

# Tehran poised to negotiate but 'not at any cost'

## International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran has frequently announced that it seeks negotiations to resolve dispute over its nuclear program but not "at any cost."

Addressing a meeting of intellectuals in Tehran Province on Thursday, the Iranian president said that, "It is not acceptable to impose sanctions and say that you should have no missiles or weapons, and then talk about negotiations again." Pezeshkian underlined that negotiations must be conducted with dignity.

"If they come with dignity, we will negotiate, but we will not yield to coercion ... from the beginning, we have declared that we seek dialogue and negotiation, but not at any cost," the Iranian president said.

Iranian and American presidents have repeatedly expressed their countries' readiness for new negotiations on Iran's nuclear program in recent months. But the US president's bullying language has made it difficult to start negotiations. Iranian officials say the negotiations under pressure are not reasonable. Since taking office in January, US President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed his eagerness for talks with Iran to strike a deal on Tehran's nuclear program.

At the same time, he has reinstated his so-called "maximum pressure" policy and has threatened military action against Iran.

"He thinks that if he comes and threatens us, we will back down tomorrow and say, 'Alright, we accept whatever you say.' We are

human beings with dignity. If they come with dignity, we will have a dialogue, but we are not going to yield to coercion," Pezeshkian said, referring to his American counterpart.

On February 7, Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said experience has shown that negotiations with the US have no effect on solving Iran's problems.

During his first term in office, Trump pulled Washington out of the UNSC-endorsed Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed severe economic sanctions against Tehran while Iran was adhering to its commitments under the deal and even continued to do so for a year after the US withdrawal. Trump's move in 2018 left the future of the nuclear deal in limbo.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a meeting of intellectuals in Tehran Province on February 20, 2025.  
● president.ir

## 'Politically charged': Deputy FM rejects Grossi's nuclear remarks



Rafael Grossi  
● AFP

### International Desk

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi rejected recent remarks by UN atomic agency chief Rafael Grossi on its nuclear program, calling them "unprofessional" and "politically charged."

Gharibabadi's reaction came after Grossi at a press conference in Japan's capital said Iran was "enriching (uranium) at 60 percent, so almost weapon level." He also described a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran as an "empty shell" that was "no longer fit for purpose."

Gharibabadi insisted that Iran's nuclear program was solely for peaceful purposes.

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) also reacted to Grossi's remarks, saying that his comments

could be used as pretext by the United States and other Western countries "to exert unjust pressure on Iran."

The AEOI in a statement warned the IAEA that with such unprofessional and politically biased comments the agency risks losing its credibility.

"As the head of a major international organization, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is expected to always speak and act impartially, professionally, and free from political bias." "Unfortunately, some of Mr. Grossi's statements and positions, particularly his recent ones, lack these qualities, raising concerns that this important international organization, by straying from the path of neutrality and professionalism, may undermine its own credibility," the statement said.

In his remarks, Grossi said Iran had blown past the limits set by the 2015 deal, adding the goal currently was to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, or to help it "prove that they don't want to."

The deal – known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – collapsed following Washington's withdrawal from it in 2018 during

the first term of US President Donald Trump, who returned to office in January.

Tehran continued to adhere to the deal for a year after Washington pulled out, but then began rolling back its commitments after remaining parties to the nuclear deal failed to fulfill their commitments under the agreement.

Iran has repeatedly expressed its willingness to revive the accord but efforts to that end have faltered. The IAEA nuclear watchdog, which Grossi leads, claims Iran has increased its manufacturing of enriched uranium such that it is the only non-nuclear weapons state to possess uranium enriched to 60 percent.

That level is well on the way to the 90 percent required for an atomic bomb, according to the IAEA.

During his press conference, Grossi said that much of the 2015 deal was "no longer applicable," adding that the IAEA was ready to provide "technically sound alternatives to eliminate the possibility that Iran develops a nuclear weapon."

Tehran vehemently denies any intention of developing nuclear weapons.

## Nuclear chief: Iran 'major player' in construction of nuclear plants

'Iran one of world's main heavy water producers'

### National Desk

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami said Iran has become "a major player" in the knowledge of constructing nuclear power plants in the world.

Speaking at a ceremony held at the construction site of 300-megawatt Karun power plant in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on Thursday, Eslami said that the world knows that Iran is gaining the knowledge to construct nuclear power plants, noting that, "The enemies can't stand seeing this great achievement."

The Iranian official said that, "In order to achieve our goals, we don't care about the enemies' sanctions and pressure," adding that, "We will continue the path that we have drawn for ourselves to reach our goals."

He said that the United States tried to stop the construction of the nuclear plant twelve years ago, but it failed to do so.

"With the help of our youth and scientists, its construction continued," he added.

Pointing to the importance of nuclear know-how in various fields, including medicine and agriculture, Eslami said



Mohammad Eslami  
● AEOI

that the enemies can't prevent the Islamic Republic from achieving its goals by assassinating its scientists or imposing sanctions and exerting economic pressure on the country.

The construction of the power plant is one of the manifestations of the country's progress," he added.

According to reports, the power plant is of a pressurized water reactor (PWR) type and with the capacity of producing 300 megawatts of electricity is to be built on a land of approximately 50 hectares in the vicinity of the Karun River.

In the second day of his visit to the Khuzestan Province on Friday, Eslami said that Iran is one of the main players in the production of heavy water in the world – the issue that "the enemies cannot tolerate."

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Iran's Army to hold military drills in Gulf of Oman

### National Desk

Iranian Army's Deputy Coordinator Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari said the Army will hold naval drills today in the Gulf of Oman and northern Indian Ocean.

"The joint military exercise Zolfaghar 1403 will begin tomorrow (Saturday) on the Makran coast, the Sea of Oman and the northern Indian Ocean," Sayyari said on Friday. Saturday's exercises have the "objective of strengthening defense and deterrence capabilities against any land, air and sea threat," Sayyari added.

Sayyari said that the Army's ground, naval, air defense and air forces will participate in the military drills.

The purpose of the exercise is to enhance the defense and deterrence capabilities of Iran against any threat, he added. Sayyari also warned the country's enemies that Iran's Armed Forces are ready to confront any threat from land,



Habibollah Sayyari  
● IRNA

sea and air.

In recent weeks, Iran has conducted military exercises across the country, including near nuclear facilities in the west and center of the country.