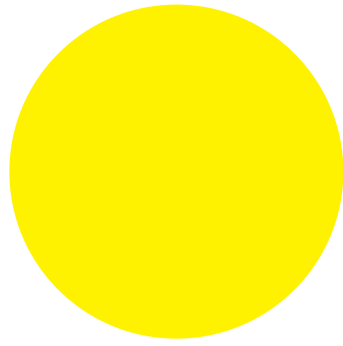


Iran's reading habits surpass global average: **Official**

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

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Trump trumps Harris to take US helm in stunning comeback

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How Trump's Iran policy could unfold

O P I N I O N

Republican Donald Trump was elected the 47th president of the United States for a second term, having edged out Democrat Kamala Harris. With the Senate also falling into Republican hands, Trump's path to implementing his policies has been significantly smoothed out. While tensions between Iran and the US were already running high during Joe Biden's presidency, and the Democrats failed to deliver on their promise to join Iran's nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, the situation was somewhat less dire than during Trump's first term in office, with both sides keeping diplomatic channels open despite being at loggerheads for months.

Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and the subsequent assassination of Iran's General Qassem Soleimani severely damaged relations between Washington and Tehran. During Biden's tenure, Trump criticized the Democrats for turning a blind eye on Iran's oil sales, attributing it to their ineptitude. Meanwhile, he has promised Americans that he will strike a deal with Iran that benefits the US. In Tehran, officials insist that whoever occupies the White House has little bearing on the country's policies. However, experts have different opinion's. [Page 2 >](#) Here is what some Iranian analysts have to say about the impact of Trump's presidency on Iran:



US president-elect Donald Trump arrives to speak during an election night event at the Palm Beach Convention Center in Florida, the US, on November 06, 2024. **AFP**

Iran-Israel conflict: A broken taboo



By **Gholamreza Mansouri**
Political science researcher

O P I N I O N EXCLUSIVE

The confrontation between Iran and the occupying entity known as Israel has undergone three historical and epistemological stages. Each stage of the confrontation was based on a different type of epistemic condition, especially in Iran. Let's go over these stages in order to get a better understanding of how we got here. [Page 4 >](#)



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Battlefield, not political action will end war: Hezbollah chief



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Iranian Oscar hopeful 'In the Arms of the Tree' to compete in US

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Iran submits bid to join CIS railway network



Iran is seeking to obtain the approval of the Council for Rail Transport of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for its wagons to operate in the bloc's rail network. A Wednesday report by the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways said its CEO has attended the 81st meeting of the Council for Railway Transport of the CIS member states in Uzbekistan, IRNA wrote. The report said Iran will use the meeting, which is chaired by Russia, to submit its request to join the railway network of the CIS so that its wagons can operate in the network.

The application aims to enable Iran to use the vast network of CIS railways for cargo transit. Managing Director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Jabbar-Ali Zakari represented Iran in the CIS meeting in Tashkent as an observer state. On November 5-6, the 81st meeting of the Council for Railway Transport of the CIS is being held in Tashkent. The event is attended by representatives of the railway administrations of Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Iran, Latvia and Estonia.

The meeting was opened by Chairman of the Board of Uzbekistan Temir Yullari JSC Zufar Narzullayev with a welcoming speech. He stressed the importance of the support of railway transport from the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan, noting that important decisions are being made for the development of the industry and the diversification of services provided.

As part of the council's work, the results of the development of a plan for the formation of freight trains and wagons with containers in international traffic for the period 2024-2025 were presented.

In addition, other topical issues related to the interaction between the participants of the railway community and their partners were discussed at the meeting. The meetings are continuing, and it is expected that important decisions will be made to further strengthen the transport sector in the region.

Pezeshkian urges reform in subsidies to fix shortages

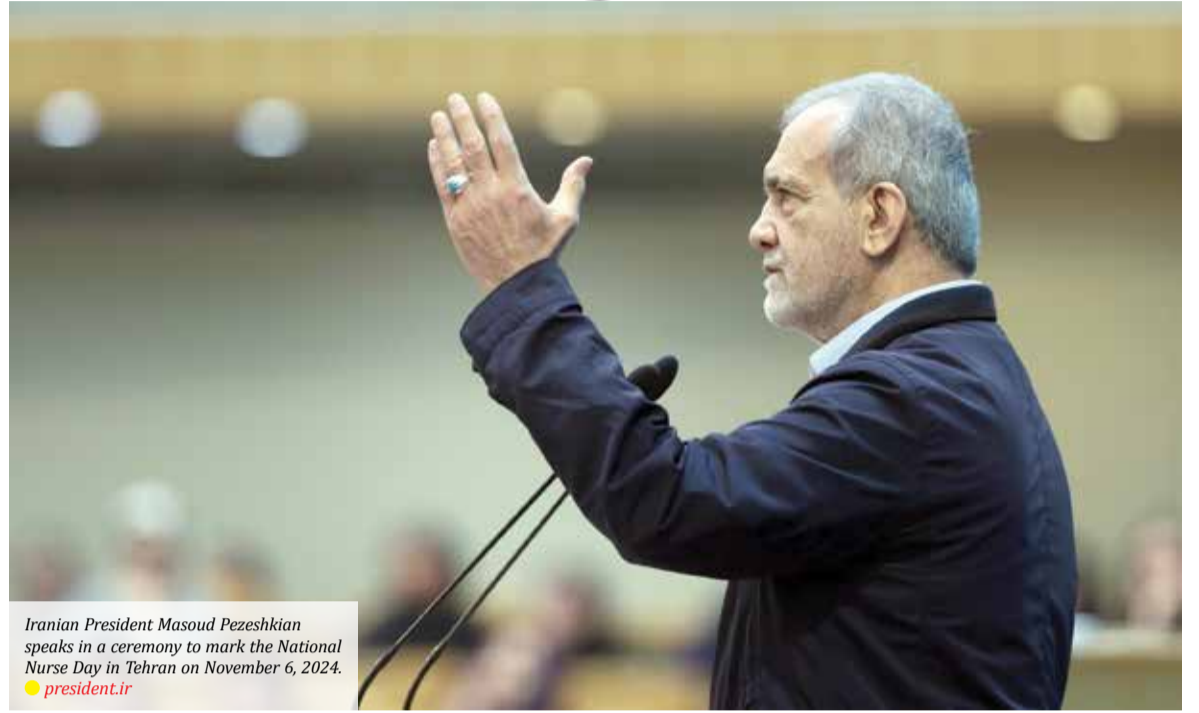
Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for a reform in the subsidy allocation program across the country, stressing that, "I urge economists to provide practical solutions to address problems." Speaking in a ceremony in Tehran on the anniversary of the National Nurse Day, Pezeshkian stated that subsidies are being paid on bread, meat, gasoline, electricity and gas, but some do not use their share of subsidies, while some take 100 times more, according to president.ir. He went on to say that the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer, adding that a solution should be found to overcome this trend. The president pointed to the shortages across the country, asking the people to help solve them. Pezeshkian said, "We

want to fix these shortages without causing harm to those who are already deprived and ensure that these problems are eliminated."

He said, "I have talked about unity and emphasized that Iran is for all Iranians, this country is ours and we must make it prosperous. I do not have the right to allow inequality and injustice in society, as we are trying to make this happen, you should help us to go in this direction."

The government will not carry out any economic intervention without informing the people and seeking expert opinions, Pezeshkian stated, noting that before taking any measure, the government must ensure that this process is beneficial for the whole society and can be done with the cooperation of the people. "We must strive to ensure that ev-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks in a ceremony to mark the National Nurse Day in Tehran on November 6, 2024. president.ir

everyone receives their due rights."

Pezeshkian said in a video published in August that

fuel subsidies make no sense in Iran.

"There is no rationality in the fact that we buy

gasoline with free market dollar prices and we sell it with a subsidized price," Pezeshkian said in a video

broadcast by state media. "Our economists and experts should stand up to these wrong policies."

Iran becomes self-sufficient in laser industry: AEOI chief

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said the country has become self-sufficient in the production of lasers. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Mohammad Eslami said that the laser technology is introducing itself to the public more and more each day and is going to help industries by synergizing with other technologies, IRNA reported. "With the unveilings we made at the laser

exhibition, we have reached the capacity for a self-sufficient production of laser products," he noted, referring to an ongoing exhibit in Tehran. Eslami also said that a number of contracts had been inked with industrial firms at the exhibitions to equip the country's industries with laser technology.

The 5th Iran Laser, Photonics, and Quantum Specialized Exhibition kicked off in the capital Tehran on Sunday to showcase Iran's



latest advancements in the field of laser technology.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Eslami highlighted the role of lasers across vari-

ous fields, saying that the laser technology currently has diverse applications such as human safety and environmental protection.

Envoy urges launching Tehran-Tunis direct flights



Tunisia's Ambassador in Tehran Imad Al-Rahmuni called for launching direct and regular flights between Iran and Tunisia. Speaking in a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Civil Aviation Organization Hossein Pourfarzaneh, on Wednesday, Rahmuni expressed his satisfaction with the increase in air transportation relations

with Iran, IRNA reported. He called for updating the MoUs between the two countries in the field of air transportation. Meanwhile, Pourfarzaneh emphasized developing air transport cooperation between the two countries. He also stressed boosting relations in technical, educational and overhaul fields.

How Trump's Iran...

GOPs, Dems cut from same cloth

🔗 **Mohammad-Sadegh Koushki**
Political analyst

If we take a closer look at the 40-year history of the US's confrontational approach toward Iran, we will realize that a significant portion of the sanctions and anti-Iranian actions took place under Democratic administrations. The sanctions were first slapped on Iran during Jimmy Carter's presidency, and we saw them ratchet up during Bill Clinton's eight-year tenure. As a result, we have not noticed any fundamental difference in the American approach.

The reason is that long-term strategies dominate US foreign policy, with presidents having only tactical authority. These strategies are crafted by think tanks, reviewed by the Defense and State Departments, as well as relevant intelligence agencies, and the most

favorable ones are selected to align with US foreign policy objectives. The president only presents these decisions, rather than making them. The decision-making process is, in fact, a complex mechanism that unfolds in think tanks, government ministries, and ultimately, in the Oval Office. It's not as if the president can single-handedly make decisions.

Iran has been under pressure, threat, and sanctions from the US in a continuous process, in various forms, including political, economic, and media-related. This behavior has been consistent in all administrations since 1980, with no major difference between Republicans and Democrats.

The Americans are, in no way, on board with the idea of the Islamic Republic becoming a powerful country with robust defense and economic capabilities. Therefore, it is up to us to upgrade our thinking and move away from simplistic and naive management styles.

Iran, Israel poised for mini-war

🔗 **Mehdi Motahharnia**
International relations expert

The dynamics between Iran and the US are more contingent on developments in Tehran than on the changing of the guard in Washington. Trump is now the president-elect of the United States. In reality, there is only a 5% difference between Democratic and Republican administrations, given the bipartisan consensus on Iran policy.

With the Republicans set to take control of the Senate and Congress, their consolidated power will likely accelerate changes in the Middle East. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, anticipating this shift, made a meaningful move by dismissing Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and forming a more cohesive cabinet to press ahead with his policies. From now on, the Iran-Israel issue will heat up leading to a mini-war, and US policies will be-

come increasingly aligned with Israeli policies in the coming months.

This could spell trouble for Tehran. Trump would likely intensify his preemptive strikes in the mini-war, launching more targeted and harsher attacks on Iran. Netanyahu will not face pressure from either the US administration or Congress, allowing him to lead a controllable cabinet in Tel Aviv that is fully in sync with Washington. This could make the regional landscape increasingly perilous.

No 'regime change' policy

🔗 **Albert Boghozian**
Economic expert

It is no secret that the US presidential election has far-reaching implications for the global economy, and Iran is no exception. As a relatively isolated and closed economy, Iran's connection to the world is largely limited to its oil exports, making it vulnerable to the outcome of the US election. Since Trump has brought

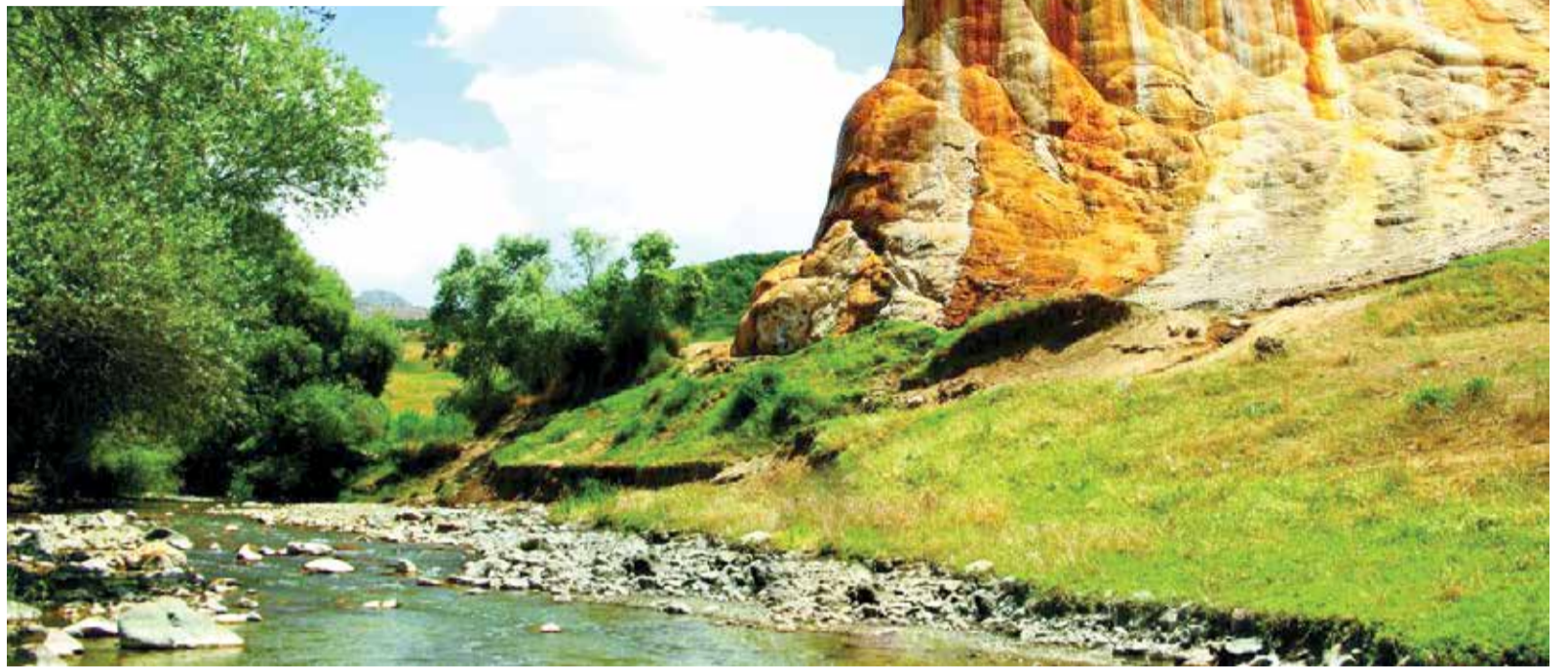
up Iran during his campaign speeches, it is clear that the US election result will have a ripple effect on the Islamic Republic. During his election campaign, Trump claimed that he would sit down with Saudi Arabia and broker a deal to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict overnight. If these promises were to materialize, they would undoubtedly have a positive impact on Iran's economy.

Trump did follow through on some of his campaign promises during his first term, including pulling out of the JCPOA. However, that was eight years ago, and Trump is well aware that implementing certain policies comes with a hefty price tag. Nevertheless, it is clear that Trump does not have a "regime change" policy in the works. That being said, during this campaign, he did accuse the Biden administration of giving Iran too much leeway, claiming that the Democrats had freed up Iranian funds, while the Republicans would not have allowed it.

Discovering the wonders of Kani Gravan Spring

Iranica Desk

Kani Gravan Spring is a natural attraction that bubbles up from the heart of the earth, surrounded by unique features. The surrounding limestone hills, shaped by nature, showcase a beautiful aspect of this region. The Kani Gravan Spring is considered one of the most beautiful tourist attractions in West Azarbaijan Province, located about 12 kilometers away from the city of Sardasht. The cold water of this spring is undrinkable due to its salinity. Over time, the sediment of minerals present in the spring has created a colorful limestone structure around it, enhancing the spring's beauty. Additionally, the chemical interactions of the spring water have caused the height of this structure to increase every year. In winter, the limestone structure freezes, while the spring water continues to flow due to its salt content, IRNA wrote. The origin of the spring's name is unclear. Many locals interpret its name as a term from the Kurdish language. In Kurdish, Gravan means hard and heavy water, possibly referring to the high mineral content in the water of this spring.



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Features

Kani Gravan is a rich mineral water spring with a mineral concentration of over one gram per liter. The healing properties of this spring are significant, and it can be classified among sparkling mineral springs, widely utilized for various beauty and skin treatments. In fact, the main fame of Kani Gravan Spring comes from its bubbling water, which has beneficial properties used in biophysiological therapies.

The presence of natural and mineral salts in the water of Kani Gravan Spring has spurred the development of therapeutic tourism in the area, attracting many visitors each year for the treatment of skin diseases, bone pain, as well as ailments like rheumatism and muscle pain, directing them to Sardasht and the village of Kani Goyz.

As the water flows over the surface, it leaves behind materials that over

time create an interesting conical structure, resulting in a colorful hill. This hill, set amidst the lush nature of the region, creates an eye-catching view with a beautiful color spectrum. The limestone structure, from which the spring bubbles, is about 20 meters tall.

The river passing at the base of this natural structure is the Hormozabad River. This river becomes full in the spring, irrigating its surrounding en-

vironment and presenting a pleasant and green scenery filled with blooming meadows. The water flowing from this spring eventually merges into the Little Zhab River.

On the road leading to the Kani Gravan Spring from Mahabad, you will be greeted by lush greenery, pleasant weather, and beautiful scenery — especially in spring, when wheat fields, oak forests, and flowing waterfalls create a unique view. The bubbling water

in rivers also adds to this beauty. The uniquely colored limestone hills attract every viewer, creating an attractive space for photography. You can set up a picnic for a few hours in the meadows surrounding the spring and enjoy this marvelous nature. There are no accommodation facilities around the spring; it is better to stay in one of the nearby towns, with Sardasht being the best option, just about 12 kilometers from the spring.



Best time to visit

The peak beauty of this area is in spring and summer, showcasing its flowing rivers, lush landscapes, and pleasant weather. With the arrival of autumn and the onset of winter, the spring and its sur-

rounding nature still retain their beauty, and the freezing and snow-covering of the limestone hill during these seasons presents visitors with an extraordinary and stunning view.

Tips for visiting

Access to the spring is easy, and visitors of all ages can enjoy it. It is advisable to park your vehicle at the end of the dirt road and walk through the beautiful surrounding meadows. On the way to the waterfall, you will encounter a very beautiful

mountainous road. During your trip to West Azarbaijan Province, be sure to include a visit to this spring in your itinerary; especially since this spring is the second most famous attraction in Sardasht after the Shalmash Waterfall.

Historical significance of Kushk-e Ardeshir in Dashtestan

Kushk-e Ardeshir, also known as the Palace of Ardeshir, is a remarkable historical site located in the Poshtpar hills, close to a village bearing the same name, which is noted for its pleasant weather. This ancient structure is part of the Eram region in Dashtestan, situated approximately 150 kilometers east of the city of Bushehr the capital city of Bushehr Province. The palace dates back to the reign of King Ardeshir I, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty. This connection explains the numerous architectural similarities be-

tween Kushk-e Ardeshir and the Ardeshir Palace in Firuzabad, another palace constructed by the king himself. Adding to its significance, Kushk-e Ardeshir is included in Iran's National Heritage List, highlighting its importance to the country's cultural and historical landscape. This area is home to a wealth of historic monuments that date back to those periods. Among the most prominent sites are Goor Dokhtar, an ancient tomb dating to the sixth century, and Tang-e Eram. The area continues

to yield fascinating archaeological discoveries, with historical artifacts frequently uncovered during excavations. For example, in 2016, two urns were found during excavations related to renovations for a bridge in the Poshtpar region, underlining the ongoing significance of this site for historical research. The architectural body of Kushk-e Ardeshir is primarily constructed of stone and *sarooj*, a specific type of water-resistant mortar that has helped the structure withstand the test of time. The palace features a Chalipa or

cross-shaped design, crafted in the style of *chahartaq* with barrel vaults on top to provide structural integrity and aesthetic appeal. Today, two ivans remain intact on the north and southeast sides of the palace. Adjacent to these ivans are rooms that are roofed with elegant arches, showcasing the advanced architectural techniques of the era. At the summit of the structure, a stone column stands, which is speculated to have had multiple purposes: it may have

functioned as a place for lighting fires for signaling, or it could have served as a lookout point for guarding the palace. Additionally, there is a vaulted pathway that extends six meters from southeast to northwest, further enhancing the architectural complexity of the site. Unfortunately, in 2011, parts of this significant Sassanid building were damaged due to high

humidity and moisture levels, alongside a lack of attention and maintenance directed towards this national monument. Despite these challenges, Kushk-e Ardeshir remains a vital part of Iran's heritage, representing the rich history and architectural prowess of the Sassanid era.



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Iran-Israel conflict: A broken taboo

By Gholamreza Mansouri
Political science researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The confrontation between Iran and the occupying entity known as Israel has undergone three historical and epistemological stages. Each stage of the confrontation was based on a different type of epistemic condition, especially in Iran. Let's go over these stages in order to get a better understanding of how we got here.

Disorientation, tradition, or the West?

For all intents and purposes, the first confrontation between the two sides can be attributed to the collapse of the Ottoman and Qajar empires. During that time, the groundwork for the establishment of Israel was being laid by the victorious countries of World War II in the lands partitioned off from the Ottoman Empire.

Iranians were experiencing a fundamental epistemological shift in their domestic and foreign policy, moving from a form of despotism reliant on religious tradition to a modernizing authoritarianism that sought to close the gap between Iran and Western civilizations. The main characteristic of this period was a fateful disorientation that made any intervention outside the borders impossible. This was while Iran and Israel had no technological advantage over each other.

Shah turns West, Israel gets armed

The second episode can be titled "the years after World War II". Around this time, Israel practically emerged and was officially admitted to the UN in 1948 as a member. Exhausted from years of being occupied during World War II and plagued by problems such as famine, coup d'état, and separatism, Iran made great efforts to adapt itself as much as possible to Western standards to gain their support, especially due to a fear of the Soviet Union. It should be noted that Mohammad Reza Shah, Iran's ruler at the time, was not alone in this endeavor; some influential clerics supported him as a Shiite king, though not all of them did.

Meanwhile, Pan-Arabism outside Iran reached its peak until its humiliating defeat by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. However, the defeat of the Arabs became a prominent excuse for Iran's Shah to adjust his relations with Israel and strengthen his alliance with the West. However, Islamist movements and some leftists condemned the Shah for his policies regarding Israel, which caused a significant rift between the nation and the state. By this historical episode, both Iran and Israel had developed classic military capabilities, but Israel was able to achieve the technology to build the atomic bomb with the support of America. In the third and final episode, the Islamic Revolution soon came to shift its ire from the fleeing king to Israel. The slogan of Imam Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Revolution, was the removal of Israel, which he introduced as a fundamental foreign policy strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the Islamic world. Years later, we are gradually witnessing the conflict between the two religious ideological forces coming to a head.

The most important battlegrounds of this conflict were on two separate layers: regional recruits and military technology. As two warring countries that do not share borders, Israel and Iran need to master both layers for the final battle. Israel, which has the full support of the West as well as a handful of countries in the East, adopted a policy of de-escalation and normalization of relations with Iran's neighbors, successfully playing a role in regional crises such as the Karabakh war. Despite Iran's opposition, Israel was able to estab-



FINANCIAL TIMES



Motorists drive past a billboard depicting various Iranian-made ballistic missiles in service, in Tehran, Iran, on April 15, 2024. ATTA KENARE/AFP



Israeli military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari displays to the media one of the Iranian ballistic missiles Israel allegedly intercepted, in Julis army base, southern Israel, on April 16, 2024. ARIEL SCHALIT/AP

lish friendly relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, especially with the latter. It cannot be denied that siding with Israel provides the best opportunity and advantage for regional countries to achieve the highest technologies due to its integration into Western civilization, although Iran also seeks to do the same despite Western sanctions. Contrary to Israel's regional recruitment policy, Iran has always tried to keep its backed groups, like Hezbollah and Hamas, battle-ready against the enemy, especially in the face of the failure to unite the countries of the region against Israel. Indeed, all of the confrontational elements have, for the most part, created conditions that made direct battles between the two sides avoidable. However, October 7 and its subsequent events changed the entire playbook.

Technology, broken taboo

In the entire history of the Iran-Israel hostility, the arrangement of the military forces of the two sides has always been in such a way as to prevent a direct military confrontation between the two sides. But in Iran's Operation True Promise of April 14, 2024, this taboo was broken.

Certainly, Israel's decision to eliminate the military wings of Hamas and Hezbollah ignited the fire of direct conflict. Technological advancements on both sides are enabling direct military conflict in new forms, such as drone or missile strikes, although neither side has engaged in full-scale conflict, yet. It seems that the trust of both sides in their high level of technological capabilities has played an important role in the initiation of direct warfare between them. However, due to the geographical distance, both sides are trying to use their most advanced war machines in battle. We see the significant role of technology, rather than human resources, in encouraging the initiation of direct war. Additionally, both sides strive to utilize the best technologies to reduce their human losses.

It can be concluded that Israel has been able to seriously damage the military arm of the resistance in the region by relying on its bunker-buster bombs — to destroy the tunnels dug by Hamas and Hezbollah — and other smart military technologies. On the other hand, Iran, using its missile and drone technology, is considering launching more direct attack on Israel to change the tide for its backed groups in the fight against Israel.

Although technology has paved the way for direct combat, this does not mean that technology, instead of the leaders of the two fronts, decides whether the war efforts should be continued or not.

US's long history of destabilizing Iran



By Seraj Assi
Palestinian author

PERSPECTIVE

For a year since last October, US leaders have cheered on Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza, even as the genocide there — funded and armed by the United States — has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, roughly half of them women and children. The cheers have continued as Israel has expanded its bombardments to, now, three other Arab countries: Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria. Still unsatisfied, some are now rooting for Israel to bomb Iran. Joe Biden had been reportedly "discussing" the prospect of an Israeli attack on Iran's oil fields, the lifeline of the Iranian economy, which has been languishing under a devastating US embargo for decades. Following Iran's missile barrage into Israel, carried out in retaliation for Israel's assassinations of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris called Iran a "destabilizing, dangerous force" in the Middle East, opening a new chapter in a long history of US hawkishness against Iran. Then, she went even further, calling Iran the United States' "greatest adversary".

Long, violent history

For those familiar with this history, it's hard to hear such statements without hearkening back to New Year's Eve, 1977, a year before the Iranian Revolution broke out. In the heat of growing civil unrest in Iran, US president Jimmy Carter attended a lavish state dinner with the Shah of Iran Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, where Carter toasted, "Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world."

Ironically, the toasts were preceded by a long US history of destabilizing Iran — a history marred with covert operations and clandestine interventions. Twenty-four years earlier, during "Operation Ajax," the CIA, in collaboration with the British MI6, had orchestrated a coup that ousted the democratically elected Iranian prime minister Mohammed Mossadeq, who had won on a platform of nationalizing Iranian oil and taking it back from Western control. The coup set into motion the destruction of the country's budding democracy and would haunt Iranians for decades to come. Starting in the late 1940s, in the heat of the Cold War, the Harry Truman administration embraced the young Shah as an important partner in the emerging anti-Soviet alliance in the Middle East, despite mounting Iranian resentment of the Shah's corruption and his reckless sales of Iran's resources to foreign companies to finance his lavish lifestyle. The Shah's spending spree led him to sell exclusive rights to Iran's oil and natural gas to Western multinational oil companies, mainly the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), which exploited Iranians and exported millions of barrels of oil that made fabulous profits while paying Iran virtually nothing.

Resentment of the Shah soon gave rise to popular dissent. In October 1949, Mossadeq, a longtime critic of the Pahlavi dynasty and a vocal advocate for Iran's right to control its own oil industry, founded the National Front, a broad coalition that included both middle-class moderates and members of the left-wing Tudeh Party. Mossadeq and his allies soon held the balance of power in the Iranian parliament, known as the Majles, where they ran on the platform of sharing oil profits between Iran and AIOC, citing the example of other multinational oil firms operating in Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

Backed by the British government, AIOC refused to compromise. The Majles responded by nationalizing the Iranian oil industry. Shortly after, Mossadeq was elected prime minister, and immediately announced plans to wrest control of Iran's oil fields and refineries from the UK.

The West was quick to retaliate. When Mossadeq moved forward with nationalization, the British and US governments joined forces to press the Shah to oust

his new prime minister, threatening an international embargo on Iranian oil, while secretly planning a coup in Tehran. President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave his blessing to the plan. The coup architects were US secretary of state John Foster Dulles, a rabid anti-communist who dismissed Mossadeq as a Russian stooge and "madman," and Allen Dulles, the new CIA director, who had close ties with MI6, the British intelligence service, and was an enthusiast for covert operations against nations he deemed vulnerable to Soviet subversion or takeover. Kermit Roosevelt, a grandson of Theodore Roosevelt and a veteran CIA covert operator, was dispatched to Tehran to oversee the plan.

US and British agents carried out what they branded as a "countercoup" against the newly elected government, which entailed distributing lavish bribes to mobilize hundreds of pro-Shah mercenaries, who stormed into the streets chanting anti-government slogans and staged violent clashes with Mossadeq's supporters. Meanwhile, Western-friendly general Fazlollah Zahedi and right-wing military officers, along with the Iranian secret police, known as SAVAK, moved to restore order and crack down on dissent, rounding up Tudeh Party militants, arresting Mossadeq, and reinstating the Shah.

Just the beginning

In the name of fighting Communism, the United States helped sabotage a thriving democracy in the Middle East. To cite American historian Douglas Little: "Having convinced themselves that Iran was about to fall to communism, Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers had encouraged pro-American forces to overthrow a democratically elected Iranian leader and place an increasingly autocratic ruler back on the Peacock Throne."

The 1953 coup, known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup d'état, was a prelude to a long history of US covert regime change operations against democratically elected leaders across the Global South. Two decades later, in Chile, the United States infamously conspired to overthrow the elected socialist president Salvador Allende, helping usher in an authoritarian right-wing dictatorship.

In Iran, the 1953 coup was just the beginning. As Iranian resentment against the Shah grew, the United States responded

with a new covert operation in Iran in the early 1960s. Shortly after his inauguration, John F. Kennedy hatched his own plan to counter civil unrest in Iran: a "White Revolution". In April 1962, Kennedy, fresh off the Bay of Pigs debacle, invited Shah Pahlavi to Washington, where the two leaders reviewed a "blueprint for stability in Iran". Nine months later, the Shah unveiled his White Revolution, a package of modernizing, "top-down" reforms designed to avert radical "bottom-up" change along the lines of Fidel Castro's Red Revolution in Cuba. In the spring of 1963, US Peace Corps volunteers descended on Iran to preach American modernization, and as hundreds of US corporations began investing in the Shah's "economic miracle," millions of barrels of oil flowed from Iran to the United States' Cold War allies in Asia and Western Europe.

Meanwhile, Iranian opposition leaders,

the United States would permit the Shah to purchase non-nuclear weapon systems from the US arsenal, including helicopter gunships, jet fighters, and guided-missile frigates.

The Shah embraced the new Nixon Doctrine with enthusiasm, embarking on lavish purchases of \$13 billion worth of US military hardware from the increased revenue generated by skyrocketing oil prices following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the Arab oil embargo. But the oil boom only alienated the Iranian middle and working classes, who viewed with growing disdain the Shah's wasteful spending on US arms. Riots erupted in the streets of Iran and were met with a brutal crackdown by the Shah, with the US blessing.

From his exile in Iraq, the increasingly popular Ayatollah Khomeini condemned the bloodshed, calling for the overthrow of the US-backed tyrant. The Iranian Revolution

weapons and aircraft, military intelligence, and billions of dollars of credit. This did not prevent Reagan from illegally approving an "arms for hostages" deal with the Ayatollah Khomeini government in the scandal widely known as the Iran-Contra affair.

The Iran-Iraq war ended in a stalemate. Emboldened by his US partnership, Hussein invaded Kuwait three years later, and the United States was soon fighting its former ally and new pariah in Iraq.

Locked in hostility

Since then, US policy toward Iran has been marred by past grievances and locked in ahistorical hostility. Not to be upstaged by his predecessors, Bill Clinton adopted a policy of "dual containment," which employed crippling economic sanctions and preemptive military threats to weaken Iran, culminating in signing into law the Iran and Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 (ILSA). Meanwhile, Iranian leaders attempted to mend bridges with the United States with a series of goodwill gestures. In May 1997, Iranians elected Islamic moderate and reformist Mohammad Khatami as president, who would extend an olive branch to the United States, only to be met with the Clinton administration's deep animosity and suspicion, and its unwavering demands that Iran end its nuclear research program, as expressed in the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000.

Under George W. Bush, neoconservatives made destabilizing Iran an official policy, again despite Iranian outreach. Hours after 9/11 unfolded, Khatami sent condolences to Bush, while thousands of young Iranians held a candlelight vigil in the streets of Tehran. Bush responded by branding Iran a terrorist regime and a member of "the Axis of Evil," along with Iraq and North Korea. (Or the "Curse," in Benjamin Netanyahu's newest version, which includes Gaza and Lebanon.)

When, 14 months later, US troops invaded Iraq to depose Saddam Hussein, it was Khatami's turn to condemn the United States. Some of Bush's top advisers, including vice president Dick Cheney, privately welcomed the prospect of an Israeli preemptive strike against Iran's Bushehr nuclear complex, and even plotted regime change in Tehran. Unsatisfied with his wanton destruction of Iraq, Bush himself would order the Pentagon to plan an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, as the former president boasts in his memoirs.

By persistently opting for economic punishment and seeking military solutions to weaken the country, the United States has always gotten it wrong on Iran — whether it was the CIA overthrowing the democratically elected prime minister Mossadeq; or Carter giving refuge to the authoritarian Shah; or Reagan sending weapons to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War; or George W. Bush rebuffing an Iran nuclear deal, or Donald Trump sabotaging Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran and carrying out the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, or the Biden administration warmongering against Iran in a time of mounting regional conflict, stoking the flames of a wider war — on top of sending thousands more US troops to the region and securing a \$8.7 billion military aid package for Israel.

The United States has worked to destabilize Iran for nearly a century. With the Democratic presidential nominee once again trotting out hawkish tirades against Iran while backing Israel's new assault on Lebanon, American officials seem to have learned nothing from history.

The article first appeared on Jacobin.



⬆ Demonstrators wave sticks as protests break out across Iran as part of a coup orchestrated by the CIA and British intelligence to overthrow the democratically elected Iranian prime minister Mohammad Mosaddeq on August 19, 1953.
● AFP

led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, mocked the Shah as an American puppet and denounced the US-backed reforms as "Westoxification" (Gharbzadegi in Persian). By the late 1960s, US officials believed Iran was basking in the Shah's White Revolution. They cheered as the Shah clamped down on dissent, while toasting his decision to exile Ayatollah Khomeini, who they saw as nothing but an "annoying Islamic rabble-rouser".

In came Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Desperate to boost US expansion in the Middle East and get out of the Vietnam quagmire, the Nixon administration eyed monarchical Iran as a US proxy. In 1972, the pair visited Tehran, where they presented the Shah with their "Nixon doctrine": in exchange for the United States' help in ensuring political stability in Iran,

was soon underway.

On January 16, 1979, Shah Pahlavi boarded a Boeing 707 at Tehran's Mehrabad airport and headed, after a brief stop in Egypt, for exile in the United States. For many Iranians, giving refuge to the Shah was a bitter reminder of the CIA's conspiracy to overthrow Mossadeq: The United States, it seemed, was a rogue superpower that rewarded reviled tyrants and punished legitimately elected leaders.

After Revolution

Two weeks after the Shah fled, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran for the first time after 15 years in exile, promising to establish an Islamic Republic and vowing to cleanse the country of all remaining influence of "the Great Satan". Yet the United States continued to wallow in denialism. US elites rarely bothered to understand Islamist political movements or Ayatollah Khomeini's particular brand of Shi'ism. They never acknowledged that festering anti-American sentiments in Iran were not religious or cultural in origin, or the product of a "clash of civilization" or some other ahistorical nonsense but had roots in the United States' long history of meddling in the country and its support of the Shah's dictatorship. When Ronald Reagan took office in 1980, Iran had been locked in an increasingly bloody war with Iraq, which lasted for eight years and claimed half a million lives, most of them Iranians. Eager to settle old scores with Iran, the Reagan administration sided with Iraq, providing Saddam Hussein with



People walk past an anti-Illuminati, anti-US mural on the former US embassy's wall in Tehran, Iran, on January 3, 2020.
● NAZANIN TABATABAEE/WANA

Rangraz tips Geraei to flourish in new weight class

Sports Desk

Iran's Greco-Roman wrestling head coach, Hassan Rangraz, is confident Mohammadreza Geraei will excel in the new weight class despite his latest setback at the World Championships. Geraei, who missed out on defending his Olympic title after a defeat against Saeid Esmaili in the Iranian 67kg trials for the Paris Games in August, moved up to the 72kg class but got off to a disappointing start to the new chapter of his career.

Chasing a fourth successive world medal in last week's competition in Tirana, Geraei fell to a shock 11-3 loss to Benji Peak in the first round and finished his campaign empty-handed, though many believe some contentious decisions by the referees cost the former world champion dearly against the American underdog.

"This was Geraei's first international event in the 72kg class. There is no doubt he had technical flaws against the American wrestler, but let's not forget that he already has four precious world and Olympic medals under his belt and remains highly motivated to succeed in the new category," Rangraz told ISNA.

"It might have been a bit too late, but he still made the



Iran's Mohammadreza Geraei (red) is in action against American Benji Peak in the Greco-Roman 72kg contests of the Wrestling World Championships in Tirana, Albania, on Oct. 28, 2024.
● UWW

right decision to change the weight class and I'm confident he has much more to offer in the future World Championships before gradually moving to the 77kg class for the next Olympic Games," added the Iranian head coach, who believes Geraei will face stiff competition from up-and-coming Iranian wrestlers in the 72kg class, including former world under-23 champion Danial Sohrabi.

Unlike his younger brother, Mohammadali Geraei, who also moved up to a new class for the World Championships, will look back on the competitions in the Albanian capital with great joy.

A three-time world bronze medalist prior to the event, Geraei, 30, walked away with the ultimate prize of the 82kg contests in emphatic fashion, storming to a 9-0 victory over Hungarian Erik Szilvassy in the final.

Geraei must fill lucky to have had a shot at a fourth world medal.

In November last year, the United World Wrestling banned him for 12 months due to an incident in last year's World Championships, when he threw a bottle of mineral water on the mat during his brother's last-eight clash, presumably trying to buy Mohammadreza some time to restore stamina against

Japanese wrestler Kyotaro Sogabe, before the Iranian held on to win 11-10. However, the international governing body of the sport went on to lift the ban in February, though Geraei still failed to make a late tilt at a place in the Summer Olympics.

"Mohammadali endured a tough couple of years but all the patience paid off as he achieved his goal. I was always worried he would

suffer the same fate as [former Iranian freestyle wrestler] Reza Yazdani, who despite his great merits, never won an Olympic medal," Rangraz said.

"I'm thrilled to see him finally get what he deserved. Mohammadali had a world title and an Olympic medal missing in his collection, and thank God he added one of them to his medal haul. We will definitely come up with the right plan to prepare

him for the Olympics in four-years' time."

Pouria Dadmarz and Iman Mohammadi were the other two Greco-Roman Iranians in action at the World Championships - featuring four non-Olympic categories - with the former settling for the 55kg silver, while the latter was knocked out in the 63kg quarterfinals.

"I was glad to see Dadmarz improve on his world bronze in last year's competitions. He has a bright prospect for the next four years, given his performance in Tirana. He gave it his all in the final but just couldn't get the better of [four-time world champion] Eldaniz Azizli of Azerbaijan," Rangraz said of the former world junior champion.

"Mohammadi also deserved to finish on the podium. I think the referee should have been more decisive in his last-eight bout [against Russian Sadyk Lalaev]. Iman has a great body for an amateur wrestler but he still struggles when he is in a par terre position, which is an area he needs to work on."

AFC Champions League Two: Sepahan defeat Sharjah to keep knockout hopes alive

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan defeated Emirati side Sharjah FC 3-1 in Doha to revive hopes of progressing to the knockout phase of the AFC Champions League Two. The much-needed victory saw the Iranian top-flight side close the gap on second-placed Sharjah to one point in Group C and remain four points adrift of Jordan's Al Wehdah SC, which beat Istiklol of Tajikistan 1-0 at home.

It will now be a three-way battle for the top two spots in the group with two rounds of fixtures to spare.

Playing in a first game under interim coach Hugo Almeida since Jose Morais's departure, Sepahan started right on the front foot and found the breakthrough in the 12th minute, when Iran international center-back Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi headed home on a Mohammad Karimi's pinpoint corner kick delivery.

Arya Yousefi's side-footed strike from inside the box doubled Sepahan's lead in the third minute of added time in the first half, before Sharjah pulled one back through Brazilian substitute Luan Pereira, whose low drive went past Sepahan keeper Payam Niazmand on the

hour mark. Sharjah continued to push for the equalizer but Sepahan managed to hold on and restore the two-goal cushion through Javad Aqaiepour in the first minute of added time to walk away with maximum points. Next in the group for Sepahan is a crucial game against Al Wehdah on November 26.

▶ Arya Yousefi (14) celebrates Sepahan's second goal with teammates in a 3-1 win against Sharjah FC in the AFC Champions League Two in Doha, Qatar, on Nov. 5, 2024.
● AFC



▶ Sporting head coach Rúben Amorim is thrown up in the air by his players after the 4-1 victory over Manchester City in the UEFA Champions League in Lisbon, Portugal, on Nov. 5, 2024.
● PEDRO NUNES/REUTERS

United cannot play the way Sporting do, warns Amorim

THE GUARDIAN - Rúben Amorim said Sporting's 4-1 rout of Manchester City was a dream way to sign off in his last home game as head coach but warned that when taking over Manchester United he cannot be as "defensive" as the Portuguese champions.

After Phil Foden opened the scoring, Viktor Gyökeres's hat-trick and a Maximiliano Araújo strike handed City a first Champions League loss of the season. Yet Amorim was clear the result will mean nothing when he starts at United next week.

"We cannot transport one reality to another," he said. "United cannot play the way we play, they cannot be so defensive. Of course it's good to beat City. But I'll be living in a different world, we'll

have to start from a different point." He was asked if this was a dream manner to sign off. "Yes. I couldn't ask for anything better, it was a very important moment for all. But we had the luck - this was a one off."

Before the game Amorim quipped that some United fans would view him as the "new Ferguson" if Sporting beat their great rivals. "I was playing with words when I said that I am not going to read anything for six months," said Amorim. "I am going to focus on the team."

At the end the 39-year-old was given a rapturous reception from the home supporters and the bumps from his players. "I thanked everyone for the win," he said. "If we hadn't won the match, the moment wouldn't be so nice. It was bet-

ter with a win over City." "I wasn't expecting to be raised in the air, I know what I did for them, and what they did for me. I will keep these memories with me for ever. The most important moment for me was when we lost 5-0 to City [two years ago] and everyone applauded."

Pep Guardiola struck a defiant note. "It's a difficult moment, but I'm here and want to fight, I like these moments. I don't want to give up," City's manager said. "You cannot say much when you lose 4-1. Emotionally we were not stable enough. Emotionally we have to be more stable."

"It is what it is. Now it is difficult, but I want to fight and not give up. There is a challenge ahead of me."

Trump trumps Harris to take US helm in stunning comeback

International Desk

Donald Trump was elected US president, capping a remarkable comeback four years after he was voted out of the White House and ushering in a new American leadership likely to test democratic institutions at home and relations abroad. Trump, 78, recaptured the White House on Wednesday by securing more than the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the presidency, Edison Research projected, following a campaign of dark rhetoric that deepened the polarization in the country, Reuters reported. The former president's victory in the swing state of Wisconsin pushed him over the threshold. As of 5:45 a.m. ET (1045 GMT) Trump had won 279 electoral votes to Harris' 223 with several states yet to be counted. He also led Harris by about 5 million votes in the popular count. "America has given us an unprecedented and powerful mandate," Trump said early on Wednesday to a roaring crowd of supporters at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in Florida. Trump's political career had appeared to be over after his false claims of election fraud led a mob of supporters to storm the

US Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, in a failed bid to overturn his 2020 defeat. But he swept away challengers inside his Republican Party and then beat Democratic candidate Kamala Harris by capitalizing on voter concerns about high prices and what Trump claimed, without evidence, was a rise in crime due to illegal immigration. Harris did not speak to supporters who had gathered at her alma mater Howard University. Her campaign co-chair, Cedric Richmond, briefly addressed the crowd after midnight, saying Harris would speak publicly later on Wednesday. Republicans won a US Senate majority, but neither party appeared to have an edge in the fight for control of the House of Representatives where Republicans currently hold a narrow majority. Major stock markets around the world rallied following Trump's victory, and the dollar was set for its biggest one-day jump since 2020.

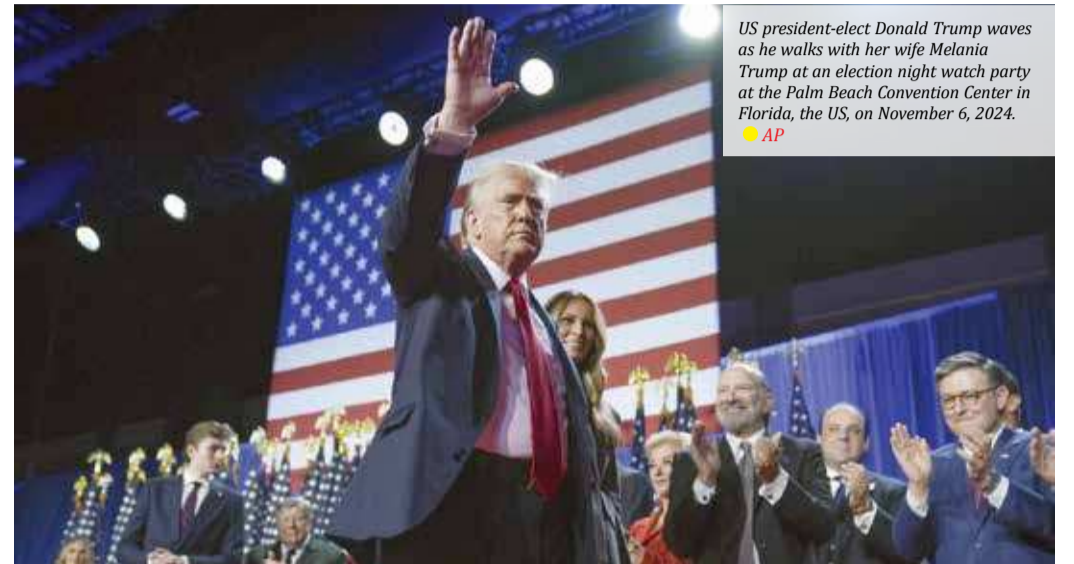
Economic problems

Voters identified jobs and the economy as the country's most pressing problem, according to Reuters/Ipsos opinion polls. Many Americans remained frustrated by higher prices

even amid record-high stock markets, fast-growing wages and low unemployment. With the administration of President Joe Biden taking much of the blame, a majority of voters said they trusted Trump more than Harris to address the issue. Hispanics, traditionally Democratic voters, and lower-income households hit hardest by inflation helped fuel Trump's election victory. His loyal base of rural, white and non-college educated voters again showed up in force. Trump prevailed despite persistently low approval ratings. Impeached twice, he has been criminally indicted four times and found civilly liable for sexual abuse and defamation. His victory will have major implications for US trade and climate change policies, the war in Ukraine, Americans' taxes and immigration.

Trade war with China, allies

His tariff proposals could spark a fiercer trade war with China and US allies, while his pledges to reduce corporate taxes and implement a spate of new cuts could balloon US debt, economists say. Trump has promised to launch a mass deportation campaign targeting immigrants in the country illegally.



US president-elect Donald Trump waves as he walks with her wife Melania Trump at an election night watch party at the Palm Beach Convention Center in Florida, the US, on November 6, 2024. AP

He has said he wants the authority to fire civil servants he views as disloyal. His opponents fear he will turn the Justice Department and other federal law enforcement agencies into political weapons to investigate perceived enemies.

A second Trump presidency could drive a bigger wedge between Democrats and Republicans on issues such as race, gender, what and how children are taught, and reproductive rights. Vice President Harris fell short in her 15-week sprint as a candidate, failing to galvanize enough support to defeat

Trump, who occupied the White House from 2017-2021, or to allay voters' concerns about the economy and immigration. Harris had warned that Trump wanted unchecked presidential power and posed a danger to democracy.

Nearly three-quarters of voters say American democracy is under threat, according to Edison Research exit polls, underscoring the polarization in a nation where divisions have only grown starker during a fiercely competitive race.

Trump ran a campaign characterized by apocalyptic language.

He called the United States a "garbage can" for immigrants, pledged to save the economy from "obliteration" and cast some rivals as the "enemy within." His diatribes were often aimed at migrants, who he said were "poisoning the blood of the country," or Harris, whom he frequently derided as unintelligent. Despite legal woes and controversies, Trump is only the second former president to win a second term after leaving the White House. The first was Grover Cleveland, who served two four-year terms starting in 1885 and 1893.

No matter who leads US as Iran has pre-planning in place: Gov't

International Desk

Iran's government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani said it does not matter who becomes the US president because all the necessary planings have been made in advance in Iran. Mohajerani made the remarks hours before the announcement of the victory of Donald Trump in the 2024 US presidential election. She told reporters on Wednesday that Iran does not see any difference between Trump and his election rival Kamala

Harris. "The election of the US president has nothing to do with us. The general policies of the US and Iran are constant," she said. "More than four decades of sanctions have made Iran hardened and we are not worried about Trump's re-election," she said. "Basically, we do not see any difference between these two people [Trump and Harris]. Sanctions have strengthened Iran's internal power and we have the power to deal with new sanctions." The US, under then-pres-



ident Trump, unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from a nuclear accord signed in 2015 with Iran and imposed a series of illegal sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Trump officially became the 47th US president on Wednesday, securing a second non-consecutive term nearly four years after he left the White House following a major defeat to his Democratic rival Joe Biden.

Israelis protest after Netanyahu fires defense minister

Protests erupted in Israel after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired his Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Netanyahu said a "crisis of trust" between the two leaders led to his decision, adding that his trust in Gallant had "eroded" in recent months and Foreign Minister Israel Katz would step in to replace him. Gallant said his removal was due to disagreement on three issues, including his belief that it is possible to get the remaining captives back from Gaza if Israel makes "painful concessions" which it "can bear," BBC reported. Many protesters on the streets were calling for Netanyahu to resign, and demanding the new de-

fense minister to prioritize a captive deal. Netanyahu and Gallant have long had a divisive working relationship. During the past year, there have been reports of shouting matches between the two men over Israel's war strategy. The former defense minister has also been unhappy with plans to continue to allow Israel's Ultra-Orthodox citizens to be exempt from serving in the military. Months before the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023, Netanyahu had fired Gallant over political differences, before reinstating him following major public outcry. But on Tuesday Netanyahu said, "In the midst of a



war, more than ever, full trust is required between the prime minister and the minister of defense." He said although there had been trust and "fruitful work" in the first months of the war, "during the last months this trust cracked." Around 100 captives out of 251 taken by Hamas on October 7, 2023 remain unaccounted for more than a year into the war. His replacement Katz is seen as even more hawkish in terms of military strategy.

Battlefield, not political action will end war: Hezbollah chief



International Desk

Hezbollah's new chief said on Wednesday that only one thing will end the conflict between the resistance movement and Israel, which is the battlefield not political action. "What will stop this... war is the battlefield," Sheikh Naim Qassem said in a speech on Wednesday. Qassem said the steps taken by Israel aimed at defeating Hezbollah and occupying Lebanon will not succeed due to Hezbollah's resilience and commitment

to defending homeland. "We have tens of thousands of trained resistance combatants" ready to fight, Qassem said. He also said nowhere in Israel would be "off-limits" to the group's attacks. Qassem also stated that Hezbollah has been preparing for such confrontations since the 2006 July war, enhancing their training, armament, and operational capabilities. Regarding possible cease-fire negotiations, he said there will be a road to indirect negotiations through the Lebanese state when Israel stops its aggression. Referring to US presidential election, Qassem said the results of the US presidential election will have no impact on any possible cease-fire deal. "We don't base our expectations for a halt of the aggression on political developments... Whether (Kamala) Harris wins

or (Donald) Trump wins, it means nothing to us," he said in a pre-recorded speech before Trump's win was announced. The speech was Qassem's second since he was named Hezbollah secretary-general last week. He replaced the movement's decades-long chief Hassan Nasrallah, who was assassinated in a massive Israeli strike on the group's south Beirut bastion. Israel has also been targeting Lebanon since October 2023, when it launched the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Lebanon's Hezbollah has been responding to the aggression with retaliatory operations. Since then, more than 3,500 people have been killed in Israeli bombardment. Almost two-thirds of them have been killed since Israel intensified its air aggression on Lebanon six weeks ago.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran's reading habits surpass global average: *Official*



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Despite the publication of various statistics in recent years suggesting that Iran's reading culture and book-reading habits fall short of global standards, Mehdi Ramezani, the secretary-general of the Iran Public Libraries Foundation (IPF), remains optimistic, believing that the Iranian people's inclination to read books surpasses global norms.

The 32nd National Book Week of the Islamic Republic of Iran, themed "Reading for Empathy", is set to take place from November 13 to 20. Every year, during this week, the media and public attention focus on the state of reading and book culture among Iranians.

Regarding per capita reading in Iran, conflicting statistics have been presented, with estimates ranging from 2 to 70 minutes per day. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, several comprehensive studies have cited varying numbers, including 15 minutes, 18 minutes, 21 minutes, and 30 minutes. However, the most recent official statistics on reading in Iran, recorded by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) in 2010, indicate that individuals aged 15 and above spend

an average of 4 hours per month reading non-academic books (excluding the Qur'an and prayer books), while the total per capita reading time for non-academic books is 6 hours and 32 minutes per month.

According to the latest available global statistics on reading per capita, India tops the list with an average reading time of 10 hours and 42 minutes per week, followed by China, Egypt, Russia, and France.

The Tehran Statistical Center reports that the daily per capita reading time in the capital is 16 minutes and 36 seconds, and 1 hour and 54 minutes per week. Other studies cite 18 minutes per week, while some mention 12 minutes per day, which includes "books, newspapers, prayers, and other materials." Official statements from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Iran Public Libraries Foundation have also referenced a per capita reading time of around 30 minutes.

Despite the less-than-ideal statistics, Mehdi Ramezani, Secretary-General of the Iran Public Libraries Foundation, remains upbeat about the state of book reading in Iran, believing that the Iranian people are genuinely interested in books and reading. Iran Daily reporter sat down with Ramezani for an exclusive interview on the topic of books and reading in Iran. The full text of the interview follows:



IRAN DAILY: We've often come across the notion that Iranians aren't big on reading, but what's your take on this issue?

RAMEZANI: Yes, it's become a common assumption that Iranians aren't keen on books, but our scientific studies tell a different story. In a survey recently conducted by the Iran Public Libraries Foundation in collaboration with the Iranian Students Polling Agency (ISPA) affiliated with the University of Tehran, book reading has

really taken off in Iran, with many people showing a genuine interest in getting into it. Based on this, a proposition was examined regarding visiting books, and if a book is available to someone, what percentage of people will go and read it. This survey has been conducted internationally, and the average number is around 40%, but our survey in Iran shows that this number is above 60%. This shows that Iranians are eager to read, but the problem is that books are out of reach for many. We need to break down barriers and make books more accessible to all. Plus, cultivating a reading culture in the country demands a serious commitment to nurturing a love of reading, which we must drive forward.

What measures have been implemented to build a reading culture in Iran?

We're convinced that schools

are the ideal platform to instill a love of reading, and we've devised a plan to address this issue. We've been pushing forward with this idea, and a notable achievement is the creation of the National Reading and Promoting Useful Reading Document, which has been approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. We're optimistic that this document will be put into action soon, during National Book Week, and will be a major step forward in promoting books and reading across the country. Although the document covers several facets of reading promotion, we're of the opinion that integrating reading into school curricula is the most crucial aspect, and we must see this initiative through to its conclusion in schools.

It seems that you're pushing back against the claim made by some Iranian institutions

that the per capita reading ratio in Iran is relatively low. Can you elaborate on that?

Many countries have not released per capita reading ratios for their populations, and even if they were to do so, it would be necessary for the data to be compiled by authoritative institutions, taking into account the specific conditions of each country. For instance, reading philosophical texts is a far cry from reading novels or simpler books, and all these variables need to be factored into assessing the reading habits of a society. It's only natural that reading a philosophical text requires more time and a higher level of academic background. In my view, per capita reading ratios are not a reliable indicator of a population's reading habits and book-reading frequency. I think it's a mistake to focus on this metric, and instead, we should be working to cultivate a culture of

book-reading and inculcate a love of reading in our society. This is our responsibility, and we will continue to pursue it. Of course, we still have a long way to go to reach the ideal level of book reading envisioned by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, but I believe the narrative that Iranians are not book-lovers is not entirely accurate.

Given the steady rise in paper prices, book prices have also been creeping up. How significant a factor do you believe this is in deterring people from reading books?

While the issue of high book prices is certainly a challenge, it can be mitigated by making books widely available through public libraries. We're currently pushing forward with the idea that every city in the country should have a library. At present, over 200 cities out of more than 1,000 are with-

out a library, which is a pressing concern that needs to be addressed. We've also been championing this cause in government, and we've made it a top priority to develop libraries across the country. However, it's not necessary to build new libraries from scratch; we can leverage existing resources to tackle this issue and fill the gap. Another key strategy for promoting a reading culture in the country, particularly in disadvantaged areas, villages, and nomadic regions, is the establishment of mobile libraries. We've developed a model for this, and it can be implemented through partnerships with car manufacturers, who can contribute to this initiative as part of their social responsibility. Abbas Salehi, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, has also been in touch with the Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade on this matter, and it's being actively pursued.

Iran's 'The Sound of Cloud' wins top award at Italy's Marano festival

Iranian short animation "The Sound of Cloud", directed by Mohammad Lotfali and written and produced by Hadi Firouzmandi, won the top animation award at the 27th Marano Children's Film Festival (MARANO RAGAZZI SPOT FESTIVAL) held in Marano di Napoli, Italy from October 21-26.

This achievement marks another international success for the film, which has also been selected to compete in the 3rd Arlington International Film Festival (AIFF) in the United States. The AIFF will take place in Massachusetts from November 7-10, 2024. The Arlington International Film Festival



is a reputable organization that aims to promote cross-cultural understanding through the screening of independent films and exploration of the lives of people around the world.

Iranian Oscar hopeful 'In the Arms of the Tree' to compete in US

Iranian film 'In the Arms of the Tree', directed by Babak Khajeh Pasha, was selected to compete in the Main Competition section of the 10th Asian World Film Festival (AWFF) in the United States.

This year's festival will take place from November 13 to 21 in Los Angeles, California.

According to ISNA, the film will be screened in the main competition section, vying for top awards including the Snow Leopard Award for Best Film.

The movie features a cast including Maral Baniadam, Javad Ghamati, Rouhollah Zamani, Ahura Lotfi, and Ryan Lotfi.

'In the Arms of the Tree' has also been chosen as Iran's official representative in the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards. The AWFF aims to introduce the best of Asian cinema to Los Angeles, promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration between Asian film industries and Hollywood. The festival, which is supported by diverse Asian



communities in Los Angeles and independent film enthusiasts, showcases films from over 50 Asian countries, including Turkey, Japan, Russia, and India.