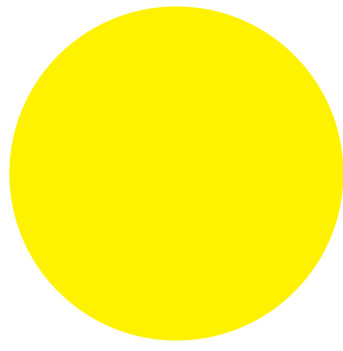




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Pezeshkian's uphill battle for Iran's future after turnout relief

By Mostafa Shirmohammadi
Editor-in-chief

OPINION

Masoud Pezeshkian became Iran's 9th president in a runoff election that saw nearly half of Iran's 61.4 million eligible voters casting their ballot. The 70-year-old former health minister who ran on a platform of social, political and economic reforms, garnered some 16.4 million of votes while his conservative contender Saeed Jalili bagged around 13.5 million - more than 9% shy of the winner on Friday.

The 50% turnout, which almost matched with that of the 2021 presidential election, brought palpable relief for the authorities a week after only 40% eligible voters showed up at the polls nationwide in the first round to set a record low in the history of the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Establishment and the president-elect owe greatly to the people who came out to uphold Iran's long-standing honor. Pezeshkian now has to carry a tremendous burden to safeguard this national asset during his four-year tenure by fulfilling his campaign promises such as economic prosperity, social freedoms and easing and lifting bans on the Internet.

The veteran Reformist has no way but to bolster Iran's sanctions-hit economy in order to improve people's livelihood as the first and foremost priority. This could be the cornerstone of his plans while in office to help maintain his support base for the next presidential election and thus general voter turnout. It sounds like 'Mission Impossible' to lure a nation buffeted by economic hardships, including runaway inflation, double-digit unemployment and exorbitant housing rents to turn out strongly for an election. To achieve such goals, the president-elect will beyond a shadow of a doubt need to bring to the fold other branches of power, seasoned political parties and likewise powerful and influential persons and entities within the Islamic Republic. Fighting and infighting will do harm to not only his government but the whole Islamic system in a broader picture as this may precipitate failure of his reform plans and as a result demoralize a great deal of voters during the next presidential polls.

National unity is sine qua non for success in Pezeshkian's fledgling government.

Pezeshkian Declared President

President-elect showered by worldwide congrats

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Iran's currency, stock market bolstered after Pezeshkian's victory



Iran's national currency, the rial, regained some lost ground at market on Saturday along with registering an 88,179-unit rise for stock market to stand at 2,188,000. It comes after Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian won Iran's runoff presidential election of Friday, securing 53.3% of the votes and defeating his conservative rival, Saeed Jalili. Reports in the local media and currency monitoring websites published on Saturday showed that the rial had closed at 587,800 against the US dollar in evening trade at the unofficial exchange market in Tehran, whereas it was priced at about 615,000 rials before the run-off.

Iran's Parliament has recently come up with a plan to reduce the dependence of the economy on the dollar and pivot to national currencies in foreign trade.

Also on Saturday, the Iran Mercantile Exchange announced that within the week ending on July 5, the IME witnessed trade of 2.315 million tons of commodities with a total trading value of nearly \$640 million, posting growths of 4% and 25% in volume and value of trades compared to the week before that.

the exchange saw on its metals and minerals trading floor trade of 1.647 million tons of commodities valued at more than \$328 million.

Also, the IME sold 1.058 million tons of cement, 260,848 tons of steel, 167,150 tons of sponge iron, 146,000 tons of iron ore, 6,435 tons of copper, 6,395 tons of aluminum, 1,740 tons of zinc, 200 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 15 tons of precious metals concentrate and 40 vehicles. Moreover, the IME witnessed on both domestic and export rings of its oil and petrochemical trading floor 644,859 tons of commodities worth more than \$298 million.

Tehran, Moscow ink monetary deal

Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Mohammadreza Farzin said that a monetary contract has been signed between Tehran and Moscow for carrying out bilateral trade exchanges.

Farzin told reporters on Saturday that he and his Russian counterpart had a meeting in Saint Petersburg last Thursday where they finalized agreements already signed between the two countries, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, the chief bankers of Iran and Russia have also signed an MoU on joint measures to be taken by the two countries.

Farzin also said that the new monetary contract enables Iran and Russia to trade in local currencies.

He added that based on agreements between the specialized delegations of the two countries, Iran's Shtab banking system will link Russia's MIR

interbank system by the end of August.

The official said that the new scheme would allow the Iranian nationals to take ruble from Russian ATMs using their Iranian banking cards.

He said that the scheme will further develop in the next phases to allow the Russian nationals to use their banking cards in Iranian ATMs and will then enable using Iranian cards at the Russian poses.



Iran to launch highly-advanced satellite soon: Minister



Iran will launch its first domestic satellite of cutting-edge technology in a month, announced the country's Minister of Information and Communication Technology Issa Zarepour.

He added that the satellite is in the final stage expressing his hope that its data will be used soon, reported Fars News Agency.

The minister went on to say that following the successful launch of Pars 1 satellite, all its subsystems were tested one by one as the tests were successful.

Zarepour said in March that the Islamic Republic is among the top 10 countries in manufacturing satellite and space launch vehicle.

Iran is in possession of the base for launching satellite-carrying rockets into space and ground stations to receive data from satellites, he noted.

Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has taken giant strides in the civilian space program.

Late in February, Iran successfully put into orbit the domestically-built Pars 1 research-sensing satellite. The 134-kilogram satellite was launched by a Soyuz rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's far eastern Amur region.

Iran becomes board member of ILO education center



The Islamic Republic of Iran was selected as a member of the Board of Directors of Turin Education Center in Italy, which is affiliated with the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The Turin International Education Center, which was established in 1964, is known as an educational and training arm of the ILO, reported Tasnim News Agency. This center aims to improve the capacities of ILO member states in various fields including sustainable development, merited work and social justice.

Providing specialized training services in the fields related to work and employment, exchange of experiences and best working practices among member countries, development of human resources and promotion of workforce skills at the international level are among the main goals of the center.

This selection strengthens Iran's position as an important player in the Middle East region in the field of education and development of the workforce.

Also, Iran will have the opportunity to share its experiences in the fields of education and employment with other countries and benefit from international experiences.

Copper industry of Iran poised for golden age



By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writer

Iran is setting its sights on a future gleaming with copper. Boasting some of the world's largest copper reserves, the country is embarking on a significant development push, aiming to transform itself into a global copper powerhouse. Iran's geological endowment is truly remarkable. Estimates suggest the country holds roughly 6% of the world's copper reserves. This translates to a staggering potential of over 50 million tons of recoverable

copper, a figure that continues to grow with ongoing exploration efforts.

Copper's significance transcends its sheer abundance. This versatile metal is a cornerstone of modern civilization, playing a vital role in everything from electrical wiring and construction to renewable energy technologies like solar panels and wind turbines. As the world increasingly embraces sustainable practices, the demand for copper is projected to surge in the coming years.

Iran recognizes this opportunity. The country has outlined ambitious plans to significantly ramp up copper production. A

proposed \$15 billion investment aims to propel annual copper cathode production past the one-million-ton mark, a quadrupling of current output. This ambitious target, if achieved, would not only solidify Iran's position as a major copper producer but also generate substantial revenue streams. Estimates suggest this growth could translate into over \$10 billion in annual copper exports, a significant boost to the Iranian economy.

Leading Iran's copper development is the National Iranian Copper Industries Co (NICICO). This state-owned giant operates the country's largest cop-

per mines and refineries, playing a pivotal role in shaping the industry's direction. NICICO's recent achievements, including a 33% year-on-year sales growth, demonstrate its operational efficiency and underline the copper sector's potential to contribute to Iran's economic well-being.

A challenge facing copper industry lies in infrastructure development. Extracting and processing vast quantities of copper requires a robust infrastructure network, encompassing reliable power supplies, efficient transportation systems, and a skilled workforce. Significant investments in infrastruc-

ture upgrades will be necessary to fully unlock Iran's copper potential.

Environmental considerations are also paramount. Large-scale mining operations can have a detrimental impact on the environment. Iran must strive to implement responsible mining practices that minimize environmental damage and ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry.

Despite all challenges, the future of Iran's copper industry appears bright. The sheer scale of its copper reserves, coupled with the country's will to development, positions Iran for a significant role in the global

copper market. By attracting strategic partnerships, fostering technological innovation, and prioritizing environmental sustainability, Iran can ensure its copper industry not only thrives but also fosters economic prosperity for generations to come. The development of Iran's copper industry is not merely an economic endeavor; it's a strategic move with the potential to usher in a new era of growth and prosperity. As Iran delves deeper into its copper treasure trove, the world will be watching with keen interest, eager to see this ancient land illuminate the future with the brilliance of copper.

Khajeh Mountain, a treasure trove of history and culture

Iranica Desk Khajeh Mountain is one of the most important tourist destinations and attractions in Zabol, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, situated just a short distance away. This mountain is home to valuable historical monuments that are hidden like treasures from the view of tourists. Various beliefs and stories associated with Khajeh Mountain have heightened the mystery and significance of this landmark.

Khajeh Mountain stands as the sole natural feature in the Sistan plain, rising to an approximate height of 609 meters above sea level (about 100 meters above ground level). Within this mountain, one can find one of the rare ancient structures of the Parthian dynasty, known as the mud-brick Persepolis. Despite significant destruction to parts of this ancient structure due to natural and human causes, the architectural style of this fortress remains observable.



Khajeh Mountain and Hamoun Lake hold sacred significance in the beliefs of the three religions of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam. This region has been extensively studied and explored by numerous researchers, all concentrating on the architectural styles of the Arsacid and Sassanid structures.

Khajeh Mountain was initially identified and discovered in 1916 by Aurel Stein, a renowned British archaeologist. Subsequently, Professor Herzfeld, a German scholar, conducted expeditions for relics in the Khajeh Mountain area from 1925 to 1929, and the findings of this archaeologist's excavations are documented in a book.

Sections

The most important and largest section of the ancient monuments of Mount Khajeh is located on the southeast slope of the

mountain. This complex, known as Kafaroon Castle, consists of three defensive walls, the main gate, side corridors, a central courtyard, a fireplace, and more.

The second structure at the highest point overlooking Kafaroon Castle is Kak Kahzad. In mythological beliefs, he was the ruler of the region and was killed by Rostam. This location could be the residence of a king.

The architectural decorations used in some parts of this structure resemble the Greek style and include capitals in the Doric style with spiral volutes. Some others, such as small decorative flowers resembling lotus flowers, appear to be inspired by Achaemenid art. Some also show similarities to art from Mesopotamia. Evidence of the regular stone stairs that connected Kafaroon Castle with Kak Kahzad is still visible.

The mountain's expanse is vast and flat, covering several hect-

ares, much of it adorned with captivating stone graves. These graves are so remarkable that they can captivate you for hours; placed nearly at ground level, they are covered with flat and occasionally curved stones.

Gallery

Situated in the heart of the mountain, the gallery is an artistic space featuring a room and exquisite wall paintings. The name originates from the abundance of wall paintings depicting kings, nobles, and religious narratives adorning every corner of the room, extending all the way up to the ceiling. Visiting Khajeh Mountain is free of charge. Guides are usually available to explain the history. Iran is a country of diverse ethnicities; when exploring various regions, let's respect the local culture. Support the local economy by purchasing from nearby shops.

Ancient wonders of Ziwiye Castle in Saqqez



Saqqez is the northernmost city of Kurdistan Province, located 187 kilometers from Sanandaj, the capital city of the province. The Ziwiye ancient site, also known as Ziwiye Hill, attests to the antiquity of this region. Ziwiye Castle is situated 50 kilometers from Saqqez in a village of the same name. Approximately five kilometers from the village lies a tall hill with structures dating back 3,000 years. This hill is home to the castle, also referred to as a state fortress or the Ziwi-

ye treasure. Standing at a height of 1,835 meters, the castle measures 450 meters in length and 118 meters in width.

Ayub Rabbani obtained permission from the Iranian government to excavate the area. He unearthed a treasure trove of gold, silver, and ivory encased in a bronze casket, which became renowned as the Treasure of Ziwiye. Some of the findings were sold to the National Museum of Iran, while the majority were smuggled out of the country and

are now on display in esteemed museums such as the British Museum, Louvre, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Subsequently, an American delegation led by Robert Dyson conducted twelve seasons of excavations in collaboration with Habibollah Qeddisi, Nosratollah Motamed, and Simin Lakpout, yielding discoveries. The first professional report on these excavations, titled "Ziwiye Treasure" by Andre Godard, was published in 1950.

The castle, spanning three stories with 21 stone stairs, boasted a foundation of stone, adobe walls, and a unique architectural layout. The first floor, likely a temple, still retains some remnants and was easily accessible due to its hillside location.

The second floor, residential in nature, featured interconnected painted rooms with distinctive color schemes. Discoveries of archery equipment and bronze arrows suggest its use as a military residence.

The third floor, known as the ruler's residence, housed a barn for security during times of war and siege. It included spacious rooms with stone capitals, doors, windows, and decorative bronze furnishings as described by Andre Godard.

The premises were adorned with brick or tiled flooring, and featured north and south gates, with the latter displaying ornate tile decorations. Water was supplied to the castle through piping from nearby mountain springs.

Historically, the castle belonged to the Mana tribe, whose capital was Izirti (modern-day Saqqez). Culturally influenced by neighboring Assyrians and Urartians, the art found in Ziwiye reflects a blend of both styles.

Despite its historical significance, there are currently no tourism facilities in the vicinity. Visitors interested in exploring Saqqez can also discover attractions like Domenar Mosque, Haj Saleh Historical Bath, and Karafu Cave.

Would French Far Right moderate once in power?



By Nouriel Roubini
Distinguished economist

OPINION

Following a trip to Paris in late 2022, I wrote a controversial research note pushing back against the conventional wisdom of the time. Following his re-election earlier that year, French President Emmanuel Macron, I argued, would continue to rule like Napoleon, hubristically enacting prudent but unpopular reforms by decree, rather than by securing parliamentary majorities. I predicted that by the time of the next European elections, his party would have fallen fully out of favor, allowing Marine Le Pen's Far-Right National Rally to win in a landslide.

In this scenario, Macron would be left to govern with an even weaker minority government, and investors, fearful of a Le Pen victory in the 2027 presidential election, would impose market discipline: higher interest-rate premiums and lower stock prices. But this would become a self-fulfilling prophecy because the market would be forcing Macron to push through even more unpopular austerity measures by decree.

Unfortunately, this slow-motion train wreck has proceeded as I expected. Following his party's rout in the European elections last month, Macron unwisely dissolved the National Assembly and called a snap election. At best, he will be left with a hung parliament and a minority government too weak to withstand a no-confidence vote. But the more likely scenario is that National Rally will win the election and run the next government in an emasculating "cohabitation" arrangement with Macron's administration.

If National Rally were to secure an absolute majority in the second round, would it pursue its dangerous Far-Right vision of reckless fiscal expansion and anti-EU unilateralism, putting it on a collision course with the European Commission? Or would it moderate and present itself as a more traditional party in the way that Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy has done?



Marine Le Pen (R) and her possible prime minister Jordan Bardella
FINANCIAL TIMES

Full "Melonization" is unlikely for multiple reasons. For starters, Le Pen's campaign program and stated views are much further to the Right than Meloni's. Second, Italy's Right-wing government played nice because it stood to unlock nearly €200 billion (\$217 billion) in EU funds (grants and low-cost loans) under the post-pandemic recovery plan. France, by contrast, is a net contributor to the EU budget. Third, Meloni started with less anti-EU baggage and a more pro-NATO, pro-Ukraine tilt, whereas Le Pen's party is historically Euroskeptic and has benefited from Russian financing in the past. And whereas former Prime Minister Mario Draghi, a widely respected technocrat, provided "parental guidance" to an initially naive Meloni, Le Pen might be on her own.

Still, there are several reasons to think that Le Pen and her deputy, Jordan Bardella (as prime minister), would be partly Melonized. First, most parties do moderate once in power, simply because the task of governing imposes demands above and beyond what any opposition party needs to worry about. Second, if Le Pen wants to become president in 2027, she must prove that National Rally can govern competently, and this may require a coalition with more moderate forces.

Moreover, both the European Union and the European Central Bank can influence French policy positions through various carrots and sticks. France is already subject to a European Commission procedure that requires it to reduce — and certainly not increase — its deficit; and the ECB can provide conditional or even unconditional support to reasonably well-behaving countries whose sovereign

interest-rate spreads have widened excessively. Indeed, some have suggested that if ECB President Christine Lagarde, a former French finance minister, proves accommodating to Le Pen, there could be some "parental guidance" after all. If all else failed, market discipline — in the form of a widening sovereign spread and a sharply declining stock market, or even a rating downgrade — could still prevent overly reckless fiscal policies, or at least force a reversal of such policies after the fact. Bond vigilantes remain the foremost binding constraint on economic recklessness in most countries. They are why Liz Truss's government in the United Kingdom lasted just 44 days.

If National Rally is smart, it will moderate its fiscal program and placate its base — à la Meloni — by emphasizing security, law and order, and immigration restrictions. If it suffered any economic or social policy setbacks, it could simply blame Macron, the EU,

and "evil" investors, bolstering its argument that it should be handed the presidency, too. That said, a National Rally-led government would face serious risks and challenges in the form of civil disobedience, bureaucratic ("deep state") resistance, labor strikes (organized by the Far-Left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon), protests by students and teachers, and potentially the kind of violence that exploded last year in the predominantly Muslim banlieues (low-income suburbs) following the police killing of a young French Muslim. If France, a country famous for mass demonstrations and revolutions — even when more moderate regimes are in power — is governed by a Far-Right party, and the second-largest parliamentary grouping is from the Far Left, constant turmoil, and potentially violent chaos, could become the norm.

Cohabitation with Macron would make the situation only more complicated. The president, who once compared himself to Jupiter, would

become a lame duck, and he might even decide to resign, thus triggering a presidential election before 2027. Even if the current election leads to a hung parliament, Macron's government could be toppled by a no-confidence vote, leading to a lame-duck caretaker government that few of the president's remaining allies would want to stick around for. Thus, Macron may still resign even in the hung parliament scenario.

In either scenario, the establishment would be even further discredited, and Le Pen would be well-positioned to build on her current support. There are no obvious, charismatic politicians who could challenge her in the presidential election. Unless she and Bardella self-destruct, they will come to power sooner or later. But when they do, they may be Melonized sufficiently to alleviate many observers' worst fears. That is the hope, anyway.

The article first appeared on Project Syndicate.



Emmanuel Macron (R) and Marine Le Pen pose for photographs before the start of a live face-to-face televised debate on French public national television on April 20, 2022.
AFP

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After elections, battle for soul of France begins



By John
Lichfield
Journalist,
editor

OPINION

Stripped of the noise and confusion of the campaign, today's second round of voting will in many places be a straight choice between a candidate of the Far Right and a candidate of the anti-Far Right 'republican front' — writes John Lichfield. It will show whether French voters do truly want a Le Pen government — and will kick-start a long and chaotic battle over the future of France.

President Emmanuel Macron has finally got his way. For months he has been attempting to engineer a referendum on the Far Right. French voters insisted on making the European elections and the first round of parliamentary elections a referendum on him.

In Round Two on Sunday, Macron's question can no longer be avoided. In more than 300 of the 501 constituencies still in play, there will be a straight fight between the Rassemblement National (RN) and a candidate of the so-called "Republican Front", the makeshift anti-Far Right alliance between former sworn enemies of Left and Centre.

Over 200 of these constituencies were potential three-way battles after Round One. Scores of third-placed candidates of the Left alliance and the Macron centrist alliance have now withdrawn, willingly or under duress, to allow their better-placed former rivals a clear run against the populist-nationalist Right.

Stripped of all the noise and confusion of the campaign, Sunday's vote is therefore a simple affair. Does France want to be governed by the anti-European, pro-Russian, still fundamentally racist Rassemblement National?

Does it want to be led by a 28-year-old Prime Minister, Jordan Bardella, who is an impressive purveyor of sound-bites and a darling of Tik-Tok but has never run anything but his mouth?

An avalanche of polls and seat projections in the last two days suggests that the answer will be "no".

All polls still say that the Far Right and their Centre-Right quising allies will form the largest single bloc in the new National Assembly on Sunday. All now agree that Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella will fall far short of the 289 seats needed for an overall majority and well shy of the 260 or so seats which might, with difficulty, form the basis of a governing coalition.

On Monday, when I forecast that the RN would NOT form the next French government, I defied the ambient mood of much of the national and foreign media. The conventional wisdom has shifted in my direction.

That makes me uneasy. Hundreds of candidates have stood aside. The pollsters have polled. But the voters have yet to vote.



A dirty French flag is seen during the demonstration against the new pension reform plan in Paris, France, on January 31, 2023.
● TELMO PINTO/SOPA IMAGES

Many of the key battleground constituencies will be very close on Sunday night. Polls suggest that as many as half the first-round voters of the Left and Centre are unwilling to vote tactically for their former enemies of the Centre and the Left.

The transfer of less than half of the third-placed votes should be enough to defeat the Far Right in many constituencies. It will be insufficient or produce a coin's toss result in others. One of the most pivotal Republican Front v Far Right constituencies is my own in southwestern Calvados. In Round One, the sitting Macronist deputy, the former Prime Minister, Elisabeth Borne, was pushed into second place by a relatively unknown candidate of the Rassemblement National, Nicolas Calbrix.

The young man who came third, Noé Gauchard, candidate for the hard-Left La France Insoumise, withdrew immediately without waiting for national pacts or fronts or instructions. "It's hard for me to withdraw for Elisabeth Borne, the woman who manipulated through the pension reform," he said.

"But that does not compare with fascism."

In Round One, the RN candidate took 36.26 percent of the vote, Borne 28.93 percent, and Guichard 23.16 percent. Most of the rest went to other Far Right candidates (three percent) and a Centre-Right candidate (seven percent). Borne therefore needs around 40 percent of the Left vote to win in Round Two.

She should win. It will be very close. I spoke to one of the few people who live in the constituency who is not white.

I will call him Ahmed. "If I was not a Muslim, I would probably vote for Bardella," he said. "People are very angry. There are some I know who can only afford to eat one meal a day. The Far-Right message — no one cares about you but us — may be false but it strikes home."

"I voted for the Left in Round One and I will vote for Borne, with no pleasure, in Round Two but only because I am a French-born Muslim and I know what damage Le Pen and Bardella can do to my country. Many other people here don't care about all that." The Rassemblement National mocks the Republican Front as the last stand of the "elite" — an alliance "against nature," which stretches from the

anti-capitalist, Mélenchon Left to the Globalist Macronist Centre. Some voters of the Left, and not just the Left, secretly agree with them.

Others, like Noé Guichard and Ahmed, will see Sunday's vote as a moral stand against a destructive, mendacious, and incompetent Far Right.

Marine Le Pen also argues that the Republican Front is a denial of democracy. Her party topped the poll last Sunday with an unprecedented 33.3 percent of the vote. She and Bardella therefore have the right to govern, she says.

But France is not Britain. In a first-past-the-post, one-round system, we would be facing the first Far-Right government in France since 1944. Keir Starmer won a landslide for Labour on Thursday night with only slightly more of the popular vote (about 35 percent) than the RN won last weekend.

The French two-round system may be laborious and arcane, but it does give voters a chance to correct blunders and avoid calamities. The political establishment may have "conspired" to create the Republican Front, but no one can force voters to support it on Sunday night.

Despite my misgivings, I believe they will. That will not be a "denial" of democracy. It will be the healthy reaction of the two-thirds or so of the French electorate that does NOT want a government by mendacious, incompetent, and frequently racist charlatans.

France will plunge instead into at least 12 months and possibly three years of confusion and disarray before the next Presidential election. Whatever government can be concocted from Sunday's results will struggle to respond to the genuine distress of part of the electorate.

In 12 months or three years' time, Le Pen and Bardella will blame once again a conspiracy of the establishment — not their rejection by a majority of voters — for their failure to bring their destructive and incoherent ideas into government.

I believe that they will be defeated on Sunday but that will be just the beginning of a long and crippling battle over the future, and the soul, of France.

The article first appeared on *The Local France*.

French elections: End of Macron era will redefine EU politics



The illustration shows German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (L), leader of the French Far-Right National Rally party Marine Le Pen (C), and her protégé, Jordan Bardella.
● ESTHER SNIPPE/EURACTIV



By Anne-Laure
Duféal
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

As French President Emmanuel Macron's party faces a likely defeat in the snap legislative elections, and the Hard-Right and Left-wing opposition forces inch closer to power, the implications for European Union politics are profound.

Brussels is nervous about post-election results and possible coalition scenarios. Should the Left or the hard-Right gain power, France could be on the path to a form of "Frexit". Macron, who since 2017 positioned himself as a hero of the EU, may now be seen as responsible for the impending crisis.



French Far-Right leader Marine Le Pen gestures at a campaign rally in March.
● JEAN CHRISTOPHE VERHAEGEN/AFP

A National Rally (RN) or a Left victory could also mean open conflicts between France and the EU on various issues: budgetary policies, defence projects, Schengen agreements, and the Ukraine war among them.

Jordan Bardella, President of the RN and gunning for the position of Prime Minister, said his party would "strive to obtain a reduction of the French contribution to the budget of the European Union" if it won the elections.

The Left, on the other hand, opposes EU-imposed austerity measures, vowing to reject such constraints. Further tensions may rise after the European Commission launched an excessive deficit procedure against France and six other Member States. The RN's proposed reforms concerning Schengen, prioritising European nationals and increasing immigration controls directly challenge EU principles. The party even suggested a referendum putting French law above EU law, which would be in direct conflict with the European treaties.

On Ukraine, both the RN and the Left, particularly driven by La France Insoumise (LFI), oppose sending

troops to Ukraine.

Their stance on Ukraine represented a major shift in France's military aid to Kyiv.

These statements diverge from Macron's commitments to support Ukraine militarily, including potential troop deployments, calls for European military training for Ukrainian forces, and authorising strikes from Western weapons in mainland Russia.

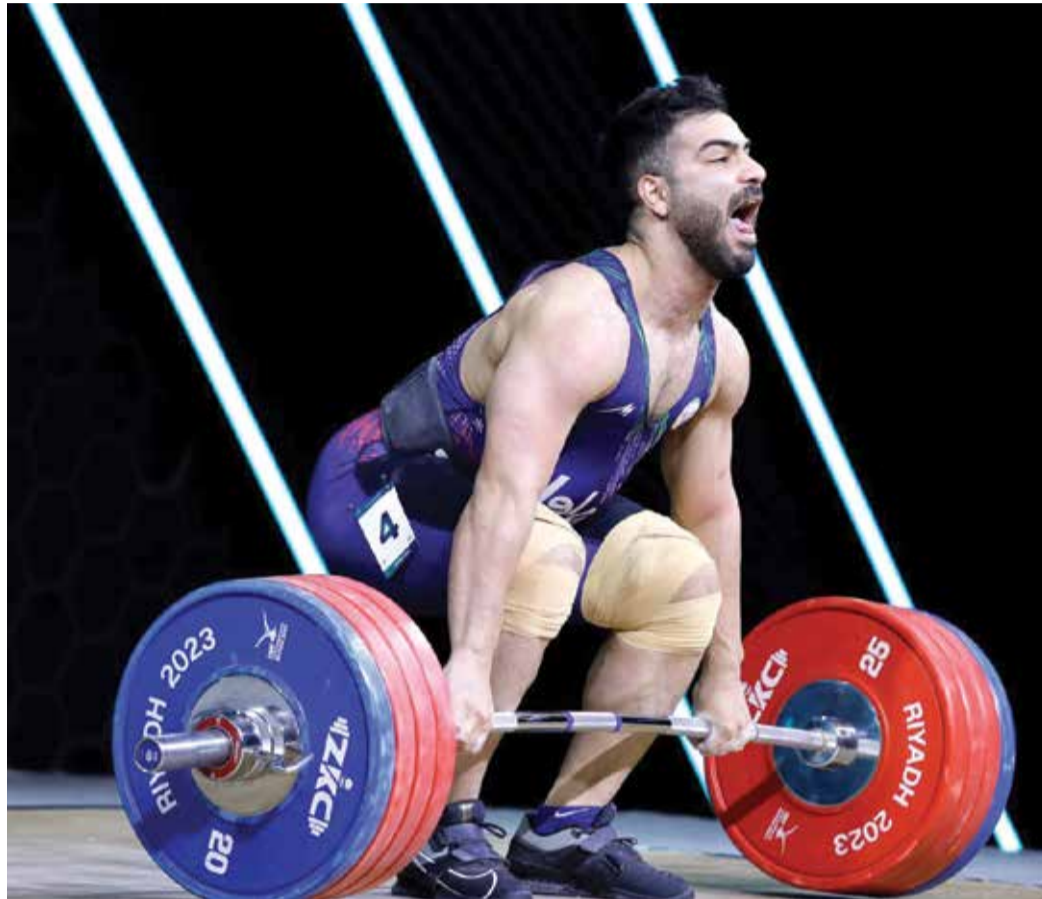
A victory for the RN would also shift the EU's power dynamics and likely solidify a bloc's shift to the Right.

The possible political transformation has particularly spooked Berlin. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed concern at the possible outcome of the French elections at the summer party of the Social Democrats on July 3 in Berlin.

Scholz highlighted the importance of the ballot for the "Franco-German couple" and the future of Europe. "Let's do everything we can together to protect our great and beautiful Europe and not let Far-Right populists dominate it," he said.

The article first appeared on *Brussels Signal*.

Will Paris Olympics yield another weightlifting glory for Iran?



Iranian weightlifter Mirmostafa Javadi, seen in action in last year's World Championships, will take part in the men's 89kg contest in the Paris Olympics.

● IWF

Sports Desk

Iranian duo Mirmostafa Javadi and Ali Davoudi will chase a 10th Olympic weightlifting gold for the country when the Paris Games get underway in less than three weeks' time.

More than seven decades after weightlifter Ja'far Salmasi wrote his name into history books by grabbing a first Olympic medal for Iran – a men's 60kg bronze in London 1948

– the sport remains the second-most prolific one for the country over the past 29 editions of the event. Weightlifting has been one of the two sporting events – along with wrestling – to exceed double figures in the all-time Olympic medals table for Iran, yielding nine golds, six silvers, and five bronzes.

Distinguished Mohammad Nasiri won a first weightlifting gold for Iran in Mexico 1968 but the country had

to wait until the turn of the century for another Olympic glory, when Hossein Tavakkoli and superheavyweight sensation Hossein Rezaeadeh walked away with the ultimate prizes in Sydney 2000.

Rezaeadeh repeated his success four years later in Athens, with Behdad Salimi, Kianoush Rostami, Sohrab Moradi, Saeed Mohammadpour, and Navab Nasirshah – the current head coach of the national team – also among the gold medalists, though the latter two's triumphs in London 2012 were only confirmed years later due to initial winners' testing positive for banned substances.

And now, Javadi and Davoudi will be keen on entering the elite list when walking onto the stage in Paris Expo Porte de Versailles on August 9 and 10.

Javadi will head to the French capital as the reigning world 89kg champion, having bagged the clean & jerk and total golds last September in Riyadh to add to his double silvers and a bronze in the 81kg event in 2021. The 24-year-old Iranian will face stiff competition from Colombian Yeison López – the world snatch record (182kg) holder of the class – and Bulgaria's Karlos Nasar, who were both absent in the World Championships but shared the top spots between them in April's IWF World Cup in Phuket.

Nasar enter the 89kg contest as the world C&J record holder with 223kg, while Venezuelan Keydomar Vallencia – a winner of two bronzes in Riyadh – Italian Antonino Pizzolato and Marin Robu of Moldova will also fancy their chances for an Olympic medal.

Georgian's territory

Meanwhile, the +102kg class is likely to remain Lasha Talakhadze's terri-

tory in Paris as the Georgian great – the undisputed world superheavyweight champion for the past nine years – will be chasing a third successive Olympic gold in the French capital.

Meanwhile, Iranian Davoudi, the reigning Olympic silver medalist, will have to be up against an even harder test to repeat his Tokyo medal as Bahraini Gor Minasyan, who beat Davoudi to the Asian Games gold last year, and Varazdat Lalayan of Armenia – triple World Cup gold winner – will be eager to stand alongside the Georgian on the Paris podium.

The clean & jerk contest could be Davoudi's trump card in Paris though the 252kg record in his latest outing in Phuket would hardly guarantee an Olympic medal for the Iranian.

Lalayan registered 253kg for the C&J gold in Thailand, while his 210kg tally was eight kilograms better than the Iranian's in the snatch event.

Weightlifting has been one of the two sporting events to exceed double figures in the all-time Olympic medals table for Iran, with nine golds, six silvers, and five bronzes.



Iran's Ali Davoudi, pictured in the Tokyo Games, will chase a second successive Olympic medal in the superheavyweight event in Paris.

● AP



Portugal's Euro exit likely to herald Ronaldo's international retirement

REUTERS – Defeat for Portugal at the European Championship on Friday likely brought down the curtain on the extraordinary international career of Cristiano Ronaldo.

While Portugal's totemic forward has made no pronouncements on his future with the national team, the 39-year-old struggled to revive former glories at the tournament in Germany and departed Euro 2024 without scoring apart from in shootouts.

Portugal lost 5-3 to France on penalties in their quarter-final after a goalless stalemate in which Ronaldo missed a glaring chance in extra time but converted one of the kicks in the shootout.

"It's too soon and raw after the match to talk about that and there have been no individual decisions made," coach Roberto Martinez said when asked if it had been Ronaldo's last game



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo looks dejected during a last-16 defeat against France in Euro 2024 in Hamburg, Germany, on July 5, 2024.

● ANNEGRET HILSE/REUTERS

in a Portugal jersey.

There will forever be debates

about where he sits among the greatest footballers – in or be-

hind the exulted company of three-times World Cup winner Pele or the extraordinary talent of Diego Maradona or long-time rival Lionel Messi.

All of them won the World Cup, which Ronaldo has not, but in terms of statistics in national team colours the 39-year-old is out there on his own.

Friday's loss to France at the Volksparkstadion was Ronaldo's 212th cap, significantly ahead of Messi who won his 185th for Argentina against Ecuador in the Copa America on Thursday. Ronaldo's 130 goals for his country is also way out on its own at the head of most scored in international football, with Messi recently moving second on the list with 108.

"Cristiano is in the national team of Portugal because he deserves to be," Martinez had said earlier in the tournament. In terms of longevity few can

match Ronaldo, who debuted for Portugal in 2003.

He was 18 years-old when he came on at halftime to replace Luis Figo in a friendly against Kazakhstan in front of roughly 8,000 in Chaves. Days earlier he had signed for Manchester United, convincing manager Alex Ferguson of his potential after tormenting the team's defence in a pre-season friendly. By the next year he was a regular for Portugal as they hosted Euro 2004, upset in the final by Greece.

He is the first to play at six European Championships and his 14 goals in 30 matches is also a Euros record. He won the trophy in 2016 when Portugal beat hosts France in the final.

Ronaldo's tears

Ironically, in Portugal's Euros triumph Ronaldo went off early in the decider in Paris in tears

with a knee injury.

If you add in his goals in Euro qualifying, Ronaldo has scored 55 times in the competition, with Harry Kane next on 29.

At the World Cup, Ronaldo has played 22 times, scoring eight goals, in five tournaments, while Messi has played four times more and has the appearance record.

In the 21 years Ronaldo has played for Portugal, they have not missed out on qualifying for the World Cup, with a semi-final place in 2006 their best return. That year, Ronaldo netted the decisive penalty to beat England in the quarter-finals.

It has been an extraordinary career, highlighted by five Ballon d'Or awards, and it is not over yet ... certainly not at club level. Ronaldo top-scored with 35 goals in the Saudi league last season and has another year's contract at Al Nassr.

Alcaraz stretched, Sinner sublime at Wimbledon

REUTERS – Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz was stretched to the limit en route to the Wimbledon fourth round but world number one Jannik Sinner, his likely semi-final opponent, was unruffled as he advanced in ominous fashion. The 21-year-old Alcaraz, bidding for his fourth Grand Slam

title, ran into inspired American Frances Tiafoe in a repeat of their thrilling semi-final the 2022 U.S. Open.

Just as in New York, the two players traded blows in a match sprinkled with spectacular exchanges but once again it was Alcaraz who boasted the greater firepower – racking up 55 winners to Tiafoe's

39 in a 5-7 6-2 4-6 7-6(2) 6-2 win.

"I'm playing with the statistics that I have just lost one match in the fifth set. That's an advantage for me. That's why in those situations I play at my high level," the Spaniard said. Alcaraz's day got even better as he finished in time to watch Spain beat Germany at Euro

2024, although he insisted he had not asked the schedulers for an early time slot.

Meanwhile, after being pushed hard by compatriot and 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini in the first round, a clinical Sinner ran riot against Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic, winning 6-1 6-4 6-2 in a little over one and a half hours.



● REUTERS

Pezeshkian outshines Jalili, emerges victorious in runoff election

Iran's veteran parliamentarian and Reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian emerged victorious in the country's presidential runoff election on Friday and became the next chief executive after his predecessor, Ebrahim Raisi, who lost his life, along with foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and several others, in a tragic helicopter crash in northwest Iran on May 19.

According to the final vote count announced on Saturday morning, Iran's election headquarters, which runs under the auspices of the country's Interior Ministry, said Pezeshkian prevailed over his opponent, former nuclear negotiator and Conservative candidate Saeed Jalili.

Leader hopes for 'bright horizons'

In a message on Saturday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei hailed the Iranian

people for their "warm and passionate" turnout in the presidential election, praising as a "brilliant and unforgettable job" what they did in the face of boycott calls.

"This great move in confronting the manufactured furor of boycotting the elections, which the enemies of the Iranian nation had launched to induce despair and deadlock, is a brilliant and unforgettable job," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "All the honorable candidates and all those who worked day and night for weeks for the victory of each of them share in its honor and reward," he added.

Now that the Iranian nation has elected its president, the Leader noted, I congratulate the nation and the president-elect and all those working in this sensitive juncture, especially the enthusiastic youths at the election headquarters of the candidates, and recommend everyone to cooperate and think for the progress and increasing honor of the country.

"I also recommend that the president-elect Dr. Pezeshkian look forward to long and bright horizons with trust in the beneficent God and continue the path of Martyr Raisi to make the best use of enormous capacities of the country, especially the young, revolutionary and faithful human

resources, for the comfort of the people and the progress of the country."

'Hand of friendship'

In his first remarks since being declared winner of the runoff vote, Pezeshkian said on national television on Saturday that he will "extend the hand of friendship to everyone."

"We will extend the hand of friendship to everyone; we are all people of this country; we should use everyone for the progress of the country," Pezeshkian said.

Later, he took to X to thank the Iranian people for putting their trust in him, pledging not to let them down.

"Dear people of Iran, the elections are over and this is just the beginning of our togetherness. The difficult path ahead will not be smooth except with your companionship, empathy and trust. I extend my hand to you and I swear on my honor that I will not leave you alone on this path. Don't leave me alone."

Jalili felicitates

In a message on Saturday, Jalili lauded Friday's vote as a "serious completion in a safe and sound environment" and congratulated his former rival over his victory.

Jalili said the high turnout and transparent election once

again showed the democratic nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Now, it is time for all people in the country to assist the president-elect Pezeshkian to advance the country's status on the international stage".

Parliamentarian support

Iranian Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf congratulated Pezeshkian on his election victory and expressed his full support to the 14th administration.

Qalibaf said in a message that the election was held in the best way in line with the Leader's guidance and strategies, and enjoyed the participation of all political groups and tendencies.

The Parliament speaker congratulated Pezeshkian and praised him for placing a premium on internal unity and his vow to follow the policies of the Leader. He also emphasized that the Iranian legislature would cooperate and fully support the 14th Iranian government to help with the progress of the country.

Mokhber congratulates victor

Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber extended his congratulations to Pezeshkian on winning Iran's 14th presidential election.



Mokhber emphasized that the true winners of the national event are the Iranian people, who have once again demonstrated their determination, steadfastness, and hope throughout different stages of the Islamic Revolution. As the competition concluded, Mokhber expressed hope for a new season of friendship in the country, aiming to build a stronger Iran.

Interior minister hails turnout

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi also thanked the people for their participation in the vote and congratulated Pezeshkian on the victory.

Vahidi touched on wrong

analyses and efforts made to suggest that elections in Iran had no meaning, saying the results put the seal on the invalidity of such claims.

IRGC's support

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) expressed support for and pledged cooperation with the president-elect's administration.

In a message on Saturday, IRGC Commander Major General Hossein Salami congratulated Pezeshkian on the presidential election victory, wishing him success in his tenure.

Paying tribute to the late Iranian president Raisi,

the general expressed the IRGC's full preparedness for cooperation and interaction with the next administration to fulfill the country's needs within the framework of the grand policies outlined by the Leader. Major General Salami also expressed confidence that the mobilization of all capacities and opportunities will lead Iran to victory against the enemy's economic war, stressing that reliance on the domestic capabilities and protection of the Islamic Establishment's might in the international arena for the restoration of the Iranian nation's rights will enable the country to shine globally.

● BORNA

President-elect showered by worldwide congrats

International Desk

World leaders and top government officials extended their congratulations to Masoud Pezeshkian on his victory in Iran's presidential runoff election on Friday.

The 69-year-old parliamentarian and heart surgeon garnered more than 16 million votes while his rival, former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, got over 13 million out of about 30 million votes cast, with the voter turnout standing at 49.8 percent.

Heads of state of neighboring and regional countries, including Russia, Pakistan, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan as well as Persian Gulf Arab states expressed their felicitations to Pezeshkian on his election.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in his congratulatory message, hoped for the "reinforcement of constructive bilateral cooperation" between Moscow and Tehran.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari hoped that "fraternal" relations between Pakistan and Iran will "grow further stronger" during his presidency. The country's prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, on his X account, looked forward to working closely with Pezeshkian, and promoting peace and stability in the region.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, the speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly, expressed confidence in the further consolidation of Tehran-Islamabad ties during his tenure.

Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid and the country's prime minister, Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, con-

gratulated the Islamic Republic of Iran and the new Iranian president-elect on his victory. Rashid wrote on X that, "We affirm our keenness to strengthen relations between Iraq and Iran in a way that serves the interests of the two neighboring countries and peoples."

President of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq Nechirvan Barzani, and Prime Minister Masoud Barzani, in separate messages, congratulated Iran's new chief executive.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, in a congratulatory letter to Pezeshkian, welcomed his electoral success and said Azerbaijan placed "great importance" on relations with Iran.

"I invite you to pay a visit to Azerbaijan to exchange views on the prospects for development of our bilateral cooperation. I convey my best wishes to you, and wish success in your future responsible activities for the prosperity of the friendly and brotherly people of Iran," Aliyev said. Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon also wished success for Iran's president-elect and invited him to visit his country.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan congratulated Pezeshkian and said, "Relations with the brother country of the Islamic Republic of Iran are of special importance for the government and people of the Republic of Armenia."

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan assured that during Pezeshkian's tenure, multilateral and long-term cooperation will reach a higher level in all priority fields.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman also congratulated Pezeshkian.

"On the occasion of your victory in the presidential election in the Islamic Republic of Iran, we are pleased to send you our sincere congratulations and best wishes for success, looking forward to continuing to develop relations between our two brother countries and peoples, and continuing coordination and consultation in order to enhance regional and international peace and security."

Bin Salman, for his part, expressed his "sincere congratulations and best wishes for success and further progress and progress for your country and brotherly people," highlighting his "keenness to develop and deepen relations that unite our two countries and peoples, and serve our common interests."

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani wished Pezeshkian success and the further development and prosperity of joint relations.

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed said he was looking forward to the strengthening of bilateral relations

during Pezeshkian's presidency.

In a post on X, King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa said that Manama seeks to establish outstanding relations with Iran based on cooperation in a way that benefits both countries.

Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said and Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad Al Sabah sent separate messages of congratulations to Pezeshkian.

Sheikh Meshal wished Pezeshkian "a long healthy life and more prosperity and development for the Islamic Republic."

In his congratulatory message, Kuwaiti Emir wished Pezeshkian a long and healthy life and "more prosperity and development for the Islamic Republic."

Strategic relationship

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad affirmed the desire of Damascus to strengthen ties with Tehran.

"We are keen to ensure that our relationship remains at its peak," Assad said, adding that he wants to work with Pezeshkian "to strengthen the Syrian-Iranian strategic relationship," and that "resistance will remain the common approach we follow."

Far Eastern congratulation

In his message to Pezeshkian, President Xi Jinping said, "I attach great importance to the development of China-Iran relations and am willing to work with the President to lead the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership towards deeper advancement."

"Faced with complex regional and international situations, China and Iran have always supported each other, worked together and continued to consolidate strategic mutual trust," Xi said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he looked "forward to working closely" with Pezeshkian

"to further strengthen our warm and long-standing bilateral relationship for the benefit of our peoples and the region."

Japan's Foreign Ministry announced that Tokyo will strengthen dialogue with the new administration in Tehran.

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a statement, wished for Iran "a path of prosperity and development under the new government, contributing constructively to regional stability."

Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim wrote in a Facebook posting, "This outcome reflects the vibrant spirit of Iranian democracy and heralds a promising future for Iran."

'Absolute support'

The Venezuelan government congratulated the people of Iran for their commitment to democracy in Friday's runoff election that resulted in Pezeshkian's victory.

"Venezuela expresses its conviction that the decision made by the Iranian people will contribute to the prosperity of this nation, as well as its consolidation as an emerging power of the nascent multipolar world," Venezuela's Foreign Minister Yván Gil said in a statement on his X account.

Gil expressed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's "absolute support" for Pezeshkian "to continue deepening the fraternal relations between both peoples and in the comprehensive strategic alliance for mutually beneficial cooperation."

In a congratulatory message, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić said that Pezeshkian's presidency would bring prosperity to the nation.

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko congratulated the cardiac surgeon and invited him for an official visit to his country.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist





20th Tehran Auction fetches over \$4m

Arts & Culture Desk

The 20th Tehran Auction for Modern and Contemporary Iranian Art took place on July 5, concluding with a total sales figure of approximately \$4.6 million.

The event, held at the Parsian Azadi Hotel in Tehran, showcased 116 works across various mediums, including painting, calligraphy, photography, and installation, ISNA wrote.

The auction featured works by renowned Iranian artists such as Jalil Rasouli, Aydin Aghdashloo, and Farhad Moshiri. The most expensive pieces on offer were Aghdashloo's 'End of an Era from

the Memories of Destruction' series, Moshiri's 'Black Numbers on White,' and an untitled work by Mohammad Ehsaei, each estimated to sell for between \$250,000 and \$300,000.

Other notable artists with multiple works in the auction included Reza Derakhshani, with a total high estimate of \$300,000, Jazeh Tabatabai with a \$275,000 high estimate, and Farideh Lashai and Vahed Khakdan, each with works estimated to sell for up to \$200,000.

The first of its kind in Iran, the Tehran Auction was launched in 2012 as an independent and private initiative to introduce the best in Iranian art, ranging from established

and emerging Iranian artists to art collectors and the global audience. The auction was hosted by a new face, Shahriyar Rabbani, who began the proceedings by remembering three prominent Iranian artists who died in the last three months: Hadi Jamali, Farshid Shiva, and Iraj Tanzifi. The auctioneer also announced the withdrawal of Lot 102, a piece by Adel Younesi, without providing further details. The auction then began with Rasouli's 'Tree of Friendship.'

Last year, a total of 82 artworks realized over \$4.8 million in sales at the 19th edition of the Tehran Auction that focused on classic and modern Iranian art.



Iranian conductor Rahbari returns to Russia for 18th time

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian maestro Ali (Alexander) Rahbari will perform in Saint Petersburg, Russia, for the 18th time.

Rahbari will lead the Mariinsky Opera in a concert titled 'Transfigured Night.'

The concert, taking place on July 18, marks the conclusion of Rah-

bari's third artistic season with the Mariinsky Opera, with

next year's concerts already fully planned, ISNA wrote.

'Transfigured Night' will feature a program of early 20th-century masterpieces, including Arnold Schoenberg's 'Verklärte Nacht,' Edward Grieg's 'Peer Gynt Suite,' Claude Debussy's

'L'après-midi d'un faune,' and Maurice Ravel's 'Daphnis et Chloé' and 'Boléro.'

Rahbari was appointed by the Artistic and General Director of the Mariinsky Theatre, Valery Gergiev, in July to conduct 10 performances.

In the upcoming artistic season, Rahbari will also be conducting six symphony orchestras in China, including Beijing, in addition to his various international performances.

Iran's first women-only tourist complex to open in Tabriz

Social Desk

Iran's first women-only tourist complex is set to open in Tabriz, in the country's East Azarbaijan Province.

During a one-day trip to the province, Javad Vahedi, an official in the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, praised the province's excellent performance in the tourism sector, ILNA wrote.

Vahedi said that the country's first women-only tourist complex, offering accommodation, recreational, sanitary, and sports facilities, is ready for inauguration. Known as the Nehzat Tourism Complex, the facility boasts a total investment of \$6.89 million and covers an area of 5 hectares with a built-up area of 10,000 square meters. The complex has created direct employ-

ment for 40 people.

East Azarbaijan Province is also a pilot province for health tourism in Iran, and Vahedi emphasized the need to maximize the potential of the province's diverse tourism offerings.

He described the Nehzat complex as a comprehen-

sive facility offering a range of recreational, service, and welfare amenities, including accommodation, a sports hall, a swimming pool, a jacuzzi, a beauty and hygiene salon, and a restaurant, making it the most complete women's tourism complex in the country.



Iran's health official: Dengue fever death rate 1%

Social Desk

An Iranian health official said the death rate from dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease, is around 1%.

Farshid Rezaei, director of the Health Education and Promotion Office at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, said that educational packages about dengue fever are being developed for travelers, medical staff, and journalists, IRNA wrote.

Rezaei stated that there are no travel restrictions due to the fever, but advised travelers, especially those visiting countries like the UAE and Thailand, to be aware of self-care

practices to prevent mosquito bites and infection.

He emphasized that 40% to 80% of patients infected with dengue fever show no symptoms, and adhering to hygienic practices can reduce the risk of infection by up to 70%. Rezaei recommended that Iranians traveling to high-risk provinces, mostly in the southern regions, take necessary precautions such as wearing socks, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and using insect repellents.

Dengue fever is caused by a flavivirus with four different types, meaning a person can be infected up to four times. The virus is transmitted by the Aedes aegypti and Aedes

albopictus mosquitoes, which also carry the Zika and chikungunya viruses.

Since April, 138 cases of dengue fever have been identified in Iran, with the majority of infections originating from other countries like the UAE, Pakistan, and Iraq. Only seven cases were domestically transmitted. The provinces of Hormuzgan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Bushehr, and Gilan are currently dealing with the disease, while Mazandaran and Golestan are at risk.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Education has emphasized that controlling the Aedes mosquito requires a collaborative effort from

various organizations, including the governors, civil defense organizations, customs, and border guards, in addition to the ministry's own efforts.

In recent years, dengue fever has been prevalent in the Pakistani city of Panjgur, located less than 200 kilometers from the Iranian border and a common route for Arbaeen pilgrims.

Iran began monitoring the disease in 2016 and identified the Aedes mosquito in 2019.

The Aedes mosquito is a known carrier of several diseases and can infect multiple individuals through its bite, posing a significant health risk.

