

Pezeshkian: If Iran’s nuclear sites are targeted, thousands more will be built



National Desk
Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said the country would build thousands more nuclear facilities if they

are attacked after the US president repeatedly threatened Iran with military action on its nuclear sites. “They are threatening us that they will attack our Natanz nuclear facility.

Come and attack it. It is the brains of our children that built it,” Pezeshkian said during a visit to the southern province of Bushehr. “If you destroy a hundred (nuclear facilities), our children will build a thousand,” he said. US President Donald Trump has recently raised the possibility of Israel’s strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities if Tehran and Washington fail to reach an agreement on Iran’s nuclear program. The Washington Post also reported on Thursday, citing US intelligence, that Israel was “likely to attempt a strike on Iran’s Fordow and Natanz nuclear facilities in the first six months of 2025.” The report referred to “two potential strike options, each involving the United States providing support in the form of aerial refueling as well as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.” The Wall Street Journal had earlier carried a similar report.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have worsened in recent weeks after the US president reinstated his “maximum pressure” policy on Iran over its nuclear program. At the same time, Trump called for striking a deal with Iran. “I would like a deal done with Iran on non-nuclear. I would prefer that to bombing the hell out of it,” Trump told the New York Post on Friday, adding, “If we made the deal, Israel wouldn’t bomb them.” On Wednesday, Pezeshkian said the US president says he wants to negotiate with Iran while closing all the doors for negotiations. He threatens the world not to establish relations with Iran and on the other hand, he suggests that we negotiate. Pezeshkian added that Iran will not back down and will not surrender in the face of any threat. During his visit on Thursday, Pezeshkian visited Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, authorizing operations at Units 2 and 3 of the facility, the Islamic Re-

public’s sole nuclear power plant. He toured various sections of the first Unit of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, including its control room and turbine, where plant managers and experts briefed him on the details of the plant’s operations, electricity production, and power transmission to the grid. He also visited the construction sites of Units 2 and 3 of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant and, at the end of the tour, ordered the installation of the first key equipment component for Unit 2’s reactor building to enhance safety standards, along with the excavation of pump house buildings for both units. The first phase of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, currently operating at a capacity of 1,015 megawatts, has generated 72 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity over 11 years since its commissioning. This has prevented the consumption of 114 million barrels of crude oil, saving over \$8 billion in fossil fuel costs.

Iran rejects ‘baseless’ US claim of arming Yemen’s Ansarullah

International Desk
Iran rejected “baseless” accusations by the United States about the Islamic Republic’s military and financial support for Yemen’s Ansarullah resistance group, saying that Tehran has always supported peace and stability in the Arab country. In a letter to the United Nations chief and the president of the Security Council, Iran’s Permanent Mission to the UN emphasized that the US cannot hide its complicity in Israel’s crimes by pinning the blame on Iran for regional tensions. Iran’s reaction came after US Deputy Representative to the UN Dorothy Shea in an address to a Security Council briefing on Yemen alleged that Iran’s materiel and financial support had enabled Yemen’s Ansarullah to launch “numerous attacks on civilian infrastructure” and fire at American warships in the Red Sea. “Unlike the United States that provides weapons and extensive financial support to the Israeli regime to continue its aggression against the oppressed people of the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been and will keep adhering to the fundamental principles of the international law, the United Nations Charter, and Security Council resolutions,” Iran’s mission said. Tehran has adopted a “unified and stable” position on Yemen’s crisis and believes that the conflict must be resolved via a “comprehensive political

process” that guarantees the country’s independence, national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. The US, UK, and Israel have launched attacks across Yemen over the past months in violation of the country’s sovereignty and international law. The illegal attacks came in response to Yemen’s campaign to show solidarity with the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip amid a genocidal Israeli war. “Since the beginning of the Yemen crisis, the Islamic Republic of Iran has called for an immediate end to aggression, a cease-fire, the start of meaningful dialogue between Yemeni parties, and the peaceful settlement of the conflict with no foreign interference,” the Iranian mission said. The future of Yemen must be determined by its own people, it noted, stressing that lasting peace is only possible there “through diplomacy, respect for national sovereignty, and adherence to international law, not through military interventions or false accusations.” Since the beginning of Israel’s onslaught on the Gaza Strip, the Yemeni Armed Forces have targeted ships heading to or departing ports in the occupied territories, or those linked to Israel, in the southern Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and even in the Arabian Sea. They have also conducted strikes against Israeli targets in the occupied lands.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran urges Lebanon not to bar planes from landing in Beirut



International Desk
The Islamic Republic urged Lebanon not to prevent Iranian planes from landing in the country’s airports after a decision by the Arab country barred two Iranian aircraft from touching down in the Lebanese capital. Lebanon’s Directorate General of Civil Aviation said on Thursday it had “temporarily rescheduled” some flights including from Iran until February 18 as it was implementing “additional security measures.” Iran’s Ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, in a televised interview on Friday, said that Tehran is trying to restore flights between the two countries, adding that the Lebanese government had requested that another plane replace the Iranian plane to evacuate the Lebanese stranded in Iran. Amani said that Tehran could agree to the Middle East Airlines evacuation flights “on the condition that they (Lebanese authorities) don’t block Iranian flights.” Late Thursday, a crowd of Lebanese people blocked the Beirut airport road and burned tires to protest the Lebanon’s decision. After the airport protests, author-

ities said they were working to bring back Lebanese passengers abandoned in Iran with planes belonging to the Beirut-based Middle East Airlines. But Saeed Chalandari, CEO of Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport, said on Friday that Iran had rejected the proposal. “Naturally, we do not agree to their request, because if there is to be a flight between the two countries, it must be a two-way flight,” Chalandari told Iranian news agency Tasnim. After blocking the Iranian flight, Lebanon dispatched two planes on Friday from its own national airliner Middle East Airlines to bring the stranded Lebanese home from Iran, but Iran refused to allow the Lebanese aircraft to land on its territory. Lebanon’s Foreign Minister Joe Raggi told Lebanese broadcaster Al-Jadeed that his ministry was working to resolve the issue with its Iranian counterpart. The developments coincided with Israel’s threats against Iranian planes landing in Lebanon. Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee had warned the army was prepared “to thwart” any attempts to transfer what was claimed to be

funds or weapons to Hezbollah resistance group in Lebanon. Adraee has claimed that Iran and Hezbollah “have been exploiting... the Beirut international airport through civilian flights, to smuggle funds dedicated to arming” the group. The Iranian foreign ministry spokesman in a statement accused Israel of disrupting flights from Tehran to Beirut. The Iranian foreign ministry Esmaeil Baqaei said that, “The threat by the Zionist regime to a passenger plane carrying Lebanese citizens has disrupted normal flights to Beirut airport.” Baqaei condemned Israel’s “gross and continuous violations of the principles and rules of international law and violations of Lebanon’s national sovereignty.” He also called for the International Civil Aviation Organization and other world bodies “to stop Israel’s dangerous behavior against the safety and security of civil aviation.” In September, Lebanon’s Transport Ministry ordered an Iranian aircraft not to enter its airspace after Israel warned air traffic control at Beirut airport that it would use “force” if the plane landed.