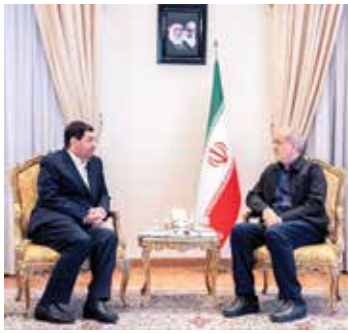
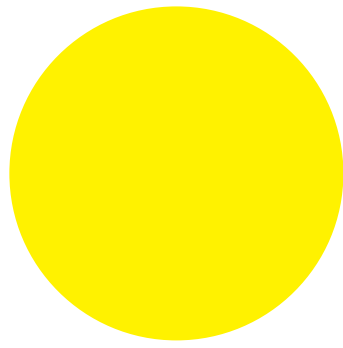


Congratulatory messages keep pouring in

Acting president briefs Pezeshkian on executive affairs



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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (c) meets with ministers and top officials of the outgoing government in Tehran, Iran on July 7, 2024. ● leader.ir

Biden should see Iran's election realistically

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

In a hotly contested race, Masoud Pezeshkian, the flagbearer of Iran's reformists and moderates, emerged victorious as the new president of the Islamic Republic. Championing the promise of "change" and "reform," Pezeshkian beat his conservative rival, Saeed Jalili, as half of eligible voters did not turn out. No major political party or faction boycotted the election and they fielded their candidates. Pezeshkian's electoral campaign and televised debates accentuated his commitment to a policy of "interaction with the world." His critics attempted to align him with the moderate government

of Hassan Rouhani, portraying Pezeshkian's government as a continuation of Rouhani's reign. Nevertheless, the president-elect appears to favor following in the footsteps of former president Mohammad Khatami's reform-driven trajectory of the late 1990s and early 2000s - the very government wherein Pezeshkian served as health minister. That government adopted policies to promote global engagement, with "détente" constituting a pivotal agenda of its foreign policy. Now, as Iran grapples with the persistent pressure of sanctions, Pezeshkian has vowed to rekindle the strategy of international engagement guided by the three paramount tenets of the Leader: dignity, wisdom, and expediency. [Page 2 >](#)



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Iran's exports to Iraq up 27% in three months

Iran exported \$3 billion worth of commodities to Iraq during the first three months of the current Iranian year (March 20-June 20), 27% percent more than the corresponding period in the previous year which stood at \$2.346 billion.

Announcing the news, Farzad Piltan, an advisor to the head of Iran Trade Promotion Organization, said the main exported goods included natural gas, fresh apples, iron and steel ingots.

Tile and ceramics, watermelons, evaporative coolers, tomatoes, home appliances, gas turbines, PE compounds, hot-rolled bars, clinker, infant formula and ice cream were among other exported commodities to Iraq, the official stated.

Iran imported \$107 million worth of goods during the three months to June 20, Piltan said adding that it indicates 25% of rise compared to the related figure of last year (\$85 million). Precious metals, aluminum alloys, tire, automobiles and home appliances were among the main imported goods from Iraq during the period, the official noted.

Iran sells caviar to 38 countries: *IFO* official

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou

Staff writers

According to official statistics, Iran exported 4,784 tons of caviar to 38 countries during the Iranian year to March 19, which indicated a 37% rise compared to the previous year that stood at 3.5 tons.

Talking to Iran Daily, Nasser Karami-Rad, the director general of stock enhancement and conservation of aquatic genetic resources of the Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) added that the country produced 4,760 tons of sturgeon meat as well as 21,612 tons of caviar during past Iranian year.

A sum of 4,650 tons of sturgeon meat and 18.46 tons of caviar were produced in Iran during the year to March 20, 2024, according to the official.

The trade of sturgeon in the world is carried out under the supervision of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Karami-Rad said stating that the permitted caviar export for Iran during the last Iranian year was put at 7.8-8 tons by the multilateral global agreement.

"In addition, due to the restrictions that exporters are facing regarding



the obligation to return foreign currency to the country, as well as other issues, every year some caviar is exported from the country through unofficial corridors," he explained. According to official data, the coun-

try's revenues in year 1401 via the export of caviar underwent a 37% increase.

"Sanctions have created problems for exporters, including in the field of monetary and bank transfers,

and if these problems are resolved, we will see a significant leap in the export of caviar, as Iranian caviar is globally-known and many buyers are interested in buying from Iran," Karami-Rad said.

Considering the potential that Iran enjoys in the field of sturgeon breeding and its high profitability, we can earn very good revenues by developing sturgeon breeding, he concluded.

Biden should see ...

He has also pledged to heed the concerns of those who chose not to partake in the election and try to accommodate their aspirations.

Page 1 > Echoing this sentiment, Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, former communications minister and a prominent figure in Pezeshkian's campaign, said that the inauguration of the new president would catalyze a challenging new phase in which he would try to bring onboard all those who refused to show up at the polls.

Based on his stances, Pezeshkian who is a cardiac surgeon, it is evident that he perceives interaction not only as a remedy for navigating the broader international context but also as a potent prescription for fostering cohesion and cooperation among disparate factions within Iran itself. Amidst global responses to Iran's presidential election, the European Union's foreign policy spokesperson congratulated Dr Pezeshkian's victory, expressing optimism for strengthened relations with Iran. However, in a striking departure from this stance, the US State Department spokesperson characterized the election as neither "free" nor "fair," and would not yield substantial changes in Iran's approach or the protection of citizens' rights.

Contrary to the claims made by this US official, the presidential election in Iran saw the participation of candidates representing the entire political spectrum, and no group boycotted the process. The spirited campaign, impassioned televised debates, and extensive voter turnout - prompting a six-hour polling extension - collectively suggest that the election met acceptable standards. The victorious candidate, Pezeshkian, has been a vocal critic of prevailing policies, casting further doubt on allegations of a constrained electoral process. Furthermore, an election of this nature has not been seen in any US-allied countries in the region, and no such occurrences are anticipated.

Given the disconnect between these claims and the observable facts surrounding Iran's recent presidential election, it would be prudent for US President Joe Biden to redress the missteps made by his State Department spokesperson and adopt a more realistic approach to this significant political development. Former US president Donald Trump's antagonistic policies toward Iran, born from inaccurate assessments, resulted in heightened tensions and costs for both nations - developments that were vociferously condemned by the Democrats under Biden's leadership. The Biden administration's current stance on Iran's election, targeting a newly-elected president yet to begin its term, appears neither grounded in reality nor diplomatically advisable. In light of the warm reception to the election results from America's closest regional allies, it would be appropriate for senior US officials - particularly President Biden - to recalibrate their perspective and demonstrate respect for the outcome of Iran's democratic process. This shift in approach is crucial should the Biden administration genuinely believe that diplomacy constitutes the best option on the table.

Exploring Iran's swap of Turkmen gas to Iraq



A gas swap agreement was signed between Iran and Turkmenistan on Wednesday to supply 10 billion cubic meters a year of Turkmen gas to Iraq through Iran. The strategic agreement is a win for all three countries, diversifying Turkmenistan's export destinations, supplying gas to the north of Iran, and preventing electricity shortages in Iraq.

The contract was signed in a ceremony attended by Iran's Ambassador to Turkmenistan Ali Mojtaba Rozbahani, and head of state concern Turkmen-gaz Maksat Babayev, Press TV wrote. In the joint press statement published on the occasion, it was declared that "Turkmenistan and Iran have been developing mutually beneficial relations in the gas industry for years based on the principles of friendship, good neighborliness, mutual respect and equal participation".

The gas swap between Turkmenistan and Iran has already been carried out, starting in 2022 and 2023, to Azerbaijan. The Turkmen government has yet to provide any details on prices, timing or logistical arrangements, but has announced that it will seek to expand the new gas pipeline to Iran.

According to the Associated Press, Iranian companies will build a new 125-kilometer pipeline to Iran to increase Turkmenistan's gas transmission capacity. Turkmenistan's foreign ministry announced that Ashgabat plans to increase its gas exports to Iran to 40 billion cubic meters annually. Turkmenistan relies heavily on the ex-

port of its huge natural gas reserves, and China is the main customer of gas in Turkmenistan. Therefore, Ashgabat is working on building a pipeline to supply gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India in order to diversify its markets. Also, the entry into force of the new contract will provide a solution to the electricity crisis in Iraq. Iraq's power plants rely heavily on gas imported from Iran, which covers a third of Iraq's needs, but the supply is prone to frequent cutoffs, which worsen the crisis. In previous statements, Iraq's Electricity Minister Ziad Ali Fazil confirmed that his country had finalized the agreement to import 20 million cubic meters of Turkmen gas per day, but the only challenge was the lack of communication lines to transfer it. Therefore, Iraq negotiated with the Iranian side to use its networks to transfer gas from Turkmenistan whenever a disruption in gas supplied by Iran occurred. The gas swap deal signed on Wednesday covers part of Iraq's needs and underlines Iran's commitment to guarantee sustainable supplies to the country.

The agreement is also an important development in Iran's foray into the infrastructure building business, where the construction of 125 km pipeline and three compressor stations in Turkmenistan is carried out by Iranian companies with the aim of expanding Turkmenistan's gas supply to the Islamic Republic. This has been officially confirmed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

Turkmenistan. The recent talks held in Ashgabat from July 1 to 3 also provided the basis for discussions on several aspects of further cooperation in the gas industry between Iran and Turkmenistan.

The European Union and Turkey closely monitored the negotiations and underlined their international importance. The pipeline project is of vital importance for the energy security of both countries and shows their willingness to develop long-term strategic relations in the energy sector. The initiative aims to strengthen the gas transportation infrastructure and ensure export of more natural gas to Iran. It allows Turkmenistan to increase its natural gas exports and embolden its position in the global energy market.

As for Iran, it will optimize domestic gas consumption and consolidate the country's exports, which is very important considering the increasing domestic demand for energy sources. Turkmenistan plans to increase the volume of gas supplied to Iran from two main routes to 40 billion cubic meters per year.

The first route is the main Daulatabad-Sarakhs-Khangiran gas pipeline with a current capacity of 12.5 billion cubic meters per year. The pipeline stretches from the Daulatabad gas field in Turkmenistan to Khangiran in Iran, where it is connected with the Iran Gas Trunkline system.

It is significant as it allows the diversification of Turkmenistan's gas export routes, doubling the nation's export of gas to Iran. For Iran, the pipeline allows the country to deal with gas shortages in its northern regions, and to improve its reputation as a trade partner in the Caspian region.

The second route is the Korpaje-Kordkuy pipeline with a current capacity of 8 billion cubic meters per year. In addition, transmission continues through the Artiq-Lotfabad cross-border pipeline launched in the 1990s to supply gas to border towns in north-

ern Iran. The pipeline has a capacity of one billion cubic meters of gas per year and plays an important role in ensuring the energy security of border regions.

Iran has already swap agreements in place with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. In November 2021, Iran and Azerbaijan signed a swap deal for 1.5-2 billion cubic meters of gas per year from Turkmenistan. In July 2022, they agreed to raise the volume to 3-4 billion cubic meters per year. Iran also has the ability to import 40 to 50 million cubic meters of gas a day from Turkmenistan to guarantee energy security in the country and strengthen economic relations with its neighbors. Negotiations on the transit of gas from Turkmenistan to Turkey through Iran are also ongoing. Iran and Turkey are connected by a main gas pipeline with a capacity of 14 billion cubic meters per year, but Turkey imports only 9.6 billion cubic meters per year and there is room for additional 4.4 billion cubic meters per year to transmit through the network. Negotiations on the potential transit of Turkmen gas through Iran to Turkey indicate a growing interest in creating new energy routes that can meet Turkey's growing demand for energy resources.

Overall, the development of gas transportation infrastructure between Turkmenistan and Iran along with having new swap deals signed shows the strategic importance of these projects for the region.

In the midst of international sanctions and geopolitical instability, these measures are carried out with the aim of ensuring energy security and sustainable development of both countries. Considering the geopolitical importance of the region, these projects can play an important role in strengthening economic and political relations between countries. They also diversify natural gas supplies and reduce dependence on traditional routes and suppliers, which is essential to ensure long-term stability in the region.

Masal, a slice of paradise in Iran

Iranica Desk

Masal is a small city located in the northwest of Rasht, the capital of Gilan Province. The summer retreats in this region offer a pure and exceptional climate, a pristine and misty atmosphere, indescribable tranquility, towering waterfalls, and endless green meadows that allow you to feel as if you are walking on clouds. Each year, numerous travelers visit the Masal highlands to enjoy a peaceful vacation away from the hustle and bustle of city life. This area is undoubtedly a slice of paradise in Iran, resembling a surreal painting.

Location

Masal is situated 60 kilometers from Talesh and 55 kilometers from Rasht, the provincial capital of Gilan. The city is approximately 380 kilometers away from Tehran, requiring around five hours of driving to reach Masal, the second highest city in Gilan after Rudbar. Passing through the winding roads of Masal, you will enter the highlands, each of which holds its own wonders.

Masal boasts towering waterfalls, lush forests, flowing rivers, and picturesque highland meadows with colorful cottages dotting the hillsides. The Khalkalaei and Morghak rivers are the prominent rivers in the area. There is a popular coastal park near the Khalkalaei River where visitors can relax. The locals in Masal are known for their warmth and hospitality. The primary language spoken in Ma-



● rokna.net

sal is Taleshi, with many residents engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry.

Summer retreats

Olsabelangah is arguably the most beautiful summer retreat in Masal, offering stunning views of the surrounding area and situated at an elevation of 1,490 meters above sea level, 27 kilometers northwest of Masal city. The climate in this highland region is so pleasant that even locals visit to escape the summer heat. Olsabelangah is a protected area, allowing construction only with wooden materials. As a result, the highland has preserved its charming wooden cottages, colorful tiled

roofs, and traditional architecture.

The water used in the houses of Olsabelangah is sourced from springs and stored in water tanks. Electricity in the village is provided by a power generator, which unfortunately shuts off after midnight. Sanitation facilities are situated outside the cabins, requiring a short journey to access them.

Sueh Chaleh summer retreat is another popular destination in Masal, following Olsabelangah. It is renowned for its colorful two-story houses that offer a spectacular view, especially during sunset. Located 25 kilometers south of Masal at an altitude of 1800 meters above sea level, Sueh Chaleh translates to a place where tulips and irises flourish in the local language.

Witnessing the pristine and enchanting landscapes of Sueh Chaleh, with the valley covered in a mystical mist, is an experience that everyone should have at least once in their lifetime. When visiting this highland, be sure to take a morning stroll to witness Sueh Chaleh in its most breathtaking form, resembling a piece of paradise before your eyes.

Talaragah summer retreat stands out as one of the most stunning locations in Masal, offering unparalleled views of forests, valleys, mist, and clouds. While internet access is not available in this highland, the lush green meadows of Talaragah are so captivating that you can easily spend a few days disconnected from the digital world, immersing yourself in the natural beauty surrounding you.

Traveling through the winding and lush greenery-lined roads to reach the highlands of Masal undoubtedly offers the joy of experiencing one of the most picturesque natural trekking routes in Iran. The road often resembles a green tunnel, occasionally shrouded in mist.

The summer retreats in Masal are among the finest places to immerse oneself in rural life and atmosphere. Visitors can enjoy a unique ecotourism experience in wooden houses that may lack urban amenities such as electricity, gas, and piped water. Heating in these houses is typically provided by wood or small gas capsules, with water sourced from nearby springs.

Dining options

After journeying through the city of Masal and making your way along the verdant road towards the highlands of Masal, you will find limited dining options, with only a few hotel restaurants and small roadside shops offering *aash* (a Persian bean and noodle soup), tea, and *balal* (a traditional Persian snack). Given the scarcity of restaurants, we recommend that travelers bring their own cooking essentials to prepare meals amidst the stunning nature of Masal's highlands.

Best time to visit

For those planning to camp in the summer quarters, it's crucial to note that nights in this region can be very



● IRNA

Being above the clouds

Within these highlands, there are no streets or avenues, only well-kept hiking trails that guide you through the landscape. The rural ambiance of Masal's highlands, accompanied by the soothing sounds of birds and the presence of livestock, offers a tranquility unlike any other.

Arriving early in the highlands or spending the night in one of the villages may reward you with a breathtaking sight—being above the clouds, an unforgettable experience. When journeying to the highlands of Masal, remember to indulge in photography, nature walks, mountaineering, and horseback riding to make the most of your visit.

cold. Even during the summer season, it's advisable to have warm clothing and heating equipment for comfortable overnight stays in nature. The weather in Masal tends to be cold during fall and winter, with temperatures dropping below freezing. However, the spring and summer seasons bring milder weather, with an average temperature of around 18°C, characteristic of a highland region.

The winter in the highlands can be extremely cold, prompting most individuals to migrate to the city of Masal and leaving the cabins empty. Hence, it is advisable to avoid traveling to these highlands during the winter season to ensure a more pleasant and enjoyable experience.



● IRNA



Study: Protests harmed trust in higher education



By Josh Moody
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

Pro-Palestinian campus protests during the spring semester appear to have further undermined public trust in higher education, according to a study that the marketing firm SimpsonScarborough.

The protests, which sprawled across more than 100 US campuses from coast to coast, captured national headlines and drew the wrath of congressional Republicans, who chastised college presidents for how they dealt with encampments and student demands to divest from Israel and companies allegedly profiting off its war against Hamas.



Pro-Palestinian students and activists protest at an encampment on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles, in Los Angeles, California, on May 6, 2024.
● ETIENNE LAURENT/AFP

According to the SimpsonScarborough survey, which included responses from 641 college-bound high school students and 1,000 parents of high school-aged students, parents were more likely than their children to be aware of campus demonstrations and tended to have a more negative view of the protests.

Drilling down into political affiliation, the survey showed that trust in higher ed decreased most among Republican parents. Nearly half (49 percent) said their trust was diminished by the protests, while 47 percent said it was not affected; the remainder said the protests actually increased their trust. Democrats and independents were less impacted by the demonstrations, though 22 percent of Democratic and 30 percent of independent parents noted that their trust in higher education had declined. The findings come after public trust in higher education hit an all-time low last year.

Parents and students alike associated only a handful of institutions with the protests, namely Columbia University, Harvard University, and the University of California, Los Angeles. All three saw contentious pro-Palestinian encampments, and the leaders of all three institutions have appeared before Congress in separate hearings on campus antisemitism since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7.

Some institutions have attributed other campus troubles to the protests; for instance, Emerson College has alleged that the protests negatively affected enrollment. Earlier last month, Emerson announced layoffs due to declining enrollment, which officials partially attributed to "negative press and social media" related to the protests and the arrests of more than 100 students in April.

The article first appeared on Inside Higher Ed.

Crackdown on US campus protests just beginning



By Adam Federman
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

On April 24, as students were wrapping up their semester at Indiana University (IU) in Bloomington, the school's provost convened an ad hoc committee to discuss a planned protest against the war in Gaza that was set to begin the following day. It was less than a week after Columbia University had called in the NYPD to break up an encampment in Manhattan, arresting more than 100 students, and tensions were running high nationwide. Already, over the winter, Indiana University had suspended a professor for sponsoring a talk by the student Palestine Solidarity Committee and canceled a major retrospective exhibition — in the works for years — by the 87-year-old Palestinian American painter and IU alumnus Samia Halaby, an

outspoken critic of the Israeli occupation.

On the eve of the April protest, without informing faculty or students, the provost's committee — composed only of members of the administration, including the university's chief of police and the vice provost for student life — rewrote a longstanding policy governing speech and assembly on campus. Specifically, they prohibited the use of tents or other structures without prior approval. The next morning, students began assembling tents to occupy Dunn Meadow, a large field in the middle of campus that's been the site of protests going back to at least the 1960s, including an anti-Apartheid "shantytown" that stayed up for two semesters in the mid-1980s and an encampment against the first Gulf War that lasted for 45 days.

But this time, students were told, without explanation, that it wasn't allowed. When they went ahead anyway, unaware of the new policy, school administrators called in heavily armed state troopers that day.

In an alarming show of force, snipers armed with rifles were positioned on the roof of the Indiana Memorial Union building overlooking the meadow. By late afternoon, 33 Indiana University students and faculty members had been arrested, charged with criminal trespassing, and banned from campus for a year. David Anthony McDonald, a professor of ethnomusicology who was among those arrested, said he only learned of the policy change as troopers brandishing batons and plexiglass shields began advancing on the students.

"That is everything you need to know

about the coordination that was taking place between the IU administration and the state police, with no coordination between the administration and the actual students they are supposed to be protecting," McDonald said.

It was only late that night, at nearly 10 pm, that IU President Pamela Whitten emailed faculty to explain the creation of the ad hoc committee and its decision. Students were not officially informed until a campus-wide email was sent three days later. While Whitten claimed that the new policy "enables us to balance free speech and safety in the context of similar protests

occurring nationally," numerous faculty members pointed out that the administration's abrupt change of policy and lack of consultation with the wider community is precisely what led to the dangerous confrontation with law enforcement.

IU declined to comment for this story. "They reversed a policy of 50 years overnight and then they proceeded to enforce this new policy the next day at the point of a gun," explained IU historian Alex Lichtenstein in an email. Over more than three decades in academia, and 12 at IU, he wrote, "I have never seen anything like this, in any institution I have been a part of."

At least a dozen colleges and universities have changed their policies to make it harder to protest the war on Gaza. More may follow this summer.



Columbia University faculty members protect students in the pro-Palestinian "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" in New York City on April 29, 2024. The students were given a suspension warning if they did not meet the university's deadline to clear the encampment.
● MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES



Pro-Palestinian protesters are being arrested at Indiana University on April 25, 2024, by the State Police riot squad. All the arrested protesters, including professors, have been banned from Indiana University's campus for a year.

● JEREMY HOGAN/SOPA IMAGES

Indiana is not alone in making sudden changes to policies dictating when and where students can gather and what they can say as the war in Gaza enters its ninth month. As colleges and universities have become the focal point of Gaza protests, at least a dozen have overhauled campus conduct rules in ways that will effectively limit speech and make it riskier to protest. And this marks an abrupt change from the direction academia had been moving in. Over the past decade, universities including Indiana have become more lenient in allowing protests and encampments to stand without resorting to the kind of force we've seen recently, in a vivid example of what some call the "Palestine exception".

Brian Soucek, a law professor at UC Davis and a member of the American Association of University Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, says schools are both clarifying or tightening their rules and making new decisions about how to enforce them. Brown and UC Berkeley, for example, negotiated with students and reached agreements to reconsider divestment from Israel, which led to the voluntary dismantling of encampments.

But elsewhere changes to policy have led to the overwhelming use of state power — typically law enforcement dressed in riot gear — to clear encampments on campuses across the country. Policy changes have also led to widespread disciplining of students and faculty through suspensions or expulsions and, in some cases, withholding diplomas. In some cases, it's prompted the walling off of the university itself. Columbia, for example, was on lockdown through the end of the semester while NYU erected a plywood wall around part of its campus.

As a result, colleges are coming to look more like a police state than institutions of higher learning. And this is just the beginning. With students leaving for the summer and most encampments removed, at least for now, university administrations have the chance to overhaul campus policies and implement newly repressive measures in the fall.

"I have a feeling there's going to be a lot of changes made over the summer," said Laura Beltz, director of policy reform at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which has been tracking policy changes at colleges and universities since October. "I do have concerns that they're going to be adopting more restrictions in the

days to come."

Many schools, including the University of Pennsylvania, which recently banned encampments and "overnight demonstrations" anywhere on campus, have implemented interim or temporary policies that could be made permanent in the coming months. Others, like the University of Michigan, have floated sweeping new proposals redefining "disruptive activity" and introducing new enforcement mechanisms that could be finalized before the fall semester begins. According to Beltz, these overly broad changes could have far-reaching implications for future student movements.

"Rules designed to suppress protests on this particular issue can just as easily be applied to restrict protest on a variety of issues on campus," Beltz wrote in an email.

Changing policies to target a particular movement or opinion — eschewing the so-called viewpoint neutrality — is a violation of the First Amendment, but that appears to be what several universities have done. (The ACLU and FIRE have challenged many of the new policy changes on First Amendment grounds. Public universities, which receive government funding, are bound by the First Amendment while private institutions are not. However private colleges and universities usually have free speech policies that mirror those of their public counterparts.)

IU's President Whitten even acknowledged in her email to faculty that the policy change was made in response to student plans to set up an encampment in Dunn Meadow. Shortly after the Hamas attacks of October 7, Columbia created a Special Committee on Campus Safety that, like IU's ad hoc group, is composed solely of top administrators, with no student or faculty representation. While colleges and universities typically consult student and faculty governing bodies before implementing consequential changes, one of the Columbia committee's first moves was unilaterally updating the university's events policy to grant the administration "sole discretion" over disciplinary matters — effectively making itself judge and jury. Less than three weeks later, the new policy was used to suspend campus chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace. (SJP has been suspended or banned from at least half a dozen universities across the country.)

In May, as protests spread across the country, University of Virginia's (UVA) Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) made a last-minute

change to its regulations to require administrative approval for any temporary structures erected on campus, whereas previous guidelines had allowed for the recreational use of tents as long as they were under a certain size. Several hours after the policy was altered, UVA's encampment was cleared and more than two dozen students were arrested. (In a statement, UVA said the OEHS regulations posted on its website in May were out of date and the university was merely clarifying existing policy.)

Other changes have been more carefully considered but no less troubling. American University, in a decision widely criticized by civil liberties groups, has banned all indoor protests and established strict new requirements on registering student groups and posting materials such as flyers on campus, which must be "welcoming to all students". This measure would effectively prohibit the dissemination of unpopular or controversial viewpoints. Meanwhile, Cornell, Harvard, Franklin & Marshall, Lehigh, Caltech, Barnard, and Columbia have all released statements clarifying or updating policies on speech and assembly on campus, many of which will restrict students' ability to engage in First Amendment-protected activity.

The crackdown on the Palestinian solidarity campaign is not only taking place within colleges and universities. At the federal level, the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law found, eight new laws have been proposed that would punish students arrested during campus protests, in some cases by revoking visas for non-US students or cutting off financial aid.

All of this is part of a broader legislative push, at the state and federal levels, to undermine social movements — from the anti-pipeline campaigns of the 2010s to Black Lives Matter and Stop Cop City — by enhancing penalties for common protest-related crimes such as trespassing or blocking traffic. Several states have cited recent protests against US policy on Israel as their motivation for creating stiffer punishments for blocking traffic. In its most extreme form, New York Democrats in a recent legislative session put forward a bill that would make blocking a highway or bridge an act of domestic terrorism. Trump, for his part, has reportedly said that, if he's re-elected, he will deport student protesters and "set that movement back 25 or 30 years".

The full article first appeared on *In These Times*.

Victory at Columbia University

Now, drop all charges!

OPINION

Over six months after Hamas initiated the Al-Aqsa Flood in Gaza on October 7, students at Columbia University in New York City occupied Hamilton Hall on April 30. They protested the school's millions of dollars of investment in the apartheid, Zionist regime of Israel, along with Israel's ongoing racist genocide against the people in Gaza.

New York City Police Department cops brutally arrested 46 of those students, at the request of the school administration, for "criminal trespassing," considered a misdemeanor. In a bit of irony, the NYPD were the real trespassers.

New York City Police Department cops brutally arrested 46 of those students, at the request of the school administration, for "criminal trespassing," considered a misdemeanor. In a bit of irony, the NYPD were the real trespassers.



Pro-Palestinian protesters arrested for seizing the Hamilton Hall (renamed to Hind's Hall) at Columbia University announce in a press conference that they will be refusing court deals, outside a Manhattan criminal courthouse after their court appearance on June 20, 2024.

● AP

The Washington Post carried an article that revealed that pro-Zionist billionaires — such as Daniel Lubetzky, Daniel Loeb, Len Blavatnik, and Joseph Sitt — pledged campaign donations to Mayor Eric Adams if he would allow the NYPD to "handle" the protesters in collusion with university President Minouche Shafik, a former financial adviser, and the Board of Trustees. (May 16)

These arrests took place following a student encampment set up the week before, which was dismantled by the New York Police Department. The encampment ignited the student Intifada that spread, first throughout the US and then globally, in solidarity with Palestine.

Of the 46 people arrested, 31 were Columbia students or others with a current tie to the university; charges were dismissed against the 30 students on June 20 due to a lack of evidence. One other student had their charges dropped earlier. The remaining arrestees — 12 of whom are considered "outsiders" by authorities — were eligible to have their charges dropped if they accepted an "adjournment in contemplation of dismissal". This is a provision in New York law that, if the ACD is accepted, the case against the arrestee will be dropped and put away for six months only if they are not arrested for another offense in the interim.

Fourteen of the 15 remaining defendants, proudly wearing their Palestinian keffiyehs defiantly in court, turned down the ACD deal and issued a joint statement stating the reason for their decision: "We stand here today united by our action and the Palestinian cause. The state has attempted, once again, to divide us — dismissing some of our cases and offering others deals in accordance with their outside agitator narrative."

"All of us who took part in the liberation of Hind's Hall [renamed in honor of a six-year-old Palestinian girl murdered by the Israeli Occupation Force] were driven by the same necessity to escalate, to escalate for Gaza, to resist the savage genocide of our siblings in Palestine."

"We exercised our shared right to oppose the US war machine by putting our bodies upon the years of Columbia, one of its most well-oiled domestic components." (June 21)

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Long live the student Intifada!

The article first appeared on *Workers World*.



Pro-Palestinian protesters are being arrested at Indiana University on April 25, 2024, by the State Police riot squad. All the arrested protesters, including professors, have been banned from Indiana University's campus for a year.

● JEREMY HOGAN/SOPA IMAGES

Indiana is not alone in making sudden changes to policies dictating when and where students can gather and what they can say as the war in Gaza enters its ninth month. As colleges and universities have become the focal point of Gaza protests, at least a dozen have overhauled campus conduct rules in ways that will effectively limit speech and make it riskier to protest. And this marks an abrupt change from the direction academia had been moving in. Over the past decade, universities including Indiana have become more lenient in allowing protests and encampments to stand without resorting to the kind of force we've seen recently, in a vivid example of what some call the "Palestine exception".

Brian Soucek, a law professor at UC Davis and a member of the American Association of University Professors' Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure, says schools are both clarifying or tightening their rules and making new decisions about how to enforce them. Brown and UC Berkeley, for example, negotiated with students and reached agreements to reconsider divestment from Israel, which led to the voluntary dismantling of encampments.

But elsewhere changes to policy have led to the overwhelming use of state power — typically law enforcement dressed in riot gear — to clear encampments on campuses across the country. Policy changes have also led to widespread disciplining of students and faculty through suspensions or expulsions and, in some cases, withholding diplomas. In some cases, it's prompted the walling off of the university itself. Columbia, for example, was on lockdown through the end of the semester while NYU erected a plywood wall around part of its campus.

As a result, colleges are coming to look more like a police state than institutions of higher learning. And this is just the beginning. With students leaving for the summer and most encampments removed, at least for now, university administrations have the chance to overhaul campus policies and implement newly repressive measures in the fall.

"I have a feeling there's going to be a lot of changes made over the summer," said Laura Beltz, director of policy reform at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE), which has been tracking policy changes at colleges and universities since October. "I do have concerns that they're going to be adopting more restrictions in the

days to come."

Many schools, including the University of Pennsylvania, which recently banned encampments and "overnight demonstrations" anywhere on campus, have implemented interim or temporary policies that could be made permanent in the coming months. Others, like the University of Michigan, have floated sweeping new proposals redefining "disruptive activity" and introducing new enforcement mechanisms that could be finalized before the fall semester begins. According to Beltz, these overly broad changes could have far-reaching implications for future student movements.

"Rules designed to suppress protests on this particular issue can just as easily be applied to restrict protest on a variety of issues on campus," Beltz wrote in an email.

Changing policies to target a particular movement or opinion — eschewing the so-called viewpoint neutrality — is a violation of the First Amendment, but that appears to be what several universities have done. (The ACLU and FIRE have challenged many of the new policy changes on First Amendment grounds. Public universities, which receive government funding, are bound by the First Amendment while private institutions are not. However private colleges and universities usually have free speech policies that mirror those of their public counterparts.)

IU's President Whitten even acknowledged in her email to faculty that the policy change was made in response to student plans to set up an encampment in Dunn Meadow. Shortly after the Hamas attacks of October 7, Columbia created a Special Committee on Campus Safety that, like IU's ad hoc group, is composed solely of top administrators, with no student or faculty representation. While colleges and universities typically consult student and faculty governing bodies before implementing consequential changes, one of the Columbia committee's first moves was unilaterally updating the university's events policy to grant the administration "sole discretion" over disciplinary matters — effectively making itself judge and jury. Less than three weeks later, the new policy was used to suspend campus chapters of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) and Jewish Voice for Peace. (SJP has been suspended or banned from at least half a dozen universities across the country.)

In May, as protests spread across the country, University of Virginia's (UVA) Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) made a last-minute

change to its regulations to require administrative approval for any temporary structures erected on campus, whereas previous guidelines had allowed for the recreational use of tents as long as they were under a certain size. Several hours after the policy was altered, UVA's encampment was cleared and more than two dozen students were arrested. (In a statement, UVA said the OEHS regulations posted on its website in May were out of date and the university was merely clarifying existing policy.)

Other changes have been more carefully considered but no less troubling. American University, in a decision widely criticized by civil liberties groups, has banned all indoor protests and established strict new requirements on registering student groups and posting materials such as flyers on campus, which must be "welcoming to all students". This measure would effectively prohibit the dissemination of unpopular or controversial viewpoints. Meanwhile, Cornell, Harvard, Franklin & Marshall, Lehigh, Caltech, Barnard, and Columbia have all released statements clarifying or updating policies on speech and assembly on campus, many of which will restrict students' ability to engage in First Amendment-protected activity.

The crackdown on the Palestinian solidarity campaign is not only taking place within colleges and universities. At the federal level, the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law found, eight new laws have been proposed that would punish students arrested during campus protests, in some cases by revoking visas for non-US students or cutting off financial aid.

All of this is part of a broader legislative push, at the state and federal levels, to undermine social movements — from the anti-pipeline campaigns of the 2010s to Black Lives Matter and Stop Cop City — by enhancing penalties for common protest-related crimes such as trespassing or blocking traffic. Several states have cited recent protests against US policy on Israel as their motivation for creating stiffer punishments for blocking traffic. In its most extreme form, New York Democrats in a recent legislative session put forward a bill that would make blocking a highway or bridge an act of domestic terrorism. Trump, for his part, has reportedly said that, if he's re-elected, he will deport student protesters and "set that movement back 25 or 30 years".

The full article first appeared on *In These Times*.

Victory at Columbia University

Now, drop all charges!

OPINION Over six months after Hamas initiated the Al-Aqsa Flood in Gaza on October 7, students at Columbia University in New York City occupied Hamilton Hall on April 30. They protested the school's millions of dollars of investment in the apartheid, Zionist regime of Israel, along with Israel's ongoing racist genocide against the people in Gaza.

New York City Police Department cops brutally arrested 46 of those students, at the request of the school administration, for "criminal trespassing," considered a misdemeanor. In a bit of irony, the NYPD were the real trespassers.



Pro-Palestinian protesters arrested for seizing the Hamilton Hall (renamed to Hind's Hall) at Columbia University announce in a press conference that they will be refusing court deals, outside a Manhattan criminal courthouse after their court appearance on June 20, 2024.

● AP

The Washington Post carried an article that revealed that pro-Zionist billionaires — such as Daniel Lubetzky, Daniel Loeb, Len Blavatnik, and Joseph Sitt — pledged campaign donations to Mayor Eric Adams if he would allow the NYPD to "handle" the protesters in collusion with university President Minouche Shafik, a former financial adviser, and the Board of Trustees. (May 16)

These arrests took place following a student encampment set up the week before, which was dismantled by the New York Police Department. The encampment ignited the student Intifada that spread, first throughout the US and then globally, in solidarity with Palestine.

Of the 46 people arrested, 31 were Columbia students or others with a current tie to the university; charges were dismissed against the 30 students on June 20 due to a lack of evidence. One other student had their charges dropped earlier. The remaining arrestees — 12 of whom are considered "outsiders" by authorities — were eligible to have their charges dropped if they accepted an "adjournment in contemplation of dismissal". This is a provision in New York law that, if the ACD is accepted, the case against the arrestee will be dropped and put away for six months only if they are not arrested for another offense in the interim.

Fourteen of the 15 remaining defendants, proudly wearing their Palestinian keffiyehs defiantly in court, turned down the ACD deal and issued a joint statement stating the reason for their decision: "We stand here today united by our action and the Palestinian cause. The state has attempted, once again, to divide us — dismissing some of our cases and offering others deals in accordance with their outside agitator narrative."

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Iranian fencers to take a shot at Olympic history



By Amirhadi Arsalanpour
Staff writer

Iranian saber team will be hoping to round off years of progress by grabbing a first-ever Olympic medal when the sporting extravaganza gets underway in Paris in less than three weeks' time.

"Iranian fencing has been craving for Olympic glory for 12 years. I think the Games owe us a medal," said the Iranian head coach Payman Fakhri, whose team will be represented by Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Rahbari, Mohammad Fotouhi, and Farzad Baher in the French capital's Grand Palais on July 31. "I don't know if it is written in the stars for the Iranian team,

but I'm sure this group of fencers have reached the maturity to win an Olympic medal," added Fakhri, who took charge of the national team for a second spell in June.

His men made it to the team saber final at the Asian Championships in Kuwait but came short against fencing powerhouse South Korea, which featured two members of the Tokyo Olympic gold-winning team in Oh Sanguk and Gu Bongil.

Iranian captain Pakdaman, meanwhile, is also set to be a part of the individual contests in Paris through the FIE ranking.

"We've enjoyed all sorts of success in recent years," Pakdaman said in a training session attended by Iranian Sports Minister Kioumars Hashemi on Saturday.

"We've excelled at different Fencing World Cup events. We came out on top against Italy in its own backyard in 2019. We've beaten Hungary. Iran has truly become a household name in the sport and the Olympic medal is the only piece of glory eluding the country. The Paris Olympics could be a turning point for Iranian fencing," added the world number five in the Olympic qualification ranking. Iran came closest to the Olympic podium in Rio 2016, where Mojtaba Abedini suffered a last-four heartbreak against American Daryl Homer before falling to a loss to prominent South Korean Kim Jung-hwan in the battle for bronze.

The campaign in Tokyo, however, was one to forget for Iran as Abedini and Rahbari were

knocked out in the round of 16 and Pakdaman was beaten by eventual gold winner Áron Szilágyi of Hungary in the quarterfinals, while the country failed to go beyond the last-eight round after a narrow defeat against Italy.

"We've surely learned from our mistakes in the previous Olympics. Refereeing decisions cost us against Italy and we were unlucky to lose 45-44. We'll have to make sure it won't happen this time around. The team started preparing for the Games right after the event in Tokyo, taking part in numerous international competitions, and I just hope all the hard work pays off in Paris," said Rahbari, an individual bronze medalist in Kuwait as well as last year's Asian Games.



● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

Morais to stay on as Sepahan manager, club confirms



● PAYAM SANI/IRNA

Sports Desk

Portuguese head coach Jose Morais will spend a third season at Sepahan, the Persian Gulf Pro League club confirmed on Sunday.

The news ends weeks of speculation swirling around the Sepahan bench following the final victory over Mes Rafsanjan in the Iranian domestic cup, Khorramshahr Liberation Memorial, in June – a first trophy for the top-flight side in nine years.

The Portuguese is to return from vacation in the coming days as Sepahan's first training session for the new season will begin by the end of the week, the Isfahan-based side said in a statement.

The club's first game of the new

campaign will come on August 6 at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, where Morais's men will host Emirati side Shabab Al-Ahli in the preliminary round of the inaugural AFC Champions League Elite season.

The winner of the tie will play away to Qatar Stars League's Al-Gharafa a week later for a place in the 12-team league phase of the competition in the West region.

Morais, 58, led his team to the runner-up spot in the Iranian league in his first season in charge, before a controversy-laden campaign saw Sepahan finish third behind Tehran archrivals Persepolis and Esteghlal last term.

Widely regarded as the favorite to lift the league trophy after some emphatic

victories in the early stages of the season, Sepahan had to part ways with several signings midway through the season due to the Iranian Football Federation's financial rules and fell short in the title race in the second half of the campaign.

Morais faces the prospect of being without two instrumental figures in his squad for the next season as Iranian international striker Shahriar Moghanlou, the leading marksman in the league with 16 goals, is on the verge of joining Ittihad Kalba in the UAE Pro League, while prolific fullback Ramin Rezaeian, who bagged 14 goals and 12 assists across all competitions, has announced the cup final against Mes was his last appearance in the Sepahan shirt.

'Something special': Koeman relishes semi-final clash with England

THE GUARDIAN – Ronald Koeman savoured the prospect of a Euro 2024 semi-final against England as "something special" after the Netherlands booked their place with a thrilling comeback win over Turkey.

Two of Europe's old powers will meet in a major tournament for the first time since 1996 after Stefan de Vrij and an own goal from Mert Muldur overturned a half-time deficit. Koeman's players rode their luck late on but saw out a storm of pressure and face what promises to be a high-octane occasion in Dortmund.

"For the whole nation it is something special," Koeman said, reflecting on the fact that the Netherlands had not reached a Euros semi-final since 2004. "We are a small nation and to be part of the semi-finals with England, France and Spain we are really proud to get the opportunity."

Twelve days previously

Koeman had criticised his side for a poor performance against Austria but this time he praised their attitude and application in a deafening, sometimes impossibly intense, environment at Olympiastadion. "It was really an emotional match," he said. "We had a big heart and we sometimes get criticism about that – that we don't have that compared to other nations. The players showed a big heart after going 1-0 down. We had to suffer but finally it is a great success."

England were taken the distance by Switzerland earlier in the evening but Koeman played down any notion that extra time and penalties will have taken a greater toll on Gareth Southgate's team. "If you win the match that always gives a good feeling," he said. "We need to recover, like England. It is not a physical difference between them and us. We played on the same day, we need to travel like them.

It is not the physical [aspect] that will decide the result."

Asked if he would have a preferred final opponent, Koeman offered a clear choice. "First of all we need to fight to win the semi-final," he said. "It will be a great night on Wednesday between two big nations historically. If we play the final, my preference is Spain because we had France in the group stage."

The Turkey manager, Vincenzo Montella, whose players were denied by some last-ditch defending and a brilliant stoppage-time save from Bart Verbruggen, saw honour in defeat. "I think we are among the top five in the European Championship," he said. "We are proud that we have gained an identity by feeling our whole country behind us and adopting our strategy. Our players should be kissed on the forehead. We should be really proud: we have come this far, but could have achieved even more."



● NETHERLANDS' head coach Ronald Koeman celebrates his team's last-eight victory over Turkey in Euro 2024 in Berlin, Germany, on July 6, 2024.
● RONNY HARTMANN/AFP



Raisi's diplomacy spotlights interaction, dignity: *Leader*

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has praised prominent features of the outgoing administration of late President Ebrahim Raisi, underlining that the popular government favored diplomatic interaction and dignity in its foreign policy approach.

The Leader made the remarks during a meeting with members of the outgoing administration in the Iranian capital of Tehran on Sunday.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the 13th administration led by Raisi, who along with a number of his companions lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash in the northwest of the country on May 19, was the "government of work, hope and action" in both domestic and foreign sectors. Stressing that the late chief executive was resolute in serving all walks of the nation and fighting off racketeering, the Leader said, "Among the prominent features of Raisi's administration was its people-centricity, something which must be set as a role model for all authorities." Touching on the Raisi administration's foreign policy, Ayatollah Khamenei said the 63-year

politician was an outstanding figure in diplomatic interactions and brought honor to both Iran and the Iranian nation.

"Respecting interaction and dignity at the same time was one of the outstanding traits of Mr. Raisi," the Leader said. "He believed in the principle of communication and was a person of interaction but from the position of honor."

He espoused very firm beliefs in the potentials and capacities of Iranian experts and was blunt in expressing his religious and revolutionary positions as he never made any hazy comments, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"Among the distinctive characteristics of Martyr Raisi was his diligence, and round-the-clock efforts," the Leader noted, underlining that the late Iranian president never felt upset in the face of criticisms, and never fell into despair despite all the difficulties he encountered.

"Our dear Raisi looked up to the public and by being among the people, he would feel the realities and needs, and made solving the problems and meeting the needs of the masses of the people the cornerstone of his



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei meets with members of the outgoing government in Tehran on July 7, 2024.
● IRNA

plans and actions," he noted. Raisi was hopeful and optimistic about the future, the Leader said, adding that the late president intended to reach his goals

with the cooperation of his cabinet members. Ayatollah Khamenei also hailed Raisi for supporting the public and giving paramount impor-

tance to their demands. "Martyr Raisi was extremely patient and forbearing. His characteristics can be utilized as a management model for the entire nation."

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also thanked the Iranian nation and state officials for holding a smooth presidential election.

Congratulatory messages keep pouring in

Acting president briefs Pezeshkian on executive affairs

National Desk

Iran's President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian continues to receive congratulatory messages and pledges of support from both domestic and international officials, with Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei expressing hope that the new chief executive will take steps toward the country's progress by taking advantage of national capabilities. Ayatollah Khamenei on Saturday received Iran's president-elect after his victory in Friday's runoff presidential election. Once again, the Leader congratulated Pezeshkian on his success in obtaining the majority of the votes and made necessary recommendations.

A pledge for campaign promises

Pezeshkian received more than 16

million votes (about 53.6%) against former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili with more than 13 million (about 44.3%) out of over 30 million votes cast, with the voter turnout standing at about 50 percent.

In his first address to the nation after winning the election at the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini on Saturday, the president-elect said he is ready to serve the noble Iranian nation and vowed to fulfill his campaign promises.

Pezeshkian said he would focus his efforts on promoting dialogue, convergence and national reconciliation in the country. He also noted that he respects his competitor Jalili and tells all who voted for him that the competition has ended and the time has come for friendship in Iran.

The president-elect emphasized that he has no intention to limit

people's desires and will rather seek to "remove the shadow of sanctions, threats and war from Iran."

He stressed the need to promote dialogue and constructive interaction with the world to serve national interests and meet people's needs.

Pezeshkian called on the people to help him fulfill his promises and overcome the challenges and crises faced by the country.

Meanwhile, in a meeting on Sunday, Acting President Mohammad Mokhber briefed Pezeshkian on the latest status of the executive affairs, as the 14th administration is going to take office within the next few weeks.

Mokhber provided the president-elect with general information about the political, economic, cultural and social affairs that were handled by the administration of late President Ebrahim

Raisi, who lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash on May 19.

Top military brass 'ready to cooperate'

In separate congratulatory messages on Sunday, Iran's top military brass voiced readiness to cooperate with Pezeshkian's government. Iran's highest-ranking military commander expressed the Armed Forces' readiness to

cooperate and interact with the president-elect's administration.

"I hope that by further strengthening the defense capabilities of the Armed Forces, we will make a big leap in establishing the authority, deterrence power, security and defense of the sacred ideals of the Islamic Republic and our holy land," Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said.

Iranian Army Chief Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi also lauded the "fervent" presence of Iranian voters at the polls as he felicitated Pezeshkian on his presidential win.

Mousavi expressed the readiness of the Army to interact with the Iranian president-elect and his government and to "use the ample and valuable capacities" of the force in the path of the 14th administration's success.

Meanwhile, Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani wished him success in fulfilling his presidential tasks during his tenure, announcing "the readiness of the scientists and servicemen in the field of defense and science and technology in the Ministry of Defense in all-out cooperation [with the new government] and protection of the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

US, EU response

In its first reaction to the results of the Iranian presidential election, the US State Department reiterated false accusations and claimed that the vote was "not free or fair" and would not "lead to fundamental change in Iran's direction."

However, the department said that the US would continue to use diplomacy with Tehran "when it advances American interests," according to AP.



But, the European Union on Saturday expressed its readiness to engage with Iran's new administration.

Nabila Massrali, the spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union congratulated the Iranian president-elect, saying, "We take note of the results of the presidential elections in Iran and congratulate President elect Massoud Pezeshkian."

"We are ready to engage with the new government in line with EU policy of critical engagement," Massrali wrote on X.

In remarks published in Italian newspapers, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy Edmund Chirilly congratulated the people and government of Iran on the occasion of the election of the new president.

"I hope that we can cooperate to establish peace and stability in the region, especially in the Gulf of Aden and the Middle East in general," Chirilly said.

Hezbollah to stay with Iran

Hezbollah also congratulated Pezeshkian on his victory, pledging that the movement would keep treading down the path of resistance alongside the Islamic



Iran's President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (R) meets with Acting President Mohammad Mokhber in Tehran on July 7, 2024.
● IRNA

Republic under the would-be Iranian chief executive.

The Lebanese resistance movement's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said Hezbollah had always looked to Iran as a "strong and stable support base" for the resistance elements and the oppressed people ever since the victory of the country's Islamic Revolution under the founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini.

"Your Excellency, we will remain on this path with you, God willing, until we achieve final victory, the main pillar of which will be a strong, dear, and powerful Islamic Iran."

Also, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ruling Taliban government in Afghanistan congratulated Pezeshkian in a statement on Sunday.

Taliban expressed hope that "with the establishment of the new government, relations between the two neighboring and Muslim countries will further strengthen and expand in various fields."

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist





Iran designates May 20 as National Ecotourism Day

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ezzatollah Zarghami, announced that May 20 has been declared as National Ecotourism Day in Iran. In a statement, Zarghami said that May 20, which falls on the 31st of Ordibe-

hesht (second month in the Iranian calendar), will be marked as a day to celebrate and promote ecotourism in the country, Mehr News Agency wrote. "I would like to express my felicitations to all my colleagues and the diligent members of the ecotourism community on the occasion of the designation of May 20 as National Ecotourism Day,"

Zarghami said in a post on his X social media account. The official added that May 21 is celebrated as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, and that Iran's diverse ethnic groups are a source of national pride and identity. "Our ethnic groups are the honor and identity of our nation," he wrote.

Iran's 41st Book of Year Award honors winners



● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

The winners of the Islamic Republic of Iran's 41st Book of the Year Award received their accolades at a ceremony held on July 6, 2024. The event, which took place at the Roudaki Hall in Tehran, was attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, IRNA wrote. During the ceremony,

Esmaeili acknowledged the high cost of books but assured that the government is working to improve access to them. He also highlighted the ongoing construction of the largest library in the region, spanning over 18,500 square meters in Arak. In addition, the minister mentioned the country's successful collaboration with Pakistan and Turkmenistan and a signed

agreement with Turkey, which will be the special guest at next year's Tehran International Book Fair. The award-giving ceremony recognized the top publications and publishers in various categories, including Philosophy, Religion, Social Sciences, Language, Applied Sciences, Literature, History, Geography, Children and Adolescents, Humanities, and Arts.

Social Desk

At the 10th BRICS Civil Forum in Russia, Pir-Hossein Kolivand, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), unveiled the organization's capabilities and introduced the innovative concept of "Red Crescent Houses." Kolivand highlighted IRCS's experience in establishing self-sustaining medical centers in African

Iranian Red Crescent Society's initiatives welcomed by BRICS

and Latin American countries, made possible by the Iranian government's mandate to carry out health and medical missions abroad. With minimal investment and by leveraging the host

country's resources, these centers provide over one million health services annually, playing a crucial role in promoting health and well-being. The Red Crescent Houses are a

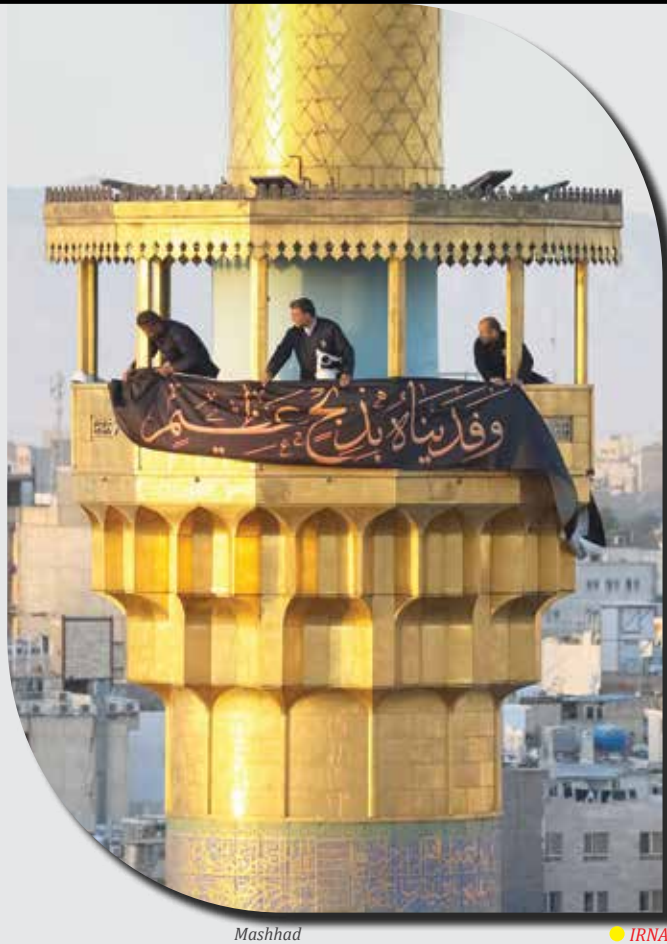
smaller, community-based version of this initiative, he said, adding that IRCS established these houses with a focus on educating communities about disaster preparedness and response to mitigate the

impact of natural disasters and diseases and enhance resilience during crises. Kolivand emphasized the synergistic efforts of IRCS's pillars, all working together to maximize service delivery to the people. The Red Crescent Houses, in collaboration with other IRCS organizations, actively engage in poverty alleviation and community empowerment. By identifying vul-

nerable individuals and families, they provide much-needed health, medical, and livelihood support, thereby preventing further harm and promoting resilience. The successful models and experiences of IRCS are set to be replicated in other BRICS countries, showcasing Iran's humanitarian leadership and the power of community-driven initiatives, he added.

Preparation for Muharram

Iranians prepare for the lunar month of Muharram, with cities and towns across the country being adorned with black flags and holding mourning ceremonies to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions. This tragic event, known as the Battle of Karbala, holds great significance for Shia Muslims. In anticipation of the 10-day mourning period, servants of the holy shrines of Imam Reza (PBUH) in Mashhad and Hazrat-e Masoumeh in Qom replaced their dome flags with black ones, symbolizing grief and reverence.



Mashhad

● IRNA



Karaj

● IRNA



Qom

● IRNA



Gonabad

● ISNA



Yazd

● ISNA