Iran begins celebrations marking 1979 Islamic Revolution

The photo shows a motorcycle parade in the Azadi Square in Tehran as part of celebrations marking the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.
● MEHR

National Desk

Nationwide celebrations to mark the 46th anniversary of the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution started in Iran on Friday with thousands of programs organized to be held across the country.

The Ten-Day Dawn celebrations begin on the 12th day of the Iranian month of Bahman in the Persian calendar which marks the return of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Imam Khomeini, to Iran after several years of living in exile.

In the capital Tehran, thousands of Iranians as well as several officials attend-ed a ceremony to adorn the city's major cemetery with flowers, where Imam Khomeini held his first speech after returning to the country.

Meanwhile, motorcycle parades were held across the country to mark the victory of the revolution.

Over 46,000 programs have been prepared and organized to mark the Islamic Revolution's anniversary this year. The programs include visiting the tombs of the martyrs, holding 900 meetings with the families of martyrs, laying flowers on the tombs of martyrs, and sounding the bell of the Revolution in 110,000 schools across the country.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also paid tribute to Imam Khomeini at his mausoleum in Tehran on Thursday. He also visited the tombs of the martyrs in Tehran's cemetery.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 led to over-throwing of former Iranian monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

By toppling the Western-backed Pahlavi regime 46 years ago, the Iranian nation ended 2,500 years of monarchic rule and established a new political system – a republic based on Islamic values and democracy.

FM says Iran supports any Syrian gov't backed by public

US advised to unblock Iranian seized assets as trust-building step

International Desk

Iran expressed support for any government in Syria which is backed by the Arab country's people after the administration of former president Bashar al-Assad was toppled by militants in December last year.

In an interview with Qatar-based Al Jazeera TV channel, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also affirmed that Tehran will support stability and integrity of Syrian territory.

The Islamic Republic had been one of the main allies of the former government in Syria and had helped the country to root out the foreign-backed terrorists, including the Daesh, after the country was gripped by foreign-sponsored militancy in 2011.

However, armed militants, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), took control of Syrian capital, Damascus, on December 8 and declared an end to Assad's rule in a surprise offensive that was launched from their stronghold in northwestern Syria, reaching the capital in less than two weeks.

Iran pulled out its military advisors from the country after new rulers took control of the country.

Since then, Iran has repeatedly underlined that it supports Syria's sov-ereignty and territorial integrity as its principled policy.

Tehran has also highlighted the need for an inclusive Syrian government, which would include all political, ethnic and religious groups.

The Iranian government has also expressed Tehran's readiness to reopen its embassy in Damascus, which was closed after the takeover of the country by militants.

In a statement on December 8, Iran's Foreign Ministry reiterated the status of Syria as an "important and influential" country in the West Asia region and said the Islamic Republic will spare no effort to help Damascus establish security and stability.

Trust-building step

During the interview, Iran's foreign minister also responded to a question about the possibility of negotiations between Tehran and the new administration in the United States.

Araghchi said the history of relations between Tehran and Washington is full of distrust which will not be dispelled with a single word.

Araghchi said the history of relations between Tehran and Washington is full of the US hostility towards Iran. Citing the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and the assassination of Iran's anti-terror commander Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top diplomat said, "All of these events created a history full of hostility and, most importantly, a history full of distrust between Iran and the US. Of course, all of this cannot be compensated for with one word."

In response to the question of what steps the US should take to win Iran's trust, Araghchi said there are many steps they can take. The release of Iran's assets that has been blocked by the US in different countries is an example of steps that can be taken to gain Iran's trust.

Positive signals are coming from Tehran and Washington as the two countries' presidents prioritize negotiations to settle their disputes, not least over Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

Since taking office last July, the new

Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

Iranian administration has repeatedly voiced its readiness to hold talks with the Western countries to resolve their disputes over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

In recent months, Iran and European parties to the nuclear deal – France, Germany and the UK – have also held several rounds of talks on Iran's nuclear program and have agreed to resume the negotiations in the future.

In 2015, Iran proved the peaceful nature of its nuclear program to the world by signing the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with six world powers.

However, Washington's unilateral withdrawal and its subsequent re-imposition of sanctions left the future of the deal in limbo.

Hamas confirms death of its military chief Mohammed Deif

Palestinian resistance group, Hamas, confirmed on Thursday the death of its military chief Mohammed Deif in an Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip during the regime's onslaught on the Palestinian territory.

"The Al-Qassam Brigades announce to our great people the martyrdom of a group of distinguished fighters and heroic commanders," Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' armed wing, announced in a video statement, naming "commander Mohammed Deif, chief of staff of the Al-Qassam Brigades (and) commander Marwan Issa, deputy chief of staff" among them.

Israel had accused Deif of being one of the key architects of Hamas' October 7 operation in the occupied territory, along with Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, who was killed on October 16, 2024.

On August 1 last year, the Israeli military announced it had killed Deif in an air strike in Gaza the month before.

The military said fighter jets had struck Khan Yunis on July 13 and following an intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was killed in the strike.

He was killed along with one of his top commanders, Rafa Salama, the military said.

Deif became head of Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, in 2002.

Deif, whose real name is Mohammed Diab al-Masri, was born in the Khan Yunis refugee camp in 1965.

Iran's chance to break

In this context, Trump's statements about making the US the global AI hub during his

first days back in office indicate a serious intention to set up an AI monopoly. These are not just slogans but reflect a long-term strategy to maintain US supremacy in the post-Cold War era. Trump and his supporters understand that AI is the key to power in the 21st century and whoever controls it can shape the world's future.

Chinese AI breakthrough

Amid these circumstances, the emergence of the Chinese startup DeepSeek with its powerful and affordable AI model offers a glimmer of hope to independent nations. This initiative proves that AI monopolization is not possible and will ultimately backfire on the monopolists. DeepSeek has challenged major US tech giants like Google and OpenAI by offering a high-performance AI model at a fraction of the cost. This achievement demonstrates that impres-sive AI progress does not require massive investments or reliance on expensive chips manufactured by US tech firms.

Such a breakthrough opens up unparalleled opportunities for countries like Iran. The first and foremost opportunity is reducing dependence on Western technologies. By accessing the the open-source Chinese AI model and emulating it intelligently, Iran can achieve self-sufficiency in various sectors, including industry, agriculture, healthcare and education, relying on its own hardware resources. This will free Iran from dependence on expensive, monopolized Western technologies, often several times more expensive due to sanctions and import restrictions.

The second opportunity is transforming the economy. Indigenous AI can serve as a growth drive force, creating jobs, boosting productivity and slashing costs. By leveraging affordable AI, Iran can enhance its global economic competitiveness and become a regional economic powerhouse.

The third opportunity is strengthening independence and national sovereignty. By developing AI technology domestically, Iran can free itself from foreign dependence in sensitive areas like cybersecurity and national defense, reinforcing its sovereignty.

Iranian policymakers should take into account that the growing prevalence of AI opens up new frontiers for societies and industries. In the not-so-distant future, AI will permeate all aspects of human life, fundamentally changing how we work, live and interact socially.

In industry, AI will lead to increased automation and robotics, making factories and production lines more AI-dependent. This can boost productivity and reduce costs but will also create new challenges in employment and education.

In services, AI will enable customized services and improve service quality. Customer support, education and healthcare systems will increasingly employ AI, potentially enhancing people's quality of life and driving down service costs.

In science, AI will speed up research and scientific discoveries. AI can assist scientists in analyzing complex data and uncovering hidden patterns, leading to remarkable advancements in medicine, biology and physics.

Proposals for wise engagement with AI era

Iran should adopt shrewd policies in the face of the AI era. The first policy is investing in education and training AI specialists. Iran should set up specialized universities and research centers to nurture AI talent and tap into its young population.

The second policy is supporting knowledge-based companies and AI startups. The government should provide loans and financial support to create a conducive environment for these entities and encourage innovation.

The third policy is developing the necessary infrastructure for AI development.

The government should invest in ICT infrastructure, laying the groundwork for AI advancement.

The fourth policy is bringing in appropriate regulations for AI usage. The government should enact legislation to prevent AI misuse and protect individual rights and privacy.

It is crucial to emphasize that the AI era presents a unique opportunity for Iran to achieve technological advancements. However, this opportunity requires diligent planning and effort. Authorities should learn from past experiences, rely on domestic capabilities and young talents and seize this moment to shape a bright future for the beloved homeland while ensuring that research funds do not fall prey to opportunists who, under the guise of "national" projects, seek to exploit public funds with flashy proposals.

It is to be vigilant about the "AI Sputnik Moment" and act wisely to seize the opportunity to benefit the country and beyond.