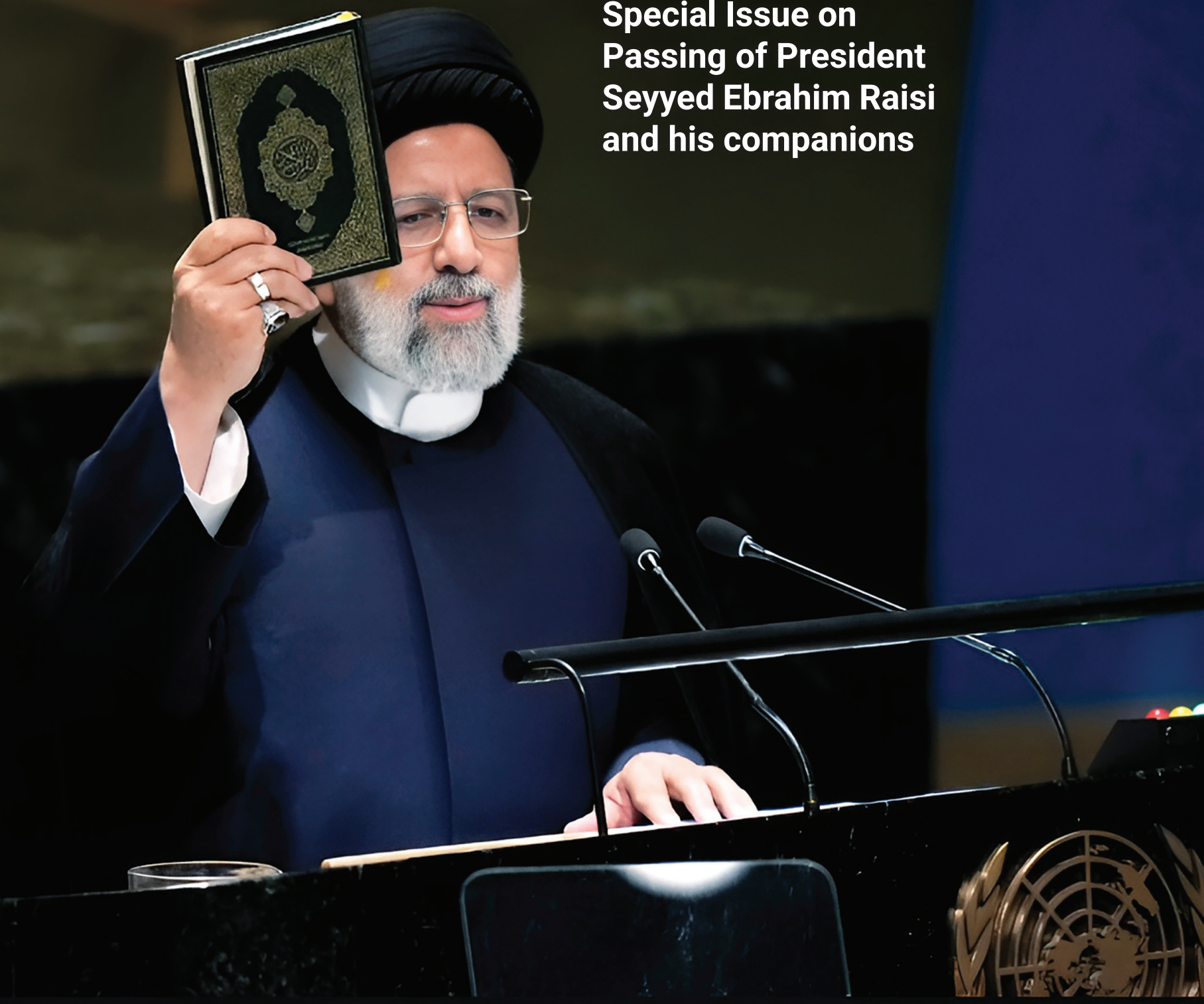


Martyr President

Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions







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The mystery of immortality



By Ehsan Salehi

Caretaker of the IRAN Cultural & Press Institute

Forty days after the devastating events of Black Monday on May 19, 2024, Iran finds itself at a pivotal moment in its history. The profound shock of these incidents has yet to be fully comprehended, along with the implications for this new era. Iran mourns the loss of one of its finest managers, President Raisi, whose significance is described by the Supreme Manager as unparalleled under the sky, emphasizing his crucial role in Iran's history.

The Islamic Republic, as a dynamic entity, experiences both losses and gains in response to challenges and opportunities. President Raisi's passing is likened to the loss felt at the victory of the Islamic Revolution itself. His exceptional qualities and management were acknowledged even by critics, marking him as one of the revolution's most significant achievements. His legacy as a devout follower of Imam Khomeini was so pivotal that it was likened to an "opening of openings" by Imam Khomeini after a critical victory.

President Raisi exemplified the ideal of an Islamic Revolution figure, inspiring not only within Iran but globally. He represented continuity from Imam Khomeini's era, demonstrating the ongoing impact of the Islamic Revolution. His absence has compelled even critics to recognize his virtues, highlighting his profound impact on the nation's hearts and minds.

Raisi's management was marked by transformative qualities evident in his stewardship of Mashhad, the judiciary, and ultimately the presidency. Each phase of his career left a lasting imprint on these institutions, bringing about significant changes. His management style was characterized by industriousness, fearlessness in confronting challenges, commitment to completing important tasks, popularity among the people, efficiency, and a dedication to educating youth. His management was meticulous and detail-oriented, capable of mobilizing resources effectively.

However, above all these qualities, Raisi's management was rooted in sincerity and purity. These foundational principles were fundamental to his success and were instrumental in his role as a transformative manager of the Islamic Republic. His life and martyrdom exemplified the power of purity, demonstrating that amidst a world marked by corruption and deceit, true management could emerge based on integrity and service.

In various management roles throughout his career, Seyed Ibrahim Raisi found a conducive environment to enact significant changes. Beginning with senior positions in the judiciary like leading the General Inspectorate Organization and serving as its first deputy, he later assumed management roles at Astan Quds Razavi, the judiciary, and eventually the pres-

idency. At Astan Quds Razavi, he set unprecedented standards for transparency, populism, and poverty alleviation, all while exemplifying integrity in his actions. His tenure demonstrated that wielding power could effectively serve the underprivileged and pilgrims.

As head of the judiciary, Raisi was notably the first to hold a doctoral degree in private law, reflecting his exceptional academic credentials. He transformed the judiciary by fostering openness to criticism and intellectual discourse, a stark departure from previous practices where even minor critiques in anonymous media faced severe repercussions.

During Ramadan of 2019-2020, just four months into his tenure as head of the judiciary, he hosted an iftar gathering attended by nearly all major judicial figures, a precedent-setting event noted for its inclusivity. His administration also granted numerous pardons and substantial sentence reductions to media figures, demonstrating his ability to wield authority impartially.

In the 2017 and 2021 elections, despite ethical challenges from opponents, Raisi maintained ethical standards and refrained from engaging in unethical behavior, showcasing his capacity to keep confidences while prioritizing public service.

As president, he wielded significant authority, yet he emphasized that these resources were tools for efficiency and service rather than personal gain. His strength stemmed from his sincerity and preparedness for pivotal tasks. His untimely passing has left many questioning the wisdom behind the event, yet it serves as a reminder of the privilege to live in an era where the remarkable legacies of Shia figures like Khomeini, Khamenei, Soleimani, and Raisi are understood and cherished.

Amid global injustices, the principled managers of the Khomeini school stand as beacons of steadfastness and service, silencing detractors with their actions at the pinnacle of management.

Furthermore, the incident underscores the miraculous power of sincerity. Raisi's sincerity in life and martyrdom affirms that true honor lies in God's hands, with sincerity receiving divine rewards even in this life. The unprecedented public mourning and commemoration ceremonies for Raisi across various cities underscore the profound impact of sincerity in winning hearts.

Raisi's martyrdom has elevated his status as a significant Islamic figure, akin to the revered martyrs of Islamic history. His legacy and martyrdom in service to God and humanity are a testament to his sincerity and truth.



Martyr President

Ebrahim Raisi: **A Symbol of Pure Politics**



By Ali Kakadezfuli

Managing Director of Iran Daily

Martyr Ebrahim Raisi stands as a testament to the notion that true recognition often comes posthumously. His death illuminated the life of a man whose true essence and contributions were only fully appreciated after his passing. Known for his dedication to the principles of pure and honest politics, Raisi's legacy continues to inspire, transcending political affiliations and touching the hearts of all Iranians.

Raisi's political career was marked by an unwavering commitment to integrity and national unity. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was not swayed by factionalism or partisan agendas. Instead, he saw himself as a servant of the people, dedicated to the betterment of Iran as a whole. This non-partisan approach earned him a unique place in the hearts of the Iranian populace, who saw in him a politician dedicated to the greater good rather than personal or party gains.

His tenure in government, though not without its challenges, was widely regarded as a significant improvement over his predecessors. Even his critics acknowledged that his administration brought about meaningful changes and improvements, particularly in comparison to the government before his. Raisi's focus on transparency, accountability, and service to the nation helped restore a degree of trust in public institutions that had been eroded over time. The grandeur of his funeral was a stark indicator of his widespread appeal and the deep respect he commanded among Iranians. The massive turnout and the collective outpouring of grief were not merely for a former leader but for a man who symbolized hope and integrity in public service. This overwhelming show of support reflected the people's appreciation of his efforts to foster a more just and equitable society, irrespective of the political successes or failures attributed to his tenure.

Ebrahim Raisi's legacy is multifaceted. As a politician, he was a point of convergence in Iranian politics, embodying the virtues of honesty and dedication. His vision of a united Iran, free from the shackles of political divisiveness, continues to resonate, particularly in an era where such ideals seem increasingly rare. Raisi's life reminds us that politics can be a noble pursuit when grounded in the service of the nation and its people.

Beyond his political achievements, Raisi's personal character set him apart. He was known for his humility and accessibility, traits that endeared him to the public. His ability to connect with people from all walks of life, to listen to their concerns, and to act with empathy and sincerity were hallmarks of his leadership style. This genuine connection with the populace reinforced the perception of him as a leader who truly cared about the welfare of his countrymen.

In examining his contributions, it becomes evident that Raisi was more than just a politician; he was a statesman in the truest sense of the word. His commitment to ethical governance and his vision for a unified and prosperous Iran provide a blueprint for future leaders. His life and work serve as a reminder that politics, when practiced with integrity and a genuine desire to serve, can indeed be a force for good.

The story of Martyr Ebrahim Raisi is one of posthumous recognition and enduring influence. His approach to politics, characterized by a refusal to engage in partisan conflicts and a steadfast focus on national unity, sets a standard that continues to inspire. As Iran moves forward, the legacy of Ebrahim Raisi will undoubtedly remain a guiding light, symbolizing the enduring power of integrity and the profound impact of a life dedicated to the service of others.

Biography



People's President:
Life and legacy of Ebrahim Raisi,
who redefined politics



Key Management and Political
Positions



**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**

People's President: Life and legacy of Ebrahim Raisi, who redefined politics

By Alireza Hashemi

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and two other officials have been declared dead after their helicopter crashed in the mountains of northeastern Iran on 19 May. The incident took place in East Azerbaijan province after President Raisi and his accompanying delegation were returning after inaugurating two hydraulic dams on the border with Azerbaijan.

The helicopter had to make a hard landing due to inclement weather conditions – including heavy rain and dense fog – which made it difficult for search and rescue teams to carry out the operation.

The wreckage of the chopper was discovered by emergency rescue teams in the wee hours of 20 May morning in dense forests nestled between the cities of Varzaqan and Jolfa in East Azerbaijan province.

Pir-Hossein Koulivand, head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), announced in televised remarks that no sign of life was found on the crashed chopper, ending all hopes of survivors.

Who was Ebrahim Raisi?

Ebrahim Raisi was born on December 14, 1960, in the city of Mashhad in northwestern Iran.

He rose through the ranks to become one of the most important political figures in the Islamic Republic of Iran, holding many key positions, including the chief of the judiciary, before taking the helm.

From 2004 to 2014, Raisi served as Iran's deputy chief justice and was known for his fair and humane approach, which won him many admirers across the country.

In 2014, he was appointed as the country's Attorney General, a position he held until 2016.

He then became the custodian of the holy shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam, in his hometown Mashhad. As the custodian of the shrine, he accomplished works that were not done before.

His most notable appointment came in March 2019 when the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, chose him to lead Iran's judiciary.

He succeeded Sadeqh Amoli Larijani, who was appointed the head of the Expediency Council.

As the head of the Iranian judiciary, Raisi initiated a much-lauded campaign against corruption in the system and enacted laws to protect women against domestic violence. His popularity rose tremendously during his stint as the Iranian judiciary chief, which paved the ground for his political innings – as the chief executive.

How did he make a political foray?

A noted Islamic scholar, Raisi served as a member of the Assembly of Experts from South Kho-

rasan province and was first elected from there in the 2006 election.

In 2016, he became the deputy leader of the Assembly of Experts, a Constitutional body responsible for appointing the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Ayatollah Jannati heads the body.

Raisi became a household name in Iran and across the Muslim world in 2017 when he ran as a popular candidate in the presidential election against then-President Hassan Rouhani.

He ended up second in that election after Rouhani, who secured 23.5 million votes against Raisi's 15.7 million.

However, his second presidential bid in 2021 saw him emerge as the decisive winner, assuming leadership of the country for the next four years.

In the 2021 election, Raisi won a



landslide victory, pocketing 17.9 million votes out of the 28.9 million cast, establishing his reputation as a popular political figure. The eighth president of Iran officially began his tenure on August 3, 2021.

How was his governance different?

Raisi's election came at a time of significant challenges for Iran, including economic hardships exacerbated by US-led sanctions and heightened tensions with Washington.

His election campaign was centered on combating corruption and alleviating economic hardships.

After taking office, he hailed the youth as Iran's most valuable asset and the economy's driving force, committing to addressing their

primary concerns, such as unemployment.

Moreover, Raisi stressed the need to overhaul the bureaucratic system, combat corruption and bureaucratic inertia, and pledged to reduce inflation to a single-digit level by boosting production.

He supported diplomatic efforts to neutralize the impact of Western sanctions and improve the livelihood of the Iranian people.

A staunch critic of American presence in the region and its policy of imposing sanctions on independent nations, Raisi vowed to "not waste a single moment" in getting sanctions lifted, rather focused.

The Iranian president declared that removing "cruel" sanctions would be an "obligation" for his administration, achievable through active economic diplomacy and neighborhood-friendly policy.

He adopted a firmer and pragmatic stance in Iran's foreign policy, particularly in negotiations with the US and European powers to revive the 2015 nuclear accord.

His tenure witnessed fresh talks to salvage the accord that had been derailed by former US president Donald Trump. But those efforts again hit a snag due to US procrastination on sanctions removal.

The 63-year-old president passed away in a helicopter crash during a visit to Eastern Azerbaijan province, where he and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, inaugurated two dams built on the Aras River.

Iran's Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, and other officials and bodyguards were also on board the chopper that crashed.



Martyr President

Key Management and Political Positions

- » Thirteenth President of the Islamic Republic of Iran (since 2021)
- » Head of the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- » First Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of Experts
- » Custodian of Astan Quds Razavi
- » Member of the Expediency Discernment Council as both a personal and official member
- » First Deputy of the Judiciary
- » Attorney General of Iran
- » Head of the General Inspection Organization
- » Prosecutor of Tehran
- » Prosecutor of the Islamic Revolution of Karaj and Hamedan Province
- » Member of the fourth and fifth terms of the Assembly of Experts representing South Khorasan
- » First Secretary of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in Iran
- » Founder of the Fatemeh Zahra Seminary (for women) in Tehran (Nassr neighborhood)
- » Founder of the Imam Hadi Specialized Center for Shia Studies under the supervision of the Qom Seminary
- » Special Judicial Mission by Imam Khomeini (RA) alongside Niyeri to address special reports
- » Member of the Board of Trustees of the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order for ten years, appointed by the Supreme Leader



International Conference Speeches

- » Conference on Combating Administrative Corruption in Africa
- » Conference on Combating Organized Crime in Argentina
- » Conference on Administrative Health in Sochi, Russia
- » Conference on Human Rights in Pakistan
- » Conference on the Role of Ashura in Social Changes – Istanbul, Turkey
- » Conference on the Implications of Constitutional Law in Preserving Human Rights – Nigeria
- » International Cooperation Conference on Combating Corruption – China
- » United Nations Human Rights Conference – Geneva
- » Conference on Combating Administrative Corruption in the Philippines, appointed as Deputy of the Asian Inspectors General
- » Numerous other specialized meetings attended by officials from various countries

Key Responsibilities by Official Position

- » Member of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace
- » Member of the Supreme Council of Standards
- » Member of the Supreme Petroleum Council
- » Member of the Council for the Development of Eastern and Western Iran
- » Member of the Supreme Council of Money and Credit
- » Member of the Headquarters for Combating Economic Corruption
- » Member of the Headquarters for Combating Narcotics

Recent Responsibilities

- » President of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- » Member of the Expediency Discernment Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- » Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of Experts of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- » Member of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- » Member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Special Issue
on Passing of
President Seyyed
Ebrahim Raisi and
his companions

Report

- Leader's Condolences on the Martyr-Like Death of the President and his Entourage
- UNGA pays tribute to Iran's late president
- Millions bid farewell to Raisi
- The Messages of World Leaders on the Sad Demise of Martyr Raisi and His Companions
- Leaders at Raisi's funeral highlight Iran's work to repair Arab ties



**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**

Leader's Condolences on the Martyr-Like Death of the President and his Entourage

LEADER OF THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION
DECLARES 5 DAYS OF PUBLIC MOURNING

Message of Condolence Following the Martyr-like Death of the President and his Entourage.

Ayatollah Imam Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, sent a message of condolence on the occasion of the martyr-like death of Hujjatul Islam Seyed Ibrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Dr Hosein Amir-Abdollahian, the Foreign Minister; Hujjatul Islam Ale-Hashem, Representative of the Leader in East Azerbaijan; Dr Rahmati, the Governor of East Azerbaijan; and their esteemed entourage in a disastrous air accident.

The text of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's message of condolence is as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful
"Indeed, we are from Allah, and to Him do we Return."

It is with great sorrow and deep regret that I have received the bitter news of the martyr-like passing of the combatant cleric, the popular and competent President, the dedicated servant of Imam Reza (peace be upon him), His Eminence Hujjatul Islam wa al-Muslimeen Hajj Seyed Ibrahim Raisi, and his esteemed entourage. May God's mercy be upon them.

This tragic incident occurred while an act of service was being undertaken. For the entire time he served in this office, during his short presidency and before, this noble and selfless man tirelessly dedicated himself to serving the people, the country, and Islam.

The beloved Raisi did not know the meaning of fatigue. The nation of Iran has lost a sincere, devoted, and valuable servant to this unpleasant incident. He made the people's welfare and satisfaction a priority, and that satisfaction indicates divine satisfaction above everything else. Therefore, his grievances from ingratitude and the criticism of some ill-intentioned individuals did not hinder his relentless efforts for progress and reform day and night.

In this fateful incident, such prominent figures as Hujjatul Islam Ale-Hashem, the beloved and reputable Friday Prayer Leader of Tabriz;



Mr. Amir-Abdollahian, the combatant and active Foreign Minister; Mr. Malik Rahmati, the revolutionary and religiously devout Governor of East Azerbaijan; the flight crew, and other members of the entourage all went to meet their Lord. I hereby declare five days of national mourning and extend my condolences to the dear people of Iran. According to Article 131 of the Constitution, Mr Mukhber will assume the position of managing the executive branch and, with the heads of the legislative and judicial powers, is entrusted with the responsibility for arranging the election of a new president within a maximum of fifty days.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to Mr Raisi's esteemed mother, his noble and respected wife, and his other surviving family members, as well as the honourable families of his entourage, especially Mr Ale-Hashem's venerable father. I pray for their patience, solace, and divine mercy for the deceased.

Sayyid Ali Khamenei
20/05/2024

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his companions

UNGA

pays tribute to Iran's late president



A picture of late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi is displayed as the United Nations General Assembly holds a tribute to him at UN headquarters in New York on May 30, 2024.

The United Nations General Assembly held a plenary meeting on Thursday (30 May) to pay tribute to the late president of Iran Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage, who died in a helicopter crash on May 19.

Following the observing of a minute of silence, Dennis Francis, president of the General Assembly, offered his deepest condolences to the government and people of Iran.

He said president Raisi “led his country’s contribution to shape the tenets of our multilateral system and international cooperation”, according to the UN official website. Francis also honored the memory of late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian — “a consummate diplomat who faithfully stood alongside president Raisi in representing Iran on the global stage”.

Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres also extended his condolences to the families, the government and people of Iran. President Raisi led Iran at a challenging time for the country, the region and globally, he said.

“In these difficult times, international and regional cooperation are needed more than ever” in order to build confidence, prevent conflict and

resolve disputes, Guterres said. To this end, he assured the Iranian people that the United Nations stands in solidarity with them and in the quest for peace, development and fundamental freedoms.

Additionally, Burundi’s UN Ambassador Zéphyrin Maniratanga, who spoke on behalf of African nations, praised the Iranian president as a “distinguished leader who devoted his life to serving his nation and fostering international cooperation particularly with African countries.”

Meanwhile, Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the UN Munir Akram spoke on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

“We take solace in the historical contributions of the former Iranian President to the vision and mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, notably its central cause of the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and the protection of the sanctity of holy mosque of Al-Quds Sharif,” he said.

Speaking for the Non-Aligned Movement, the representative of Uganda emphasized that Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian were “instrumental” in strengthening cooperation among members of the bloc.



Martyr President

Millions bid farewell to Raisi

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other martyrs were laid to rest, concluding days of funeral attended by several million of mourners after they were died in a helicopter crash on Sunday.



on Passing of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions

At least three million mourners marched in Raisi's home town Mashhad Thursday to bid farewell to the president, the mega city's mayor said, following processions in the cities of Tabriz, Qom, Tehran and Birjand.

Later at dusk, the president's body was lowered into a tomb at the Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine, where Shia's eighth Imam is buried.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, expressing his deep sorrow over the "martyrdom-like passing", announced five days of national mourning on Monday.

The cortege carrying the coffins of the "martyrs" attracted huge numbers of mourners who thronged main thoroughfares and adjoining streets for several kilometers, wherever it went.

In Tehran, Ayatollah Khamenei and representatives of the regional resistance groups prayed over the coffins Wednesday (23May), before millions of people followed a procession down Tehran's main boulevard.

The Leader also met the president's family in his residence, viewing the former president "as a symbol of the Islamic Revolution slogans". He described the people's admiration for Raisi as a message to the world in



support of the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian foreign minister was buried south of Tehran. Tens of thousands of mourners gathered in the town of Shahr-Rey in Tehran Province on Thursday (23 May) for a funeral ceremony, which ended in Amir-Abdollahian's burial in the shrine of Shah Abdolazim.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh attended the prayers and recounted President Raisi telling him that the Oct. 7 operation by Palestinian fighters against Israel was an "earthquake in the heart of the Zionist entity".

Statesmen from West Asia and beyond from some 60 countries attended a later memorial service, including

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Tunisian President Kais Saied.

Tajikistan's President Imomali Rahmon, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan and Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, and the UAE's minister of foreign affairs, were other foreign representatives who traveled to Tehran, meeting Iranian leaders to express their condolences.

Also, the resistance officials including Deputy Secretary-General of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah Sheikh Naim Qassem, Deputy Secretary-General of the Islamic Jihad resistance movement, Mohammad al-Hindi, and the senior representative of Yemen's National Salvation Government, Mohammed Abdul-Salam were in Tehran to pay tribute to the late president and his entourage.

Earlier tens of thousands of people lined the streets of Birjand, capital of the eastern province of South Khorasan, to bid farewell to the late president as his coffin move through the main street.

President of the UN General Assembly Dennis Francis paid tribute to Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian by visiting the Islamic Republic's mission in New York on Thursday to sign a memorial book in honor of the deceased Iranian officials. Representatives of 50 countries in the United Nations have also signed the book opened in memory of them.



**Martyr
President**

The Messages of World Demise of Martyr Raisi

China

China's Leader Xi Jinping:

"Deep condolences to the Iranian government and people, Raisi's tragic death is a great loss to the Iranian people, and the Chinese people also lost a good friend,"

Russia

Russian President Vladimir Putin:

"Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi was an outstanding politician whose entire life was devoted to serving his Motherland. He enjoyed the well-deserved respect of his compatriots and high prestige beyond his country. As a true friend of Russia, he made an invaluable personal contribution to the development of good neighborly relations between our countries and made great efforts to advance them to the level of strategic partnership, I have had the privilege of meeting Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi on multiple occasions, and I will always cherish the fond memories of this wonderful man. Please convey my heartfelt condolences and support to the family and friends of the late President, as well as to all those affected by this tragic incident. I extend my wishes for strength to the Iranian people as they navigate through this challenging and irreparable loss,"

India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi:

"Deeply saddened and shocked by the tragic demise of Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His contribution to strengthening India-Iran bilateral relationship will always be remembered. My heartfelt condolences to his family and the

people of Iran. India stands with Iran in this time of sorrow."

Pakistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif:

"Pakistan will observe a day of mourning and the flag will fly at half-mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brotherly Iran."

Türkiye

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan:

"I ask the Almighty God for mercy for my dear counterpart, my brother, and the honorable president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Ebrahim Raisi, who unfortunately passed away in a helicopter accident. I wish God's mercy for the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran and others who lost their lives in the helicopter accident. I express my deepest condolences to the nation and the government of Iran, especially to (Grand) Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the leader of Iran, and the honorable Raisi family and other deceased. As a counterpart who personally witnessed his efforts to calm to serve the people of Iran and the region during his tenure, I remember Mr. Raisi with respect and gratitude

European Union

President of the European Council, Charles Michel:

"The European Union offers its condolences for the death of President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hussein Amir Abdol-

Leaders on the Sad and His Companions

lahian, and other Iranian officials involved in the tragic helicopter crash on Sunday. The EU expresses its sympathies to the families of all the victims and to the Iranian citizens affected.”

Saudi Arabia

King Salman:

“We learnt of the news of the death of His Excellency Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and his companions – may God have mercy on them – and we send you and the brotherly people of the Islamic Republic of Iran our deepest and sincere condolences.”

Egypt

President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi:

“The president of the Arab Republic of Egypt prays that the deceased Iranian President and the departed may rest in God Almighty’s mercy, and grant their families patience and solace, expressing the solidarity of the Arab Republic of Egypt with the Iranian leadership and people in this terrible incident.”

Iraq

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia’ Al-Sudani:

“We express our solidarity with the brotherly Iranian people and the officials of the Islamic Republic during this painful tragedy.”

Japan

Spokesperson Yoshimasa Hayashi:

“The country expresses its deepest condolences to the government and people of Iran over the death of Pres-

ident Raisi and the foreign minister.”

Jordan

King Abdullah:

“Deepest condolences to the brothers, leadership, government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the death of Brother President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Brother Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and those accompanying them. May God have mercy on them all. We stand in solidarity with our brothers in Iran in this difficult circumstance.”

Malaysia

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim:

“His (President Raisi’s) dedication to justice, peace, and the upliftment of the ummah [the Islamic community] was truly inspiring. In our meeting last November, we committed ourselves to bolstering Malaysia-Iran relations, working together for the betterment of our peoples and the Muslim world. Our pledge will be fulfilled.”

Pope Francis

The Pope sent condolences to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday following the death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash. “I send condolences upon the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein AmirAbdollahian, and all who perished in yesterday’s helicopter crash, Entrusting the souls of the deceased to the mercy of the Almighty, and with prayers for those who mourn their loss, especially their families, I send the assurance of spiritual closeness to the nation at this difficult time.”



Martyr President



Qatar

Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani:

“Asking God Almighty for mercy and forgiveness for [those killed] and for their families with patience and solace. We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return.”

Sudan

Sudan’s Sovereign Council Head, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan:

“Our sincere condolences and sympathy to the friendly Iranian people. We pray to God Almighty that he may have mercy on the President and his companions, and grant their families patience and solace, expressing the solidarity of the Government of Sudan and its people with the leadership and the Iranian people in this great loss,”

Syria

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad affirmed Syria’s solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the families of the dead. President Assad added that Syria had worked with the late president to ensure strategic ties between Syria and Iran remained prosperous, recalling Raisi’s important visit to Syria as part of enhancing ties for the benefit of both nations.

United Arab Emirates

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan:

“I extend my deepest condolences to the Iranian gov-

ernment and people over the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and those accompanying them following a tragic accident.”

Venezuela

President Nicolas Maduro:

“Deeply saddened to have to say goodbye to an exemplary person, an extraordinary leader of the world as our brother Ebrahim is, and will always be, an excellent human being, defender of the sovereignty of his people, and unconditional friend of our country.”

Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina:

“I am deeply shocked and saddened to hear about the sad demise of President Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Hossein Amirabdollahian, and members of the entourage in the tragic accident of the helicopter carrying them. In this hour of grief, on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I convey our deepest condolences to the Government and the brotherly people of Iran.” Announcing a national day of mourning on Thursday (23 May), She added: “On the day, the national flag will be at half-mast in all government, semi-government, and autonomous institutions and educational institutions, in-



cluding all government and private buildings and Bangladesh missions abroad.”

Afghanistan

Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund:

“We share our grief with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the people of that country and offer our condolences to all the families of the victims, the nation and the government of Iran,”

Nigeria

Presidential Spokesman Ajuri Ngelale:

“President Bola Tinubu extends his condolences to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi; Iranian foreign minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other officials in a helicopter crash. President Tinubu expresses profound grief over this disturbing tragedy, and describes President Raisi as a leader who was passionately committed to the development of Iran.”

Vietnam

“Acting State President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Vo Thi Anh Xuan, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and President of the National Assembly Tran Thanh Man, are grieved to learn about the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other members of the entourage. They extended their deepest condolences to the interim President of Iran, Mohammad Mokhber, Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, and through them, to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei; the government and people of Iran.”

The World Health Organization

“We express our condolences to the people of Iran and the families of the late President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and all those who lost their lives in the helicopter crash yesterday.”

United Nations

Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres:

“The Secretary-General is saddened by the death of Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of Iran, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and their colleagues in a helicopter accident on 19 May. The Secretary-General expresses his sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and to the Government and people of Iran.” The United Nations office in Geneva also raised the flag of our country at half-mast in the headquarters of this organization as a sign of sympathy with the Iranian nation.



Martyr President



Leaders at Raisi's funeral highlight Iran's work to repair Arab ties



Indian Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar (center-back) and his delegation pay tributes to Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage, who passed away in a helicopter crash on May 19, in Tehran, Iran, on May 22, 2024.

Special Issue on Passing of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions

The list of foreign dignitaries who attended Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi's funeral on Wednesday underscored how Tehran's efforts to blunt US sanctions and mend ties with its neighbors have paid off. Few other occasions could have brought the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain into close quarters with the leaders of US-designated "terrorist groups" Hamas and Hezbollah. Alongside them were representatives from Yemen's Houthi resistance group and Afghanistan's Taliban, as well as a former aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The emir of Qatar, which hosts the biggest US military base in the Middle East, was also there.

The guest list showed just how hard Iran has worked to repair ties with major Arab countries even if they remain vital US allies that have normalized ties with Israel or are considering to do so. Raisi's ceremony even included a Tunisian president's first visit to Iran since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and rare appearances by the foreign ministers of Jordan and Egypt.

Hezbollah, based in Lebanon and whose fighters are exchanging fire with Israel almost every day, is Iran's strongest backed group. Hezbollah's Deputy Chief Sheikh Naim Qasem stood behind Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as the latter led the funeral prayers. He was the only Arab to have such a prominent presence there.

Hamas was represented by its political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, who's based in Qatar.

Before Raisi's election in 2021, Iran's government was run by a moderate president who wanted to improve ties with the West and reduce its dependence on Chinese investment. That changed under Raisi and tensions between the Islamic Republic and the US and Israel have worsened, especially since the war in Gaza erupted in October. Iran has worked hard to neutralize a raft of US sanctions tightened under both Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Many countries in the region have been willing to continue doing business with Iran or keeping diplomatic

ties open even if doing so contradicts Washington's wishes.

Iran's power

Many are wary of Iran given its powerful military and the reach of its backed groups. The Houthis, funded and trained by Iran, have attacked Saudi Arabia and the UAE with drones and missiles in recent years, at times targeting oil facilities. That's a key reason both Riyadh and Abu Dhabi have sought to ease relations with Tehran. The Saudis and Iranians restored diplomatic ties last year through a deal China helped broker.

Video from Tuesday's ceremony in Tehran showed tens of thousands of people gathered to mourn Raisi, who was killed along with Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and others in a helicopter crash on May 19.

Hamas released photos of Haniyeh smiling and waving as he walked through crowds, even as its fighters continued to battle Israeli forces in Gaza.

Accounts varied about the number

of countries represented at Raisi's funeral, though officials from Lebanon, Iraq, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, and many other countries were there. Russia and China, two countries that have boosted ties with Iran amid the US isolation, sent low-level officials. Such funerals are often delicate political and diplomatic dances. Countries sometimes look to signal their empathy for the country's people while avoiding any action suggesting they back the leaders' decisions.

The US wrestled with just such a dilemma over Raisi's death. The US State Department issued a statement expressing its "official condolences" over the death, a message that was directed at regular Iranians and not the regime itself. The US government has had almost no direct contact with Iran since former president Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear accord in 2018. No US official attended the ceremony on Tuesday.

The full article first appeared on Bloomberg.

Perspective

- Raisi's role was to bring diplomacy into the service of the field
- Raisi's most significant focus in foreign policy was the adoption of the 'Look to the East' policy
- Raisi was honest and popular among Iranians
- Raisi was a prominent figure in the Islamic world
- Art of listening well
- A Global Message: Reflecting on the Funeral of Raisi
- How Iran's people-friendly president developed unbreakable bond with masses
- Raisi protected Iranians' identity against global tyrants
- How Europe is responding to death of Iran's president



**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**

Raisi's role was to bring diplomacy into the service of the field

By Hamid Shahriari

The secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought



Under the government of the late President Ebrahim Raisi, the path of the resistance movement was paved. The presidency of Dr. Ebrahim Raisi had a significant impact on highlighting the achievements of the struggle against Israel, particularly in operations such as Al-Aqsa Storm and the True promise. Although he did not directly participate in these actions, his political support facilitated the weakening and eventual defeat of Israel. Raisi's role was to bring diplomacy into the service of the field. Unlike the previous administration, Raisi's government aligned diplomacy with the resistance efforts, moving in complete accordance with the principles of the leadership. He had no divergence from the Supreme Leader's guidance and was committed to realizing the overarching policies of the system and the directives of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. During Raisi's administration, all ministries strived to fulfill the Leader's demands, creating unity and coherence across the country, which was a testament to his vision and an achievement of his government. Without this perspective, we would not have reached the success of Al-Aqsa Storm. When fighting in the field, if diplomacy does not support you, you face defeat from the outset. We are not pursuing territorial conquest but rather aim to emphasize

justice in thoughts and ideologies. Until now, the ideal world was portrayed as that defined by the West and America. However, we intend to convey that an ideal world is one where justice prevails.

When the Islamic Republic supported Syria, the world accused us of backing a dictatorial regime. We believed that, as in all countries, the people of Syria should decide their internal matters. We have never interfered in the internal affairs of any country. Addressing this accusation was challenging because the primary concern of the Islamic Republic was not supporting a specific government but strengthening the resistance axis. Our analysis indicated that Israel sought instability in Syria to harm the resistance axis, which includes Hezbollah and Hamas. This was our perspective, but some Arab leaders could not comprehend the issue correctly.

It took considerable time for both the world and regional countries to realize how correct and principled the Islamic Republic's resistance policies were. Following the Al-Aqsa Storm operation, the perception of the Islamic world towards the Islamic Republic of Iran changed. Those who previously claimed that the Islamic Republic aimed to create a Shia Crescent recognized Iran's support for Hamas, predominantly Sunni, understanding the depth of Iran's strategy. Thus, we have en-

gaged with and continue to interact with the Sunni community. Time has proven that the Islamic Republic has acted rightly in its regional policies. Even some Syrians, whose homes were destroyed, admitted their mistake in listening to the Wahhabis, who did not come to help them but aimed to dismantle the resistance axis, using them as tools for their objectives. Currently, a large segment of the Syrian population has come to this realization.

Now, the Islamic Republic of Iran holds a superior position in the Islamic world, particularly after the True promise operation. Some in the Islamic world tried to portray Iran as hiding behind proxy forces, using them as shields. However, the True promise operation revealed to them that Iran has clear principles and red lines. We do not seek war, but if Israel attempts to breach our territorial borders, it will face a strong response. The True promise operation brought dignity and authority to the Islamic Republic. Authority is not only military power; Arab and Islamic nations, following the True promise, understood that the Islamic Republic of Iran genuinely stands for justice worldwide. Iran has become a model for nations; while governments follow their own paths, the people see us as a symbol of pride and stand with us. This is the change brought about by the True promise.

Special Issue
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his companions

Raisi's most significant focus in foreign policy was the adoption of the 'Look to the East' policy



By Hassan Beheshtipour
Foreign affairs expert

Despite the martyrdom of Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, his administration has not left the office. I believe the late president's path goes on, at least until the next presidential election. His most significant focus in foreign policy was the adoption of the 'Look to the East' policy. Foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian explained this as prioritizing establishing relations with Asian countries. This does not mean neglecting ties with African or Latin American countries, but rather prioritizing more engagement with Asia.

The second point was the expansion of relations with neighboring countries, with the most notable achievement being the achieved détente with Saudi Arabia under Raisi's presidency. The ties with the Kingdom were severed as a result of some imprudent actions in the past. Nevertheless, tensions with neighboring countries were resolved or at least significantly reduced.

Another success was improving relations with Afghanistan and the Taliban government. The goal was to maintain good relations with the neighboring country, given the extensive cultural ties, historical commonalities, and shared interests. Tensions with Pakistan, Turkey, and Iraq were eased as well.

The news of the unfortunate death of the president and the foreign minister of Iran surely met with widespread global reaction. This would have been the case for any official who lives in a geopolitically significant country, not just president Raisi. When three countries in the United Nations Security Council request a moment of silence, it is also a recognition of Iran's status. This is not to say that I downplay the role played by the late president, but rather to emphasize that it is Iran's geopolitical importance that commands such attention. For a president of a country without significant regional or global standing, the situation would naturally be different.

Raisi was honest and popular among Iranians



By Mohammadreza Dehshiri
Head of Iran's School of International Relations

President Ebrahim Raisi was honest and popular among Iranians. As the country's Leader mentioned, Raisi was a tireless fighter who didn't shy away from the public and spared no effort in serving the community. His relentless efforts to achieve the ideals of the Revolution, promote national interests, and serve his people were most noteworthy.

Additionally, the participation of various world leaders in his funeral procession proved that the good neighborliness policy of Raisi's administration, spearheaded by the sincere efforts of the martyred foreign minister, had borne fruit. The widespread public participation in his funeral and the love that they showed for him elsewhere also elevated Iran's political standing and credibility among the world's countries.

We should leverage this new atmosphere, which has fostered a sense of solidarity and national unity within our society as well, to enhance the dynamism of our foreign policy. This policy is not tied solely to Raisi or Amir-Abdollahian but rather to the policy of the Islamic Republic. However, the key point is that these individuals implemented this strategy with strength and determination. I hope that the interim president and foreign minister will continue this policy with the same vigor and determination.

Considering the support shown by Iranians for their political leaders, I believe we will have a presidential election with a high turnout. The martyrdom of the esteemed president Raisi and foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian has shown that the country's path is toward further strengthening the bond between the nation and the government. This will, in turn, enhance Iran's international standing and credibility.



Martyr President



Raisi was a prominent figure in the Islamic world

Isa Hosseini Mazari

head of Afghanistan's Tabian Cultural Center

Martyr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi was a prominent figure in the Islamic world. He was deeply committed to the principles of velayat-e faqih (guardianship of the Islamic jurist), and he exemplified piety and adherence to divine ethics. In addition to his comprehensive knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, he was also well-versed in academic sciences. In the realm of foreign relations, Martyr Raisi sought to maintain dignified and wise relations with the West while also striving to establish close ties with powerful Eastern countries. He aimed to create a balanced international relationship free from extremism and negligence. His particular focus on neighboring countries is noteworthy. Following significant changes in our

country and the rise of the Taliban to power, the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Afghan government and people saw substantial improvement. He was the first Iranian president to appoint a special envoy for Afghanistan. This envoy and his team played a crucial role in aligning the positions of Kabul and Tehran, significantly strengthening the ties between the two nations. Their efforts resulted in significant initiatives, particularly in fostering Afghanistan's engagement with neighboring countries and the region. The first regional meeting on Afghanistan, organized and pursued by the Islamic Republic of Iran, was a testament to his impactful diplomacy. The policies and programs imple-

mented for migrants during his tenure were exceptional, notably the census of over two million migrants who arrived in Iran following the previous government's collapse, which was no small feat. Ayatollah Raisi rendered significant and commendable services to the Islamic world, particularly to the resistance axis countries. His memorable presence at the United Nations, where he held the Quran and spoke about its eternal significance, left a lasting impression. The affection of Muslims for this authentic warrior and esteemed figure of the Islamic world and humanity is enduring. His remarkable contributions are cherished not only by Muslims but by humanity as a whole, and his legacy will not be forgotten.

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Art of listening well

By **Mohammad Reza Bahonar**

Member of Iran's Expediency Council

There are reasons behind his popularity. In the position of a president, he was not a man who would just sit at his desk and give orders. He knew the art of "listening well". He listened to the problems of the villagers living along the borders as well as economic activists whose factories shut down due to economic problems.

His main concerns were the country's economic prosperity and resolving the people's woes. That's why, during his presidency and also when he was the chief of the country's judiciary, one of his main concerns was the reopening of companies and factories that were shut down due to various problems.

He was ever seeking to bring Iranians more satisfaction. That's why the late president

insisted on making provincial trips to be closely aware of the problems and demands of the people in all parts of the country.

During his short tenure, fine plans were implemented in the country to improve infrastructure, especially in the financial and economic fields. Although the president did not tie the country's economy to foreign policy, he used diplomacy to boost the country's economy.

By adopting an informed strategic policy, he managed to improve relations with Iran's neighbors and develop economic cooperation. However, his government's foreign policy was not limited to the improvement of relations with neighbors.

Under his presidency, Iran also

joined two important international organizations, namely the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, a group of emerging economies.

Following Sunday's tragic incident, condolence messages flooded in from many countries and international bodies. The declaration of national mourning in several countries further proved how much the late Iranian president and his foreign minister were well-known and loved across the world. The loss of this beloved president is a loss for the Islamic Republic of Iran and its people. But, due to prior challenging experiences, people's support, and the Leader's prudence, the Establishment has become so strong that there will be no disruption in the work of the country in the wake of the passing away of President Raisi.



Martyr President

A Global Message: Reflecting on the Funeral of Raisi

By: Jalaleddin Fanaei

The funeral of Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi is regarded as a significant and elevated event in Iran, showcasing both national unity and authentic Iranian identity to the world. This ceremony, extensively covered by domestic and international media, not only displayed deep collective emotions but also represented a rational and strategic approach to spiritual and cultural currents, a hallmark of Raisi's influence in highlighting Iran's domestic culture and spiritual aspects.

This massive gathering transcended mere respect for an individual, symbolizing a redefinition and reaffirmation of a forgotten spiritual renaissance that sought to breathe new life into Iranian society. The funeral of Raisi was not just a demonstration of national commitment but also a proclamation for spiritual awakening and the strengthening of the nation's foundations.

The live and precise broadcast of this ceremony by domestic media showcased widespread public attendance and provided deeper analysis and insight into the events, reflecting social commitment and national awakening. Social media platforms also facilitated the exchange of personal experiences and viewpoints, enhancing societal insight and knowledge about the fundamental components and spiritual roles of figures like Raisi in fortifying Iran's cultural and social foundations.

However, the mainstream media coverage of the ceremony appeared carefully curated, with close-up shots dominating the broadcasts, potentially downplaying the true size of the crowd. While many reports cited "thousands" of attendees, population estimation experts suggest that millions participated in the ceremonies. Some networks, like CNN, managed to show parts of the larger crowd, providing a glimpse of the message the Iranian nation sought to convey to the world.

It is important to note that for decades since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, major media outlets and platforms have sought to negatively portray Iran,

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**Martyr
President**



often characterizing it as unstable, unsafe, barbaric and ruled by a brutal dictatorship system. This biased coverage stands in contrast to the broader international reception of the ceremony, which presented an opportunity to evaluate Iran's image. Western media outlets have repeatedly sought to undermine Iran's legitimacy by characterizing its governance as an illegitimate "regime"—a term used to suggest a crisis of legitimacy. In this way, Western media has tried to depict Iran's governance as disconnected from everyday Iranians and unrepresentative of the nation.

Yet, Iran remains the largest and perhaps the most democratic system in the Middle East, amidst a region dominated by autocratic governments. The event was not only a demonstration of national unity but also a chance to reflect the shared relationships and values upheld by the Iranian people. Providing a comprehensive and balanced perspective on such events is crucial for promoting mutual understanding between Iran and the international community. Rather than perpetuating narratives that fail to capture Iran's full complexity, a nuanced approach is necessary to foster genuine dialogue and cooperation.

The phenomenon of massive public participation in political-religious events, such as the funerals of General Qasem Soleimani and President Raisi, highlights a significant and undeniable reality: the true nature of Iranian society is often misrepresented in Western media and scholarly texts. Social and political science writers must address how, despite their claims of a deep divide between the government and the people, millions of Iranians attended the funerals of their leaders, grieving deeply for their government officials and political representatives.

So-called Iran experts are required to explain how, from their perspective, this group numbering in the millions does not represent the broader Iranian populace, but rather a specific and limited faction that advocates for values antithetical to Iranian culture and lifestyle. These values, including the promotion of nudity and immodesty, originate from modern Western culture, where materialistic and hedonistic ideals are often prioritized. Such values have warped societies they have infiltrated, to the extent that gender identification has become a primary focus and the hottest topic of discussion. These values have been encroaching upon various societies, including Iran, for years through platforms like movies, social media, and news outlets.

The funeral of Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi was a profound affirmation of Iran's national spirit and the unity of its people. The ceremony showcased the Iranian nation's integrity, resilience, and steadfast commitment to its strategic and spiritual goals. By participating in this significant event, Iranians demonstrated their unwavering connection to their leaders and cultural roots, challenging narratives that seek to misrepresent their society.

The broad international reception of Raisi's funeral highlighted the need for a balanced understanding of Iran, in contrast to the often one-sided portrayal seen in Western media. The event underscored the nation's integrity and solidarity, reaffirming a deep cultural and spiritual heritage that transcends political divides.

In conclusion, the funeral of Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi was more than a moment of national mourning; it was a declaration of the Iranian people's unity, resolve, and dedication to preserving their cultural identity and spiritual values, such as supporting the oppressed people of Palestine, combating Islamophobia, and rejecting new forms of colonialism and hegemonic policies.

How Europe is responding to death of Iran's president

By Eldar Mamedov

Middle East affairs expert

The crash of the helicopter and the resulting death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and the country's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian came at a tense time in EU-Iran relations.

Tehran's support for the Russian war in Ukraine, support for Hamas, and being classified as a terrorist organization in the EU have caused many EU leaders to perceive Iran as one of the bloc's top geopolitical adversaries.

Despite that background, European leaders have expressed condolences and offered assistance in dealing with the aftermath of the accident.

Reacting to the news of the crash, Charles Michel, the former prime minister of Belgium and currently the president of the European Council wrote on X that he and EU member states were "monitoring the situation closely". When the deaths of Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian, as well as others on board, were confirmed, Michel expressed, in the name of the EU, "sincere condolences" and offered "thoughts to the families" of the deceased. EU high representative for foreign policy Josep Borrell expressed similar sentiments.

Even before the deaths were confirmed, the EU, through its commissioner for crisis management, civil protection, and humanitarian aid Janez Lenarcic announced that the bloc was activating, at the request of Iran, its emergency satellite mapping services in order to locate the crash site. The offer and hashtag that accompanied it — #EUSolidarity — were reposted by Borrell but met with immediate backlash from other circles. Notably, some members of the European Parliament took issue with what one — from a liberal bloc — construed as the Commission's support for the regime in Tehran. Lenarcic's team countered that "facilitating a search and rescue

operation is not an act of political support to any regime or establishment. It is simply an expression of the most basic humanity." The critics might have found it ironic that Iran would ask the EU for assistance, given the abysmal state of bilateral relations, but the Commission acted fully in compliance with the EU's own guidelines on humanitarian aid. There was no love lost for Ebrahim Raisi in Brussels, but, at a time when the EU's credibility is flagging due to its divisions and confusions on Gaza, such a clear case of consistency with its own declared values is something to build on — apart from a simple act of decency.

And the EU would indeed need to

rebuild its political capital in relations with Iran. It has important interests to pursue. For one, Germany and France, alongside the non-EU Britain, are signatories of the flailing nuclear agreement known as JCPOA. As Iran's nuclear program advances following President Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and President Biden's subsequent failure to revive it, concerns increase in Europe, as they do elsewhere, that Iran may be approaching the nuclear threshold status, and only a political decision away from an actual weaponization of its nuclear program.

Tensions in the Middle East, where the EU launched earlier this year





its maritime mission to protect the shipping routes in the Red Sea from the Iran-backed Houthis, are another major concern for the EU. And there are still EU citizens kept in detention by Iran, such as the Swedish national and official from the Borrell-led European External Action Service Johan Floderus, on allegedly spurious charges of spying for Israel.

Those who lambast EU officials like Michel, Borrell, and Lenarcic for supposedly failing to take a “tough line” against Tehran neglect to explain how these vital interests will be served in the absence of any diplomatic engagement with Iran. Following maximalist demands would be even more absurd at a

time when the United States, Europe’s primary security guarantor, is itself engaged in talks with Tehran, through intermediaries, on de-escalation of tensions in the Middle East and on the nuclear file. The EU, in fact, has an advantage over the US in that it doesn’t need to go through third parties to engage with Iran, since it already has direct channels of communications.

The EU will have to tread carefully in the coming months leading up to the elections of the new president in Iran. Its core interests, as outlined above, remain unchanged whoever is in charge in Tehran. The EU is likely to concentrate on them, even if that would fall far short of

the aspirations to see a democratic change in Iran. The possible elevation of the current deputy foreign minister and chief nuclear negotiator Ali Baqeri Kani to the position of foreign minister may cause some advances in reviving at least some form of a nuclear agreement. As to the presidential elections, the most likely course of action for the EU will be to wait and see and then deal with whoever emerges on the top, mindful of the fact that in the Islamic Republic president has limited room in setting foreign policy, with the final decisions to be taken by the Leader.

The full article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.



Martyr President

Raisi protected Iranians' identity against global tyrants

By Amirhossein Somali

Guest contributor

As international tensions continue to rise and we witness various internal and external crises, it becomes increasingly evident that the more Iranians achieve self-awareness, the less vulnerable they become to colonial exploitation in its many forms. This self-awareness can protect their human, material, and spiritual resources from being plundered. Dr. Mousa Najafi, a full professor of political science at the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies (IHCS), currently heads this significant center for humanities. One of his most important projects is "Iranian Colonial Studies," which aims to offer a new perspective on colonialism and its operations within Iran's geographical and political landscape. Dr. Najafi has made significant contributions to the intellectual foundation of the Islamic Revolution through his noteworthy publications, such as "The Philosophy of the Islamic Revolution and Our Future," "Constitutional Studies," "The History of Political Developments in Iran," and "The Postmodern Revolution and Islamic Civilization." In this interview, he elucidates the importance of Iranian identity and the role of Shiism in shaping this dynamic identity, which has manifested itself in the establishment of the Islamic Republic's political system.

IRAN DAILY: The people of Iran participated in the funeral ceremonies for President Raisi and his other martyred associates in their millions. How do you interpret this turnout? Why do you think Ayatollah Raisi was able to immortalize his name in Iranian history?

NAJAFI: I will answer your question by citing an example from Iranian history. There are several similarities between Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and Mirza Taghi Khan-e Farahani known as Amir Kabir, one of the significant figures in Iran's history. One similarity in their social standing is that both

individuals came from the lower strata of society and rose through their inherent merit to accomplish substantial foundational work within approximately three years of leadership. This includes the implementation of a national and indigenous economy, a principle both firmly believed in. Another similarity is that both were people-oriented and deeply cared for the public; they stood steadfast by their beliefs until their last breath. Ultimately, both were buried beside their revered leaders, one beside Imam Hussein (PBUH) and the other beside Imam Reza (PBUH). I provided this historical example because I believe that understand-



ing history reveals the hidden secrets of current politics. In my opinion, what most closely connects these two national heroes and martyrs is their independence from nefarious foreign policies and, more importantly, their efforts to cleanse Iran's governance from the waves of foreign deceit and subversion.

Martyr Amir Kabir took the helm of Iranian politics during Naser al-Din Shah's era when the toxic remnants of the Treaty of Turkmenchay had left Iran and its people weak and suffering. He addressed and resolved this sinister legacy of foreign infiltration through his astute policies.

On the other hand, our beloved Ebrahim was able to confront those who sought to demean the body, soul, and identity of Iranians in the face of tyranny. Thus, this time, another son of Iran, in the guise of a religious scholar, wisely treated the wounds inflicted by the poor governance of his predecessors who sought to establish relations with the oppressors.

The last two hundred years of Iranian history have consistently shown that Iran's true independence shines brightly in the East, thanks to men like Amir Kabir and Raisi. As long as this land is rich enough to nurture such men, foreign deceit and subservience will



find no foothold here. The emergence of such stars in a nation's political firmament requires pure soil enriched by the blood of its martyrs like Amir Kabir and Raisi.

What is your definition of Iran?

When we speak of Iran, we consider several dimensions: a geographical Iran, which resembles a cat in shape; a political Iran, which is larger and takes the shape of a lion; and a cultural Iran, which is as expansive as an elephant, extending to India and Tajikistan. Furthermore, the Islamic Revolution has added a new dimension to Iran, one that extends to virtually all countries with a Shia presence. The next circle encompasses the Islamic world, including non-Shia regions that have drawn closer to us due to their shared enmity with our greatest adversary, Israel. In my view, the foundations of Iranian identity are threefold: Shia Islam, which has been particularly significant since the Safavid era; the Persian language; and the country's geography and history. There is an often-overlooked aspect of Iran: the unique characteristic of Shia Islam being the majority religion here. Two groups have resisted discussions on this topic. The first group is the Pahlavis, who aimed

to revive pre-Islamic Iran. Their ideological approach led them astray, though pre-Islamic Iran is a reality worth acknowledging in its own right, not in opposition to Shia Islam. They feared an accurate portrayal of Shia Islam. The second group emerged as post-revolution during the rise of "Ummah-ism." Some hesitated to address this topic, fearing it might create divisions or upset Arab or Sunni brothers. This reluctance has allowed secular nationalism to grow alongside the Islamic Republic, which is dangerous.

Shia Islam is the majority in countries like Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Yemen, Azerbaijan, and Kuwait, but these nations have not established a "Shia nation" as Iran has. Unlike Iran, they do not have a Shia majority identity.

After the revolution, when the idea of the "Ummah" (global Muslim community) gained prominence, some avoided discussing the significance of Shia Islam to prevent potential conflicts. However, this is crucial. The notion that all Muslims are equal has led some to adopt an anti-nationalist Ummah-ism, which is the opposite extreme of the Pahlavi view. Both perspectives are marked by excess. Any ideology, even Ummah-ism, must have a starting point, and for us, that is Iran.

The reluctance to discuss Shia Islam properly stems from a fear of causing division or offending Sunni Arabs. However, failing to address this has enabled secular nationalism to grow in our country, posing a significant risk. The reality is that while Shia Islam is the majority in some countries, they have not forged a Shia national identity as Iran has.

Do we owe nation-building to the Safavids or the Pahlavis?

We owe it to the Safavids. The Pahlavi dynasty cannot be compared to any other royal dynasty in Iran because unlike the others that naturally emerged, the Pahlavis

were dependent from the start. How can a dependent dynasty build a nation? This element of dependency is evident in the grandfather, father, and even the grandson of this family today.

What do you mean by a Shia nation? You mentioned that Azerbaijan also has a Shia majority but has not become a nation. What made Iran a nation?

This process began during the Safavid era when, through state action, Shia Islam transformed into a national identity in Iran. Some may argue that the religious scholars were not in charge at that time; however, this does not negate the fact. Ultimately, they engaged in cooperation. Anything that hinders the evolution and growth of this nation-building process is doomed to fail. Several forces initiated disruptions against this evolution. One was Nader Shah Afshar, who attempted to eliminate Shia Islam.

How can we balance nationalism and Ummah-ism?

It's a very difficult task. These two concepts do not easily align and there are inherent conflicts. For instance, even now, some within the country question why we invest so much in other Islamic countries that are neither Iranian nor Shia. In my view, one figure who has successfully maintained this balance is Qassem Soleimani. He was both a patriot and an international figure of resistance, a Shia and an Iranian, and everyone considered him one of their own. He was an extraordinary individual.

So, reality surpasses theory and we can observe it tangibly?

Yes, it is tangible. Soleimani didn't invent anything; he discovered that there is an inherent balance within the Islamic Revolution. More precisely, Soleimani wasn't an exceptional figure who just presented a balanced interpretation



Martyr President



When we refer to the concept of “Iranian Colonial Studies,” it is not about creating a new term but rather about gaining a new scientific understanding of one of the most critical reactions of the Iranian nation to preserve its identity and character against foreign aggression and infiltration.

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of the Revolution; he embodied the Revolution itself. Anyone deviating from this balance faces difficulties.

If we trace the process of nation-building you mentioned through subsequent historical periods, we see this concept manifesting in critical moments such as colonial encounters and invasions from the north and south. Based on this, when conflict arose between colonial powers and Iran, which element of Iranian identity did colonialism most strive to eliminate?

The first thing colonialism attempts to do is to disrupt this balance. It does not want this issue to persist, as it is dangerous for colonial powers. The balance between identity and civilization is a threat. In the face of colonialism, we see Islamic awakening, which is the root of the Islamic Revolution. At every stage of colonial intrusion, there has been a corresponding identity-based Islamic awakening, showing that the Islamic community is vibrant and resistant to exploitation. Unlike African or East Asian societies, Iran’s Islamic society is alive and responsive. When enemies have invaded militarily, there has been a military response; when they have invaded culturally, the response has been cultural; and when they have invaded politically, the response has been political. Today, their incursion is civilizational, encompassing military, political, cultural, and economic elements, with stronger software. Consequently, the Islamic awakening’s response must also be civilizational.

You view history as a series of “evolutionary ruptures” and believe that Nader Shah and Reza Shah created significant breaks. Following them, colonialism introduced a second rupture, sustaining its impact for 50 years until the historical self-awareness

achieved through the Islamic Revolution ended it. However, we must acknowledge that colonialism afflicted Iranian society and continues to evolve in new and complex forms. In this context, how should we understand this phenomenon to prevent further ruptures? How should a historically self-aware Iranian confront it?

Ruptures are never absolute. Even during the Pahlavi era’s disruption, there was continuity, and the Shia community did not disintegrate. If we were to identify who more astutely sought to destroy the Iranian nation, it would be Reza Shah. He aimed to eradicate religion, correctly understanding that completing this task was essential to creating a rupture.

During Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign, the rupture was mainly political, with attempts to undermine religion through cultural efforts. However, both underestimated the power of religion. They believed they could reverse-engineer the Safavid initiative and change Iran’s religion. However, changing a religion is not an easy task; it is not something to be taken lightly. Meanwhile, the clergy seized the opportunity, preserving the religious aspect of society.

They thought they could impose a secular interpretation of religion, unaware that Shia Islam is constantly evolving and regenerating. Shia Islam is essentially a comprehensive movement, continuing its work independently. They did not anticipate that Shia Islam would emerge so strongly and manifest itself as a national revolution. Our intellectuals also failed to understand the people’s true nature.

The current Islamic movement in Iran is entirely inspired by Shia teachings, which enabled it to balance diverse opinions effectively. Many Salafi movements are rooted in Wahhabism, whereas Shia Islam in Iran sought to return to its principles. Additionally, alongside the jurisprudence and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, we have philosophy,

mysticism, and Islamic civilization. These elements combined to shape a unique movement.

Why has Iran, despite being one of the world’s major powers at certain times, never been a colonialist?

Examining both ancient and modern history reveals that Iranians, even when they were among the world’s most powerful nations, largely refrained from colonialism and barbarism. Unlike many empires, Iranian conquests seldom left a legacy of poverty, exploitation, and savagery. In ancient times, Iran stood against the colonial expansions of the Greeks and Romans. During the 10th and 11th centuries, they opposed Portuguese and Spanish aggressors. In later centuries, they endured much suffering at the hands of Western imperialists, especially the British. More recently, Iran has been a staunch opponent of American bullying and excessive demands, striving to remain a proud and dignified nation. This has been particularly evident through the global revolution known as the Islamic Revolution, which defends the identity and character of Iran and other Muslims.

The study of Iranian colonialism encompasses the millennia-long story of a nation that has neither been a dominator nor submissive, remaining vibrant and active to this day. Consequently, the body of work on Iranian colonial studies, and more specifically Iranian Islamic colonial studies, seeks to develop and evaluate a native perspective on this global phenomenon. Colonial powers, alongside their territorial conquests, focused on eradicating the identities of their colonies and imposing new ones, marking a new era in their global strategy. This included efforts to globalize European languages, such as replacing Persian with English in India and promoting French in parts of the Mediterranean and Asia. This focus should not be confused with the natural spread of some languages as the



Soleimani was not an exceptional figure who just presented a balanced interpretation of Iran's 1979 Revolution; he embodied the Revolution itself.



scientific lingua franca; rather, it underscores the critical role of academic studies in the process of colonial domination.

In this context, the significant and complex field of "Orientalism" should not be overlooked. This 19th-century Western initiative aimed to understand the East from a Western perspective, portraying Eastern peoples as primitive and irrational. Such depictions justified Western paternalistic superiority and domination. This perspective justified the supposed need for entities like the East India Company, symbolizing Western superiority and the early efforts of Orientalism. Consequently, the implementation of colonialist ideologies pushed the West forward while keeping the East in a state of backwardness. From this perspective, colonial studies, both consciously and subconsciously, can address one of the most critical questions for Eastern societies regarding their relative underdevelopment compared to Western societies—a question that encompasses much of the Eastern identity and character.

Thus, understanding Iranian colonialism can clarify why Iranians, even at their most powerful, generally avoided colonial exploitation and barbarity. The primary reason for backwardness, stagnation, and sometimes decline in various civil sectors is the pervasive and pernicious phenomenon of colonialism.

What are the driving forces behind the civilization-building of Iranian identity?

The identity that leads to our civilization has two main pillars. The first pillar is bringing religion from the margins to the center, opposing secularism. Currently, the clergy holds power, and the religious fabric of society remains strong.

The Islamic Revolution has significantly contributed to this. The scholars of Qom, the Assembly of Experts, religious teachings, and the deep-rooted presence of Shia Islam in Iranian society collectively moved religion from the periphery to the center. Although religion was on the margins back then, it had the power to critique the status quo effectively. Consequently, the Shah felt compelled to visit religious sites like Mashhad and Mecca and support religious institutions. His father, who ignored these aspects, was quickly rejected by the people.

The social base of the revolution started with small Quranic and religious gatherings. Initially, it began in high schools and then spread to universities. In Isfahan, teachers were the leaders of the Revolution, followed by merchants. Contrary to communist narratives, the working class and peasants were the last to join. The cultural sector dominated the Revolution because it was not class-based. Workers showed their support in the final years, mainly to assert their labor rights.

The second pillar is "resistance to domination," which has not developed as much as the first. Resisting domination requires a deep understanding of colonialism. Today, there are fair-minded researchers in the West documenting the crimes of colonialism.

How do you evaluate the status of the decolonization movement in the world?

A powerful decolonization movement has emerged in the West. Numerous associations have been formed, and they are unwilling to comply with colonial norms. Although the decolonization movement was initially dominated by Marxists, today other academic streams are also seriously addressing this issue. Half of our recently published collection on colonial studies is composed of original works, while the other half includes works by researchers in this field. Some books and writings related to decolonization are dominated by leftist perspectives. However, thanks to extensive scholarly efforts, the Islamic Revolution has reached a level of understanding that allows us to view colonialism independently without being aligned with either the left or the right.

Since this movement is based in Iran, we have named it "Iranian Colonial Studies." It seems we are at the beginning of this journey and need to mature further. Our focus is on filling a 45-year gap in this field. There has been significant neglect in this area, and one of our tasks is to monitor the existing efforts. We must make every effort to thoroughly and comprehensively introduce and promote the foundational aspects of Shia identity without hesitation.



Martyr President

How Iran's people-friendly president developed unbreakable bond with masses

By Humaira Ahad

As fate would have it, the last provincial trip of the 'People's President', from the border region with Azerbaijan to the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz, ended in his martyrdom.

This time he returned home in a casket draped in the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Visiting the late president's house to offer his condolences, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei commended the tireless spirit of the deceased soul.

"He told me, I returned from a tour at 3 am and found it is not possible to sleep here. In the morning there was a stone-laying ceremony at Karaj," the Leader told the bereaved family members.

"He said, he went to Karaj the same night and rested there for one or two hours to feel fresh in the morning. He had returned from a twenty-day tour. All this work."

President Raisi's untimely and tragic demise in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran, after inaugurating a dam project on the border with Azerbaijan, came as a shock to all and sundry.

A pall of gloom descended on Iran as people took to the streets to mourn their beloved president.

Announcing his death, Iran's cabinet in a statement lauded the "indefatigable and hard-working president" who made the "ultimate sacrifice on the path of serving his nation."

President Raisi, true to his reputation, would always be seen among people, traveling the length and breadth of the country to meet ordinary Iranians and give a patient hearing to their problems.

In his brief presidential stint, he traveled nearly 40,000 km, covering all the provinces. His country-wide trips were mostly reserved for Fridays. The dedicated president preferred spending his weekend among the masses, to be acquainted with their issues and consolidate his connection with people.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution on Raisi

"The simple lifestyle and minimum formalities in the personal and working behavior of the (Raisi) administration, especially about the

president himself, is impressive to me," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said about the Iranian president in August 2023.

Ayatollah Khamenei always acknowledged the tireless efforts of President Raisi and his administration in improving the livelihood of the people of Iran.

In a message issued on May 20, a day after the fatal air crash that led to the death of the Iranian president and his companions, including Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Ayatollah Khamenei described Raisi as a hard-working cleric and a popular president who dedicated his life to serving the people of Iran, the country, and Islam.

"In this bitter tragedy, the Iranian nation lost a warm-hearted, humble, and valued servant," said the Leader, adding that President Raisi never took a break from work despite facing criticism from ill-wishers.

Ayatollah Khamenei regarded Raisi as a "dear and tireless leader", a phrase that had never been used by him for anyone before, showing the admiration Leader had for his hard work and integrity.

"Beloved President Raisi knew no fatigue. In this painful incident, the people of Iran have lost a sincere, dedicated, and valuable servant.

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For him, the well-being and satisfaction of the people, reflecting divine satisfaction, prevailed above all," the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said.

Ayatollah Khamenei further stated that Martyr Ayatollah Raisi did not distinguish between day and night and worked round the clock in order to resolve people's problems.

Unbreakable connection with people

After being elected as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2021, Raisi started working tirelessly to improve economic conditions, which were significantly affected by the pandemic.

The devoted president would travel extensively even during the times of COVID-19, visiting hospitals and pharmacies. It was due to his government's extensive efforts that Iran was able to locally produce COVID-19 vaccines to contain the spread of the pandemic.

The country bypassed cruel and illegal Western sanctions that hindered the easy flow of medical supplies, including lifesaving vaccines to Iran, during the pandemic.

As the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Raisi abandoned all the ceremonial protocols and aristocratic approaches to work and

chose to walk among the ranks of ordinary people.

During his time in office, he traveled to the far-flung parts of Iran. According to his close aides, the late president believed that meeting people, seeing their living conditions, and talking to them were the prerequisites to understanding their concerns and grievances and then making efforts to resolve them.

In his interaction with people during provincial trips or even during his meetings in the capital, the late president was known for his humility and humbleness.

Mahmoud Gabarlo, an Iranian cinema artist and film critic, wrote about his meeting with President Raisi at an Iftar dinner for artists and cultural figures.

"Twice I was the guest of Mr. Raisi, the late president. I participated with a group of artists and writers. My motive to accept the invitation to these governmental parties was to witness the President's personal interaction with individuals belonging to the field of art and culture," he stated.

"Regardless of my critical writings about the 13th government's policies in the field of culture and art, especially cinema, I witnessed President Raisi's honest and benevolent behavior with all the people

of culture and art whose spectrum of thought was different from the President. One can never forget his warm and sincere greetings..."

As an Iranian, he added, it is "not possible for me to not mourn the passing away" of the president who "carried the personal traits of compassion, simplicity and sincerity while working for the people of the country."

Similar thoughts about the martyred president were echoed by Syed Amir Meernaseri, a labor activist working in Hapco, an Iranian freight company.

"Ayatollah Raisi spoke very informally and softly to make us comfortable and lessen our hesitation. He would bring himself to the level of the workers so that the workers open up and share their problems," he was quoted as saying.

He said concern for the working class was one of the important personality traits of the late president.

Referring to the late president's diligence in solving the Hepco factory's problems, Meernaseri said Ayatollah Raisi "had been pursuing Hepco's issues since he was the head of the judiciary."

"President Raisi visited us in the factory. His visit came as a pleasurable shock to the workers especially due to the Presidential protocol which hampers such visits due to security concerns. The workers credited the non-closure of the factory to this high-ranking martyr," he said.

"The day Ayatollah Raisi came to the Hepco factory, hierarchically, the CEO should have reported to him, but he asked for us and we, the ordinary workers reported to him. The day we were called to his office, all the governors and the ministers were present in the meeting. The President treated us with special respect and made us feel at home. He made sure that we do not consider ourselves strangers at the place or feel any form of anxiety in the presence of high-ranking officials," Meernaseri who had met the late president at least 5 times added.

Colleagues praise the 'hard-working' president

President Raisi, who served in dif-



Billboards across the Iranian capital hail the late Iranian president as someone who worked indefatigably and tirelessly for the people of Iran, a fitting tribute to the man who saw himself as a mere "servant" of the people and described his government as "people's government." During his three years in office, President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi earned respect from people for his people-friendly approach to governance and for touring almost every province to meet people and personally listen to their grievances, something that had no parallel.



Martyr President



ferent roles in the country's judiciary and rose through the ranks to become the judiciary chief, was revered by his colleagues for his hard work and intellect.

Attending a memorial ceremony for the late Iranian president, Ayatollah Abdol-Ali Gawahi, director of political beliefs at the general headquarters of the Iranian Army said he worked for the deprived and never showed any signs of exhaustion and would always travel to solve the problems of the people.

"His personality was generous and he believed in simple living," he was quoted as saying.

Chief of Justice of Kerman Province, Ebrahim Hamidi described "people-oriented leadership" as the principle characteristic of President Raisi's governance.

While offering condolences to the people of Iran on the martyrdom of the late president and his companions, Hamidi said he learned many lessons from him, "The most important sign of his moral character was a good relationship with people and a revolutionary spirit."

Commenting on Raisi's tenure as the chief justice of the country, Hamidi said one of his prime concerns was to "alleviate people's problems through his people-oriented approach."

"Ayatollah Raisi always emphasized proper and direct communication with the people and appeared as a successful model in the arena of human engagements. He always advised the government officials to respect and honor the common masses," he stated.

The judiciary official further said that the concern for the people of Iran could be seen in Raisi's provincial trips as the president visited most impoverished areas of the

country to meet people.

"His presence on the ground during times of crisis would provide a feeling of reassurance to people."

Dr. Muhammad Dostar, head of the Guilan University in the northern city of Rasht, considered Raisi as a person "who believed in prioritizing Islamic ethics and morals in political activities."

In an interview with ISNA news agency, Dostar said Raisi "did not adhere to the formalities that people follow when appointed to a high position."

"Martyr Ayatollah was a leader of the people. He was fully aware of people's issues as he would take regular trips to different Iranian states. He made sure that people's problems are followed till a solution is reached," he stated.

The head of Guilan University stated that the late president had special respect for the common masses and tried to stay informed about the issues that the people of the country were facing.

Raisi inherited austerity

In the past week, a video was doing rounds on the internet that showed the simple dwelling of the late president's mother, Seyedeh Esmat Khodadad Hosseini in the northeastern city of Mashhad.

The octogenarian lives in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in the holy city. Many of Hosseini's neighbors were unaware of her being the late president's mother until the news of his martyrdom came and people started flocking to the house of the president's mother to offer condolences.

"President Raisi never came to visit his mother's house with his entourage. He would often visit her during late hours to avoid trouble to

neighbors," said a woman who has known the family for decades.

The video went viral on social media with people praising the simple lifestyle that the family practices. Many netizens said that the martyred president inherited the austere way of living from his mother.

'Watch on Enemy', a page on X, was all praise for the simplicity exhibited by the president's family.

"This is not just a lesson for Iran but for all of us, whether in Europe, Pakistan, or anywhere else. This is the house of the President of Iran's mother. Unlike some politicians who fake poverty to win hearts, President Raisi (r) never spoke about his personal life."

Slamming the Western propaganda on Iran, Firstblood Hassouna also praised the late president,

"They say, 'the Iranian officials are corrupt and multibillionaire western funded puppets.' Iran Politics Meanwhile, back to reality...the house of the mother of the martyr President Ibrahim Raisi in the city of Mashhad."

Margarita Barnard, a netizen compared the late Iranian president with Western heads of the state.

"This is how President Raisi of Iran's own mother lived. A poor woman so unlike Western leaders he never paid himself a huge salary while his people starved in a gutter. THAT'S a true leader..."

Rosa Rafiey, a peace activist, was also impressed by the simple way of life of the Iranian president's mother.

"All the economic power and facilities of the country were at the disposal of this honorable martyr as the first executive person, but his mother's house was so simple. Raisi didn't take anything for herself [himself], unlike many other presidents in the world. Divine man."

Foreign policy

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**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**





Ayatollah Raisi's 28 foreign trips in 34 months

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi served for 1,019 days from August 3, 2021, to May 20, 2024. On his final working trip, he met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to inaugurate the "Qiz Qalasi" dam on the Iran-Azerbaijan border. Tragically, he was martyred upon returning due to a helicopter crash.

Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi undertook a total of 28 foreign trips to 23 countries. During this period, he traveled twice to Tajikistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the United Nations. The travel record of the eighth President of the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly indicates that his foreign policy priorities were focused on strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries, particularly those in Central Asia.

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Tajikistan

Ebrahim Raisi's first foreign trip was to Tajikistan in September, exactly one month after the presidential elections. This trip resulted in the signing of eight cooperation documents between the two countries and the significant achievement of Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Turkmenistan

Three months later, in December 2021, he traveled to Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. On the sidelines of the ECO summit, a trilateral gas swap agreement was signed, valued at 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters of gas annually, facilitating the transfer of gas from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan via Iran.

Russia (First Trip)

Raisi's first trip to Russia took place on January 19-20, 2022. During this visit, he met with Vladimir Putin in Moscow, discussing a wide range of economic cooperation in energy, banking, transit, and security sectors. Three months later, on February 21-22, he visited Qatar, where the discussion on the Gas Exporting Countries Forum highlighted the region's significance.

Oman

Three months later, on May 23, 2022, Raisi visited Oman, another Gulf country. During this visit, he referred to Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman as a sincere and reliable friend of Iran and discussed with economic stakeholders ways to resolve trade issues between the two countries.

Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were the next destinations of Raisi's foreign trips. He visited Turkmenistan on June 29, 2022, and on September 15 of the same year, he traveled to Uzbekistan for the second time in less than a year since the beginning of his presidency to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, highlighting the importance of strengthening cooperation with northern neighbors. During this trip, Iran's full membership in the SCO was officially announced. He held 11 meetings with the leaders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, China, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, resulting in the signing of various cooperation agreements.

First trip to New York

Two days after concluding this regional tour, on September 18, 2022, Raisi traveled to New York for the first time to attend the United Nations General Assembly. During this trip, he met with the Presidents of France, Switzerland, Finland, Serbia, Bolivia, Zimbabwe, and the Prime Ministers of Japan, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Armenia. In his speech at the 77th UN General Assembly, he protested the assassination of "Martyr Qasem Soleimani" by holding up his photograph and emphasized the failure of Western sanctions against Iran.



Martyr President

Kazakhstan

The next trip of the late Raisi, the deceased President of Iran, was 22 days after his New York visit to Kazakhstan, a northern neighbor of Iran. During this trip, he met with the Emir of Qatar and the President of Azerbaijan, telling Ilham Aliyev that Iran was ready to use its capacity to resolve conflicts between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

China

Raisi's last foreign trip in 2022 was to China, Iran's largest trading partner. On February 13, 2023, he went to Beijing for a three-day visit. During this trip, 20 cooperation documents and memoranda of understanding were signed in various fields including crisis management, information and communication technology, media, trade, intellectual property, cultural heritage, and crisis management.

Syria



On May 2, 2023, the late President of Iran traveled to Damascus, the capital of Syria, and met with Bashar al-Assad. This was the first visit by an Iranian president since the Syrian war crisis. During this visit, 14 cooperation documents were signed in various fields such as oil and energy, trade, and facilitating pilgrimage affairs between the two countries.

Second trips to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

On November 8-9, 2023, the Iranian President made his second visits to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, participating in the 16th ECO Summit in Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital. He emphasized Iran's determination to mobilize more resources and energy to enhance cooperation within the ECO framework.

Saudi Arabia

One of the most significant foreign trips of the late Raisi in 2023 was his historic visit to Saudi Arabia after seven years, facilitated by China's mediation. On November 11, he traveled to Riyadh to attend an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on the Gaza conflict. During this visit, he met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, where both parties emphasized the development of bilateral relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.



Russia



On December 7, 2023, Raisi made his second visit to Moscow, the capital of Russia. During his meeting with Vladimir Putin, he stated, "Iran and Russia have good cooperation in energy, agriculture, and scientific activities, and further significant steps can be taken." Raisi added that the Israel-Hamas war is a challenge for all humanity and that the bombing of Gaza must be stopped immediately. Putin announced that the volume of economic exchanges between the two countries had reached \$5 billion.

Turkey

The next trip for the Iranian President was to Ankara, the capital of Turkey. On December 24, 2023, Raisi traveled to Turkey, where 10 cooperation documents were signed between Tehran and Ankara.

Algeria

Raisi's last foreign trip in 2023 was to Algiers, the capital of Algeria. During this visit, he participated in the meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum and met with the leaders of Qatar, Tunisia, Mozambique, Iraq, and Bolivia.

Pakistan

Raisi's first foreign trip in 2024 was to Pakistan. From April 22 to 24, he visited Islamabad, followed by visits to the cities of Lahore and Karachi. During this trip, eight cooperation documents were signed, envisioning a trade volume of \$10 billion between the two countries, with an emphasis on securing the borders.

Sri Lanka

On April 24, 2024, the Iranian President traveled from Pakistan to Sri Lanka for his last foreign trip, aimed at economic development with East Asian countries. During this one-day visit, he participated in the inauguration ceremony of the multi-purpose Uma Oya Dam and Power Plant project alongside Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, marking one of Iran's major engineering service export projects.

Iran-Azerbaijan border

In his final working trip, Raisi visited the Iran-Azerbaijan border and met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at the zero point border along the Aras River. During the ceremony, he stated, "The Qiz Qalasi Dam is a symbol of regional development and a testament to the determination of the two countries and peoples of Iran and Azerbaijan to expand cooperation."



Martyr President



In this illustration, Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (L) is seen alongside his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping.

Recognizing Raisi's stellar contribution to China-Iran friendship

By Hannan Hussain

Scholar

On May 20, Iranian officials confirmed President Ebrahim Raisi's tragic death in a helicopter crash in the northwestern East Azerbaijan province.

It marks the departure of a polished statesman. Raisi helped guard Tehran against external interference while deepening its pragmatic relations within and beyond the Middle East. In China, he will be remembered as a dependable friend who brought two strategic partners even closer. His contribution to time-tested China-Iran ties merits profound recognition for several reasons.

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Look at Raisi's landmark visit to China early last year. He worked with China to expand multisector engagement through a dozen cooperation documents. In the same year, bilateral trade clocked an impressive \$14.6 billion. Expanding cooperation in agriculture, trade, tourism, healthcare, and energy underscored a deeper commitment to upgrading Iran's comprehensive strategic partnership with China.

Raisi concretized and communicated that understanding in his exchange with Chinese President Xi Jinping last year, sending a powerful message on long-term priorities. "Iran's commitment to deepening and upgrading the Iran-China comprehensive strategic partnership is unswerving and will not be affected by any changes in the international and regional situation," he affirmed.

Going forward, that sense of resilience carries profound meaning for Chinese-Iranian ties. Despite threats of rising unilateralism, unwarranted sanctions, and recurring conflicts in the Middle East, China-Iran relations under Raisi set a powerful example for common development and world peace. Tehran amply reciprocated Beijing's willingness to implement their 25-year comprehensive cooperation plan and embraced important strides across the energy, trade, and infrastructure sectors.

On the multilateral front, China and Iran's support for regional diplomacy and economic develop-

ment remains another hallmark, given Tehran's full-member entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS.

In Raisi's own words, multilateralism is a principal "guarantee for realizing justice". As such, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) scored tangible dividends for the people of Iran during his tenure, reflecting high-level engagements to support Iran in developing ports, railroads, and other long-term infrastructure.

China is also seen as a pivotal contributor to Iran's future development endeavors, including the production of 15,000 megawatts of renewable power, high-speed transit projects, and other big-ticket connectivity pursuits. All this speaks to the deepening spirit of win-win cooperation under Raisi with the second-largest economy. Iran continues to enjoy a unique geographical position and status under the BRI framework, and the late president's legacy of strategic engagement leaves ample groundwork for his successor to build on. Looking ahead, Iran's political structure will endure in the face of difficulties. Iran's interim President Mohammad Mokhber is in charge until an election is held within 50 days, and Tehran's foreign policy priorities — including towards China — will reflect continuity for several reasons.

First, it is the nature of Raisi's rule itself: His leadership achievements were popular among Irani-

an conservatives and the religious elite, and bolstered his prospects of re-election.

Among those achievements was the historic China-brokered Saudi-Iranian agreement. It helped shore up common ground between two major Middle Eastern powers and proved that diplomacy could trump deep-seated historical divisions. Future progress on reconciliation is likely to propel China and Iran's pursuit for enhanced "regional and international peace and security" in a region facing recurring conflicts.

Second, the China-assisted Saudi-Iranian detente served as a powerful endorsement of Raisi's foreign policy of building trust in neighbors. That vision stands to strengthen as Iran eyes further opening up and constructive engagement in the Middle East.

Moreover, Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has also declared Tehran's ingress into key multilateral groupings as a "very good achievement". Thus, Beijing's support for Tehran's regional integration will continue to benefit the broader vision behind Raisi's foreign policy vision.

In conclusion, Raisi's statesmanship had a remarkable impact at the domestic, regional, and international levels. Its successfully reinforced China-Iran ties as catalysts for peace, common development, and win-win diplomacy.

The article first appeared on CGTN.



**Martyr
President**



Role of Iran's late president, foreign minister in Palestine

By Robert Inlakesh

Journalist, writer

Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will be replaced following their shock helicopter crash deaths in the Varzeghan region.

While Iranians poured to the streets in their millions across the country to mourn the passing of the two, along with other senior officials, and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held a moment of silence, their records on the question of Palestine are of great importance to highlight.

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on Passing of
President Seyyed
Ebrahim Raisi and
his companions



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (C) meets with Palestinian resistance leaders, commanders, and intellectuals in the Syrian capital, Damascus, on May 4, 2023, while foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian is sitting to Raisi's immediate left.

Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (1960-2024)

Born in the Iranian city of Mashhad, a key religious location in the country and home to the Imam Reza shrine, Ebrahim Raisi was educated from around the age of 15 at the renowned Qom religious seminary and went on to study under several important Islamic scholars of the time.

A child of a clerical family, Raisi would join the protests that culminated in the birth of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 when the Iranian people overthrew the UK-US-installed dictator, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

What is often not pointed out is the centrality of the Palestinian cause to the popular revolt that overthrew the tyrannical Iranian monarch, not only in terms of the references made to Palestine within the revolutionary movement itself but also in terms of the Palestine Liberation Organization's training of groups of revolutionaries.

Receiving his doctorate in Islamic Jurisprudence and Law at the Shahid Motahari University, Ebrahim Raisi would quickly be promoted, aged 25, to be the deputy prosecutor of Tehran.

Inside Iran, while there were a range of opposition parties and individual voices against him, he was seen in much of the country as a man of the people who would travel frequently to the poorest areas of the nation. For this reason, many speculated that he would potentially be in line to replace Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

When elected to power in 2021, Ebrahim Raisi ran as a religiously conservative candidate and won on a platform of economic reform. In Western media he was labeled a "hardliner" or "conservative", which had to do mostly with two key aspects of his orientation as a politician, his foreign policy approach and his religious approach. The term conservative in Iran is only befitting to the religio-social aspect, however, as those described with the term often pursue

socialist economic policies and have little to do with conservatives in the West.

On the foreign policy front, Ebrahim Raisi was focused on an "Eastern pivot", leaving behind attempts to align Iran with the West. This meant building on Tehran's ties with Moscow and Beijing and joining the BRICS economic alliance and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The other key aspect of Iran's new foreign policy was adopting a more resolute stance towards the issue of regional resistance to Israel and US hegemony.

Iran, under Raisi, would focus on developing a stronger deterrence equation when it came to their "shadow war" with the Israelis. Tehran also advocated more frequently on behalf of the Palestinian people, developed its relationship with Hamas further, and sought to combat the US-planned Saudi-Israeli normalization deal that became a primary foreign policy goal until October 7.

After October 7, Ebrahim Raisi was the most resolutely pro-Palestinian voice at the Arab-Islamic summit that was triggered by the war in Gaza, calling on all nations involved to sanction Israel for their crimes against the Palestinian people and spoke in support of the armed struggle against the occupation.

It was also under president Raisi's rule that the Islamic Republic launched its first-ever direct attack against Israel from Iranian territory, which came in retaliation for Israel having bombed the consular segment of Iran's embassy in Damascus, Syria.

Throughout the war on Gaza, Iran has been one of the most vocal states against Israel's genocide and has advanced its confrontational approach to Israel, whereby it coordinates with its allies Hezbollah, the PMU, and Ansarullah to aid the Palestinian resistance in Gaza.

During president Raisi's last speech, delivered in Azerbaijan, he turned his attention to the is-



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A truck is carrying the coffin of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi during a funeral in downtown Tehran, Iran, on May 22, 2024.



sue of Palestine and highlighted its uniting force between the people of Iran and Azerbaijan, declaring that “the Palestinian cause stands as the foremost issue of the Islamic world.”

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (1964-2024)

Born in the city of Damghan, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian began his career by receiving a PhD in International Relations from The University of Tehran. He went on to build significant relationships throughout West Asia and would first take on government roles when Ali Larijani was the speaker of the Iranian Parliament.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian then became the Secretary-General of

the Permanent Secretariat of the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Intifada, before becoming Managing Director of the ‘Palestine Strategic Dialogue Quarterly’, where he would serve as the lead editor.

He was also known for his close relationship with former leading Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’s elite Quds Force. This relationship is said to have stemmed from Amir-Abdollahian’s role at the Foreign Ministry as an Iraq expert, following the toppling of Saddam Hussein by the US military. When General Qassem Soleimani was designated the head of the Quds Force, it was said they would meet to discuss key regional

issues.

General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in Baghdad by a US drone strike in 2020, is credited with having helped the Palestinian resistance develop strategies in order to effectively fight the Israeli military, the most prominent of which is said to be his role in the construction of the elaborate system of tunnels under the Gaza Strip.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was also a professor at the Iranian Foreign Ministry’s School of International Relations and had occupied the position of deputy foreign minister, during the government of former president Hassan Rouhani. He reportedly had a falling out with the serving foreign minister at the

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time, Javad Zarif, due to disagreement on the direction of Iran's foreign policy.

When Amir-Abdollahian became Iranian foreign minister in 2021, with the election of the Raisi government, he was presented throughout Western media as a "hardliner" on foreign policy issues.

A stern advocate of the Palestinian cause, he was viewed as posing a special threat to Israel and US regional ambitions, as he was known to be dedicated to the idea of what Iran calls its "Axis of Resistance". He had been involved in various meetings with the likes of Hezbollah Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah and had long known leaders within the Palestinian resistance too.

Contributing to president Ebrahim Raisi's approach, which was sternly in favor of ditching the West and building ties throughout the Global South, in addition to Russia and China, he is credited with playing a pivotal role in the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

When the war in Gaza began, Amir-Abdollahian indicated that there is a chance Iran could be drawn into the conflict if Israel launched a ground invasion of the besieged coastal enclave. Then, on October 14, he met with the political leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, in Doha.

In November, he also set up a meeting between Hamas politburo member Khalil Al-Hayya, the Secretary-General of Hezbollah

Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Secretary-General Ziad al-Nakhleh in Lebanon. He traveled to Lebanon a number of times during the war to coordinate with the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance factions.

Hamas described both Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian by stating that "these leaders supported the legitimate struggle of our people against the Zionist entity, provided valued support to the Palestinian resistance, and made tireless efforts in solidarity and support in all forums and fields for our people in the steadfast Gaza Strip during the Battle of Al-Aqsa Flood".

The full article first appeared on The Palestine Chronicle.



Martyr President

Russia transmits love beams to post-Raisi Iran

By Samuel Ramani

Founder of Pangea Geopolitical Risk

The May 19 death of Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash represented a damaging blow for the country's hardliners, following the assassination of several senior military leaders in recent months. For Russia, it meant the loss of a leading international ally.

The Kremlin is acutely aware of its dependence on Iranian expertise as perhaps the world's most successful sanctions evader, as an unquestioning transporter of Russian goods through its warm water ports, and as a supplier of military supplies. Any change in approach would likely have an outsize influence on Russia's war against Ukraine. It is important that, at a minimum, Tehran feels Russia's love in moments of crisis.

So, the deaths of Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in hills near the border with Azerbaijan were greeted with despondence and public lamentation from the Kremlin. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent condolences to Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and lionized Raisi as a true friend. Memorials to the Iranians appeared in Kazan, the capital of the Muslim-majority region of Tatarstan.

These outward displays of grief were paired with predictions of enduring cooperation. State Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman Leonid Slutsky argued that Russia-Iran cooperation was "on the rise" and predicted collaboration on major infrastructure projects. Former Russian ambassador to Iran Levan Dzagharyan emphasized that Tehran's foreign policy orientation is determined by Iran's leader.

Is the Kremlin's outward confidence in Russia-Iran cooperation justified?

Mostly yes. Raisi's death removes one of the most fervent champions of Russia-Iran cooperation from the arena. His close relationships with Russian officials predate his ascension to the presidency in 2021. During the 2017 Iranian presidential election campaign, which saw Raisi emerge as then-president Hassan Rouhani's hardline rival, Raisi met Tatarstan's President Rustam Minnikhanov, a leading Putin surrogate in the Islamic world. The meeting fueled speculation that he was Russia's preferred candidate. Raisi's steadfast emphasis on Iran's partnerships with the so-called Global South and anti-Western foreign policy outlook made him a reliable partner for Moscow. His appointment of Amir-Abdollahian as foreign minister was

also welcomed in the Kremlin. Amir-Abdollahian engaged with Russian officials in Syria-related negotiations from 2012–17 and effusively praised Putin's leadership in a January 2020 interview.

Despite the abrupt loss of these carefully honed personal relationships, Iran's acting President Mohammad Mokhber is another Russia-friendly figure. In his capacity as Iran's first vice president, Mokhber accompanied two senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officials to Moscow in October 2022 and allegedly pledged surface-to-surface missile transfers to Russia as well as drones.

Mokhber has also actively promoted Russia-Iran energy sector cooperation in the Caspian Sea and the North-South Transport Corridor, a railway link connecting Russia with India via Iran. Sina Bank, a US-sanctioned entity that Mokhber oversaw during the first de-



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in the Kremlin in December 2023.

cade of the 2000s, is a facilitator of Russia-Iran financial sector cooperation and has announced plans to open an office in Astrakhan, a Russian city just to the north of the Caspian Sea.

Russia's proactive response to the helicopter crash will be welcomed in Tehran. Russia dispatched planes to help find Raisi's crashed aircraft and Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu also offered assistance in the investigation into Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian's deaths. Putin's meeting with the Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali after the plane crash was a break in diplomatic protocol that highlighted the importance that Russia places on its relationship with Iran.

The manner of Raisi's death underlined the common problems the two countries face. Many have pointed to the parlous situation of civil aircraft in both countries as US and European sanctions make replacement parts hard to source. Russian officials have echoed Iran's former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif's attribution of the crash to foreign sanctions. Russian Foreign Min-

ister Sergei Lavrov accused the US of undermining aviation safety by blocking Iran's imports of aviation parts.

While it's clear Russia-Iran relations benefit both parties, Russian concerns persist about what might follow Raisi's death. Military analyst Alexey Zhivov wrote in the ultranationalist outlet *Tsargrad* that: "Azerbaijan is a latent ally of Israel. If it turns out that Raisi [was killed], all this will end in a Transcaucasian war."

Former Russian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Andrei Baklanov warned that Raisi's death could threaten the recent de-escalation between Iran and Israel, although Iranian officials have not joined some Russian analysts in promoting conspiracies about US or Israeli involvement.

The future power balance inside Iran is of greater concern to the Kremlin. Amongst Russian experts and commentators, there is a division of opinion on Mokhber's viability as Raisi's successor.

Iran expert Mais Kurbanov contends that he is highly respected by the Iranian people and will win between 70-80% of the vote in the

June presidential elections. Vladimir Sazhin, a leading Iran expert at Moscow's Institute of Oriental Studies, is more circumspect, predicting an intense power struggle between "conservatives and radicals". Mokhber's lack of religious credentials could place him at odds with fellow hardliners.

While the Russia-Iran diplomatic partnership has strengthened along multiple tracks, the robust relationship between Putin and Ayatollah Khamenei has been integral to its success.

While the deaths of Raisi and Amir-Abdollahian are unlikely to alter the short-term trajectory of Russia-Iran cooperation, the Kremlin is keeping a watchful eye on the instability that might follow their deaths.

The swift completion of the trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which will lead to 50-75% tariff reductions, will be Russia's initial priority as it seeks to reinforce the image of a business-as-usual relationship.

The full article first appeared on the Center for European Policy Analysis.



Martyr President

Iran's regional standing better thanks to Raisi

By Ebrahim Beheshti

Staffwriter

There are critical unanswered questions surrounding Iran's regional standing during the tenure of the late Iranian president Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi: Did his government's policies usher in greater stability in the region? What impact did the True Promise Operation against Israel have on Tehran's position? To discuss these issues, we turned to the expert insights of Amir Mousavi, a specialist in regional and strategic affairs.



IRAN DAILY: How did Iran's regional position change during the three-year period of president Raisi's government? Did it move towards strengthening or weakening?

MOUSAVI: The reaction of the world's government to the news of the unexpected martyrdom of the president and his foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian proved that the Islamic Republic had turned a corner and was no longer isolated on the global stage. A tidal wave of condolence messages and delegations poured in, paying their respects to the president and his companions on the crashed helicopter. The United Nations and the Security Council also responded with respect, further showing that the government of the late president was successful in improving the country's international standing. This outpouring of support

really riled up the regime's opponents, leaving them fuming. After the United States backed out of the JCPOA, the general consensus was that Tehran would see much tougher days and would have to back down from its stance. However, president Raisi's government rolled with the punches and used all the cards they had to stand up to the harsh sanctions and meet domestic needs. They implemented a resistance economy, keeping the economic cycle going and factories running. Currency fluctuations caused a few hiccups but didn't deal a knockout blow to Iran. In fact, Iran's resilience in the face of these external pressures gave the Islamic Republic a real boost in credibility and reputation. President Raisi was able to iron out some disagreements with regional countries tactfully and rationally in their diplomatic interactions, helping to calm the waters and pro-

mote stability. He even managed to keep relations afloat with European countries while strengthening ties with the Axis of Resistance and maintaining support for the Palestinian people. By following the leader's recommendations and creating internal coordination, president Raisi's government steered through crises and solidified Iran's regional standing.

From all these measures, the rapprochement agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia really stood out. Do you think this deal and the subsequent warming of ties had a calming effect on the region?

Yes, it surely did. But it's worth pointing out that two factors prompted Saudi Arabia and other regional countries to dial down the tension and iron out their differences with Iran. The first factor was realizing that the president

and foreign minister were in total agreement with the leader and the establishment in their remarks. As a result, their messages and stances carried weight, and it became clear that Iran's messages were not contradictory. This assurance prompted Saudi Arabia to take steps toward normalizing relations, and the level of cooperation ramped up nicely. A notable moment was when Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stepped out of a high-level meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to personally greet president Raisi during his visit to Jeddah.

The second factor was that these countries saw the validity in Iran's positions. They realized that Iran was after regional stability and wasn't meddling in their business. They also woke up to the fact that America and Israel had pulled the wool over their eyes with Iranophobia. On top of that, America and Israel couldn't guarantee their safety. A prime example was when Aramco's major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia were hit, and the Americans didn't lift a finger to help.

As a result, we saw a shift in the attitude of Arab countries towards Iran. The tone of their comments changed from hostile to constructive and cooperative. A prime example of this shift is the recent message sent by Mohammed bin Salman to Iran's Interim President Mohammad Mokhber. This message highlighted the importance they placed on maintaining and strengthening relations between the two countries.

President Raisi successfully fostered cohesive coordination between various internal institutions, ensuring that Iran projected a united front in its comments. This



single voice resonated with the countries in the region, leading to the mending of ties between Tehran and numerous regional states.

During president Raisi's term, we not only witnessed diplomatic measures but also a military operation against the Israeli regime. Did this show of force bolster Iran's standing in the region?

Yes, 'Operation True Promise' and the strike on Israel certainly bolstered Iran's position both regionally and internationally. With this decisive action, Iran sent a clear message to the world: we stand by our friends and deal firmly with our foes. Tehran demonstrated that any country daring to target Iran's interests would face a resolute response. It became evident that friendship with Iran bears fruit, while enmity comes at a cost. This operation was made possible by the seamless coordination between various domestic institutions in Iran. Even the Americans toned down their usual belliger-

ent rhetoric and opted for sending messages instead. A telling example was the visit by authorities from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Iran, where they pledged to uphold the security agreement to remove terrorists from Iran's borders.

Israel had misinterpreted Iran's strategic patience as a sign of weakness, only to realize that the patience morphed into a strategic blow. The execution of this operation during president Raisi's administration underscored the notion that military action complements diplomacy in Iran. Both diplomacy and defense capabilities are leveraged to safeguard Iran's security and advance its interests.

This operation taught Iran's foes a lesson and made resolute those friends who had been hesitant to become closer. The diplomacy of president Raisi's administration, coupled with the initiatives of Amir-Abdollahian, undoubtedly enhanced Iran's standing both regionally and internationally.



Late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi arrives wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on November 11, 2023, to take part in an extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



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Raisi takes Iran-Uzbekistan relations up to new heights

By Sadeq Dehqan

Staffwriter

At the invitation of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, his Uzbek counterpart, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, visited Iran almost a year ago for the first time. This marked the second time a President of Uzbekistan had made the trip since 1992.

Leading a high-ranking political and economic delegation, Mirziyoyev sealed the deal on 10 cooperation agreements across a range of sectors. These included a preferential trade agreement; transportation and transit protocols; plans for cooperation on pharmaceuticals, standards, and insurance; a look into setting up shared free zones; and a program for partnerships on technological innovation and the agricultural sector.

On the other hand, the president of Iran made not one but two trips to Uzbekistan, the first official one taking place on September 14, 2022.

During this three-day sojourn, the Iranian leader and his high-level delegation attended the 22nd summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's member states. This marked the finalization of Iran's permanent membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Additionally, the trip saw the signing of 17 memorandums of understanding and cooperation agreements, along with a joint statement, between the top brass of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The cooperation agreements between the two nations spanned a wide range of areas again. These included ramping up collaboration in agriculture, energy, and customs; boosting sports, science, technology, and innovation partnerships; increasing cultural exchanges; joining forces in the health sector; making international transport through the Chabahar port a reality; developing environmental initiatives; growing the tourism industry; and streamlining visa processes for business leaders, academics, and tourist groups.

In an interview with Iran Daily, the head of the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce chimed in on the countries' relationship, stating that things really kicked off between Iran and Uzbekistan during Raisi's presidency. "The level of relations between the two countries reached an unprecedented level during Raisi's tenure," Mousa Aghaei said.

In what follows, we discuss the economic and commercial ties, trade exchanges, and economic cooperation between the two nations with Aghaei.



The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (C) and his Uzbek counterpart, Shavkat Mirziyoyev (R), visit Tehran's specialized exhibition of innovations and technologies on June 18, 2023.

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IRANDAILY: As the head of the Joint Chamber of Commerce of Iran and Uzbekistan, how would you assess the current state of play when it comes to economic and trade exchanges between these two nations?

AGHAEI: With the two countries hitting it off in recent years, their economic cooperation and trade exchanges have been on a roll. The upward trajectory in their trade relationship has kept up the momentum over the last two to three years. As an example, our exports stood at \$290 million at the close of the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended March 20, 2023) and climbed to \$350 million by the end of 1402. Meanwhile, Iran also imported \$150 million worth of goods from Uzbekistan in 1402. With this exponential growth in trade, we're optimistic that the total bilateral exchanges will hit the \$1 billion mark by the year's end.

Is it realistic to expect that we'll hit the \$1 billion mark in annual trade within a year?

Absolutely. Hitting that \$1 billion figure is well within reach, given the strong ties between our nations. There's no doubt that the economic and commercial potential of our countries far surpasses the current numbers, and we have what it takes to surpass the \$1 billion milestone.

However, American and Western sanctions against Iran have thrown a spanner in the works when it comes to monetary and banking transfers. On top of that, some of our domestic laws regarding exports have been a bit of a hindrance. One such law relates to the repatriation of foreign currency by exporters. Typically, exporters don't hold on to that currency overseas; they bring it back home. However, if we put them under pressure over this, it becomes problematic. This particular law might work for government-owned industries like steel or petrochemicals, but it's not a one-size-fits-all solution for the private sector. We ought to give the private sector more leeway to engage in foreign trade and ramp up their contribution to our export numbers.

How much of a role is the private sector playing in the trade between Iran and Uzbekistan?

The warming relations between government officials have paved the way for a more prominent role for the private sector in business dealings. We've seen a steady stream of back-and-forth visits at the ministerial level, with Uzbek ministers of energy and tourism holding meetings with their Iranian counterparts. This has sparked a growing interest among Iranian businessmen to explore trade opportunities with Uzbekistan, whether through the joint chamber of commerce or their own initiatives. It's clear that the ties between our countries have

strengthened significantly, and we're witnessing a lot more interaction and trade exchanges, alongside our burgeoning tourism industry. Tourism, after all, plays a pivotal role in fortifying bilateral relations, as tourists become ambassadors of culture, commerce, and shared experiences.

What are the primary goods traded between our countries?

In the past, yarn and cotton were Uzbekistan's two main exports to Iran. However, Tashkent is shifting its economic focus toward higher-value-added products, moving away from exporting raw materials. As a result, you'll likely see a dip in their cotton exports, with a pivot toward boosting cloth and clothing production for export instead.

Iran's exports to Uzbekistan cover a diverse range of goods, including steel, construction materials, agricultural produce, flowers, and plants, and we're also in the game when it comes to exporting technical and engineering services.

What other avenues for collaboration have been left untapped between our countries?

Over the last two years, commercial and economic relations have really taken off, and that was evident at the Iran Expo 2024 exhibition, held in Tehran back in late April. Uzbekistan showed up in force, sending the fifth-largest delegation of businessmen and economic movers and shakers. After witnessing the breadth of Iran's industrial and export prowess on display, Uzbek officials and business leaders remarked, "We didn't realize Iran had such impressive production capabilities." There's a ton of untapped potential for economic cooperation, but one area that's been left on the back burner is tourism. If we crank up our collaboration in this sector, both countries stand to rake in a fortune. There's a clear appetite for cross-border travel, and our governments ought to lay the groundwork to make it easier.



Martyr President



Raisi leads the charge for Russia-Iran-China's 'new world order'



The illustration shows the former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (R), the current Chinese President Xi Jinping (C), and the current Russian President Vladimir Putin, each in front of one of the landmarks of their respective countries.

Special Issue on Passing of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions

Amidst all the sadness and grief over the loss of Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, let's take a moment to showcase the critical path he helped forge toward a new global order.

In the nearly three years since Raisi ascended to the Iranian presidency, Eurasian integration and the drive toward multipolarity have become fundamentally conducted by three major actors: Russia, China, and Iran, which, by no accident, are the three top "existential threats" to the hegemonic power.

Increased Eurasian integration
On May 19 in Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin invited Iran's ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali to be at the table in an impromptu meeting with the cream of the crop of Russia's Defense Team.

The key message portrayed was that Moscow has Tehran's back,

and Russia completely supports the stability and continuity of government in Iran, which is already fully guaranteed by Iran's constitution and its detailed contingencies for a peaceful transition of power under even unusual circumstances.

As we are now deep into total hybrid war mode — bordering on

Hot — across most of the planet, the three civilization states shaping a new system of international relations could not be more obvious. Russia-Iran-China (RIC) are already interlinked via bilateral, comprehensive strategic partnerships; they are members of both BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and their

modus operandi was fully unveiled for the whole global majority to examine at Putin's crucial summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing last week.

In short, none of the three Asian powers will allow the other partners to be destabilized by the usual suspects.

A stellar record

Late President Raisi and his top diplomat, foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, left a stellar legacy.

Under their leadership, Iran became a member of BRICS, a full member of the SCO, and a major stakeholder in the Eurasia Economic Union (EAEU). These are the three key multilateral organizations shaping the road to multipolarity.

Iran-Russia relations reached the next level in trade and military-political cooperation. Two years ago, Putin and Raisi agreed on a comprehensive bilateral treaty. The draft of the core document is now ready and will be signed by Iran's next president, expanding the partnership even further.

A hypersonic joint statement

The overarching charter of what a new system entails was revealed at the recent landmark Putin-Xi summit via a stunning 10-chapter joint statement, over 12,000 words long, with "cooperation" appearing no less than 130 times.

This document can correctly be interpreted as a joint hyperson-

ic manifesto comprehensively blowing up Washington's artificial "rules-based international order".

Iran, sanctioned to death for over four decades, is now learning directly from China and Russia about their efforts to destroy "decoupling" narratives as well as the effect of a tsunami of Western sanctions on Russia.

Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani had previously remarked that thanks to Iran's "exceptional geopolitical location" reaching West Asia, the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea region, and wider Eurasia, Iran can contribute to the "economic growth and economic potential" of all regional players.

Putin's visit to China in May included a visit to the northeastern powerhouse Harbin — which has strong geographical/historical links to Russia. A giant China-Russia Expo attracted over 5,000 commercial firms. It's not far-fetched to imagine an equally successful Russia-Iran Expo at a Caspian port. Promethean project

What links Russia, China, and Iran is, first and foremost, an emerging framework designed by sovereign civilizational states. The fateful passing of president Raisi won't alter the big picture in the least.

We're in the middle of a long process against an environment conditioned for decades by pain and fear. The process has gained immense traction these past few

years, starting with the official launch of the New Silk Roads in 2013.

The New Silk Roads, now known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is a Promethean project that is as much geopolitical as geoeconomic. In parallel came the gradual expansion of the SCO's role as an economic cooperation mechanism.

The Iranian bombing of ultra-protected Israeli territory with perfect precision — as a response to a terror attack on its diplomatic consulate in a third country — sent a crystal-clear, game-changer message, completely understood by the global majority: the hegemon's power in West Asia is coming to an end.

Losing the Rimland is anathema to perfectly American geopolitics. It must be back in its control as it knows how important it is.

New direction

The angel of history, though, is pointing in a new direction — to China, Russia, and Iran as the natural sovereigns shaping the re-emergence of the Heartland.

Concisely, these three sovereigns have the epistemological level, will, creativity, organization skills, vision, and tools of power to realize a true Promethean project.

It may sound like a miracle, but the present leadership in all three states shares this common understanding and endeavor.

The full article first appeared on TheCradle.



Martyr President

Iran-Pakistan relations after Ebrahim Raisi

By Taimur Shamil

Scholar

Former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's deaths in a helicopter crash are being mourned in Pakistan as well as Iran, two neighboring countries with close relations. This was shocking for many in Pakistan because of the close relations and also because this news came at a point where Raisi paid a visit to Islamabad last month in May to improve relations that were thought to be under strain after recent border skirmishes.

Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan came at a crucial point in the backdrop of regional dynamics. Iran is facing various political pressures domestically as well as internationally. The recent terror wave, missile strikes with Israel, domestic and international pressures, conflicts with the neighbors, and sanctioned economy have taken a toll on Iran's strategic outlook. Iran's neighbor, Pakistan, too faces multiple challenges; increasing terrorist attacks, strained relations with Afghanistan over terrorism, aggressive posturing from the Modi government in India, and a fragile economy with an aggravating inflation rate and energy crisis. These common issues have brought Iran and Pakistan closer to seeking avenues for cooperation that can potentially address mutual security, economic, and geopolitical concerns.

Raisi's visit was important and timely. Political observers saw it as an attempt to improve and mend ties with Pakistan after recent skirmishes that saw missile strikes from both sides citing terror outfits operating in respective countries. Another perspective behind Raisi's visit was the pressure that Iran is facing internationally, especially after its recent rift with

Israel.

Regionally, Iran is attempting to attract alliances and keep any political stalemates at bay. Its détente with Saudi Arabia is an example of how Iran is trying to avoid political deadlocks and continue with its strategic goals. It is important to observe that Iran's relations with China have strengthened over the years, with China's promising investment of \$400 billion over the span of 25 years, a cooperation agreement signed in 2021. This has given Iran a new strategic outlook. Raisi's visit to Pakistan came in this backdrop; to explore new avenues for cooperation and to address the irritants in the relationship. Pakistan, while observing the regional changes, believes that Iran is a neighbor that needs to be engaged positively.

Pakistan and Iran share approximately 562 miles of border which tends to provide trade potential but is also marred by security issues. The border tensions aren't new and have their roots in history as well as recent past. However, there is much in common that needs to be explored. Both sides have deep cultural roots, as Pakistan is believed to host the largest Shia population outside of Iran. This provides Iran with significant

cultural and religious affiliation and roots in Pakistani society and culture. This gives Pakistan an exceptional strategic space in larger Iranian, as well as regional, geopolitics.

Pakistan and Iran relations are generally peaceful with no major setbacks or fractures. However, terrorism is an irritant in the relationship that undermines the security of both states and regional security at large.

Iran continues to grapple with the Jaish-al-Adl terrorist outfit that it believes operates from Pakistan. Pakistan also believes that Baloch terrorist groups like Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and others are part of a terrorist network based in Iran. Nonetheless, the discourse of terror networks continues to be highlighted. A common threat for both Iran and Pakistan is the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISKAP); a terror group that operates in the region with scattered presence in Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Beyond security, there are several other issue areas between Pakistan and Iran. Economic integration remains at the top. Much has been speculated about the bilateral trade. However, there are multiple areas where Pakistan and Iran lack integration and need special

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Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front) and Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif (L) jointly inaugurate the Mand-Pishin border market by planting a tree sapling in southeast Iran on May 18, 2023.



emphasis. For instance, Pakistani Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Iranian president Raisi inaugurated the first border market at the Mand-Pishin border crossing at the Pakistan-Iran border in 2023. This certainly was a step forward in realizing that Pakistan and Iran have great potential for trade. Estimated bilateral trade volume, which is currently \$2 billion, can reach somewhere around \$10 billion. Still, this is the first trade point that will be followed by five more border markets. Nevertheless, the market still lacks state-of-the-art infrastructure, business-linked amenities, market-focused trade, and business facilities that can support the potential for trade originally envisaged.

Moreover, smuggling still remains one of the key areas that hampers formal trade and potential for business. One of the many reasons for this issue is that the government-facilitated trade markets at the border crossings are a recent phenomenon as compared to the informal trade that has been going on between Pakistan and Iran. This has much to do with the local border-oriented trade culture that has been in practice for decades or rather, centuries. More or less similar is the case with the areas that

border Pakistan and Afghanistan. The question there is not entirely the same but comparable to the Pakistan-Iran border. Therefore, a comprehensive mechanism that can link the Iranian and Pakistan markets, in fact, lacks proper groundwork and comprehensive economic strategy from both sides. Another area that lacks proper economic strategy is that there is a perception that policies made at the official level have limited input from the business community itself. The commercial routes, economic zones, and border markets must be chalked around a rigorous and well-thought-over trade strategy seeking substantial input

from the trade community. Any initiative that sidesteps the business community would shake the desired economic goals.

Much is being speculated about Iran's foreign policy after Raisi. It can be assumed that not much is likely to change in Iran's foreign policy approach or its general foreign policy conduct. Iran's foreign policy regarding neighbors is likely to continue the same way; amicable and positive. Late Raisi's attempt to improve relations with Pakistan would be remembered as a positive step in the right direction for bilateral relations and regional peace.

The full article first appeared on The Nation.



Martyr President

CEO of SpecialEurasia Silvia Boltuc:

Raisi forge new paths in int'l relations

As my area of expertise is geopolitics, I will focus on highlighting the major achievements of Ebrahim Raisi's presidency specifically in this field.

Although the President does not solely shape the country's foreign policy, the Raisi administration had distinct characteristics. Under President Raisi, indeed, Iran's foreign policy pursued two pivots, 'regionalism' and 'look to East'.

The first outcome of this strategy was Tehran's shift toward new alliances and the restoration of ties with some neighbouring countries.

Iran and Saudi Arabia re-established relations after years of tension. Notably, on May 25th, also King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain expressed the country's willingness to establish normal diplomatic, trade, and cultural relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Although this occurred after the helicopter crash, I believe this achievement can be attributed to the Raisi presidency. It is also important to acknowledge that Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian played a key role in Iran's diplomatic efforts to reshape its regional network of alliances.

The reintegration of Syria into the Arab League was another notable event, especially given Iran's strong alliance with the Syrian government. Syria had been a significant point of friction between Tehran and Riyadh, so Damascus' return to the Arab League signalled a clear willingness among these major players to deescalate tensions and build new relations for regional stability.

Talking about the Arab League, I should mention the renewed relations with Egypt, which could favour Iran's recent policy toward Africa. Despite initial optimism during Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood leadership, differences emerged over Iran's support for Bashar Al-Assad. The phone call on December 23rd, 2023, between President Raisi and the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, to extend congratulations on his recent re-election, was welcomed as a new chapter of the two country's relations.

As for Africa, President Ebrahim Raisi embarked on a three-country trip to Africa in mid-July 2023, marking the first time an Iranian president has undertaken such a visit in over 11 years.

As demonstrate by Turkey being the only NATO coun-



Generally, Western media fail to represent every layer of Iranian society, often interviewing people in a biased and instrumental manner. I believe all perspectives should be relayed honestly and without judgment.

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The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (front row - 2nd L) and his fellow BRICS leaders pose for a family photo during the closing day of the BRICS summit at the Sandton Convention Center in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023.

try to hang the flag at half-mast after the helicopter incident that killed President Raisi and its companions, Ankara and Tehran were also seeking closer ties. It is reasonable to believe that the 'Palestinian issue' has led several Sunni-majority countries to enhance their cooperation with the Islamic Republic.

As a result of the 'Look to the East' policy, Iran has cultivated closer relations with Russia and China. The message of condolence from the Russian President following Raisi's death clearly showed the high level of cooperation between Moscow and Tehran, encompassing initiatives such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) or joint naval drills. Meanwhile, China brokered the normalisation of relations with Saudi Arabia and invested significantly in key Iranian infrastructure projects, such as the Persian Gulf Bridge.

As I mentioned the military field, undoubtedly, under Raisi, Iran has increased its indigenous production, particularly of drones. This development has raised concerns in Western circles, but it has also enhanced Iran's capability to export arms and bolstered its resilience in the face of heavy sanctions in this sector.

In recent years, Iran's policies have brought Tehran closer to Central Asia, the Caucasus, and India, all of which are attracted by Iran's strategic location and its ports.

Other notable successes are Iranian membership into

BRICS, Tehran signing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which represents a significant milestone in Iran's regional economic integration, and the Islamic Republic's admittance to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as a full member.

Defining Raisi's actions regarding relations with the West is more challenging. Despite continuing nuclear negotiations under the current Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri, no agreement has been reached yet.

The Israeli military intervention in Gaza has further strained relations, with Iran supporting the resistance axis and the West steadfastly backing Israel. However, while the 'Palestinian dossier' has distanced Western actors from Iran, it has also brought some regional powers closer to Tehran.

The conflict in Ukraine and Iran's close ties with Russia have further cooled relations with Brussels.

Still, according to many analysts, under Raisi's administration, Tehran, while not avoiding negotiation tables, has essentially turned away from the West and generally sought to redirect the country's future relations towards the East and the so-called global South. In general, Iran has been one of the countries advocating for a multipolar organisation of world powers, focusing more on forging new alliances during this historical shift rather than meeting Western demands regarding its policies.



Martyr President

From isolation to integration

Iran's balancing act pays off, reduces regional tensions

The onset of the previous Iranian government's tenure coincided with unique circumstances affecting the country's foreign policy. On the one hand, negotiations to resuscitate the JCPOA were left inconclusive at the time, and on the other, the tightening sanctions on Iran necessitated extra effort to navigate and develop the country's foreign relations. In this regard, two significant events on two fronts — regional and international — warrant consideration. Regionally, the fierce conflicts between the Saudi Arabia-led Arab coalition forces and Yemen precipitated a unique dynamic in relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Arab nations, especially Saudi Arabia. Internationally, the outbreak of the Ukraine war and Iran's strategic ties with Russia bred pessimism among Western nations vis-à-vis Iran.

In this situation, the late Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian assumed the helm of the country's foreign policy. Considering the aforementioned challenges, he endeavored to clear many of the existing hurdles with a judicious and pragmatic revolutionary approach and to smooth the path for expanding the nation's ties.

Naturally, Iran's adopted policies and the Foreign Ministry's approach partly emanated from the prevailing circumstances and the positive or negative outcomes of the penultimate government's policies in the international arena. The deployment of novel approaches also stems from the perspective of the late president Ebrahim Raisi, coupled with the management style and thoughts of Amir-Abdollahian as a decision-maker and enforcer of the country's foreign policy.

Before assessing these matters, it is apt to acknowledge that despite the arduous conditions impeding the advancement of policies envisaged by the Islamic Republic of Iran in regional and international arenas, we should not overlook the steadfast, calm, trust-building, yet firm character of the late

Amir-Abdollahian.

Amir-Abdollahian took the reins of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs amid the backdrop of the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign imposed by the United States and its European allies. However, through his tireless endeavors, he managed to break the deadlock that stalled the development of the country's ties with other nations. Among his salient achievements were:

Promotion of good neighborliness policy

A key focus of the previous Iranian government was fostering amicable ties with neighboring countries. In this vein, despite tensions with Iran's northwestern and eastern neighbors, the country's diplomatic apparatus adeptly managed crises and prevented tension escalation with neighbors, ultimately enhancing communication levels.

Balanced policy, eastward orientation

The Islamic Republic of Iran pursues peaceful relations with all countries worldwide, guided by its national interests and a balanced, fair policy befitting an in-



dependent nation. However, with the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA, the nuclear deal lost efficacy. Heeding the guidance of the Leader of Iran's Revolution that "not everywhere in the world is the West," the Raisi government adopted the so-called "Look to the East" policy, starting with China. The previous government firmly placed an emphasis on looking to the East as the cornerstone of its foreign policy in the international arena, adopting a pragmatic approach.

Iran's Leader elucidated, "In foreign policy, preference for the East over the West, preference for neighbors, and preference for nations and countries that share commonalities with us over others is among our priorities today." These statements by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, outlining a



Late Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (front-R) welcomes his Saudi counterpart, Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud (front-L), ahead of their historic meeting in the Chinese capital city of Beijing on April 6, 2023.



general policy, were incorporated into the previous government's agenda. This led to the adoption of a foreign relations balancing act and the formulation of Asia-centric policies, with a particular emphasis on neighbors and the Islamic world.

The ensuing reduction in tensions with the Republic of Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, and other members of the Arab League underscores the effectiveness of this approach. The widespread declarations of public mourning and condolences from numerous countries in the region and beyond following the tragic death of president Raisi and foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian, along with their accompanying delegation, attest to the respect for and impact of Iran's foreign policy endeavors.

Membership in int'l organizations

Among the outcomes of the Look to the East policy, we can highlight Iran's successful bid to become a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS, marking significant achievements for the country's diplomacy under the stewardship of Amir-Abdollahian.

The fostering of relations with the East and Iran's accession to the two significant treaties mentioned above significantly damaged the maximum pressure campaign of the United States and its European allies. With their hostile policies failing, these countries started a new round of negotiations with Iran, which culminated in an easing of sanctions and a divergence between the stances of

many European nations and the United States toward the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Support for resistance diplomacy

The previous government's principled and steadfast policies effectively neutralized and diminished the impact of Iranophobia, a fear-mongering tactic employed by the United States and the Zionist regime in the region and worldwide. Subsequently, when the Zionist regime encroached on Gaza and perpetrated unconscionable crimes against Gazan women and children, global public opinion underwent a radical shift. As the brutality of the Zionist regime was exposed and it was pushed toward global isolation, the world grasped the fundamental tenets of the resistance front and Iran's support for it.

As a concluding remark, it bears mentioning that, regrettably, within our country, a change in government often results in the disregard of the previous government's plans and endeavors. Rather than continuing the established path with flexibility to suit new circumstances, there is a tendency to start anew. This not only inflicts substantial harm on existing material and immaterial investments but also reflects a misapprehension of the general policies of the system endorsed by the Leader of Iran's Revolution and the nation's best interests. It is hoped that the esteemed presidential candidates and the incoming government can formulate plans and advance based on the overarching policies of the system and the nation's interests, thereby ensuring the country's progress remains on course.



Martyr President

Martyr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian: A True Field Diplomat

By Mohsen Asadi Movahed

Expert on International Law

In 1976, it all began with a phone call at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On one end was Martyr Soleimani, and the discussion revolved around Iraq issues. When the expert from the Iraq desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs answered the call, he realized that the IRGC Quds Force commander was on the line. This marked the beginning of a friendship between the diplomat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the field commander.

Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, tragically passed away in a helicopter crash along with Martyr President Ayatollah Raisi. The crash occurred in the mountains of Azarbaijan, where the soil was mixed with the blood of this respected diplomat.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was born in 1964 in Damghan city. He lost his father when he was 7 years old. He got married at the age of 30. He studied international relations at the University of Tehran and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and earned a doctorate. In his interviews, he emphasized his role as a "diplomat" and often shared interesting stories about General Solei-

manior personal meetings with his international counterparts, saying "We diplomats".

He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the beginning of 1991, working as an expert in the Department of Arab and African Countries of the Ministry. According to his own words, if this department had not done him any good, he would have had the privilege of becoming a direct supporter of Martyr Sardar Soleimani. Later, when General Soleimani joined the Quds Corps, he had a close relationship with him. Amir-Abdollahian held such positions such as Deputy Director of the Arab and African Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011 to 2016), Director General of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East (2010), Iran's Ambassador to Bahrain (2007 to 2010), and deputy of the special representative of the foreign minister for Iraqi affairs (2013-2014).

He was elected as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Ayatollah Raisi and took up the "regional balance" strategy. He believed that Iran should have a good relationship with all of them

by balancing the relationship between the countries of the region. Also, he did not hesitate to help the resistance groups and was a companion and friend of groups such as Hezbollah, Hashd al-Shaabi, Yemen's Ansarullah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad groups. The proof of this claim was the foreign minister's eight trips to Lebanon and Syria during his ministry. Most of the thinkers of the region and the Arab and African officials had a good relationship with him, and some of Iran's rivals in the region always looked at him with respect. In short, he was known as the "Diplomat of the Field"!

A book about his professional life has been published called "Sobhe Sham". According to Martyr Amir-Abdollahian's testimony, this book was written at the request of General Martyr Soleimani. In a part of this book, interesting narratives of Sardar Soleimani can be seen stating: "Our intelligence departments have many documents that confirm that the main purpose of creating ISIS and the great crisis that was created for the region is the axis of resistance



and Iran. The crisis was supposed to be transferred to our country. This was a plan drawn on a macro level for the region and for us. Each of the countries of the region entered into the story based on their understanding of the issue."

In the field of regional diplomacy, after "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm", as well as the war in Gaza and Israeli crimes in this area, he was always looking for a way to end the crimes in Gaza and help the Palestinian people. He traveled many times to the countries of the region and during his last trip to Gambia, he gave an important speech at the summit of Islamic countries.

He was deeply passionate about "Palestine". All his efforts were dedicated to supporting the freedom of Palestine and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. In addition to his ministerial roles, he also led the Secretariat of the Palestinian Intifada Support Headquarters. This secretariat's primary responsibility was to advocate for Palestinian freedom and emphasize the significance of this issue on the global political stage. Amir-Abdollahian's regional and international trips to different

countries always brought good news. One of his most important activities during his ministry was to restore relations with Saudi Arabia. He also made significant progress in renewing the relationship with Egypt. In terms of the JCPOA and nuclear issues, he successfully navigated nuclear negotiations by following the nuclear strategic law. Amir-Abdollahian was involved in negotiations for the exchange of prisoners and the return of 6 billion dollars from Iran's blocked money in South Korea. Additionally, he aimed to improve relations with Eastern countries, reduce tensions with regional nations, and foster positive connections with independent countries worldwide. Many of these initiatives were successfully implemented, contributing to a positive legacy for him.

Martyr Amir-Abdollahian's consultations before and after "Operation Wadiah Sadiq" (True Promise) were very prominent in the course of which he created political and diplomatic support for Iran. A clear example of this was his meeting with the UN Security Council in front of the representative of

the Zionist regime. In the last 8 months, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was one of the most productive foreign ministers in the region and the world, who consulted and talked with his counterparts to stop the war in Gaza and implement a ceasefire. He had a difficult time during this period, especially in relation to the Israeli regime's attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus and Operation True Promise.

In order to enhance foreign policy capabilities and play an effective role in regional and global developments, the Raisi Administration had prioritized the doctrine of neighborhood and convergence. This aims to restore balance to the country's foreign policy. The diplomatic system focused on three main areas: neighbor-oriented policy, balanced foreign policy, and active economic diplomacy. Amir-Abdollahian had been chosen as the key figure to pursue the goals set for these three areas. One of Amir-Abdollahian's significant achievements was Iran's membership in the Shanghai Pact, which aimed to strengthen ties with eastern countries.



**Martyr
President**

President Raisi played vital role in global shift towards multipolarity: *US analyst*

By Alireza Hashemi

President Ebrahim Raisi was a “transformative leader” whose tenure catalyzed the global transition towards a multipolar world order, hastening the decline of Western dominance, according to an American political analyst.

In an interview with the Press TV website, Max Parry, a New York City-based independent journalist and geopolitical analyst, underscored the late Iranian president’s role in steering the country through a significant historical juncture.

“The late president’s legacy will be remembered by posterity as having led Iran through a major turning point in its history and as one of the most important world leaders in the global shift towards a multipolar distribution of power,” Parry stated.

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Parry noted that President Raisi’s tenure as the Iranian president was characterized by his unwavering leadership during a period of great uncertainty for the country. He took office at a time when the nation’s future hung in the balance, grappling with the repercussions

of prolonged sanctions and economic warfare led by the West. Despite these challenges, the American analyst noted, Raisi remained committed to reviving the nuclear accord that the US under Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned in 2018, insisting that Iran





would not make additional concessions.

“Raisi campaigned, stating his intention to revive the nuclear accord but not without stipulating that Tehran would make no further concessions at the negotiating table since it was Washington that reneged on the agreement. On this, he was steadfast to the end,” Parry emphasized.

Raisi’s strategic approach to overcoming Iran’s challenges involved embracing multipolarity and fostering partnerships with nations across the Global South, many of which had also faced threats of “regime change.”

“He found that the solution to challenges Iran faced was to embrace multipolarity and partner with other nations throughout the Global South that have been targeted for “regime change” in a pro-

gram of international solidarity and multilateralism,” Parry noted.

Raisi focused on transforming relationships, turning foes into friends: Analyst

President Raisi constructed a transformative policy framework and focused on transforming relationships, turning foes into friends and friendship into brotherhood, says an analyst.

By strengthening ties with countries such as Russia and China through economic integration based on mutual cooperation and benefit, President Raisi laid the groundwork for Iran’s eventual economic resurgence despite Western sanctions.

The strengthening relations with Moscow further bolstered Iran’s stability and national security, according to Parry.

A landmark event during Raisi’s presidency was Iran’s accession to the BRICS economic alliance, which aligned Tehran with a coalition of nations committed to reducing reliance on the US dollar as the dominant reserve currency.

“One of the most important events during his tenure was Iran’s move to join the BRICS economic alliance earlier this year, which linked Tehran with a host of nations in a global drive to reduce dependency on the US dollar as the dominant reserve currency,” he remarked.

“As de-dollarization drive increases, Washington’s ability to impose sanctions on non-compliant nations like Iran will become ultimately ineffective.”

Under President Raisi’s leadership, he hastened to add, Iran played a crucial role in the decline of Western hegemony and the emergence of a multipolar international system.

“Under Raisi, Iran ensured the decline of Western zero-sum dominance and years from now, he will be looked back on as one of the key figures who presided over the historic moment when the world order transitioned toward a multipolar international system and away from American primacy,” Parry said.

While presidents of China and Russia may have captured the world’s attention with their symbolic embrace, Parry said President Raisi’s contributions were equally vital to the geopolitical transformations underway.

“Many would argue that President Raisi played just as essential a role in the changes we see taking place geopolitically.”



Martyr President



Raisi focused on transforming relationships, turning foes into friends: *Analyst*

By Alireza Kamandi

President Ebrahim Raisi constructed a transformative policy framework and focused on transforming relationships, turning foes into friends and friendship into brotherhood, says a Pakistani analyst. Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, CEO of the Asian Institute of Ecocivilization based in Islamabad, in an interview with the Press TV website, reflected on Raisi's role and contribution as a global leader.

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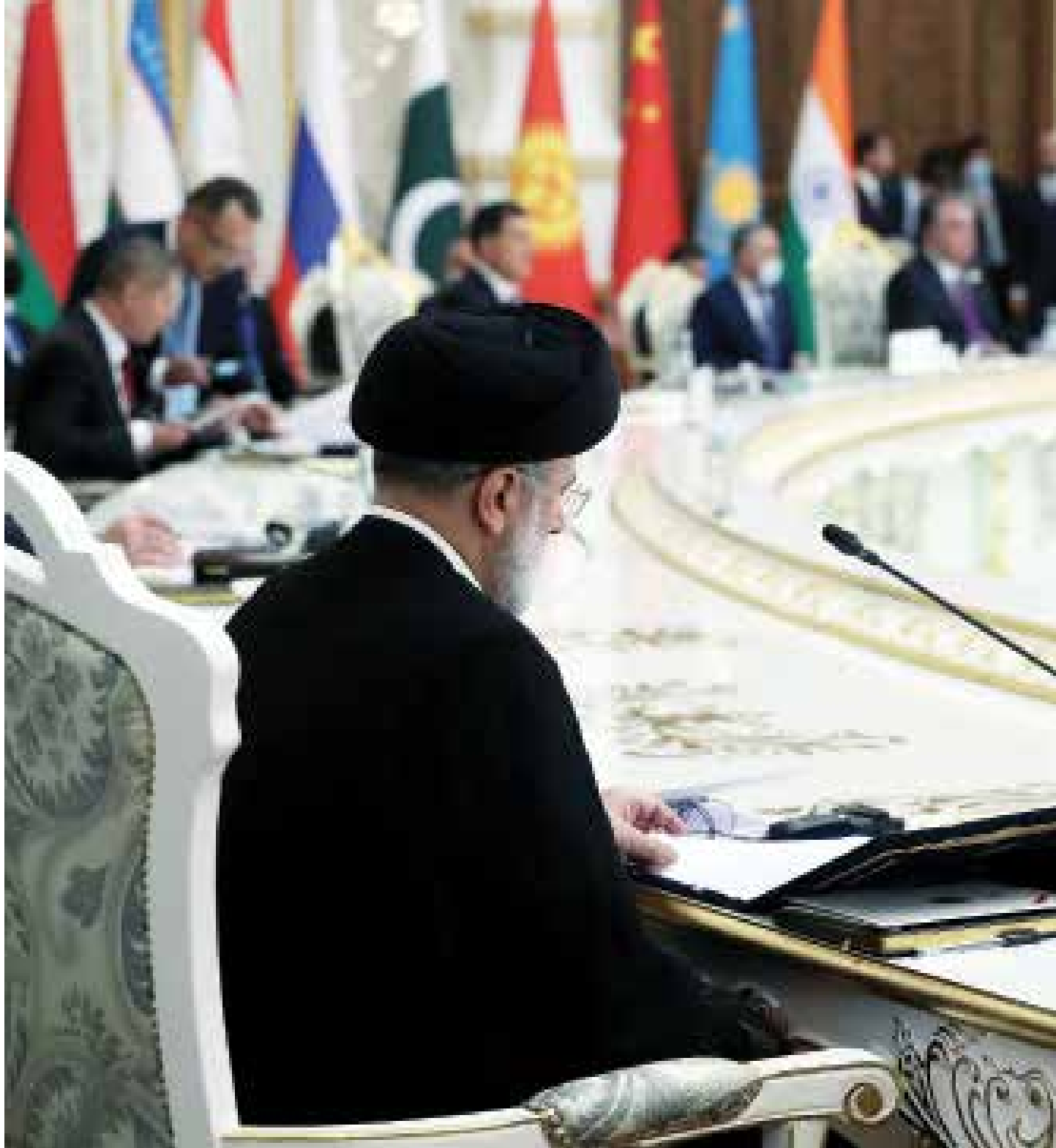
“He first built a close alliance with China in multiple fields, including economy, energy, defense, and culture. Now, China is Iran’s leading reliable and sustainable trade and investment partner,” he noted. “He then strengthened his country’s relationship with traditional friends such as Russia.” President Raisi, who passed away in a helicopter crash has been hailed by international political commentators for his role in furthering Iran’s national interests while forging close ties with neighbors. Ramay said the “most transformative move” under his leadership was the re-establishment of Iran’s diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia after seven years of friction. “This bold step towards rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia was a significant event in recent history, given the

pivotal role these two nations play in the region and among Muslims,” the Pakistani analyst stated. “The agreement holds the promise of de-escalation in the region and the potential to pave the way for lasting peace. Moreover, it could play a crucial role in bridging the sectarian divide among Muslims, a pressing need in the current global context” he hastened to add. Regarding the measures taken by the administration of Martyr Raisi to neutralize sanctions, Ramay, who is also an advisor to the Sustainable Development Goals Secretariat of the Parliament of Pakistan, emphasized the global economy runs through supply chains, and economic and regional blocks drive these supply chains. He termed Iran’s membership in BRICS an “important milestone and a smart way to grow Iran’s economy.” “BRICS is home to two leading global growth contributors, China and India. It is also home to the most significant economies in other parts of the world, like Russia in Eurasia, Brazil in Latin America, and South Africa in Africa.” “Moreover, Russia and Brazil are at the forefront of introducing the alternative currency to the US dollar. Lastly, China is the second biggest economy in the world, and most importantly, it is out of the US influence. It is emerging as the biggest economic player and is predicted to be the biggest economy in the world.” Iran officially became a member of the BRICS grouping at the beginning of 2024, five months after it was accepted as a full member along with Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. “It is expected that Iran’s membership in BRICS will help the country neutralize the impact of sanctions and create new opportunities for

itself,” the analyst stated. The memberships in BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) were two diplomatic masterstrokes of the Raisi administration, crafted jointly by President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. Referring to President Raisi’s pro-neighborhood policy, Ramay said he was working to strengthen relations with neighboring countries, underscoring that two most prominent examples were his last two visits. “First, he came to Pakistan. He met with the leadership of Pakistan and explored options for expanding trade, economic, and investment relations. Second, he went to Azerbaijan to open new avenues for cooperation,” he said, referring to the Iranian president’s two final foreign trips. The late Iranian president, he added, also worked to strengthen the Axis of Resistance, especially in the wake of the Israeli genocidal war on the besieged Gaza Strip. “Martyr Raisi earned respect in other countries, especially Muslim countries. First, he was a strong voice for Palestine and provided unwavering support to it. He was an open supporter of Hamas and provided them support to save Palestine people from the genocide by Israel,” the analyst stated. “Second, he was a vocal and strong voice against the blasphemy of Islamic personalities and values. His speech at the UN after Quran burning incidents earned him much respect among Muslims and non-Muslims.” Under his leadership, Iran strengthened its relationship with Russia more than in the past. Iran provided military, economic, and diplomatic support to Russia to defy the pressure from NATO and the US, he said.



Martyr President



Path charted by President Raisi for Iran's foreign policy will endure: *Analyst*

By Alireza Hashemi

The path charted by President Ebrahim Raisi for Iran's foreign policy and economic development is poised to endure, says a Canadian political analyst, adding that Iranians are unlikely to abandon the legacy of their late president and his government's accomplishments. Bruce Katz, a founding member and co-president of the Canada-based Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU), told the Press TV website that President Raisi's strategies, particularly his engagement with BRICS, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the fortification of Iran's energy sectors, have entrenched a legacy that the subsequent government is expected to uphold.

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“The path traced by President Raisi in foreign policy and economic and diplomatic relations is such that its impact will be lasting and it is unlikely that the (next) government of Iran would abandon these achievements,” he stated. He said the process to elect successors for President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian will likely be influenced by the country’s commitment to continue on their path. “The successors to Raisi and Amirabdollahian will be chosen based on their desire to pick up where the late Iranian president and foreign minister left off.” Katz emphasized the importance of this continuity, especially considering the potential return of for-

mer US President Donald Trump to the American presidency later this year. The stark contrast between the foreign policies of Biden and Trump towards Iran, with the latter’s camp exhibiting greater hostility, underscores the importance of maintaining and advancing Iran’s military capabilities as a deterrent, Katz asserted. “There is essentially nothing to choose between Biden and Trump in terms of US foreign policy, but it is a fact that the Trump camp is decidedly more hostile to Iran than even the Biden administration. There have been instances in the past where Biden has warned Israel against attacking Iran. Trump will feel less constrained to pre-

vent Israel from such a course of action,” he noted.

“What this means for Iran is the necessity to continue the successful advancements in its military capacity as a warning to a potentially hostile Trump administration. It also translates to Iran’s need to continue reinforcing its economic, diplomatic and military ties with China, Russia and Syria and consolidating its improving relations with Saudi Arabia.”

The decline of the Israeli regime’s global standing, juxtaposed with Iran’s ascent, further solidifies Iran’s resolve to adhere to the successful policies implemented by Raisi and Amirabdollahian, Katz added.

“What that means in terms of Iran’s foreign policy regarding West Asia, is not to change one iota of the foreign, economic and diplomatic policies undertaken by Ebrahim Raisi and Hossein Amirabdollahian. One does not mess with success,” he asserted.

Architect of ‘Look East’ policy

Reflecting on the achievements of Raisi’s administration, the Canadian analyst hailed the late president’s ‘look East’ policy, which he said led to a massive expansion of Iran’s diplomatic and geopolitical ties.

“A series of economic ententes and development of diplomatic and geopolitical ties have thrust Iran into its position as a strategic pivot for both China and Russia in West Asia,” he said.

“Raisi has been the architect of turning Iran from looking to the West for economic and foreign relations to concentrating on Eurasia which is in the process of sup-



Martyr President

planting Europe as the principal economic point of interest in the world.”

Katz noted that Raisi’s shift away from the West was best manifested in talks on the resurrection of the Iranian nuclear deal, which was undermined by the pro-Israel lobby and had no promising prospects.

Raisi’s government shifted its strategy on the nuclear deal in response to continued US sanctions, famously stating that he would not tie Iran’s economic interests to the will of foreign governments, according to Katz.

“Originally, Raisi was committed to following the JCPOA process, despite his skepticism regarding Washington’s political will actually to apply the JCPOA. The Trump reneging of the deal confirmed Raisi’s skepticism. As a pragmatist, Raisi understood that there would have to be a change in strategy: if sanctions against Iran were not to be lifted, then those sanctions would have to be rendered ineffective.”

This pushed Iran to turn its focus towards developing nations and major economies like China and Russia, seeking to bypass the US dollar and the SWIFT banking system, according to Katz.

“The way to nullify the sanctions was directing Iran’s economy and diplomatic relations toward developing nations in the Global South and dominant economies such as those of China and Russia. That translated to commercial exchanges using currencies other than the US dollar and circumventing the



Western-based SWIFT banking system.”

The Canadian analyst named the 25-year deal with China and Iran’s membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS as fruits of this shift in focus.

“A point in fact is Raisi’s success in negotiating a 25-year deal with China in March of 2021, which includes Chinese investment in Iran and promoting its role in China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Anticipated benefits for Iran include increased energy exports, investment in energy infrastructure, and

relief from US sanctions through the use of national currencies in energy trading,” he noted.

“Under Raisi’s stewardship, Iran also became part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In 2023, again under Raisi’s leadership, the BRICS organization, uniting the world’s largest developing economies and challenging the traditional hegemony of Western powers in global affairs, welcomed Iran among its members.”

President Raisi’s tenure also saw the restoration of Iran’s diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia and



the UAE, challenging the US-Israeli hegemony.

“Notably, China and Saudi Arabia’s decision to divest from US treasuries signaled a move towards de-dollarization, reflecting a shift to a multipolar world order. I do not think it is an exaggeration to state that Raisi played a certain role in this monumental paradigmatic change,” said the analyst.

It is also noteworthy that under Raisi’s leadership, Iranian relations were also reinforced with Latin American countries in what used to be considered ‘America’s

backyard.’

“In the summer of 2023, Ebrahim Raisi embarked on a visit to Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba in order to strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with those three countries. This indicates Raisi’s vow to make Iran’s foreign policy one that would extend far beyond just Western Asia,” Katz told the Press TV website.

“Indefatigable defender of Palestinians”

Katz, a longtime supporter of Palestinian rights and self-determi-

nation, said another of President Raisi’s principal legacies is that of resistance to Western hegemony in West Asia and elsewhere.

Despite international pressures, Iran’s stance on Palestine remained firm, with Raisi emphasizing the importance of liberating the al-Quds and supporting the resistance movement.

“Ebrahim Raisi stands out as an indefatigable and indomitable defender of the Palestinian people. His administration provided unwavering support to the Palestinian resistance currently fighting against the Israel-US genocide,” he said.

Katz cited Raisi’s famous remarks that “the world will never be the same as before” following the Operation Al-Aqsa Flood (Storm), saying the recent decision by Spain, Ireland and Norway to recognize the Palestinian statehood serves as another proof of that.

“The fact that European countries have broken ranks with the US and have stated that they will recognize the State of Palestine is proof of the fact that US-European consensus over Palestine is fractured. The old Western hegemonic order in West Asia draws to a close,”

“That is what Ebrahim Raisi meant when he referred to the fact that “the world will never be the same as before.”

“Raisi’s commitment to Palestinians will be sorely missed but it is not likely to affect Iran’s continuing support for the Axis of Resistance which includes occupied Palestine,” he added.



Martyr President



6 defining traits shaping Iran's int'l relations

By Allah Karam Moshtaghi

Iranian diplomat

Although the fundamental frameworks of foreign policy in countries like the Islamic Republic of Iran do not undergo drastic or frequent changes with each new government, it goes without saying that incoming governments devise their own strategies and tactics and select individuals best suited to manage micro and macro policies. These choices play a pivotal role in giving weight to the principles of foreign policy. This means that different governments can prioritize different principles of foreign policy. For instance, under one of the previous governments, secondary issues, like negotiating an agreement, had not only taken center stage in foreign policy but had also put the country in suspense and ever-anticipating. We were also left with unbalanced policies that negatively impacted major issues such as good neighborliness policy, the economy, relations with non-Western countries, and even the axis of resistance. However, the previous government's foreign policy, with its smart balanced strategy, has brought about one of Iran's most shining periods since the revolution. Raisi's government was able to draw on the strengths of the twelve preceding governments in the realm of foreign policy and review, rebuild, and set right their shortcomings. The foreign policy of Raisi's government boasted at least six significant strengths, thanks to which he managed to accomplish a great deal in a short span of three years.



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his companions



Ebrahim Raisi (front-R), the late president of Iran, attends Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on September 17, 2021.

1. Tapping ideal foreign minister

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had revolutionary and veteran credentials, along with a deep worldview, extensive experience, comprehensive and insightful perspective on developments, and an admirable personality. This left no room for doubt among then-parliamentarians that he was the most suitable choice for foreign minister. His nomination was approved with an overwhelming majority of 270 votes in favor, 10 abstentions, and a mere 6 votes against.

With Amir-Abdollahian's appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the two realms of the "field" and "diplomacy", once distant, reached new heights of cooperation. Amir-Abdollahian's personality traits, such as his consultable nature, intelligence, compassion, self-control, thoughtful expression, humility, and spirit of seeking cooperation with other institutions influencing Iran's foreign policy, helped untangle the domestic knots in the country's foreign policy.

2. Multi-dimensional view on foreign policy

A defining feature of foreign policy during the tenure of the late president Ebrahim Raisi was the shift away from a one-sided approach in the international arena. The disappointing experience of attempting to engage with several Western powers, which yielded little fruit and stagnated the development of ties with other nations, prompted Amir-Abdollahian to first, carefully analyze the recurring policies of the past and then, recognize the need for a new design.

This shift in perspective led to a focus on Africa, East Asia, neighboring regions, and South America. Approval of Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS, along with signing Free Trade Agreements with Eurasian countries, during the brief presidency of Raisi, resulted from this broadened perspective.



Martyr President



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front-2nd L) and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (L) walk out of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the United States, after the president's speech at the 77th meeting of the UN General Assembly on September 21, 2022.

3. Economic focus in foreign policy

The economy has been the most overlooked aspect of our country's foreign policy following the Islamic Revolution. At times, it was fully overlooked, and at other times, it was operating in reverse, meaning that our foreign policy prioritized facilitating the import of goods, even non-essential ones. On other occasions, Iran's foreign economy revolved exclusively around a select few countries, particularly the West.

While former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in his two terms took successful steps towards diversifying foreign policy in the economic realm, the unnecessary troublemaking fueled by the then-government hindered the continuity of this policy.

In the government of Raisi, the economy emerged as one of the central pillars of foreign policy. The appointment of Mehdi Safari as the economic deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was even suggested as a potential candidate for running the then-reviving Commerce Ministry, underscores this diligence and focus. To provide a clear example, during Raisi's tenure, Iran's relations and contracts with Africa quadrupled, and the president traveled to countries that our previous presidents had not visited in two decades.

4. Leveraging domestic capacities

Under the government of Raisi, foreign and domestic politics were intertwined and mutually reinforcing. On the one hand, the negative competition between institutions influencing the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, which was witnessed in some previous governments, dissipated. This gave way to prudent coordination between institutions. During this period, we saw the greatest harmony between ministries and political, economic, security, cultural, health, and construction organizations pertain-





ing to foreign policy.

On the other hand, domestic intellectual, industrial, defense, and social capacities were harnessed in alignment with foreign policy to advance national interests. For instance, at one point, Iran's technological prowess in vaccine production overcame the barriers posed by unfriendly policies enacted by certain countries regarding vaccine provision.

Another successful example is the policy of leveraging domestic capacities and relying on knowledge-based achievements in the oil and gas industry, which bolstered foreign policy.

Additionally, our country's defense prowess and authority were coupled with diplomatic action, effectively neutralizing a potential crisis on our northern borders. Some analysts have also attributed the successful and timely execution of Operation True Promise to the full support of the government of Raisi, suggesting that a lack of governmental support and consensus during those critical days could have jeopardized the operation's level of success.

5. Good neighborliness policy

Fostering good neighborly relations and practically rebuilding ties with the 15 countries neighboring ours was one of the most significant policies of Raisi's government in the foreign arena. Re-establishing communication with Saudi Arabia; exchanging ambassadors with the UAE; enhancing relations with Kuwait; successfully managing disputes with Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq; elevating the level of multi-layered relations with Turkey and Russia; and resolving gas-related issues with Turkmenistan and the Peace Pipeline with Pakistan, along with several other instances involving our neighbors, were outcomes of Raisi's novel approach to foreign policy. Foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian, drawing on his regional expertise and experience, adeptly handled this new direction.

6. An honorable discourse

The essential component of foreign policy, from which other policies, plans, approaches, and achievements stem, is the emergence and reinforcement of an honorable discourse that the previous government embraced, based on the three principles of honor, wisdom, and expediency.

When Amir-Abdollahian attended the Baghdad Summit on August 28, 2021, just days into his tenure as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he altered his planned position behind the president of France during the commemorative photo at the event, instead taking a place in the front row. While some initially viewed this as an impromptu and isolated action, the assertive behavior of Amir-Abdollahian and the proud language of our country's officials in the foreign sphere affirmed that the determination of Raisi's government to shift from a "diplomacy of pleas" to a "discourse of authority" was firmly on the agenda. The discourse of honor and authority was a hallmark that the government of Raisi and its foreign minister, Amir-Abdollahian, sought tirelessly to strengthen and solidify as a fundamental clause in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This discourse aims to portray Iran as a model of a powerful, reliable, and independent country on a unique path of development that serves not only its own interests but also those of the region.



**Martyr
President**

For Martyr Raisi, Palestine was the primary issue of the Muslim world

By Ivan Kesic

As people around the world mourn the tragic death of President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, it is time to look back at his illustrious life and legacy and how he championed the cause of the oppressed. One of the causes he staunchly championed was that of Palestine. He minced no words in calling out the Israeli regime's genocidal war against Palestinians and urged the Muslim nations to unite.

Palestine figured prominently on his foreign policy agenda, which was reflected in his speeches.

During the 2021 presidential election, President Raisi would often refer to the issue of Palestine. After taking the helm, he walked the talk and dedicated himself to the cause, following in the footsteps of the founder of the Islamic Revolution Imam Khomeini and Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei – the two personalities he greatly admired.

In his eloquent speeches, he would always mention the issue of Al-Aqsa mosque as the most important issue of the Muslim world and would urge the Muslim nations to keep alive the fight for its liberation.

At his swearing-in ceremony in August 2021, President Raisi termed Iran's support for the oppressed people of Palestine as a clear example of the true friendship of Iranian people for Palestine.

"Despite all the pressures and restrictions imposed against Iran, we are fulfilling our religious and humanitarian duty in defending the rights of Palestinian people

and we expect Muslim and Arab countries to play a leading role in this regard," he said at the time.

Only three days after taking the presidential office, President Raisi held an official meeting with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, Islamic Jihad leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah and leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Talal Naji.

In the meetings, he stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran will always support the Palestinians.

"We have never had any doubt about this policy. In our view, Palestine has been, and will be, the first issue of the Islamic world," he was quoted as saying at the time.

He praised the two Palestinian resistance movements for bravely defending the rights of the Palestinian people and said the power to determine the fate of Palestine today lies in the hands of the resistance.

Reaction to the Al Aqsa operation

Two days after the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm in October last year, President Raisi held im-



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portant separate telephone conversations with both Haniyeh and Nakhalah, discussing the developments in the besieged Gaza Strip and reaffirming Iran's support for the resistance.

In a message at the time, he said he was confident that Palestinians would come out victorious.

President Raisi invited the world to observe the fact that oppression and injustice exercised against the oppressed Palestinian nation, the continuation of insults and desecration to women and prisoners, and the desecration of holy Quds, the first Qibla of Muslims cannot continue forever.

"Iran supports the Palestinian nation's legitimate defense. The Zionist regime and its backers bear responsibility for endangering the security of the nations of the region, and they must be held to account for this," he asserted at the time.

He also urged Muslim governments to join hands in honestly supporting the Palestinian nation, adding that the Zionist enemy should also know that the balance of power has changed.

At the end of the message, he offered greetings to the resistance forces in the region, from Palestine, Lebanon and Syria to Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen, recalling the efforts made by General Qassem Soleimani, Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in supporting the resistance.

Three days later, President Raisi stated that all the Islamic and Arab countries and all the freedom-seeking people of the world must arrive at a serious convergence and cooperation in the path of stopping the crimes of the Zionist regime against the oppressed Palestinian nation.

He added that Iran will try to achieve that coordination by contacting the leaders of the Islamic countries, and tasked the foreign

ministry to arrange the meetings with regional leaders.

In the days that followed, he held talks with the officials of Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Qatar, Oman and other countries, condemning Israeli crimes against people in Gaza and urging strong diplomatic action.

10-point proposal at Riyadh summit

One month after the Israeli regime launched its genocidal aggression, President Raisi was one of the 57 Muslim leaders who attended the extraordinary summit on Palestine in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

Originally, the 22 members of the Arab League were expected to attend the Riyadh summit, but it was later expanded to include the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), consisting of 57 mostly Muslim-majority countries.

Unlike other leaders who attended the meeting, President Raisi minced no words in unequivocally condemning the genocide in Gaza and urged the world community to boycott and prosecute the child-murdering regime, which he said is an "illegitimate child of the US."

"What has happened in the past five weeks in Gaza and parts of the occupied West Bank is a historic source of shame for ethics, law, and humanity," he asserted at the time, urging the OIC to act as a unifying force in order to help the Palestinian people.

President Raisi reiterated Iran's long-standing position on holding a referendum in which all Palestinian Muslims, Jews and Christians, from the river to the sea, including those expelled from those areas, would participate and decide their destiny.

During his speech, he also proposed a series of measures against the Israeli regime and in support of Palestine, summarized in ten key points.



Martyr President

The first three points called for an end to the massacre of civilians in Gaza, the complete lifting of the humanitarian blockade, and the immediate withdrawal of the Zionist regime's military from the area.

The next three points dealt with the attitude of the OIC members towards the Zionist regime and called for the suspension of political and economic relations, the designation of the Israeli army as a terrorist organization, and the establishment of an international court to punish Israeli crimes.

The last four points dealt with post-war Gaza, and included the reconstruction of infrastructure in the besieged territory through a fund, as well as humanitarian aid, declaring the date of the bombing of the Arab Al-Ahli Hospital as a day of genocide in the official calendars of Islamic countries, and arming the people of Gaza if the Israel regime's relentless crimes continue.

Exposed the Israeli regime's fragility

In November, President Raisi said Israel's brutal crimes in Gaza were the result of frustration because they had suffered a humiliating military defeat and had failed to achieve any of their strategic goals. He also noted that "killing of women and children does not translate into victory," and those massacres of civilians "created an unprecedented atmosphere of anti-Zionist hatred across the world."

Speaking at a conference on the implementation of the Constitution in early December in Tehran, President Raisi noted that Iran's support for Gaza and Palestine is in total compliance with the Constitution, which has obligated the Islamic government to back the oppressed.

In the following days, he went on an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Russia,

where, on his initiative, Palestine was one of the main points of discussion.

He also discussed the issue with the officials of Egypt, Pakistan, Malaysia and Algeria, strengthening Iran's bilateral relations with these countries.

Addressing the International Conference of Al-Aqsa Strom and Awakening of Human Conscience in January, President Raisi reiterated the importance of Palestine for the Islamic Ummah, calling it also "the first issue of humanity and all the free people of the world."

He quoted the words of Imam Khomeini (RA), describing the issue of Palestine as the first issue of the Islamic world and the liberty of the holy Al-Quds as the priority of the Islamic world.

In another speech, President Raisi praised the role of resistance movements in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq, who joined the pro-Palestinian retaliatory operations against the Zionist regime.

Called on Muslim nations to shun hypocrisy

He also condemned certain Islamic countries who enjoy clandestine economic relations with the Zionist regime despite the ongoing genocide against Gaza, urging them to change course.

He also condemned the US regime for vetoing the UN Resolutions that called for a ceasefire in Gaza, describing Washington as the center of the Axis of Evil. He also slammed the Western media for its distorted coverage of the Israeli-American genocide in Gaza.

In March, President Raisi used the occasion of Nowruz to call on his counterparts in regional countries to take practical measures to stop Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

In addition, on the occasion of sending Eid Fitr congratulatory messages in April, he called on the

leaders of all Islamic countries to engage more strongly in supporting Palestinians.

In the same month, he condemned Western countries who project themselves as protectors of human rights while openly or silently supporting the Israeli regime, calling them accomplices in Zionist crimes.

President Raisi also condemned the brutal crackdown on anti-Zionist student protests in Western universities in recent weeks, especially in the United States.

"Today, thanks to the clean blood of the oppressed martyrs of Gaza, the true face of Western civilization has been revealed more than ever in front of the people of the world, and it has become clear that those who make claims on advocating freedom of speech are not committed to any morality but attempts to preserve their hegemony over others," he said.

At the beginning of May, in a statement marking the occasion of the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, he called upon the world bodies and all the awakened human consciences to help the oppressed Palestinian people of Gaza and provide the grounds for sending humanitarian aid.

A few days later, during his visit to the 35th Tehran International Book Fair, President Raisi called Iranian writers and artists to depict the conflict between honor and evil in Gaza.

At the 5th International Congress of Imam Reza (AS) held in mid-May, he said that the blood of 15,000 martyred Gaza children is so powerful that it would not only end the Zionist regime but also lead to an end to global injustices.

In his recent official trips, from Sri Lanka to Azerbaijan, President Raisi strived to improve bilateral relations, while emphasizing common positions on the Palestinian issue.

Culture, society

- Iran's health system forever transformed for the better
- President's arts policy builds bridges
- Late president's literary initiatives
- Raisi's gov't celebrates cultural renaissance
- Big steps of tourism industry under late president
- Unleashing Iran's tourism capacities: The Raisi effect
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**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**

Under Raisi's presidency

Iran's health system forever transformed for the better

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, Iran's government, led by the late president Ebrahim Raisi, achieved significant milestones in various sectors, notably transforming the nation's health system. During the early days of Raisi's tenure, which started on August 3, 2021, the country was still grappling with the effects of the pandemic, but the government's swift procurement and distribution of vaccines turned the tide, ensuring the safety of countless citizens.

Within a brief five-month period after the administration took charge, over 131 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were imported into the country. According to data released by the customs and the Food and Drug Organization, Iran's vaccine imports surged sevenfold within those five months, compared to the entire term of the previous administration. This rapid scale-up in vaccine acquisition was a critical component of Iran's comprehensive efforts to protect its population from the devastating effects of the pandemic.



Nurses were heard this time

Ali Abbasi-Beglo, a board member of the Emergency Medical Association of Iran, highlighted the dedication of Raisi's government to nurses in an interview with Ana news agency. According to Abbasi-Beglo, Raisi's focus on the nation's health system was evident from the onset of his presidency, as demonstrated by the hiring of over 10,000 nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He further added that giving merit pay to healthcare workers was among other initiatives prioritized by Raisi's government that reflected its commitment to the well-being of healthcare professionals.

Pharmaceutical breakthroughs

Significant strides were made in the pharmaceutical sector, as confirmed by the head of the Food and Drug Organization, Seyyed Heydar Mohammadi. For example, according to Mohammadi, 17 new drug production lines were launched and several innovative medications were introduced during president Raisi's tenure.

The Darooyar project, another notable development, was first implemented in the Iranian calendar year of 1401 (ended March 20, 2023), paving the way for the domestic production of a range of high-tech medical equipment and supplies, such as linear accelerators, CT scan machines, defibrillators, respiratory ventilators, anesthesia machines, and specialized dialysis machines, along with a variety of required disposables. These advancements were made possible through the dedicated efforts of knowledge-based companies and the support of president Raisi.

Mohammadi emphasized the late president's commitment to bolstering food security and informing the public about healthy foods, which resulted in tangible improvements by the end of the calendar year of 1402 (ended March 19, 2024). The president's unwavering support for producers of healthcare products and his focus on improving the nation's health were evident in the prioritization of healthcare resources, such as medicine, equipment, and infant formula, as well as his frequent orders

to accelerate the provision of financial assistance to the health sector.

Knowledge-based health firms under spotlight

The focus of Raisi's government on knowledge-based companies in the health sector stands out as one of its exceptional accomplishments. Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, vice president for parliamentary affairs in the cabinet of Ebrahim Raisi, underscored the government's dedication to supporting these companies, particularly in medicine and health. According to Hosseini, previous governments of Iran had not prioritized this area, resulting in a lack of support for knowledge-based companies and their innovative products. However, Raisi's government made a concerted effort to champion the nation's brightest minds and their groundbreaking ideas. In line with this vision, various ministries, including oil, energy, and industry, were mandated to provide backing to their relevant knowledge-based companies.

This new emphasis on nurturing Iran's exceptional talent is expected



dent significantly improved Iran's hospital infrastructure with the opening of 106 hospital projects and the addition of 15,939 hospital beds. Comparing his government's achievements to his predecessor's, the Minister of Health pointed out to Hazrat Mahdi (PBUH) Smart Hospital, which now has 1,000 beds, and Ghadir Hospital, which now has 821 beds, as examples. Saeid Karimi, the deputy director of the Ministry of Health, also emphasized the growth in hospital bed capacity, stating that the number of special beds for infants doubled from 500 to 1,500. Furthermore, 3,000 specialty beds were added to the country's hospital bed capacity during this period.



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (R) speaks with doctors and nurses in a hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.

to yield remarkable results, as long as young innovators continue to receive the support they need. The prevailing sentiment is that Iran's success hinges on harnessing the ingenuity of its youth to drive progress and growth.

Health system before, after Raisi

Prior to Raisi's inauguration as president in August 2021, around 19 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been allocated to Iran, with daily fatalities surpassing 700. Following the government's allocation of necessary financial resources, approximately 140 million vaccine doses were secured.

Completing electronic prescription initiative

The implementation of the electronic prescriptions initiative, which was introduced in the calendar year of 1397 (ended March 20, 2019), and the phasing out of paper prescriptions became a top priority for Iran's government under Raisi. This transition gained momentum when the Iran Health Insurance Organization

rolled out the electronic prescription program across 235 cities in November 2019. The pressing need for streamlined healthcare services amidst the coronavirus pandemic further emphasized the significance of the project.

Curbing escalating, unnecessary healthcare costs was another key concern for the country's health authorities. By implementing the electronic prescription program, Iran aimed to integrate various pieces of information, prevent prescription errors, cap service fees, prevent insurance overlaps, and reduce paper consumption. The successful execution of this project would pave the way for the full realization of the family doctor initiative.

According to experts, the current electronic prescribing system has effectively addressed many issues related to paper prescriptions while also reducing healthcare costs, minimizing prescription and medication errors, and enhancing drug therapy and patient well-being.

Boosting hospital capacity

The government of the late presi-

Iran's booming health tourism industry

Iran has experienced remarkable growth in health tourism over the past two years, attracting a staggering 2.2 million health tourists to the country. With 240 hospitals acquiring IPD licenses to accommodate this influx, the government's commitment to fostering health tourism is evident.

As part of its ongoing strategy, the government intends to introduce a plan under which health advisors will be dispatched to countries that send us the highest numbers of health tourists, further solidifying Iran's position as a premier medical destination.

In addition to these efforts, the Minister of Health highlighted the launch of 53 new public dental centers and the acquisition of 1,000 ambulances during the late president's tenure.

Iran's health infrastructure development in the same period also includes the establishment of 37 pre-hospital emergency bases and four airbases as well as the purchase of 58 ambulances and 20 ambulance buses equipped with 13 mobile beds, contributing to a comprehensive enhancement of the nation's healthcare resources.



Martyr President

President's arts policy builds bridges



The late president Ebrahim Raisi (2nd-R) and his minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili (C) stand alongside veteran actors of Iran in a meeting on March 15, 2024.



When president Raisi's government got to work, one of the most pressing concerns for some Iranians was the potential closure of the culture and art arena and the subsequent construction of metaphorical walls between various groups of individuals. However, the issue of culture and art was addressed with great consideration. Throughout the tenure of the previous government, led by the late president Ebrahim Raisi, there were numerous achievements that demonstrated a renewed emphasis on culture and art, an area of concern that had perhaps previously been largely neglected. During his tenure, supporting artists, promoting Iranian art, and elevating the quality of artistic expression were identified as key priorities, and a series of comprehensive measures were implemented to ensure their realization.

Governing fields of art, cinema, theater, and music were fraught with an intricate network of challenges throughout the past three years when the previous government was in office. Nevertheless, upon reflection, it becomes clear that the efforts at the management of these cultural and artistic realms can be commended as the preservation of the principles of Iran's Islamic Revolution remained a cornerstone of such efforts. This attention to the principles resulted in a thriving cultural landscape that can be deemed admirable despite facing the most stringent cultural boycott project ever orchestrated by hostile entities.

For all the concerted efforts of enemy forces and their pawns within the country to promote an all-encompassing boycott of cultural and artistic events, the previous government was able to triumphantly host the Fajr film and theater festivals, as well as facilitate the organization of numerous concerts in Tehran and other provinces, coupled with film screenings. Under these challenging conditions, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance adopted a management strategy aimed at preventing societal polarization and division, thereby achieving its objective of preserving the rich cultural heritage of the nation.

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Breaking 23-year-old record

A closer inspection of the surge in the production and sales of cinematic works over the past two to three years proves the aptitude of Raisi's government for navigating a steady course away from excitement, ultimately surpassing several historical records that had stood for several years prior. This uptick in viewership and sales had ripple effects, elevating the production and filmmaking processes throughout the country, and boosting the economic livelihood of nearly 17,000 who depend on the cinematic industry. The government's management of the cinema was able to usher in record-breaking sales without crossing boundaries.

The pinnacle of this record-breaking movie sales streak was in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024). Deemed a pivotal marker in the national film industry, the number of moviegoers in 1402 surpassed the previous 23 years, shattering multiple records. Riding on this wave, Iranian cinema sales soared to 1,216 billion Tomans (over \$20 million).

In conjunction with building confidence with the specialized community of artists, particularly in the realm of cinema, Raisi's government recognized the vital importance of earning the support of the nation. The diverse range of artists whose works were featured at various festivals in the past three years is indicative of the government's ability to strike a healthy balance between

these two key constituencies. One significant example that epitomized this approach was the meeting held on March 15, 2024, in which the deceased president met with artists from a variety of fields including poetry, cinema, calligraphy, music, and literature. In his speech, he regarded cultural capability as a pivotal element of national power, akin to defense and economic capabilities. He stressed the importance of giving the country's art and culture scene the attention it deserves.

What provides further evidence of this confidence of the art body with president Raisi and his government are the messages and interviews of artists and actors published on the occasion of the president's tragic accident.

For example, Poursan Derakhshandeh, a renowned screenwriter and director, commented, "I was touched by their martyrdom. What happened is not good at all. This event will have many (negative) psychological effects on people. I am sorry and affected by this tragedy; In the past years, there have been bitter incidents in which we have lost some officials. However, this bitter incident left us in awe."

Ebrahim Hatamikia, another prominent cinema director, added his own voice to the collective outpouring of grief, writing: "On the last day of Ordibehesht (the second Iranian calendar month), when the news of the martyrdom of Ayatollah Rai-

si and his accompanying team was published, our hearts trembled and we were stunned. Today, we saw one of the most bitter events in the history of this land and we whispered to ourselves, 'Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un' (meaning 'Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we return.'). I offer my condolences for this heartbreaking, bitter, and terrible incident. It is hoped that this critical phase will pass with peace and unity in line with the interests and expediency of dear Iran, away from political and factional differences."

Alirum Nouraei, a film and television actor, also wrote: "I offer my condolences to the noble people of Iran for the martyrdom of the revolutionary president Ayatollah Raisi and their honorable companions, and I pray for the survivors' patience and health from the one Allah."

Alongside the aforementioned points, the previous government's accomplishments in the realm of art include the establishment of 231 movie theaters across various provinces of the country. Moreover, the simultaneous strengthening of the private sector while preserving governmental capacities in the film industry can be considered another hallmark of managerial performance during this period. The government's commitment to supporting the private sector was evident in the impressive sales figures of private sector films and their substantial presence in film festivals.

Music rhythm was fast

A noteworthy accomplishment of president Raisi's government was attaining a balanced frequency of monthly concerts across the nation. Regardless of genre, which encompassed pop, traditional, and regional music, these concerts facilitated the establishment of cultural equity throughout the country. People living in provinces outside the capital were afforded the opportunity to attend live performances by their favorite singers, leveling the playing field in terms of accessibility. This recalibration translated into an average of 500 monthly concerts nationwide, drawing an audience of approximately one million people based on the average capacity of the performance venues.

From several perspectives, the aforementioned concert frequency can be considered a significant development: Firstly, the number of monthly concerts has never reached this level in recent years, demonstrat-

ing an unprecedented level of cultural activity. Secondly, never before in recent times have all the provinces of the country enjoyed equal access to diverse musical performances. Finally, the enthusiasm for concerts in the past never translated into such a substantial monthly audience, highlighting an overall growth in cultural engagement.

Contrary to the forebodings of some at the onset of president Raisi's tenure, his administration did not usher in an era of cultural isolationism and censorship, as many had feared. Rather, his three-year record reveals a commitment to elevating the significance of culture and art in both rhetoric and action. To that end, Raisi and his administration actively encouraged the stewards of these fields to actualize planned initiatives, resulting in a more vibrant and accessible cultural landscape.



Under president Raisi, people living in provinces outside the capital were afforded the opportunity to attend live performances by their favorite singers, leveling the playing field in terms of accessibility. This recalibration translated into an average of 500 monthly concerts nationwide, drawing an audience of approximately one million people.



Martyr President

Late president's literary initiatives

The deceased Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi was always trying to improve the conditions of the literary figures in the country and would turn up at ceremonies related to literature.

One of the characteristics of the president was his attention to cultural events and the issues and troubles of authors, poets, and others who make a living from writing in all its forms. In the three years he held the presidency, he turned up at the Book of the Year Award ceremony each year.

In early March 2022, when health guidelines linked to the COVID-19 epidemic were still being strictly followed across the country, the closing ceremony of the 39th edition of the Book of the Year Award and the 29th Iran's Book of the Year Award was held simultaneously with the presence of president Raisi, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, and other cultural caretakers of the country.

At the ceremony, the president pointed out that books play a very key role in political and economic analyses and said: "For this reason, paying attention to books and reading books is of great importance in the Islamic Republic." He went on to add that books and book reading are of huge significance in Iran. Thanks to such an approach, we're seeing more and more growth and success from educated Iranians in society and academic circles.

Best tool for understanding characters

Referring to the role of the book as a bridge between civilizations, president Raisi maintained in that ceremony: "The book is the best tool for understanding characters. If it were not for the works of Saadi, Hafez, and Avicenna, it would be very hard and even impossible to pin them down. Getting to know a culture and civilization goes hand in hand with getting to know the books, and through books and cultural works, we can share our culture with other countries."

On that day, the president also paid attention to the hardships of the livelihood of Iranian literary figures. "These days, many people who write well are living in difficult conditions. They should be supported."

Duty of protecting culture

The following year, at the 40th Book of the Year Award ceremony, the president touched on the protection of culture as the duty of intellectuals and stressed: "Books can keep a culture safe. It's up to intellectuals to safeguard this function and tradition. Books are the works that can protect a society's culture. You should always keep an eye on books. They're the best way to preserve the history, culture, and knowledge of the nation. Books give us a platform to pass on thoughts and science."

Pointing out the actions of his government in this regard, he explained: "One of the serious plans of this government is to focus on cultural issues. Dealing with economic and livelihood matters shouldn't take our eye off the ball when it comes to books and culture. That includes honoring authors and writers who were active in the book world. We should always double down on these efforts. Books are our way to know the great. The government should pave the way for the emergence of better writers in the book publishing field."



Elites of society

Two years later, president Raisi took part in the 41st edition of the Book of the Year Award ceremony on March 8, 2024, as well. The late president stated there that the perfect human being was the noble prophet of Islam, adding that through books and by looking at the life of the perfect human being and his precious parents, "we can see a role model to build our life upon".

Emphasizing that responsible writing should be promoted, he noted: "We shouldn't cash in on books, writing, and the transmission of knowledge. Of course, everyone has bills to pay, but books and the sharing of science, knowledge, and culture should be put on a pedestal."

The late president stated that some jobs in society always rely on the treasury or handouts and that the life of someone struggling in this regard should be provided for somehow. "But we shouldn't bring the book down to the level of a money-making medium," he said. "There might be some extra income involved, but that's not the point. Writing is one of those jobs that, although it's considered work, shouldn't be about making money."

Addressing the writers present at the meeting, he highlighted: "You are the elites of society and have your own responsibilities. We expect elites to safeguard society from cultural invasion and protect it against deviations. An intellectual isn't someone who leads people towards Western or Eastern thoughts."

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During an unannounced visit to the Tehran International Book Fair, the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (C) talks with a publisher of the Holy Qur'an on May 21, 2022.

Expansion of public libraries

His attention to cultural issues wasn't just a one-time thing at the Book of the Year Award. On November 15, 2022, president Raisi flagged the problem of books and book reading as one of the key indicators of every society's culture. He asked the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance to make expanding public libraries and easy access to books a priority. Following the late president's attendance at a ceremony for commemorating the National Day of Books, Reading, and Librarians in November 2022, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance penned a letter to the president, suggesting ways to make books more accessible and tackle the livelihood challenges faced by

librarians with the help of the country's institution for public libraries.

Per the president's order on November 28, 2023, relevant institutions, including Iran's Planning and Budget Organization, were tapped to cooperate in solving librarians' problems and making books more accessible. The organization was also tasked with allocating the necessary credit budget to temporarily ease librarians' livelihood challenges within the rules. Another part of the order focused on central libraries in the provinces; the Planning and Budget Organization was to allocate the required credits to complete the construction of these central libraries.

Self-sufficiency in paper production

Another key point in the president's was the attention he paid to self-sufficiency in paper production. Right from the start of the previous government's term, Raisi pushed for self-sufficiency in paper production by rallying various forces and holding regular meetings with paper producers. He also tasked his first deputy with following up on

this matter.

With Raisi at the helm of the government, the Ministry of Education was tasked with using domestic production for textbook papers. This move kept \$50 million of foreign currency within the country. As a result, about 1,241 people found employment in Mazandaran's wood and paper industry factory.

Communicating via Book fair

During different periods, both when he was serving as the head of the judiciary and later as president, he attended the Tehran International Book Fair. He recently spoke about the importance of holding the Tehran International Book Fair and advancing cultural justice. During his multi-hour visit to the book fair, chatted with publishers and publishing managers about issues and challenges in the publishing industry and the book market.

According to him, the book fair is more than just a cultural event. It's a platform for establishing meaningful and effective communication between authors, publishers, and book readers, and a place where ideas are exchanged.

He attributed the thriving book publishing and distribution sector to the blessings of Iran's Islamic Revolution. Before the Revolution, the Tehran Book Fair was limited to a couple of tents pitched next to the University of Tehran. Now, with the backing and encouragement of the leader, an exhibition of this magnitude and quality is held for books, fueling everyone's enthusiasm and interest in reading.



Martyr President

Raisi's gov't celebrates cultural renaissance

Record-breaking achievements in performing arts, music

The previous government wrapped up with the untimely, tragic death of president Ebrahim Raisi, but over his three-year tenure, a noticeable growth kicked off in the fields of art and cultural activities.

Three years ago, there were 580 movie theaters up and running in the country. Raisi's government turned things around by adding another 300 cinemas to the mix. By the end of the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024), the number of movie theaters in the country had ramped up to 846. Besides showing a growth rate of over 48% for constructing theatres compared to the previous government, this figure means that the per capita cinema for Iranians has improved to one theater per 104,000 people. When president Raisi took the wheel, the latter figure stood at one theater per 580,000 people.

Breaking box office records

In the first year of Raisi's government (ended August 3, 2022), film sales racked up a whopping 415 billion Tomans (nearly \$9 million) with an audience of 13 million people tuning in. The following year, cinema sales skyrocketed to over 1,240 billion Tomans (over \$20.7 million). Keeping up the momentum, Iranian cinema sales clocked in at over 146 billion Tomans (over \$2.29 million) in the first month of the Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended April 19, 2024).

Cinematic productions

Under President Raisi's government, over 180 movie scripts have been greenlit for production. These films showcase a diverse range of genres and talents, with both renowned veterans and up-and-coming filmmakers behind the camera.

Concerts held

Over the last three years, a grand total of 7,000 music concerts have been played in venues in the capital and various cities across the country. The number of concerts in 1401 (ended March 20, 2023) hit 3,913, and the following year, the tally cranked up to 4,970.

Theatrical productions

By July 2022 last year, the count of theatrical productions neared 8,000, and this number ramped up in the months to March that marked the end of the calendar year. Compared to the year before, drama production and performances have shot up by over 30%.



The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (C) is interviewed while touring Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) facilities for filming TV programs.



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Big steps of tourism industry under late president

The previous government wrapped up its nearly three-year-long term with the tragic loss of its president on May 20, but the reverberations of his actions will carry over into multiple areas. President Ebrahim Raisi's government knocked it out of the park in the tourism sector, which this note will focus on.

Big steps of tourism industry

Despite the relentless smear campaign waged by certain foreign media outlets aligned with imperialist powers, and amidst the onslaught of sanctions imposed by the United States and several European countries — all fueling Iranophobia — Raisi's government steadfastly prioritized tourism and attracting foreign visitors. Determined to reveal the true essence of Iran to the world, the late president, along with his cabinet members, worked tirelessly. As a result, the tourism industry not only kept its upward momentum but accelerated, as evidenced by this report.

In line with the Leader's policies on tourism, the government pulled out all the stops. Consequently, figures revealed that Iran's tourism industry raked in \$7.8 billion over the last two years.

The tourism numbers for last year were also crunched and showed a 58% jump in visitors, with 6,382,755 tourists touching down, compared to the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended March 20, 2023), when a mere 4,230,000 people visited.

According to figures from Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the Deputy Tourism Minister, foreign investment in the tourism sector has skyrocketed since the previous government took office, leaping a massive 18 times and hitting \$256 million by the end of the calendar year

1402 (ended March 19, 2024).

The late president's provincial trips were a real boon for local tourism industries. A total of 1,610 tourism projects kicked off across the country since his government took office.

As stated by the deputy minister, a staggering 2,400 tourism projects valued at 400,000 billion Rials (over \$68 million) are currently underway. Of these, 81 projects, accounting for 97,000 billion Rials (over \$167 million) in investment, are over 80% complete.

The government gave the green light to cancel tourist visa requirements for citizens of 33 countries, a strategic move that saw tourist numbers soar to 6,382,000 by the end of last year.

Ezzatollah Zarghami, the minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, maintained that the Islamic Republic has thrown open its doors to the world, rolling out the red carpet for international visitors and offering them the chance to discover the country's unique attractions firsthand. He further emphasizes the need to counter the barrage of negative advertising, rumors, and Iranophobia propagated by the arrogant powers.

According to

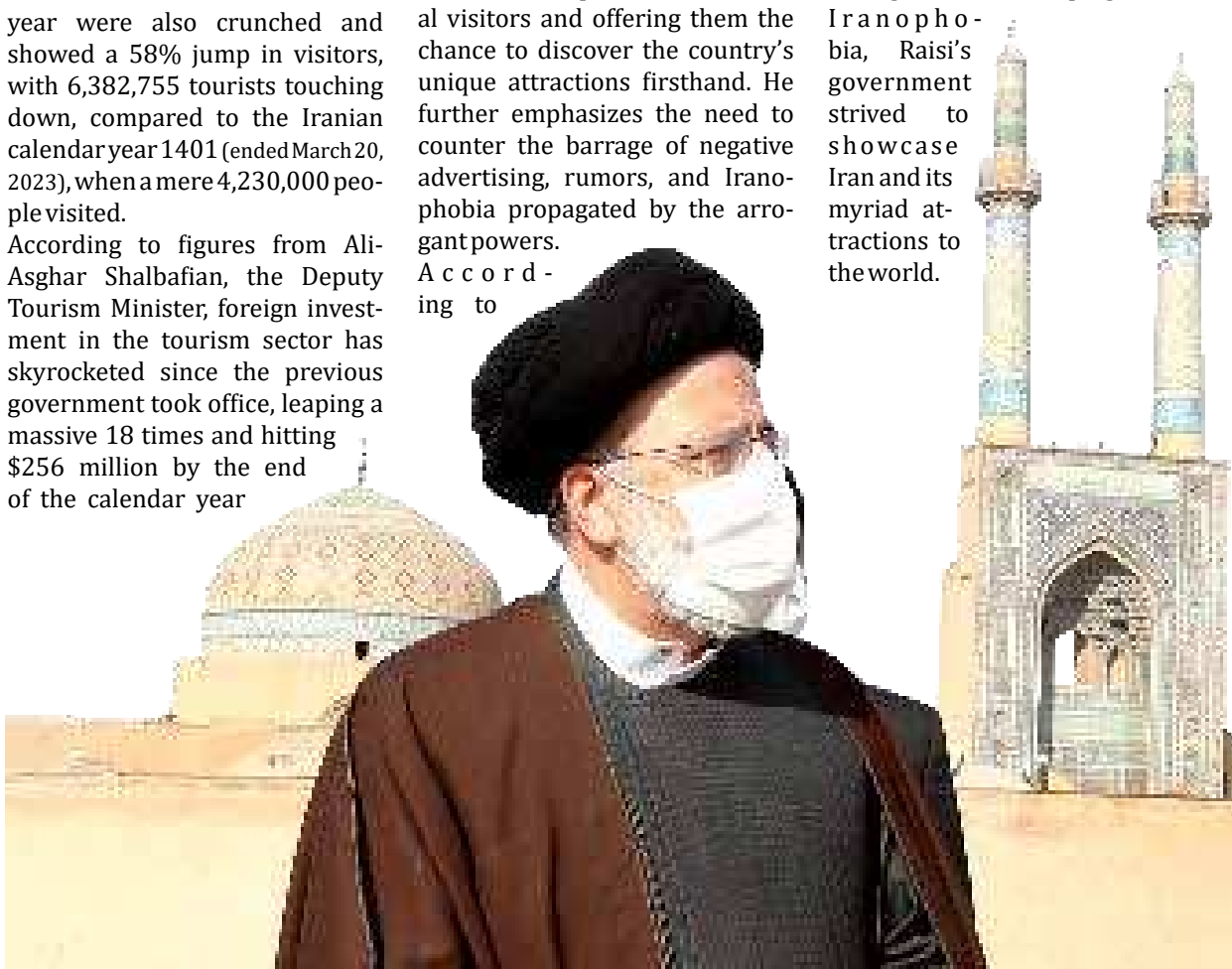
Zarghami, the cabinet firmly believed that tourism is the birthright of everyone on the globe, and Iran stands out as one of the most breathtaking countries owing to its unique history, natural wonders, ecotourism, hospitable locals, and health tourism.

Moreover, the Iranian tourism industry experienced a boom in job creation under president Raisi, witnessing a 10.3% spike in employment in 2023 compared to the previous two years. Last year's surge propelled the industry's contribution to the country's total employment to a substantial 6.6%.

What we've covered here only scratches the surface of the previous government's efforts in the realm of tourism. Despite facing significant challenges, including the global coronavirus pandemic, which brought worldwide tourism to a grinding halt, and amid strong smear campaigns and Iranophobia, Raisi's government strived to showcase Iran and its myriad attractions to the world.



The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi visits the historical neighborhood of Yazd, Iran, on December 17, 2021, to oversee efforts at restoring historical monuments.



Martyr President



Unleashing Iran's tourism capacities: *The Raisi effect*

In the face of Iranophobia peddled by hostile nations, president Raisi's government successfully ramped up revenue from the tourism industry by revitalizing and harnessing the indigenous and local capacities of our country. It also managed to bring down the unemployment rate by lending its support to industry activists and played a part in preserving precious environmental resources.

Tourism has long been on the Iranian governments' radar, with a focus dating back to the 4th National Development Plan. However, due to a lack of attention from the second to last government, the country fell behind its regional peers in this sector. Things took a turn for the better in the 7th Development Plan, guided by the Leader of the Revolution's general policies. The plan included a dedicated clause for tourism development. Seizing this opportunity, Raisi's government swung into action, vigorously working to rejuvenate the country's tourism capacities. Their efforts paid off, resulting in a significant influx of 7.1 million tourists and generating a substantial \$8.7 billion in revenue over the past two years.

Massive income from tourism

Statistics reveal a compelling story: foreign tourists injected \$6.2 billion into Iran's economy in 2022, marking a substantial 73.5% jump from 2021, when international visitors spent \$2.5 billion. Combined over two years, that's a hefty sum of \$8.7 billion. On top of that, we need to factor

in the spending of Iran's domestic tourists, who shelled out 225 thousand billion tomans (over \$7.5 billion) in 2021 and then upped their game in 2022, splashing out over 316 thousand billion tomans (over \$8.1 billion), reflecting a 40.1% year-on-year increase. Ebrahim Raisi, the late president,

consistently underscored the importance of harnessing all of Iran's diverse capacities to the fullest and set an ambitious target of attracting 15 million foreign tourists annually. Within the tourism sector, this goal stood as one of the most pivotal axes emphasized by the president and his government.

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The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi (front-L) visits the Ashuradeh Island and Khazini Canal in the Caspian Sea on December 21, 2023, while reviewing plans to dredge and revive the Gorgan Bay on a boat.

Share of incoming tourists to Middle East

A 2022 World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report shed light on Iran’s burgeoning appeal to foreign tourists. In 2022, international visitor arrivals surged, with 4.1 million trips recorded — a remarkable 315% uptick compared to the previous year, effectively quadrupling the number. However, Iran’s share of the global tourism pie remains modest, capturing only 0.4% of all foreign tourist trips in 2022.

The 315% surge in foreign tourist arrivals in 2022 marked a dramatic rebound from the previous years’ declines: an 83% drop in 2020 due to the widespread impact of the coronavirus pandemic, followed by a 30% dip in 2021. Meanwhile, the Middle East as a whole welcomed 66 million foreign tourists in 2022, reflecting a robust 163% growth year-on-year. Iran’s share of this regional tourism pie stood at an estimated 6%.

Ecotourism permits, national works

In September 2023, Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts issued a comprehensive statistical and comparative report at an exhibition, detailing its accomplishments over the previous two years. Among its notable achievements, the ministry highlighted the expansion of the country’s hospitality infrastructure with the addition of 313 hotels (excluding those in free zones) and the issuance of permits for 849 ecotourism accommodations. Furthermore, an impressive array of cultural treasures has been recognized: 427 movable cultural properties, 595 immovable cultural properties, 302 tangible works, and 476 intangible works — amounting to a total of 1,800 entries — have been inscribed on the list of national treasures. In the Iranian calendar year 1400

(ended March 20, 2022), Iran’s national programme to safeguard the traditional art of calligraphy gained international recognition with its inscription on UNESCO’s list of Good Safeguarding Practices. Then, in a remarkable leap forward, four joint international cases — celebrating Yalda (Shab-e Chelleh), the art of crafting and playing the oud instrument, sericulture and traditional production of silk for weaving, and Turkmen-style needlework art — were approved at the UNESCO meeting in Rabat, Morocco, in 2022. This propelled Iran to sixth place globally on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Additionally, in line with the 10-year plan, two global files showcasing Iran’s tangible cultural heritage — the cultural landscape of Masouleh and Hegmataneh, and

the historical center of Hamedan — have been meticulously compiled and submitted. Field evaluations for one of the world’s most extensive serial registration files, titled “54 Iranian Caravanserais,” have been completed. Seven cases of intangible cultural heritage, including Iftar and its associated social and cultural beliefs, the art of gilding, the tradition of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), and the Sadeh Celebration, the Mehregan festival, the art of crafting and playing the Robab, and the traditional production of Rosewater along with its related social and cultural beliefs, have been forwarded to UNESCO for the years 2023 and 2024. These submissions are currently under review as part of UNESCO’s cultural inscription process.



Martyr President

Foreign investment in tourism

On April 27, 2024, Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian, Iran's deputy tourism minister, highlighted the surge in foreign investment in the tourism sector. He noted that since president Raisi took office, foreign investment in tourism had multiplied eighteenfold, reaching a substantial \$256 million by the close of the calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024). This was accompanied by the presentation of 600 investment packages by over 2,000 businessmen from 80 countries at the Iran Expo 2024 event.

He deemed the exhibition's timing crucial in light of previous events, underscoring its significance as the standout feature of the next expo. He elaborated, "The very fact that this exhibition is taking place sends a clear message about the prevailing security in our country. This visual testament can be leveraged by businessmen and merchants to convey this reality to the world, effectively dispelling any doubts that may have arisen due to recent developments."

Revival of Gorgan Bay after 25 years

Gorgan Bay, also known as the Gulf of Gorgan, and its environs earned international recognition in 1975 as a wetland of significance by the Ramsar Convention. In 1976, UNESCO further acknowledged its ecological importance by classifying it as a natural biosphere reserve. However, between 2017 and 2021, a confluence of factors, including a drop in the Caspian Sea water level, sediment buildup, rampant marine plant growth, canal closures, decreased rainfall, and heightened evaporation rates, resulted in the desiccation of 35% of this once-lush bay.

Following the previous government's swift and effective interventions to resuscitate Gorgan Bay, the esteemed American scientific publication Science took note. A paper reported that just four weeks after the Ashuradeh Canal opening in 2023, a massive 1.5 billion cubic meters of water surged from the Caspian Sea into Gorgan Bay, elevating the water level by a full 40 cm. This timely influx of water resuscitated some 400 meters of coastal areas along the Caspian Sea that had previously dried up, restoring 3,000 hectares of the bay. Additionally, water salinity levels dropped from 48 units per thousand to 27 units per thousand.

Restoration of historical monuments

In October 2023, Shahab Talai, CEO of Iran's Fund for the Development and Restoration of Historical Textures, unveiled an enticing incentive. He announced that any individual, company, or institution incurring expenses related to the repair, restoration, or refurbishment of tourist sites could have those costs recognized as tax equivalents. This recognition would be granted with the endorsement of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the devel-

opment and restoration fund, facilitating a beneficial arrangement for those contributing to the preservation of tourist attractions.

Highlighting the fund's resources and capabilities, he emphasized the ability to offer diverse and tailored support to owners and custodians of historical buildings. He elaborated, "The government extends a range of benefits to those active in this field, one of which comes in the form of tax exemptions."



Insurance for tourist guides

At the 15th gathering of Iranian tourist guides, Mohsen Hajisaieid, vice president of the Iran Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, shed light on several beneficial measures undertaken by the government of president Raisi. He noted that providing insurance to thousands of tourist guides, deploying guides during Nowruz celebrations, facilitating the participation of tourist guides in international events, and placing tourism guidance signs in tourist hotspots were among the key initiatives of Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. He also commended the ministry's efforts in resuscitating tourism post-pandemic, waiving visas for 33 countries, and pushing for the implementation of two-day weekend holidays.

Mehdi Ghasemian, secretary of the Iran Tourist Guide Association, announced the resumption of tour guide insurance in July 2023. He went on to say that "by linking the tourist guide card to the banking system and setting up direct deposits into this account, it has become possible to put in place a requirement for foreign tourists to purchase tickets through tourist guide cards at major sites like Persepolis, thus making use of the capacity of local guides."

Construction of coastal towns

Mehrdad Bazrpash, Iran's minister of Roads and Urban Development, also recently said, on the sidelines of the signing of the contract to equip and operate the container terminals of Chabahar Port with the Republic of India: "Turning Iran into a tourism hub is one of the government's goals. By designating several coastal towns — seven of which have been prioritized while work on three towns is already underway — we are moving in that direction." Saeid Ghafouri, the head of the New Towns Development Company, recently announced preparations are underway for the construction of seven towns. He stated, "The new towns of Tis; Makran Central; a new town in Jask city; the towns of Persian Gulf, Beris, Kooshk, and Shahrak-e Aftab form a collection of settlements that, while offering diverse economic and social roles and functions, aim to introduce new patterns of urban planning and architecture. These patterns are designed to be appropriate to local and climatic conditions while also taking into account regional and international capabilities."



Heavy machinery work to open the Ashuradeh Canal in 2023, allowing water to flow from the Caspian Sea into the drying Gorgan Bay.



**Martyr
President**



Iranian late president Ebrahim Raisi waves to a crowd of Iranian girls and young women in a gathering in Tehran, Iran, on May 8, 2024, two days before the National Girls' Day. "The advancement of our country lies in the hands of our young people, especially our girls," he said.



Women, families first

A look at achievements of Raisi gov't

Women, as half of the country's 80 million population, were put at the top of the planning and policy-making agenda from day one by the previous Iranian government, so that related matters would improve at a faster pace. It's now been three years since that government took the reins, and a lookback at the achievements of this period showcases the efforts made in a host of fields.

Dedicating facilities

Some of the important steps of the previous Iranian government in the field of women include modifying and tailoring laws and regulations for women and families and dedicating better facilities to them. To this end, the cabinet made it a priority to approve special facilities for these two groups during provincial trips and followed up on the implementation of these approvals during subsequent visits.

Another valuable measure of the government was to clear the obstacles and address the economic challenges faced by Iranian families, particularly in the

field of housing, which ties in with the acceleration of general policies on the issue of encouraging larger families. As such, the approval of a note in the budget of the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024) to grant land to families with quadruplets or higher-order multiples was one such measure swiftly implemented from the outset of this year.

Also, allocating facilities to women and families, as well as assuming responsibility for addressing social harms in this domain, were among the government's other measures in its 500-day plan.

Setting targets for women's health

Women's health, as the most central element of family well-being, has been the foremost concern of the late president's government from his earliest days in office. It is an area that, unfortunately, had been neglected in prior decades due to a lack of appropriate groundwork.

However, in the first two years, by relying on the identification of statistical variables and indicators, the government has given new impetus to the issue of women's health and well-being, employing Land-use planning. Tangible measures were subsequently taken in this field, the most obvious being the extension of pregnant women's insurance coverage to the end of breastfeeding.

Also, preparing an atlas on the status of women, setting priorities in the field of health for women and families, pinpointing problem areas and pathologies of women's health, and identifying

health needs across 31 provinces are all part of the government's action plan to address the deprivations in women's health. Additionally, determining the most important priorities and health issues for women and girls in sports, as well as ensuring equitable access to sports facilities between men and women, are all integral components of this initiative.

National Women's Health Week and the subsequent prioritization of identifying and treating cancer in women, providing the necessary infrastructure by utilizing sports facilities and increasing the budget for the construction and repair of special gyms for women, and investigating infertility treatment issues, including the lack of infertility treatment centers in various provinces, all formed part of the previous government's performance in promoting women's health.

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Women's rights on parliament's agenda

Perhaps the greatest achievement in the field of women and families is the fulfillment of their legal needs and rights. To this end, president Raisi's government, in addition to taking measures within the scope of its executive power, pursued the reform and adjustment of laws pertaining to women's rights in the legislative arena to ensure these rights are permanently upheld.

Offering female relief recipients of the country's Diya Institution a one-year breathing space to repay facilities, drafting the bill granting housing to quadruplet families, drafting a bill that tackles the issue of persons without identity documents, and the proposal to exempt female-headed households and mothers with custody of children from serving outside their place of residence were all part of the government's legislative reforms and tailoring efforts regarding Iranian women.

In addition to the aforementioned, the drafting of a bill on the scope of the guardian's powers, the amendment of a bill on permitting the opening of savings accounts for children, the preparation of the bill to join the Women Development Organization of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the revision of school instructions for handing over students' report cards and educational information to parents, the issuance of a directive by the first vice president on the obligation of government agencies to coordinate with the vice presidency in the appointment of advisers, and the resolution to allocate one percent of facilities from executive bodies to the field of women and families are all actions undertaken by the previous government to advance the legal rights of these two groups.

Empowering female heads of households

Empowering and enhancing the health and quality of life of female heads of households were a central demand and agenda item for Raisi's government. Providing education, economic empowerment, and employment opportunities for women heads of households and affected women was the general policy pursued by the late president and his cabinet during their 500 days in office. In realizing this policy, the previous government created a guarantee fund to facilitate employment for female heads of households who are relatively poor and lack protective coverage.

The training of 2,046 women and the economic empowerment of an additional 2,055 women across 11 provinces, the development of a comprehensive empowerment plan for women in line with the 6th National Development Plan, the creation of employment opportunities for women recovered from addiction, and the empowerment of 315 women from the target group were all actions undertaken by the late president's vice president for women and family affairs during their two-year tenure.

Iranian women in int'l arena

Among the previous government's notable achievements is the active participation of Iranian women on regional and international platforms. The signing of international cooperation agreements with a focus on women and the hosting of international empowerment courses serve as a part of the government's main strategy to foster a robust presence for Iranian women on the global stage.

Harnessing the potential of women's diplomacy in international interactions, the late president's government devel-

oped international relations by signing six joint memorandums of cooperation, in particular, with six countries.

They also followed up on the approval and implementation of joint cooperation plans through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the government hosted and participated in a training course on the international empowerment of women, as well as conducted empowerment courses for female managers, contributing to the enhancement of Iranian women's status in the country's overseas arenas.

Consolidating families

Lastly, it's worth mentioning that the government's most critical task in implementing the general policies of the establishment was addressing Iran's aging population. In this regard, Raisi's government utilized the potential of its Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs and took significant steps.

Supporting the nutrition of mothers in

deprived areas, fostering a connection between creative ideas and manufacturers and managers within the baby equipment industry, commending eight selected innovative women, and calling for the production of products and provision of services to support babies, children, and mothers were all steps taken by the Vice Presidency for Women

and Family Affairs in this domain. Supporting the provision of layette sets in underprivileged areas, pursuing the establishment of kindergartens within executive bodies, and extending free aid to underprivileged families with babies were all part of the previous government's record in addressing the needs of the young population.



Martyr President

Iran gov't promotes female entrepreneurship



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (R) listens as Fatemeh Nassaji (L), a female entrepreneur, explains her educational handicrafts during the president's provincial visit to Kurdistan Province, Iran, on November 3, 2023.



During the global economic crisis, while many developed countries were struggling with the tremendous problem of unemployment, the government of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi was zeroing in on employment to further its goal of serving the people.

The salience of the government's approach on this matter stems its two targets of facilitating stable businesses and family-oriented businesses. This is due to the fact that in the design of a sustainable family-oriented business network, the job seeker, while undertaking the necessary training and support, takes on a job whose sustainability is guaranteed and monitored by the entrepreneur for at least four years. On the other hand, the woman working in such a network carries out her work in a flexible way, fitting in her home responsibilities and playing a part in a family-oriented role, while also making use of the capabilities of other family members.

In this network, home businesses and value-creating small businesses were expanded through the use of the capacity of the Omid Entrepreneurship Fund under the previous government. What is more, female heads of households, abused women, self-supporting girls, and job-seeking graduates were em-

ployed in 239 categories as the target community.

Additionally, more than 7,000 female entrepreneurs and job seekers were trained in home-based jobs through the use of facilities approved during the late president's provincial visits.

In another aspect of this network, the plan for economic empowerment of female heads of households and backing for women entrepreneurs was carried out for women leading households and unmarried girls over 45 years of age, resulting in the training of upwards of 4,500 individuals in 209 categories.

Tapping into the capacity of non-governmental organizations to generate employment for the target group of women who are heads of households, self-supporting, recovering addicts, or disabled across 15 categories opened up over 400 job fields as a result of the previous government's efforts.

The government's backing for the establishment and growth of wom-

en's cooperative companies in tandem with Iran's Ministry of Labor, Cooperatives, and Social Welfare unlocked job prospects for female heads of households as well.

Furthermore, collaborations with the aforementioned ministry in setting up and growing cooperative businesses led by disabled women across 34 categories unlocked job opportunities for this target demographic.

Harnessing the potential of the country's Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology by way of holding job training and skill-building events for female students stands as another achievement of this network.

Additionally, collaborations with the Ministry of Agriculture towards providing training in healthy crop production and establishing health gardens, with a focus on empowering local communities, culminated in over 18,000 person-hours of training for women under president Raisi's government.

Economy

- Iran's foreign trade keeps upward trend during Raisi's term: IRICA
- Raisi cements regional ties, economic gains follow
- Precious legacies of Raisi's economic diplomacy
- Boom in oil industry gained during 1,000-day term of Raisi
- Raisi resuscitates Iran's economy
- Raisi's tireless 1,000 days to fix Iran's economy
- Achievements of Raisi's Agriculture Ministry
- Iran's agriculture, fisheries flourish under Raisi



**Special Issue on
Passing of President
Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi
and his companions**

Iran's foreign trade keeps upward trend during Raisi's term: *IRICA*

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Iran's foreign trade registered a considerable jump during the late President Ebrahim Raisi's administration (32 months in service) and reached more than \$301 billion, according to a report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

About 347 million tons of goods, valued at over \$137.8 billion, were exported from the country between August 2021 and April 22, 2024, showing a 17.19 and 1.5 percent hike in terms of value and weight respectively compared to the same period in the previous administration, it said, wrote Tasnim News Agency.

The report added that \$48 billion of products were exported from the country in 2021, showing a 40 percent hike compared to a year earlier. More than \$53 billion of products were imported into the country in 2021, showing a 36 percent hike compared to a year before, it noted.

IRICA put the export of non-oil goods in 2022 at \$53 billion, showing about 10 percent increase compared to a year earlier.

The country imported \$59 billion of products in 2022, registering a 13 percent hike compared to a year before.

Iran exported about \$87 billion worth of products including oil, electricity, technical and engineering services last year (ended March 19, 2024), showing a 58% hike compared to a year earlier, the report said. A helicopter carrying President Raisi and his entourage crashed in northwestern mountainous forests on May 19.

The crash killed President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Friday prayers leader of Tabriz Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem, Governor of East Azarbaijan Malek Rahmati, the commander of the president's security team, two pilots and a flight crew.



**Martyr
President**

Raisi cements regional ties, economic gains follow

By Ebrahim Beheshti

Staffwriter

Iranian foreign policy took a decisive turn under the late president Ebrahim Raisi, who zeroed in on fostering relations with neighboring countries. In recent years, there has been a flurry of diplomatic activity between Iranian officials and their counterparts in the region, who have been rubbing elbows frequently. The frequency and intensity of these diplomatic interactions drive home the importance of regional cooperation for Iran's foreign policy agenda.

Iran Daily conducted an interview with Seyyed Reza Sadrolhosseini, a regional affairs expert, to discuss the effectiveness of this foreign policy and shed light on the driving forces behind the government's commitment to building strong regional alliances.



IRAN DAILY: What national and regional factors influenced the decision by the government of president Raisi to prioritize relations with neighboring countries?

SADROLHOSSEINI: For any nation, fostering good relationships with its neighbors is a cornerstone of political wisdom and essential to safeguarding national security. In Iran's case, Islamic ethics also play a role as it emphasizes the importance of forming strong bonds between Tehran and its predominantly Muslim neighbors. Additionally, Iran's constitution and the recommendations of the late founder and the current leader of the Islamic Republic strongly encourage regional cooperation. With this in mind, president Raisi shifted the focus of his government's foreign policy to tackling shared challenges and bolstering economic relations with neighboring countries. Over the past three years, both the late president and the late foreign minister diligently pursued this approach, reaping significant rewards and solidifying the foundation for continued collaboration.

Could you provide striking examples of accomplish-

ments stemming from the policy of strengthening relations with neighboring countries?

First off, significant strides were made in resolving misunderstandings and differences with certain neighboring countries, which were previously fueled by external influences.

Secondly, a major diplomatic breakthrough was achieved with the normalization of ties between Tehran and Riyadh, a crucial player in the region, the Islamic world, and the Arab sphere. This rapprochement has paved the way for further diplomatic successes.

Thirdly, economic relations with neighboring nations have seen marked improvements during the past three years. As per official statistics, Iran's exports to its neighbors jumped by 30%, and overall trade relations witnessed a 36% uptick in the first two years of president Raisi's time in office.

Another feather in the cap of this policy is the masterful handling of the Iran-Azerbaijan crisis. Even though an individual attacked the Baku embassy in Tehran for personal reasons, we witnessed a reduction in diplomatic ties between the two countries. Meanwhile, some countries tried to overem-

phasize the border challenges, even expecting the two Muslim countries to go to war with each other.

However, the government of the late president and his diplomatic apparatus skillfully de-escalated tensions between Tehran and Baku. The case in point is the fact that the very last trip of the late president and foreign minister before their tragic air accident was taken to inaugurate a large joint dam on the Aras River. As another testament to the strengthened relations, the reopening of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Tehran is on the horizon.

Adding to this list of accomplishments, we can highlight the resolution of challenges with Iran's eastern neighbors, particularly Afghanistan. Relations between Iran and Afghanistan had hit rock bottom due to US interference during Ashraf Ghani's government. However, ties have since bounced back, with Iran's exports to Afghanistan experiencing a substantial boost. Iran's readiness to engage in dialogue and address disputes over maritime borders and joint energy fields with countries such as Kuwait should also be recognized as another triumph of the government's neighborhood policy.

Moreover, within this relatively brief period, Raisi's government tried to regain the trust of nations like Armenia, Turkey, and Pakistan across various sectors, including security, energy, and economics. The high-profile attendance of foreign delegations, particularly from neighboring countries, at the ceremony paying tribute to the late president and his accompanying delegation serves as a testament to the Islamic Republic's enhanced standing and the positive role that it plays in the region.

How did the government seek to implement the neighborhood policy to successfully overcome misunderstandings?

The government followed a strategic approach rooted in interaction and dialogue, aiming for mutual benefits while ensuring mutual respect and security. The late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian adeptly enacted this policy, prioritizing the expansion of economic relations. Of course, Iran's government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained steadfast in upholding Islamic and revolutionary values throughout the de-escalation and interaction processes with neighboring countries.

While president Raisi underscored not seeking to tie economic issues to specific foreign policy matters, it appeared that economic collaboration became an essential aspect of our approach to foreign policy. Were the government and foreign ministry effective in leveraging foreign policy for economic cooperation?

From the outset, foreign minister Amir-Abdollahian stressed the importance of solidifying and broadening economic relations with other nations, particularly neighbors. President Raisi's statement about not tying the economy to foreign policy was intended to communicate that the government would not restrict meeting the country's

economic needs to a singular case or bow to Western demands and pressures.

Addressing economic needs was a top priority for the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Raisi, as evidenced by increased Iranian exports and meeting domestic demands amidst Western sanctions over the past three years. Therefore, president Raisi's viewpoint does not imply a disconnect between the economy and foreign policy. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of not allowing the economy to be held hostage by Western expectations and indulgences.

The presence of Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry and Bahrain's foreign minister at the ceremony honoring the late president and his companions was noteworthy. How might these attendances impact the restoration and promotion of diplomatic relations with these two countries?

During the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, a significant meeting occurred between Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukri. The meeting resulted in a mutual agreement to

expedite the process of improving political relations between the two nations. Furthermore, the ministers engaged in discussions regarding Egypt's stance on Israel's actions in Gaza and their involvement in providing aid to Palestinians.

While the interim government's remaining term may witness ongoing efforts to bolster Iran-Egypt relations, it is possible that any substantial advancements may fall under the purview of the succeeding Iranian government. Ali Bagheri Kani, the acting minister of Foreign Affairs, has indicated that the previous government's emphasis on regional relations will continue to be a top priority.

The presence of the Bahraini delegation, led by their foreign minister, was also of considerable importance, especially since no specific and preliminary measures have officially been taken to address the differences between Iran and Bahrain in a serious manner. Their participation in the tribute ceremony demonstrates respect for Iran's leadership and acknowledges the nation's regional and international standing. This gesture of goodwill from Bahrain sets the stage for constructive dialogue and potentially paves the way for resolving the differences between the two countries.



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front-R) talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at an Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 11, 2023.



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Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi delivers a speech at the 15th summit of the BRICS group of countries held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023. The BRICS leaders announced during the summit that they would welcome six new members in January 2024: Iran, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.



Precious legacies of Raisi's economic diplomacy

Raisi dedicated his life to the people's welfare and economic prosperity. During three years of his tireless presidency, he was a source of many services to the progress of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the world stage.

One of the brilliant areas of his activities was the foreign policy.

In addition to the tangible outcomes of the policies of president Raisi's government in boosting foreign relations in the path of realizing national interests, increasing national power, enhancing foreign trade, and neutralizing Western sanctions have certainly been the cornerstones of many actions that can be built upon by future governments.

Here we focus on a small but important part of president Raisi's foreign policy achievements.

Special Issue
on Passing of
President Seyyed
Ebrahim Raisi and
his companions



Membership in regional, international blocs

Strengthening international alliances in foreign relations, especially membership in regional common market organizations and free trade agreements, has always been one of the important objectives in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. Remarkable gains have been made to this end under president Raisi who, compared to his predecessors, further used Iran's unique geopolitical position and economic capabilities to secure Iran's share of regional and international trade.

One of these achievements was the finalization of Iran's membership in the two key economic blocs of BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) along with several emerging non-Western powers. Though Iran for years was an

observer member of these blocs, if it was not for the major change in Iran's foreign policy under president Raisi who adopted the "Look to the East" policy, Iran's membership could not have been realized this quickly.

Russia and China, two great strategic allies in the transitioning global order, consider the Islamic Republic as the third member of their Eastern alliance due to the country's completely independent policy, strategic geopolitical position, military power, and extensive regional influence. The government of Raisi played a key role in this achievement.

Indeed, membership in SCO will provide unmatched opportunities for Iran's economic development and foreign trade. The bloc covers about 30 percent of the global GDP and about 40 percent of the world's

population, which translates into the total defeat of the West's sanctions that aimed to isolate Iran from global trade.

Joining the club of the emerging powers of BRICS, which many experts say will prospectively replace the G7, facilitates foreign trade, cuts trade costs and customs, transfers technology and knowledge, provides raw material, expands Iran's interactions with global markets, and eliminates various international payment problems by doing business with national currencies.

During president Raisi's tenure and thanks to the efforts of the late foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Iran managed to take a huge step toward membership in the Eurasian Economic Union. The organization, which accounts for about 2.4 percent of the global trade, also signed a free trade deal with Tehran.

Marketing, opening new trade gates

The economy was a priority to the foreign policy of the government of president Raisi, to the extent that during his 33-month presidency, he visited 28 foreign countries. In the meantime, although the government focused on expanding all-round economic relations with neighbors and countries in the region, president Raisi did not ignore other markets receptive to Iranian companies and goods, especially in developing countries.

To this end, after years of stagnation, Raisi's government revived Iran's trade and political standing



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with Latin America. In addition to meetings with Latin American leaders on the sidelines of the UN annual sessions, in June 2023, he started a five-day tour that saw him visiting Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba. By signing 35 cooperation documents in various areas, he took a long leap to restore Iran's considerable trade share in this region.

During his presidency, relations with Africa also saw a surge. His efforts manifested, for example, in the Iran-Africa Summit initiative held earlier in April in Tehran at the level of senior officials, including finance ministers of over 30 African countries. Furthermore, president Raisi toured the three countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe in July 2023, marking the first visit of an Iranian president to Africa in 11 years. The tour secured significant achievements for Tehran.

The jump in the country's oil and gas revenues in the middle of tough sanctions and energy agreements with neighbors were among the other accomplishments of the economic diplomacy of president Raisi's government. According to officials, Iran managed to increase oil and gas production and export revenues to levels higher than before the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Revamping the country's energy diplomacy and boosting cooperation with neighboring countries have been on the agenda of the oil

ministry since the beginning of the late president's government. Ending the five-year hiatus in gas trade with Turkmenistan, the signing of a three-party gas swap deal between Iran, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan paved the way for Tehran to access the European gas market in the future.

Another key step in increasing energy exports was taken by Raisi in his recent trip to Pakistan. The two neighbors agreed to conclude the construction of the Iran gas pipeline to Pakistan. By taking the final steps of this agreement, Iran's share of the region's energy market will surely witness a fundamental transformation. Since the 11th phase of the South Pars Gas Field in a shared field with Qatar was rolled out during his term, Iran's production surpassed that of the Qataris even in the midst of sanctions.

Unlocking Iran's corridor capacities

Iran is a country with a unique geopolitical position on a highway connecting the east, west, north, and south of the world. This has created an opportunity for Iran to play a key role in major transit projects and the international trade network. Both of these can contribute to its economic development and secure income sources for it.

During Raisi's tenure, a change in Iran's approach to the "resistance economy" caused the government to prioritize putting more into the development of the International



al North-South Corridor, consequently allowing the rail and road projects to experience a remarkable expansion in a short period. In this regard, cooperation with India to further develop Chabahar port took place. Moreover, Iran's rail connection to Afghanistan was concluded with the inauguration of the Khaf-Herat railway in July last year.

The East-West Corridor is also a



The first transit train carrying a container of sulfur from Kazakhstan to Turkey, after passing through Turkmenistan, moves through Iran on June 19, 2022.

mid-term strategic priority that invites intense competition given its huge transportation potential. Some rival routes are already active and entrenched within the framework of this corridor. Three years ago, when the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was inaugurated and the first Turkish freight train made its way to China without passing through Iran, there emerged a feeling that Iran was

abandoned in this megaproject. Actions of the past governments made Iran the big absentee in this significant project despite being aware of the geopolitical importance of the BRI. This approach was changed under president Raisi's government as the latter focused on taking advantage of the country's regional capacities. Under his government, a new approach was

put high on agenda that exploited the country's transit capacity in bilateral or multilateral trade exchanges with the allies. Inaugurating the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey corridor in May 2022 to boost the East-West Corridor was among the fruits of this policy that managed to restore Iran to the BRI.

The article first appeared on ABNA24.



Martyr President

Boom in oil industry gained during 1,000-day term of Raisi

By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou

Staffwriter

The measures by the incumbent government in about 1,000 days of its service (started August 2021) led to a boom in Iran's oil and gas industry, as crude oil production increased by more than 60 percent, and oil exports increased from 300,000 barrels to an average of 1.5 million barrels per day.

Iranian Minister of Oil Javad Owji has recently said from the very beginning, the current government (13th government) has never waited for negotiations to remove international sanctions, adding that in recent 2.5 years, relying on domestic new technology-based firms (NTBFs), Iran's oil industry has gained great achievements.

Stating that at the beginning of the current administration, the amount of oil production and export was not favorable, the minister said: "Today, we have achieved such figures in this field that are hard for many to believe."

"By the end of last Iranian year (March 19, 2024), we have completed about 132 unfinished projects worth \$28.5 billion, and at the same time, we have started the implementation of 50 projects worth \$47.5 billion," he announced.

Pointing to the 54-million-cubic-meter increase in the gas production, as well as a rise of 220,000 barrels in processing capacity and 10 million tons of petrochemicals in the last 2.5 years, Owji said a large part of the achievements obtained thanks to the completion and exploitation of unfinished projects, some of which were delayed for more than 10 years. Owji said the development of Phase 11 of South Pars Gas Field, which was passed around by foreign companies for 20 years, is one of the main achievements of the Ministry of Petroleum during the tenure of the 13th government.

"This achievement was gained by the efforts of the managers and employees of the oil industry and by relying on domestic contractors, which currently produces 12 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas, and according to plans, will increase to 30 mcm by the end of the 13th administration, and in the coming years will hit 50 mcm."

Pointing out that the previous government had announced that it was ready to hand over the Abadan Refinery which is the country's oldest refinery for free, Owji stated: "Today, we see that the refinery contributes greatly to the production of oil products in Iran as last year it made a profit of 12 trillion tomans (\$200 million)."

The executive works of the second part of Phase 2 of the refinery's development project will also start soon, he added.



Collecting associated petroleum gas

Contracts worth over \$5 billion were signed for the collection of associated petroleum gas (APG) in the 13th government for field gas collection of the West Karoun and East Karoun fields of Karun as well as fields in the west of Iran, the minister stated.

“Currently, 11.5 mcm of APG are collected, which will reach 30 mcm by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2025). Methane from the processing of these flare gases is injected into the national gas network as heavy compounds are fed to petrochemical complexes in order to create more added value.” He mentioned the completion of South Pars Phase 14 Refinery after a decade and said: With the full launch of the complex, more than 50 mcm per day was added to Iran’s gas refining capacity.

Extraterritorial refinery projects

The National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) was the first Iranian company to start extraterritorial refineries.

Venezuela was the first country, and El Palito was the pilot refinery for Iran’s extraterritorial project.

The El Palito refinery project in Venezuela has progressed by about 85 percent, as 85-90 percent of its equipment has been provided by Iranian companies.

Iran also has reached an agreement with South Africa to develop and equip five refineries in the African state.

The agreement was reached on

the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, under which the Iranian Oil Ministry will help to develop five refineries in South Africa by exporting technical and engineering services.

Boosting pressure

The pressure boosting project, which started last Iranian year, requires an investment of \$20 billion as its implementation will fetch \$900 billion in income and 90 trillion cubic feet of gas for the country, has said Mohsen Khojasteh-Mehr, the CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Eligible companies that we have chosen for the project should work in the field of geophysical and geotechnical studies, turbo-compressor manufacturing, and pressure boosting platforms.

The official noted that his company has signed a contract with petrochemical companies



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for 20 gas tanks worth \$7 billion, explaining that the NIOC cooperates with petrochemical complexes and refineries, and supports them in providing feed and export issues.

Launch of megaprojects

Last year, the NIOC signed a \$13-billion contract for the development of oilfields, of which \$12.5 billion pertained to two joint fields, Khojasteh-Mehr stated, adding that Iran has 400 oil and gas reservoirs, as the country's total oil and gas reserves are equivalent to 340 billion barrels of crude oil.

A total of 700 low-yielding wells have been handed over to new technology-based firms (NTBFs) and technological companies because the private sector can help the entire upstream chain of the oil industry.

Gaining self-sufficiency

Referring to the implementation of very important projects in the field of gas storage, Owji has said in the last [Iranian] year of 1402, more than one billion cubic meters (bcm) of additional gas storage was done compared to its preceding year of 1401.

Owji explained about the increase in the quality of petroleum products in the country's refineries stating that the production of Euro 5 products was achieved in the Isfahan Refinery last year, and according to e plannings, the boosting of quality for petroleum products in all refineries is carried out by relying on domestic capacity.

He referred to the implementation of more than 1,000 kilometers of gas pipelines in the country, and continued: "In the current administration, five gas pressure boosting stations were put into operation and gas was supplied to more than 6,000 villages."

Iran's oil industry has attained self-sufficiency in all sectors, including the development of offshore and onshore fields, marine structures, the construction of petro-refineries, the collection of APG, and the drilling of horizontal and vertical wells, relying on the domestic manufacturers of the industry.

Planning has been done to increase the production of oil and gas, oil and petrochemical products in the Seventh Development Plan which relies on the potentials of domestic companies.

There is no limit to investment in the oil industry, the minister said inviting all investors to join the industry, as the Ministry of Oil will also provide full support.

According to statistics released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) and the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the Ministry of Oil had a magnificent performance last Iranian year, Owji said





adding the economic growth of the oil and gas sector was over 20 percent last year, which had a significant impact on the overall economic growth of the country.

More revenues

Iran exported \$35 billion worth of crude oil in 1402 despite all the restrictions, Owji has stated noting that the enemies made efforts to stop Iran's oil tankers, but they failed.

Talking about the Ministry of Petroleum's plan for the current Iranian year, Owji said a sum of 79 projects valued at \$25 billion will be put into operation in the upstream and downstream sectors, as 50 new projects have also been kicked off.

"With the implementation of new oil industry projects, 300,000 to 400,000 bpd will be added to oil production, 35 mcm to crude gas production, 50,000 barrels to refining capacity and three million to five million tons to the annual production capacity of petrochemical complexes of the country."

Referring to the signing of contracts for the development of oil and gas fields by the NIOC with domestic contractors, the minister said adding four contracts were inked with domestic firms valued at \$20 billion for the pressure boosting project in the South Pars joint field and \$13 billion worth of contracts for the development of seven oilfields has been signed by the NIOC.

He pointed to the call of the Ministry of Petroleum to supply gas feed to petrochemical units and stated: "During last weeks, important documents were signed with 13 petrochemical companies to supply their gas feed from 20 gas fields."

Fruits of Raisi's foreign visits

The ground is paved for cooperation on oil sector with foreign countries which was done by Raisi's visits to other countries, the minister stated noting that oil cooperation with foreigners in the field of exporting oil, oil products, petrochemical products and exporting techno-engineering services is increasing day by day.

All the capacities of the country in the technical, financial, contractors and advisory sectors are used for the prosperity of the oil industry, Owji said, noting that "There is no better place than investing in oil industry, as the return on capital in the oil industry occurs in the shortest time.

Owji pointed to the development of energy diplomacy by the 13th government and added: "Today, despite all the restrictions, compared to [the Iranian year of] 1397, the highest level of exports is carried out."



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President**

20 reasons why

Raisi resuscitates Iran's economy

The government of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi kicked off on August 3, 2021, while facing wide-scale economic problems and dilemmas, which had carried over from its preceding government. Apart from dealing with debts and liquidity, there were also many small knots that were bogging down different departments.

The government that was handed over to Raisi faced a tremendous budget deficit, and the country was in ruins with a myriad of problems, the most pressing of which was the COVID-19 pandemic. These issues fell squarely into Raisi and his new government's laps.

The following report outlines some of the actions and achievements of the previous government in overcoming these challenges. Despite all the perceived criticisms leveled at that government, it delivered tangible results, as the following report will show.

1. Economic growth after 10 years

President Raisi's government successfully steered the country's economy onto a positive growth trajectory after a decade-long recession characterized by stagnant zero percent yearly growth. They managed to bump it up to three percent initially and then to four percent. This achievement isn't

merely based on statistics issued by domestic institutions; it has been confirmed by international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

2. Jump in export of crude oil, gas condensate

The late president's government successfully boosted oil sales to 3

million barrels per day, reclaiming the third spot among OPEC members. This feat was achieved despite the country not having seen such sales volumes since 2018, prior to the imposition of extensive sanctions.

The oil minister acknowledges that Iran's oil industry currently finds itself on the front lines of an economic war, bearing the brunt of





A ship carrying a shipment of passenger cars, once banned from being imported, arrives in an Iranian port.



the most stringent sanctions.

3. Reducing liquidity growth

The 12-month growth trend of the monetary base saw a significant decline in the wake of the previous government's disciplinarian approach and the central bank's active monetary and supervisory policies. This downward trend

was reflected in the figures, which showed a decrease from 42.8% as of late July 2021 to 39.6% by late October 2023.

4. Tripartite gas swap

The signing of Iran's gas swap agreement with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan is significant for the country across three fronts: economic, political, and transi-

tional. It carries multiple advantages and underscores the success of the previous government's policy in fostering enhanced collaboration with neighboring nations.

5. Permanent membership in SCO

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) stands as one of the globe's most expansive and influential regional entities, playing a pivotal role in international trade and security affairs.

Iran's permanent membership in this organization unlocks a plethora of opportunities, particularly within the economic sphere, and has spurred the growth of the country's exports to the member states within this organization.

6. Rise in wheat purchase from farmers

By the close of the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 20, 2023), the volume of wheat procured from growers hit 7.2 million tons, marking a 60% uptick compared to the preceding year. All claims were settled by year-end. Projections indicate a continued ascent in these figures by the conclusion of the current calendar year.

7. Slashing unemployment rate

According to the announcement of the Statistical Center of Iran, the unemployment rate in summer 2023 ticked down to 7.9%, marking a year-on-year drop of 1.0%.

8. Launching North-South Corridor

The country has laid out plans to transit 20 million tons in the short term (targeting a one-year timeframe) and 50 million tons over the long term, eyeing earnings of \$50 bil-



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Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (C) inaugurates an expansion project in the country's flagship Abadan Refinery in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on March 20, 2023.



lion. Iran is strategizing to realize this income in the upcoming years through infrastructure development and the easing of laws.

9. Removing production obstacles

Characterized as economic rent, the distribution at the state-set exchange rate of 42,000 Rials had posed a significant obstacle for businesses lacking access to government-issued currency and the resultant rent creation before president Raisi took office. For this reason, the removal of the preferential exchange rate for importing basic goods can be deemed a positive step toward making the economy transparent and shifting towards competitive production. Additionally, this measure brought about a tenfold increase in subsi-

dies after a 12-year hiatus.

10. Facilitating licensing of businesses

The activation of the National Licensing Portal stood as one of the previous government's notable actions. According to Article 7 of the Law on the Implementation of Article 44 of the Constitution, the portal ought to have been activated as far back as 2007, but conflicting interests within governments prevented its realization. However, during the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi, the Ministry of Economy diligently pursued the matter, and the process of issuing licenses was for the most part improved. The development happened as a result of a modification in the aforementioned Article 7 by Ehsan Khandouzi as a member of the

Economic Committee of the Iranian Parliament. He then carried the initiative forward on a larger scale during his tenure as the Minister of Economy.

11. Lifting the ban on car imports

In January of last year, Iran's ban on car imports came to an end after a four-year hiatus as the first shipment arrived. Currently, steps are being taken to facilitate the import of electric and affordable cars, which are being introduced into the market owing to the adopted policies.

12. Disclosing names of big bank debtors

The previous government's objective in disclosing the names of significant defaulters on bank loans

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was to raise public awareness and generate demand for action to recoup these debts. The public should be informed about individuals who, after several years, continue to refuse to repay their debts to the banks and exhibit no intention of doing so.

13. Fighting flour smuggling

The integrated flour management system records and oversees the purchase of flour by bakers, its sale by factories, and the transportation of flour within the country, effectively curbing widespread flour smuggling. The rollout of the government's plan resulted in a significant decrease in the country's flour consumption without causing any disruptions to the nation's bread basket.

14. Rolling out electronic prescribing

The plan for electronic prescription implementation and the non-acceptance of paper prescriptions, in alignment with fulfilling the Iran Health Insurance Organization's legal duties, came into effect at the beginning of December 2021 after a 16-year hiatus.

15. Implementing Nursing Services Tariff Law

The passing of the Nursing Services Tariff Law bestowed upon nurses a sense of identity and independence. Prior to any financial discussion, it is essential to acknowledge the significance of this law in terms of bestowing identity and autonomy upon the nursing profession. This autonomy encompasses various dimensions such as efficiency and income.

16. 90% coverage of infertility insurance

The government of president Raisi was committed to reducing out-of-pocket expenses for individuals facing infertility issues. To that end, services at infertility treatment centers, including specialized procedures such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), microinjection (ICSI), intrauterine fertilization, and embryo transfer, are now offered with 90% tariff coverage.

17. Unveiling electronic checks system

In November of this year, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) introduced the electronic check system. An electronic check is a novel type of check that adheres to all the regulations governing traditional paper checks but is validated using an electronic signature and issued digitally. This digital innovation surpasses paper checks in terms of security and cashability, and

with the goal of utilizing this advantage in mind, the CBI launched the Checkad system to offer a secure digital alternative to physical checks.

18. Ramping up power production

The Raisi government achieved a record increment in electricity production capacity within a single year, successfully adding 6,000 megawatts to the national grid. This feat was accomplished despite the Rouhani government's policy of not constructing new power plants, a decision that had previously led to significant challenges in the country's power generation infrastructure.

19. Organizing property warehouses

Resolving the issue of the stored away exported cars, which had languished for five years in warehouses, stood as one of the pivotal actions undertaken by the Ministry of Economy last year. This move generated an income of nearly 30,000 billion Rials (\$54 billion) for the government.

20. Completing half-finished projects

One of the previous government's foremost priorities, as proclaimed by president Raisi from the outset, was the completion of unfinished projects. As a result, numerous long-awaited halted projects were finalized and inaugurated during the 30 months of Raisi's presidency. Examples include the subway of Parand city, which opened after 18 years, the Saqqez airport that commenced operations after a 20-year wait, the Shiraz-Isfahan freeway completed after 13 years, and dozens of other endeavors, including solutions to water-related challenges.



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Raisi's tireless 1,000 days to fix Iran's economy

During Ebrahim Raisi's presidency, Iran's economy made significant strides forward in key areas. These include getting a handle on monetary variables and stabilizing the energy sector — electricity, gas, and water. The National Housing Movement also took off under Raisi's leadership. These measures resulted in a jump in macroeconomic indicators. The tireless efforts by Iran's previous government and, at its head, late president Raisi, paid off, successfully establishing stability in the food market.

During the working days of the week, Raisi was serving his people in the capital, and on weekends, he would usually travel to the provinces to reach out to Iranians and deal with their obstacles and what was troubling them. He even kept at it during the Nowruz holiday. Covering the long list of Raisi's achievements during his rather short stint as president would take several full newspapers; therefore, we will go over only a part of his valuable services.

Everyone recalls that Raisi commenced his term amid a backdrop of governmental challenges: issues with paying salaries, near-empty warehouses of basic goods, a negative treasury, a seemingly insurmountable budget deficit, inflation surpassing 60%, frequent power outages and queues for purchasing basic goods, and myriad small and large economic woes. However, during his tenure of nearly two years and ten months, almost all macro indicators have turned positive or made a leap just like the oil sector.



Breaking records in energy production

Although Iran's oil sales statistics aren't officially disclosed due to sanctions, estimates are crafted by domestic and foreign centers. The latest reports indicate that Iran's oil production climbed to at least 3.4 million barrels per day in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended March 20, 2024).

Oil exports had taken a drastic downturn in the final years of the second to last government, but with the Raisi government's proactive economic diplomacy, they climbed back up to 1.6 million barrels. This figure remains somewhat shy of pre-US withdrawal from the JCPOA levels.

In the gas sector, Iran successfully doubled its production, despite facing sanctions. As a result, the calendar years 1401 (ended March



20, 2023) and 1402 witnessed minimal domestic gas outages. Additionally, Phase 11 of the South Pars joint gas field — a critical energy supply hub for Iran — was brought online last year after two decades, thanks to the expertise of Iranian specialists.

In the summers of the last two years, records for daily electricity consumption were consecutively broken in Iran, with usage surpassing 70,000 megawatts. However, there were no power outages due to shortages. Notably, this year, for the first time in the Islamic Republic of Iran's history, industrial electricity consumption growth outpaced that of the domestic sector. After many years, frequent blackouts and daily

power outages were returning to the country, but the previous government turned things around, increasing power generation capacity to 8538 megawatts and putting an end to regular blackouts.

Additionally, at the outset of the previous government, 10,000 Iranian villages were identified as requiring immediate action for water supply, and a decision was made to bring sustainable drinking water to these villages within the four-year term. From the beginning of the government's tenure until the end of the calendar year 1402, nearly 5,000 villages that previously lacked access to sustainable drinking water were provided with this essential resource. Un-



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doubtedly, the efforts to ensure rural water supply will stand as a lasting testament to the legacy of late president Raisi.

Liquidity returns to long-term trend

Controlling monetary variables stands as one of the strengths of Raisi's government. The significant, continuous, and simultaneous reduction of the monetary base and liquidity during his presidency has been unprecedented in the past decade. The previous government successfully curbed the point-to-point growth of liquidity, bringing it down from 42.8 percent in October 2021 to 23 percent in April 2024. Additionally, they lowered the monetary base from 45 percent in April 2023 to 29.6 percent in March of the following year. Therefore, the previous government's track record should be assessed as a success in steering liquidity back toward its long-term trend. The impacts of these actions are currently being felt, with more significant effects anticipated in the future.

Inflation ballooning curb

As a result of the decelerating trend in liquidity growth during the calendar year 1402, the inflation rate also followed a downward path for both consumers and producers. According to the data by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), point-to-point consumer inflation peaked at 55.5% in April 2023 but fell to 30.9% in April of this year. Consequently, 12-month inflation decreased from 48% to 38.8%. Producer price inflation reflects the state of inflation within the country's manufacturing sector. The previous government successfully lowered this inflation rate from 103%, which was recorded in the final months of its predecessor's term, to 23.8% in April 2024, underscoring its commitment to supporting production and producers.

The maintenance of stable prices for bread and gasoline, essential commodities for all, and the

steadiness of water, electricity, and gas rates for ordinary consumers, despite rising inflation and exchange rates, showcases president Raisi's adept management within the subsistence economy sector, utilizing non-price tools.

From recession to growth

Iran's GDP witnessed a relative improvement over the past two years. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) data, Iran's gross domestic product (GDP), based on the purchasing power parity (PPP) index, reached \$1,730 billion in 2023 (December 2022 to January 2023). This improvement elevated Iran's economy, ranking it as the 19th largest economy globally.

According to the latest data from the SCI, Iran's economic growth in the calendar years 1401 and 1402 reached four and six percent, respectively. This achievement stands in contrast to the average economic growth rate of Iran in the preceding decade, which, according to Central Bank statistics, fell below one percent annually and even dipped into negative territory during certain years of that decade.

Currency market control

Traditionally, the currency market experiences confusion at the slightest event, but it maintained stability during the previous government's tenure, especially from March 2023 to January 2024. Several factors contributed to this stability over the last two years: increased oil sales and revenue collection, enhanced exchanges with neighboring countries, the establishment of the Iran Center for Exchange, a boost in domestic production alongside reduced import dependence, joining the SCO and BRICS groupings, and, most notably, the lowering of inflationary expectations.

Reducing unemployment, wheat self-sufficiency

Iran's unemployment rate dropped to 8.2%, marking the lowest level since the country's Islam-



ic Revolution. This positive development resulted from increased economic growth and the revival of 6,000 stagnant production units. Additionally, during president Raisi's tenure, the country achieved self-sufficiency in bread wheat production, despite challenges posed by low rainfall levels. The government's trust-building measures, and those of the late president himself, played a pivotal role in this achievement. Recently, the markets for chicken, eggs, and most basic goods have stabilized as well.

Additionally, Raisi's stance against corruption, previously demonstrated in the judiciary by tackling the Head of Iran's Coin Cartel and other major economic criminals, once again became evident in the dismissal of the former minister of Agriculture before any judicial proceedings commenced.

Promise turned into movement. The construction of four million houses in four years was president Raisi's pledge, which was allowed



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (front-C) participate in the relaunch of a factory in Semnan Province on April 18, 2024.

by the parliament's legislation. This promise of constructing over 2,500,000 units practically transformed into the National Housing Movement, with 400,000 units delivered. If not for obstacles in securing land and facilities, which delayed the government's progress by a year, they would have drawn closer to the figure the late president committed to. It is imperative that the next government sustain the momentum of this housing movement initiated by Raisi.

Food packages in millions

The previous government had other livelihood schemes in the works. The agenda for the calendar year 1402 included a plan to introduce electronic coupons for food baskets containing 11 basic items. In February 2024, the government rolled out the so-called Fajraneh Electronic Coupon initiative to commemorate the Islamic Revolution's triumph, enabling over 60 million eligible citizens to benefit

from the scheme's double subsidy. This initiative wrapped up on May 10, 2024, having distributed approximately 142 million packages to the public. Aside from a handful of queues that formed during the project's early days due to inadequate publicity, there were no further issues with queues or shortages.

Satellite launches

Iran's space industry, in general, and the launch and construction of its satellites, in particular, had stagnated for years, but the previous government kick-started a revival. Through its determination, 11 satellites successfully took off into space, setting a record. Raisi epitome of Iranian willpower Tens of pages are insufficient to review Raisi's economic accomplishments in full as the aforementioned instances merely scratch the surface. On May 20, following the inauguration of the Qiz Qalasi dam, the helicopter carrying president Raisi and his entourage

suffered from an accident en route back to Tabriz due to poor weather conditions. It was announced the next morning that Raisi, along with his entourage, sadly passed away. However, during his brief tenure as president, Raisi demonstrated that by refusing to capitulate to the will of adversaries and rely on agreements like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and FATF, Iran can surmount challenges and take significant, enduring strides forward through tireless efforts and practical measures. These measures include boosting exchanges with friendly and neighboring nations and harnessing the strength of Iranians. The Raisi government prioritized fundamental reforms over stop-gap measures, heeding the Leader of the Revolution's counsel against sacrificing the country's future for short-term gains. As a result, he attained partial success in stabilizing the economy, and had his tenure continued, complete success would have been within reach.



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By the numbers

Achievements of Raisi's Agriculture Ministry

The agricultural sector plays a significant role in ensuring food security, and one might even say it underpins national security.

The following report outlines the actions taken by the government of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi regarding some staple items; it then goes on to detail some of the initiatives of organizations under the Ministry of Agriculture, breaking down the work carried out within each department, starting with the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization (NRWO).

Natural Resources, Watershed Management Organization

Natural resource land ownership: The country holds 137 million hectares of natural resource land. Prior to the Raisi government, approximately 77 million hectares of these lands had ownership documentation. Under the previous government, this figure rose to 134.5 million hectares.

Watershed management: Before the Raisi government took office, watershed management projects were implemented in several provinces, covering several thousand hectares. However, due to the previous government's efforts, a land restoration program for several million hectares was initiated

for the first time. Scientific studies have already been conducted on seven million hectares of land across the country.

Following comprehensive and expert studies, watershed management of 20 million hectares of the country's pastures was incorporated into the 7th National Development Plan (2023–27). During his visit to the Agriculture Ministry, president Raisi emphasized the revitalization of 50 million hectares of land nationwide, and this initiative was approved after further expert studies. It is also worth noting that the Raisi government fulfilled approximately 42% of the objectives outlined in the 6th National Development Plan (2016–2022) regarding watershed management.



According to experts from the country's natural resources organization, there is a groundwater deficit of more than 140 billion cubic meters nationwide. This deficit can be addressed through the implementation of watershed management projects.

Demarcation of lands: The delineation of natural resource lands and watershed management was one of the other positive measures taken by the Raisi government. The demarcation of lands in this sector witnessed a 57% increase, rising from 89 million hectares at the start of that government to 140 million hectares by the end of the Iranian calendar year of 1402 (ended March 19, 2024).

Planting one billion trees: The am-



 + Iran's previous president Ebrahim Raisi (R) plants a tree sapling on the occasion of the National Tree Planting Day on March 5, 2024. president.ir

bitious plan to plant one billion trees was initiated by the Raisi government. This plan entailed planting 250 million saplings annually throughout the country with the involvement of the populace.

Land Affairs Organization of Iran

Resolving agricultural land use conflicts: One of the key challenges faced by Iranian farmers in their dealings with the government has been the issue of overlapping boundaries between national and agricultural lands. By the end of September 2021, 1.08 million hectares of land across the country had been cleared of such conflicts, which equates to 11% of the total land area. During the Raisi gov-

ernment, significant progress has been made, with this figure rising to 11.037 million hectares, representing a 922% increase. As a result, 75% of the country's lands are now free from border conflicts. Accreditation of agricultural lands: It is worth noting that up until August 2021, approximately 4% of agricultural lands (totaling about 1.780 million hectares) had been documented. In the last three years, there has been significant progress in this regard, with documents issued for an additional 8.604 million hectares, representing a 383% increase and bringing the total accredited land to 53% of the total agricultural land. Consolidation of agricultural lands: Another initiative being pursued in

the agricultural sector is the consolidation of small, fragmented plots of land that have fallen out of use over the last few decades. Until August 2021, when president Raisi took office, 256 hectares of agricultural lands had been integrated, and this figure rose significantly to 13,144 hectares during the Raisi government. This reflects a substantial growth rate of 5054% in the consolidation of small land parcels. Identifying, preventing change of land use: One of the challenges faced is the threat of changing the use of agricultural land. In some cases, even first and second-class lands have been targeted by profiteers. Up until August 2021, 379,738 cases of land-use change were identified, and this number



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rose to 600,612 cases in the last three years, reflecting a growth rate of 58%.

Demolition of unauthorized constructions: Unauthorized constructions on agricultural lands that were demolished up until August 2021 totaled 109,296 cases. During the Raisi government, this number rose to 244,824 cases, reflecting an increase of 87%.

Allocation of land for agricultural projects: During the second-to-last government and up until August 2021, a total of 714,366 hectares of national land were allocated for agricultural projects. In the previous government, this allocation increased by 12%, reaching 799,153 hectares.

Land allotment for production, industrial projects: One of the key projects undertaken by the Land

Affairs Organization of Iran is the allocation of land for production plans across various industries. During the penultimate government and up until August 2021, a total of 140,880 hectares of land were allotted for this purpose. However, under the Raisi government, the transfer of land in this sector increased by 12%, reaching a total of 150,891 hectares.

It is worth noting that in the realm of intelligent land monitoring, the technology to monitor and intelligently oversee the country's land was not in place until August 2021. Due to the efforts of the Raisi government, this capability has now been implemented across all 31 provinces.

Iran Fisheries Organization

Aquatic exports: This area has a high capacity for revenue generation and supplies the basic goods market with high-calorie items, it

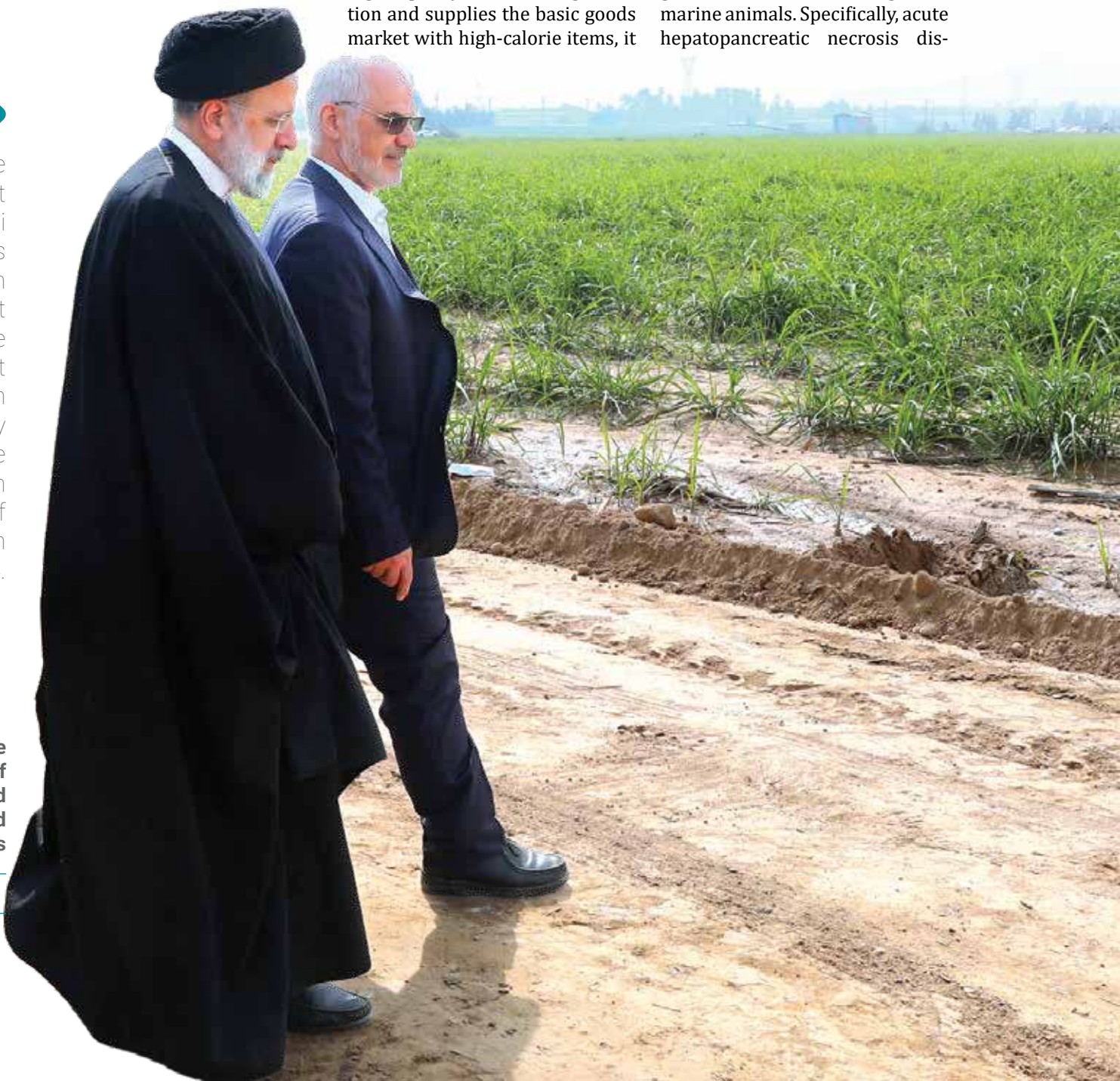
is worth mentioning that in the calendar year of 1402, 210,000 tons of aquatic products were exported from the country, generating a value of \$650,000. Three years before in 1399 (ended March 20, 2021), this figure stood at 139,000 tons, equivalent to \$528 million.

Shrimp farming: The latest statistics from the calendar year of 1399 indicate that Iran had 15,000 hectares of shrimp cultivation fields, producing 48,000 tons of shrimp. Under the Raisi government, these figures have risen to 26,000 hectares, representing a 73% growth in cultivation fields and a 4% increase in production, yielding 50,000 tons of shrimp.

The relatively modest 4% increase in production, compared to the significant 73% increase in cultivation, can be attributed to the emergence of a disease affecting these marine animals. Specifically, acute hepatopancreatic necrosis dis-



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (L) inaugurates the modern smart subsurface irrigation project of the Karoon Agro Industry Inc. in the southwestern city of Shoushtar on March 8, 2024.



Special Issue on Passing of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions

ease (AHPND), which is a bacterial disease prevalent worldwide, has impacted shrimp farms. Bacterial diseases tend to have prolonged lifespans, whereas viral diseases present less of a challenge in this regard.

Despite these challenges, Iran has achieved 96% of its goals set for this sector in 1402.

Production of fish in cages: By the end of the second-to-last government, there were 133 cages in the sea, resulting in the production of 2.6 thousand tons of fish. These figures have seen significant growth, reaching 356 cages and yielding 6,318 tons of fish by the end of 1402, representing increases of 167% and 143%, respectively.

Eyed eggs: Eyed eggs refer to fertilized salmon eggs that have developed to a stage where they are ready to be transferred. The term “eyed egg” describes this stage, as the eyes of the developing fish become visible inside the egg.

In 1399, 202 million pieces of eu-

genic eyed eggs were produced in Iran, and this number rose to 367 million pieces in 1402, reflecting an 81% growth rate. As a result of these initiatives, salmon production in the country has increased over the last three years.

Algae production: Algae production holds significance due to the crucial role algae play in ecosystems. They serve as a food source for numerous aquatic animals, and some varieties are even suitable for human consumption. Additionally, algae are prolific producers of oxygen through photosynthesis.

At the end of the penultimate government, algae production stood at 40 tons (wet weight), and this saw a substantial increase of 820% under the Raisi government, reaching 368 tons by the end of 1402.

Ornamental fish: Ornamental fish breeding and exports contribute significantly to the country’s economy, benefiting from a strong market demand. In 1399, the production of ornamental fish stood at

276 million pieces, and this number increased by 37% to reach 379 million pieces in 1402.

Aquatic production: In 1399, 1.268 million tons of aquatic products were produced domestically. This figure grew by 11% last year, reaching a total of 1.408 million tons.

Job creation: Employment statistics within the fisheries sector also showed a positive trend. By the end of the calendar year of 1399, the sector employed 237,000 people, and this number rose to 261,000 by the end of 1402, reflecting a 10% growth rate.

Fishing: In 1399, the country’s fishing yield totaled 715,000 tons, and this amount increased by 7.8% to reach 771,000 tons by the end of 1402.

Aquaculture: Within the sector of fish and other marine products, Iran raised 553,000 tons of fish in 1399. By the end of 1402, this figure rose to 637,000 tons, reflecting a 15% growth rate.



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Iran's agriculture, fisheries flourish under Raisi

The statistics and reports tallied by the government of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi show that the government's performance in agriculture was satisfactory. It even managed to chalk up solid achievements in the fields of farming and fisheries.

Almost self-sufficient in wheat production

One of the achievements of the government in this field was its move towards reaching self-sufficiency in wheat. This is especially important since wheat is deemed a strategic commodity in securing the country's food supply. Consequently, the Raisi government set out to achieve self-sufficiency in wheat production and made strides in the production and purchase of wheat from farmers.

As per the report of the Agriculture Ministry, the country's domestic wheat production stood at 4.5 mil-

lion tons in the Iranian calendar year 1400 (ended March 20, 2022), and Iran imported an additional 7 million tons to meet the needs of the country. The next year, Iran produced 7.5 million tons of wheat and imported 3 million tons. In the last calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), domestic wheat production rose to 10.4 million tons, and the country imported a further one million tons. Given the downward trend in wheat imports and the estimates made, the country is on track toward achieving self-sufficiency in wheat provision this year.

There were several measures that



Raisi's government took to cause an increase in the production of this key product: First, the government announced the guaranteed purchase rate of wheat ahead of the planting season and rationalized it. Second, Iranian farmers saw a 129% growth in wheat purchases, from 50,000 rials per kilo in the calendar year 1400 to 130,000 rials in 1402. This was done so as not to disadvantage farmers. Third, the government provided various support packages such as the planting subsidy and wheat delivery bonus.

Diplomacy in agricultural prosperity

Raisi's government has had successful experiences in developing agricultural diplomacy. It got the Qiz Qalasi hydroelectric dam, the largest and most important water project in the northwestern border region, up and running after 20 years. The dam provides the plains of the northwestern provinces with 2 billion cubic meters of water annually and lays the groundwork for the expansion of the agriculture and tourism sectors there.

The strengthening of food diplo-

Iranian late president Ebrahim Raisi (2nd-L) is getting briefed about an innovation at an exhibition showcasing the achievements of the country's knowledge-based companies, in Tehran on August 16, 2022.



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his companions



Iran's deceased president Ebrahim Raisi speaks at an event in Tehran on September 5, 2022, marking the start of the agricultural calendar year 1401-1402 and honoring successful persons in the agriculture industry.



macy with Russia, Latin American countries, neighboring nations, and aligned states was a key focus of the previous government's actions and consultations. Its active agricultural diplomacy resulted in several memorandums on safe consumption, food health, and pesticides, as well as the exchange of botanical technical knowledge. Removing export tariffs on agricultural goods with Asian countries and Russia and creating new export markets were also central to the government's consultations with other nations. According to a report by the Agriculture Ministry, these efforts led to a 22% growth in the export of agricultural and food products, reaching \$6.37 billion at the end of 1402, up from \$5.22 billion in 1400.

Investment growth in fisheries

According to a report from the Iran Fisheries Organization, 63% of the investments in the fisheries and aquatics sub-sector in the calendar year 1399 (ended March 20, 2021) came from bank facilities, 20% from the private sector, and 17% in the form of loans from the government.

However, in the year 1402, the total figure marked a 1,200% increase. The breakdown of this investment in 1402 was as follows: 90% from the private sector, 5% from public sector credits, and 5% through bank facilities.

When it comes to trade, the Raisi government also saw a notable expansion in the export of aquatic and fishery products. In 1399, Iran exported 139,000 tons of fishery products, generating revenue of \$528 million. This increased significantly by 1402, with exports reaching 210,000 tons and bringing in \$650 million.

Development of agricultural tech

Another notable achievement of the Raisi government was the advancement of Iran's agricultural technology and the boost in its productivity within the agricultural sector. Through the backing of novel scientific projects linked to water and food security, the establishment of technological and knowledge-based units in agriculture witnessed a substantial expansion, increasing by 308%. This growth

took the number of such units from 152 in 1400 to 621 by the end of 1402. Furthermore, the issuance of electronic business licenses in the agricultural sector, which initially stood at zero at the start of the government's term, surged to reach 307,000 cases as of 1402.

Growth in fertilizer production

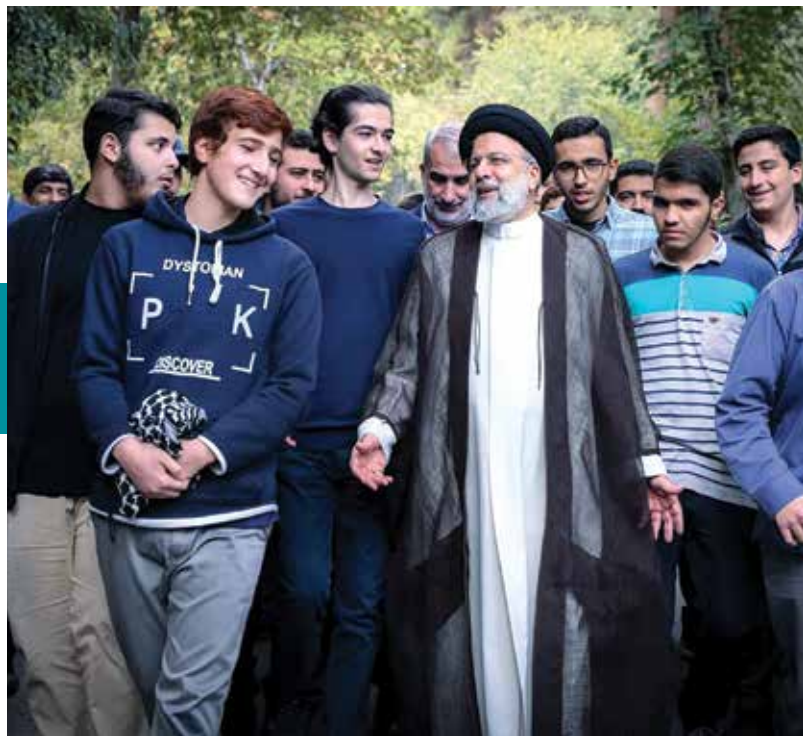
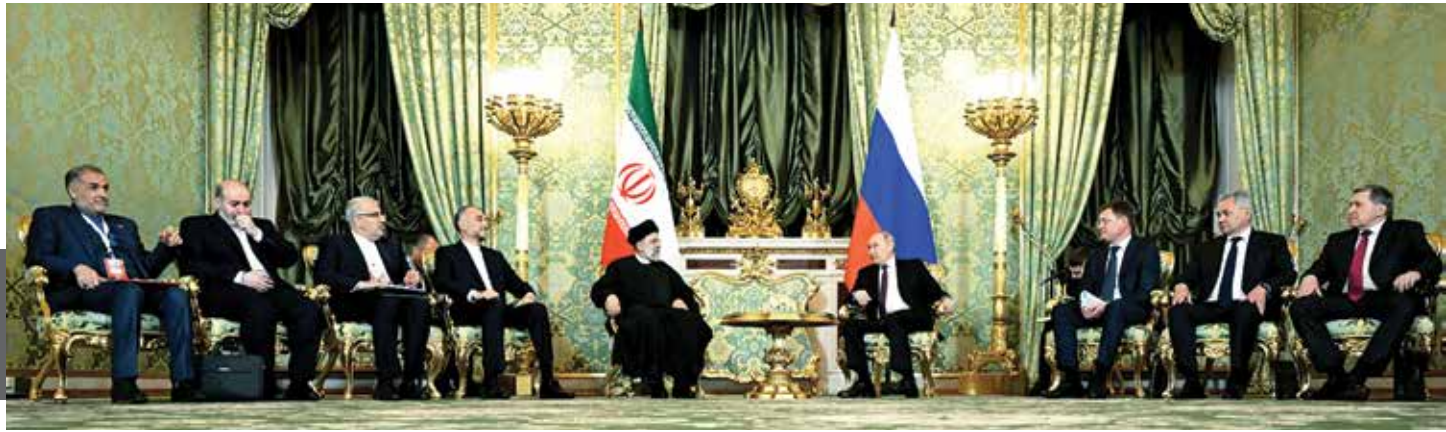
With an output of 8 million tons of urea fertilizer, Iran ranks among the world's largest and most prominent exporters of this vital strategic agricultural input. The country's annual agricultural requirement for potassium nitrate, phosphate, and potash chemical fertilizers stands at approximately 4.5 million tons. Iran has achieved self-sufficiency in the production of potassium nitrate fertilizers, which constitute the largest share of the country's fertilizer portfolio.

Regarding phosphate and potash fertilizers, which were previously imported until the last few years, the country embarked on a path toward self-sufficiency in agricultural fertilizers by planning 30 projects for the construction of factories and the development of domestic mines. This initiative aims to produce over 3 million tons of chemical fertilizers and 2 million tons of phosphate and potash fertilizers. Key projects within this framework include utilizing the capacities of the Urmia Petrochemical company for potassium sulfate fertilizer production, the establishment of a factory for phosphoric acid and phosphate fertilizer manufacturing at the Karun Phosphate Products Complex, the triple superphosphate fertilizer production by Yazd's KimiaDaran Kavir Factory, and the development of the Charam Phosphate Mines.

Thus, the production of phosphate and potash fertilizers in Iran witnessed a notable increase, rising by 51% from the start of the previous government's term to the end of 1402. This increase took the production levels from 77,000 tons to 116,000 tons, which, in turn, led to the cessation of imports and the retention of currency within the country.



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