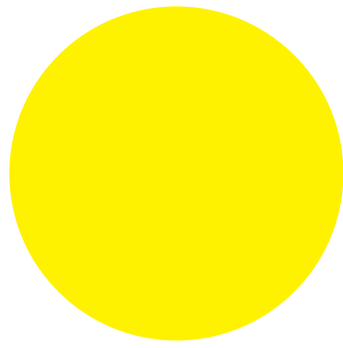


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7 >



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Parliament Starts Debating Ministerial Picks

Pezeshkian casts new cabinet as gov't of national consensus

7 >



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses Parliament in the capital Tehran, on August 17, 2024, as he defends his cabinet lineup.
● ATTA KENARE/AFP

The road to national unity a one-way or two-way street?



By Mohammad-Ali Vakili
Former Iranian MP

**EXCLUSIVE
OPINION**

Iran's political landscape has witnessed a potential game-changer with President Masoud Pezeshkian's introduction of the concept of a "national accord" government. However, in recent weeks, two distinct interpretations of this idea have emerged, sparking a lively debate. One school of thought advocates that the cabinet and the president's key associates should predominantly belong to the political faction supporting him, namely the Reformists, and that the spirit of national accord should be reflected in the plans and policies enacted. On the other hand, there are those who believe that true national accord is best embodied by a cabinet that includes representatives from across the political spectrum, sending a powerful message of unity and compromise. Mr. Pezeshkian appears to lean toward the latter interpretation, as evidenced by his cabinet proposals, which feature individuals from various political backgrounds. This inclusive approach, however, has not sat well with some of the

president's allies and supporters, particularly political activists and reformist parties, who have voiced their criticism. Yet, it is worth noting that for the general public, the performance and results delivered by ministers may ultimately carry more weight than their political affiliations. As things stand, the fate of this cabinet now lies with Parliament. The critical question remains: Is the road to accord that Pezeshkian has courageously embarked upon a one-way street, or is there room for reciprocity? Should Parliament, with its conservative majority, embrace the president's accord slogan and bestow a vote of confidence upon the cabinet, especially the reformist nominees, it would signify a two-way journey toward national unity, with legislature and the president working in harmony. However, should partisan considerations prevail and lead MPs to obstruct the path of the proposed reformist nominees, Pezeshkian's mission will undoubtedly become more challenging, facing mounting pressure from supporters. Saturday marked the first day for reviewing cabinet picks in the legislative chamber, and early signs suggest that Parliament is inclined to cooperate with the government, as reflected in the distribution of support for the cabinet's generalities.

Page 7 >

9th Caspian Media Forum

Envoy: Iran, Russia reject clash of civilizations, advocate for intercultural dialogue

8 >



Persian Gulf Pro League roundup:

Late VAR drama seals opening-day win for Esteghlal

6 >



Iran condemns Afghan violation of railway territory

2 >



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SPECIAL ISSUE 4-5 >

