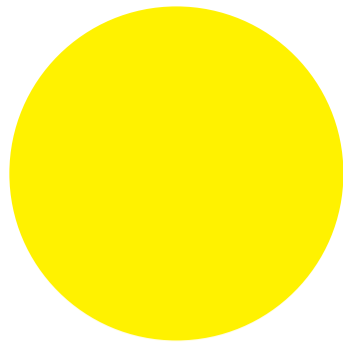


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NEWS IN BRIEF

Rail-transported goods up 89% in last three years: Bazrpash

Iran's minister of roads and urban development announced an 89 percent growth in the transit of goods via rail during the government of the late president Ebrahim Raisi compared to the previous government. Mehرداد Bazrpash referred to the statistics in the field of transit during the government of the late chief executive and said good agreements were inked with the regional countries in this field and the road transit volume rose from 9.3 tons to 14.7 tons last year, Tasnim News Agency reported. It is hoped that the volume of the road transit will exceed 20 million tons by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (to end March 20, 2025), he added. Elsewhere in his remarks, Bazrpash pointed to the two macro projects namely "Iran Rah" and "Housing of People" and expounded on the positive measures taken in the two fields. The "Iran Rah" Project is a main issue in defining Iran's logistics and transit opportunities and has been put atop agenda of the ministry, he said.

Electricity output grew 13.5% under Raisi's government

Statistics indicate that Iran's generation of electricity during the government of the late president Ebrahim Raisi registered a 13.5 percent growth, with Iran generating more electricity than industrialized countries like the UK and Italy. The latest statistics released in a report on "Statistical Review of the Global Energy" show that Iran generated 382.9 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2023, registering a 4.3 percent hike compared to a year earlier. Iran had generated more than 367.1 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2022. The growth of Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 was nearly twice that of the average growth of the generation of electricity in the world. The report put the total generation of electricity worldwide in 2023 at more than 29,924 terawatts/hours, which was 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier. Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 exceeded that of industrialized countries like the UK, Italy, and Spain as well as Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand, the report added.

Acting president opens 17 petroleum projects worth \$3b

Iran launched 17 major petroleum industry projects with an investment worth \$3 billion as the country moves ahead with plans to expand its oil sector despite sanctions affecting its access to foreign investment and technology.

Acting President Mohammad Mokhber attended a ceremony in the Iranian Oil Ministry headquarters on Monday to remotely inaugurate the projects that were scattered in seven provinces across Iran, Press TV wrote.

One of the important measures taken by the 13th government was to focus on strengthening the oil industry by relying on domestic capabilities, Mokhber said speaking in the inaugural ceremony.

He went on to say that by attracting domestic and foreign investments and taking advantage of the country's engineers and experts, the Ministry of Oil organized the oilfields that had been abandoned by the Europeans.

Meanwhile, Oil Minister Javad Owji said in the ceremony that by launching the projects, in addition to creating jobs for 15,000 people, it will fetch about \$2 billion annually.

The minister went on to say that in the last three years, the Ministry of Oil has signed more than \$23 billion worth of contracts for the development of joint and independent oil and gas fields, while in the field of energy consumption optimization, the min-



istry has received approval from the government to sign new projects worth \$36 billion.

The projects covered oilfield development, refineries and petrochemical plants, fuel pipelines and flared gas recovery systems. The official IRNA news agency said in a report that the projects will increase Iran's flare gas recovery capacity by 4 million cu-

bic meters per day while boosting the country's capacity for production of Euro 5 gasoil by 5.7 million liters per day.

Petrochemicals production capacity will increase by 3 million metric tons per year as a result of the new plants launched on Monday, said the report, adding that some 222 kilometers of pipelines had also been inaugu-

rated to increase the ability of refiners to transfer products to various parts of the country.

Most of the projects were in southern oil-rich provinces of Khuzestan, Bushehr, Hormuzgan and Fars, it said.

Iran has relied on domestic expertise and investment to develop its petroleum sector in recent years despite the fact that

the country has been struggling with a series of unprecedented sanctions imposed by the United States.

Oil exports and production have increased as a result of the policy, with Owji saying earlier this week that total oil output in Iran will reach around 4 million barrels per day by the end of the calendar year to late March.

Iran's annual honey production hits 85,000 tons: Senior businessman



By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

Iran produced 85,000 tons of honey during last Iranian year

(ended March 19) despite drought and shortage of rainfall in the country, said Abdolreza Bigonah, a member of Ardebil Chamber of Commerce, adding that production of honey is expected to witness at least 10 percent of

growth during the current year. Bigonah, who is also the head of the National Association of Beekeepers and Honey Producers of Iran, told Iran Daily that the great variety of weather in Iran has caused a wide range of vegetation across the country, based on which, depending on the type of flower and plant that the bee collects its nectar, different types of honey with flavors and various properties are produced. He noted that Ardebil Province is one of the important centers of honey production in the country, explaining that the mountainous areas of Ardebil and the slopes of Sabalan mountains are considered to be the main centers of honey production in the north-western province.

Thanks to the plant diversity of these areas which includes astragalus, thyme and echium amoenum, the honey produced in these areas enjoy high quality, as the honey produced in Sabalan of Ardebil has been registered globally.

According to him, the Iranian provinces of East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Ardebil, Kurdistan, Mazandaran and Fars account for the largest amount of honey production in the country per year.

Despite the high volume of honey production in Iran compared to many countries, the figure for honey exports is not very significant, the official criticized.

An important problem faced by honey exporters is the re-

turn of foreign exchange, which is due to the US and Western sanctions against Iran, Bigonah stated.

"Every year, we have 15,000 to 20,000 tons of honey production surplus in Iran, and therefore, if the export problems are solved and we perform better in the field of marketing, the country will earn a good income from honey exports."

During spring, we have seen an increase in honey production due to the very good weather that happened in different parts of the country, but considering that the honey production season in the country has not yet ended, it is still not possible to give an exact figure on total production, he noted.

Yearly inflation down by 0.9% to 36.1% in June: SCI

Latest figures released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) show that the annual inflation rate in the country dropped again in the calendar month to June 20.

SCI data showed that the consumer price index (CPI) had reached 249.7 in the month to late June, an increase of 36.1% compared to the same figure reported in late June 2023, reported Press TV.

However, the rate had declined by 0.9% compared to the same rate reported in the month to late May, a sign the country is

emerging from a crisis of high inflation rates that had peaked at 49.1% in May last year.

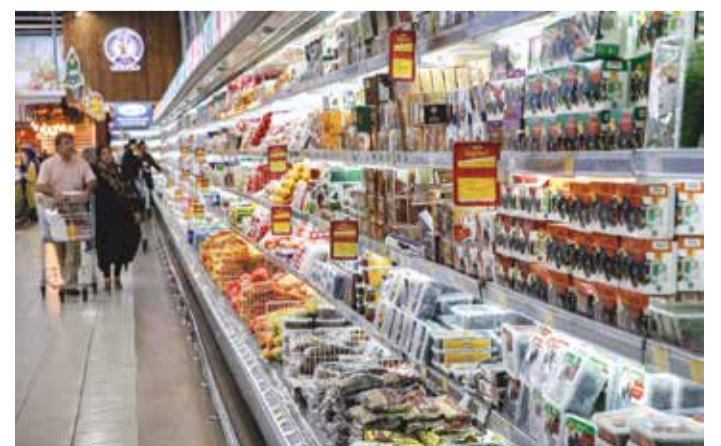
SCI figures showed that consumer prices had risen by 2.8% on a month-on-month basis in the calendar month to late June with prices of food, beverages and smoking products rising 4.2% while prices of non-food goods and services rising 2.1% over the same period.

The point-to-point inflation measure, which compares prices in two similar months of back-to-back years, topped 31.9% in the month to late June, according to

the same figures.

Iran has seen high but controlled levels of inflation in recent years, both because of a relatively short period of decline in its oil exports which began in 2020, a year after the US toughened its unilateral sanctions against the country, and because of changes in the global supply and demand system that has been blamed on the coronavirus pandemic.

Annual inflation rates of below 40% are a respite for many Iranians who have been struggling with sky-rocketing prices in recent years.



Take a journey through nature, history, and culture in Aladagh Mountains



In the heart of northwestern Iran lies a province that often escapes the international traveler's radar—Zanjan. Instead of heading to the well-known cities of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tehran, those in the know are attracted to Zanjan for its unspoiled landscapes and wealth of cultural heritage.

Among its many treasures, none shines quite as brightly as the Aladaghlar Mountains, a rugged and majestic range that offers an unparalleled blend of natural beauty, adventure, and history. Before we delve into the wonders of the Aladaghlar Mountains, it's essential to under-

stand the context in which they are set. Zanjan Province, with its capital city also named Zanjan, is situated in the northwest of Iran. It shares borders with Ardebil Province to the north, Gilan Province to the northeast, Qazvin Province to the east, Hamedan Province to the southeast, and Kurdistan Province to the west.



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Historical significance

The history of Zanjan stretches back millennia, with evidence of human settlement dating as far back as the 4th millennium BCE. Throughout its long history, the region has been under the rule of various empires, including the Medes, Achaemenids, Seleucids, Parthians, Sassanids, and later, the Islamic caliphates and Iranian dynasties. This rich tapestry of cultures has left an indelible mark on Zanjan's architecture, traditions, and way of life.

Economic and cultural identity

Today, Zanjan is known for its handicrafts, particularly its exquisite knives, *charoogh* (handwoven women's shoes), and *malileh* (filigree). The province is also famous for its agricultural products, with olives, garlic, and grapes being key exports. However, it's the province's natural beauty that is increasingly drawing visitors from around the world, and at the heart of this appeal are the Aladagh Mountains. The Aladagh Mountains are a prominent mountain range located in Zanjan Province. The name is of Turkish origin, reflecting the Turkic influence in the region's history. "Ala" means colorful or motley, while "daghlar" means mountains, so the name can be roughly translated as Colorful Mountains.

Geographical location and features

The Aladagh Mountains are part of the larger Alborz Mountain range, which stretches across northern Iran from the border with Azerbaijan to the southern end of the Caspian Sea. The Alborz Mountain is home to Iran's highest peak, Mount Damavand, and forms a natural barrier between the Caspian lowlands and the Iranian Plateau. Within this grand geological context, the Aladagh Mountains rise majestically in Zanjan Province. The range is characterized by its rugged peaks, deep valleys, and dramatic cliffs. The highest summit in the Aladagh Mountains reaches an impressive altitude of over 3,000 meters (about 9,800 feet)

above sea level, making it a challenging target for mountaineers and a stunning sight for all visitors.

Climate and ecosystems

The climate in the Aladagh Mountains varies significantly with elevation. At lower altitudes, the region experiences a semi-arid climate typical of much of Iran's interior. Summers are hot and dry, while winters are cold, with temperatures often dropping below freezing. However, as you ascend the mountains, the climate becomes progressively cooler and moister.

Mountain Forests: Between 1,500 and 2,500 meters, the slopes are covered in mountain forests. Oak, maple, and wild almond trees dominate these woodlands, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife.

Steppe: Below 1,500 meters, the landscape transitions into steppe—a semi-arid grassland dotted with hardy shrubs and small trees adapted to the dry conditions.

Flora and fauna

The Aladagh Mountains are a biodiversity hotspot, supporting a wide range of plant and animal species, many of which are endemic to the region.

In terms of flora, the alpine meadows burst with color in the warmer months. Here, you'll find species like the Zagros lily, mountain tulip, and various types of bellflowers, buttercups, and forget-me-nots. In the forested areas, wildflowers like primroses and violets carpet the forest floor in spring.

The Aladagh Mountains host a diverse range of fauna, including the endangered Persian Leopard, agile bezoar ibex, omnivorous brown bear, majestic golden eagle, and charming Persian squirrel. Each species is uniquely adapted to the rocky slopes and forested areas, making wildlife sightings in this region a special experience. The Aladagh Mountains aren't just a natural wonder; they're steeped in history and cultural significance.

Ancient trade routes

For thousands of years, trade caravans traversed the valleys and passes of the Aladagh Mountains.

These routes were part of the broader network that we now call the Silk Road—a series of trade routes that connected China with the Mediterranean world. Traders carrying silk, spices, and other luxuries from the East would pass through these mountains on their way to markets in Persia, Mesopotamia, and beyond.

Evidence of this history can be seen in the remnants of caravanse-rais—fortified inns that provided shelter, food, and protection for travelers. Some of these structures, built from the sturdy stone of the Aladagh Mountains, still stand today, offering a tangible link to this vibrant past.

Nomadic heritage

The slopes and valleys of the Aladagh Mountains have long been home to nomadic peoples, particularly the Shahsavans. The Shahsavans are a Turkic people who have practiced a semi-nomadic lifestyle for centuries, moving their herds between summer pastures in the mountains and winter quarters in the lowlands.

This seasonal migration, known as transhumance, is perfectly adapted to the varied ecosystems of the Aladagh Mountains. In spring and summer, the nomads lead their flocks of sheep and goats up to the alpine meadows, where the animals fatten on the rich grasses. Come autumn, they descend to the warmer, more sheltered valleys to escape the harsh mountain winter. The Shahsavans are renowned for their handicrafts, particularly their vibrant, geometrically patterned rugs and kilims. The wool for these textiles comes from their own flocks, grazed in the meadows of the Aladagh Mountains, while many of the dyes are derived from plants gathered in the same region.

Sacred sites and legends

Mountains have often been seen as places of spiritual power, and the Aladagh Mountains are no exception. Throughout the range, you'll find shrines, some modest and others more elaborate, dedicated to various saints and holy figures. These sites attract pilgrims who

come to seek blessings, make vows, or give thanks.

One such site is the tomb of Pir-e Aladagh, a Sufi mystic who, according to local tradition, lived as a hermit in these mountains several centuries ago. His simple stone tomb, located high on a mountain slope, is a place of profound peace. Pilgrims tie colorful ribbons to nearby trees as symbols of their wishes and prayers.

The Aladagh Mountains also feature in many local legends. One tale speaks of a hidden valley, accessible only through a narrow, easily overlooked pass. In this secret glen, it's said that the last survivors of the Assassins—the famed medieval sect—found refuge after their strongholds were destroyed by the Mongols. While historians are skeptical, the legend adds an air of mystery to any hike through the mountains.

Activities and attractions

The Aladagh Mountains offer a wide range of outdoor activities and experiences for visitors. This includes hiking and trekking on various trails of different difficulty levels, rock climbing on limestone cliffs and granite towers, wildlife watching tours to spot Persian leopards and various bird species, cultural experiences such as staying with nomad families and taking Silk Road heritage tours, and winter sports like skiing and snowshoeing.

The diverse range of activities available in this region makes it a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts and those looking to immerse themselves in nature and local culture.

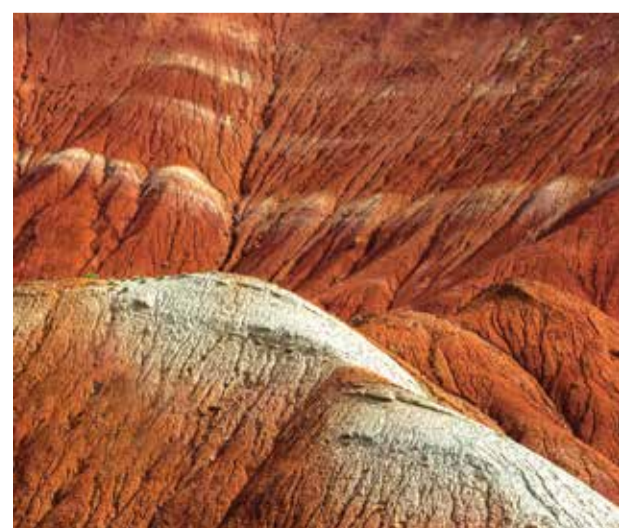
The Aladagh Mountains offer a variety of outdoor activities for visitors. Rock climbing enthusiasts can explore routes like Shahsavans Wall and Eagle's Nest. Wildlife watching tours allow visitors to observe Persian leopards and a diverse array of bird species. Cultural experiences such as Nomad Homestays and Silk Road Heritage Tours offer opportunities to engage with the region's history and traditions. In winter, the mountains become a winter sports destination for skiing and snowshoeing.



IRNA



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IRNA

Nearly half of voters say Biden not mentally fit for second term

By Terry Jones
Editor

PERSPECTIVE

In recent weeks, after several very public signs of age-related issues, 81-year-old President Joe Biden's physical and mental fitness for the White House have once again become a topic of debate. Is the oldest president ever to serve still fit for office? A plurality of voters say "no," according to the latest I&I/TIPP Poll. Overall, more American voters give Biden failing grades than passing ones when it comes to both his mental and physical health, according to the national online June I&I/TIPP Poll, taken from May 29-31, of 1,910 adults. The poll has a margin of error of +/-2.4 percentage points.



US President Joe Biden (C) seemingly freezes in place while attending a Juneteenth concert on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, D.C., on June 10, 2024. KENT NISHIMURA/GETTY IMAGES



Americans lack confidence in Biden's ability to be the next leader of the United States. No doubt, Biden's advisers are worried about this.

Our first question asked: "President Biden is seeking a second term. How would you rate his mental acuity and physical fitness?" Participants were then given several possible answers, with a school-style grade assigned: A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (poor), and F (unacceptable). On mental acuity, or sharpness, the poll wasn't close: For 47% of those who answered the poll, Biden earned either D (16%) or F (31%) grades. Just 33% gave him either A (14%) or B (19%). Another 16% rated him C — just average. Overall, Biden's "grade-point average" was 1.66, or roughly a D+ grade on the traditional "A-to-F" grading continuum. But, not surprisingly, the answers weren't uniform across all demographic groups.

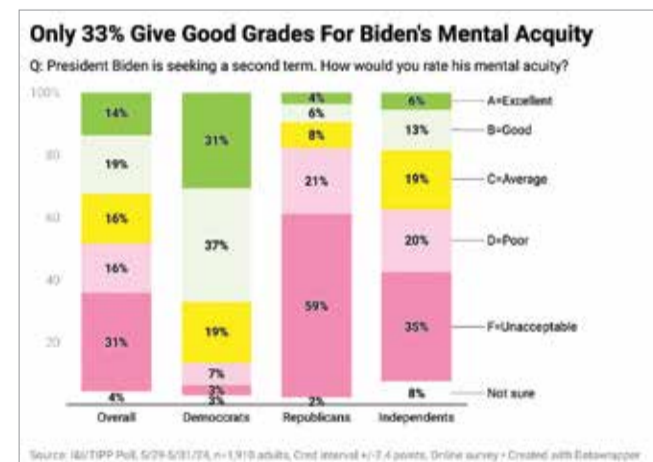
For instance, Democrats were far more likely to give Biden high passing grades for mental acuity (67%) than failing ones (11%), while just 10% of Republicans gave Biden passing grades and 80% flunked him. Independents also were unimpressed: They delivered 55% D or F grades, versus just 18% high passing grades. By race, white respondents were generally harsher on Biden than minorities. Among white voters, 56% rated Biden a D or F, versus 28% who gave him A or B grades. For blacks, the comparable ratings were 19% D or F grades (poor) for Biden, but 46% gave him As or Bs (good). Hispanics split somewhere in the middle, with 40% giving Biden the lowest possible grades, but 41% giving him the highest.

And, in a possible bad omen for Biden in 2024's presidential vote, Red State (52% poor, vs. 30% good) and Swing State (49% poor, 32% good) voters seem to be in tune, while even Blue State voters (42% poor, 36% good) seem at best ambivalent about Biden's fitness for a second term. Assessments of Biden's physical fitness to stay another four years in the most powerful elected position in the world followed a similar pattern. Once again, 47% of voters gave Biden a D or an F for his physical fitness, while just 28% gave him an A or B. Also again, Republicans (78%) and independents (55%) give failing grades, while Democrats (13%) are far more generous. Some 57% of Dems give Biden top marks, versus just 9% of GOP members and 17% of independents. Two other questions reflect how voters perceive Biden's ability to do his job should he win a second term.

The first: "How concerned are you about Biden's ability to handle national security issues if he is re-elected as president?" On this question, 62% overall responded either "very concerned" (42%) or "somewhat concerned" (20%), versus 32% answering "not very concerned" (16%) or "not at all concerned" (16%). While partisan differences were evident, as almost always seems the case in polls, it's notable that while 57% of Democrats described themselves as "not concerned," 37% — more than a third — described themselves as "concerned." That compares to 9% "not concerned" to 88% "concerned" for Republicans, and 27% "not concerned" and 65% "concerned" for independents. Clearly, Americans of all parties have significant worries about Biden handling foreign affairs. Yes, that includes Democrats.

The final question: "In 2020, President Biden claimed that he did not have any involvement in his son Hunter Biden's business. Based on what you know now, how honest do you believe the President was about his involvement in his son's business?"

ran photos of Biden seemingly wandering away from the other G7 leaders, only to be towed back to the group by Italian leader Giorgia Meloni. In another worrisome sign, he appeared to put his head on the ailing Pope Francis' head as he spoke with him, a strict no-



Here again, responses were quite damning for a major national political figure. Among voters, 48% described Biden as either "not very honest" (15%) or "not at all honest" (33%). That compares to just 39% calling Biden either "somewhat honest" (19%) or "very honest" (20%). No doubt, Biden's advisers are worried about this. As the I&I/TIPP Poll clearly demonstrates, a plurality of voters have significant problems with Biden's physical and mental health, and also show significant doubts about his basic honesty and integrity, in particular with regard to his foreign business dealings with his son, Hunter Biden. It may be problematic. Biden's recent turn at the G7 meeting in Italy left many both in the US and in nations around the world scratching their heads. Under the headline "Meander In Chief," the New York Post

not that sent tongues wagging about his mental faculties. This comes after an alarming article in the Wall Street Journal based on interviews with 45 Democrats and Republicans who had met with Biden recently and found him mentally lacking. The Journal cited a number of recent public miscues on Biden's part that had raised concerns among voters: "On May 20, during a Rose Garden event celebrating Jewish American Heritage month, Biden said one of the US hostages held in Gaza was a guest at the White House event, before correcting himself. One day earlier, at a campaign event in Detroit, he indicated that he was vice president during the COVID-19 pandemic, which started three years after he left that office. It was one of numerous flubs in the single speech that prompted the White House to make cor-



A pro-Palestinian protestor (front-R) holds a sign warning the US president that democrats will not vote for him in the November 2024 election, during a December protest in Los Angeles. DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES

rections to the official transcript. In January, he mixed up two of his Hispanic cabinet secretaries, Alejandro Mayorkas and Xavier Becerra. During a February fundraiser in New York, he recounted speaking to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl — who died in 2017 — at the

2021 Group of Seven meeting. That same month, at a different fundraiser, he said that during the 2021 G-7 summit he had spoken to former French President François Mitterrand, who died in 1996." As for Biden's ability to handle foreign affairs, which Democrats and Republicans agree re-

quires diplomatic deftness and depth of knowledge, Biden's abilities in that realm have also raised serious questions. From the disastrous exit from Afghanistan and our involvement in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, to the US' open-borders immigration policy, to China's growing military, diplo-

matic, and economic challenges to the US, to the support for long-time ally Israel following Hamas' attack, many Americans are simply fed up with what they see as an enfeebled America on the world stage, as the I&I/TIPP Poll clearly indicates. Coupled with Biden's clear

trouble in convincing voters he has had little or nothing at all to do with Hunter Biden's multi-million-dollar business dealings overseas, and the president may have an uphill battle in gaining a second term.

The full article first appeared on *Tippinsights*.

If Biden steps down, who comes next for Democrats?

By Martin Pengelly
Journalist

OPINION

According to *New York Times* columnist Bret Stephens, Joe Biden has one option if he wants to secure a "courageous, honorable, and transformative legacy" from his time as US president: He should choose not to run for re-election in November.

Just five months out from election day, Stephens, a "Never Trump" conservative, listed the dizzying challenges facing Biden at home and abroad as he runs to keep from the White House "a felonious adversary who, three years ago, incited violence to overturn an election."

Stephens did not directly mention Biden's age, 81, or ceaseless speculation that the president is too old for the office. But the question of age is undoubtedly Biden's biggest campaign problem and Stephens did write that the president's "feeble" leadership renders him unequal to the great tasks facing the US, leaving him "with one option that can be a win for America and, ultimately, his place in history."

"He can ... cede the field to a Democrat who can win ... and do the hard and brave things it will take to secure security and peace for the free world."

"There's still time, if only just."

When contacted by *The Daily Beast*, neither the White House nor the Biden campaign chose to comment on Stephens' column. But say President Biden did listen to Stephens and did decide that even so close to an election, to be a modern-day Cincinnatus — the Roman dictator who relinquished power, setting an example for George Washington — was the best thing he could do for his country. Which Democrats might step into the breach?

Coastal governors with TV hair

Biden and Donald Trump haven't debated yet but Gavin Newsom of California has, facing off with Florida governor Ron DeSantis on Fox News in December. Most thought Biden's surrogate won, in part simply by acting and appearing more presidential than an opponent two months after giving up on his twitchily awkward Republican campaign and casting his lot with Trump. Widely held to be preparing a presidential run in 2028, the tall and handsome Newsom was also widely said to be running a "shadow campaign" this time, in case the Democratic nomination fell open. He denied it, of course, but at 56 and in his second term, he has the experience, as well as the looks and manner, to make a case

on the national stage quickly. In the debut column, as governor of a deep blue state, Newsom could expect ferocious opposition from centrists and Republicans both. Phil Murphy of New Jersey has nothing like Newsom's profile or presence (though he does have a new hairdo), but he is also a two-term governor with a solid record in a populous blue state who might seem ready-made to step into a gap. He's 10 years older than Newsom, but in US politics today, 66 is practically spring chicken material. A former Goldman Sachs executive, Murphy might reassure Wall Street leaders now slinking back to Trump. He also has diplomatic experience, having served as ambassador to Germany under Barack Obama. He denied interest in the presidential nomination in 2024 but dodged questions about 2028. He'd surely be interested if a vacancy suddenly arose.

Swing state stars who get things done

Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan, is also in her second term. Considered for vice president when Biden ran and won in 2020, she shone through COVID and other challenges in a tough state — even amid a far-right plot to kidnap and possibly kill her. That episode and others have contributed to the 52-year-old's national profile. When she does run, which most state and national observers expect in 2028, her pitch will inevitably focus on blue-collar qualities associated with her state: grit (or "True Gretch" as an imminent campaign biography awkwardly puts it), tenacity, and a commitment to working-class voters. As Biden said when considering her for VP, Whitmer is one of a group of women Democrats think is ready to break the ultimate glass ceiling and enter the Oval Office.

In Pennsylvania, meanwhile, Josh Shapiro won election to the governor's mansion in 2022 by beating Doug Mastriano, an extreme Republican pick. Shapiro, 50, is a former state represen-



tative and attorney general, in which role he, as his own biography puts it, "protected the right to vote and defended Pennsylvania's election result [in 2020], winning in court dozens of times before and after Election Day". In short, Shapiro would be a centrist pick with less governing experience than other executives but direct experience on the front lines of the fight against Republican election subversion and threats to democracy itself, a key theme of Biden's campaign.

The veep

Kamala Harris is of course Biden's vice president and would thus have every right to expect a hearing from the Democratic faithful should the president choose to step down. The first woman and woman of color to be vice president, a former California attorney general, and US senator, she emerged from a list of serious contenders to seize that White House role. Her time in the job has of course been far from easy, but recent campaign outings have shown Harris's immense strength when prosecuting a case — particularly in taking the fight to Republicans. As Biden discovered in the first debate in 2019, when Harris attacks, the rhetorical blows keep coming. As

voters discovered as that primary went on, retail politics is less of a strong point.

The scholar

Wes Moore is another first-term governor in Maryland, a Democratic stronghold which nonetheless could play a role in the Senate going Republican this year, should the popular former GOP Gov. Larry Hogan persuade voters of his moderate appeal. Moore, a former Rhodes Scholar and author, occupies the same sort of centrist territory and has so far emerged from a particularly testing episode, the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge and the resultant effect on shipping at the Port of Baltimore, with his credentials as an executive enhanced. Like most of the other governors eyeing a White House run, Moore is, of course, thinking more of 2028 than 2024. He's also younger than most, at 45, and has plenty of time.

Over Capitol Hill?

Most Democratic energy on the Hill will be applied to trying to win back the House and attempting to hold the Senate. But as the saying goes, no US senator ever looked in the mirror and failed to see a president staring back. Among senior members of that chamber, Bernie Sanders of Vermont has run two strikingly successful campaigns for the Democratic presidential nomination, efforts that did much to strengthen the progressive wing of the party. He is, however, older than Biden — 82 now, 89 at the end of the next Senate term should he win re-election — and seems an unlikely choice for an electorate starkly concerned about the ages of Biden and Trump (who turns 78 on Friday). At 74, Liz Warren of Massachusetts, another progressive star, also seems unlikely to tilt for the White House again. Then again, unique circumstances might argue for unique actions: a promise to serve one term, say.

The Space Man, Star Trek fan

Among younger Senate Democrats, New Jersey senator and not-

ed space opera enthusiast Cory Booker ran in 2020 and at 55 surely still sees himself as fit for higher office. Should a vacancy arise in the short term, Mark Kelly of Arizona could be a decent outside bet to make a surprise White House run. Not just popular and from a battleground state, the 60-year-old is a former US Navy combat pilot and NASA astronaut and has direct links to the movement for gun reform, a key Democratic cause, through his wife Gabrielle Giffords, a former congresswoman who survived being shot in 2011.

The mayor

Pete Buttigieg mounted a surprisingly strong challenge to Biden in the 2020 primary. Then, he was the mayor of South Bend, Indiana. Now he's a seasoned government leader, transportation secretary in an administration that has seen strikingly little turnover or scandal — certainly compared to the Trump circus that came before — battle-tested by shipping and rail disasters in Baltimore harbor, in East Palestine, Ohio, and elsewhere. Another youngster in political terms, still just 42, the former US Navy reservist is a confident public performer who has years on the national stage before him.

The billionaire

Mark Cuban. This is not a joke. The star of ABC's *Shark Tank* and part-owner of the Dallas Mavericks NBA team has flirted with politics for years, particularly since Trump took the stage as a belligerent voice from the business world, forever touting his billionaire status. Cuban has that status too but less of the belligerence and more of a commitment to sane centrism that saw him discussed as a possible candidate for No Labels before he disavowed the idea. Now 65, Cuban has said he has "no plans" to run in 2024. Of course, should Biden somehow heed Bret Stephens and decide suddenly to step down, all plans everywhere will be torn up — and new ones quickly drawn.

The full article first appeared on *The Daily Beast*.

Some Democratic heavyweights rumored to replace US President Joe Biden on the presidential ballot, if need be, are shown in the photo. From left to right: Vice President Kamala Harris, Governor of California Gavin Newsom, Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer, and US Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg.

THE DAILY BEAST



Most Democratic energy on the Hill will be applied to trying to win back the House and attempting to hold the Senate. But as the saying goes, no US senator ever looked in the mirror and failed to see a president staring back. Kamala Harris is of course Biden's vice president and would thus have every right to expect a hearing from the Democratic faithful should the president choose to step down. As Biden discovered in the first debate in 2019, when Harris attacks, the rhetorical blows keep coming. As voters discovered as that primary went on, retail politics is less of a strong point.



US President Joe Biden (R) with Democratic Senators Joe Manchin III of West Virginia (C) and Jon Tester of Montana (L)
DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Taremi says Inter move was a no-brainer

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Mahdi Taremi says he "didn't have to think twice" about signing for Internazionale once the Serie A champion approached him.

Having moved to the Italian giant on a two-year contract – with the option of an additional season – as a free agent from Porto, the 31-year-old Iranian will embark on a new chapter in his career when joining Nerazzurri's preseason on July 13.

Speaking to Iranian state television on Monday night, Taremi said: "I had offers

from clubs in the Persian Gulf countries but had no intention of going back to the Asian football at this stage of my career as I am still looking to improve and move forward."

"There were also talks about several teams in England, Italy, and Spain, though none of them made an official request for me," said the Iranian.

"But when Inter made an approach I didn't have to think twice about the offer. I had a short conversation with [head coach] Simone Inzaghi and he had wonderful ideas about my future at the club," added the former Persepolis

striker.

However, the Iranian international is aware of the scale of the task ahead of him as he will have to compete with Argentine captain Lautaro Martínez – the leading marksman in the Italian top flight last season – and French international Marcus Thuram for a place in the starting XI.

"I will have to be at my best in Inter. When you are playing alongside some great players in a team of Inter magnitude, you will have to give it your all to succeed," Taremi said.

Taremi spent four glorious seasons with Porto, helping

the club lift seven domestic trophies – including a Portuguese league and couple double in the 2021/22 campaign – while he bagged 91 strikes in 182 appearances to become the Dragons' third all-time top scorer behind retired Brazilian Mario Jardel and Colombian Jackson Martínez.

"Portugal is like a second home to me and I never felt like a stranger in that country. The Porto fans' love and support truly made an impact in my personal life there. I told them that I will stay a member of the Super Dragões for the rest of my life."



Wrestling U17 Asian Championships: Iranians Shamsipour, Afshar cruise to freestyle golds

Sports Desk

The first day of the freestyle contests at the Wrestling U17 Asian Championships saw Iranians walk away with two gold medals across three weight classes in Amman, Jordan.

Representing the country in the 71kg contests, Abolfazl Shamsipour overcame opponents from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan before defeating Indian Nishant Ruhil 4-1 in the final.

Reza Afshar, meanwhile, dominated the 80kg class as he marched to the final showpiece without conceding a single

point and then outmuscled Bunyod Rufatov 4-0 for the gold.

Amir-Ali Valipour was the only Iranian to end his campaign empty-handed after a last-eight defeat against Kazakhstan's Bakdaulet Akimzhan in the 65kg event. Monday's results came after the Iranian Greco-Roman squad had made a clean sweep of 10 medals but settled for a runner-up finish behind Uzbekistan in the team table.

Abolfazl Karami (51kg), Emadreza Mohsennejad (80kg), and Danial Izadi (92kg) grabbed three gold medals, with Ahmad Badraddin (45kg), Ali-

reza Amiri (48kg), Amir-Mahdi Saeidi Nava (67kg), and Mohammad Kazemi (71kg) adding four silvers to Iran's medal haul.

Amir-Ali Heidari (55kg), Abolfazl Shirri (60kg), and Ayoub Hosseinvand (110kg) left the Jordanian capital with three consolation bronzes as Iran tallied 200 points.

Uzbekistan notched up 215 points, thanks to a remarkable five golds, as well as three silvers and double bronzes, while third-place Kazakhstan finished on 148 points with a single gold, two silvers, and three bronze medals.



Iranian wrestlers Abolfazl Shamsipour (L) and Reza Afshar won two freestyle golds at the U17 Asian Championships in Amman, Jordan. **ADIB MOHMADI/AIAW**

Spanish Garrido unveiled as new Persepolis coach

Sports Desk

Spanish Juan Carlos Garrido has been named as the new head coach of the Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis.

"Welcome to the Red Army Juan Carlos Garrido," the club wrote on X on Tuesday as the 55-year-old Spaniard is to arrive in Tehran in the coming days to sign his contract.

A former manager of La Liga sides Villarreal and Real Betis, as well as Club Brugge in Belgium, Garrido replaces Brazilian interim coach Osmar Loss Vieira, who refused to take the Reds' permanent role despite leading the club to a seventh top-flight crown in eight years earlier in the month as he decided to move back to his home country to be close to his family.

Garrido's appointment ends weeks of rumors and speculation swirling around the Persepolis bench, during which several names were brought up in the media for the job – including ex-Napoli boss Walter Mazzarri, Dutch coach John van 't Schip, and Croatian Dragan Skocic. Garrido led USM Alger to the



fourth place in the Algerian top division in the newly-finished campaign and is no stranger to working in the Middle East as Persepolis will be his 10th club in the MENA region over the past decade. Having started his professional career as a manager with CD Onda in the Spanish fourth-tier league, the

Valencia-born guided Villarreal to a fourth-spot finish in La Liga and a Champions League qualification in his first full season in charge in 2011, while lifting the CAF Confederation Cup trophy on a couple of occasions with Egyptian giant Al Ahly (2014) and Moroccan side Raja Casablanca (2018).



Spalletti seeks improvement ahead of Switzerland last-16 clash



LEE SMITH/REUTERS

REUTERS – Italy coach Luciano Spalletti praised the never-say-die attitude of his players in rescuing a point with a 98th-minute equaliser against Croatia on Monday to book a European Championship last-16 place, but said there was much room for improvement. Substitute Mattia Zaccagni earned the 1-1 draw in Group B as holders Italy set up a clash with Switzerland in Berlin on Saturday but Spalletti seemed to take offence at several questions in the post-match press conference in a fiery display. "We deserved to go through

tonight in terms of what we produced out there. We were a bit soft at times during the game, we did not necessarily play our best football," he said. "But it was hard to make it through this group. Spain are brilliant, Croatia are excellent. When you drop below the minimum standards like we did in the first half, it is because we feel the pressure of how important the game is. "Because otherwise it is not possible (to play so poorly). But thus far everything they (the players) have done (at the Euros) has been getting better from my perspective."

He suggested his players needed to improve physically ahead of the knockout rounds. "Whenever there is a challenge or a 50-50, we don't win any. It is not a technical question, it comes down to experience, getting into these physical challenges and being willing to do the dirty work. We need to improve on that score." Spalletti was, however, pleased his side were able to keep their shape as they ended the game with six attacking players in a desperate search for an equaliser. "The players who came off the

bench were immense, those that played for the last 10 minutes were crucial. They kept that shape despite the fact we were ultra offensive. We knew we could not concede a second or third goal, but we also had to attack." He challenged his team to cut out the individual errors that have proved costly in recent games. "Today we were timid, but we need to do more," Spalletti said. "We have players who have the quality to play these games on an equal footing, but sometimes we make trivial mistakes."

Leader: High voter turnout 'source of pride'



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said a high voter turnout in the upcoming presidential election makes Iran proud and helps the Islamic Republic overcome its enemies.

The Leader made the remarks on Tuesday in an address to large groups of Iranians from the provinces of Tehran, Gilan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Markazi and North Khorasan on the occasion

of Eid al-Ghadir and ahead of the Friday presidential election, Press TV reported.

The Iranian nation is to face a test, Ayatollah Khamenei said, referring to the June 28 presidential election.

Iranians will go to the polls on Friday to elect the next president from among the six candidates vying to replace the late president Ebrahim Raisi.

"Elections are always a test, but



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei meets with a group of people from four Iranian provinces in Tehran on June 25, 2024.

● khamenei.ir

now [they are] more [important] than ever," the Leader added. Ayatollah Khamenei also expressed hope that the election will be a source of pride for the Iranian nation through their "maxi-

mum participation" and choosing "the most qualified" candidate.

"One of the factors that enable the Islamic Republic to overcome its enemy is the election," Ayatollah Khamenei asserted.

He further advised people to show a high voter turnout in the election to silence the country's ill-wishers, noting whenever participation was low it served as a tool for the enemies to reproach the Islamic establishment.

The Leader criticized the politicians who believe in reliance on world powers, saying they "think all the ways of progress pass through the US; No, it is not like that."

"The one who thinks that it is not possible to take steps without favors of the US, he will not manage [the country] well," he emphasized.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that the most qualified candidate is the person who is capable of tapping into domestic opportunities and capacities, among them the country's young, educated generation.

"The Islamic Republic has shown that it can advance without relying on foreigners and it has done so."

The Leader said that he has always believed in interaction with the entire world, with one or two exceptions.

Ayatollah Khamenei further expounded that his call for not pinning hope on foreigners "does not translate into severing relations [with them], but it means national bravery and national independence."

Iran raps US, EU, E3 over JCPOA status quo

'Constructive' dialogue only option to revive nuclear deal

Iran's United Nations envoy said the US departure from the 2015 nuclear deal and non-compliance of the European Union and the EU trio (France, Germany, and Italy) are the main reasons behind the failure of the agreement and the current deadlock.

During a UN Security Council meeting on the implementation of the deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and UNSC Resolution 2231 which endorses the agreement, Amir Saeid Iravani said pressures and intimidation are "non-starters" and the only option to revive the deal is "constructive" dialogue.

Iravani added that Iran got engaged in nine rounds of negotiations in Vienna and was willing to revive the deal based on the understanding reached in August 2022, but the United States, E3, and the European Union "lacked sincerity and determination" for its reimplementation. "Their failure to live up to their commitments regarding the removal of

sanctions ... is among the examples of their non-compliance," he noted. Iravani said the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany, are attempting in vain to shift the blame to Iran, disregarding the underlying and primary cause of the current situation, which is the "unilateral and unlawful withdrawal" of the United States from the deal in 2018.

According to Iravani, the E3's failure to honor their commitments on the removal of sanctions, specified in paragraph 20 of Annex V of the JCPOA on Transition Day (18 October 2023) is a clear example of their non-compliance, which violates both the JCPOA and UNSC Resolution 2231.

"Instead, they mounted a smear campaign against my country, a modus operandi [of the West]; however, repeating lies over and over again does not transform them into a truth." He explained that the JCPOA was "not perfect" but it still remains "the best viable option."

He said Iran has time and again said



● [IRNA](http://irna.ir)

it had to scale back its JCPOA commitments in response to the US's unlawful withdrawal from the deal and the Europeans' lack of success in upholding their commitments.

"The remedial measures are in full conformity with Iran's rights under paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, according to which, in the case of re-instatement or re-imposition of sanctions by the US or the EU, Iran is entitled to either partly or completely stop fulfilling its commitments." Iravani said Iran's remedial measures were "inevitable" because the JCPOA was drawn up based on a se-

ries of nuclear commitments made by Iran in return for the removal of all sanctions imposed by the UN, the US, and the EU.

Secretary-General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres also called for all parties to the nuclear deal to pursue all available avenues for dialogue and cooperation.

During the meeting, Malta's Ambassador to the UN and Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231, Vanessa Frazier, encouraged the international community to take actions to fully support the implementation of the JCPOA.

Russia eyes cooperation pact with Iran in 'very near future'

Moscow expects to sign a new agreement on comprehensive cooperation with Iran "in the very near future," Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told Russia's RIA state news agency in an interview published on Tuesday.

"We expect that this agreement will be signed in the very near future, since work on the text is already close to completion. All the necessary wording has been found," RIA cited Rudenko as saying.

On June 11, Russia underlined that

Tehran and Moscow are continuing work on the comprehensive cooperation agreement after Russian media reported suspension of the joint deal.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that work on a comprehensive agreement between Russia and Iran continues but the schedule may somewhat change due to the snap presidential election in Iran.

His remarks came hours after Russian presidential envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov said that the

work on the cooperation agreement has been suspended due to issues with the Iranian side.

Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali also rejected the report, saying that both countries are trying to sign the agreement in 2024. Russia and Iran signed a 20-year strategic agreement in 2001 that was automatically extended in 2020 for five years, according to Russia's TASS state news agency reports. Both sides also agreed in 2020 to work on a new pact that would replace the old document.

Iran resolved to bolster cooperation in Asia: Acting FM tells ACD



Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (C) addresses the 19th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) ministerial meeting in Tehran, Iran, on June 24, 2024. ● [IRNA](http://irna.ir)

International Desk

Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani said holding

of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue forum shows Tehran's determination to use all opportunities to strengthen multilateralism, cooperation and convergence in Asia.

"During the meeting, two documents of principles governing the activities and procedures of the assembly were approved for the first time", Bagheri Kani wrote on X.

Tehran hosted the 19th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) ministerial meeting on Monday, which was participated by about 40 representatives from Asia countries.

Iran has assumed the rotating presidency of the 35-member forum since October last year. The forum was established in 2002 and its headquarters is based in Kuwait's capital.

In a message to the conference, Iran's Interim President Mohammad Mokhber said the era of unilateralism is coming to an end and a new multilateral order is emerging in the world.

He said the "power of new Asia and strengthening of economic and technological foundations in this continent" have played an important role in putting an end to the era of unilateralism.

"The world is in a period of historical transition to a new international order and the emergence of a multipolar world. This irreversible path is heavily influenced by emerging Asian powers," he added.

Mokhber emphasized that the benefits and useful outcomes of multilateralism are evident in regional unions and organizations.

"We believe that under the existing circumstances in the international system, Asia can shape a new model based on justice, human dignity, dialogue, friendship and multilateralism in the field of changeable global relations," he added.

The interim Iranian president said multilateralism will pave the way for benefiting from the opportunity to participate in multilateral arrangements, which are formed as a result of unity against unilateralism.

Iran believes that Asia can create positive changes in global relations and play a leading role in forging international convergence, he added.

He expressed confidence that the new model can boost synergy among Asian countries and be beneficial to reforms in global structures.

"What is vital for the new international order is to end the West's monopolistic arrogance in the international political, economic, monetary and financial systems," he said.

He also noted that more trade and economic convergence among the Asian countries as well as other emerging economies in the global south will facilitate and accelerate the path to achieve the abovementioned goal.

As the rotating president of Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Iran has chosen the slogan of "a more powerful and coherent Asia through modern and emerging technologies" to be the focal point of its activities, he added.

Notification of AUCTION
SJSCO. D140301

Referring to AUCTION SJSCO.D140301 dated June 22, 2024, hereby we would like to inform that the bid Delivery Term changed to FAS.

AUCTION SJSCO. D140301:
Hereby Sirjan Jahan Steel Company announces selling and export 25,000 MT DIRECT REDUCED IRON (DRI) on basis of FAS. Interested bidders are invited to get documents with send an email to sjsco.sales.info@gmail.com. All the documents will be sent VIA email. All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than Monday, July 01, 2024 (2024-07-01)

For more information, please contact us at:
Tel: +2186084642
SIRJAN JAHAN STEEL COMPLEX

Iran, Bahrain agree to hold talks on resuming ties



Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (r) shakes hands with Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani in Tehran on July 23, 2024.
● IRNA

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Bahrain have agreed to start negotiations on the resumption of political relations between the two countries after a hiatus of more than eight years. The announcement was made in an early Monday joint statement by the two countries, Press TV reported. According to the statement, the agreement was reached following a meeting between Iran's Acting

Foreign Minister Ali Baqeri Kani and his Bahraini counterpart, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, on the sidelines of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue summit in Tehran. The visit by the Bahraini top diplomat was his second in less than a month, after attending the funerals of late president Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who lost their lives in a helicopter crash in May along with six others.

The joint statement noted that the two countries' top diplomats held a bilateral meeting "within the framework of fraternal and historical relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Islamic Republic of Iran, and [in view of] religious [and] neighborly ties [as well as] the common history and mutual interests between them." "During the meeting, the two sides agreed to create necessary mechanisms to start negotiations

between the two countries on how to restart political relations" between Tehran and Manama, the statement concluded.

The announcement came after in early June, Mohammad Jamshidi, the deputy chief of staff for political affairs to the Iranian president said Bahrain had sent a message to Iran through Russia to normalize relations.

A week earlier, Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa had said during a state visit to China that his country was working to restore diplomatic relations with Iran.

"We believe in the principle of good neighborliness and non-interference in internal affairs," he stressed, adding, "We are working to restore diplomatic relations with Iran as a neighbor."

Bahrain followed suit with Saudi Arabia to sever diplomatic relations with Iran on January 4, 2016, after Iranian protesters, enraged by the execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr by the Saudi government, stormed its diplomatic mission in Iran.

Tehran and Riyadh reached an agreement in the Chinese capital city of Beijing in March 2023 to restore diplomatic relations and re-open embassies and missions.

Scrutinizing Israel-Hezbollah conflict amid ceasefire bids in Gaza



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Israel needs to understand that the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah will stop its retaliatory attacks on the northern occupied territories only after a ceasefire in Gaza.

Senior American officials have expressed concerns over a potential major war between Hezbollah, a powerful group within the Muslim resistance front in Lebanon, and Israel. In the past two weeks, Hezbollah has launched numerous attacks on Israeli-occupied northern areas, disrupting the regime's defense systems and causing significant financial damage. These attacks began immediately after Israel's brutal aggression in Gaza on October 7, in support of the oppressed Palestinians. Hezbollah had multiple objectives in targeting Israel, such as diverting a substantial part of Israel's military strength to the northern occupied territories to prevent full military force from being used against Palestinians in Gaza, imposing financial burden on Israel by moving Jewish settlers from the occupied northern areas, and protecting Hamas's military strength and strategic assets. Hezbollah has largely succeeded in these goals, as Israel has not been able to significantly harm Hamas's military leadership in southern Lebanon.

In this context, American officials are advising Israel's aggressive government that a ceasefire in Gaza is the most effective way to end Hezbollah's attacks on Israel's northern territories. Hezbollah's relentless attacks in May and June have shaken Tel Aviv. According to Israeli media, on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, Hezbollah conducted a significant attack on an Israeli air force base using two drones, deviating from conventional attacks. The attack destroyed a major blimp used for missile detection, known as the Sky Dew. This base is located near Golani Junction, about 35 kilometers (21 miles) from the Lebanese border. According to the Israeli multi-language online newspaper, The Times of Israel, Hezbollah has launched thousands of drones, missiles, and rockets at northern Israel in the past seven months. Although most of these attacks have been limited to border areas, the successful attack on Israeli targets about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the border on May 15, 2024, has stunned Tel Aviv with Hezbollah's

power and military capability. The Sky Dew aerostat, valued at \$230 million, was deployed two years ago to detect long-range missiles, cruise missiles, and drones from Syria and Lebanon. Its destruction makes it difficult for Israel to keep the northern occupied territories safe from aerial attacks. Hezbollah has essentially blinded Israel to targeted aerial strikes on military installations in the north, aiming to maximize damage to Tel Aviv's military strength. In retaliation, Israel conducted nighttime airstrikes on populated areas in Baalbek, located about 100 kilometers inside the Lebanese border, considered a Hezbollah stronghold, causing significant damage to life and property. Concurrently, the mayor of Nazareth, a northern city under Israeli occupation, informed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he cannot ignore the increasing severity of Hezbollah's attacks.

Hezbollah's escalating attacks in the past two months have resulted in the death of 14 Israeli soldiers and 10 aides, according to Tel Aviv's official numbers. However, active human rights groups in Israel claim that over 80 Israeli soldiers have been killed in the last two months, and 36 soldiers died in a single day under a barrage of over 100 rockets fired by Hezbollah.

Amid such escalating attacks, Israel has threatened broader aggression on the north. Consequently, American and European diplomats are trying to convince Tel Aviv to abandon the idea of extensive military action against Lebanon, as resistance forces aim to provoke such a mistake to endanger Israel's security. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has stated that the US and the EU are seeking a diplomatic solution to end the ongoing fighting on Israel's northern areas adjacent to the Lebanese border.

During a press briefing with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, Blinken mentioned that Hezbollah has linked its actions against Israel to Gaza. If a ceasefire in Gaza is achieved, the likelihood of finding a diplomatic solution to the northern crisis increases. Meanwhile, US Special Envoy Amos Hochstein is in Beirut, engaging indirectly with Hezbollah to reduce the intensity of attacks on Israel.

In the current scenario, the concerns of the US and Europe are evident. Israel is entangled with the resistance front, and now the resistance alliance is preparing to tighten its grip on Israel.

Israeli strike kills 10 family members of Hamas chief

International Desk

Israeli forces on Tuesday bombarded the besieged Gaza Strip, where Palestinian officials said one strike killed 10 family members of Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas' Political Bureau, including his sister.

According to Reuters, at least 24 Palestinians were killed in three separate airstrikes on Gaza City early on Tuesday.

The reported strike came three days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "intense phase" of the war raging since October 7 was winding down, and as his defense minister was visiting Washington.

Israel's military did not immediately confirm the early-morning strike, which the Civil Defense Service in Gaza said hit the family's house in the northern al-Shati refugee camp, leaving some bodies trapped under the rubble, AFP reported.

"There are 10 martyrs and several wounded as a result of the strike, including Zahr Haniyeh, sister of Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh," Civil Defense Service spokesman Mahmud Basal told AFP.

Haniyeh lost three sons and four grandchildren in a strike in April. The Hamas chief at the time said about 60 of his relatives had died in the Gaza war.

Health Ministry in Gaza said Tuesday that at least 37,658 people



have been killed during more than eight months of war.

2,000 children lost one or two legs

Meanwhile, the head of the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees said that ten children per day are losing one or both of their legs in the war in Gaza.

"Basically, we have every day 10 children who are losing one leg or two legs on average," UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini told reporters in Geneva.

Citing figures from the UN children's agency UNICEF, he said that figure "does not even include the arms and the hands, and we have many more" of these.

"Ten per day, that means around 2,000 children after the more than 260 days of this brutal war," Lazzarini said.

He said amputation often takes place "in quite horrible conditions," sometimes without anaesthesia.

Save the Children said on Monday that up to 21,000 children are estimated to be missing in the chaos of the war.

Presidential candidates attend final televised slugfest

National Desk

The fifth and final televised debate in the 2024 Iranian presidential election took place, with six hopefuls presenting their plans and blueprints on how to make the government more efficient.

Campaigning for the snap presidential election, scheduled for June 28, is in full swing, with six candidates in the fray—Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Masoud Pezeshkian, Amir-Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi, Alireza Zakani, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, and Saeed Jalili—pulling out all the stops to win voters' favor.

During the debate, Pezeshkian emphasized his commitment to alleviating the burdens of economic sanctions, acting as a liaison between the government and the youth, revamping production infrastructure, addressing energy inefficiencies, honoring Iran's rich cultural diversity, and highlighting the support of the Islamic Revolution's leader in supporting the country's progress, and mediating conflicts.

Qalibaf placed a strong emphasis on addressing "inflation" and promoting "prosperity" during his debate, promising to carry on "the legacy of Martyr President Raisi" by seeing through the completion of "the projects he left unfinished". He

encouraged the Iranian people to actively engage in the election, stating that their participation is crucial for safeguarding national security.

Pourmohammadi said he has risen from the heart of the original discourse of the Islamic Revolution. He voiced his worry regarding the people. During his last debate, the cleric said he seeks bridges between ethics and politics, dignity and expediency.

During the debate, Jalili highlighted the government's focus on engaging with communities to grasp the nation's potential. He criticized the negotiation [with foreign nations] as a form of disrespect towards the people. He said "The duty of the government is interaction, not negotiation. Those who negotiate disrespect the people."

Zakani said he is "familiar with poverty". The nominee underscored his commitment to combatting "corruption" and "discrimination", expressing concern about incompleteness of Raisi's government (mission). Qazizadeh Hashemi asserted a perspective of optimism by rejecting the notion of deadlocks and advocating for a solution-oriented approach. "We have no solution other than building the country with the method practiced by President Raisi".