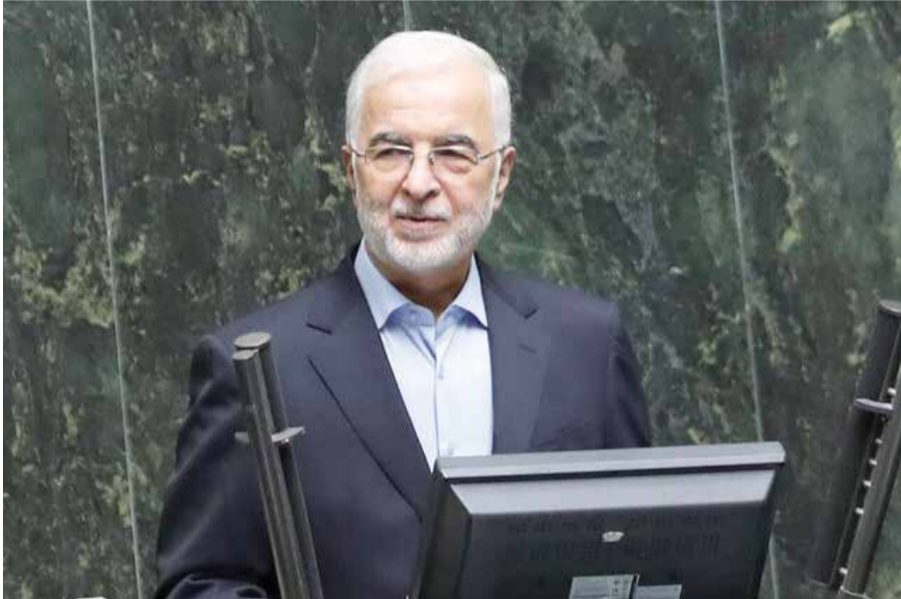


Momeni to focus on social freedoms, equal opportunities for all



The proposed nominee for the Ministry of Interior has called for further respect to social freedoms and the parity of men's and women's rights as he outlined his plans at Parliament on the fourth day of the legislative body's reviewing of the qualification of President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup. "I believe that we should provide equal opportunities for all citizens, both men and women, and each person should be used in terms of his or her special talents and abilities, so that the feeling of discrimination is eradicated, so that we can all sense equality and brotherhood," Eskandar Momeni said in his address to Parliament on Tuesday. "Paying attention to the internal capacity of the Ministry of Interior is one of my priorities," he added. "Organizational promotion, motivational programs and uplifting their dignity and livelihood, meritocracy and consolidation of systematic oversight and the revival of the position of the Ministry of Interior are among the most important goals." Momeni underlined that the country more than ever before needs security, peace, coordination and national solidarity as well as hope and creating hope.

The ministerial nominee for Interior Ministry also highlighted the protection of public culture and Islamic values with a "cultural and persuasive approach." In an open session on Tuesday, Mustafa Pour-Dehqan spoke in support of Momeni's qualifications and plans, saying the nominee is "well-known, disciplined and faithful" who is committed to the principles of the country's law enforcement and security. Hamidreza Guderzi, as a critic of the nominee, said, "I registered as an opponent, but I will vote for you as a supporter...The Ministry of Interior is a vast ministry and all the internal discipline of the country rests with this ministry. Our request is that you be mindful of the selection of governors, mayors, village councilors and municipalities." The blueprints and qualifications of Reza Salehi Amiri, who is Pezeshkian's pick for Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, were also debated at Parliament on Tuesday. "We have set our general policies by defining 10 strategies and 50 plans," Salehi Amiri said. "Our first strategy is to develop domestic tourism. Domestic tourism in the country

enjoys a very high potential and we can achieve job creation and elimination of deprivation by expanding tourism. The development of pilgrimage tourism is our main point and advantage in the country, and we must make an all-round investment in this regard." Salehi Amiri also pointed to the fortification of "cultural and economic diplomacy" as one of his strategies for managing his ministry. Speaking in his support, Hamidreza Kazemi said Salehi Amiri is a "well-seasoned" individual in terms of knowledge and experience, and he is devoted to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution. Ali Khezri opined as a critic that the nominee lacks a "reform-oriented program" and the issue will cause many problems for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. The Iranian Parliament also discussed on Tuesday the plans and qualifications of Abbas Salehi Shariati as the nominee for heading the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. "The nexus between the government and the nation can be culture and media... So, the people of culture, art, and media are the leaders in this field, and these

people, their standing, rights, institutions, and organizations should be taken into consideration," Salehi Shariati said. "The role of Iranians in the spread of Islam in the world is unique and the Islamic culture was disseminated throughout the Islamic territories with the presence of Iranian artists, writers, poets, scientists, philosophers, researchers and teachers," he underlined. Salehi Shariati had no critics at Parliament on Tuesday and his proponents made no speeches.

Nominees picked after full deliberation: President

In a meeting with a group of lawmakers on Monday night, Pezeshkian emphasized the necessity for close interaction between the administration and Parliament to settle problems and said he had chosen his ministers after thorough consultations. The president stressed that none of the ministerial nominees had been chosen without "consultations with the high-level authorities" of the country. Pezeshkian said his incoming administration has honored the pledge of "national consensus" and now expects the lawmakers to demonstrate their commitment in practice by giving a vote of confidence to his cabinet. What the administration cares about the most at present is to narrow the gap between the people and government and ensure the Iranian people's satisfaction, he added. Less than two weeks after being sworn in as the new president of Iran, Pezeshkian submitted the list of his proposed ministerial picks to the Parliament for a vote of confidence on August 11. Iran's Parliament is expected to hold a formal session on the votes of confidence for the 19 ministerial nominees on Wednesday.

Iran, FAO to bolster climate resilience



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE), with the support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), initiated their cooperation aimed at strengthening resilience to the climate change. The newly signed project, titled "Strengthening Iran's access to GCF with national ownership, knowledge-based policies, and sound technologies," represents a crucial step towards aligning the national strategies with climate action and promoting sustainable development, Tasnim reported. Iran, like many nations, faces the challenges of climate change and grappling with its adverse ef-

fects, including escalating droughts and catastrophic floods further exacerbating water scarcity issues affecting ecosystems, biodiversity, food production, and economy, IRNA reported. Engaging all key stakeholders including government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the inception workshop for this project was held on August 19, marking the official launch of this crucial initiative and setting the stage for collaborative efforts towards achieving climate resilience in the country. The transformative initiative between the Islamic Republic of Iran, GCF, and FAO aims to fortify the

country's resilience to climate change through a multifaceted approach. Additionally, by facilitating access to advanced climate-resilient technologies and engaging both targeted sectors and the private sector in climate action initiatives, Iran aims to develop a strong network of climate projects aligned with national priorities and GCF standards. Anticipated outcomes include enhanced national coordination mechanisms, the development of a strategy for direct access to the GCF, an updated GCF Country Program, and the establishment of a comprehensive National Climate Change Knowledge Hub.

Wheat production up by 100% in some provinces

Wheat production has risen by up to 100% in some Iranian provinces thanks to bumper harvest and price incentives offered to farmers. Iran's Ministry of Agriculture said on Monday that wheat production in the northeastern province of Golestan, the third largest wheat producer in the country, had doubled this year compared to figures reported at the end of last harvesting season in August, Press TV reported. It said the central province of Isfahan had also report-

ed a year on year increase of 98% in wheat crop, adding that production had also risen by more than 70% in three provinces of North Khorasan in northeast, Markazi in center and Hamedan in western Iran. The ministry said total domestic wheat purchases had reached 11.51 million metric tons (mT) since they started in early April, up 16% compared to the same period last year. It said the funds spent on wheat purchases had exceeded 2,030 trillion rials

(\$3.4 billion) of which 942 trillion rials had been paid to farmers under the government's Guaranteed Purchase Program. Experts say the significant increase in domestic wheat supplies in Iran is a result of better climate conditions and favorable prices offered by the government. The government announced last year that it will raise its guaranteed price for domestic wheat purchase as part of a policy to further cut back on imports.

Interior Ministry pick ...

Momeni's military background has been a point of focus for some, but what is often overlooked is his extensive experience with the Traffic Police and the transformative impact he had during that tenure. Much of his military career was spent in this public-facing role, addressing societal issues and interacting closely with the people. This experience paves the way for his prospective work at the Interior Ministry. A key consideration is the ap-

pointments that the Interior Minister will make. It is likely that some of these appointments will have security or military backgrounds, which is understandable given the nature of certain departments within the ministry, such as the deputy for security affairs. However, the political domains need the involvement of politicians, and the deputy for civil affairs requires expertise in urban and development management. Thus, the ministry demands a diverse range of managerial expertise and

backgrounds. As Momeni, or indeed any other nominee, takes the reins of the Interior Ministry, they must first consider the broader implications of higher-level laws and directives and learn from past experiences to chart a course for the ministry's future. Should amendments to existing laws be deemed necessary based on past experiences, the interior minister should engage with Parliament and the government to effect change. Alternatively, if laws are al-

ready in place, creativity in their implementation can ensure widespread acceptance. It is also imperative to acknowledge the unique cultural and social dynamics of each city and province. A creative approach to law enforcement is warranted, underpinned by respect for people's rights and the understanding the point that posts exist to serve people and solve their problems. I believe Momeni can draw on Pezeshkian's approaches to carry the ministry's missions, such as the moral police that enforces social codes. At times, it becomes necessary to amend laws, and

even when enforcing them, cultural nuances and softer strategies must be considered. A heavy-handed approach to social issues without understanding their underlying causes is unlikely to bear fruit. In certain instances, deploying the Law Enforcement Force, which falls under the Interior Ministry, may not be the optimal strategy. Other organizations should also lend their support to the Interior Ministry, and the interior minister can act as the lynchpin, coordinating the efforts of various organizations with differing responsibilities but shared legal frameworks.

Momeni's track record, particularly with the Traffic Police, suggests he is well-equipped to establish this effective coordination. Given the Interior Ministry's broad responsibilities, the proposed minister must be flanked by individuals capable of prioritizing issues and needs and acting accordingly. However, in light of the Leader's emphasis on economic matters, the Interior Ministry should also direct its attention to economic concerns. Economic development and security are intrinsically linked, and fostering the former will contribute to the latter.