxes and beavers. That last one might surprise you, but North America was once rich with beavers.

Bigger animals would come later – deer, coyotes and the occasional bear. Not in the first year, maybe, but eventually.

With no electric lights, the rhythm of the natural world would return. The only light would be from the Sun, the Moon and the stars. The night critters would feel good they got their dark sky back.

Fires would happen frequently. Lightning might strike a tree or a field and set brush on fire, or hit the houses and buildings. Without people to put them out, those fires would keep going until they burned themselves out.

Around your city

After just one year, the concrete stuff – roads, highways, bridges and buildings – would look about the same.

Come back, say, a decade later, and cracks in them would have appeared, with little plants wiggling up through them. This happens because the Earth is constantly moving. With this motion comes pressure, and with this pressure come cracks. Eventually, the roads would crack so much they would look

like broken glass, and even trees would grow through them.

Bridges with metal legs would slowly rust. The beams and bolts that hold the bridges up would rust too. But the big concrete bridges, and the interstate highways, also concrete, would last for centuries.

The dams and levees that people have built on the rivers and streams of the world would erode. Farms would fall back to nature. The plants we eat would begin to disappear. Not much corn or potatoes or tomatoes anymore.

Farm animals would be easy prey for bears, coyotes, wolves and panthers. And pets? The cats would go feral – that is, they would become wild, though many would be preyed upon by larger animals. Most dogs wouldn't survive, either.

Like ancient Rome

In a thousand years, the world you remember would

still be vaguely recognizable. Some things would remain; it would depend on the materials they were made of, the climate they're in, and just plain luck. An apartment building here, a movie theater there, or a crumbling shopping mall would stand as monuments to a lost civilization. The Roman Empire collapsed more than 1,500 years ago, yet you can see some remnants even today.

If nothing else, humans' suddenly vanishing from the world would reveal something about the way we treated the Earth. It would also show us that the world we have today can't survive without us and that we can't survive if we don't care for it. To keep it working, civilization – like anything else – requires constant upkeep.

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