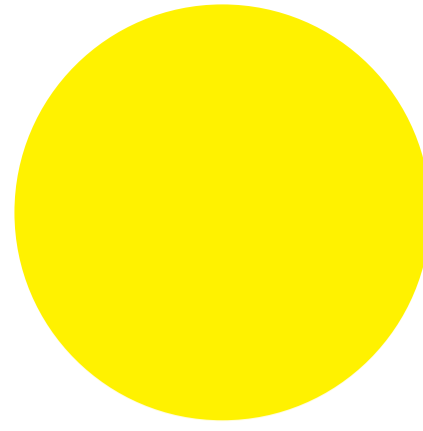


Artists
around the
world unite
in solidarity
with
Palestinians

8 >



Iran Daily



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Raisi: US Veto 'Double Oppression'

SPECIAL ISSUE

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Wounded Palestinians lie on the floor of al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, central Gaza Strip, after arriving from al-Ahli Hospital following an explosion there, on Oct. 17, 2023.



EXCLUSIVE

Gaza war spillover to cost West economically:

Iran MPs

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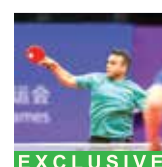
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Over 40 countries want to join BRICS

IRNA – Following the landmark expansion that took place at the last BRICS summit, there are now over 40 countries that are seeking to join the economic alliance at the 2024 summit. Indeed, next year's event is set to take place in Russia, with nations already preparing to submit an application. The BRICS economic bloc made geopolitical waves when it expanded its current membership. The bloc went from its original five of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa to a roster of 11.

Russia identifies promising amount of transit along INSTC



TREND – The International North-South Transport Corridor will eventually be able to move up to 30 million tons of freight each year, said the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Maria Zakharova. "In terms of transport issues, the focus is on the prospects for the development of successfully functioning international trade routes, such as the INSTC, which include the systematic construction of highways," she said.

Iran is 23rd maritime trade power in the world: UNCTAD



TASNIM – The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) put Iran's shipping fleet capacity at 19.3 million tons, which makes the country the 23rd maritime trade power in the world. In its latest report on the situation of maritime transportation industry in the world, UNCTAD noted that the world's total commercial ships including tankers, container ships and bulk-carriers exceeded 56,591 vessels by the end of 2022.

Construction of Iran's largest solar farm started

Economy Desk

The construction of a specialized solar energy zone with the capacity to produce 400 megawatts of electricity in an area of 700 hectares was launched on Thursday in Rayen of Kerman Province.

Iran has started building

five specialized solar energy zones in Kerman Province, as the Rayen zone is referred to as the largest in the country, IRNA reported. Officials claim that if these projects are completed and launched, the country's electricity shortage problem will be solved within the next five years.

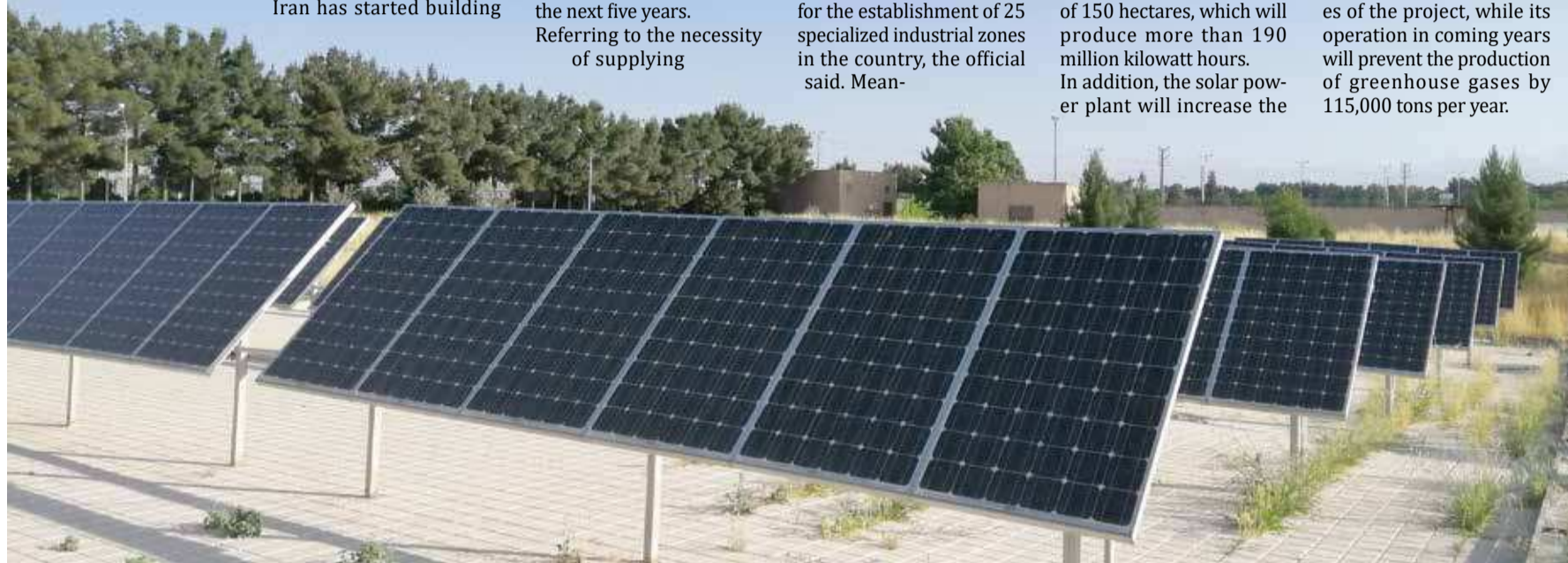
Referring to the necessity of supplying

electricity to the country's industrial parks, Deputy Industry Minister Farshad Moqimi announced his ministry's readiness to use the electricity produced by the solar plant to supply electricity to firms located in industrial zones.

Iran has issued permissions for the establishment of 25 specialized industrial zones in the country, the official said. Mean-

while, the construction of a 100-megawatt solar power plant of a large mining and industrial company started on Wednesday in Ashkezar of Yazd Province in central Iran. This power plant, which is the first 100-MW power plant in the province, will be built in an area of 150 hectares, which will produce more than 190 million kilowatt hours. In addition, the solar power plant will increase the

stability of the power grid in coming years, while with the opening of the power station, more than 55 million cubic meters per year will be saved in the country's fossil fuel consumption. Saving 45,000 cubic meters of water is one of the other advantages of the project, while its operation in coming years will prevent the production of greenhouse gases by 115,000 tons per year.



SP daily gas condensate output at 780K barrels: CEO

Economy Desk

A sum of 780,000 barrels of gas condensate, 15,000 tons of ethane, 15,000 tons of propane, 10,000 tons of butane, and 2,500 tons of sulfur are produced daily in South Pars refineries, announced the CEO of South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) on Friday.

Ahmad Bahoush told IRNA that since the establishment of the complex, 1,960 billion cubic meters of natural gas has been sweetened in South Pars refineries and transferred to national lines.

The official said the complex's first gas production and sweetening started at the second refinery of the South Pars (SP) phases 2 and 3 in 2001, when 50 million cubic meters (mcm) of feedstock were supplied by SP platforms and 40 mcm of natural gas per day were produced and sweetened.

According to him, 80,000 barrels of gas condensates and 400 tons of sulfur were produced per day at that time.

Bahoush said 13 refineries of the South Pars gas field have been well developed during the 25-year period, adding feedstock the complex now receives from well-head platforms of the SP field amounts to 650 million cubic meters per day

(mcm/d) and 580 mcm/d are sweetened and produced before natural gas is transmitted to the national grid.

The SPGC chief said the South Pars field accounts for 75 percent of the country's gas production, continuing its refineries are currently producing 780,000 barrels of gas condensates, 15,000 tons of ethane, 15,000 tons of propane, 10,000 tons of

butane, and 2,500 tons of sulfur daily to supply foreign exchange through exports.

Bahoush said 2.8 billion barrels of gas condensates have been produced, 25 million tons of propane as well as 16 million tons of butane have been exported, and the country's petrochemical complexes have been supplied with 31 million tons of ethane during the 25 years.

The South Pars Gas Complex is operating in two industrial sites in Assaluyeh and Kangan, the counties of southern province of Bushehr, along the Persian Gulf coasts.

In addition to gas production, the complex has taken social responsibility, carrying out effective measures to protect the environment, create job opportunities, hold

training courses, improve public health, and foster culture.

The gas refineries are located at sites 1 and 2 in Kangan and Assaluyeh, which have 24 phases. Phases 1-10 and 15-21 are situated in Site 1 in Assaluyeh, and phases 11-14, 19, and 22-24 in Site 2 in Kangan.

Having an area of 9,700 square kilometers, the South Pars gas field is located 3,000 meters below the seabed in the Persian Gulf and shared by Iran and Qatar.

It is the world's largest gas reserve, located 105km off the coast of Assaluyeh port.

The part owned by Iran covers an area of 3,700 square kilometers, holding 14 trillion cubic meters (tcm) of gas and 17 billion barrels of gas condensates – eight percent of the world's gas deposits, or 50 percent of domestic gas reserves.



Tehran, Minsk sign documents on oil, agricultural cooperation



Three cooperation documents were inked between Iran and Belarus in the fields of forestry, veterinary medicine and animal husbandry.

Also, a memorandum of understanding on oil cooperation was signed by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and Belarusian Belneftkhim Chairman Andrei Rybakov on the sidelines of a meeting between Iran's First Vice President Mohammad

Mokhber and Belarusian Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko, IRNA reported.

The two countries enjoy high potentials and capabilities to boost ties in all fields, especially trade, economy, forestry, and animal husbandry, he emphasized.

Iran's major portion of potash fertilizer is supplied by Belarus, Mohammad Ali Nikbakht, the agricultural minister said,

adding, "In return, Iran exports agricultural and horticultural products including fresh fruits and vegetables, and various kinds of dried nuts and citrus fruits."

At the official invitation of the prime minister of Belarus, Mokhber visited Belarus on Tuesday at the head of a high-ranking trade and economic delegation to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest.

Oil Minister Javad Owji, Industry, Mine, and Trade Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi, and Agriculture Minister Mohammad Ali Nikbakht accompanied Mokhber during the one-day visit. Iran and Belarus signed a comprehensive cooperation roadmap and seven memoranda of understanding in mid-March, as Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko made a visit to Tehran.

Autumn's hidden charms in desert regions of Iran



Qasr-e Bahram Caravanserai
kavirabad.com

Iranica Desk

The autumn season, despite not being widely regarded as the ideal time for travel due to the start of the academic year and shorter days, holds a hidden charm that can transform a travel experience into an unforgettable memory.

As the third season of the Iranian year gracefully unfolds, temperatures gently decline, and nature adorns itself with a breathtaking palette of changing colors. This picturesque transformation is often accompanied by the soothing melody of autumn drizzles, creating a symphony for the senses. It is during this time that the allure of nature tourism reaches its peak, making it one of the most enchanting seasons to explore.

In the vast expanse of Iran's land, where desert and semi-desert regions dominate, the warm climate of the first half of the year restricts visitation. However, autumn emerges as a golden opportunity to venture into these captivating landscapes. Moreover, it presents the perfect chance for a delightful autumn weekend getaway, allowing you to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and immerse yourself in the tranquility of the season.

One of the most captivating destinations for autumn trips near Tehran unveils itself in the ethereal beauty of the Varamin Plain and the southeastern realms of Tehran Province. Nestled less than 50 kilometers from Tehran, the journey to Varamin is a delightful passage through lush greenery and enchanting agricultural plains. The ancient route itself holds a magnetic allure, beckoning travelers with its timeless charm.

Venturing southward from Varamin, two mesmerizing routes unfold, each offering a gateway to the desert's mesmerizing wonders. Should you choose the leftward path, an amazing journey awaits, leading you towards the captivating realms of Qasr-e Bahram and the majestic Kavir National Park.

Qasr-e Bahram Caravanserai, also known as Rabat-e Siahkuh, stands as a testament to the allure of this region. Its origins are steeped in the mystique of the Sassanid era, although the exact date remains shrouded in the mists of time. The presence of stone water channels, a relic of antiquity preceding the Safavid era, hints at the enduring legacy of this architectural marvel.

In the past, before the establishment of the Tehran-Qom highway, this very route reigned as the shortest and most prominent passage connecting Tehran and Kashan. It stood as a vital thoroughfare, facilitating the flow of travelers and commerce, etching its significance as a major artery of transportation.

Embark on this autumn escapade, where history intertwines with nature's grandeur, and let the whispers of the past guide your journey through the captivating landscapes of Varamin and beyond.

The Caravanserai of Qasr-e Bahram, which is considered one of the enchanting attractions of Semnan, was nationally registered in 1975 and is recognized as the prime location in the breathtaking Kavir National Park for the development of ecotourism.

There is another route that awaits nature enthusiasts in the southern realms of Varamin. Embark upon an enchanting journey along a road

that gracefully winds its way from Garmsar to Qom. This route is more suitable for one-day autumn trips and is also accessible by car.

As you traverse this mesmerizing route, prepare to be captivated by the wonders that unfold before your very eyes. After venturing out approximately 10 kilometers, a majestic tapestry of a vast wetland reveals itself, a sanctuary teeming with a symphony of aquatic and marshland birds, as well as a myriad of other splendid creatures.

Nestled in the western reaches of the desert's protected expanse, within the Masileh Plain lies the Hoze Marreh Wetland. It graciously awaits your arrival at kilometer 50 of the Qom-Garmsar highway, a jewel among the five cherished wetlands of Qom Province.

Next to the highway, fortunately, there are enchanting spots to stop the car and immerse oneself in their breathtaking beauty. Following this scenic route will eventually bring you to the captivating city of Qom.

And when it's time to head back to Tehran, you can take the Qom-Tehran highway, which boasts its own unique allure and splendor, especially during the magical autumn season.

The Koshk-e Nosrat area and the mountainous village of Baghak, located in the Aliabad Pass and on the old road from Qom to Tehran, are among the natural tourist attractions of this route.

In the route from Varamin to Qom, which passes right through the heart of the desert marshes, you can notice sandy dunes and thorny trees in some areas, indicating the desert and barren nature of the region.

Right in this area, on the southern side of this highway, there is a Shah Abbasi Caravanserai that also has suitable facilities such as a restaurant and accommodations.

The Deir-e Gachin Caravanserai is 80 kilometers north-east of Qom. It is a historic and grand caravanserai, known as the mother of caravanserais in Iran. In the past, it had a dome made of plaster, which no longer exists, and that's why it is called Deir-e Gachin, literally meaning "cloister of plaster".

The history of Deir-e Gachin Caravanserai dates back to the Sassanid era, and it underwent changes during the Safavid period. This caravanserai has an area of 12,000 square meters, with the main building covering 8,000 square meters. It includes 43 rooms, a royal courtyard, a secluded courtyard, eight camel stables, two shops, a bathhouse, and a mosque.

Mohammadabad Stone Caravanserai is also one of the historical buildings along this route. It is located 48 kilometers from Qom, on the road to Garmsar. It is considered one of the largest caravanserais of its kind and has been registered as a national heritage.

This structure goes back to the 11th century CE and features massive stone walls and eight watchtowers that give it a special grandeur and magnificence. In the vicinity of this caravanserai, the remains of Mohammadabad Castle, dating back to the Parthian period, are visible.

Keep in mind that when traffic to the northern provinces is at its peak, opting for a route towards the desert and central regions can not only help you avoid fatigue and traffic, but also provide a cost-effective and unforgettable experience.



Varamin Plain
RNA



Kavir National Park
itto.org



Masileh Plain
kojaro.com



Mohammadabad Stone Caravanserai
wikimedia.org



Deir-e Gachin Caravanserai
ealiya.com



Hoze Marreh Wetland
mrbillit.com



This view shows the aftermath of a deadly blast that struck al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, on October 18, 2023.
● ANADOLU

Surprise, surprise, Israel manipulated evidence

Iran FM calls for oil embargo, expelling Israeli envoys

Gaza war spillover to cost West economically: *Iran MPs*



By Sadeq Dehqan

Staff writer

Economists believe that continuing the war in Gaza and expanding the scope of war on new fronts, apart from the increase in casualties and the creation of insecurity in the region, will have a devastating impact on the global economy, leading to rising inflation and worsening economic conditions in various parts of the world, especially Western countries.

They argue that the Middle East region, which holds nearly 50% of the world's oil reserves and about one-third of the world's liquefied natural gas, with nearly 25% of the world's total oil consumption passing through the strategic chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz, is crucial to the United States and Western industrialized countries, which

rely on the region's fossil fuels. More than anything else, the expansion of war in the region puts pressure on the economies of the United States and Western countries.

Seyyed Mehdi Toghiani, a member of the Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament, discussed the economic implications of the continuation of the Zionist regime's attacks on Gaza, saying, "The continuation of the war in Gaza will have far more negative economic consequences than the conflict in Russia and Ukraine. During the Russia-Ukraine conflict, many European countries heavily relied on Russian gas and grain, and the outbreak of this war caused significant turmoil in the European economic market and led to inflation in many countries that had not experienced the economic consequences of inflation before the war." He emphasized that the world's economic situation is not pre-

pared to accommodate another widespread war and cannot endure it. Toghiani said, "In any case, the United States and Western countries, whose economies are highly dependent on Middle Eastern fossil fuels, will be heavily burdened by the continuation and expansion of this war. This is because the issue of fuel and transit of goods through the region is vital, and if the war expands, it will affect fuel and transit in the region."

Gholamreza Marhaba, another member of the Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament, commented on the possibility of new fronts opening against the Zionist regime and the expansion of war. He stated, "The more pressure is exerted on the Zionist regime by the world's countries, the possibility of a change in their strategy in Gaza and the cessation of their war crimes will be greater. When a discussion of sanctions and restrictions on oil exports

comes up, or if the expansion of war does not allow oil exports from Middle Eastern countries, the price of oil and energy will naturally rise significantly, because the issue of fuel and energy prices is greatly influenced by political factors."

Ali Rezaei, another member of the Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament, said to Iran Daily: "The outbreak of war in any corner of the world has economic repercussions, and the expansion of the Gaza war will certainly impact global oil and energy prices and other areas. A major shock has entered the region, and if the conflict continues, freedom-loving and anti-oppressive countries worldwide may join the war in support of the Palestinian people's plight, and then the consequences of the expanding war will become apparent."

He emphasized the dual and contradictory behavior of the United States in relation to the

Gaza war, saying, "On the one hand, US officials condemn the war, while, on the other hand, they supply military weapons to the Zionist regime and provide them with financial support, knowing full well that continuing the war does not benefit them in any way."

Ebrahim Rezaei, a member of the National Security Committee of the Iranian Parliament, explained the situation in Gaza and stated, "Palestine has been the top issue in the Islamic world from the past until today. What we are witnessing today, a humanitarian crisis and a war crime in Gaza, makes the Gaza war a top priority for Is-



Raisi: US veto of UNSC resolution 'double oppression' on Gazans

International Desk

A fresh report from a Turkish institute reveals that Israel's official footage of the bombing of Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza is highly edited, while military experts around the world cast doubt on how a purportedly conventional rocket could have killed people but not leveled the hospital.

At least 500 people were killed and hundreds injured in an Israeli airstrike on Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza late Tuesday, the Gaza-based Health Ministry said. Yet, Tel Aviv and its Western supporters push the narrative that the missile was hit by a wayward projectile fired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement.

However, experts at Turkey's Center for Countering Disinformation meticulously analyzed a recent video shared by Israel's official state account on social media, showing that it had undergone editing with manipulative intentions before being shared with the public and raising serious questions about the video's authenticity and the narrative it aims to convey.

Upon a detailed analysis of the unedited footage, the center has reached the conclusion that the missiles launched from Gaza were aimed at Israel, and the hospital that suffered the devastating strike was not situated in the path of those missiles.

The centre's Thursday report also raised important questions regarding the munitions used in the hospital strike. "It is seen that the munition capable of causing extensive damage is not the type that Hamas has ever used," the report stated.



Valeria Scuto, lead Middle East analyst at Sibylline, a risk assessment company, told BBC that Israel has the capacity to carry out other forms of air strike by drone, where they might use Hellfire missiles. These missiles generate a significant amount of heat but would not necessarily leave a large crater, which explains the rather small crater that was found in the parking lot of the hospital. She also says uncorroborated footage shows a pattern of fires at the hospital site that was not consistent with this explanation. Scuto's confusion is valid as the report from the Turkish institute later revealed that the footage had been manipulated by Israel.

Tehran calls for harsher measures

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian urged Islamic countries to take "practical measures" against the Israeli regime in the face of its "war crimes and genocide" in Gaza, including by imposing an oil embargo and expelling Israeli ambassadors. Amir-Abdollahian made the

remarks on the sidelines of an urgent meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Saudi city of Jeddah, IRNA reported.

He emphasized the need for practical measures and a strong statement from the summit condemning the Zionist regime's atrocities in Gaza. Referring to the bombing of a hospital in Gaza, Amir-Abdollahian explained that practical measures would mean that Islamic countries that have normalized diplomatic relations with the Zionist regime immediately sever their ties, expel Israeli ambassadors, and halt all oil exports to the regime. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi also said the US veto of a UN Security Council resolution calling for a pause in Israel's attacks and crimes against the people of Gaza is "double oppression" against the Palestinians and humanity.

The US on Wednesday vetoed the resolution that had been drafted by Brazil and had sought to broker aid access to Gaza amid the incessant Israeli airstrikes and shelling against people in the tiny strip of land, Press TV wrote.

Victims pile up, supplies drain

Israel bombarded the Gaza Strip early Friday, hitting areas where Palestinians had been told to seek safety, and it began evacuating a sizable Israeli town near the border with Lebanon, the latest sign of a potential ground invasion of Gaza that could trigger regional turmoil.

On Thursday, Israeli Defense Minister Gallant ordered ground troops to prepare to see Gaza "from the inside," hinting at a ground offensive aimed at crushing Hamas's fighters nearly two weeks after their bloody incursion into Israel. Officials have given no timetable for such an operation.

Over a million people have been displaced in Gaza, with many heading Israel's orders to evacuate the northern part of the sealed-off enclave on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Though Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had called areas in south Gaza "safe zones" earlier this week, Israeli military spokesman Nir Dinar said "There are no safe zones."

"The strikes, coupled with extremely difficult living conditions in the south, appear to have pushed some to return to the north, despite the continuing heavy bombing there," Ravina Shamdasani, said the spokesperson for the UN human rights office.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited the Rafah crossing—the territory's only entry point not controlled by Israel — on Friday and appealed for the quick movement of aid into Gaza, calling it "the difference between life and death."

Resolute response imperative to halt Israeli acts in Gaza



Scores of injured people are being taken to al-Shifa Hospital following the bombing of al-Ahli Hospital.
● Ali JADALLAH/GETTY IMAGES

By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

A significant tragedy is unfolding in Gaza, a crisis in human history. Despite the dire circumstances caused by Israeli airstrikes on Palestinians, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, the international community and the Muslim

world have been slow to react effectively and curb Israel's actions. While Iran's diplomacy has thus far prevented a ground invasion by Israel, the duration of this restraint remains uncertain.

Gaza is now grappling with a severe shortage of food and water. Israel's cessation of electricity, oil, and the flow of essential supplies has caused innocent women, children, and men to suffer from the lack of basic necessities. Distressing videos on social media depict people being compelled to migrate due to hunger.

The world is still divided on the justification of Hamas's attacks on Israel and Israel's response. The Israel-Palestine conflict has persisted for seven decades. Israel's actions, such as drone strikes and airstrikes, often disregard the lives of civilians and the destruction of property.

Two days ago, the disputed bombardment of a Gaza hospital led to the tragic loss of medical staff and patients. This act should not only be condemned but also met with accountability.

The condition of the Muslim world is deeply troubling. While Pakistan stands as the only nuclear power in the Muslim world, its authorities describe Israel's aggression against Palestinians as a conflict between Hamas and Israel. At this critical juncture, Pakistan should openly support the Palestinian cause.

It is essential for the Muslim world to unite in solidarity with the Palestinians during these challenging times. The actions of the Mahmoud Abbas administration, with its limited powers, must be criticized as it separates the Palestinian Authority from Israeli aggression in Gaza.

In India, the Modi government's stance on Israel's treatment of Palestinians in Gaza is also worthy of condemnation. Modi's support for Israel compromises India's status as a major democratic nation. A democratic state should not stand with a country like Israel, which openly violates human rights.

Furthermore, the Western world continues to support Israel. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, of Indian origin, visited Tel Aviv to express solidarity with Israel, sharing in its sorrow during the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In this critical moment, it is imperative for the Muslim world to unite and take action to halt Israel's actions while providing much-needed assistance to the suffering Palestinians in Gaza.

Islamic countries." He added, "Any involvement in the unstable region leads to one of the areas of instability, especially in economic and energy matters. Because the conflict in the region, in the first place, will destabilize the oil export market, especially to Western countries, and will lead to an increase in oil prices. Therefore, in my opinion, it is in favor of the West and Western economies to try to minimize tensions in the West Asian region, and the only solution is to quickly halt the war machine and destruction of the Zionist regime."

Rezaei noted the United States' concern about the impact of the war on fuel and energy prices, saying, "One of the problems for Americans in recent years

has been their inefficiency in foreign policy matters, which we have repeatedly seen in the discussions about the JCPOA (Iran nuclear deal), and it is one of the reasons for the failure of nuclear negotiations during President Biden's term." He continued, "Since the beginning of the recent war initiated by the Zionists against Gaza, we have witnessed the conflicting positions of the Americans regarding the continuation of the war. At first, they had a strong stance in support of the Zionist regime's attacks, but gradually they retreated in this regard, and we have seen milder positions from them. Perhaps this retreat is due to economic interests, particularly the issue of fuel. However, verbal positioning alone for reducing military attacks by the Zionist regime on Gaza is not enough; we expect the United States to promptly halt the crimes of the Zionist regime and stop the war."



Iranian karatekas denied Hungarian visa for world meet



ikfir

Sports Desk

Several members of the Iranian karate team will not take part at the upcoming World Senior Karate Championships in Budapest after the Hungarian Embassy in Tehran refused to issue entry visas for them.

The Iranian men's and women's squads left Tehran for the Hungarian capital on Thursday, with male kata representative Ali Zand as well as the country's female kata trio and the whole para karate team missing out on the flight.

Iran will be back at the event – starting Sunday – after being absent in the previous edition in Dubai two years ago due to positive coronavirus test results for several members of the team.

Tokyo Olympic champion Sajjad Ganjzadeh headlines the men's team in Budapest, chasing a second major +84kg gold in less than a month following a top-podium finish at the recently-finished Hangzhou Asian Games. Ganjzadeh will be joined by Ali Meskini (-60kg), Amir-Reza Borzouei (-67kg), Saman Edalati (-75kg), and Mahdi Khodabakhshi (-84kg) in the kumite contests.

Khodabakhshi and Ganjzadeh will also team up with Bahman Askari, Zabi-hollah Poursheib, Saleh Abazari, Mahdi Ashouri, and Mahmoud Ne'mati as Iran will be after a fourth team kumite gold at the World Championships, having dominated the competitions on three successive occasions between 2014 and 2018.

Meanwhile, bronze medalists at the Asian Games Sara Bahmanyar (-50kg) and Fatemeh Sa'adati (-55kg) plus Atousa Golshadnejad (-61kg), Mobina Heidari (-68kg), and Leila Borj-Ali (+68kg) will be the Iranian contestants in the women's kumite contests. The five Iranian girls will be coached by Leila Bahrami, who replaced Farahnaz Arbab right before the competitions.

Iranian Hodaei building on table tennis success at Asian Games



By Mahdijeh Qazvinian
Staff writer

Few Iranians would argue that the final outcome at the recently-finished Hangzhou Asian Games in China was quite what the country's Sport Ministry and the National Olympic Committee had hoped for prior to the multi-sport event.

En route to a seventh-place finish in the medals table, Iran's 285-athlete delegation bagged 13 golds across the 15 days – seven short of the figure the Iranians tallied to end in the sixth spot in Jakarta-Palembang 2018, while it was the lowest for the country since 2006, when Iran grabbed 11 gold medals in Doha.

For all the below-par runs in certain competitions – namely football, weightlifting, and shooting – the country's sporting apparatus still had reasons for joy in other events, in which the Iranians enjoyed some historic achievements.

While Iran celebrated maiden medals in mountain cycling, chess, roller skating, and the artistic gymnastics, the table tennis squad ended country's decades-long drought at the Asian Games, leaving Hangzhou with a couple of bronze medals. Amirhossein Hodaei was part of the Iranian trio, alongside Nima and Noshad Alamian, that stood third in the men's team contests, before the Alamian brothers grabbed a doubles bronze. "It was a massive achievement for the Iranian table tennis as the two bronzes brought an end to the country's 65-year wait for a medal at the Asian Games," Hodaei, who is now in Paris to participate in the French league, said in an interview with Iran Daily.



Iran's Amirhossein Hodaei is in action at the table tennis contests of the Hangzhou Asian Games in September 2023.

ISNA

Suffering a 3-1 loss to Hong Kong, the Iranian team emphatically defeated Bahrain and Mongolia for the runner-up spot in the group and a place in the round of 16, where Iran also came out on top in straight matchups against Vietnam.

The pinnacle of Iran's campaign, however, came in the last-eight clash against table tennis powerhouse Japan, which was decided by three nail-biting victories for the Iranians, including Hodaei's five-game win against Maharu Yoshimura – a winner of six team and doubles medals at the World Championships as well as a team silver at the Rio 2016 Olympics.

"No one really expected this victory as the Japanese are among the top teams across the globe, but we gave it our all against them. We had a great team sprit throughout the Games. I wonder if this triumph will ever be repeated again," said the 25-year-old Iranian.

Iran's fairytale run ended after a 3-0 semifinal setback against South Korea, which saw the country share the third podium with the Chinese Taipei, while the host came out victorious against the South Koreans in the final showdown.

"To win a medal at an Asian event takes a lot of effort as China, South Korea and Ja-

pan are the dominant forces of the sport worldwide. Thank God we won the medal, which will hopefully lead to the fans and sporting setup in the country offering more support to the Iranian table tennis from now on." The success in Hangzhou summed up years of hard work for the Iranian, who first came to prominence on the global stage in 2019, when he finished the year as the top-ranked men's under-21 player in the ITTF World Ranking – a feat described by Hodaei as "the best thing that had ever happened to me in my life." "That helped me continue my career overseas. I went

to the German league in 2019 and then played in Hungary, Spain, and Sweden before moving to France two and a half years ago. "I come from a sporting family. My father was a wrestler and my younger brother is also a table tennis athlete. I first started playing table tennis for fun in a park near our home when I was 11, but everyone who watched me playing encouraged me to continue in the complete sport, and then after three years of playing as a professional I joined the Iranian team at the age of 20." Next for Hodaei and his Iranian teammates are the 2024 World Champion-

ships in Busan, South Korea in February.

"The event will also serve as the qualification tournament for the Paris Olympics. A top-10 spot will secure a direct qualification for the Games and I'm sure we'll achieve that, given the talent and quality in our team," Hodaei said.

Asked who he would dedicate his latest medal to, Hodaei said: "My family, of course, and Hamid Ehsani-Mehr, who not only has covered a substantial share of my expenses in some international tournaments, but has also been a great friend and father figure throughout my career."

Barcelona look to recover injured players with Clasico around the corner



REUTERS – Barcelona winger Lamine Yamal and fullback Alejandro Balde returned to training on Thursday as the injury-plagued LaLiga champions prepare to host Athletic Bilbao on Sunday with one eye on next week's Clasico against Real Madrid. Barcelona boss Xavi Hernandez will hope to recover a number of key players in time to face Real, but may have to get creative with his team selection for Bilbao as the champions grapple with injuries to eight first team players, including Polish striker Robert Lewandowski. Midfielder Sergi Roberto is the latest name on the list and will be sidelined for several weeks after suffering a leg injury in training on Wednesday. Barca, who trail Real Madrid by three points at the LaLiga summit, also have to

cope with injuries to Jules Kounde, Frenkie De Jong, Pedri and Raphinha.

Kounde will definitely miss the Real Madrid game next Saturday, but De Jong and Lewandowski have a slim chance of being fit for the Clasico.

Raphinha is said to be progressing well, while Pedri is expected to be back in training soon and could be available for Wednesday's Champions League match against Shakhtar Donetsk. Leaders Real Madrid visit Sevilla today and are set for a reunion with their former defender Sergio Ramos for the first time since he re-joined his childhood team after a couple of seasons at Paris St Germain.

They are expecting to have centre back David Alaba available after he missed international duty with Austria due to a leg injury.

Barcelona's Lamine Yamal (R) is seen in action against Granada's Carlos Neva during a game in Granada, Spain, on October 8, 2023.

JON NAZZA/REUTERS

China slams 'illegal' US sanctions against Iran's defense programs

Russia supports end to UN missile-related ban on Iran



REUTERS

While the UNSC on Thursday officially ended its restrictions on Iran's missile program, the US and the EU vowed to maintain their bans on Iran's ballistic missile and drone programs.

International Desk

China and Russia have expressed their support for the expiration of the United Nations Security Council sanctions on Iran's missile program, while Iran also confirmed on Wednesday the "unconditional" end of the restrictions imposed by the UNSC on its missile-related activities. However, on the same day the United States imposed new sanctions on Tehran's missile and drone programs. In a note sent to the member states of the UN, the Security Council on Thursday officially declared an end to restrictions it had imposed on Iran's missile program, according to the organization's secretariat. The secretariat of the UNSC officially ended curbs set out in paragraphs 3, 4, 6 (c)

and (d) of Annex B to UN Resolution 2231. According to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), on October 18, another set of Iran's sanctions related to its missile activities were due to be lifted. However, the US and the EU member states have vowed to maintain restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile and drone programs. The Biden administration announced new sanctions and other measures designed to prevent Iran from selling or acquiring parts or technology related to ballistic missiles or drones, saying that Washington would remain focused on the issue despite the expiration of the UN measures. In a press release, the US Treasury claimed that the designated individuals and entities have "materially

supported" Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Defense Ministry "in the production and proliferation of missiles and UAVs."

'Illegal sanctions' condemned

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson slammed the new "illegal" sanctions on individuals and entities linked to Iran's missile and drone programs. Mao Ning expressed Beijing's opposition to the US sanctions after the Treasury Department slapped the restrictive measures on 11 individuals, eight entities, and one vessel in Iran, Hong Kong, China, and Venezuela for "enabling" Iran's ballistic missile and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) programs, Press TV reported.

"We are always firmly opposed to illegal unilateral sanctions imposed by the US," the Chinese diplomat said.

"We will firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies and citizens." Meanwhile, the EU said on Tuesday that it planned to join the US in retaining sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program after the UN sanctions expire. "The [European] Council adopted legal acts to maintain the designations that had initially been imposed by the United Nations for individuals and entities involved in nuclear or ballistic missiles activities or affiliated to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)," the statement said. "The council also agreed to maintain sectoral and indi-

vidual measures, existing under the EU's sanctions regime, notably those related to Iran nuclear proliferation, as well as arms and missile embargoes." On the same day, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani denounced the European Council's decision as "unilateral, illegal and politically unjustifiable".

Russia no longer obeys UN restrictions

Russia has said it need no longer obey the restrictions on giving missile technology to Iran once they expired on Wednesday, without saying whether it now planned to support Tehran's missile development, Reuters reported. "Supplies to and from Iran of products falling under the Missile Technology Control Regime no longer require

prior approval by the UN Security Council," Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday. Confirming the "unconditional" end of the restrictions, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said, "Today, the last part of the anti-Iran restrictions, including assets freeze and financial restrictions on certain Iranian individuals and entities, imposed for years by the UNSC in the areas related to missile activities and exchange of relevant services and technologies, were terminated unconditionally." Published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry website, the statement warned that any action aiming to impose sanctions or restrictions on Iran's defense interactions and cooperation is now in contradiction with the termination of the restrictions

under UNSC Resolution 2231, stressing Iran's right to implement the necessary measures to safeguard its national interests. Iran signed a nuclear deal, formally known as JCPOA, with world powers in July 2015, agreeing to put some curbs on its nuclear program in return for the removal of sanctions on the country. The US, however, pulled out of the deal in May 2018 and re-imposed its unilateral sanctions on Tehran, prompting the latter to drop some of its nuclear commitments under the deal. The talks on the revival of the JCPOA began in April 2021 in Vienna, Austria. Despite several rounds of talks, no significant breakthrough has been achieved since the end of the last round in August 2022.

Iran's Kandovan among UNWTO's Best Tourism Villages 2023

Kandovan, a charming village located in East Azarbaijan Province, Iran, has achieved a remarkable milestone by securing its place on the significant list of the world's Best Tourism Villages recognized by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The Deputy Tourism Minister of the

Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ali-Asghar Shalbafian announced this remarkable achievement, marking Kandovan as the first Iranian village to be honored among the world's top tourism destinations. The villages were named during the

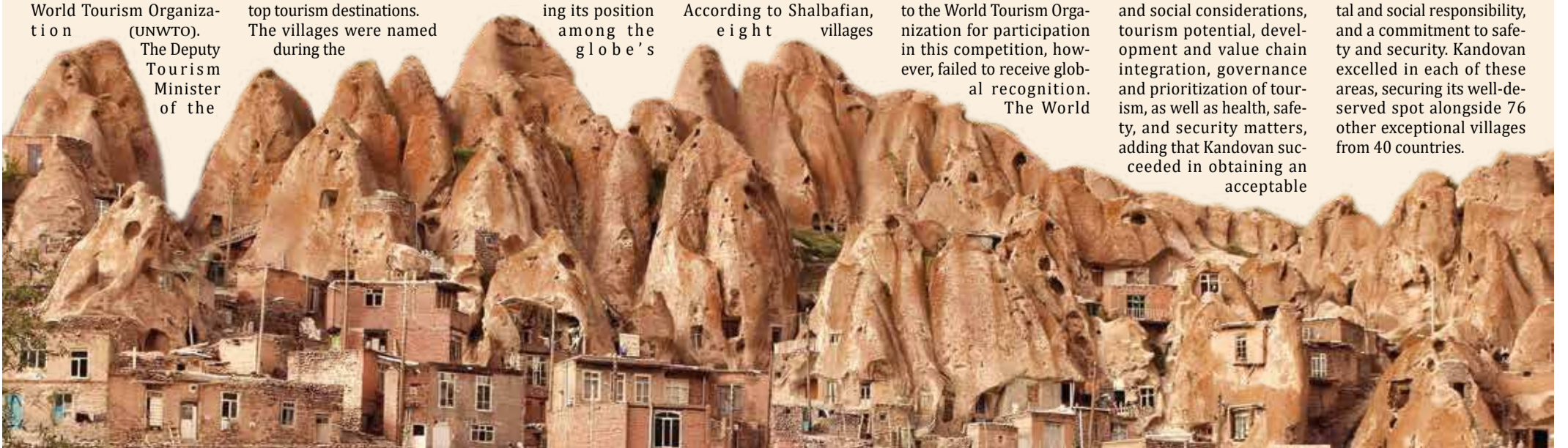
UNWTO General Assembly, taking place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, according to the international body. Kandovan faced serious competition from over 200 villages worldwide, yet it emerged victorious, securing its position among the globe's

most enchanting tourism destinations. This recognition is part of the UNWTO's ongoing initiative to boost tourism as a driver for rural development and the well-being of local communities. According to Shalbafian, eight villages

in Iran, including Kandovan, Bisheh in Lorestan, Meymand in Kerman, Soheili in Qeshm, Palangan in Kurdistan, Qasemabad in Gilan, Kandolus in Mazandaran, and Abyaneh in Isfahan were also introduced to the World Tourism Organization for participation in this competition, however, failed to receive global recognition. The World

Tourism Organization has established nine criteria for selecting global villages, which include possessing cultural resources, their promotion and preservation, economic sustainability, environmental and social considerations, tourism potential, development and value chain integration, governance and prioritization of tourism, as well as health, safety, and security matters, adding that Kandovan succeeded in obtaining an acceptable

score in these criteria. To earn its place on this exclusive list, Kandovan had to meet rigorous criteria set by the UNWTO, which included cultural resource preservation, economic sustainability, environmental and social responsibility, and a commitment to safety and security. Kandovan excelled in each of these areas, securing its well-deserved spot alongside 76 other exceptional villages from 40 countries.





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Artists around the world unite in solidarity with Palestinians



Rescuers and civilians remove the rubble of a home destroyed after an Israeli attack in central Gaza. ● AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Palestinians search the destroyed annex of the Greek Orthodox Saint Porphyrius Church, the oldest church still in use in Gaza. ● AFP

Arts & Culture Desk

In a powerful display of global solidarity, a number of artists and cultural icons from all over the world have united in a resounding call to stand with the Palestinian people in their resistance against the prolonged Israeli occupation.

Following the historic Palestinian resistance offensive on the morning of October 7, Israel has been waging a genocidal war against Gaza. On October 17, Israel bombed the Baptist hospital, killing over 500 Palestinians, all civilians.

The famous American actor, **Mark Ruffalo**, published on his page on the "X" platform, reports of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the situation in Gaza, in which it warned of the danger of the indiscriminate bombing of the Israeli occupation.

The actor famous for the character "Hulk" re-published a statement from UNICEF, in which it said that "killing and maiming children is a grave violation, and intentional killing is a serious violation of international humanitarian law," as part of her talk about the situation in Gaza.

For his part, the famous Irish actor, Liam Cunningham, published a demonstration in which he appears to have participated in solidarity with the Gaza Strip, which was organized in the capital, Dublin.

In turn, American star Susan Sarandon shared a group of news and video clips that show the brutality of the Israeli occupation in targeting civilians in Gaza. The famous star re-published pictures on her account on the "X" platform, showing the Israeli occupation's use of white phosphorus in the bombing of Gaza, the use of which is a violation of international law.

For his part, Hollywood star John Cusack confirmed that the Palestinians live in a large prison, due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation on freedom of movement through security

barriers and the "apartheid" wall. He added through his account on the "X" platform: "Anyone who has visited Palestine will not deny that thinking about the place I visited and the Palestinians I met, where 6,000 bombs were dropped on them in six days – is unimaginable.



There is literally no place to go."

On his Facebook account, Palestinian filmmaker **Rashid Mashharawi** reacted to the events in more than one post, describing Israel as an "incident" in the

life of the region, and considered that "survival is for the righteous."

"There is no future for this barbaric Zionist entity, Israel has dehumanized its citizens and soldiers," he wrote, adding, "A battered society, killing thousands of people and destroying thousands of buildings, and what next?"

Actor Khaled Abu Al-Naga devoted his pages on the platforms to reveal the massacres of the occupation, through his account on the platform "X" commented on one of the pictures "Friends in Washington DC demonstrating against the Israeli war in Gaza, apartheid and occupation in support of the Palestinian people."



The Lebanese singer **Ragheb Alama** – through his account on the platform "X" – condemned the international community and wrote: "Who is carrying out the massacres of killing children, women and innocent people in Gaza? Is it the criminal occupation army? The international community is carrying out the massacres, calling it a disgrace to humanity. The perpetrator of this historic crime is the bloody monster of the Zionist occupation army."

Relief Campaigns

As a Goodwill Ambassador at the United



Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Egyptian actress **Mona Zaki** reacted with a video on Instagram, saying, "We follow the tragic events in Gaza with the utmost oppression and injustice, and it is unimaginable the magnitude of the health, psychological and physical situation that the children of Palestine are going through, and the simplest thing that can be given is to donate to save them."

The actress had posted – through the feature of Story on Instagram – a picture of a child amid the explosions and destruction resulting from the bombing of Gaza, and commented on it, "I wish I could hide children in my heart until the end of the war."

Under the title "Help Gaza", a number of celebrities also interacted with the donation campaign called by the Egyptian Red Crescent Society to support the brotherly Palestinian people. Singer Tamer Hosni called on his fans through his Instagram account to pray for the Palestinian people and support them, saying, "Donate to the Egyptian Red Crescent to support our brothers, children and innocent people in Gaza," and asked his followers to donate, even small amounts.

Actor **Ahmad al-Sakka** also interacted with the campaign, posting ways to donate to Gaza, and placing the Palestinian flag next to it on his Instagram account.



Actor Ahmed Fahmy also called for donations and the delivery of aid to Palestine, who posted a video on his Instagram account, saying, "The least we can offer to our brothers in Gaza is by donating to the Egyptian Red Crescent Society." Tunisian actress Latifa posted a blood

donation campaign and a food bank, commenting that it was "the least that can be given to our people in Gaza under the harsh brute conditions."

This is what the singer Angham did, as she wrote on Instagram, "In difficult days, it is easy to fall prey to helplessness, but we can only help in a simple way, I invite you to help the people of Palestine not only with prayers but with assistance that helps them to survive."

Through his account on the "X" platform, actor Ahmed Helmy said, "Children in the hundreds were killed, burns, wounds and lost limbs, grieving mothers and fathers and children whose parents died in front of them, and their homes were demolished, there is no safety, food, water, medicines, fuel or electricity," and continued that they have the right to life and must be helped, and concluded his post by calling for donations to the children of Gaza.

Through his account on the "X" platform, Kuwaiti singer **Abdullah al-Ruwaihed** interacted with the solidarity campaign launched by the Ministry of Information to relief the Palestinian people.

Crimes against humanity

Syrian actress Sulaf Fawakherji posted a video of a Palestinian child sitting amid the destruction caused by the Israeli attack and commented on it, "A mighty and invincible people from small to large, our souls are with you at every moment."

Tunisian actress **Hend Sabri** interacted on Instagram, writing, "Millions are losing faith not only in maps but in humanity, and I am one of them, I refuse to choose those who

mourn for their children," and continued that she is astonished by the disregard and dehumanization of the Palestinian people in the media through silence, and described what is happening as a crime.

The Egyptian actress **Sherihan** did not miss and declared her solidarity through the "X" platform, where she wrote more than one post, and

commented that she does not believe the madness, criminality, brutality, barbarism and horrific crimes reached by the occupation against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy sites, children, women and the elderly, and a life without electricity, water or fuel. Sherihan denounced the injustice and oppression of the Palestinian people, who are living under total siege and "genocide", telling the whole world that "if there was humanity or law to reject this genocide."

For his part, the Egyptian actor Khaled Al-Nabawi – through a post on the platform "X" – that the defense of Palestine is the defense of the Arab nation from the Nile to the Euphrates. Jordanian actress Saba Mubarak put the Palestinian flag on her Instagram account, stressing her support for Palestine. Egyptian actor Mohamed Henedy called on the Palestinian people via X, and singer Ahmed Fahmy (a member of the WAMA team) posted on his Instagram account a video of him calling on the Palestinian people.

On her Instagram account, singer **Asala Nasri** said, "Palestine is a homeland that we adore and belong to its people" and called on the people of Gaza in the wounded land to be victorious.