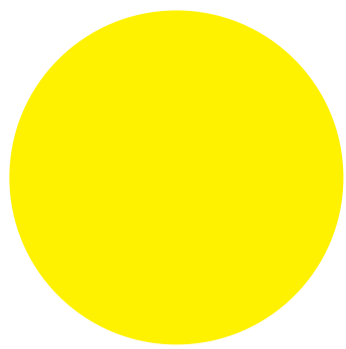


CBI stresses more financial ties, less reliance on dollar in BRICS



Iran summons German envoy over Islamic center closure



Demonstrators from Jewish Voice For Peace protest the war in Gaza at the Canon House Building on July 23, 2024 in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES

Wave of protests breaks out against Israel's genocide in Gaza

Pezeshkian a symbol of trust in government

By Mohammad Atrianfar
Reformist political activist

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

Iran's President-elect Massoud Pezeshkian has put in place a mechanism - an advisory council, to be precise - for choosing ministers, with an eye to bringing efficient and competent people on board. This mechanism is a reflection of his personal viewpoint. His words on national cooperation and making use of the country's capabilities ring true; he has no intention of misleading the people. Pezeshkian has risen to power outside of the political and factional boxes, and his honesty, openness, and integrity have stood him in good stead on this journey. However, what's more, important is that it doesn't matter who becomes minister. Whoever takes on this role must work within the parameters set by the president. While the cabinet comprises no more than 30 ministers, the executive branch has a host of managers and experts at various levels, and these skilled individuals need to be kept on.

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Iran's monthly inflation down to 35.5%

Economic Desk

Iran has reported a further drop in its annual inflation rate amid better government controls on basic goods supplies and tighter monetary rules.

Figures published on Tuesday showed that the consumer price index (CPI) had increased by 35.5% in the year leading to July 21 compared to the year before to reach 255.2, Press TV reported.

The figures, released by the official government statistics agency the Statistical Center of Iran, showed that the headline inflation rate had dropped by 0.6% compared to the same rate reported in late June.

The SCI had reported a 0.9% decline in inflation rate in June compared to May.

The downward trend in inflation in Iran should be regarded as a success for the outgoing administrative government in the country a year after it was grappling with inflation as high as 49%.

SCI figures showed consumer prices had risen by 2.2% on a month-on-month basis in the calendar month to late July, with prices of food, beverages and smoking products rising 1.6% while prices of non-food goods and services rising 2.5% over the same period.

The point-to-point inflation rate, which compares prices in two similar months of back-to-back years, topped 32.2% in the month to late July, up 0.3% compared to the figures reported in late June, said the SCI.

Head of the Central Bank of Iran, Mohammadreza Farzin, stated on Wednesday that since 2018, the intensification of new sanctions on the Iranian economy has led to a chain reaction of inflation, rising exchange rates, increasing interest rates and heightened liquidity.

"In other words, we found ourselves trapped in a cycle of inflation and escalating exchange rates, which continuously fueled inflation in monetary variables, CRP inflation, PPI inflation, and producer inflation," he remarked during a cabinet performance report session of the current government that addressed monetary variables.

He said that regarding monetary policies, liquidity, which had increased to over 40%, has now decreased to the 20% level and currently sits at 25%.

Experts say lower inflation rates in Iran, a country grappling with a series of unprecedented economic hardships caused by US sanctions, is a result of better government controls on imports and distribution of basic goods supplies, including animal feed and grains.

They say tighter monetary rules have also allowed the Iranian government to have a better control on the money supply and inflation in the country.

CBI stresses more financial ties, less reliance on dollar in BRICS

Economic Desk

Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for international affairs, during a virtual meeting of BRICS member states, outlined the CBI's policies regarding the development of financial cooperation with the member countries, defining the shared goal of the countries as reducing reliance on the dollar in trade transactions and increasing the use of local currencies.

During a live video conference at the third meeting of the financial deputies of the central banks of BRICS member countries in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro on Wednesday, Mohsen Karimi emphasized the necessity of utilizing local currencies in trade transactions among the member states.

He stated that "reducing reliance on the US dollar and increasing the use of local currencies in economic and trade exchanges, as well as implementing a multilateral financial settlement scheme among BRICS members, and employing fast and secure banking data exchange channels independent of SWIFT, have all been underscored by BRICS members."

In the meeting, Karimi emphasized that issues related to the notion of BRICS Bridge project,



Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, Mohsen Karimi, addresses a meeting of BRICS member states via videoconference in Tehran on July 24, 2024.

the multilateral financial settlement mechanism, and the rapid and secure banking data exchange channels independent of SWIFT for BRICS members are significant for them.

The deputy governor of CBI said that problems such as insufficient transparency, high costs, slow transaction speeds, and lack of equitable access to cross-border payment channels for all participants are primary reasons for the importance of the "BRICS Bridge."

The creation of the BRICS Bridge will help increase mutual trade between the member countries, Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko said earlier in the month.

Describing BRICS Bridge, the deputy governor of the CBI also said that the mechanism provides an opportunity for participating countries to implement Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CFT) procedures within their jurisdictions.

Karimi added that the potential of the BRICS Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Council can be enhanced, and through this initiative, member countries can benefit from relevant international standards and recommendations, eliminating the need to rely on the suggestions of certain institutions that are based on biased assessments. Regarding the operational model, the BRICS Bridge should consider the basket of national

currencies of the member states, emphasizing the use of national currencies and moving away from the dollar and euro, with settlements to be conducted within the platform.

Karimi noted that Iran has practical experience and with a precise definition of the selected model and the advancement of several similar global models, it is expected that the plan will be implemented in a relatively short time frame given the importance and urgency of the BRICS Bridge.

Foreign investment outlook in Oman

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

Oman's strategic location in the Persian Gulf region presents an opportunity for foreign companies, providing them easy access to major global trade routes connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe. This advantageous position, coupled with the country's geopolitical stability safeguarding it from spillover effects of neighboring crises, has instilled confidence in foreign investors. Additionally, Oman's free trade agreements with 50 countries, including the United States, Singapore, and several European countries, have increased its attractiveness.

The approval of the new Foreign Investment Law in 2020 was a

significant step towards attracting more direct foreign investment in Oman. Special Economic Zones have also played a crucial role in attracting direct foreign investment. Oman's free zones offer attractive commercial laws allowing foreign investors to have 100% ownership for 30 years and enjoy tax exemptions, providing a reassuring environment for traders seeking access to markets in the GCC, Europe, and Africa regions.

Oman is also introducing new incentives, including exemptions related to specific costs and operational requirements for ongoing projects in less developed areas of Oman, demonstrating the government's commitment to facilitate business growth beyond the oil and gas sectors.

In 2022, Foreign Direct Invest-

ment (FDI) reached 43.2% of Oman's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), indicating the country's economic potential and growth prospects.

Foreign direct investment continued to grow through significant investments from the UK, USA, China, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain until the end of 2023, with a growth rate of 3.78%. Growth is forecasted to be 2.1% in 2024.

In the current year and beyond, foreign investment in rail, road, renewable energy, and housing projects is expected. New initiatives include several infrastructural projects such as the Hafeet Rail Project connecting Sohar in Oman to Al Ain and Abu Dhabi in the UAE, as well as a planned metro network for Muscat.

Oman has also established the

Royal Academy of Management to focus on leadership and management capabilities, supporting Oman's economic diversification and development through knowledge acquisition, skill enhancement, and human capital growth.

In 2024, Oman's Future Fund of \$5.2 billion was launched to strategically invest in key sectors and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups. The new fund will invest in eight strategic sectors: tourism, manufacturing, green energy, information and communication technology (ICT), ports and logistics, mining, fisheries, and agriculture.

Oman is also pursuing digital transformation and enhancing investment services through initiatives like the Oman Business Platform. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion of Oman is committed to improving communication, operational efficiency, and customer services through electronic platforms, creating visible value for investors.

However, Oman needs to address challenges such as reducing its dependence on fossil fuels. Oil exports still constitute over 30% of Oman's GDP, 60% of exports, and more than 70% of government revenue, making its economy vulnerable to global price fluctuations and demand. Simplifying processes and reducing bureaucratic formalities can further aid in attracting more foreign direct investment. To tackle these challenges, Oman is implementing reforms to streamline regulations, provide targeted incentives, invest in ICT, and skill development,

and enhance its strategic position and business-friendly environment to attract sustainable and diversified foreign direct investment, beyond oil and gas sectors.

Investment in infrastructure and ICT skills transformation is a significant step for Oman to become a more attractive destination for foreign investors seeking to leverage advanced digital capabilities. Achieving this could establish Oman as a more appealing destination for stable foreign direct investment. Overall, the outlook for foreign direct investment in 2024 appears positive, characterized by governance stability, policy reforms, and sustainable economic diversification.

It is worth mentioning that attracting foreign investment is a key strategy for strengthening Oman's economy. With its strategic geographical location, robust port infrastructure, and suitable facilities, Oman is prioritizing attracting foreign investment. Oman has significant potential in sectors such as oil, gas, tourism, transportation, and ICT, offering ample opportunities for increasing foreign investment in the future, similar to recent years.

It should be noted that Oman's National Center for Statistics and Information reported in February 2024 that the total foreign investment in the country by the end of 2022 exceeded \$92 billion, of which 75.9% was in the form of direct foreign investment, totaling around \$70 billion. More than 71% of Oman's foreign direct investment is in the oil and gas sectors.





Akhanghan Tower, the mysterious monument of Mashhad's heritage

Iranica Desk

The city of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi Province, is home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims, attracting millions of tourists each year.

In addition to the shrine, there are several historical attractions in and around Mashhad, one of which is the Akhangan Tower. This historical tomb dates back to the 14th century CE, and after six centuries, identity of those resting within remains uncertain for brevity.

Akhanghan Tower is recognized as one of the key sightseeing spots in Mashhad. It is located approximately 22 kilometers from the city center, about 10 kilometers east of Tabaran in Tus, and near a village of the same name.

The tower serves as the burial site of an individual whose identity is unknown, captivating the minds of tourists and visitors like a puzzle. The site is listed as an attraction of Khorasan Razavi Province on Iran's National Heritage List.

Some believe that the feminine motifs observed on the tower may indicate the identity of the deceased; they speculate that the buried individual is Gouhar Taj, the sister of Gouharshad, the wife

of Shah Rukh, the ruler of the Timurid Empire—a theory that the Cultural Heritage Organization also considers plausible. Meanwhile, another group attributes the tomb to an Indian girl who was a follower of Imam Reza (PBUH) and passed away during her pilgrimage. Others suggest that this structure may serve as a collective tomb for important and distinguished individuals. However, the validity of these theories remains unproven.

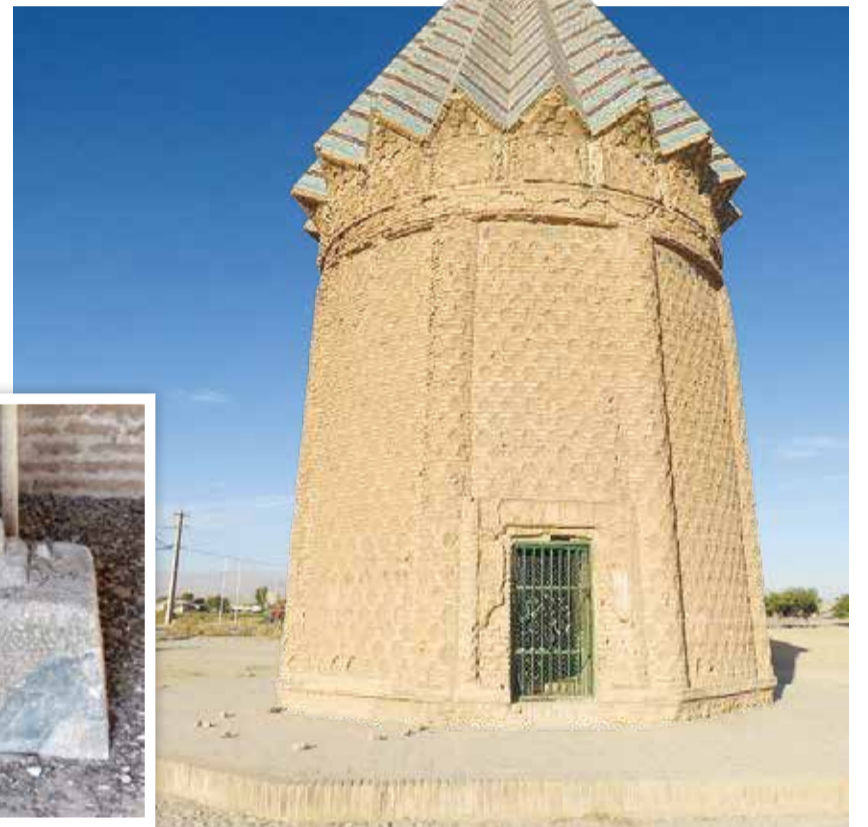
As mentioned earlier, this structure is estimated to be over 550 years old. The architect who designed this ancient brick monument created a tomb-like tower that reaches a height of more than 17 meters. The builders constructed it on a circular platform with eight semi-hexagons.

The circular exterior of the mausoleum is beautifully adorned with eight semi-columns.

The Akhangan Tower features a cylindrical column that stands nearly 14 meters tall. This historic structure is constructed from brick and is artistically embellished with tiles in shades of lapis lazuli and turquoise, cut into various shapes, including rectangles and polygons.

The tile decorations also incorporate

diverse and intricate designs. Within this beautiful and grand tower, three entrance doors are visible. Inside, there is a tombstone measuring 110 centimeters in length, 50 centimeters in width, and 40 centimeters in height, inscribed with text in Thuluth and Naskh calligraphy. A notable aspect of the architecture is the interior space, which is devoid of any motifs or decorations, while the exterior—from the walls to the semi-columns—is beautifully adorned with tiles.



iranwonders.com

Enigmatic wonders of Chameli Wetland in Takab

Iranica Desk

Nestled in the heart of Iran lies a natural wonder that has intrigued scientists and visitors alike for centuries — Chameli Wetland of Takab. Located in Takab, West Azarbaijan Province, this phenomenon defies conventional explanation and offers a glimpse into the mysterious workings of nature. Initially appearing as an ordinary field of grass, Chameli reveals its enigmatic nature upon closer inspection, with the grass seemingly moving as if possessed by a mind of its own.

The moving grass of Chameli Wetland has spurred numerous theories among researchers. Some attribute it to electromagnetic fields, while others suggest underground water currents as the cause. Despite the various hypotheses, no definitive explanation has been agreed upon, adding to the allure of this natural wonder. Takab itself is renowned for its diverse geological formations, situated in the western part of Iran, boasting landscapes ranging from rocky mountains to fertile plains. The unique geological composition of the region contributes to its biodiversity, supporting various flora and fauna.

Environmental significance

Beyond its geological curiosity, Chameli Wetland plays a crucial role in the local ecosystem.



eligasht.com

The moving grass phenomenon supports a rich biodiversity, attracting numerous species of insects and birds. Its conservation is therefore vital to maintaining the delicate balance of the region's ecosystem.

Indigenous perspectives

For the indigenous people of Takab, Chameli holds deep cultural significance. Legends and folklore abound regarding the origins of the moving grass, with tales passed down through gen-

erations. These stories not only enrich the cultural tapestry of the region but also underscore the profound connection between nature and the community.

Archaeological insights

Archaeological excavations near Chameli Wetland have unearthed artifacts dating back centuries, shedding light on ancient civilizations that once thrived in the area. The presence of these artifacts further empha-

sizes the historical importance of the region and its enduring appeal to historians and archaeologists alike.

Best times to visit

To witness the mesmerizing spectacle of the moving grass, plan your visit during the spring or early summer when the flora is in full bloom. The moderate climate during these seasons enhances the experience, allowing visitors to explore the area comfortably.

Wildlife encounters

Chameli Wetland is not just about the moving grass; it's also a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Keep an eye out for rare bird species and small mammals that inhabit the area. Birdwatching and nature photography opportunities abound, making it a paradise for eco-tourists.

Local cuisine

While exploring Chameli Wetland, indulge in the local cuisine and hospitality. Traditional dishes

prepared with locally sourced ingredients offer a taste of authentic Iranian flavors. Engaging with local communities also provides insights into their customs and way of life.

Conservation challenges

Despite its natural beauty, Chameli Wetland faces threats from human activities and climate change. Efforts are underway to protect this fragile ecosystem and promote sustainable tourism practices. Conservation initiatives aim to preserve the moving grass phenomenon for future generations to cherish.

Sustainable development opportunities

Balancing conservation with development is key to the future of Chameli Wetland. Sustainable tourism initiatives not only benefit the local economy but also raise awareness about the importance of environmental stewardship. By supporting responsible tourism practices, visitors can contribute to the long-term preservation of this natural wonder.

Chameli Wetland stands as a testament to the wonders of nature and the resilience of ecosystems in the face of change. Its moving grass phenomenon continues to captivate and inspire, inviting visitors to explore its mysteries and appreciate its beauty. Whether you're a scientist, a historian, or simply a nature enthusiast, Chameli Wetland offers a journey of discovery like no other.



Promise, risks in turning to Kamala Harris



By Shane Goldmacher
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

than the drawn-out American contests. The tight timeline will magnify any missteps Ms. Harris might make but also minimize the chances of a stumble.

And in a race that Mr. Trump had been on a trajectory to win, Ms. Harris immediately becomes the ultimate X-factor.

Mr. Biden quickly endorsed Ms. Harris, who would be a barrier-breaking nominee as the first woman, the first Black woman, and the first person of South Asian descent ever to serve as president. As the Democratic Party rallies behind her — the loudest voices of dissent were simply those not publicly endorsing her — here are six ways her candidacy holds both promise and peril.

Vice President Kamala Harris swiftly established herself as the Democratic front-runner to take on Donald J. Trump within hours of President Biden's exit on Sunday, fundamentally rewiring the presidential contest at warp speed.

Now, the race has been transformed into an abbreviated 106-day sprint that more closely resembles the snap elections of Europe

than the drawn-out American contests. The tight timeline will magnify any missteps Ms. Harris might make but also minimize the chances of a stumble.

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US Vice President and potential 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris takes the stage as she attends the 30th annual Essence Festival in New Orleans, Louisiana, on July 6, 2024.
● EDMUND D. FOUNTAIN/REUTERS



In a sprint of a race, Ms. Harris is poised to attack Donald Trump on his felonies and, in a 2024 twist, his age, but Republicans will be galvanized to fight her, too.

She inverts age argument

During the Republican primaries, Nikki Haley had warned everyone who would listen that the first party to swap out its octogenarian candidate — Mr. Trump will turn 80 while in office if elected to a second term — would win. She was making the argument for herself but the logic applies to Ms. Harris, too.

Unlike the 81-year-old Mr. Biden, Ms. Harris, 59, is not old — and just that fact neutralizes what has been one of the most potent Trump lines of attack. Within minutes of Mr. Biden's quitting, Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans were questioning Mr. Trump's capacity to govern into his 80s, a daring attempt to reframe an age debate that has been so damaging to Democrats.

"She can make the issue of age and fitness a liability for Trump," Erin Wilson, Ms. Harris's deputy chief of staff, said on a call on Sunday with the group Win With Black Women. Polls have consistently shown

that voters have not been overly concerned with the 78-year-old Mr. Trump's age, but simply taking the issue off the table may be enough of a victory for Democrats. They were facing the stiff headwinds of three-quarters of Americans thinking Mr. Biden was too old — a view shared widely even before his doddering debate. Ms. Harris is also expected to give Democrats a far more vigorous campaigner. Her day job is not nearly as demanding as Mr. Biden's, and she can barnstorm the country at a pace far faster than Mr. Trump has undertaken.

She's a former prosecutor; Trump's a convicted felon

Ms. Harris has often been at her best politically when she has taken on the role of prosecutor-in-chief, whether on the debate stage when she first bore into Mr. Biden in June 2019 over busing or as a senator on the Judiciary Committee where her intensive cross-examinations

went viral. When she ran for president, among her tag lines — and her struggling campaign cycled through a few catchphrases — was that she was best positioned to "prosecute the case" against Mr. Trump.

Now, she will have the chance to do so in the same year in which an actual prosecutor in New York scored 34 felony convictions against Mr. Trump, and he still faces more than one future criminal trial.

People who have worked with Ms. Harris believe that framework could allow her to play to some of her strengths — and expose some of Mr. Trump's weaknesses. Polls have shown a noteworthy share of voters think Mr. Trump has committed crimes yet are still planning to vote for him.

Harris will be tagged California liberal

If Mr. Biden was widely seen as too elderly to lead, he had other advantages built up over 50 years in the public spotlight. Namely, he has long been

viewed as a more moderate Democrat who pushed back against the more extreme elements of his party. It helped him appeal to the political middle.

"Do I look like a radical socialist with a soft spot for rioters?" he fumed at one point in the 2020 race. His image was such that at times Republicans opted to attack him by suggesting he was being directed by other forces. Ms. Harris does not have that advantage.

Instead, Ms. Harris got her start in politics as the district attorney of one of the nation's most famously liberal cities, San Francisco, before winning statewide in one of the nation's most famously liberal states, California. (Mr. Trump, notably, was among her donors then.)

And while Ms. Harris did not carve out a reputation in California as an outspoken progressive — her tagline as D.A. was about being "smart on crime" — when she ran for president in 2020, she regularly staked out positions to Mr. Biden's left, including embracing a "Medicare for all" system that he had avoided.

As Mr. Biden's partner for the last three-and-a-half years, Ms. Harris faces the added burden of supporting the agenda of a president who has become deeply unpopular.

The Trump team has already signaled they plan to attack her on immigration in particular. The question is whether Ms. Harris can successfully find a way to campaign on some of the Biden-Harris administration's most popular accomplishments without the current unpopularity of the man who previously led the ticket.

She gives Democrats much-needed jolt of momentum

Mr. Trump and his advisers were not looking to shake up a race he was winning by almost

every metric. As Republicans gathered last week in Milwaukee, they were downright jubilant about the direction of 2024, seeing Mr. Trump as almost a candidate of destiny days after he had survived an assassination attempt.

Now, his team must shift to run a very different race against a very different candidate. Ms. Harris has the ability to potentially energize the Democratic base — especially some of the core constituencies who had felt alienated — in ways Mr. Biden no longer seemed capable of. The president had struggled, relative to his 2020 performance, among Black voters and younger voters in particular; constituencies that Ms. Harris's historic potential candidacy would seem poised to improve upon.

In an early sign of the Democratic appetite for a change, donors contributed more than \$60 million online on Sunday — the third biggest day in the history of ActBlue.

It was also notable that Mr. Trump cast doubt on a future debate with Ms. Harris after he had so eagerly sought to share a stage with Mr. Biden, suggesting a venue change from ABC to Fox News.

Her gender could galvanize Democrats, also Republicans

In the 2020 primary, Democratic voters wrestled for months with the question of who would be the strongest candidate against Mr. Trump. They wondered, often aloud, about the idea of nominating a woman.

Mr. Trump, after all, had just defied expectations and defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016. The party ultimately selected an older white man in Mr. Biden.

For much of the Trump presidency and beyond, Democrats have benefited from a gender



Former US president Donald Trump (C) stands on stage for a podium check at the Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 17, 2024.
● BILL CLARK/CQ ROLL CALL

gap. Women voted for Democrats by a bigger margin than men favored Republicans. But Mr. Trump has swelled his advantage so much among men of late that the gender gap has been suddenly favoring the G.O.P. Ms. Harris has a chance to reverse that and has already proved herself a far more compelling messenger than Mr. Biden on the issue that Democrats believe can win them the 2024 race. Mr. Biden rarely would say the word abortion; Ms. Harris visited an abortion clinic. Ms. Harris faces other distinctive challenges as a Black candidate and a woman, in a country and a political system where both groups are often held to different standards. And in Mr. Trump, she faces

an opponent with a history of exploiting stereotypes for his own advantage. **She can be transcendent but also tentative** One of the notable facts of Ms. Harris's speedy rise to the pinnacle of Democratic politics is a little more than a decade is how few loyalists have been along for the full ride. If Mr. Biden surrounded himself with a small, sometimes insular, coterie of advisers — a recent Biden inner-circle addition could have served him for a decade — Ms. Harris has relatively few similarly long-standing aides. Early on as vice president, her staff turned over significantly. She has few advisers dating back even to her days in the Senate, let alone her time as

attorney general of California. She parted ways with a swath of the senior team on her 2020 presidential primary run, which was wracked with infighting. Those who have worked both for and against her say she has few equivalents when she nails a big speech, or delivers an acerbic line on the debate stage or at a committee hearing. But they also say she can get in her own head, retreat back to canned comments, and make tentative, self-inflicted mistakes. Now, she is inheriting Mr. Biden's enormous campaign apparatus. And she has little more than 100 days to capture both the Democratic nomination and the presidency.



The article first appeared on The New York Times.

The illustration shows potential 2024 Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris (L) and Former US president Donald Trump. **LINDSEY BAILEY/AXIOS**

US Vice President Kamala Harris speaks on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC, on July 22, 2024. **TING SHEN/BLOOMBERG**



Can Kamala Harris beat Donald Trump?

Here's what polls show

By **Aana Gordon**
Reporter

ANALYSIS

But even if Harris becomes the Democratic nominee at the convention in August, concerns remain about her ability to compete in a general election against Donald Trump.

The Democratic Party appears to be injected with new hope in the aftermath of President Joe Biden's decision on Sunday to drop out from the race and endorse Kamala Harris. She raised a record-breaking \$81 million within 24 hours of announcing her candidacy, and as of Monday night, Harris has secured enough support from delegates at the Democratic National Convention to clinch the Democratic nomination.

A slight majority of Americans have a negative opinion of Harris, according to FiveThirtyEight polling. Some 51% of Americans disapprove of Harris to 38% who approve. Former president Donald Trump has a higher disapproval rating at 53%, but 39% of Americans approve of him. Election polls show Harris lagging behind the former president by a small, but not insurmountable margin of 1.5 percentage points on average, according to an analysis done by the Washington Post of 11 different pollsters. These figures are only a slight

improvement on President Joe Biden, who trails Trump by 1.9 percentage points. However, all of these polls were conducted before Biden's drop-out announcement, and surveys about the potential performance of hypothetical candidates are often inaccurate. With those caveats, here are what some of the most respected polls show:

ABC News/The Washington Post/ Ipsos: +2 Harris
ABC News, The Washington Post, and Ipsos worked together to conduct a poll from July 6 to July 9, inter-

viewing 2,431 US adults. ABC News/The Washington Post polls are ranked second in FiveThirtyEight's list of best pollsters after the New York Times/Siena College, which has yet to release a national survey on a Harris vs. Trump matchup.

Their survey found that Harris outperformed Trump by 2 percentage points. That is better than Biden, who is polling exactly the same as Trump.

The Economist/ YouGov: +5 Trump
A poll conducted by The Economist and YouGov

from July 13 to July 16 found that Harris trailed behind Trump by five percentage points, performing worse than Biden, who trailed Trump by two percentage points. The poll sampled 1,582 US adult citizens.

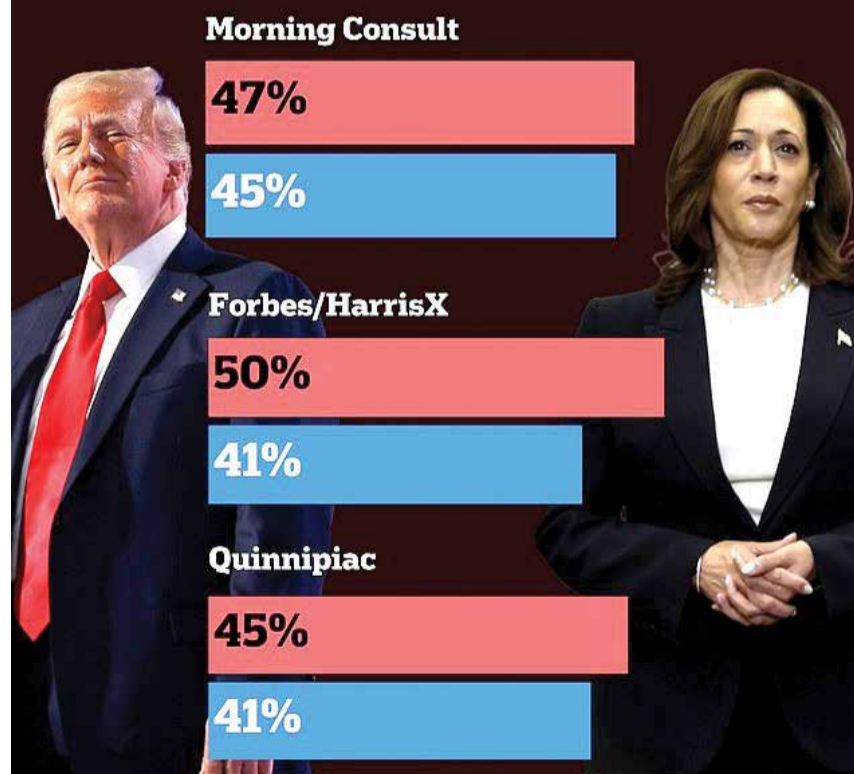
Reuters/Ipsos: +1 Trump

Reuters and Ipsos conducted a poll on July 16, surveying 1,202 adults living in the US in the aftermath of the assassination attempt on Trump. The survey found that the former US president narrowly edged out Harris by one percentage point. The same poll showed Trump outperforming Biden by three percentage points.

Yahoo! News/ YouGov: +2 Trump

Yahoo! News and YouGov conducted a poll from June 28 to July 1, after Biden's botched debate performance but before the assassination attempt on Trump. The poll showed Trump outperforming Harris by two percentage points, the same figure he outperformed Biden by. The poll also found that while 38% of voters who lean Democrat preferred Harris as the replacement for Biden, 42% believed that someone else would be a better fit for the nomination. The survey polled 1,754 American adults.

Several polls have Trump beating Kamala



Several polls taken after US President Joe Biden dropped his reelection bid show Vice President Kamala Harris trailing Donald Trump in the 2024 race. **DAILY MAIL**

The New York Times/ Siena College

The New York Times/Siena College poll is considered the most accurate in the country, according to FiveThirtyEight's rank-

ings. While they have yet to release a national survey on Harris vs. Trump, polls in the swing states of Pennsylvania and Virginia from July 9 to July 12 found that Trump led Harris by two

percentage points in Pennsylvania but Harris outperformed Trump by five percentage points in Virginia.

The article first appeared on TIME.

	Biden vs Trump	Margin:	Harris vs Trump	Margin:
All	Trump	<1	Harris	+1
18-29	Biden	-12	Harris	+16
30-44	Biden	-2	Harris	+7
45-64	Trump	+10	Trump	-7
65 and older	Biden	+3	Trump	<1
Male	Trump	+15	Trump	+15
Female	Biden	+14	Harris	+17
White, college	Biden	+22	Harris	+24
White, no college	Trump	+36	Trump	+38
Black	Biden	+58	Harris	+64
Other	Biden	+6	Harris	+16

The chart shows the results of a survey sample of 1,533 likely voters in Pennsylvania and Virginia from July 9 to 12, 2024. This polling was undertaken before Donald Trump's assassination attempt on July 13 and during the NATO conference. **NEW YORK TIMES/SIENA POLL**

Rahmati named Havadar coach



● TASNIM

Former goalkeeper of Iran's national football team and Esteghlal club Mahdi Rahmati was appointed as the head coach of Havadar football club.

The 41-year-old coach replaced Masoud Shojaei in the Tehran-based football club, according to Tasnim News Agency.

Under leadership of Shojaei, Havadar finished 13th in the 16-team table.

Rahmati stepped down as the head coach of Nassaji in November 2023 following poor results in the top flight team.

Rahmati played for Iran's national football team from 2004 to 2014. He also played for Esteghlal in two stints.

Tractor completes signing of Igor Postonjski

Iranian football club Tractor completed the signing of Croatian midfielder Igor Postonjski.

The 29-year-old midfielder has most recently played for Croatian team NK Varazdin, a professional football club based in Varazdin, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Tractor has previously hired former Iran coach Dragan Skocic.

Postonjski started his playing career in HNK Gorica in 2017 and has also played in Inter Zapresic and NK Zagorec. He replaced Iraqi midfielder Safa Hadi in the Tabriz-based football team.

IPL: Almedin Ziljkic joins Esteghlal



● TASNIM

Croatian left winger Almedin Ziljkic officially joined Iran's Esteghlal football team.

The 28-year-old player played for Sarajevo last season, Mehr News Agency reported.

Ziljkic started his playing career in 2015 in Donji Srem and has also played in Serbia's Novi Pazar, Bosnian teams Gorica, Sloboda Tuzla, and Borac Banja Luka and Slovenian team Olimpija Ljubljana.

Esteghlal has previously completed the signing of Milad Zakipour, Mohammad Hossein Eslami, Ramin Rezaeian, Saman Fallah and Alireza Koushki.

Iran to possibly host Kyrgyzstan football team in Isfahan

Iran's national football team manager says there is a possibility that Iran will host Kyrgyzstan's national team in Isfahan.

This match will be held in the first week of the final selection stage of the 2026 World Cup on September 15, hosted by Iran, reported Mehr News Agency.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup, marketed as FIFA World Cup 26, will be the 23rd FIFA World Cup, the quadrennial international men's soccer championship contested by the national teams of the member associations of FIFA. The tournament will take place from June 11 to July 19, 2026.

Iran will be aiming to progress to a fourth World Cup in a row - and seventh in total - after appearing in 2014, 2018 and 2022 and take on a Qatar side attempting to qualify for the tournament for the first time.

The Qataris, who won a second consecutive Asian Cup title in February, played at the 2022 edition as hosts but have never progressed to the finals through the preliminaries.



● IRNA

The United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and DPR

Korea are also in the group. "If you look at our group, it's not

easy, we have UAE and Qatar but if you look at our results from

the previous round, (it gives us confidence) to qualify," Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei said late June.

Korea Republic leads the Group B cast with Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Kuwait also in the hunt for the two automatic spots to the Finals.

Korea will be the favorites, having made 10 consecutive FIFA World Cup appearances since 1986.

Heading Group C will be Japan, who are seeking to qualify for the FIFA World Cup for the eighth consecutive time.

Standing in their way will be Australia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, China PR and Indonesia.

The preliminaries begin on Sept. 5 and run until June 10, with the winners and runners-up in each group qualifying automatically for the finals in Mexico, the United States and Canada.

The third and fourth place finishers in each group will advance to a fourth round, which will determine the continent's two remaining guaranteed qualifiers.

Tehran derby slated for Matchweek 6



● IRNA

Tehran derby between Persepolis and Esteghlal football teams has been scheduled for Matchweek 6.

Iran Professional League (IPL) for the 2024-25 draw ceremony was held on Tuesday evening in Tehran's Olympic Hotel, IRNA reported.

A total of 16 teams will participate in the 2024-25 season.

Persepolis is the defending champion and looks to win the PGPL title for the 10th title.

Chadormalu and Kheybar will take part in the upcoming season as newcomers after securing promotion to the league last season.

Sanat Naft and Paykan were relegated from the IPL to the First Division.

Ardebil to host world darts tournaments

Iran's Director General of Youth and Sports in Ardabil province has announced that the province will host the world darts tournament, titled the Safavi Cup.

Mohammad Ali Pahnavaer told IRNA on Wednesday that the tournament will be held on Thursday and Friday (October 3-4) in men's, women's, boys', and girls' divisions in Ardabil city, northwestern Iran.

He mentioned that the World Open Darts tournament, in the form of t

Persepolis defender Gvelesiani inks contract extension

Georgian defender Giorgi Gvelesiani extended his contract with Persepolis football team.

The 33-year-old player has penned a one-year contract with the Reds of Tehran, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Gvelesiani, who represented Georgia in Euro 2024, is the best foreign goal scorer in Persepolis with 16 goals.

Gvelesiani scored the winner against Mes Rafsanjan and helped Persepolis defend its title in the Iran Professional League (IPL).

Moghanlou joins Ittihad Kalba of UAE

Iran and Sepahan's international forward Shahriyar Moghanlou joined Emirati football club Ittihad Kalba.

Ittihad Kalba had plans to sign the 29-year-old striker in the January transfer window, but failed to hire the player, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Moghanlou played 82 matches for Sepahan and scored 37 goals for the Iranian club.

He helped Sepahan win Iran's 2023-24 Hazfi Cup in late June.

Iranian international winger Mahdi Ghaedi also plays in Ittihad Kalba.



● TASNIM



● REUTERS

IOC awards 2030 Winter Olympics to French Alps 'under conditions'

The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday awarded the 2030 Winter Games to the French Alps but under the condition that France gives financial commitments.

The decision came after President Emmanuel Macron told IOC members he would ask France's next prime minister to give a financial "guarantee" for hosting the Games, AFP reported.

France is the only candidate

to host the Games but the funding has been in question because there is no government in place following inconclusive snap elections. But Macron told IOC members in Paris he would ask the prime minister who emerges from the ongoing talks to form a new government to make a "financial commitment" and also create an Olympic law. Speaking two days before the opening ceremony of the Paris Summer Olympics,

Macron said: "I want to confirm my full commitment and the full commitment of the French nation."

"I assure you I will ask the next prime minister to include not only this guarantee but also an Olympic law in the priorities of the new government."

Macron said France wanted to show "the rest of the world that the Winter Games are not just history - and we are proud to be part of it - but part of our future."

Iran summons German envoy over Islamic center closure



A police officer stands outside the "Blue Mosque", housing the Islamic Centre of Hamburg, northern Germany, on July 24, 2024.
dpa

The Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the German ambassador on Wednesday after the closure of an Islamic center in the northern city of Hamburg over what Berlin claimed to be propagating extremism and

Islamic ideology as well as support for the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

"Following the action of the German police which closed a number of Islamic centers, the German ambassador was summoned today to the ministry of foreign affairs," the ministry said in a statement on social media platform X.

Germany's Interior Ministry said it had "banned the Hamburg Islamic Center and its affiliated organizations throughout Germany to date, as it is an Islamist extremist organization pursuing anti-constitutional objectives."

Berlin accused the Islamic Center Hamburg (IZH) and its affiliated organizations of undermining the German state and promoting an "Islamist-extremist ideology opposed to human dignity, women's rights, an

independent judiciary, and democratic governance."

Germany's Interior Ministry also said 53 properties associated with the IZH were searched across eight German states following a court order, and four mosques were shut.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned Germany's "hostile action," and said it was "contrary to the fundamental human rights principles." "Unfortunately, what happened in Germany today is a clear example of Islamophobia and a confrontation to the teachings of the Abrahamic religions," it said.

The ministry hailed "valuable and unforgettable services of Islamic centers, including the Hamburg Islamic Center, in explaining the religious teachings of Islam, promoting the principle of dialogue and religious tolerance, as well as combating extremism."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran rebukes UN report on 'extra-judicial' executions in 1980s



The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry roundly dismissed the last report by the outgoing UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the country as part of attempts by enemies to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic.

In a statement on Wednesday, Nasser Kanaani said Javaid Rehman, the outgoing UN rapporteur, who has been misappropriating his position to serve the terrorist Mujahidin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), has pursued the policies of the terror group in the final days of his tenure. Kanaani underlined that the allegations raised by Rehman lack credibility and are totally rejected.

In his last report on Iran dated July 17, Rehman called for a probe into unsubstantiated claims that Iran had committed "summary, arbitrary and extra-judicial executions" in the 1980s.

Pezeshkian: Tough decisions needed to run country

National Desk

Iran's President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday that his administration has to make "tough decisions" because it is not

possible to run the country with the ongoing methods. Pezeshkian made the remarks in a meeting of the supreme provisional councils in Tehran on Wednesday. "We definitely will emerge

victorious with unity," he underlined, adding that he cannot do anything by himself.

"We are not going to make a decision without people's participation and imple-

ment a policy without people's support," he said. Pezeshkian won the presidential election in the second round of the vote on July 5. He garnered more than 16 million votes

against ex-nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, who secured upwards of 13 million out of over 30 million votes cast, with the voter turnout standing at almost 50 percent.



Wave of protests breaks out against Israel's genocide in Gaza

International Desk

Several cities in the world were the scene of fresh anti-Israel demonstrations as Israel continues its devastating war on the Gaza Strip. American protesters against the Gaza war staged a sit-in at a congressional office building Tuesday ahead of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress, with Capitol Police making multiple arrests. Netanyahu arrived in Washington Monday for a visit that includes meetings with President Joe Biden and a

Wednesday speech before a joint session of Congress. Dozens of protesters rallied outside his hotel Monday evening, and on Tuesday afternoon, hundreds of demonstrators staged a flashmob-style protest in the Cannon Building, which houses offices of House of Representatives members. Organized by Jewish Voice for Peace, protesters wearing red T-shirts that read "Not In Our Name" took over the building's rotunda, sitting on the floor, unfurling signs and chanting "Let Gaza Live!"



After about a half-hour of clapping and chanting, officers from the US Capitol Police issued several warnings, then began arresting protesters — binding their

hands with zip ties and leading them away one-by-one. "I am the daughter of Holocaust survivors and I know what a Holocaust looks like," said Jane Hirschmann, a native of Saugerties, New York, who drove down for the protest along with her two daughters — both of whom were arrested. "When we say 'Never Again,' we mean never for anybody."

The demonstrators focused much of their ire on the Biden administration, demanding that the president immediately cease all arms shipments to Israel. "We're not focusing on Netanyahu. He's just a symptom," Hirschmann said. "But how can (Biden) be calling for a cease-fire when he's sending them bombs and planes?"

Protests in UK

Workers and trade unionists from Workers for a Free Palestine blockaded the Foreign, Commonwealth and

Development Office in central London.

They called on Foreign Secretary David Lammy and the new Labour government to meet their own demands on the previous government by

Gaza. France will deploy hundreds of police officers to secure Israel's opening Olympic football match against Mali in an initial security test before the Games' opening ceremony.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said 1,000 security personnel will be deployed. The Palestinian Olympic Committee this week called for Israel to be excluded from the Games in an open letter to International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach. The letter accused Israel of breaching the traditional Olympic truce with its ongoing war on Gaza, which has claimed the lives of more than 39,000 Palestinians — mostly women and children — since October.

Strikes on Khan Yunis

Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip killed at least 121 Palestinians killed and wounded hundreds of others in southern Khan Yunis in just 24 hours.

Two United Nations agencies said an estimated 150,000 people have fled the southern city of Khan Yunis since Monday.

Louise Wateridge, from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), made said on Wednesday that the Palestinians fled the city after Israel announced the latest evacuation order.

"Over 80% of the Gaza Strip has been placed under evacuation orders or designated as no-go zones by the Israeli military," Wateridge said.

Iran arrests 20 terrorists, including two Daesh ringleaders



The Iranian security forces have arrested 20 foreign terrorists, including two ringleaders of Daesh terrorist group, Intelligence Minister Esmaeil Khatib said.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Khatib said his forces have captured the 20 terrorists in 12 separate operations in recent weeks, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Most of the arrestees had illegally crossed the border, the minister said. He noted that 12 of the 20 people arrested in Iran had infiltrated into the country to carry out terrorist operations.

Khatib added that two of the arrestees were the ringleaders and the Daesh and Takfiri groups who were affiliated with the countries that are not even neighbors of Iran.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tourist arrivals surged nearly 51% last year

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran experienced a surge in foreign tourist visits last year, according to the nation's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ezzatollah Zarghami. Addressing a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Zarghami revealed a substantial 50.8% increase in foreign tourist arrivals for the Iranian calendar year concluding on March 19, in comparison to the preceding year. This means nearly 14 million foreign tourists visiting Iran in the past three years, the minister highlighted. Zarghami attributed the growth to the unilateral visa waiver with 28 countries, implemented in cooperation with Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He noted that this decision opened Iran's doors to the world, and the number of visitors from some of those countries increased this year compared to the previous year, IRNA wrote.

"Despite Iranophobic activities and warnings issued by many countries advising their nationals not to travel to Iran, we had growth in visits," Zarghami said. The minister also acknowledged a decrease in tourist arrivals due to political issues with the Republic of Azerbaijan, which led to the cutting of land route relations between the two countries. In addition, Zarghami mentioned that Iran experienced a 20% increase in tourist arrivals during the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year, starting on March 20, compared to the same period last year. He also highlighted the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which postponed many world meetings, gatherings, sports events, and travels since its outbreak in February 2020. To further boost tourism, Zarghami mentioned the investment in 1,785 projects, including 5-star hotels, which are



expected to create 51,000 job opportunities. He added that 81 large tourism projects are set to be inaugurated by the end of the current

Iranian year. The minister also broke the news that Iran had been chosen as the host of the global handicrafts and tourism center in Isfa-

han, which is expected to boost the country's handicrafts sector. Zarghami concluded by emphasizing the importance of honoring pioneers and veterans

in the fields of handicrafts and cultural heritage, stating that it is a policy of the current administration to honor and celebrate elites.

Iranian scientists develop gene therapy to prevent blindness



Iranian researchers made a breakthrough in the treatment of retinitis pigmentosa, a hereditary disease that can lead to blindness. A team led by senior researcher Maryam Haghshenas has developed optimized recombinant viral vectors that efficiently transfer genes through intravitreal injection, offering a less aggressive approach to gene therapy. Haghshenas highlighted the growing significance of gene therapy in treating genetic and acquired diseases, particularly in ophthalmology. She emphasized the importance of producing recombinant viral vectors optimized for effective gene transfer as a crucial step in treating retinitis pigmentosa, IRNA wrote. The research focused on X-linked retinitis pigmentosa, caused by a defect in the RPGR gene. Haghshenas and her team created a virus carrying a healthy version of the RPGR gene. This virus can be injected into the vitreous, allowing the gene to be expressed specifically in the photoreceptors of the retina, thus preventing blindness.

Retinitis pigmentosa affects about one in every 2,500 births, causing progressive retinal degeneration and eventual complete blindness. The development of optimized viral vectors offers a promising approach to preventing blindness in patients with this inherited condition. The team's invention involves creating mutations in the viral coating to enhance penetration and increase the transfer of the virus to different layers of the retina after intravitreal injection. The virus was successfully tested in a pre-clinical study on one-month-old mice, demonstrating its ability to effectively transfer and express the RPGR gene in the photoreceptor cells of the retina. This innovative approach eliminates the need for highly invasive subretinal injections, reducing the risk of severe inflammation and retinal detachment. The optimized viral vectors offer higher stability and permeability, making them well-suited for direct injection into the vitreous, a less invasive and safer approach.

Iranian researchers' theory on Qur'anic translation available now in 12 languages

Arts & Culture Desk

An innovative theory in translation studies, developed by two Iranian researchers, gained global acclaim. The book, titled 'Issues and Solutions for Translating Divine Attributes in the Holy Qur'an,' written by Gholamreza Abbasian and Samaneh Nazerian, has now been published in Chinese, adding to its previous translations into 11 other languages, IRNA wrote. The book emphasizes the importance of incorporating feminine perspectives and characteristics alongside masculine ones, with equal weight and without superiority of one gender over the other, for a more beautiful world

and humanity's growth and advancement toward the Creator. First published in Germany in 2016, the book has been translated and published by Amazon in various languages, including Irish, German, French, Portuguese, English, Spanish, Scots, Welsh, Brazilian Portuguese, Dutch, and Russian. The Chinese translation now makes this important work accessible to a whole new audience. The scientific findings presented in the book offer a novel approach to translating religious texts, particularly the Holy Qur'an. It challenges the three historical phases of women's writing proposed by American scholar Elaine Showalter in 1977 and introduces a fourth



phase, the "Feminine-Masculine Phase," highlighting the need for a blend of gender perspectives to enrich our understanding of the divine. This global reach of the book

showcases the impact and relevance of Iranian scholarship in the field of translation studies and its ability to spark meaningful conversations across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Pezeshkian a symbol ...

In the past, we didn't have a great track record in this respect, and with each change of government, many of the country's executive managers also changed. Now, Pezeshkian is of the view that efficient personnel should be retained and that fresh, experienced experts should also be brought on board. So, Pezeshkian is matchless; there's no one quite like him, and we have faith in his ability to stay true to his course. This path appears to have the backing of various parts of the ruling system, particularly Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Khamenei. The Leader's recent comments about parliamentary cooperation with the government and support for Pezeshkian's cabinet were clear,

intelligent, and forthright. Of course, the Leader has always endorsed and backed sitting governments as this support smooths the path for their success. However, his support for Mr. Pezeshkian seems to carry extra weight because Pezeshkian represents the restoration of public trust in the government and the ruling system. In previous elections and over the past few years, mismanagement has led to a weakening of faith in the country's leadership. Pezeshkian's involvement in the election, his stance, and his success - which was remarkable in itself - have shown everyone that it's possible to rebuild the trust between the people and those in power. As such, the Leader's support for Pezeshkian translates to

support for national unity and the revival of public confidence in the Establishment. Now, the question is whether the political factions that are rivals to the future government will heed the Leader's recommendation to work with the upcoming administration or choose to create roadblocks and cause havoc. It looks likely that the moderate sections of the Conservative camp will fall in line with the Leader's suggestion, especially given the commendable stance taken by personalities like Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Pezeshkian's former electoral rival, in the weeks since the election. This is particularly relevant given that Mr. Qalibaf is also the speaker of the Parliament and will play a pivotal role in fostering cooper-

ation between the government and the legislature. This leaves only the hardline sections of the Conservative political forces, which have had - and continue to have - differences with their more moderate counterparts. We hope that even if these factions don't plan to cooperate with the new government, they will, at the very least, refrain from throwing wrenches. This doesn't mean that political parties shouldn't be able to critique the government. Constructive criticism certainly has its place, but deliberate sabotage and attempts to marginalize will undoubtedly go against the recommendations of the Leader. So, all things considered, I'm optimistic that Pezeshkian will deliver on his campaign promises.