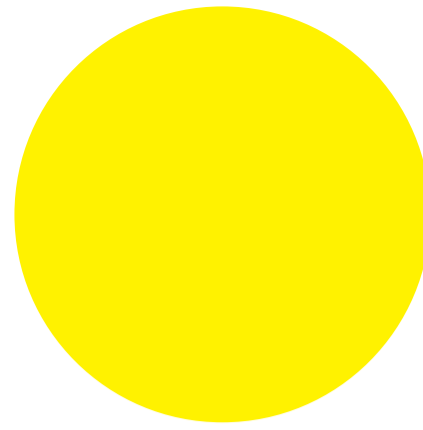


Iran to construct refinery, power station in Kyrgyzstan

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Renewable power capacity exceeds 1,100 MW



Economy Desk

The power generation capacity of Iran's renewable power plants has increased to 1,101 megawatts, according to a report by IRNA.

Developing the capacity of renewable power plants is one of the plans of the incumbent government, based on which, the Ministry of Energy has proposed the construction of renewable power plants, one of which is the construction of a station with 10,000 megawatts of capacity, the report added.

According to the program, 4,000 MW of solar power plants, 3,000 MW of wind power plants will be built by industries.

In recent days, the construction of 30,000 MW of renewable power plants in five years was approved in the meeting of the Iranian Supreme Council of Energy. For this purpose, the biggest financing of renewable power plants was done through the National Development Fund of Iran, with the aim of developing investing in mega projects in the field of renewable energy.

Accordingly, the National Development Fund of Iran allocated \$5 billion for the construction of renewable power plants.

Currently, around 30 percent of the energy produced in the world is provided by renewable methods, while in Iran, the share of renewable and clean energy production in the country's total electricity production has been 0.6 percent since the beginning of the year.

A researcher of a new technology-based firm said, "Today, more than 10,000 megawatts of renewable power plants have been installed in Turkey, while in Iran, the total of renewable and wind resources is nearly 900 megawatts. Less than one percent of the country's electricity is supplied from renewable sources, while it is 15 percent in Turkey."

Mohammadreza Navazani noted, "Due to the fact that the price of energy carriers is low, renewable energy, including solar energy, are ignored in Iran. On the other hand, fossil resources are provided to power plants for free to produce electricity. If fossil resources are fed into refineries and petrochemicals, it will be possible to earn foreign exchange for the country, but we just burn it and generate electricity from it."

Iran-Russia strategic relations growing: *VP*

Iran to construct refinery, power station in Kyrgyzstan



Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber (l) shakes hands with Chairman of Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan Akyzbek Japarov in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on October 25, 2023.



Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber (l) shakes hands with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on October 25, 2023.

Economy Desk

Level of Iran-Russia strategic relations is growing well, said Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber in his meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Bishkek on Wednesday.

Mokhber arrived in Bishkek to attend the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of Government, fvpresident.ir reported.

Referring to setting of records in bilateral commercial exchange last year, Mokhber emphasized the need to develop economic relations between the two countries in all sectors, calling for removing the obstacles ahead, along with speeding up the process for implementing the previous agreements.

He also expressed appreciation for Russia's support for Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and the Eurasian Union's free trade agreement with Iran.

Russia wants to develop tourism relations between the two countries and, in this regard, the plan to issue tourist visas has been

implemented, the PM said. In their negotiations, Iranian and Russian delegations decided to carry out technical and economic studies regarding gas transit between Russia and Iran with the cooperation of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Developing Tehran-Bishkek economic ties

Meanwhile on Wednesday, Iran and Kyrgyzstan agreed to develop economic cooperation, including starting a rail corridor, build a refinery and a power plant in the Central Asian country, the trade of bitumen and grain as well as establishing business centers.

In a meeting with Chairman of Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan Akyzbek Japarov, Mokhber referred to the high potential for boosting bilateral trade and highlighted the necessity to elevate bilateral relations to a new level. He expressed Iran's interest and full readiness to strengthen friendly relations with Kyrgyzstan in the spirit of friendship and partnership.

In the meeting, Japarov congratulated Iran on be-

coming a full member of the SCO.

"I am confident Iran will make its contribution to the strengthening of SCO capacity, and friendship and cooperation between SCO member states," the Kyrgyz official said.

He also added that the landmark visit of Mokhber to Kyrgyzstan will create a strong foundation for further development of bilateral ties.

The cabinet chairman hailed the signing of a memorandum on the establishment of the Kyrgyz-Iranian Investment Office in Bishkek, on the sidelines of the meeting of the intergovernmental commission held on October 20 in Bishkek.

As a landlocked country, Kyrgyzstan is interested in the use of Iran's sea ports, the official said.

Particular attention was paid to cooperation in agriculture and industry, and export of eco products from Kyrgyzstan to Iran. "Kyrgyzstan has a big potential of export of beans to Iran. Bean fields occupy more than 55,000 hectares; 78,276 tons of beans were harvested in 2022," the official stated.

Kyrgyzstan can also export

honey to Iran, he added.

Before leaving Tehran for the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek, Mokhber said the SCO member states have ample capacities for economic cooperation, according to a statement published on the website of Mokhber's office.

The SCO meeting kicked off on Tuesday and will continue until Friday.

He said the SCO is a successful model of strategic regional cooperation, stressing Iran's numerous capacities in industry, agriculture, modern technologies and energy sectors.

Mokhber expressed hope that Iran would be able to reach bilateral agreements on cooperation and partnership with the SCO member states during his two-day meeting.

Talks over gas hub

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji, who accompanies the first vice president on the trip, said on Wednesday that his ministry's agenda during the visit will be preparing the ground for supplying petrochemicals and other products to the SCO members, according to Shana. He stressed that among

other issues, he would discuss exporting Iran's technical and engineering services, making investments in the oil and gas sector and constructing energy transfer pipelines, especially for gas transit from Iran to Central Asian states.

Trade with SCO

The value of trade between Iran and 11 SCO members reached \$21.73 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian year, from March 21 to September 22, indicating a 10 percent year-on-year growth, said spokesman of the Trade Promotion Commission of Iran's House of Industry, Mine and Trade Rouhollah Latifi on Wednesday, according to IRNA.

The official added that 36.98 million tons of goods worth \$21.73 billion were exchanged between Iran and member countries of the SCO during the six months to September 22. Iran's full SCO membership was approved at the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, held via a video conference in July.

Iranian delegation to attend Pakistan Auto Show 2023

Economy Desk

During a visit to Pakistan, a 22-member delegation of Iran Union of Automobile Spare Parts Manufacturers and Sellers will discuss deepening ways of cooperation in the automobile sector.

The delegation held a meeting with Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu on Tuesday before departure to the country. This is the first-ever organized visit of represen-

tatives of the auto parts industry from Iran to Pakistan, according to a press release by Pakistan Embassy in Iran.

In the meeting, the ambassador explained the conducive investment regime of Pakistan and asked the delegation to consider entering into joint-ventures with Pakistani companies. He expressed the hope that the visit of the Iranian delegation would result in the enhancement of exports of Pakistani auto parts to Iran; imports of



Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu meets a delegation of Iran Union of Automobile Spare Parts Manufacturers and Sellers in Tehran on October 24, 2023.

cheaper replacements from Iran; and the technology-transfer oriented joint-ventures between the two sides.

Ahmed Hosseini, Chair-

man of the union, said that this long-awaited visit will pave the way for closer business relations between the private sectors of both brotherly

countries. The delegation is visiting Pakistan to attend "Pakistan Auto Show 2023", held in Karachi during October 27-29.

Kashan, a destination for lovers of literature, art and nature



The town of Qamsar, Kashan
apochi.com

Iranica Desk

The enchanting natural landscapes of Kashan, a city in Isfahan Province, along with its rich artistic and literary heritage, have yet to be fully appreciated, said a tourism expert.

Akbar Rezvanian added that Sohrab Sepehri, renowned for his poetic celebration of nature, deserves the title of the "Green Poet," while Kashan itself can be rightfully recognized as a cultural haven for tourists seeking both artistic and literary experiences.

"Tourism and Green Investment," he said, "was the overarching theme for World Tourism Day of 2023 (Sept. 27)."

He continued that ecotourism encompasses all aspects derived from the natural world: verdant landscapes, majestic mountains, dense forests, vast plains, arid deserts, meandering rivers, and expansive seas readily come



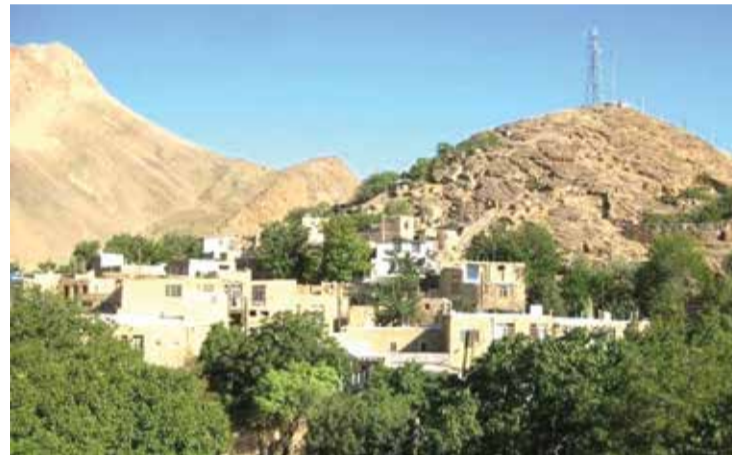
The town of Niasar, Kashan
apochi.com

to mind. "Integrating travel and exploration into this equation, it is imperative that we strive to foster and endorse tourism while concurrently safeguarding the integrity of our natural surroundings and the environment at large. This principle embodies the essence of sustainable tourism and ecotourism," he said.

Rezvanian noted that Kashan is comprised of three climatic zones: Mountains, foothills, and desert. Whenever Kashan is mentioned, only the historic fabric, ancient houses, Fin Garden, and hand-woven carpets come to people's mind, all of which are very beautiful, important, and valuable. However, the pristine and beautiful

nature of Kashan remains unknown and can showcase itself alongside the history and culture of this region, becoming a tourist attraction and a destination for art-lovers, writers, and nature enthusiasts.

"Literary and artistic tourism can have a special place in Kashan, and its hallmark is Sohrab Sepehri. The content of all of Sohrab's



The town of Bazok, Kashan
apochi.com

poems and paintings are derived from nature but, unfortunately, we have not worked on introducing Kashan as a destination for literary, artistic, and green tourism."

"Sohrab Sepehri's paintings command a noteworthy price in Iran, being highly regarded in the realm of art. Furthermore, his poems exhibit a distinct

and universally appealing style of language. However, it is worth noting that we have not yet delved into his introduction of Kashan as his birthplace," he added. Born in 1928, Sohrab Sepehri is recognized as a pivotal figure in contemporary literature and art, renowned for his nickname as "The Poet of Nature". His childhood and teenage



Sohrab Sepehri

years were spent in Kashan, where he embarked upon a profound journey of knowledge and artistic exploration. In the subsequent decade, Sohrab indulged in voyages of discovery and travel in nature, while in his fourth decade, he immersed himself in extensive sojourns. It was during this period that he made repeated visits to Japan, France, Italy, India, and America, alongside numerous other nations spanning the East and the West.

Saryazd village's charm and rich heritage

Iranica Desk

The rustic villages of Iran are absolutely enchanting. They showcase the boundless generosity of nature, offering breathtaking views and a plethora of tourist and historical attractions. Each village exudes a genuine sense of simplicity, yet pulses with vibrant energy. Located in Yazd Province, five kilometers east of Mehriz, and 40 kilometers south of the city of Yazd, Saryazd

village boasts an impressive 2500-year history. It proudly holds the prestigious title of being Iran's fifth Exemplary Tourism Village.

With a rich history spanning thousands of years, Saryazd, which has been hailed as a gateway to the province, was known as Farafar in the ancient times. Archaeological studies carried out on the pottery items found in this village indicate that this region

flourished during the Seljuk, Ilkhanid and Safavid eras.

According to experts and historical records, it is believed that prior to the founding of the city of Yazd, there existed a fascinating area near Rashtak village, known as Farafar. However, due to a devastating drought, its prosperity waned, eventually leading to its disappearance. Subsequently, the resilient locals built their new city in what

is now known as Yazd.

The old castle of Saryazd, dating back to the Sassanid era, stands as a magnificent testament to the rich history and architectural prowess of the village. It is revered as the foremost historical landmark in the village, bearing immense cultural significance. This iconic structure holds a coveted position on Iran's National Heritage List. Once hailed as Iran's largest and most renowned treasury,

it served as a vital refuge for farmers and a storage facility for grains and provisions. Within its chambers, an array of exquisite vaults and storerooms housed a variety of earthen jars.

With its sturdy brick walls, meticulously crafted and interconnected, along with its inner courtyards and towering fortifications, it stands as a testament to strength and grandeur. The main gate, designed to close from top to bottom with

seamless precision, adds an extra layer of security. This architectural marvel was built in three stories evoking awe and admiration.

An excavated trench encircles the castle, strategically designed for defense. Ingeniously, hidden traps beneath the straw ensured the enemy's futile attempts to infiltrate the fortress.

In addition to this castle, we mustn't overlook the renowned Farafar Gate, which serves as the main

entrance to the city of Yazd. This remarkable structure holds great importance and, even after its reconstruction, it has successfully retained its role as a symbol of identity.

Just beyond this gate, you'll find a charming caravanserai that dates back to the Safavid era. This architectural gem, built with sturdy bricks and crowned by a majestic dome, has rightfully earned its place on Iran's National Heritage List.



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IRNA

NEWS IN BRIEF

Illegal Afghan immigrants must leave: Minister



TASNIM – Undocumented Afghan immigrants should be expelled from Iran, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said, criticizing the Taliban's disregard for the problem that has been inflicted on Iran. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Vahidi emphasized the necessity of organizing the status and activities of Afghan immigrants in Iran. While the community of Afghan immigrants would naturally include a number of criminals, and although thousands of illegal immigrants have been imprisoned in Iran on various charges, it is necessary to prevent a phobia about Afghanistan from developing, he stated.

Russia to forge strategic defense ties with Iran



MEHR – Russia plans to develop defense cooperation with Iran on a mutually advantageous basis while taking advantage of the lifting of certain restrictions on Tehran, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told reporters. “We will develop our [military-technical] cooperation on a mutually advantageous basis, as we did before, in full compliance with international commitments and existing regimes in this field,” the senior Russian diplomat said.

Tehran slams Israel's killing of journalists

PRESS TV – Iran has strongly denounced the Israeli regime's killing of journalists in the Gaza Strip, saying the murders cannot help conceal the crimes of the Zionist regime and its supporters. Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani made the remarks in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, on Tuesday after it was revealed that the Israeli regime's ongoing war on Gaza had so far killed as many as 19 journalists.

Leader: US 'definite accomplice' in Israeli crimes in Gaza

Global disgust at Israel contrasts sharply with UNSC's inaction: Raisi



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses members of Lorestan Province's Martyrs Commemoration Congress on October 25, 2023. [leader.ir](#)

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said the United States is a “definite accomplice” in the Zionist regime's crimes against the people of the Gaza Strip. He made the remarks during a meeting with members of the Lorestan Province's Martyrs Commemoration Congress on Wednesday, according to Press TV. Ayatollah Khamenei further said the US is somehow involved in crimes that Israel commits against Palestinians in Gaza. “The presence of the heads of the oppressive and villainous states in the occupied territories shows their concern about the disintegration of the Zionist regime,” the Leader added, referring to Western leaders' trips to the Israeli-occupied territories to reaffirm their support for the regime. “Islamic governments should not be passive in the face of criminals. Victory certainly belongs to

Palestine.” He described as “decisive” and “irreparable” the blow dealt to the usurping entity by Palestinian fighters in their October 7 raid, dubbed Operation Al-Aqsa Storm. Ayatollah Khamenei said that Gaza is now “the scene of innocence on the one hand and strength on the other hand.” Ayatollah Khamenei said the “injured” and “worn-out” Israeli regime is taking revenge against the people of Gaza for the decisive blow it received from Palestinian fighters. “Yes, the people of Gaza are really oppressed, and this ruthless and bloodthirsty enemy, the usurping terrorist regime, knows no boundaries to crimes. It kills a thousand people in one bombardment,” the Leader asserted. He added, “US hands are drenched with the blood of the oppressed, the children, the patients, the women....” “Undoubtedly, however, all these cruelties and crimes will ultimately lead no-

where, and victory belongs to the Palestinian nation in this [battle] and the future [battles], despite all the support from the world's villains and the Americans' definite complicity in the Zionists' crimes,” he emphasized. Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the leaders of the US, Britain, France, and Germany have paid solidarity visits to the occupied territories and provided Israel with bombs and other weapons in a bid to rescue the regime. The extent and depth of Israel's repeated crimes, he pointed out, shook the public conscience in the US, Europe, Muslim countries, and other regions of the world. “The self-proclaimed advocates of freedom and human rights in Europe have banned pro-Palestine demonstrations, but people come to the streets in defiance of these bans and shout their anger, fury, and distress of conscience,” he said. “No one will be able to stop nations from reacting to the Zionists' brutalities.”



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Niger Bakary Yaou Sangaré in Tehran on October 25, 2023. [president.ir](#)

Raisi raps UNSC's inaction

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi highlighted the unprecedented disgust and hatred expressed by the people of the world for the recent crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, and contrasted it with the inaction of the United Nations Security Council in condemning those crimes. Speaking at the meeting of the cabinet on Wednesday morning, he stressed the necessity of passing a resolution that condemns Israel's heinous crimes in the United Nations General Assembly. Raisi described Israel's continuous killing of defenseless, innocent women and children in the Gaza Strip as a great tragedy for mankind. “Now that the unjust world order is threatening the normal course of life and the security and peace of all the people of the world, it is the duty of everyone, including the free people, intellectuals, and non-governmental organizations, to use all in their power to declare their disgust and condemn the crimes of the Zionist regime and the unjust world

order that supports it,” he asserted. In describing the unjust world order, the president specifically referred to the steps taken by Western countries regarding the indiscriminate killing in Gaza, and said, “These countries are not only encouraging this regime to commit crimes and massacres in Gaza by staying silent on the crimes of the Zionist regime, but they are also practically complicit in killing the defenseless and oppressed women and children of Gaza since they send equipment to the cruel regime.” Referring to the unprecedented disgust and hatred of the world public opinion for the crimes of the Zionist regime and the inaction of the United Nations Security Council in this regard, the president considered it necessary to pass a resolution condemning these crimes in the United Nations General Assembly. Speaking at a meeting with the foreign minister of Niger, Bakary Yaou Sangaré, the Iranian president recalled the hegemonic actions of Western countries throughout the contemporary history of the world. Raisi described the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza and the support of Western countries for these crimes as the true face of the racism and colonialism of Westerners in the recent era.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran begins building Karoun nuclear power plant

National Desk

Iran has started to build the Karoun nuclear power plant in the southwestern province of Khuzestan, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said. Mohammad Eslami told reporters after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday that the government has signed contracts with domestic companies to equip the power plant, IFP reported. He said water and electricity have been supplied as

requirements for the activities of the 300-megawatt Karoun nuclear power plant. He also added a 24-megawatt power facility is under construction for a desalination plant. The nuclear power plant, which is designed by domestic experts and is to be equipped with indigenous technologies, is being constructed in an area of around 50 hectares near the Karoun River. Earlier on December 3, 2020, Eslami said that the

plant is of medium-scale standard, and the preliminary phase will include environmental and infrastructural studies. The construction of the 300 MW site was estimated to cost \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion, and take around seven years' time, he asserted, according to AEOI. The power plant is of the PWR type, with close to 4% fuel feed. The project design has already been registered with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Muslim leaders slam double standards over Gaza war

Smoke ascends over the northern Gaza Strip following an Israeli strike on October 25, 2023.
● RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP



International Desk

Turkey and Qatar accused the international community of "double standards" on Wednesday in its reaction to the escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Qatar's top diplomat Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said Qatar and Turkey – both Western allies – "reaffirm our complete rejection of responding to the crisis with double standards when it comes to human life." "It is not permissible to condemn the killing of civilians in one context and justify it in another," said Al Thani, who also serves as Qatar's prime minister.

Gaza's Health Ministry said on Wednesday that at least 6,500 people have been killed in the war so far, many of them children.

Western governments, including Britain, France and the United States, have offered their full support to Israel, asserting its right to defend itself following Hamas's deadly rampage. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said, "The failure of some American and north European countries to condemn and prevent the destruction and disaster in Gaza constitutes a very serious double standard and plays a destabilizing role." Both Turkey and Qatar have been strong supporters of the Palestinian cause and have open channels of communication with Hamas, the rulers of Gaza.

Hamas, a liberation group

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in his

strongest comments yet on the Gaza conflict, said on Wednesday Hamas was not a terrorist organization but a liberation group fighting to protect Palestinian lands and people.

Erdogan also slammed Western powers for supporting Israel's bombing of Gaza and called for an immediate cease-fire.

"The perpetrators of the massacre and the destruction taking place in Gaza are those providing unlimited support for Israel," Erdogan said. "Israel's attacks on Gaza, for both itself and those supporting them, amount to murder and mental illness."

'Glaring double standard'

Jordan's Queen Rania also accused Western leaders of

a "glaring double standard" for not condemning Israel's killing of Palestinian civilians.

"When October 7 happened, the world immediately and unequivocally stood by Israel and its right to defend itself and condemned the attack," she said.

"But what we're seeing in the last couple of weeks, we're seeing silence in the world."

"Are we being told that it is wrong to kill a family, an entire family, at gunpoint, but it's OK to shell them to death?" she asked.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Wednesday, "France does not practice double standards".

"International law applies to everyone and France carries the universal values of humanism," Macron said during a joint press conference with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo, responding to accusations by Arab leaders who have accused Western nations of overlooking harm to Palestinians.

US role in war

Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations also said the US is aiding and abetting the Israeli regime's ongoing war on Gaza.

Addressing the UN Security Council on Tuesday, the Iranian envoy Amir Saeid Irvani said, "The US has further exacerbated the conflict by overtly aligning itself with the aggressor at the expense of the innocent

Palestinian population."

Israel has responded to Hamas's October 7 attack with relentless air strikes on the tiny Palestinian enclave. It has also imposed a total siege on Gaza's 2.4 million residents who are facing a "catastrophic" humanitarian crisis, the UN says.

Crippling blockade

The main UN aid agency in Gaza warned on Tuesday it will have to stop operations by the end of Wednesday because it is running out of fuel.

Alarm has grown about the spiraling humanitarian crisis in the heavily bombed Gaza Strip, where one doctor said he was forced to perform emergency surgery on the wounded without anesthetic.

Nearly 600,000 internally displaced people are also sheltering in 150 facilities of the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency in Gaza, while at least 40 UNRWA installations have been impacted, the UN agency posted on Wednesday on the social media platform X.

"Our shelters are four times over their capacities - many people are sleeping in the streets as current facilities are overwhelmed," the agency added.

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Tuesday spoke of "epic suffering" in Gaza and said there had been "clear violations of international law" there, a statement that drew a fierce response from Israel's top diplomat.

Political suicide for Israel

By Syed Ali Hassan

Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday, called Israeli attacks on Gaza a violation of international law and demanded an immediate cease-fire.

Guterres described Israel's collective punishment of Palestinians as war crimes, adding that the attacks by Hamas on Israel on October 7 "did not happen in a vacuum as the Palestinians have endured 76 years of suffocating occupation."

Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen blasted Guterres for his remarks. Cohen mentioned Hamas attacks but did point to the 19-day bombardment which has so far killed over 6,500 Gazans including 2,700 children. Since the beginning of the conflict, Israel has dropped 33 tons of explosives per kilometer on the Palestinian territory.

Meanwhile, Iran's Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Ashtiani warned that an Israeli ground invasion of Gaza would be a "political suicide" for the regime. He also slammed the US for its unwavering support for Israel, saying it could expand the war beyond Gaza.

According to the US Defense Department, local armed men in Iraq and Syria carried out 12 rocket attacks on American bases there. In addition, Hezbollah has targeted an Israeli checkpoint with a missile in the wake of Iran's warning.

Israel has not officially declared its withdrawal from a land attack, but some defense experts are suggesting that the regime may be steering clear of such operations.

The robust diplomatic efforts of Iran and the resistance forces in the region have exerted enormous pressure on Israel and its patrons, dissuading Israel from venturing out with any dire consequences. In addition to Iran, countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan have warned Israel against launching a ground attack.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram, has warned that Israeli operations in Palestinian territories are becoming a dangerous conflict. Addressing the meeting of the Security Council, he said that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, and Pakistan demands an immediate and unconditional cease-fire. He warned that Israeli actions could lead to a wider and more dangerous conflict and that those responsible are those who are escalating the conflict.

During the special session, Saudi Arabia also called the Israeli attacks on civilian hospitals, food reserves and basic facilities a breach of international law. The Saudi foreign minister described the international community's failure to end Israel's relentless attack and forced displacement of Gazans as a threat to security and stability.

It is denial of a right to life, Mr. Biden



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

On September 21, 2021, Joe Biden addressed the UN General Assembly for the first time as US president and reaffirmed his country's commitment to upholding democratic principles, particularly "freedom, equality, opportunity, and a belief in the universal rights of all people." He quoted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "The equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world."

Biden also said the US and his partners will work "to meet these challenges, to build a future that lifts all of our people and preserves this planet."

Setting aside some double standards by Western nations led by the United States concerning human rights, let's focus solely on recent events within a small geographic area over the past 18 days. We don't need to go through details; just examining news from Tuesday, October 24, related to the developments in Gaza will be enough to assess the US and its allies' commit-

ment to the universal value of respecting human rights.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, the death toll from Israel's strikes on Gaza since October 7 has climbed to over 5,800, among them nearly 2,400 children. Shockingly, just in one day, Israelis killed 704 Palestinians. The ministry also declared the complete breakdown of the health care system in Gaza's hospitals.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has raised alarm about the dire conditions in northern Gaza's hospitals. According to Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper, the number of Palestinian journalists killed in Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip has now reached 19.

Israel's Channel 12 has confirmed reports that the Israeli military used banned bombs against civilians in Gaza.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Western states of hypocrisy and double standards amid a lack of criticism of Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip.

"The reaction from Washington and – with a few exceptions – from European capitals to Israel's actions in Gaza since October 7 has been muted," Tom Porteous, the deputy program director at the international

NGO, said in a statement that was released on HRW's website. According to Porteous, while the United States and European countries denounced Russia's actions in Ukraine, there was no clear condemnation of Israel's cruelty in Gaza. He described the West's hypocrisy as "flagrant and obvious."

Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the British Labour Party, criticized the policies of the UK government in the war against Gaza.

"Today, [we] say very bluntly to our political leaders ... do not condone war crimes, do not condone the starvation and the denial of medicine to desperate people in Gaza," Corbyn told thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters at a rally in London on October 14.

"If you believe in human rights, then you must condemn what is happening now in Gaza by the Israeli army."

Josh Paul, a former director in the US State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, resigned last week over the Biden administration's robust support for Israel. Paul declared he could not support further US military assistance to Israel, calling the administration's response "an impulsive

reaction" based on "intellectual bankruptcy."

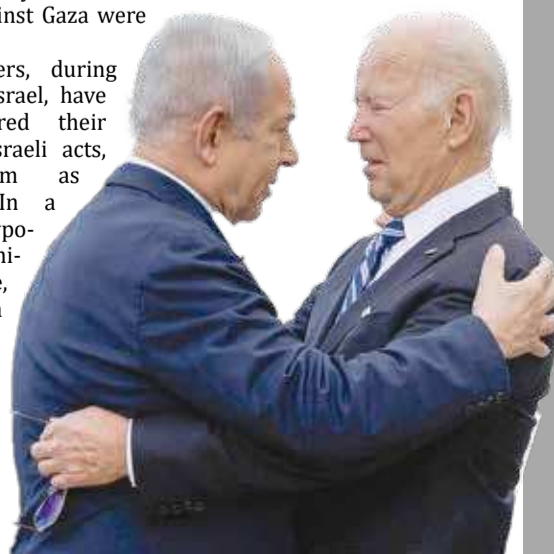
"The absence of a willingness to hold that debate when it comes to Israel is not proof of our commitment to Israel's security. Rather, it is proof of our commitment to a policy that, the record shows, is a dead end – and proof of our willingness to abandon our values and turn a blind eye to the suffering of millions in Gaza when it is politically expedient, he wrote in an opinion published by the Washington Post.

Iyad Al-Bazm, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior in the Gaza Strip, pointed out that more than 80 percent of the bombs used by Israel in its aggression against Gaza were US-made.

Western leaders, during their trip to Israel, have openly declared their support for Israeli acts, framing them as self-defense. In a somewhat hypocritical humanitarian gesture, they've made a distinction between military personnel and civilians. It's as if they see Isra-

el as a nice and obedient child who pays attention and distinguishes between soldiers and non-combatants. But the question arises: Were the 4,000 women and children killed in Israeli bombings armed members of Hamas?

No, Mr. Biden. You and your allies and partners have not only failed to create a brighter future for the people of Gaza, but you have also turned a blind eye to the violation and denial of their right to life. You've remained silent and even supported these acts. This behavior runs contrary to your supposed commitment to upholding human rights.



Wounds of Israeli war on Gaza

Israel rains down bombs on the Gaza Strip, slaughtering hundreds of civilians on a daily basis, despite international outcry. Every day, people in the Palestinian territory see parents who lose their children and vice versa. So far, more than 2,700 innocent children have fallen victim to Israeli savagery. These photos show death and destruction caused by Israeli strikes as well as demonstrations held in support of the people of Gaza.



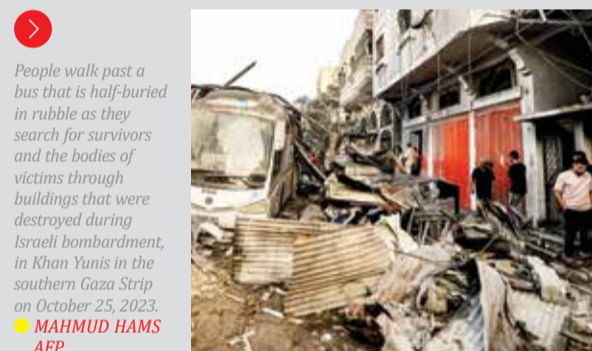
A child sits next to another playing a game on a cell phone in the playground of a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees agency that has been converted into a shelter for displaced Palestinians in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **MAHMUD HAMS/AFP**



People search for survivors and the bodies of victims through buildings that were destroyed during Israeli bombardment, in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **MAHMUD HAMS/AFP**



Mourners walk in the funeral procession of three Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in the latest violence in the occupied West Bank, at the Jenin refugee camp on October 25, 2023. **AFP**



People walk past a bus that is half-buried in rubble as they search for survivors and the bodies of victims through buildings that were destroyed during Israeli bombardment, in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **MAHMUD HAMS AFP**



Women mourn by the bodies of Palestinian victims killed during Israeli bombardment, before their funerals outside the morgue at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **MAHMUD HAMS AFP**



Protesters march with Palestinian flags during a rally in support with people in the Gaza Strip, in the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, Palestine, on October 25, 2023. **JAAFAR ASHTIYEH/AFP**



The father of Amal al-Bayouk, a one-year-old Palestinian child who was killed during Israeli bombardment, holds her body before her funeral outside the morgue at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **AFP**



Policemen guard next to the Palestinian Embassy in Moscow, where flowers and toys were laid in memory of the victims, especially children, who have been killed in Israel's attacks on Gaza Strip on October 25, 2023. **ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AFP**



Two men talk to each other while standing before shops closed following a call for a general strike in support of the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, in the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank on October 25, 2023. **ZAIN JAAFAR/AFP**

Iran's education sector faces critical shortage of teachers



By Ali
Amiri

Staff writer

Social Desk

As the current Iranian school year in September 2023 enters its second month, a considerable number of classrooms across the country remain empty of teachers, leaving countless students without proper instruction. This alarming situation has sparked concerns of an educational crisis, as the multifaceted reasons behind the teacher shortage come to light.

On Sunday, October 23, the spokesperson of the Parliament's Education and Research Commission, while reading the commission's report on the causes and factors contributing to the current teacher shortage, highlighted key issues within the Ministry of Education and the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization.

"The weakness of the Ministry of Education and the delay from the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization are among the most important reasons for the shortage of teachers in the country," said Ahmad-Hossein Fallahi, according to Fars News Agency.

According to the commission's report, the Ministry of Education as "the primary guardian of the nation's education system" bears the crucial responsibility of ensuring "an adequate supply of teachers" before the commencement of each academic year.

The report enumerates 11 more reasons that are considered to be contributing to the current shortage of teachers:

Firstly, there has been a persistent issue of procrastination and delay within



A considerable number of classrooms across Iran remain empty of teachers more than a month since the beginning of the academic year in September, 2023.

the Administrative and Recruitment Affairs Organization, particularly in regards to issuing ranks for the employment test as stipulated in Article 28 of Farhangian University's statutes. Additionally, there has been a deficiency in the number of permits granted for employment. Another contributing factor is the irregular payment of tuition fees for employees and retirees by the country's Planning and Budget Organization, which has led to a significant decrease in motivation among these individuals to cooperate. Moreover, there has been a notable reduction in the recruitment of student-teachers through Farhangian universities. The infrastructure of Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training

University has also been plagued with defects, resulting in a very limited capacity to meet the demands of the country's education system. Furthermore, Shahid Rajaei Teacher Training University has deviated from its original mission of teacher training in the past decade. Over the last decade, the recruitment process through employment tests has proven to be inadequate. The evaluation of candidates for the teaching exam has been unnecessarily prolonged, exacerbating the shortage of teachers. The high number of teacher retirements in the past three years has further exacerbated the crisis. Additionally, the prohibition of employing teachers through the purchase

of services has contributed to the shortage. The weakness of the human resources structure within the education system has hindered timely planning for the provision of adequate human resources. Lastly, the teaching profession has experienced a decline in attractiveness, further exacerbating the shortage of qualified educators. Despite efforts being made to address the teacher shortage, such as the rehiring of retired educators and increasing the number of student-teachers, the impact of this problem has already taken a toll on numerous students, particularly those in disadvantaged areas of Iran. While the majority of private schools have success-

fully completed their staff recruitment for the ongoing academic year and have even commenced classes ahead of schedule, a stark contrast emerges in the case of public schools situated in rural areas and disadvantaged cities. These educational institutions are lagging behind, exacerbating the already substantial divide between the quality of education available to the privileged compared to that which the general population and less fortunate individuals have access to – a divide which has led to a situation where the majority of seats in prestigious universities are occupied by privileged students who have succeeded in the national university entrance exam.

During an interview with an Iran Daily reporter, a school counselor shed light on the teacher shortage situation, emphasizing the contrasting severity between privileged cities and rural areas.

"Schools in larger cities have managed to maintain adequate staffing levels for the current academic year, while the shortage predominantly affects schools in villages and smaller cities," the counselor said. Additionally, the counselor expressed concern about the practice of assigning non-specialized counselors, "including myself and my colleagues, to teach classes outside our expertise."

Disturbing rumors have also circulated, suggesting that some schools have resorted to asking parents to fill in as substitute teachers due to the lack of qualified educators. It is evident that such measures place students at a significant disadvantage, compromising the quality of their education. Urgent attention and comprehensive solutions are needed to address the current shortage of teachers in our country, which in turn would prevent the divide from deepening and ensure equal educational opportunities for all students in Iran.

Among the numerous solutions proposed by the Education and Research Commission of the Parliament, article 4 stands out as a potentially enduring remedy for the teacher shortage in our country. This solution emphasizes the need to enhance the appeal of the teaching profession through the establishment of a fair payment system and the provision of educational facilities that prioritize the well-being of educators.

Tehran students show solidarity with Gaza children



Social Desk

The students from schools in Tehran gathered at Palestine Square, downtown Tehran, to show their support for Palestinian children and condemn the crimes committed by the Zionist regime.

The event saw the participation of 20,000 students, as well as officials from the Ministry of Education and Tehran Province authorities, IRNA reported.

During the gathering, the students chanted slogans denouncing the Israeli regime, expressed their condemnation of its crimes, and voiced their solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people. They held Iranian and Palestinian flags, as well as placards with the message "Death to Israel."

One of the students, Maedeh, a ninth grader, proudly held a Palestinian flag and expressed her desire to support the oppressed students in Palestine. She stated that her biggest wish is to help Palestine, go to Gaza, and even become a martyr for the cause. Maedeh emphasized that Iranian students are always ready to support their counterparts in Gaza.

Zahra, another student present at the rally, held a photo of the martyred children of Gaza. She expressed her belief that Israel will soon be destroyed and that the Palestinian people will achieve freedom.

Masoumeh, a 12th grader, joined the gathering to show her support for all the oppressed children in Palestine. She wanted to assure them that they are not alone and that they have the backing of the students in Iran.

Hossein, an 11th grader, while attending the event stated that he was there to support the oppressed people of Palestine and to convey the message that their liberation from the Zionist regime is imminent.

Moheyyoddin, an eighth grader, also showed his solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine, and emphasized that Israel's actions go against humanitarian laws, and that they stand against such crimes.

Mohammad Javad, another eighth grader, expressed his support for his peers in Gaza and reassured them that they are not alone. He echoed the sentiment that he hopes for the destruction of Israel in the near future.

Instagram linked to depression, anxiety, insomnia in kids

Dozens of US states are suing Meta Platforms and its Instagram unit, accusing them of fueling a youth mental health crisis by making their social media platforms addictive.

In a complaint filed on Tuesday, the attorneys general of 33 states including California and New York said Meta, which also operates Facebook, repeatedly misled the public about the dangers of its platforms, and knowingly induced young children and teenagers into addictive and compulsive social media use, according to Reuters.

"Meta has harnessed powerful and unprecedented technologies to entice, engage, and ultimately ensnare youth and teens," according to the complaint filed in the Oakland, California federal court. "Its motive is profit."

Children have long been an appealing demographic for businesses, which hope to attract them as consumers at ages when they may be more impressionable, and solidify brand loyalty.

For Meta, younger consumers may help secure more advertisers who hope children will keep buying their products as they grow up.

But the states said research has associated children's use of Meta's social media platforms with "depression, anxiety, insomnia, interference with education and daily life, and many other negative outcomes."

Meta said it was "disappointed" in the lawsuit. "Instead of working productively with companies across the industry to create clear, age-appropriate standards for the many

apps teens use, the attorneys general have chosen this path," the company said.

Eight other US states and Washington, DC are filing similar lawsuits against Meta on Tuesday, bringing the total number of authorities taking action against the Menlo Park, California-based company to 42.

The cases are the latest in a string of legal actions against social media companies on behalf of children and teens.

Meta, ByteDance's TikTok and Google's YouTube already face hundreds of lawsuits filed on behalf of children and school districts about the addictiveness of social media.

Mark Zuckerberg, Meta's chief executive, has defended in the past his company's handling of content that some critics

find harmful. "At the heart of these accusations is this idea that we prioritize profit over safety and well-being. That's just not true," he posted in October 2021 on his Facebook page.

In Tuesday's cases, Meta could face civil penalties of \$1,000 to \$50,000 for each violation of various state laws – an amount that could add up quickly given the millions of young children and teenagers who use Instagram. Much of the focus on Meta stemmed from a whistleblower's release of documents in 2021 that showed the company knew Instagram, which began as a photo-sharing app, was addictive and worsened body image issues for some teen girls. The lawsuit by the 33 states alleged that Meta has strived to ensure that

young people spend as much time as possible on social media despite knowing that they are susceptible to the need for approval in the form of "likes" from other users about their content.

"Meta has been harming our children and teens, cultivating addiction to boost corporate profits," said California Attorney General Rob Bonta, whose state includes Meta's headquarters.



Farhadi to preside over Les Arcs Film Festival's jury panel



ISNA - Two-time Oscar-winning Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi was selected to preside over the jury panel of the 15th Les Arcs Film Festival. The festival, set to take place in the Alpine region of Bourg-Saint-Maurice, France, from December 16 to 23, aims to promote European cinema by showcasing independent European films that have had limited exposure beyond their borders. Additionally, the festival tries to create a European film market by organizing professional meetings with key industry players. Farhadi's extensive experience as a jury president and a member at major festivals, including Berlin, Cannes, and Zurich, demonstrates his deep involvement in the global film community.

Iranian marquetry exhibited in China



IRNA - The first international exhibition of intangible cultural heritage, featuring Iranian marquetry and tazhib (illuminated art), was held in Beijing, China from October 22 to 25. The exhibition was inaugurated with the presence of China's Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism, Rao Quan. Chinese art enthusiasts showed remarkable interest in the Iranian booth, which displays around 50 exquisite works of marquetry, inlay, khatamkari, and miniatures. The cultural event features 18 participating countries, and the Iranian Cultural Center has showcased Iran's cultural products and handicrafts. Additionally, two distinguished masters of marquetry and inlay art, Mohsen Kaveh and Morteza Mohammad-Qassem, were present at the event to hold instructional workshops. Cuba, Mexico, Italy, Thailand, Slovakia, Angola, Peru, Slovenia, Cambodia, Russia, Serbia, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Morocco, the Philippines, and Uzbekistan were other participating countries in this cultural event. The exhibition aims to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage, offering a platform for artists and visitors to engage with the rich artistic traditions of diverse nations.

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Curtain falls on Tehran Int'l Short Film Festival

Winners announced

The 40th Tehran International Short Film Festival concluded and the winners in various categories were announced during its closing ceremony, attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili. The Grand Prix of the Iranian Section of the festival was presented to Ali Alizadeh for his narrative work, 'Qotar.' The film also won the Special Jury Award, IRNA wrote. In his speech, Alizadeh expressed his gratitude, saying, "I had many friends in this film who worked shoulder to shoulder with me, and perhaps even more diligently than I did. I would like to thank them all." The Audience Choice Award was given to Farhad Shantiyaei and Sama' Esmaeilidokht for their joint film, 'Ant'. The Best Animation Award went to Fatemeh Ja'fari for her outstanding work, 'Being Ten.' Iranian cinema was well represented, with the Best Iranian

Film Award for Payam Kurd-estani and Bahman Rezaei for 'Suicide with Nietzsche Style.' One of the festival's most prestigious accolades which was recently added to the event, The Truth-Seekers Award, was presented to an Afghan director Samih Saghman for the documentary 'Golab-e Gol', which sheds light on the endurance of the human spirit in challenging times. Saghman was honored for his unwavering commitment to

truth-seeking and his dedication to capturing the essence of human stories on film. Another recently-added category of this year, The Silk Road Prize, aims to recognize filmmakers who endeavor to uncover the hidden facets of the Silk Road's cultural and historical significance. Nasim Soheili won this section's award for Miras-e Baad' (Legacy of the Wind) for her outstanding contribution to the cinematic exploration of

the Silk Road. International filmmakers also made their mark, with a French director Kate MacMullen taking home the Best Documentary Award for the film 'Little Berlin.' The Best Animation Award was won by an Italian director Simone Massi 'When the War Ends'. The Grand Prix of the International Section was secured by Hassan Hekmat Ravesh for his 'All Depends on Mr. Kaf's Opinion'.

October 7 designated as 'Palestinian Youths Epic Day': Minister

The Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance hailed the "unprecedented" operation launched by the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas against Israel on October 7, saying the day will be recorded in the Iranian calendar as "Palestinian Youths Epic Day". Speaking on Tuesday, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili said Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has pointed out that October 7 is the beginning of the countdown to the destruction of the occupying regime, Press TV reported. Operation Al-Aqsa Storm was "an epic unprecedented in the historical memory of the region and the struggles of the Muslim people of Palestine. We registered the day at the General Culture Council as Palestinian Youths Epic Day. The procedures will be done for its approval at the Supreme Council

of the Cultural Revolution," he added. Hamas launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm in response to Israel's violations at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Al-Quds and growing settler violence against Palestinians. The surprise raid shook the occupying entity's security establishment, leaving 1,400 Israelis dead. In response, the Tel Aviv regime launched deadly strikes on the besieged Gaza Strip. According to Wafa news agency, more than 6,000 Palestinians have been killed and 18,000 others injured so far. It has also blocked water, food and electricity to Gaza, plunging the coastal strip into a humanitarian crisis. Esmaeili also commended protests in Muslim countries as well as Europe and the United States in condemnation of the



Israeli bloodshed in Gaza. "Yesterday, the number of child martyrs [in Gaza] surpassed 1,800. This level of cruelty, violence and murder is beyond all usual genocides," he said. "Today, in front of the eyes of billions of people, we are witnessing the bombing of the [al-Ahli Arab] Baptist Hospital that kills more than 500 children."

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili speaks during a ceremony at the public library in City Park in downtown Tehran, on October 24, 2023. IRNA



Renowned Iranian guitarist Lily Afshar dies at 63

Renowned Iranian classical guitarist, Lily Afshar, the first woman in the world to receive a doctorate in classical guitar, died on October 24 at the age of 63 after a prolonged illness. Afshar was one of only 12 international guitarists chosen to study under the legendary Andres Segovia at the University of Southern California, where her exceptional talent shone. Segovia once made a prediction on NBC evening news that Afshar would someday become a celebrated musician, a

prophecy she fulfilled with grace and dedication, IRNA wrote. Afshar's passion for contemporary music led her to become one of the first performers of works by renowned composers such as Reza Vali, Gary Eister, Gerard Drozd, Loris Chobanian, Arne Mellnas, Kamran Ince, Barbara Kolb, Merlin Zimprich, and Salvador Brotons, among others. Throughout her career, Afshar held numerous concerts in countries including Iran, the United States, the UK, Ireland, Canada,

France, Denmark, Italy, Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and South America. She also graced prestigious venues such as Wigmore Hall in London, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Grand Teton Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, the Banff Centre, Manton Music Festival, and the American Academy in Rome. The Washington Post described Afshar as "extraordinarily pure, superb, and remarkable." She received the Orville H. Gibson Award for being the best female classical

guitarist. Afshar's writings about the Castelnuovo-Tedesco and Francesco da Milano, in multiple languages, were published in Guitar Review, Ai1 Frornimo, and Guitar and Lute. In addition to her remarkable career as a guitarist, she served as a professor in the Music Department at the University of Memphis. Lily Afshar was laid to rest in Tonekabon, a city in Iran's northern Mazandaran Province, on Wednesday.