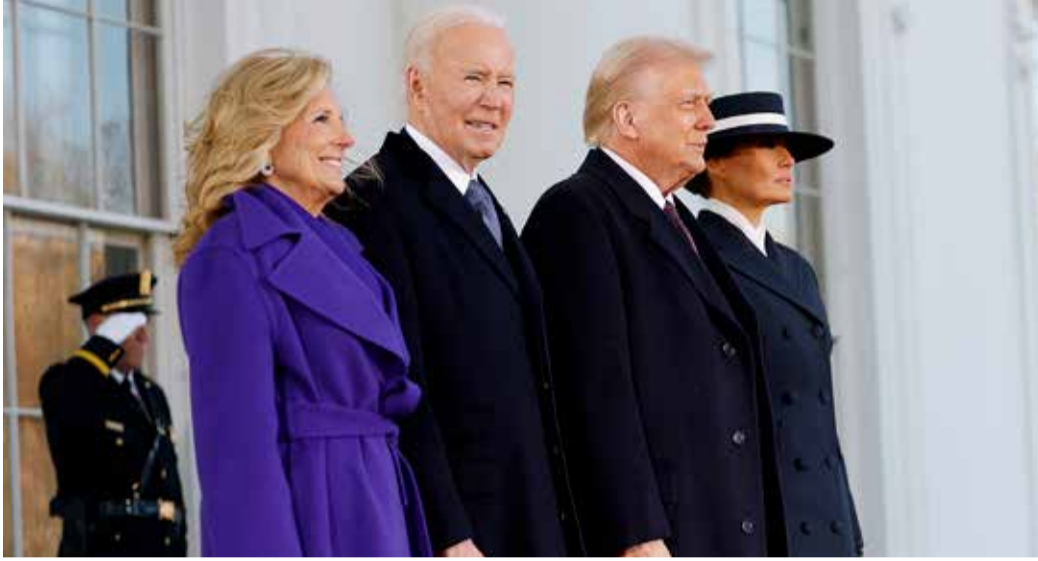


Iran says hopes Trump will take 'realistic' approach to West Asia



Former US president Joe Biden (2nd L) and US President Donald Trump (3rd L) stand together ahead of Trump's inauguration at the White House in Washington, DC on January 20, 2025. **ANDREW HARNIK/AFP**

Iran said Monday it hoped the incoming US administration under Donald Trump would adopt a "realistic" approach and show "respect" for the interests of countries in the region.

"We hope that the approaches and policies of the (new) US government will be realistic and based on international law and respect for the interests and desires of the nations of the region,

including the Iranian nation," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei during a weekly press briefing. Trump was sworn in as the US president on Monday.

Baqaei lambasted the outgoing administration of Joe Biden over its support for Israel in its war with Hamas. He also said Biden's administration had failed to "show any seriousness" in reviving the nuclear deal with Iran. During his first term, Trump pursued a policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran, withdrawing the United States from a 2015 landmark nuclear deal which imposed curbs on its nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. Tehran adhered to the deal until Washington's withdrawal in 2018, but then began rolling back its commitments. Efforts to revive

the pact have since faltered. The deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), provided for the snapback mechanism which allowed signatories to reimpose United Nations sanctions on Iran in cases of the "significant non-performance" of commitments. The option to trigger the mechanism expires in October this year. Baqaei warned of a "proportionate and reciprocal" response if the mechanism was triggered. "Abusing this mechanism will mean that there will no longer be a justification or reason for Iran to remain in some relevant agreements," he said. Iranian diplomats have previously warned that Tehran would "withdraw" from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if the mechanism was triggered. Britain, France and Germany, the three European parties to the nuclear deal, had previously told the United Nations Security Council

that they are ready - if necessary - to trigger the so-called "snap back" of all international sanctions on Iran to prevent the country from acquiring a nuclear weapon. They will lose the ability to take such action on October 18 next year when a 2015 UN resolution expires. The resolution enshrines Iran's deal with Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and China that lifted sanctions on Tehran in exchange for restrictions on its nuclear program. Last week, Iran held discreet nuclear talks with the three countries, known as the E3, which both sides described as "frank and constructive." Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi later said European powers appeared serious about finding ways to revive nuclear negotiations, adding that it was not clear whether the Trump administration "intends to return to the negotiations."

Pezeshkian lauds Palestinian resistance, victory against Israel

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated the people of the Gaza Strip on their victory in the face of the Israeli regime's ferocious 15-month-long war of genocide. "We congratulate the resisting people of Gaza and Palestine on the occasion of this victory. They stood up to Israel with strength and esteem, and attained this great achievement," the chief executive said during a meeting on Monday. "This resisting people taught other nations how they should stand up to terrorism," he added. The remarks came after implementation of the first phase of a cease-fire deal between the regime and the resistance movement Hamas. The president referred to the massacres that the regime and its supporters had committed within Gaza's small geographical area, which claimed the lives of more than 47,000 Palestinians as "an instance of terrorism." The truce in the 15-month-old conflict, which has laid waste to the Gaza Strip and inflamed the Middle East, took effect on Sunday with the release of the first three hostages held by Hamas and 90 Palestinians freed from Israeli jails. The skies above Gaza and Israel were silent for the first time in over a year, and Palestinians began returning to



People walk past the rubble of collapsed buildings along Saftawi street in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on January 20, 2025 a day after a cease-fire deal in the war between Israel and Hamas went into effect. **OMAR AL-QATTA/AFP**

what was left of the homes they fled across the war-ravaged territory, started to check on relatives left behind and, in many cases, to bury their dead. After months of tight Israeli restrictions, more than 600 trucks carrying humanitarian aid rolled into the devastated territory. The grisly search for an estimated 10,000 bodies buried under the concrete wasteland in Gaza is now under way, the civil defense agency said, with at least 62 of the dead recovered.

What happens after the deal's first phase of 42 days is uncertain. The agreement's subsequent stages call for more releases of hostages and prisoners and a permanent end to the war. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was pressured by the outgoing Biden administration and incoming Trump administration to secure a deal before the president-elect's inauguration Monday in Washington, has said he received assurances from Trump that Israel could continue fighting Hamas if necessary.

Hamas: Gaza 'will rise again'

Hamas said Monday that Gaza and its people "will rise again" and rebuild the territory battered by more than 15 months of Israeli bombardment. "Gaza, with its great people and its resilience, will rise again to rebuild what the occupation has destroyed and continue on the path of steadfastness until the occupation is defeated," Hamas said in a statement issued on the second day of the cease-fire. Despite killing more than 47,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli military failed to eliminate Hamas politically or militarily. Netanyahu continues to receive criticism for failing to "wipe out" Hamas as he pledged to do. Alon Pinkas, a former Israeli ambassador, noted neither Hamas's political nor military infrastructure was entirely eradicated despite Netanyahu repeatedly citing it as the main goal of the war.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Top general urges boost in Iran-Pakistan ties against terrorist, separatist groups

International Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said that the Armed Forces of Iran and Pakistan should further cooperate to fight terrorist and separatist groups and improve security at the common border. Baqeri, who has traveled to Pakistan to meet the country's officials, made the remarks in a meeting with the staff of Iran's Embassy in Islamabad on Monday. Baqeri stressed the need to strongly safeguard border areas between Iran and Pakistan "because the enemies seek to exploit our borders and we need more cooperation and coordination." Pointing to the significance of increasing trade and economic exchanges between the two countries, he said a number of border markets have opened and some others will be inaugurated as well. In a meeting with Pakistan's Army chief Lieutenant General Asim Munir, Baqeri said confronting the terrorist groups must continue with seriousness. The Pakistani army chief, for his part, said that Islamabad is taking necessary and urgent measures to stop terrorist activities. Expressing concern about the presence of terrorist groups in the region, he said that Iran and Pakistan are at the center of this threat. "So, our relations should be further im-

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri (R) shakes hands with Pakistan's Army chief Lieutenant General Asim Munir in Islamabad, Pakistan, on January 20, 2025. **IRNA**



proved because we believe in sustainable security at the border with Iran," Pakistan's Army chief said. The Iranian and Pakistani officials are scheduled to discuss the improvement of defense cooperation, particularly in border areas and the fight against terrorism as well as the latest developments in the region and the Muslim world. Baqeri was set to hold talks with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, and Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif. The common border between the two countries have been the scene of many terrorist attacks in recent years, which have claimed the lives of a number of Iranian and Pakistani security forces. In one of the deadliest terrorist attacks, 10 Iranian border guards were killed in the country's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan close to the border with Pakistan. The so-called Jaish al-Adl terrorist group, which has carried out numerous attacks in Iran, primarily in Sistan and Baluchistan, claimed responsibility for the attack.