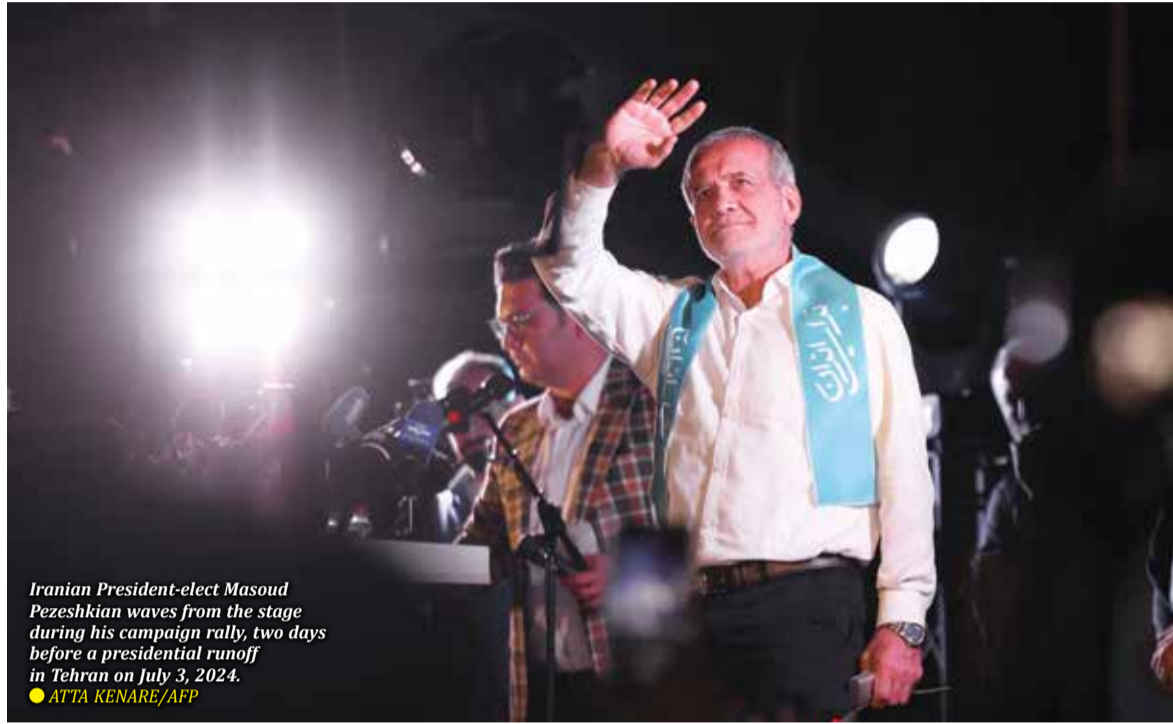


World leaders felicitate Pezeshkian on election win

President-elect reaffirms support for Resistance



Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian waves from the stage during his campaign rally, two days before a presidential runoff in Tehran on July 3, 2024.
● ATTA KENARE/AFP

International Desk

World leaders are sending messages or calling Masoud Pezeshkian to congratulate his election as Iran's 14th president and to express their readiness to continue their relations with Iran under the new government. On Tuesday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a phone conversation with Pezeshkian to congratulate his

election. Sharif praised Iran's election process as proof of the strength of the Islamic Republic's democratic foundations, and wished prosperity for the Iranian people. He said Islamabad seeks close cooperation with Tehran in order to further strengthen bilateral ties and promote regional peace and stability. Sharif added that decisions taken jointly by

both countries during the historic visit of late president Ebrahim Raisi in April 2024 had laid an excellent foundation for a mutually beneficial cooperative partnership between the two countries. The Iranian president-elect also asserted that the importance of strengthening ties with Islamabad was an inviolable principle of Iran's foreign policy. Pezeshkian highlighted the

significance of ties with Pakistan and pledged to further expand the mutual relations. Meanwhile, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has sent a cable of congratulations to Iran's new chief executive, saying his victory "reflects the confidence of the Iranian people in his ability to serve his country and steer it toward prosperity and development." Sisi also wished the president-elect "success in his

duties and expressed his appreciation of the good relations between the Egyptian and Iranian people."

Also on Monday, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said the world body was keen to cooperate with Iran's new president when asked about Iran's presidential vote. In a phone conversation with Pezeshkian, Iraq's Prime Minister Shia al-Sudani invited Pezeshkian to visit the neighboring Arab country.

The two leaders exchanged views on bilateral relations and emphasized the need for the continuation of joint cooperation in various economic and security sectors. Sudan said Iraq is optimistic about strengthening bilateral, regional and international cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad during Pezeshkian's tenure.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze also sent a congratulatory message, saying, "I am confident that your efforts as the president of Iran will ensure a bright, stable and secure future for the country." Pezeshkian on Monday reaffirmed Iran's support for Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement and

condemned Israel's actions against Palestinians.

The statement, issued to Hezbollah's chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on the IRNA official news agency, was one of the first foreign policy comments from Pezeshkian since his victory in Friday's presidential election runoff.

In reference to Hezbollah and other resistance groups in region, Pezeshkian said, "The support of the resistance is rooted in the fundamental policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

He said he was confident that the Resistance Front would stop Israel's "war-mongering and criminal policies" in Gaza, where Israel has for nine months been at war with Hezbollah's Palestinian ally, Hamas.

Pezeshkian, the 69-year-old heart surgeon and lawmaker, won Friday's runoff presidential election against ex-nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, receiving 16.3 million votes compared to Jalili's 13.5 million.

In a victory speech, Pezeshkian described his victory as the start of "a new chapter" for the country. The election was called early after Iran's president Raisi lost his life in a helicopter crash in May.

Iran's Sahand entirely sinks despite rebalancing efforts



The Iranian Navy frigate Sahand entirely sank in the southern port of Bandar Abbas on Tuesday after it was briefly repositioned following its initial capsizing on Sunday. "The Sahand warship, which was rebalanced on the water with great difficulty on Monday, has now sunk after the rope holding the ship snapped," said Nour News, which is affiliated with Iran's Supreme National Security Council. "Several people sustained minor injuries in the incident and were taken to hospital," IRNA said, citing the Iranian Army. On Sunday, state media said the ship had capsized during repairs at a wharf due to water ingress and that efforts were being made to rebalance it.

Named after a northern Iranian mountain, the Iranian-built stealth warship, Sahand took six years to be built and was launched into the Persian Gulf in December 2018. It is equipped with a flight deck for helicopters, torpedo launchers, anti-aircraft and anti-ship guns, surface-to-air and surface-to-air missiles and electronic warfare capabilities, according to local media.

The frigate has already seen deployment outside of Iran's territorial waters. Last year, it was dispatched to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and protect Red Sea shipping lanes, according to IRNA. Iran has developed a large domestic arms industry in the face of international sanctions and embargoes that have barred it from importing many weapons.

It launched its first home-made destroyer in 2010 as part of a program to revamp its navy equipment, which dates back to the 1979 Islamic Revolution and is mostly US-made.

This is the third incident of an Iranian warship sinking in the past six years - the Damavand sank in the Caspian Sea in January 2018 after hitting a breakwater, and the Kharg sank in June 2021 following a fire in the Gulf of Oman.

UN experts: Gaza children dying in Israel's 'starvation campaign'

UN rights experts on Tuesday accused Israel of carrying out a "targeted starvation campaign" that has resulted in the deaths of children in Gaza. "We declare that Israel's intentional and targeted starvation campaign against the Palestinian people is a form of genocidal violence and has resulted in famine across all of Gaza," 10 independent United Nations

experts said in a statement, AFP reported. The UN has not officially declared a famine in the Gaza Strip. But the experts, including the UN special rapporteur on the right to food Michael Fakhri, insisted there was no denying famine was under way. "Thirty-four Palestinians have died from malnutrition since 7 October, the majority

being children," said the experts, who are appointed by the UN Human Rights Council, but who do not speak on behalf of the United Nations.

Malnutrition

The UN experts meanwhile listed three children who had recently died "from malnutrition", after a number of others were said to have starved to death in

northern Gaza earlier this year.

"Fayez Ataya, who was barely six months old, died on 30 May 2024, and 13-year-old Abdulqader Al-Serhi died on June 1, 2024 at the Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah," they said. Nine-year-old Ahmad Abu Reida died just two days later "in the tent sheltering his displaced family in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis", they said.

"With the death of these children from starvation despite medical treatment in central Gaza, there is no doubt that famine has spread from northern Gaza into central and southern Gaza," they said. The experts decried that the world had not done more to avert this disaster.

"When a two-month-old baby and 10-year-old Yazan Al Kafarneh died of hunger on 24 February and 4 March respectively, this confirmed that famine had struck northern Gaza," they said.

"The whole world should have intervened earlier to stop Israel's genocidal starvation campaign and prevented these deaths." "Inaction is complicity."



The UN has been warning for months of a looming famine in Gaza, especially in the north, but one has not been officially declared.

Israel's war 'of forced hunger'

The Hamas resistance group released a statement saying that humanitarian aid has not been allowed into the besieged coastal territory for 64 days, calling it part of Israel's war "of forced hunger".

Hamas also said that Israeli settlers have been systematically burning and destroying aid at the Karem Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) border crossing to prevent it from reaching Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

"The humanitarian and hunger crises, which are intensifying in Gaza and the north, are a result of a criminal Israeli policy backed by the US administration, to



Palestinian children Uday (L) and Mohammed Mahra, both suffering from malnutrition rest at the Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip on July 9, 2024.
● OMAR AL-QATTAA/AFP

destroy all means of life in the Strip," Hamas said.

Meanwhile, heavy Israeli bombardment shook Gaza City on Tuesday as thousands of fleeing Palestinians searched for shelter and medical facilities were forced to shut down in the latest offensive in the territory's north.

Much of Gaza City and urban areas around it have been flattened or left a shattered landscape after nine months of fighting. Much of the population fled earlier in the war, but several hundred thousand Palestinians remain in the north.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

