Leader Meets Hundreds of Entrepreneurs, Investors, and Economic Activists - 22 /Jan/ 2025

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution met this morning with hundreds of entrepreneurs, investors, and economic activists and described the private sector's progress and innovations as a source of hope and momentum. He emphasised the necessity for a major media effort to inform the public, especially the youth, about these encouraging achievements. He said, "The country's decision-making and executive bodies must seriously support the private sector and remove obstacles from its path of activity and progress."

At the meeting, the Leader of the Revolution also spoke about the victory of the Gaza Resistance, saying, "What is happening before the eyes of the world is like a legend."

Ayatollah Khamenei described today's meeting as very pleasant and beneficial. He considered the remarks and reports of economic activists a source of vitality and progress, particularly when enemies are making great efforts to create an atmosphere of despair. He said, "Unfortunately, due to a lack of media exposure, youth, students, and other groups are not informed about these positive developments and achievements. Those responsible must carefully discuss and plan a major media initiative to address this issue."

Referring to five meetings with economic activists in recent years, he stated, "In 2019, at the height of sanctions and intensified threats, we called producers and entrepreneurs the commanders on the front lines of the economic war and emphasised the need for production growth. Subsequent meetings in later years showed that the private sector has been moving toward increasing its strength and creativity. This year, it has also become evident that economic activists, with their experience in the field, are pursuing production expansion and increasing investment."

The Leader of the Revolution mentioned yesterday's visit to the Pioneers of Progress Exhibition and said, "This exhibition represents a small portion of the country's realities. Nevertheless, it reveals that, despite pressures, sanctions, and threats, the private sector has achieved a commendable level of progress, and the country is moving forward. We must value this great divine blessing."

Ayatollah Khamenei added, "Although the private sector in the economy is one example of the country's progress, there are also clear signs of advancement in science, research, and other areas. However, there is no shortage of problems, flaws, and shortcomings, the resolution of which ultimately falls upon us, the officials."

He emphasised the necessity for officials to focus on domestic capacities and capabilities, especially in light of sanctions and pressures, adding, "We must make full use of these capabilities."

The Leader of the Revolution saw the visits by the heads of the three branches of government and other officials to the Pioneers of Progress Exhibition as beneficial and necessary. He added, "Martyr Raisi was very pleased and hopeful after visiting last year's exhibition."

He observed that the concern private sector investors had for the country's progress was a prominent feature of yesterday's exhibition and today's meeting. He stated, "Naturally, the matter of profit is also of interest to investors, but it is evident that, for the most part, they focus more on solving problems and advancing the country than merely increasing their earnings."

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasised that officials have a grave duty to address the concerns brought up by economic

activists. He said, "The decision-making and executive system must, in the true sense of the word, support the private sector and remove obstacles to its progress."

He likened some actions of government and regulatory bodies to "creating speed bumps" in the path of the private sector's momentum. He added, "One shameful issue is the importation of products similar to those domestically produced, which effectively harms workers and producers and paves the way for the collapse of domestic investors against foreign competitors."

The Leader of the Revolution emphasised that it was important for Mr. Aref, the First Vice President, to follow up with ministers to remove such obstacles. He said, "Eliminating these barriers may require amending laws and regulations, which must be done."

He clarified that supporting the private sector does not mean being negligent toward those who aim to exploit. He added, "While increasing oversight, assistance must also be enhanced for those who genuinely seek the country's progress."

Ayatollah Khamenei saw implementing the policies of Article 44 as a crucial step in removing barriers to the country's economic growth. He said, "All officials and experts have endorsed these policies, but the relevant authorities have failed to act on them despite repeated recommendations. This was one of the reasons for the economic decline during the 2010s."

He expressed satisfaction with the formation of specialised working groups in the private sector to achieve 8% growth. He added, "These experts have identified solutions to problems by assessing capabilities and preparing investment plans. Government officials must seriously follow up on and implement the outcomes of these working groups."

The Leader of the Revolution criticised those who think achieving 8% economic growth is impossible, tying it to unrealistic and massive foreign investments. He said, "Experts in the specialised working groups pursuing 8% growth have not tied it to 'this massive amount of foreign investments,' they are focusing on developing domestic capabilities to achieve this goal instead, and the government must certainly pay attention to their needs and assist them." He emphasised the necessity of sustaining high economic growth, saying, "An 8% growth rate, of course, is not a miracle, but if it continues and its benefits are distributed fairly, it will bring noticeable changes to the country." The Leader of the Revolution also highlighted the importance of participating in associations such as BRICS, stressing the imperative that the country's diplomatic officials work untiringly to maximise the benefits of this significant opportunity. He said, "The BRICS financial system, which enables financial exchanges using the currencies of member countries, has tremendous potential."

He emphasised the necessity of reducing reliance on the dollar in trade transactions as much as possible, stating, "This effort, which the honourable President is also pursuing, is a significant and crucial task and a decisive and impactful move in the economic arena. The Central Bank must open the way for the allocation of other currencies. Of course, this will have reactions, but it will strengthen the country's position."

He spoke about a complaint made yesterday by one of the producers at the exhibition about the extended delay in issuing permits despite this issue being highlighted in the Leader's speech last year. He said, "I was truly embarrassed by this issue. These problems must be solved, and their solution depends on a genuine belief in and practical commitment to the necessity of supporting the private sector. The private sector should feel assured of government support and experience smooth, obstacle-free processes."

In another part of his remarks, the Leader of the Revolution described the ceasefire and Gaza's victory as a clear sign of the fulfilment of the prediction that the Resistance is alive and will remain so. He remarked, "What is

happening before the eyes of the world is like a legend: a massive war machine like the United States, indifferent to humanitarian values, providing bunker-busting bombs to the oppressive and bloodthirsty Zionist regime. This ruthless and merciless regime bombs 15,000 children in their homes and hospitals, yet it fails to achieve its objectives."

He emphasised that without U.S. support, the Zionist regime would have been brought to its knees within the first few weeks. He added, "Over the past year and a few months, the Zionist regime committed every atrocity it could, bombing homes, hospitals, mosques, and churches in a small area like Gaza. Yet in the end, it not only failed to achieve the goal set by its miserable and disgraced leader—namely, the destruction of Hamas and governing Gaza without any resistance—but was ultimately forced to sit at the negotiating table with Hamas and accept its conditions for a ceasefire."

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the vigour and victory of the Resistance in the epic of Gaza are instances where the divine tradition of triumph through perseverance is realised. He stated, "Wherever there is steadfastness among the righteous servants of God, victory is certain."

He made reference to statements stemming from delusive and wishful thinking about Iran allegedly becoming weak, saying, "The future will reveal who has truly become weak. Saddam was also under the illusion that Iran was weak; he launched his aggression, and Reagan, driven by the same delusion, gave him immense support—yet both of them and dozens of other deluded individuals eventually met their downfall. All the while, the Islamic Republic grew stronger day by day. By God's grace, this experience will repeat itself."

At the beginning of the meeting, 13 producers and private-sector economic activists, both men and women, were present:

Payam Khalili: Oil and gas industry equipment sector.

Reza Haji Karim: Water and Wastewater Industry sector.

Zohreh Manouchehri: Activist in saffron, medicinal plants, and the cooperative sector.

Ali Makhdoomi: Hot blades for gas turbine producers.

Shahriyar Safari: Activist in livestock and dairy industries.

Reza Rezaei: Manufacturer of automotive parts.

Mojtaba Dastmalchian: Textile industry sector.

Mansour Najmi Nia: Mining industry sector.

Alireza Farhadi: Activist in the area of the Internet of Things (IoT) and microelectronics.

Sadaf Tajer: Producer of mother and baby products.

Masoud Pourjola: Gas and LNG industry sector.

Maham Momeni: Activist in the energy sector and,

Seyyed Amir Moayed Alaei: Activist in the industrial centrifuges sector.

The key points the speakers raised at this event included designing and implementing innovative models for attracting and training industrial students; the need to establish consistency and stability in government financial directives; the need to align financing laws for knowledge-based companies with the banking system; the low stake cooperatives have in the national economy; empowering the country to compete internationally; allocating a 20-year roadmap for the automotive industry as a guiding document and ensuring long-term stability in its regulations; leveraging the potential of the textile industry by curbing excessive imports of foreign fabrics and clothes' smuggling; mandating the use of smart technologies in the public sector and major industries; providing incentives to industries operating in underprivileged regions; and the need for decisive action against any form of corruption related to private sector matters.