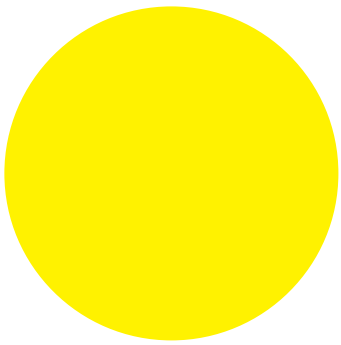


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## Daunting Curveballs Coming Pezeshkian's Way

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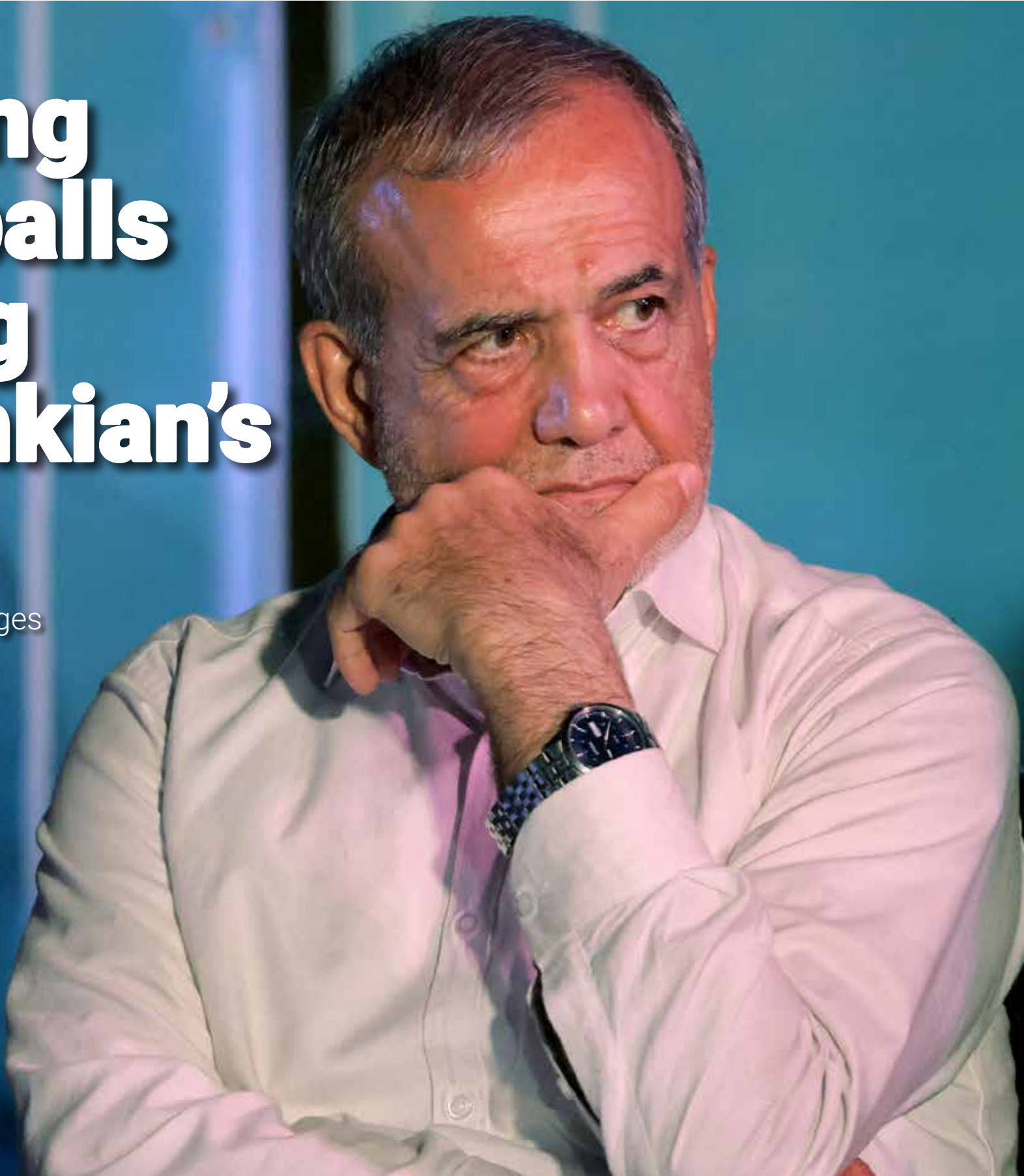
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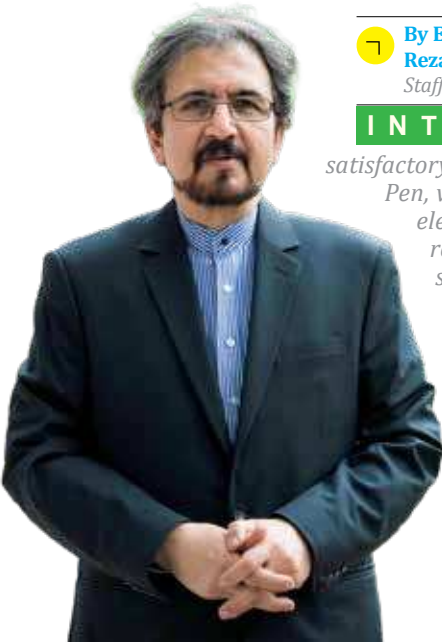
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Ex-Iranian envoy to Paris:

## France faces bumpy road to political convergence



By Ebrahim Beheshti &  
Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writers

INTERVIEW

The result of the parliamentary elections in France seems to have plunged both the country and Europe into a satisfactory shock. The far-right party led by Marine Le Pen, who won first place in the first round of the election, relegated to third place in the second round, and the leftist coalition won the most seats. Now we have to wait and see how the developments in France will go with the new political combination. In this regard, Iran Daily conducted an interview with Bahram Ghasemi, one of the senior diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who has already served as Iranian ambassador to France. Ghasemi was also Iran's ambassador to Italy, Spain and Ireland. Following is the interview:

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# Ex-Iranian envoy to Paris: France faces bumpy road to political convergence



By Ebrahim Beheshti &  
Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writers

The result of the parliamentary elections in France seems to have plunged both the country and Europe into a satisfactory shock. The far-right party led by Marine Le Pen, who won first place in the first round of the election, relegated to third place in the second round, and the leftist coalition won the most seats. Now we have to wait and see how the developments in France will go with the new political combination. In this regard, Iran Daily conducted an interview with Bahram Ghasemi, one of the senior diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who has already served as Iranian ambassador to France. Ghasemi was also Iran's ambassador to Italy, Spain and Ireland. Following is the interview:

**IRAN DAILY:** There has always been a fear and concern about the power of the far right in Europe. Considering the recent success of far-right parties in the European Parliament elections, what is the influence and power of the radical right parties in Europe?

**GHASEMI:** I believe that right-wing and radical right movements with a specific worldview have been present and emerged in different societies for a long time under different names, labels and brands, and this issue is not the only problem and dilemma of today's Europe. This problem is a wide-ranging issue and it is present in all parts of the world. Today, this kind of worldview and attitude exists in all parts of the world under different names and in different forms, but due to the European taste and values, the long experience of democracy and the presence of political parties and their deep-rooted experience of democracy as well as existence of some kind of transparency in the view along with the dos and don'ts in the manifesto of the European parties to the differences and divisions, should be judged by shining sufficient light and accurate clarification to the citizens and public opinion.

Today, the far right is present beside us and, in our region, there, here, and everywhere. The fact that it is not addressed here and there does not mean that they are not present. The difference is in having an official identification and legal registration, as well as long-standing tradition, and the long-standing parliament, beside the existence of parties as the foundation of the nation-state system there.

Owing to the transparency and impact of the media and the wide distribution of information, this extremism, even with not so many supporters, is well seen there, so society and public opinion judge their behavior and movement continuously, but here the nature of right-wing and extremists is disregarded.

This type of worldview exists in different percentages and in different quantities and qualities in all European countries with increasing or decreasing ups and downs. Poverty, inequality, discrimination, ethnocentrism and inflation, and sometimes humiliation, and tougher than that, the feeling of inferiority, and more importantly, the upward trend of migration with the killings of

war in Ukraine and Syria and the complications caused by the rise of the European Union beside the diminishing of patriot national interests, all of them exist in the formation and relative growth of this kind of thinking and everywhere in proportion to the years that have passed on their establishment.

The roots and causes of this far-rightism in Europe today are very similar to what is going on in our surroundings. But France and Marine Le Pen have more authenticity and root in Europe as news are published about them from time to time and with every election, but in other countries of old

**dissolve the country's parliament. Why did he do this and did he achieve his goals?**

It seems that with the superiority of the far right next to the right-wing parties in the European Parliament elections, Macron has reached the conclusion that the dissolution of the parliament with holding a snap election were inevitable. Also, not so serious and unconfirmed speculations have also been made that even before the European Parliament elections, he was thinking of working towards the dissolution of the Parliament, and he was worried about his state in the Parliament and considered it difficult to continue the work.



● AFP

and new Europe, in the last two decades or a little more, we have witnessed the rise of right-wing populist parties; from Austria to Greece, Italy and Spain, some of them have either come to power or participated in a coalition with majority parties in the government, and some of them have taken aggressive views after coming to power in the complex mechanism of Europe as their idealism has gone back.

They breathe and speak in the open atmosphere of Europe, but their efforts and demands will necessarily be replaced over time, but the fact is that new parties and new ideas come from the new conditions of human life in the transitioning and turbulent world; some disappear soon and some stay for long years. Undoubtedly, the way of thinking of these parties can have strategic and tactical changes, but they are not like socks, shoes and boots that can be thrown away.

**After the success of the radical-right in the European Parliament elections, French President Macron decided to**

circle; but a way out will inevitably be found and history will not stop at this point.

Winning the majority of seats by the leftists who came to remove Marie Le Pen, now they have to form a coalition with President Macron, as the French left parties mainly have a strong relationship with minorities and immigrants; as have their support in the elections, and undoubtedly, considering the number of their seats, compromising with them will not be so simple. Although they are also facing many struggles among themselves as a party or national community group. Whatever it is, the eyes of Europe and the world are carefully watching the process ahead of the Parisians.

**What happened in the one week between the first and second rounds of the French elections, when the radical right relegated from the first place in the first round to the third place?**

The reason for the apparent decline of the far right in the second round is very clear; because of the fear of their rise and possible majority gaining by Le Pen, many people who were in doubt to vote, rushed to the polling stations to prevent the National Rally from getting more votes. This election has had a high growth in turnout compared to the previous elections.

Worry and fear motivated the people, especially the leftists, to vote, and pushed the National Rally to fall to the third stage, and helped an important part of Europe and other countries to spare them of the worry and fear of the far-rightists. France and its adventure-filled history as the only superior political power of the European Union has always been a role-model and inspiration for other European states and even old Russia and other parts of the world before its revolution.

**Considering the new state of political parties in France, what do you think is the future of politics in the country? Will Macron be obliged to introduce a leftist PM?**

Under any conditions, there should be an agreement and a coalition. It is unlikely that Macron will step down, he will keep the presidency of France until 2027. We should wait for his tough negotiations with the parties, he will make all of his endeavors to keep his prime minister as much

as possible; and to satisfy the leftists, he will share some ministries with them, so this will be the best situation for him.

At the moment, the majority of the French and other European countries are happy with Le Pen's denial, although Russia is not happy and the heart of Kiev will spend the current days with a calm rate of beats, although today's Russia could be more hopeful with the coming to power of Le Pen. The possibility of reaching an agreement in this tough situation can be both difficult and time-consuming, and a critical and dark situation could prevail over the blue sky of France and the atmosphere of Europe for a while.

**Simultaneously with the parliamentary elections in France, we also witnessed the presidential elections in Iran. Do you think the results of these two elections will have a significant impact on the relations between the two countries?**

I believe this crisis and confusion caused by the French parliamentary elections is an internal issue of the French government and nation, and I think that according to Iran's policy, Tehran can cooperate with any government that is elected by the people of that country; of course, these developments in France are not something that leave an early impact which is directly related to us in the short term, and it is not also an issue that will change France's policy towards Iran.

Of course, for years, we have only had superficial relations, like with many other European countries; we don't have economic-commercial, technical and cultural cooperation of the past, and we don't have exchanges even at very low levels. These conditions must change one day, and I hope that with the end of this crisis in France and with regard to the Iranian election and the inaugural of the new Iranian presidency, the French government will start a wise process to improve the conditions in a realistic environment, as the Iranian president-elect has expressed numerous and important words about relations with other countries. Without a doubt, today, Iran will wait for a movement and development from Europe and especially France. As stated in the past, as long as there is wisdom, there is no need for conflict.

I hope that with the new Iranian government taking office France will start a wise process to improve ties in a realistic environment, as the Iranian president-elect has expressed numerous and important words about relations with other countries.



# Timeless elegance of Arg of Tabriz



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The Arg of Tabriz, also known as Arg-e Alishah, holds significant historical importance in East Azarbaijan Province. This ancient citadel beckons numerous visitors to admire its mosques, religious schools, public baths, old houses, and picturesque old streets. Despite enduring damage from natural disasters like earthquakes and human conflicts such as wars, the citadel remains one of Iran's tallest and oldest historical fortifications. Adjacent to the renowned Tabriz Bazaar, a global attraction in itself, the Arg Citadel stands out as a prominent destination drawing tourists from various corners of the world. Throughout the turbulent centuries marked by earthquakes and wars, the citadel has stood resilient. While much of its original grandeur has faded, the remaining structure proudly dominates

the Tabriz skyline as the tallest monument in the region. Offering a glimpse into Iran's architectural and cultural legacy, the citadel's enduring legacy invites exploration and contemplation of its historical significance. Originally commissioned by Taj Al-Din Alishah Gilani, a minister of the Ilkhanate, the grand Arg of Tabriz, showcases Iran's exceptional construction prowess. Initially intended as an ambitious mosque complex in the 14th century, the citadel's construction faced numerous obstacles from its inception. Despite enduring earthquakes and the ravages of war, the sturdy walls of the Arg have withstood the test of time, bearing witness to Tabriz's tumultuous past. Under the Qajar dynasty, the complex served practical purposes such as storing grain and weapons, necessitating the construction of a protective

enclosure, thereby earning the moniker arg, meaning "fortress."

### A site of resilience and renewal

The early 1900s marked another turbulent chapter for the Arg of Tabriz, as it became embroiled in conflict once more. In 1911, amidst Tabriz's fall to Russian forces, the invaders assailed the citadel's walls, leaving enduring scars that bear witness to that tumultuous period. Remarkably, these very walls provided refuge to individuals championing constitutional rights and revolutionary ideals, notably figures like Satar Khan and Bagher Khan, who courageously opposed the despotic reign of Mohammad Ali Shah. Following the success of the Constitutional Revolution, a new era dawned upon the structure, heralding the construction of a modern school and a the-

ater modeled after those reminiscent of St. Petersburg, Russia. This resurgence gained further momentum in 1931 when the arg was formally designated as a National Heritage Site, ensuring its preservation for posterity.

### Architectural splendor

The citadel stands as a magnificent showcase of Iranian architectural artistry, distinguished in the realm of Iranian Islamic architecture. This grand edifice epitomizes the Azari style, a design ethos originating from Azerbaijani pioneers by the renowned architect, Falaki Tabrizi. Characterized by its resilience and enduring construction techniques, the Azari style, also known as the Mongol or Iranian-Mongol style, found popularity during the Ilkhanate era. Constructed with sturdy materi-

als like sarooj, the citadel was built to withstand the test of time. However, a significant earthquake in the 10th century wrought considerable damage upon this venerable structure, leaving a prominent crack in its walls that symbolizes its tumultuous past. Despite these tribulations, the Ali Shah Citadel perseveres as a potent emblem of Iranian architectural ingenuity and longevity.

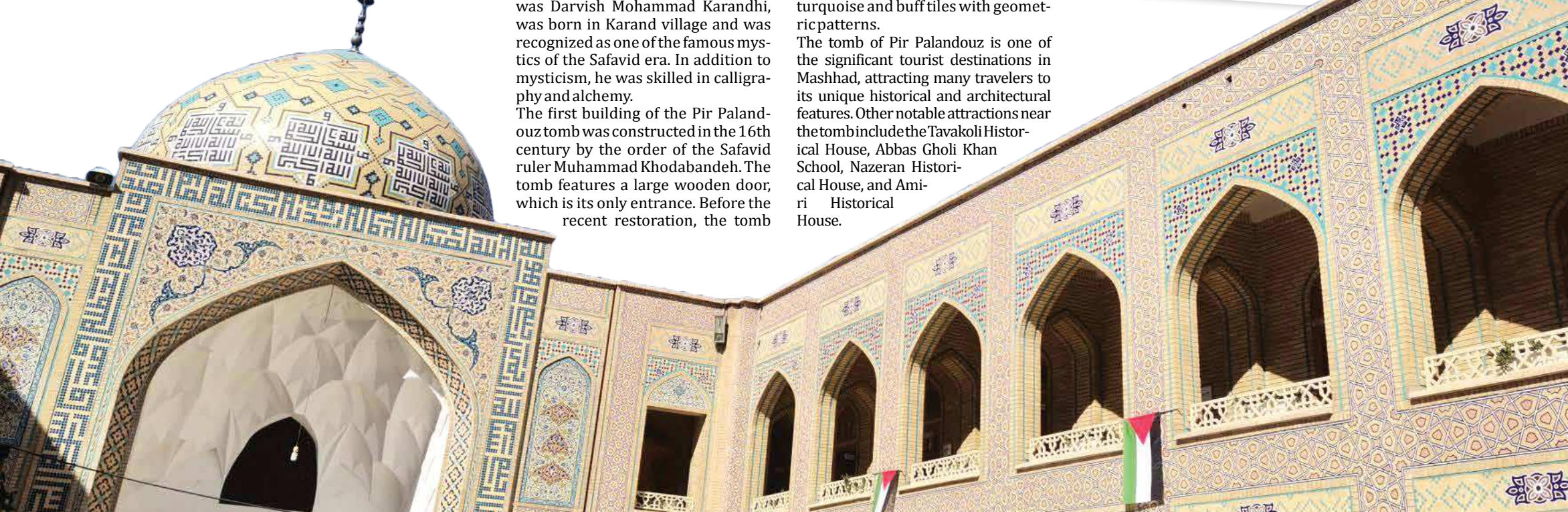
### Plan your visit

The optimal time to experience the splendor of the Arg of Tabriz is during May and June. These months offer delightful weather and a vibrant atmosphere, enhancing your visit with an added touch of enjoyment. Conversely, it is advisable to steer clear of visiting during winters when temperatures can plummet to a bone-chilling -30°C.

## Tomb of Pir Palandouz, a renowned architectural gem in Mashhad

Mashhad is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Iran, famous for its numerous holy shrines. In addition to its fame as a religious tourist destination for pilgrims, this city houses some of Iran's well-known historical monuments. Among the famous Mashhad tourist attractions is the tomb of Pir Palandouz, which was registered on the Iran National Heritage List in 1977. The tomb is located in the northeast of the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), the third Imam of Shia Muslims, and is attributed to one of the mystics named Mohammad Aref Abbasi. Aref Abbasi, whose real name was Darvish Mohammad Karandhi, was born in Karand village and was recognized as one of the famous mystics of the Safavid era. In addition to mysticism, he was skilled in calligraphy and alchemy. The first building of the Pir Palandouz tomb was constructed in the 16th century by the order of the Safavid ruler Muhammad Khodabandeh. The tomb features a large wooden door, which is its only entrance. Before the recent restoration, the tomb

had a square design with a beautiful dome covered in turquoise-colored tiles, plasterwork and tilework decorations, and unique miniature paintings. One of its unique features was its onion dome placed on a cylindrical building with exquisite decorative elements. After the restoration, new areas were added, including the entrance portal, yard, fountain, green space, and miniature paintings. However, some original features were also removed, such as the inscriptions around the exterior facade and the uniform turquoise-colored tiles on the dome, which were replaced with a mix of turquoise and buff tiles with geometric patterns. The tomb of Pir Palandouz is one of the significant tourist destinations in Mashhad, attracting many travelers to its unique historical and architectural features. Other notable attractions near the tomb include the Tavakoli Historical House, Abbas Gholi Khan School, Nazeran Historical House, and Amiri Historical House.





By Reza Raadfar  
Political analyst

## PERSPECTIVE

Leaders of the world and their prospective replacements are being asked in debates, interviews, and press conferences how they would be dealing with the Reformist president-elect of Iran. First of all, that speaks volumes about Iran's central role in world politics. Secondly, how they will respond to that question largely depends on whether they perceive this new shift in Iran as a threat or as an opportunity. We can see the world hasn't really figured out who Masoud Pezeshkian will be as Iran's president and consequently, how they will approach him, but that won't last for so long.

Pezeshkian will only be thrown so many warm-up balls to reveal his moves before he is deemed ready to play in the big leagues, where the hits have to keep coming. Domestically, it would not be too different, either. While some Iranians may be willing to give the new president-elect of Iran some time to get a grasp of the game just because that is the standard practice, most other Iranians as well as foreign actors are impatient to see what his positions on a myriad of issues are.

In what follows, we aim to discuss some of the guaranteed challenges that Pezeshkian and his foreign policy team will have to tackle no less than a few months into his presidency.

# Daunting curveballs coming Pezeshkian's way

## President-elect's challenges in foreign policy



### Appointing foreign minister

Pezeshkian's first challenge in the realm of foreign policy is, oddly enough, domestic and not even in relation to any one specific country. Far from being the only president-elect who has his worries when it comes to getting a vote of confidence for his top minister, he will probably still have more headaches than most in the following weeks.

It's not like we can't guess Javad Zarif, the former foreign minister of Iran, is his first choice if he gets to have his wish. But he is not about to get his wish, is he? Zarif, who made a giant comeback to the forefront of Iran's political scene as Pezeshkian's consultant on foreign policy during this presidential campaign, is famous across the world as the only Iranian FM in recent history that finalized a nuclear deal with Western powers, namely the US with its oc-

asionally antagonistic stance toward Iran.

However, this achievement did not come with its curses. As the United States under former Republican president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 Iran deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Zarif was bombarded with a series of harsh criticisms and accusations from the "perturbed" friends of the country and giddy political enemies alike that naturally demanded a strong, persuasive response about what had gone wrong and what Tehran will do afterwards. Long story short, Zarif did not pass the Herculean task of convincing the people of Iran and their political representatives and regaining their trust. So, for Pezeshkian to tap Zarif for the position of foreign minister is to get ready for an uphill battle where both will have to, first, concen-

trate on defending a checkered past.

Now, knowing Zarif, he is surely ready to throw down in the parliament with anyone who dares to question the specifics of the JCPOA, but to save everyone from the trouble of digging up grievances with the previous deal, Pezeshkian may opt to still have Zarif in the ministry but as a consultant or deputy — that is, of course, if Zarif is up for the job. However, that still leaves the big chair empty.

The name that is being dropped around as Pezeshkian's practically-sound choice for the foreign minister is Seyyed Abbas Araqchi. Araqchi was Iran's chief nuclear negotiator in talks with the P5+1, under Hassan Rouhani's government. So, he won't be getting out of the Iranian Parliament unscathed, but at least, he will be getting out mostly intact.

Since the Iranian Parliament is devoid

of reformists who will be accommodating Pezeshkian out of political partisanship, the president-elect is likely to make good on his unspecific campaign promise of bringing the two sides closer together and forming a unified front. It would still be unlikely that he will gamble with the position of foreign minister to achieve this aim. That kind of promised bipartisanship may be kept for tapping the heads of some of the less influential ministries.

Whatever the case may be, it's almost guaranteed that the Iranian lawmakers will put up a fight — at first, at least — but they will likely compromise with the president-elect, who has shown to be seemingly holding out an olive branch. After all, the people have spoken, and the people have voted for a candidate that stands for negotiating with the US to lift its unilateral sanctions.



Iran's President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (L) and his daughter attend a rally at Heydarnia Stadium in Tehran on July 3, 2024, the day before polling stations open nationwide.

ISNA

### Next US president, nuclear deal

The situation at the White House is as important to Pezeshkian's success as the situation at home, and the White House is up in the air, to say the least. The US presidential campaign has been going on for longer than Iran's and it has still a few more months to go, but it has just gotten interesting. President Biden's rambling appear-

ance, which was fraught with his dreaded "senior moments," in the first televised national debate has spiraled the Democrats down into the five stages of grief. Denial was no longer possible after watching the debate — and that says a lot about Biden's performance — and the subsequent anger was fruitless. So, the Dems are now bargaining with the

president to step down and let them have a chance against Trump, who has built a sizable base of unwavering followers.

Let's face it: Biden's performance in the debates will not get any better without the help of medications — and Trump is confessedly ready to pounce on that, too. If Biden gets to have his way and stays in denial that

he has a chance at beating Trump, he will frantically look around for a big win in foreign policy until November 5 to vouch for his competence at the height of his "senior moments". That is an opportunity that Pezeshkian should not miss.

If Pezeshkian manages to expedite the process of forming his government and sends his people to hold

a series of condensed talks with the Americans, both he and Biden may be able to score a partial win soon. The specifics of that partial win will likely be more favorable for Iran than the US because time is on Pezeshkian's side. To be sure, the Iranian president doesn't want to chance his success on Trump, who has already sabotaged a deal, but he still can.



Gaza war

There's a good argument to be made that a deal with Iran will not save Biden's presidency, but the same cannot be confidently said about a possible deal between the Israelis and Palestinians. Netanyahu's onslaught in Gaza is a gigantic enough problem that it can make or break the presidencies of other countries, Iran included.

Tehran has already sided with the Palestinians, and that will most certainly not change with Pezeshkian. However, there's a degree to which Iran can remain involved in the future and the end of the conflict.

On one end of the spectrum, there's a significant possibility that Iran and other members of the Axis of Resistance in the Middle East may enter the war. Judging by the events of the past few months, it seems that this possibility entirely depends on how far Israel is willing to go. There may well come another moment when Iran or its allies in the region, especially Lebanon's Hezbollah, will be under Israel's attack. Not enough has Pezeshkian said about the conflict or shown about himself to make predictions about his response to such an attack accurately. However, the general atmosphere of the country and

its top officials will likely force his hand to make a strong, deterrent response in some shape or form. Pezeshkian's challenge here would be about how he can get his own way in the face of such external and internal pressures.

On the other end of the spectrum, Iran may be able to play a part in a compromise between Hamas and Israel. The US and other Western actors have repeatedly asked Iran to play such a role, especially at the beginning of the war, but Iran has only so much influence it can exert on groups that are in for a penny, in for a pound. Pezeshkian, a doctor and a soon-to-be former lawmaker, is in no better a position than Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi to mediate a cease-fire or permanent deal.

It's impossible to imagine that Iran is happy with the fact that thousands of Palestinians have been killed. The same can be said about almost any other country in the world. Nevertheless, Iran is ultimately yet another third party to this conflict. When the whole world, including Israel's closest allies, cannot force a cease-fire to happen, how can Iran? This, then, falls more on the Israelis and Palestinians to reach an understanding of their situation and a deal to end this agony.

Aradicalizing Europe

A less urgent objective for Pezeshkian's Iran would be to find a way to deal with the shifting tides of European politics. In recent history, most leaders of European powers have historically been more moderate than their American counterparts, allowing the former group to mediate between Iran and the US. However, following the victories of Far-Right forces in elections in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, to name a few, the EU and NATO are going through a major change themselves. What Pezeshkian will also be facing in any future round of talks is an unprecedented situation where the representatives of some European members of the P5+1 that were party to the JCPOA may be fanning the flames of discord.

For example, Marine Le Pen, a French Far-Right leader, scored a big victory in the first round of a snap legislative election but just failed to consolidate that victory in the form of a majority government in the second round. However, she and her party will remain a key player in French politics. Le Pen

has taken inconsistent positions on Iran. She originally sided with Tehran and defended its right to pursue a civilian nuclear program, according to Haaretz. However, in a recent interview on French television, she expressed concerns over Tehran's attempts "to circumvent the limits concerning its nuclear program." In an attempt to distance herself from her father's antisemitic views, Le Pen has changed her party's name and pandered more and more to the French Jewish community. While the French president is in charge of negotiating international treaties, it is unclear how the weakened president will proceed in any negotiations with Tehran when Le Pen's party holds the third most seats in the French parliament.

Many of these radicalized nationalist parties that have garnered considerable support in their respective countries have already taken hostile positions toward Iran, and their challengers are not any better. Keir Starmer, the newly-elected leader of the center-left Labour Party in Britain, has previously called for the proscription of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary

Guards Corps (IRGC) as a "terrorist" organization and condemned Iran's response to Israel's attack on its consulate in Damascus.

As is the nature of politics, there may arise unforeseen circumstances that trump all other foreign policy issues currently at hand. Regardless, there are some other challenges Pezeshkian may face sooner than later. For one thing, he has to make up his mind about whether he will continue implementing the "Look to the East" policy of his preceding government. Russia and China, which have each sealed a 25-year agreement with Iran, will not be happy to see the Iranian president occupy himself with the thought of mending ties with the US to the detriment of other ties. For another thing, the war in Ukraine is still ongoing, and as a strategic partner of Russia, Iran remains at risk of getting roped into that mess in one way or another.

From what we have seen from Pezeshkian, he seems rather confident and hopeful that he will handle every curveball thrown at him when the time arises. Time will tell if his can-do attitude is misplaced or not.

# Iranian reformist wins presidency, seeks engagement with West



By Susannah George  
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

*A little-known reformist and cardiac surgeon, Masoud Pezeshkian, defeated his ultraconservative rival to become the next president of Iran, campaigning on more social freedoms and engagement with the West and describing his victory as the start of "a new chapter" for the country.*

*In a speech Saturday, Pezeshkian, 69, vowed to be a leader for "all Iranians" and said the government must be held accountable and "move forward with reforms". He also acknowledged widespread public apathy — voter turnout was only 50 percent — and said he hopes to bring Iranians relief from US sanctions and the threat of war.*

*"I have come... to seek lasting peace and tranquility and cooperation in the region, as well as dialogue and constructive interaction with the world," Pezeshkian said from Tehran at the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979.*

The candidate, a lawmaker from Tabriz, was one of six contenders approved by Iran's influential Guardian Council to run for the presidency after Ebrahim Raisi, who was elected in 2021, died in a helicopter crash in May.

Pezeshkian won the most votes in a first round on June 28 but failed to secure more than 50 percent, sending the election to a runoff Friday between him and prominent hard-liner Saeed Jalili.

Early Saturday, state news media announced that Pezeshkian had received 16.3 million votes, with Jalili trailing at about 13.5 million, a sign that the reformist mobilized much broader support.

Here's what to know about Iran's new president and the challenges he faces.

Promises of reform

A veteran of the Iran-Iraq war who served in parliament and as Iran's health minister, Pezeshkian has pushed for moderate reform but without challenging the country's system of theocratic rule under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's leader.

He has pledged to bridge what he described as the "gap" in Iran between the people and the government. "I will do everything possible to look at those who were not seen by the powerful and whose voices are not heard," he said at a rally this week.

While campaigning for president, he

advocated for loosening some social restrictions, including removing blanket internet restrictions and ending the enforcement of Iran's mandatory dress code for women.

He said he also supports greater transparency in the banking and financial sectors, including implementing measures that would allow Iran's removal from a blacklist maintained by the Financial Action Task Force, a global watchdog for money laundering and terrorist financing.

On the foreign policy front, Pezeshkian has emphasized negotiations with the West, including the United States. He said he wants to revive talks around sanctions relief for Iran and to court foreign investment to boost the ailing economy.

Iran under President-elect Pezeshkian "is more unified, resolute, and prepared than ever to tackle its challenges, strengthen its relationships with neighboring countries, and reassert its role in the emerging global order," Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's former foreign minister, posted to X on Saturday.

Zarif helped negotiate Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. President Donald Trump later scrapped the agreement, which curbed Iran's atomic energy program in exchange for widespread sanctions relief.

"The world must listen and engage with us in mutual respect, equal footing, and recognition of Iran's role in the world," Zarif said.

A limited mandate

Pezeshkian's surprise victory Saturday showed that he was able to expand his base of support, pulling from both the reformist and more moderate conservative ranks, said Mehrzad Boroujerdi, an Iran analyst and dean at Missouri University of Science and Technology.

Jalili issued a congratulatory note to Pezeshkian on Saturday, conceding defeat and vowing to aid the incoming president in the common goal of "elevating" the Islamic Republic.

Still, Iran's hard-line conservatives, who dominate most branches of the governing system, might frustrate the plans Pezeshkian set out during his campaign. "The conservatives will try to create obstacles from Day 1," Boroujerdi said.

"He won't have much of a honeymoon... They will apply the brakes to whatever Pezeshkian will try to do."

Ayatollah Khamenei also issued a statement promoting unity. "It is time for competitive election-related behaviors to turn into the morals of companionship," he said.

At the same time, low voter turnout and widespread public apathy weakened Pezeshkian's mandate.

In his speech Saturday, the president-elect addressed voters who did not participate. "It is time for dialogue in Iran. The government should know what you are saying and why you did not come" to the polls, he said.

Earlier this week, Ayatollah Khamenei

also remarked on the lack of voter participation.

"If the people demonstrate better participation in the elections, the Islamic Republic system will be able to achieve its words, intentions, and goals both within the country and also in the broader strategic expectations of the country," Ayatollah Khamenei said, according to a summary of the remarks posted to X on Wednesday.

Crises at home, abroad

Across the Middle East — from Gaza to Lebanon and Yemen — armed groups allied with Iran are attacking Israel and its backers, threatening American military bases, and disrupting global shipping lanes. In April, after an Israeli attack on an Iranian diplomatic building in Damascus, Syria, Tehran launched its first direct military attack on Israel, bringing a years-long shadow war into the open.

The presidential campaign featured some rare acknowledgment of the challenges faced by the country's ruling class — a sign, analysts say, of how serious those challenges have become.

"It has reached a stage where it is just impossible to overlook it," said Ali Vaez, the Iran project director for the International Crisis Group. "The gap between the state and the society has reached a stage where it cannot just be painted over."

The full article first appeared on The Washington Post.



Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (C) delivers a speech after winning the election, during a visit to the shrine of the Islamic Republic's founder Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in Tehran, Iran, on July 6, 2024.  
● MAJID SAEEDI/GETTY IMAGES



Supporters of reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian participate in a campaign event less than a week ahead of a presidential election, called after Ebrahim Raisi's tragic death in May 2024.  
● ARASH KHAMOUSHI/THE NEW YORK TIMES



# Iranians eager to restore taekwondo success in Paris



By Amirhadi  
Arsalanpour  
Staff writer

Four Iranians will be looking to end the country's eight-year wait for an Olympic medal when the taekwondo competitions of the Paris Games get underway.

Kimia Alizadeh's historic -57kg bronze in Rio 2016 – the only Olympic medal won by an Iranian girl to date – remains the last taekwondo achievement for the country in the sporting extravaganza as the occasion in Tokyo three years ago was the first in six editions to yield no success for the Iranian representatives.

Hadi Saei, the head of the national governing body of the sport, wrote his name into history books in Sydney 2000 when he grabbed a first taekwondo medal for Iran – a men's -68kg bronze – and went on to become the country's most-decorated Olympian of all time by winning back-to-back golds in 2004 and 2008. Yousef Karami took the men's -80kg bronze in Athens 2004 before Mohammad Baqeri-Mo'tamed settled for the men's -68kg silver in London 2012 as the taekwondo contests have been the third-most productive event – following wrestling and weightlifting – for Iran in the history of the Olympics with six medals.

And now four Iranians will be hoping to add to the haul at the four-day taekwondo showpiece



⬅ L-R: Nahid Kiani (women's -57kg), Arian Salimi (men's +80kg), Mehran Barkhordari (men's -80kg), and Mobina Ne'matzadeh (women's -49kg) will represent Iran at the taekwondo competitions of the Paris Olympics.

in the French capital's Grand Palais – starting August 7. Nahid Kiani will headline the Iranian squad in Paris, stepping into the women's -57kg contests as the reigning world bantam-weight champion. Her -53kg triumph in Baku last year marked a first women's gold for Iran throughout the 26 editions of the World Champion-

ships and the 25-year-old will be keen to notch up another milestone medal in Paris. As if Kiani needed more motivation to go all out for an Olympic medal, a successful campaign in Paris will provide her with personal redemption after she crashed out of the Tokyo Olympics in the most controversial fashion.

She fell to a first-round defeat against her fellow-Iranian Alizadeh, who represented the IOC Refugee Team in Tokyo, and, in an interview with Varzesh3 in January, Kiani said overcoming the mental struggles in the aftermath of the loss was "one of the hardest things I ever had to do in my life."

"The bout was a one-off occa-

sion in the Olympic history and I was devastated by the fact that a part of my compatriots cheered my opponent's victory, which is why I had to seek professional help from a therapist," she said.

Joining Kiani in the women's draw will be 19-year-old prodigy Mobina Ne'matzadeh, who will be looking to build on an im-

pressive run over the past two years when taking part in the -49kg event.

A world junior champion in 2022, Ne'matzadeh won the Asian silver in the same year and then picked up the bronze in last year's Asian Games, coupled with a couple of bronze medals in the World Taekwondo Grand Prix, before punching her Paris ticket in March's Asian Qualification Tournament in Tai'an, China.

Iran will also be represented by two athletes in the men's competitions.

Mehran Barkhordari will be part of the -80kg draw, with Arian Salimi chasing a medal in the +80kg contests.

Barkhordari finished third in the 2022 world event but suffered an early exit last year in Baku, though he has fond memories of the French capital as he claimed the gold in the second series of the Grand Prix in Paris last September.

He also fell to a last-four loss to former world champion Park Woo-hyeok of South Korea in the Asian Games and settled for a consolation bronze.

Salimi, meanwhile, will hope to improve on his 2023 world bronze.

The Iranian came short in the final showpiece against China's Song Zhaoxiang in the Asian Games but bounced back to cruise to the gold at the Asian Championships in May, thanks to a final victory over South Korean Park.



## Mirzazadeh given Olympic boost after Turkish Kayaalp receives doping ban

### Sports Desk

Turkish Greco-Roman wrestler Riza Kayaalp was handed a provisional suspension by the United World Wrestling after testing positive for banned substances, meaning the 13-time world and Olympic medalist is ruled out of the Paris Games later this month. Kayaalp will be replaced by reigning world under-23 champion Hamza Bakır in the country's Greco-Roman squad heading to the Games, Turkish online newspaper T24 reported.

The news come as major boost for

Iranian Amin Mirzazadeh in his quest for the 130kg gold in Paris. Mirzazadeh and Kayaalp have been familiar foes of the super-heavyweight class since they first squared off in the Tokyo Olympics three years ago, when the Turkish wrestler beat the Iranian 7-2 in the bronze medal bout and won his third Olympic medal.

Kayaalp repeated his victory over Mirzazadeh in the final showpiece of the 2022 World Championships, coming out on top on criteria, before the Iranian celebrated a first win against the Turkish great when he overturned a 2-0 defi-

cit late on to beat Kayaalp to the world gold last year in Belgrade. However, legendary Cuban Mijain López will be the ultimate favorite for the superheavyweight glory in Paris as the 41-year-old will return to the Games to chase a remarkable fifth successive Olympic gold.



⬅ Iranian Amin Mirzazadeh (L) is seen in action against Riza Kayaalp in the 130kg final at the 2023 Wrestling World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia.

● UWW

## Below-par Kane is vital for England, teammates say

**REUTERS** – Harry Kane's England teammates have rallied behind him after a string of uninspiring performances at Euro 2024, with Luke Shaw and Trent Alexander-Arnold praising their captain's leadership and the threat his presence poses for opponents. Kane has scored twice in the tournament but has looked out of sorts, lacking pace and short on chances, prompting calls for him to be dropped for today's semi-final against Netherlands in Dortmund. "Anyone who is facing England would like to see Harry Kane not playing," Alexander-Arnold said.

"You just know he is a threat. Anything in and around the box, you need to be on red alert.

"He can finish it from every angle. I always say he is the best finisher I've seen or played with. He can drop down and build play up and his hold-up play is incredible too."

Left back Shaw, who returned from injury late in the Switzerland game, said Kane was a world-class player.

"At any time he can score a goal and make that difference. He's a very important player, he's our captain," Shaw said.

"You give him time in and around the

box he'll score, he takes opportunities we know that, we see it day in day out, we know the quality he has and what he brings to the team and it's very important he's on the pitch."

Shaw said Kane had the right mindset despite his performances.

"I don't sense any frustration from him, he's the same Harry that we have from the start of the camp, nothing changed," he said. "He'd have liked to have scored more goals. Nothing changed, he's still very positive ... he's our captain, he's our leader, he leads by example and we all follow him."

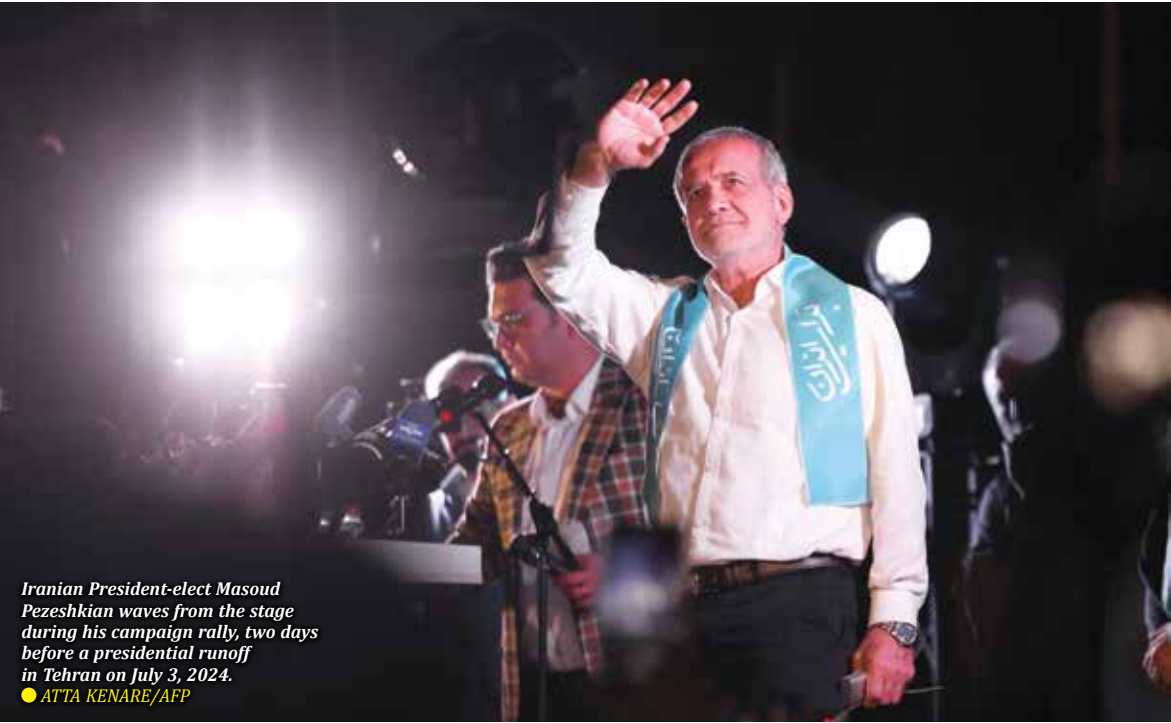


● CARL RECINE/GETTY IMAGES



# 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. Sudani 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-surface 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





# University of Tehran signs MoUs with Russian, Malaysian counterparts

The University of Tehran signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with HSE University of Russia and MAHSA University of Malaysia, aiming to strengthen academic and cultural relations. The agreements were signed by President of the University of Tehran, Mohammad Moghimi, and the respective representatives of the Russian and



President of the University of Tehran Mohammad Moghimi (R) and Head of the HSE University of Russia Nikita Anisimov (L) sign an MoU in Tehran on July 9, 2024.

● IRNA



tween Moghimi and ambassadors, embassy staff, and university heads from 12 countries, underscoring the University of Tehran's commitment to fostering global connections and enhancing its international reputation. The University of Tehran, Russia's HSE University, and Malaysia's MAHSA University all

President of the University of Tehran Mohammad Moghimi (R) and Malaysia's Ambassador to Iran Khairi Bin Omar on behalf of MAHSA University in Malaysia shake hands after signing the MoU in Tehran on July 9, 2024.

● IRNA

Malaysian universities on Tuesday in Tehran. According to the agreements, the universities will facilitate academic exchanges, including

student and staff mobility, as well as joint research and educational initiatives. The universities also plan to hold joint conferences and seminars to further scientific cooperation.

One of the agreements was inked with Head of the HSE University of Russia Nikita Anisimov and the other with Malaysia's Ambassador to Iran Khairi Bin Omar on behalf of MAHSA

University. "These agreements are a step forward in promoting international academic collaboration," said Moghimi. "We believe that exchanging knowledge, expe-

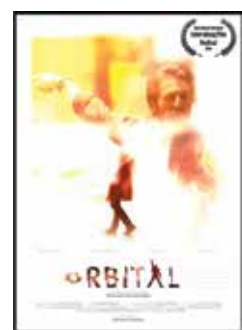
riences, and cultural insights with our Russian and Malaysian partners will greatly benefit our students and staff." The signing ceremony took place during a meeting be-

share a dedication to academic excellence and a desire to create opportunities for their students and staff to engage in cross-cultural learning and research.

## Two Iranian animations to compete in French festival

Two Iranian short animations, 'Jiroft' and 'Piano,' were selected to compete in the 11th edition of the Festival l'Art en Chemin 2024 in France. Produced by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), 'Jiroft,' directed by Marjan Keshani, and 'Piano,' directed by Keshani and Shahab Shamsi, will represent Iran in the festival's Competition Section, Mehr News Agency reported. 'Jiroft' depicts a battle between

an eagle and a snake painted on a jar, created by a goddess. On the other hand, 'Piano' tells the story of someone who wants to buy a piano, but due to the outbreak of war, is deprived of the simplest amenities of life. The Festival l'Art en Chemin 2024 showcases films that promote culture and arts, heritage, social interactions, and environmental protection. The 11th edition of the festival will take place on October 4 this year.



## Iran's 'Orbital' wins at Interrobang Film Festival

The Iranian film 'Orbital,' directed by Meysam Hasanzadeh and produced by Alireza Alavian, was awarded the Best Feature Film award at the 13th In-

terrobang Film Festival in Des Moines, Iowa, the US. 'Orbital,' is distributed worldwide by Madaktuo Pictures. Prior to its win at Inter-

robang, the film had also taken home the Best Director Award at the 8th SoundScreen Film Festival in Italy. The film joins a grow-

ing list of Iranian films gaining recognition on the international festival circuit, showcasing the country's vibrant cinematic talent.

## Iran urges SCO members to spearhead green development in region

### Social Desk

Ali Salajegheh, Iran's Head of the Department of Environment, emphasized the potential for green development within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and called for stronger ties among members of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) to improve the environmental conditions of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

Speaking at the SCO Green Development Forum in Qingdao, China, Salajegheh highlighted the opportunity for SCO members to make a significant difference in green development in the region and set a global example for environmental cooperation, IRNA wrote. Salajegheh also met with Qatari Minister of Environment and Climate Change Abdulah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Subaie on the sidelines of the forum.

He emphasized continued cooperation in the field of the International Dust Summit and the exchange of experiences in monitoring the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman with the cooperation of regional countries. The Iranian official underscored the common responsibility of SCO members in addressing pressing global issues. Salajegheh also highlighted population growth, industrialization, migration,

infectious diseases, water scarcity, and the increase in greenhouse gases as factors disrupting the balance of ecosystems and posing risks to biodiversity, food security, human health, and the environment. While acknowledging the challenge of balancing environmental measures with development goals, Salajegheh emphasized that developing countries should prioritize social and economic development to

address poverty, healthcare, housing, and energy needs. Regarding ROPME, Salajegheh emphasized that strengthening ties among its members can significantly improve the environmental conditions of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. ROPME, established in Kuwait in 1979, coordinates the efforts of eight member states to protect the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems in the ROPME Sea Area. The Kuwait Regional Convention, adopted in 1978, aims to prevent, abate, and combat marine pollution in the region.

## Dengue fever found in four Iranian provinces, sparking health alert

### Social Desk

Dengue fever, a mosquito-borne disease, has been detected in four provinces of Iran, with 63 confirmed cases and counting, according to health officials. The mosquito species Aedes, which carries the dengue virus, has been found in the provinces of Gilan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Bushehr, and Hormuzgan, said Hossein Farshidi, Deputy Health Minister. Farshidi warned that there is a risk of the mosquito spreading to neighboring provinces, including Khuzestan, Kerman, Golestan, and Mazandaran. Saeed Karimi, deputy medical director of the Health Ministry, stated that out of 200 individuals who presented to medical centers with severe symptoms of high fever and bone pain, 63

have tested positive for dengue fever, with more test results pending. Karimi attributed the rise in cases to travel to neighboring countries, particularly those in the Persian Gulf region, and advised travelers returning from these areas to seek medical attention if they experience any symptoms. The mosquito Aedes breeds in small stagnant water bodies and tire piles, and its bite can cause dengue fever, which is characterized by high fever, severe bone pain, and in some cases, bleeding and hospitalization. With a potential fatality rate of 1% for dengue fever, health authorities are urging the public to be vigilant and take precautions to avoid mosquito bites, especially in areas where the Aedes mosquito is known to be present.

