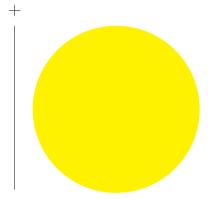
Iran yet to receive message from US on nuclear talks: President. FM







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Pezeshkian facing different views on Iran's talks with West





Iranian oil shipments shift to new discharge ports: Kpler





Creative spirit of Qeshm's residents



Pitso Mosimane terminates contract with **Esteghlal FC**







Cinematographers: From camera lens to canvas

EXCLUSIVE 8>



Iran not at loss against renewed pressure



OPINION EXCLUSIVE

With the new US administration taking office, some anticipate President Donald Trump to revive his so-called "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, drawing from his first term. Naturally, such an approach would primarily target Iran's oil sales and revenues.

Conversely, the stance taken by President Masoud Pezeshkian's government toward the new US administration is not ambiguous. Recent interviews and statements by government officials suggest a willingness to negotiate with the West for a nuclear deal, provided certain conditions

are met. Iran's readiness for negotiations is based on national security, the country's circumstances and safeguarding its national interests. These talks should benefit Iran's security and interests while also allowing for the verification of measures taken by the US and Western countries.

In previous dealings, Iran took the initiative to build trust. However, when it came time for the other party to act, they would dodge their reciprocal obligations toward Iran and con-Page 7 >

sistently backtrack on their commitments.

FM spox to Iran Daily:

Tehran ready for talks if other side sticks with logic



By Maryam Salari Staff writer

Sometimes one side of a disagreement has to exhaust almost every option before it can come to genuinely respect the other side's interests and sit down to talk it over. The Western world can now finally see a different side of Iran, a side that not only cannot be overlooked but can also play a conducive role in solving regional and even international crises. Esmaeil Baqaei, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, discussed how both sides got here in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily. Here is some of the more important parts of that interview:

IRAN DAILY: One of the major challenges for the incumbent Iranian government is tackling the mounting crisis between Tehran and European capitals. With nuclear negotiations stalled and tensions from Iran's alleged role in the Ukraine war adding to the issues, you mentioned that Tehran was

ready to address "ambiguities" through "dialogue" rather than New York and Geneva been in convincing the European Troika about their claims regarding

Ukraine? **BAOAEI**: The Geneva talks was our initiative. These discussions had been stalled due to the Europeans' miscalculations, but with the new Iranian government in office, we seized the opportunity of the foreign minister's attendance at the UN General Assembly to resume them. The New York meeting was more of an exchange of views on the topics for dialogue; we discussed what to discuss. The nuclear negotiations, regional developments including Gaza, the Ukraine war and other issues of mutual interest or concern were on the table. All the matters raised in the second and third rounds of Geneva talks were also brought up in New York. It was not expected to reach a definitive conclusion, but it allowed both sides to understand each other's stances and views on specific topics.

What place did the nuclear issue take in these talks?

"negotiation." How effective With the European Troika and have the recent discussions in the European Union primarily focused on the nuclear issue. France, Germany and Britian, along with the EU, are considered negotiating parties to the ICPOA and remain legally bound by it. The nuclear issue and the lifting of sanctions are the fixed topics for both sides. It was not expected that they would reach a specific conclusion on actions in these three rounds. Our demands and theirs are clear, but the details require more extensive expert discussions. The positive and crucial point is that both sides agree on resolving these matters through diplomatic channels and dialogue. We await their internal consensus. Another round of talks is likely within weeks, with the time and venue to be agreed upon.

> It seems clarifying the alleged concerns about Ukraine could pave the way for nuclear negotiations and soften the atmosphere against Iran. Has there been notable progress in tackling this challenge?

Regarding Ukraine, the Europeans initially leveled accusations at Iran based on negative preconceived notions, which were unfair. None of these accusations were substantiated, except for the fact that Iran had good relations with Russia. These accusations were repeated and they started to believe them.

It is important to note that, for instance, a couple of months ago, US officials claimed Iran transferred missiles to Ukraine and the EU imposed sanctions against Iran. Days later, Ukraine's president announced that discussions had taken place but no missiles had been transferred. Therefore, it was expected that the Europeans would revise their stance and reversed sanctions, but they did not. When accusations are made unilaterally and without evidence, it is hard to refute them through negotiation, as the other side tries to convince others of an alliance against Western democracy or European countries, based on their mindset or the interests they be-Page 2 > lieve they can gain

from accusing Iran, prompting an internal coalition within Europe.

Iranian oil shipments shift to new discharge ports: Kpler

According to new data by a major tanker tracking service, Iranian crude sellers found new hubs to offload their sanctioned cargo, just three weeks after China's Shandong Province, home to dozens of teapot refiners, halted imports of

The Brussels-headquartered data analytics firm Kpler said just as ports of Shandong are still awaiting clarity on whether they can receive tankers added to the OFAC sanctions list, Iranian oil sellers shifted their shipment to about 1,500 km south of Shandong.

Ever since the state-owned Shandong Port Group, which operates major terminals in Qingdao, Rizhao, Yantai, and Dongying, issued a preemptive ban three weeks ago on receiving US-sanctioned tankers and said no vessels listed by OFAC and carrying Iranian oil had offloaded at its facilities.

While it remains unclear how long the Shandong Port Group will strictly enforce the ban, oil traders have explored a new workaround—adding yet another voyage to an already complex journey. As of January 27, two Iranian crude carriers. Nichola and Dorena, had docked at Huizhou Port in southern China, with the latter believed to have completed offloading.

Neither tanker had previously been seen calling at Huizhou Port as Iranian oil haulers. A market insider told Kpler that all oil storage tanks at Huizhou Port have been rented out by Chinese traders, likely in preparation for receiving more Iranian cargoes from sanctioned

Traders will then hire non-sanctioned tankers to transport Iranian oil to buyers in Shandong, inevitably adding a few dollars to the cost—either absorbed by Iranian sellers or passed on to Shandong buyers.

Similar to Huizhou, ports in China's eastern Zhejiang Province appear ready to accept sanctioned vessels rejected by Shandong.

At least three tankers, Carnatic, Clio, and Oxis, which had previously signaled their intent to head to Shandong ports have now changed their destination to Ningbo/Zhoushan in Zhejiang.

NIOC announces February

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) announced the official selling prices (OSP) for Iranian crude oil in February.

According to the company, Iran Light crude oil will be priced approximately



\$2 above the benchmark price (Oman/ Dubai crude) for Asian customers, reflecting a nearly 1% increase compared to the previous month, Shana wrote.

The prices for various types of Iranian crude oil for the second month of 2025 were announced by the International Affairs Directorate of the NIOC.

Accordingly, Iran Light crude oil will be offered in Northwest Europe and South African markets at \$1.35 below the ICE Brent benchmark in February.

Moreover, Iran Heavy crude oil will be priced \$3.15 below the ICE Brent benchmark, and Iran's Forozan Blend crude oil will be offered at \$3.05 below the same benchmark.

In the Mediterranean market, Iran Light, Iran Heavy, and Forozan Blend crude oils will be priced \$1.25, \$3.35, and \$3.25 below the ICE Brent benchmark, respectively.

Notably, the ICE Brent benchmark has been used to price Iranian crude oil in Northwest European markets this month. This benchmark is derived from the weighted average price of Brent crude on the London-based ICE exchange on days when more than 1,000 lots (equivalent to 1 million barrels of oil) are

According to Shana, this benchmark change has been implemented in the past due to regulatory adjustments or customer preferences as is not unprecedented.

VP to visit Kazakhstan for **EAEU summit, Almaty Digital Forum**



Economy Desk

A delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran, led by Vice President Mohammadreza Aref, travels to Kazakhstan today to participate in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Prime Ministers' Summit and the 2025 Almaty Digital Forum, according to Ali Najafi, deputy for international affairs and regional cooperation in the VP's office.

depart for Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Thursday at the invitation of the Kazakh prime minister, according to fypresident.ir.

"During the visit, the VP will attend and deliver speeches at both the EAEU summit and the Almaty Digital Forum. Aref will also hold meetings with Kazakh officials and several prime ministers from EAEU member states."

Highlighting Iran's recent acc Najafi stated that Aref and his acsion as an observer member of the cial intelligence, the digital econocompanying delegation would EAEU, Najafi noted that this marks my and information technology.

the first time a senior Iranian official is attending the summit in this

Najafi emphasized that Iran's cooperation with the EAEU could strengthen ties with neighboring member states.

He expressed hope that the implementation of the Iran-EAEU free trade agreement, recently approved by Iran's Parliament, would lead to a significant boost in trade between Iran and EAEU countries. He further pointed out that under the agreement, approximately 87% of tariff codes for exports to the region would be reduced to zero, creating a valuable opportunity for expanding Iran's economic and trade cooperation and increasing

exports. Najafi also described the Iranian delegation's participation in the Almaty Digital Forum as an important opportunity, saying it will allow Iran to showcase its capabilities, programs, and initiatives in artifi-

Presidential aide says new vessels needed to boost shipping in Caspian Sea

Economy Desk

The president's representative for coordinating the implementation of the government's maritime development policies emphasized the need for new vessels to expand cargo, recreational and tourism shipping in the Caspian

Ali Abdolalizadeh made the remarks on Wednesday, during a visit to a shipbuilding company, accompanied by Mehdi Yunesi-Rostami, the governor general of Mazandaran, ISNA reported. He expressed hope that water-related issues of the Neka power plant would be resolved through the cooperation of all relevant authorities.

Abdolalizadeh noted that some of the 86 vessels currently operating in the



Caspian Sea have reached the end of their service life and require extensive repairs and reconstruction.

He stated that President Masoud Pezeshkian's government has decided to support the shipbuilding industries in Anzali of Gilan Province and Mazandaran as part of efforts to strengthen domestic shipbuilding capabilities.

Highlighting the strategic position of Mazandaran site of Sadra shipbuilding company, he stressed that new projects will be allocated to the company to facilitate its expansion.

Abdolalizadeh also pointed out that approximately 33 hectares of coastal land have been designated for development. describing it as a crucial step for the future of the Caspian Sea and the country's maritime sector.

Tehran ready for ...

In such a situation, it is challenging to reach a conclusion through negotiation and dialogue, except to firmly insist that we have no role or involvement in this conflict. Regarding Ukraine, we have em-

phasized respecting territorial integrity and national sovereignty, invited both sides to resolve issues diplomatically and demonstrated our commitment to this principle.

We are now at a juncture where both sides say the JCPOA can be a starting point for a new understanding but returning to it in its entirety is no longer feasible. Recently, Foreign Minister Araghchi urged the US to return to the JCPOA for the nuclear negotiations to get back on track or de-

clare its position on the tatter deal. This stance appears to differ from what we have heard from both Iranian and Western parties in recent months. Can you explain whether he was pursuing a specific goal or if it was just an attempt to prompt of Mr. Trump to voice his view on the

There is no contradiction in our JCPOA stance. The JCPOA, per its text and UNSC Resolution 2231, has a lifespan. The Iranian nuclear issue should be off the agenda this fall. So, reviewing the agreement is necessary; the minimum to be done. Meanwhile, the ICPOA's foundation and logic still hold. We agreed to build confidence in our peaceful nuclear program in exchange for lifting all sanctions. This logic remains. We have learned out of necessity to work to offset sanctions, both by working harder to boost our economy and by relying more on our own resources. At the same time, we know that sanctions have harmed our economy and have caused hardship for our people.

So, we will spare no effort to lift sanctions. We have said we are ready for talks if the other side is serious. Negotiation is not something to beg for; it should proceed logically and reasonably. This is the process we are willing to engage in: building confidence in our peaceful nuclear program in exchange for lifting all illegal and cruel sanctions.

Despite the European side's willingness to talk, their decision to trigger

the snapback mechanism seems serious. Iran has reportedly warned in Geneva that if this happens, it might reconsider its nuclear doctrine or withdraw from the NPT. Can you confirm this warning?

Our nuclear policy, based on the Leader's fatwa (religious decree) and military calculations, excludes weapons of mass destruction. We have constantly stated this. Regarding the snapback mechanism, we said Western parties should not use it to pressure and threaten us, as it would create a more serious crisis for them. Resorting to this would mean negotiations are pointless. Also, reinstating sanctions through this mechanism would revive UNSC resolutions. which is unreasonable, illogical and impossible, as those resolutions are

outdated and irrelevant to our nuclear program. It would only provoke the other side to reconsider the entire issue. In such a situation, our continued participation in certain international agreements like the NPT would become meaningless. We have stated this before and it is natural this will not be welcomed, but we conveyed our mes-

Based on Mr. Trump's executive orders and the stance he has taken on Iran following his inauguration, do you see grounds for negotiations with the US?

sage to them swiftly.

All I can say is that we are closely monitoring actions and will adjust our policies and measures based on the conduct of the other parties.

Creative spirit of Qeshm's residents

Iranica Desk

The inhabitants of Qeshm, located in Hormozgan Province, are vital contributors to the production of folk art, marking this region as one of the most significant in southern Iran. The relationship between handicrafts and the essence of the community shapes the identity and character of Qeshm's artistic products. The traditional arts are direct results of the history and experiences of local artists.

Hamid Almasinia, a journalist, wrote that when residents step outside their homes, they are welcomed by divine gifts such as stunning beaches and the sea. Each day, they admire the masterpiece created by the God, enhancing their appreciation of beauty. The local population crafts exquisite jewelry from the sea's offerings, including shells and pearls, which are available in Qeshm's markets. Additionally, they incorporate shells into the decoration of mirrors, pen holders, sculptures, and even bags, according to chtn.ir.

The handicrafts of Qeshm Island showcase the creativity of industrious individuals who continually strive to turn their homeland into a vibrant hub for production and economic activities.

On this island, the residents showcase their artistry using readily available materials. They enhance their lives with the gifts provided by the sea and enrich the arid landscape by crafting shell flowers. In Qeshm, art and craft, intertwined with local customs and culture, have resulted in a vibrant collection of handicrafts.

Handicrafts in Qeshm have successfully met their primary goal of addressing community needs and improving the environment. Most of these creations are initially developed based on the requirements of local people, primarily by women. Mean-









IRNA

while, the island's men engage in fishing using their handmade boats, bringing sustenance from the sea. When not fishing, they remain industrious, repurposing the wood from their boats to construct smaller vessels that reflect their commitment to a lawful livelihood.

These boats, known as *lenj*, are large vessels that resemble small ships floating on the waters of the Persian Gulf. The craft of lenj boat-making in Iran has been recognized as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO and is an art form deeply rooted in the natural en-

vironment of Qeshm.

The most significant creations of the skilled women of Qeshm include various types of embroidery, all crafted with their expert hands. These artisans produce *golabetoon* embroidery, *khus*-weaving, and *shak*-weaving, utilizing different gold and silver threads. Golabetoon embroidery and shak weaving primarily adorn trousers, while khus weaving enhances local shawls.

Traditional clothing has always been a captivating reflection of a region's culture. The local attire of Qeshm is vibrant, showcasing patterns and colors that are visually striking. In some aspects, it resembles garments from India, Arabia, and Africa. Typically, the men's traditional

wear consists of a long white dishdasha, which comes in two styles. Women's local attire includes a *kendor*, paired with embroidered trousers and a shawl, although ceremonial garments, such as those worn at weddings, exhibit distinct

The burqa is an attractive and unusual garment, primarily found in red, green, and black. It covers the area from above

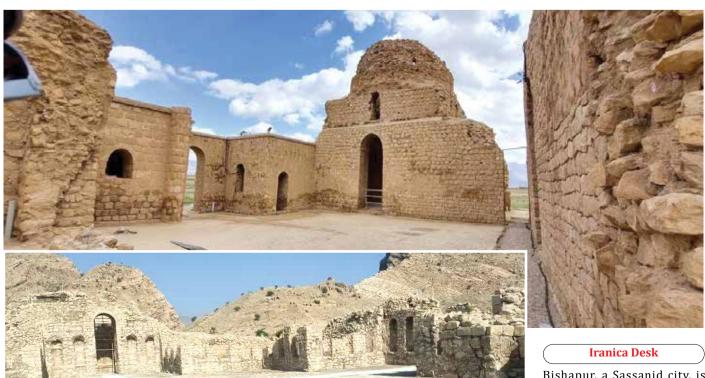
the eyebrows to below the nose and holds considerable appeal for tourists, as it is part of the traditional dress for women.

One of the primary types of vegetation on the island is the date palm, which serves as a food source and has its branches and leaves employed in various applications, including the production of wicker items.

In the eyes of the contented inhabitants of this land, nothing is considered waste; creativity can transform even the most ordinary materials into art. The craft of making musical instruments, particularly the oud, is another traditional practice that consistently yields exquisite and innovative handmade creations, significantly enhancing Qeshm's artistic heritage.

Many individuals with the requisite talent and creativity utilize specific raw materials to express their feelings and ideals or to showcase their innate skills. Seashells, conch shells, corals, and remnants of other marine creatures are among the materials that require immense patience, care, precision, and skill to prepare due to their delicacy and fragility.

Revitalizing the ancient city of Bishapur



Bishapur, a Sassanid city, is one of the ancient cities of Iran, with its remnants located in the center of Kazerun, Fars Province. Recent projects by the cultural heritage authorities promise good news for the preservation and better organization of this ancient heritage. from Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, development in the area have begun, since about a year

According to an IRNA, ancient Bishapur was registered a decade ago as part of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Firuzabad and Sarvestan on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Over the past decade, there have been many actions taken and not taken, leading to numerous discussions.

Bishapur was built in 266 CE by the order of Shapur I, the Sassanid king. After Shapur's victory over the Roman Emperor Valerian, he ordered the construction of a city in a pleasant area along the road from Persepolis to Ctesiphon. This road during the Achaemenid era connected the cities of Persepolis and Istakhr to Susa; Shapur named the city after himself.

The failure to protect valuable parts of the remnants of Bishapur in past years has surprised the officials and heritage experts of Fars Province. However, according to an official

from Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, development in the area have begun, since about a year ago, when the Sassanid serial property in Fars Province was placed under unified management as Sassanid Archaeological Landscape.

According to a report presented by the manager of the site in Fars Province, during a specialized meeting attended by the media, 18 programs and plans have been initiated in Bishapur in the past year, with four programs completed, six programs currently underway, and eight more to be implemented soon upon final approval of the plans.

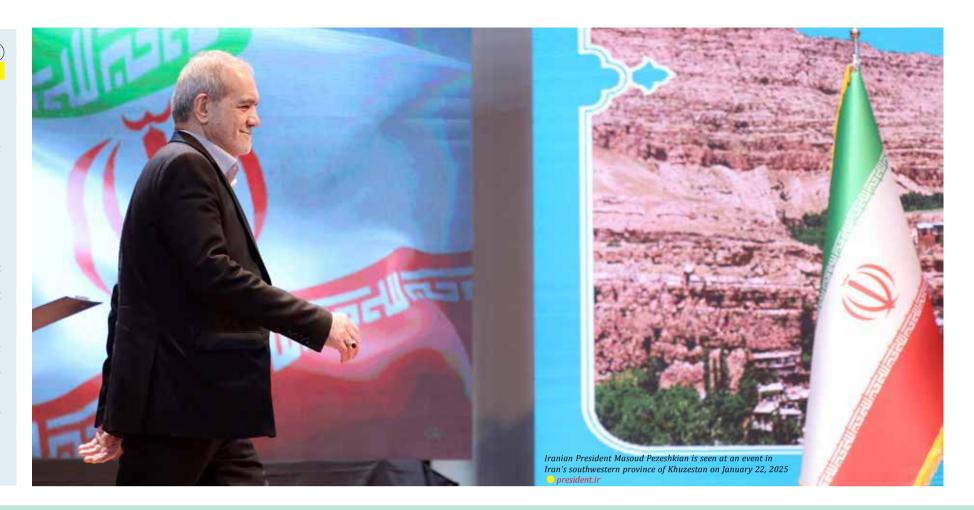
Bishapur, renowned for its striking architecture and intricate bas-reliefs depicting historical scenes, served as an important cultural and political center during the Sassanid dynasty. Its impressive ruins continue to attract researchers and tourists alike, highlighting the significance of preserving this invaluable heritage site for future generations.

International Desk

PERSPECTIVE

The policy that Masoud Pezeshkian's government has chosen involves fostering domestic consensus while engaging in dialogue with the world to overcome barriers in foreign relations and manage sanctions. To what extent will this approach assist in addressing the challenges facing the country?

The government is grappling with numerous economic challenges, which are increasingly manifesting in various imbalances, from electricity and gas shortages to issues within the banking system and pension funds.



Pezeshkian facing different views on Iran's talks with West

The government should focus its efforts on opening corridors for foreign relations through international agreements, such as BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Our breathing space lies in circumventing sanctions, and as Trump's advisors have suggested, expanding relationships with China, Russia, and India is crucial.

According to political and economic experts, overcoming this situation requires certain structural reforms, as well as a transformation of foreign relations that are currently hindered by obstacles such as anti-Iran sanctions. Research by IRNA on these challenges has included discussions with several experts across different fields of economics, politics, and foreign policy. This report reflects the viewpoints of Mohammad Kazem Anbarlooei, a member of the Islamic Coalition Party and former editor-in-chief of the Resalat newspaper, as well as Mohammad Ali Vakili, the managing editor of the Ebtekar newspaper, who has previously served as a representative for Tehran in the tenth Parliament.

Government's response to early criticism

Previously, newly elected governments would generally not face significant waves of criticism from rivals during their initial months in office. However, in recent months, rising currency rates, air pollution, electricity and gas shortages, among other issues, have swiftly become focal points of criticism regarding the government's performance.

In the current situation, Vakili states, "The most significant challenge facing the government is the public's despair over change and the prevailing judgment, both domestically and internationally, that there is little difference between the fourteenth and thirteenth governments." He adds that economic pressures, inflation, and currency fluctuations are currently the main issues for the government. Simultaneously, there is an effort to attribute all present inadequacies to this government, with some even holding it responsible for regional developments and setbacks faced by the resistance front.

This former parliamentarian describes the political objectives pursued by the government's opponents, saying, "Various factions that have no interest in the continuation of Beheshti's term are striving to portray a fantasy and ineffective government, aiming to depict Beheshti's administration as one caught up in non-essential priorities."

However, Anbarlooei, in response to a question regarding the current confrontations with the government, expresses a preference for the term "critique" over "confrongovernment must address these critiques in the realm

of domestic politics and economic issues, even if the burdens now faced by the current government are largely a result of problems accumulated from previous administrations.

According to the former editor-in-chief of Resalat, the criticism directed at the government in the economic sphere pertains to the public's financial struggles, the preservation of the national currency's value, and the safeguarding of its worth. It should not be perceived by Iranian citizens that the government is negligent in protecting the national currency. Therefore, the government must demonstrate that it is "on top of things" in this regard. Within the past two months, part of the national currency's value has diminished, an issue that concerns the entire Iranian populace and disrupts the economic system. He tation." He asserts that the hopes that Pezeshkian's economic team will pay closer attention to the seri-

ous questions surrounding the economy, particularly regarding the depreciation of the national currency.

Can negotiation solve

country's problems? Some observers argue that as long as our issues with the world remain unresolved, a significant portion of the country's problems will persist. In this context, Anbarlooei states, "We have experienced negotiations with the West over the past 45 years, particularly during Hassan Rouhani's administration. The door to negotiations has always been open from the Iranian government's side, and agreements have even been reached, but the other side has failed to uphold any of its commitments. This sends a clear signal to our government that it must only concede what we demand in negotiations, without expecting any reciprocity." He warns that sanctions re-

is currently in power, and Trump is the individual who tore up the JCPOA [The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action also known as the Iran nuclear deall. Based on the advice of his advisors, the door to negotiations for greater concessions remains open, while he is also being advised to maintain military readi-

main firmly in place and

may even intensify, with

no concessions granted

in return for any benefits

"The Trump administration

offered to us.

ness to confront Iran. This recommendation comes from Richard Nephew, the architect of the sanctions against Iran. Therefore, we are unlikely to achieve anything from negotiations, as past experiences have shown that we will not receive any concessions, and sanctions may become even more complex."

This political activist adds, "The government should focus its efforts on opening corridors for foreign relations through international agreements, such as BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Our breathing space lies in circumventing sanctions, and as Trump's advisors have suggested, expanding relationships with China, Russia, and India is crucial. They have acknowledged that these three countries do not coordinate with the global community on sanctions against Iran. One of the criticisms directed at the government is that while China aims to establish a strategic partnership with Iran, the necessary diplomatic and consular frameworks are not yet in place. Russia also has strong collaborations in various domains, and we have not fully capitalized on

the opportunities presented by our relationship with Russia."

Efficacy of consensus in improving conditions

According to Anbarlooei, the government's focus on national consensus is a very effective approach. This concept is essential for national security, defense, and interests, making it a commendable slogan. However, he acknowledges that there are critiques that Pezeshkian is attentive to. "If we can bridge the gap between the government and the people, no cognitive warfare or soft conflict can be effective. Thus far, Pezeshkian's government has stated that its goal is to implement the Leader's general policies and to carry out the country's Seventh Development Plan, which has left little room for maneuvering for adversaries. Moreover, this can serve as a fundamental axis for creating consensus among political forces."

However, the editor-in-chief of Ebtekar newspaper holds a different view regarding the effectiveness of consensus in aligning political forces to address the country's problems, stating, "In such conditions, insisting on consensus as it has been pursued so far has primarily empowered the government's opponents and dissatisfied its supporters. Consensus, in this sense, equates to retreating from both sides in favor of the opposing party. Thus far, only the government has retreated, while the opposing side has managed to gain ground."



Negotiating with US has some ifs, buts

Trump will not underwrite Netanyahu



The Trump administration has officially started working, and now it remains to be seen what foreign policies Donald Trump will pursue, especially in the Middle East, and how the relations between Iran and the US will be shaped.

Although Donald Trump's inauguration address at the US Capitol contained a series of populist slogans, it seemed to be more mature compared to his firstterm inauguration speech. The absence of radical figures, such as Mike Pompeo, in his cabinet has elevated the relative rationality of Trump's team this time around. The presence of Elon Musk, the American billionaire and the world's richest man, in his cabinet sends the message that the US wants to stay away from international tensions.

Trump, having experienced a term as president, has realized that he made many mistakes in his first term, including withdrawing from the JCPOA, which was done under the influence of Zionist lobbies and pressures from Pompeo. It seems that Trump wants to make up for some of his past mistakes

Now, there is a possibility of

establishing a dialogue between Iran and the US within the framework of the JCPOA, provided that the US returns to the JCPOA and abandons its aggressive policies against Iran and the Resistance Axis.

One of the important points in the current Trump administration is the absence of Pompeo. He had a strong affinity for Zionist figures and was actually the one who shaped the foreign policy of the Trump administration in the first term. The absence of Pompeo in the Trump administration indicates that Trump wants to focus more on solving America's domestic problems.

On the other hand, Trump will not underwrite Netanyahu's risks because he believes that during the Biden era, the US

incurred huge costs because of Israel. He believes that the US was taken advantage of in the Middle East and therefore will probably not unconditionally surrender to Israel's demands. Regarding the stance of various domestic forces on negotiating with the US, it should be noted that pursuing our national interest and regional peace are the overall policies of the Islam-

ic Republic of Iran. Any group that wants to move against this policy has not considered the national interest and has not served Iran. Now, all domestic forces must see in which direction the establishment's policy is moving and what the national interest requires.

If the West and the US treat Iran respectfully and reduce pressure on Iran and the Resistance Axis, negotiating with them can lead to securing our national interests under certain conditions. However, it is natural that if the new US administration wants to pursue aggressive policies against Iran. negotiating with such a government will be of no benefit.

The article first appeared in Farsi on Farda News







Then-secretary of state Mike Pompeo (R) looks on as former president Donald Trump makes remarks about the Turkey/Syria Border at the White House in Washington, the US, on October 23, 2019.

Challenges of mediation between Tehran, Washington



Mediation, as one of the mechanisms for resolving international disputes, has proven its effectiveness in various fields many times; but can the principle of mediation at least pave the way for holding talks between Iran and the US or speed up the process?

These days, the discussion of readiness to start negotiations is heated; in order to achieve this, one of the most frequently discussed topics is the visit of senior

The names of countries such as Japan, Oman, and Iraq came up more than any other country as mediators for potential Iran-US talks, although no official news of mediation by these countries has been released. None of these countries have officially introduced themselves as mediator or messenger. However, the frequent interactions between them and Washington have fueled rumors in this area.

process are clear: mediation is a voluntary process, and the right to accept or reject the mediation proposal lies with the parties to the dispute. Also, the result of mediation is non-binding, and the non-binding nature of mediation distinguishes it from other forms of intervention. such as arbitration.

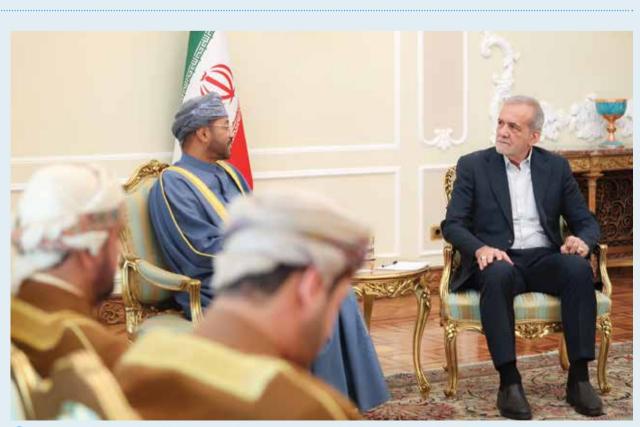
However, there are many challenges to mediation between Tehran and Washington that have made it difficult to achieve:

The first and perhaps most important challenge is the deep mistrust and ideological differences between Iran and the US, which, like an impenetrable dam, has cast a shadow over the relations between the two countries for more than five decades. The second challenge is the role of the Zionist regime, Iran's hostile relationship with this regime, and the regime's interests in the lack of agreement between the parties.

The third issue of disagreement between Tehran and Washington is the difference in the method and goal of negotiation between the two sides. Usually, the Iranian side seeks to establish and increase communica-

The advantages of the mediation tion, as well as to pursue limited and single-issue negotiation, but the opposite side often prioritizes efficiency and multi-issue negotiations. Add to these the differences in the views of the two sides on the Middle East and its stability, so that we can better understand what challenges confront the country and the mediator. Finally, owing to the current interactive atmosphere, many international disputes have been resolved peacefully in recent decades through mediation by reputable personalities, governments, and international organizations. However, in Iran, it seems that economic hardships, the sharp increase in exchange rates, the subsequent staggering rise in prices, and the promise of lifting sanctions in Pezeshkian's government have upped the public pressure on the government. It is expected that the diplomatic apparatus of the country becomes a more powerful actor than any mediator and mediation to speed up the process of starting talks and resolving international disputes.

The article first appeared in Farsi



nian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) meets with Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi in Tehran, Iran, on December 30, 2024.

Sports Athletics

itso Mosimane angrily talks to Esteghlal FC players during his last actice with the team in Tehran, Iran, on January 28, 2025

Pitso Mosimane terminates contract with Esteghlal FC

Sports Desk

Pitso Mosimane has officially terminated his contract with Iranian club Esteghlal FC due to an unresolved dispute over unpaid salaries.

The three-time CAF Champions League-winning coach has walked away from his job in the Persian Gulf Pro League after the club failed to pay the entire South African technical team's salaries. He had brought Kyle



ane (c), the former coach of Esteghlal FC

Rangoaga, and Maahier Davids to his technical team. This followed the lapse of a 15day window in which Esteghlal were given to settle the outstand-

ing debts, in accordance with

Solomon, Musi Matlaba, Kabelo

FIFA laws. Mosimane's management team MT Sports on Wednesday morning confirmed the developments and shared a statement relating to the parting of ways between

the parties.

"Esteemed coach Pitso Mosimane has officially parted ways with Iranian topflight side Esteghlal FC, with immediate effect, due to unresolved issues regarding unpaid salaries owed to him and his technical team," read the statement.

"Despite numerous opportunities provided by MT Sports Marketing & Management, Coach Pitso's management team, to resolve the matter — starting with initial discussions with the former CEO of the club last year, followed by a formal default notice delivered on 1 January 2025 — Esteghlal FC failed to address the issue.

"In good faith, Coach Pitso and the Technical Team extended a 15-day deadline as per the FIFA rules, to allow the new CEO and Board time to familiarize themselves with the situation and remedy the outstanding payments. However, the club did not resolve within the deadlines

they set for themselves. Coach Pitso Mosimane and his technical team are still owed more than two months' salaries.'

Allegedly, the South African coach had given the club a 24hour notice on Monday to pay any unpaid salaries or face contract termination.

Reports have it that the club officials were working hard to ensure Mosimane was paid in time to avoid his departure. They managed to settle the debt hours after the coach terminated his contract due to some difficulties in wiring the money to a bank account in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

This is the second club with which Mosimane is involved in a payment dispute, after Saudi

Arabian outfit Al Ahli were also penalized by the world football governing body after they terminated his contract following their promotion to the Pro League in

Mosimane signed with the Persian Gulf Pro League team based in Tehran in October 2024.

The team had started the season badly, and his experience was needed to save them from going

In the last 11 games across all competitions, the Capital Blues had suffered a single defeat and won three under Mosimane.

Esteghlal FC currently sits 11th on the Persian Gulf Pro League log standings and is slowly losing hope of becoming a contender for the AFC Champions League.

Iran eyes hosting more int'l competitions

Sports Desk

Iran's Minister of Sports and Youth emphasized that hosting more continental and global competitions is important to the country and ministry.

In a press conference on the sidelines of the Cabinet meeting, Ahmad Donya Mali noted that the 33rd edition of the Iran Fajr International badminton championships is taking place in Semnan, central Iran, with around

200 participants from approximately 15 countries. According to the minister, the enhancement of national security has created an environment conducive to an increased number of international competitions.



Chinese Taipei n's badminton team walks into the stadium during the opening ceremony of the 33rd Iran Fajr International in Semnan, Iran, on January 29, 2025. ● MEHR





Mes Rafsanjan parts ways with Shojaei

Sports Desk

The managers of the Iranian football club Mes Rafsanjan have come to an agreement with Masoud Shojaei to part ways, and Sirous Pourmousavi is set to take over as the new head coach of the team.

Shojaei's record with Mes Rafsanjan includes four wins and five losses in the league and cup competitions. His most notable victory was a 3-1 win over Perse-

polis in Tehran, which led to the sacking of Juan Carlos Garrido. His worst defeat was a 5-1 loss to Tractor in Tabriz. The team's failure to bounce back from a defeat against Foolad Khuzestan proved to be the final straw, leading the club's managers to decide to cut ties with Shojaei.

Pourmousavi faces a tough task in turning the team's fortunes around, as Mes Rafsanjan is currently 14th in the 16-team league table.

Eslami's goal nominated for best goal of ACL MD6

Matchday Six of the AFC Champions League Elite 2024-25 brought another round of impressive goals that highlighted the talent and creativity in the

An array of audacious lobs, longrange volleys, and flawless team efforts showcased the artistry of Asia's premier club competition, AFC wrote.

In Al Ahli Saudi and Esteghlal FC match, Mohammad Hossein goalkeeper Edouard Mendy with a volley from distance that bounced over the Senegalese's attempts to save.

The fans can vote to decide which goal will advance to the semi-finals.

Al Shorta's Mohanad Ali's goal against Persepolis, Al Sadd's Akram Afif's goal against Al Nassr, Pakhtakor's Otabek Jurakuziev's goal against Al Ain and Al Ain's Soufiane Rahimi's goal against Pakhtakor are also Eslami beat former Chelsea nominated for the best goal of





Iran yet to receive message from US on nuclear talks: *President, FM*

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran had not received any message from the United States regarding the resumption of negotiations on the country's peaceful nuclear program.

On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting on Wednesday, in response to reporters' inquiries about any message from US President Donald Trump, Pezeshkian stated, "No, we have not received any message at the moment." Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also addressed a press gaggle following the cabinet meeting, saying, "No specific message has been sent or received from the US government. What is being discussed is merely in the media. Right now, there is no conclusion regarding negotiations, and our benchmark is the past mistrust. Naturally, this mistrust cannot be easily overcome with nice words; it has to be demonstrated through actions."

Araghchi said talks with the European parties are ongoing, adding that Tehran is waiting to know the stances of the other side. If Iran concludes that negotiations may be conducted with the US, such talks will be held on equal standing, he stated, adding that Tehran has not arrived at such a conclusion yet.

"While we had made an agreement in the past, they (the US) scrapped the deal," the foreign minister said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) from which the US withdrew in 2018.

About two weeks ago, Pezeshkian remarked, "Trump must first prove that he will follow through on his words. We will engage in dialogue whenever he honors his commitments."

Previously, in an exclusive interview with NBC, he mentioned that Tehran is "principally" ready to negotiate with the United States.

Recently, Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad



Zarif noted during a panel discussion at the Davos meeting, "I hope that this time, in his second term, Trump will be more serious, focused, and realistic so he understands the consequences of his departure from the JCPOA, which was imposed upon us." He added that following the US with-

drawal from the JCPOA, Iran now possesses "significantly greater nuclear capacity," but he reassured that Iran poses no nuclear or security threat.



Trump's 'ethnic cleansing' Gaza proposal catches huge flak



International Desk

As Palestinians return to northern Gaza after a 15-month war, US President Donald Trump's suggestion to "clean out" the war-ravaged strip and relocate its inhabitants to Egypt and Jordan has ignited a firestorm of criticism from activists as well as across the Middle East, even from America's firmest Arab allies.

While Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — the region's two economic heavyweights, also seen as being closest to Trump — have officially remained silent, they have telegraphed their displeasure.

Media outlets in both countries known to be close to the state have been replete with articles and op-eds condemning the president's com-

Abu Dhabi normalized ties with Israel during Trump's first term, and Riyadh has expressed readiness to do so under certain conditions. Yet for both, his proposal is tantamount to a direct national security threat.

Besides destabilizing Egypt and Jordan, US talk of driving out Palestinians from their homeland after the war is seen as vindication by those that have long lambasted the UAE and Saudi Arabia for selling out the

Palestinian cause.

On Saturday, Trump called to "just clean out" Gaza and resettle Palestinians in Egypt and Jordan, describing the enclave as a "demolition site" after Israel's genocidal war.

There was immediate condemnation from the Palestinians, who, along with Jordan and Egypt, rejected the idea over fears that Israel would never allow the Palestinians to return to Gaza if they were forced to leave.

Despite widespread opposition to the proposal from Palestinian leadership, the UN and US allies in the region, Trump on Monday repeated his suggestion.

He reiterated he would "like to get [Palestinians from Gaza] living in an area where they can live without disruption and so much revolution and violence."

The remarks, apparently at odds with existing US policy and international law, have been widely rejected by the Arab world as a potentially fatal blow to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but were embraced by Israel's right wing.

US Senator Bernie Sanders denounced Trump's proposal, calling it "ethnic cleansing" and a war crime, urging all Americans to condemn it. Meantime, even Trump loyalists tried to make sense of his words. "I really don't know," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, when asked on CNN's "State of the Union" about what Trump meant by the "clean out" remark. Graham, who is close to Trump, said the suggestion was not feasible. He said Trump should keep talking to Mideast leaders, including Saudi

to Mideast leaders, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and officials in the United Arab Emirates. "I don't know what he's talking about.

But go talk to MBS, go talk to UAE, go talk to Egypt," Graham said. "What is their plan for the Palestinians? Do they want them all to leave?"

The Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation issued statements vehemently rejecting any call for the displacement or relocation of Palestinians from their land.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei has also rejected the Trump's plan. Posting a message on X on Tuesday, he wrote, "The idea of cleaning out Gaza as part of the plan for the colonial annihilation of Palestinian people has long been underway using American lethal weapons and ammunition, as well as its political, intelligence and financial support".

Resistance groups of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis were quick to lash out at Trump for his proposal.

US avoids criticizing Iran's HR record for first time after 15 years

International Desk

The United States for the first time after a decade and half refused to criticize the human rights record of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

At the 48th Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva this year, the US refrained from taking to task Iran's human rights record after 15 years.

Based on records, the United States has filed recommendations on the Islamic Republic over Human Rights issues since 2010.

However, Iran faced criticism this year from other member states including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland and Paraguay.

Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs vehemently condemned double standards and unfair human rights mechanisms in the world.

Kazem Gharibabadi, who headed the Iranian delegation to the 48th session of the Working Group on the UPR, made the remarks at a meeting which was held at Iran's initiative. Gharibabadi expressed Iran's grave concern and strong criticism of double standards, selective approaches and political and instrumental exploitation of human rights across the world.

The UPR is an essential mechanism of the council aimed at improving the human rights situation for member states. Iran is one of 14 states reviewed by the UPR working group.





Iran not at ...

Understandably, Iran's approach to negotiations with Western countries has shifted. They must first demonstrate goodwill regarding nuclear negotiations and agreements, allowing Iran to reciprocate. This shift stems from their past failures to honor obligations, especially economic ones. Western countries fell short in fulfilling their commitments, particularly in releasing Iranian financial assets as agreed. They devised lengthy convoluted processes and ultimately broke their promises. They wasted Iran's time and eroded its trust.

These experiences left Iran with bitter experiences in negotiations with the West. If future talks are to occur, Western countries must provide guarantees regarding their commitments. This applies to oil sales as well. If negotiations with the US resume, it must first adhere to its commitments in this area.

m this area.

Despite fluctuations, Iran's oil production and sales have surged in recent months. Oil production has risen from around 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) to around 3.4 million bpd. According to the Seventh Development Plan, Iran aims to boost its crude oil output to 4.5 million bpd. A plan is in place for this target and the necessary capacities are available to achieve it. Domestic and foreign investors are keen to help realize the goal.

The next challenge is Iran's ability to sell oil. The country currently faces sanctions in various sectors, including oil exports. In recent years, Iran employed various strategies to ship oil abroad and offset sanctions.

Although Mr. Trump's approach to oil sales might be stricter than his predecessor's, ratcheting up pressure on Iran's oil trade, Tehran will not be at a loss against intensified sanctions. There are numerous avenues to sell oil, although they may come with setbacks and losses. Iran will do its utmost to devise appropriate strategies to mitigate losses.

The extent of pressure on Iran depends on various factors, but Iran's profound influence in the Middle East is undeniable; not everything boils down to financial matters and economic pressures. Political dynamics and future developments will shape various matters and the aftermath of the cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon may positively impact them.

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Iran, Tajikistan strengthen tourism ties with visa-free travel: Minister

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Tajikistan have taken a major step towards enhancing their tourism and cultural ties by mutually agreeing to abolish visa requirements for air travel between their capitals, Tehran and Dushanbe.

Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, expressed optimism about the impact of this decision, stating, "The previous agreement only covered visa-free travel between Tehran and Dushanbe, but now, with the new agreement, citizens of both countries can travel from any region in Iran to any region in Tajikistan and vice versa without a visa."

The minister highlighted the potential for increased tourism, noting the current figures of around 8,600 Iranian tourists visiting Tajikistan and 1,500 Tajiks traveling to Iran annually. He aims to bump these numbers up to 100,000 with the

visa-free travel arrangement,

IRNA reported.

The new policy, approved by Iran's Cabinet, will take effect on February 3, 2025. It allows citizens of both countries holding ordinary passports to travel freely between Tehran and Dushanbe, with a maximum stay of 30 days within a 90-day period. Furthermore, addressing concerns about foreign tourists visiting Iran during the upcom-

ing Nowruz celebrations, which



coincide with the holy month of Ramadan, the minister assured that Islamic customs and traditions will be respected, and guidelines will be issued to tourist destinations, hotels, and other relevant establishments



Cinematographers: From camera lens to canvas



EXCLUSIVE

Cinema, with all its glamour, the red carpet, the continuous flashlights, the press conferences, the smiles in front of the cameras, the colorful and glamorous costumes. the fame, the money, and the popularity, has another side to it. A side where cinematographers seek refuge in the white canvas, in the sketchbook, in the sculpture mold. This is the other side of the cinematographers. Cinematographers who are known by the film industry as directors, actors, or designers, but their other artistic experiences in other media are unknown. Artistic experiences that do not allow depression, work pressure, unemployment, or censorship to stop them from creating.

An exhibition of visual arts by cinematographers, titled 'The Other Side,' is being held at the Contemporary Soo Collection, featuring the works of cinematographers who also create art outside of the film industry. The exhibition is curated by Omid Bonakdar and dedicated to the memory of Nosrat Karimi, Jamshid Mashayekhi, Dariush Mehrjui, Abbas

Kiarostami, Shahrokh Ghiasi, Atila Pesvani, Nader Torkaman, and Vahid Nasirian. The show showcases the works of Mehdi Ahmadi, Rova Afshar, Reza Babak, Parviz Parastui, Amir Shahab Razavian, Mohammad Ali Sajjadi, Mehrab Ghasemkhani, Siroos Moghaddam, Shahrokh Foroutanian, Anahita Dargahi, and others.

Falling in love with cinema through painting

Omid Bonakdar, the exhibition's curator, is an Iranian director, screenwriter, editor, and painter who also has non-cinematic artistic activities spoke to Persian Iran Newspaper about the exhibition's inception.

He said, "I'm primarily a cinematographer, but my artistic journey began with painting. Seeking collaborative visual arts, I studied set design with Iraj Raminfar, where I discovered my passion for cinema and shifted my focus to filmmaking."

New opportunity for

Bonakdar added, "For years, I balanced painting and cinema until I stepped away from the film industry a while ago, returning to visual arts. After group exhibitions, I held my solo show, 'Zoroaster's Legacy.' I realized many

cinematographer friends were also visual artists, inspiring me to curate 'The Other Side,' which took eight months of preparation."

Regarding the curation of 'The Other Side' exhibition, Bonakdar explained, "There were two criteria: selection and gallery space arrangement. In terms of selection, my primary concern was to ensure that the presented works had good quality and were aesthetically defensible, maintaining the dignity of the cinematogra-

He continued, "The Soo Contemporary Art Gallery has two floors, both dedicated to this exhibition. For the first time, gallery visitors in Iran can view a drawing by Jamshid Mashayekhi, a pencil portrait of his friend and colleague Davood Rashidi. Mashayekhi drew this portrait and gifted it to Rashidi's wife. Ehteram Boroumand. There is also a pen drawing by Amir Naderi, who has been working in the film industry outside of Iran for many years.

33 artists' works on show

Bonakdar also spoke about the various techniques seen in the works, "The works presented in this exhibition showcase different techniques. We have drawings, paintings, ceramics, and sculptures. For example, Ahoo Kheradmand's works are in gouache, Parviz Parastui's paintings are in pastel and acrylic, and Anahita Dargahi's works are in acrylic. The media of the works vary, and we have tried to showcase the other side of the visual arts of cinema artists, excluding photography and video, which are closely related to cinema itself. Parviz Parastui's works, which are being exhibited to the public for the first time, include both paintings and sculptures. My dear late friend Atila Pesyani has two wall sculptures in the exhibition, made from wood, rope, wire, and recycled materials. The works of several other artists, such as Nazanin Farahani, who has four ceramic pieces, are also

being exhibited for the first time. In total, 33 artists are featured in this exhibition, and I have made every effort to ensure it is a comprehensive show."

Harmony between visual arts and cinema

Amir Shahab Razavian, a director and screenwriter, is one of the cinematographers who also engages in visual arts and has exhibited his works in 'The Other Side' exhibition.

Regarding his works, Razavian explained, "My works are inspired by traditional painting, combining miniature, coffeehouse painting, storytelling, and nast'aliq calligraphy."

He considered his paintings to be more illustrative and added, "I wrote the stories myself, drawing from my personal experiences during the revolution and the war between 1978 and 1988. After writing the stories, I created characters based on them, and each work has a narrative, like a storytelling performance, where the stories begin and end."

Regarding his non-cinematic artistic activities, Razavian said, "In the field of visual arts, I have designed posters and held several painting exhibitions in Iran, the United States, Canada, and Germany. My previous works in painting are in black and white, but the works displayed in this exhibition are in color."

Each work has its own

Mohammad Ali Sajjadi, a director, screenwriter, producer, editor, painter, and writer, whose works are on display at the exhibition said "I became seriously interested in calligraphy and painting from the second grade of elementary school and practiced calligraphy for a long time. Later. I became interested in animated painting, and at the age of 13, I made my first film, 'Who's the Smartest?' using animation techniques."

He expressed his happiness with painting, saying, "Over the last



12 years, painting has been integral to my life. My style blends surrealism, expressionism, and occasionally ex-surrealism, varying across my portfolio. Many of my pieces draw inspiration from the painting 'Woman with Pome-

Influence of filmmaking thought on painting

This director and writer, when asked about the influence of his filmmaking thinking on his visual arts work, said, "Naturally, I am one person who uses various styles, methods, and tools in filmmaking, and in painting, I use different tools. However, both have aspects that share a common essence."

Sajjadi, when asked about the similarities and differences between painting and cinema, said, "Cinema and painting differ in many ways, but they share the element of painting. In cinema. you collaborate with a team and equipment, while painting is a solitary pursuit with a brush and canvas. I find more freedom in painting, which is why I paint more."

Cinematographers are not limited to seventh art

Amir Hossein Sedigh, who has three works at the exhibition, explained about his passion in sculpture, saying, "I have been working with sculptures for over twenty years and have participated in four group exhibitions, but I haven't had a solo exhibition vet. My first group exhibition was thanks to a dear sculptor friend

named Ilkhan, who always insisted that I display my sculptures to be seen. Once, he took one of my newly completed works from my hands and submitted it to an exhibition! Now, after a few years, I've realized that it's good for the energy of these sculptures to be spread to other people's homes, and not just fill my own house. The sculptures I've created use various materials: Stone, bronze, wood, plaster, and papier-mâché, and I've used almost all sculpture materials."

Unfortunately, in recent years, there have been many controversies surrounding exhibitions by cinematographers, who have often faced harsh criticism. My approach in this exhibition, along with Bonakdar's idea, was to show that artists working in cinema and television can have personal approaches and defendable works in the visual arts, and they are not always concerned with holding exhibitions. I believe that those who work professionally in the seventh art, whether as actors, directors, or other crew members, should have sufficient knowledge of the other six arts, from painting and literature to other forms, to present the seventh art in the best way and with the highest quality."

Sedigh added in cinema, a collaborative art form, even with all the effort, the results may not be reasonable, but in sculpture, as a solitary art, with the right choice, creativity, execution, and presentation, one can claim that the work is a part of the artist's body and soul, manifested in that form.



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