

fall in line with the president's request. Pezeshkian's moves post-election, up to now, indicate he's keen to get more participation from unions, groups, and prominent political figures in selecting ministers. This approach can shore up trust between the government and other governing institutions, political groups, and unions.

**What, in your view, should the future government be prioritizing as it gets down to business? Are these priorities economic, political, social, or international?**

It appears the country's pressing problem at the moment is the economic situation. However, economic woes like increased liquidity, soaring infla-

tion, and lackluster economic growth do not have quick fixes; they call for medium or long-term planning to deliver tangible results for the people.

So, it'd be prudent for the government to focus on less costly measures in the short term to address some issues. For instance, one such decision could be lifting restrictions on internet access, which would have positive knock-on effects in the social and cultural spheres and facilitate the online business environment. Or, the issue of women's clothing, which has become a contentious topic in the country, could be addressed with a government initiative that respects Sharia Law and customary affairs as well, thus softening the cultural and political atmo-

sphere. Interacting with Parliament and making inroads on issues of foreign exchange and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) could also be among the priorities. Of course, long-term planning aimed at tackling economic problems should kick off sooner rather than later.

I also have a suggestion for Pezeshkian: task each minister, as they start their tenure, with implementing three impactful measures in their respective portfolios within the first six months, to ramp up the government's effectiveness from the get-go.

**In the realm of foreign policy, are you optimistic about the government's approach to cooperating with other na-**

**tions as well?**

Yes, but there are some facts to consider. In the domain of foreign policy, not all decisions and powers rest with the government. What's encouraging, though, is that Pezeshkian has built solid trust with other institutions in this short period, which can underpin success in foreign cooperation. Also, apparently, his orientations in foreign policy are trusted by the system and thus lay the groundwork for engagement with the world.

Of course, the Iranian government is one side of the coin; the other side is foreign countries. They, too, should demonstrate more flexibility toward Iran, acknowledge the new developments — namely, Iran's election

results — and recognize the rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Prior to this, the nuclear deal talks during the first term of the former president Hassan Rouhani were a positive experience, but then we witnessed Donald Trump derailing them. So, foreign countries need to adopt a more realistic stance toward Iran. As a developing country with a range of capabilities, Iran can present attractive opportunities for foreign nations if they're earnest about engaging with Iran.

**Pezeshkian hailed the recent words of the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution and his emphasis on the necessity of the Parliament cooperating with the new government as a**

**boon for his government. Do you think these statements will have a positive bearing on the future government's success?**

Yes, they most certainly will. The Leader's statements about Pezeshkian have been evaluated very positively. They reinforce the message that all branches must pull together to tackle the country's problems. His support was crystal clear: I trust that various governing bodies and political groups, who view the Leader as the system's main pillar, will put these directives into practice. Of course, both supporters and critics of Pezeshkian should strive to make use of the Leader's backing of the incoming government.

Building upon past successes imperative: *ICCCI chief*

# Plans B-Z needed to neutralize sanctions



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

*With the presidential elections now out of the way and Masoud Pezeshkian voted in as Iran's ninth president and head of the 14th government, there's been a lot more talk around the direction he'll take with his cabinet selections and foreign policy and economic approaches.*

*In the meantime, a key ask of the people, which was a central campaign pledge for all candidates vying for votes, has been to tackle the country's economic troubles and improve living standards. Given this, Pezeshkian has stated that to boost the economy, the focus should be on lifting international sanctions, and he'll work on reviving the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and clearing other hurdles like joining the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).*

*To get a deeper insight into these matters, Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Majid Reza Hariri, head of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCCI) and an economic expert.*



Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (front-C) attends the first meeting of a council that reviews ministerial candidates for his government, in Tehran on July 20, 2024.  
● IRNA



Director of Consular Affairs at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ali Youssef (C) and Iranian consular officials attend the official ceremony of the reopening of the Iranian Embassy in Riyadh, on June 6, 2023.  
● FATF, IRNA, IRNA, APF

**IRAN DAILY:** As an economic official active in the realm of foreign relations, how do you assess President-elect Pezeshkian's approach to matters of economy and foreign policy?

**HARIRI:** From the televised election debates and slogans, we have gathered that Pezeshkian believes in engaging with other countries and fostering our existing global relationships. Of course, to clearly understand the newly elected government's approaches, we need to wait and see how the cabinet ministers are chosen and with which orientation. Many issues remain unpredictable at this stage, especially in foreign policy, which is a multi-dimensional and highly complex field. As we're aware, Presidents do not have the final say in the country's foreign policy. It's an area on which the entire system has to reach an agreement. One government might lean more anti-West, while another could be more Western-oriented. While such government tendencies and approaches can influence the

system's policies, foreign policy is a collaborative effort. However, based on our understanding of Pezeshkian, he strikes a moderate path in foreign policy. He doesn't go overboard in favoring either the West or the East; instead, he maintains a balanced approach to international relations. That's what we can expect from his government in this arena.

**The late president Raisi's government prioritized developing relations with neighboring countries, which yielded positive economic outcomes. Do you anticipate this approach continuing under Pezeshkian's government?**

We shouldn't simply disregard the achievements and positive experiences of past governments. President Raisi's tenure witnessed notable progress in foreign policy, particularly in economic diplomacy, bringing about beneficial outcomes for the country. Certain trends, such as the approval of Iran's membership bid in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,

were already underway before the late president took office, but his government followed through and saw these initiatives to completion. Similarly, during Raisi's term, we secured membership in the BRICS bloc of emerging economies, which is also considered a positive step for our economy and foreign relations.

Raisi's government prioritized engagement with neighboring countries, especially those along the southern border of the Persian Gulf, where tensions had previously existed. With the assistance of countries like our Chinese friends, past issues were resolved, and our bilateral relations improved. We also enhanced our relationships with India and China, leading to economic gains. Additionally, issues with Turkmenistan were addressed, paving the way for economic ties. In the last three years, steps were also taken to strengthen relations with Latin American and African nations, resulting in beneficial economic outcomes. Thus, as we consider engagement and potential friendship

with Western nations, it's imperative that we also build upon past successes and continue to explore new opportunities while maintaining the progress made in other areas.

**It appears that Pezeshkian's government has a particular strategy in mind regarding negotiations to revive the JCPOA and address the nuclear issue, with the ultimate goal of lifting sanctions. How optimistic should we be about a positive resolution?**

Given the amount of time that has elapsed since the JCPOA was halted, it seems the agreement has historically run its course. If the new government wishes to revisit this issue, it should consider a fresh approach to relations with the West concerning the nuclear agreement. As is widely known, the US holds the primary decision-making power in this regard for Western nations. Historical experience indicates that the European Union and other countries influenced by Western policies, including South Korea, Japan, and

Australia, ultimately fall in line with American directives. Thus, when we speak of nuclear cooperation with the world, we are essentially referring to the US. Negotiation remains the optimal method for engaging with any country. We haven't shut the door on talks with the US, and negotiations with Americans are ongoing in Oman and elsewhere. Of course, negotiating with the US doesn't imply capitulating to their demands. Nonetheless, by maintaining our boundaries in these negotiations, we hold some control over the outcome — about 50%. While we should interact confidently, flexibly, and shrewdly with the other side, we should also be aware that these negotiations may not yield our desired results. Therefore, to prevent our economy and other areas from reaching a stalemate, we must have a Plan B and explore alternative options. Alongside negotiations, we should aim to minimize the impact of sanctions on our economy through domestic policies and by fostering relations with other nations to create new markets for our products.



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