

# Pezeshkian never says he inherited wreck: *Experts*

**DEBATE** In the latest segment of IRNA's *Talaaghi* (translation from Persian: Intersection) program, experts looked back at the first year of the Iranian president's term in office. It was on July 28, 2024, that Pezeshkian's presidential decree was signed off on by the Leader of the Revolution, followed shortly by the inauguration ceremony. From then on, Pezeshkian and the government as a whole have plunged into a turbulent period marked by an unprecedented flurry of events, challenges, and crises. Mere hours after the swearing-in, a high-profile guest of the ceremony, Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' political leader, fell victim to an assassination attempt in Tehran. Following this, developments have picked up speed, leading us now into a post-war situation with Israel. A wide array of issues looms large — from the water crisis and glaring shortcomings in the energy sector to foreign policy hurdles, such as the fate of the "snapback mechanism". Regarding the government's performance over the past year and upcoming challenges, IRNA's *Talaaghi* program hosted two distinguished political analysts, Mohammad Atrianfar and Ahmad Shirzad. Below is the first part of their roundtable discussion, which has been translated and edited for conciseness:



Mohammad Atrianfar (R), journalist and reformist politician, and Ahmad Shirzad (L), former Iranian lawmaker, debate the one-year track record of President Masoud Pezeshkian (not pictured) on August 5, 2025.

Over this past year, foreign policy crises have clearly taken center stage during Mr. Pezeshkian's term. This period saw the Zionist regime's aggression on the country and the imposed 12-day war. We're here to discuss the events that unfolded during this time and the Iranian government's handling of them.

**ATRIANFAR:** When it comes to assessing the government's capacity and performance, I'll lay out some broad points first and then we drill down into more details. One major mistake that the media, society, and even our political and social elites keep falling into when passing judgment at the highest levels is their habit of tying someone's hands to past promises. They focus on what candidates have pledged, while overlooking the glaring gaps that often crop up between lofty slogans and the realities on the ground. This misconception trips up the public, causing them to miss the mark significantly. This type of judgment sets us up for an error that typically means the actor or official ends up defeated because their performance inevitably falls short of their lofty ideals — which puts them in the spotlight for being inefficient.

I'd argue that perhaps Mr. Pezeshkian is the only Iranian presidential figure who, from day one, did not make grand promises, instead raising his hands to say, "I am fully bound by the approved long-term political, executive, and social plan of the Islamic Establishment."

With all this said, we can now stick to the broad agenda of this debate, even though we know that society expects us to get into the details because a government is about execution, performance, and economy. It is a government that responds to the public's social and economic concerns. But we are not in a position — at least I am not — to be the ones to pass ultimate judgment. I believe Dr. Shirzad, given his academic stature, may avoid getting bogged down in such



Look at Mr. Pezeshkian's competitors in the election — all wore labels, justified or not, and society judged them accordingly. Fortunately, the labels on Mr. Pezeshkian were minimal. When he came out and said, "I don't want to quarrel," and moved ahead with unity, that allowed him to pull off what he did. Had it been someone else, it wouldn't have been possible to act this way.

details as well; The task of analyzing performance falls to the engineers involved in implementation — those who can back up their claims with hard data.

**Thank you. Mr. Shirzad, considering the key points Mr. Atrianfar touched on, how do you size up Pezeshkian's government? For instance, he proposed unity to tackle problems. What is your assessment of this administration?**

**SHIRZAD:** Masoud Pezeshkian is a unique figure, one whose like we seldom come across. We must pay attention to how, at this juncture, someone who has served multiple terms as a widely respected and efficient representative in his city stepped up to become president. Mr. Pezeshkian does not have the

backing of a powerful organization, and I think both he and society acknowledge this. Imagine someone who is secretary-general of a party or has gathered a core group of longtime allies around them — that's not him. He has been a lone player, deeply rooted in religious commitment based on the Qur'an and Nahj al-Balagha, and he is a man of integrity.

Looking at his background, he's never played up to power; Speaking the truth has been paramount for him — an outstanding ethical trait. Lacking an organizational base can sometimes bring efficiency, which is a characteristic specific to the Islamic Republic. We're not talking globally — this trait could cause problems in certain contexts. This is

talked about a lot these days, especially on social media, where people ask why the president sometimes signs something only to later backtrack on it. That's a clear sign that there isn't a strong organization standing behind him — otherwise, he would have checked in with others to find if there's any sensitivity.

At the same time, I think the particular role Mr. Pezeshkian has carved out in the current political climate is something no one else could have done. The problem in our country is that people tend to be boxed into their historical labels. Mr. Atrianfar himself has labels attached to him, whether he knows them or not, that make people overlook the details of his unique character; Similarly, I, Shirzad, carry certain labels, and these labels



The reformist Iranian presidential candidate Masoud Pezeshkian (R) greets his rival, Saeed Jalili, a hardline former nuclear negotiator, at the conclusion of a debate at a TV studio in Tehran, Iran, on June 1, 2024.