

## Putin urges deeper Russia-Iran strategic partnership

### International Desk

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday called for the "persistent" strengthening of a comprehensive strategic partnership between Moscow and Tehran in a message to his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian to congratulate on the 47th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In his message, Putin said relations between the two countries were characterized by "a friendly nature and good neighborliness" as he wished "prosperity and well-being" to the Iranian people, IRNA reported.

"Russia supports Iran's efforts to safeguard its sovereign rights and legitimate interests and to ensure the country's security in the current complex international conditions," he added, in an apparent reference to rising tensions between Iran and the United States, which have seen a massive US naval buildup in the Persian Gulf to threaten the Islamic Republic with military action if a deal is not reached over its nuclear program. Putin and Pezeshkian signed a 20-year comprehensive strategic partnership treaty in Moscow on January 17, 2025 which came into force in early October. Under the treaty, the two countries are committed to assisting one another in countering common security threats and to engaging in intelligence sharing. The agreement also specifies that if one party faces aggression, the other will refrain from aiding the aggressor.

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian praised efforts by West Asian leaders to strengthen peace and stability in the strategic region, saying that no nation benefits from war. Pezeshkian made the remarks during the International Conference on Investment and Financing Opportunities of Rail and Road Corridors, which was held in Tehran on Saturday. Pezeshkian's remarks came as regional countries including Turkey, Iraq, Oman, Qatar and Egypt did their utmost to ease tensions recently deteriorated between Tehran and Washington over Iran's nuclear program. Efforts by the leaders of the regional countries have reportedly led to the resumption of talks between Iran and the United States and have already reduced the risk of a military confrontation in the region. During the conference, the president said development of communication routes would guarantee progress for all regional countries and create a suitable platform for peace and security for future generations.

He said that Iran is firmly committed to accelerating the implementation of vital transport infrastructure projects, stressing

that connectivity will guarantee the security of all regional countries.

"In the Islamic Republic, we are determined to implement projects related to the country's roads and vital arteries with power, speed, precision, and high quality," Pezeshkian said.

During the event, attended by Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd, seven memoranda of understanding and agreements were signed between the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company of Iran and domestic and foreign investors to expand rail and road corridor infrastructure.

Ambassadors from the Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Iraq, Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, Armenia, Qatar, and Burkina Faso, as well as the UN representative in Iran, attended the event.

Pezeshkian underlined the broader significance of transport links, saying, "The communication roads and routes that connect us are the path of development and peace, and with the opening of these roads, the security of all of us will be ensured, the economies of countries will develop, and we will build a region full of peace, tranquility,



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during the International Conference on Investment and Financing Opportunities of Rail and Road Corridors in Tehran on February 14, 2026.

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and friendship."

He added that Iran shares deep historical and cultural ties with neighboring countries.

"We are friends, brothers, and relatives with the Republic of Azerbaijan, Iraq, Kurdistan, and so forth," he said.

"We have a several-thousand-year history

of cooperation and friendship with Turkey, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan; therefore, we will revive our connections and believe that our routes of connection are the path of peace, development of science and knowledge, and capability. With the opening of roads, we can guarantee security and the economy."

## China says Iran-US dispute should be resolved through dialogue

**Switzerland: Oman to host US-Iran talks in Geneva next week**

### International Desk

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the current situation surrounding Iran has affected the entire West Asia region, stressing that disputes between Tehran and Washington should be resolved through mediation and dialogue.

Addressing the 62nd Munich Security Conference on Saturday, the Chinese top diplomat said, "The United States must exercise 'caution' in its engagements with Iran. This situation directly impacts peace in the Middle East." "Instead of creating new conflicts, the parties should act with caution," Wang said.

Since February 6, Iran and the US have launched a new round of negotiations to resolve a dispute over Iran's nuclear program.

The US, which has sent a number of aircraft carriers and warships to the region, has threatened Iran with new military attacks if Iran does not make



a deal.

Iran has announced its conditions and has underlined that it will not bow to excessive demands in the negotiations which were held in Oman's capital. Iran has also said that it will give decisive response to any aggression.

Switzerland said on Saturday that Oman would host new round talks in Geneva next week. "Switzerland stands ready at all times to offer its good offices to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Iran," a foreign ministry spokesman told AFP.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov also said on Saturday that Moscow along with others, including China, is working to ensure a suitable political environment for negotiations between Iran and the United States.

On the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the outlook for negotiations with Iran with Bloomberg, saying that President Donald Trump "would always prefer to end problems with a deal."

Addressing the Munich conference, Rubio however repeated claims that Iran's nuclear program has military objectives, stressing that the US actions in June against Iranian nuclear facilities had contained what he described as a "growing threat."

The US president, who has repeatedly said he prefers a deal with Iran, claimed on Friday that regime change in Iran is "the best thing that could happen."

## Tehran-Washington talks ...

Larijani's visit should be understood in this context. When negotiations with multilayered dimensions are underway, it is natural for security and regional coordination to be pursued in parallel.

These moves do not represent a parallel channel competing with the Foreign Ministry, but rather one complementing it. The Foreign Ministry follows up on the text and framework of any agreement, while security institutions are responsible for assessing strategic consequences, executive guarantees, and preventing miscalculations. At a time when the other side is coupling negotiations with military pressure, it is natural for Iran to reinforce its diplomacy with the backing of national security.

**Considering the contradictory statements by Donald Trump, what do you think are his overall objectives and strategy toward Iran? How can the apparent contradiction between negotiations, increased military pressure, and rhetoric such as regime change be interpreted within a coherent strategy?**

Trump's foreign policy has relied less on "consistency in tone" and more on "effectiveness in outcomes." For this reason, what may initially appear contradictory can, in many cases, be components of a single pattern: combining negotiation with pressure to enhance bargain-

ing power. Within this framework, his overall strategy toward Iran appears to rest on three simultaneous pillars.

First, diplomacy under pressure. Inviting to negotiations while increasing military pressure is, in Trump's logic, a form of "leverage-building". In this view, negotiation is not a substitute for pressure but its continuation through political tools. Second, managing domestic audiences and regional allies. He seeks to demonstrate simultaneously that he is pursuing an agreement while remaining "tough" on Iran and not setting aside instruments of power. This dual approach effectively enables him to frame any outcome as a success at home.

Third, psychological warfare and increasing uncertainty. Raising issues such as regime change, even without a clear operational plan behind them, aims to heighten concern and doubt on the opposing side and to shape the media environment in Washington's favor. However, this approach is inherently risky, as the simultaneous use of threats and dialogue can increase the likelihood of misperception, miscalculation, and unintended incidents. If the real objective is to reach a sustainable agreement, the American side will ultimately have to move beyond symbolic messaging and demonstrative pressure and enter the logic of "balanced and verifiable action," the only path through

which diplomacy can shift from fragility to reliability.

**Trump has announced the deployment of a new carrier strike group to the region and stressed the need to create fear, while some US officials say the military is preparing for a several-week conflict with Iran if ordered. How do these moves affect diplomacy, and how should Iran respond?**

Such positions and actions are in practice an attempt to strengthen leverage at the negotiating table. Although this approach may be designed to extract concessions, it intensifies the climate of mistrust and increases the risk of miscalculation. These developments make the negotiating environment more sensitive while also adding urgency to diplomatic prudence.

The prudent management of this situation for Iran can be summarized along three axes. First, maintaining smart and decisive deterrence without resorting to provocative behavior; second, sustaining active diplomacy with an emphasis on balanced and verifiable measures; and third, strengthening national cohesion and making clear that negotiations are conducted from a position of dignity and to safeguard national interests, not out of weakness. Strength combined with restraint represents the most effective response to pressure.

## Araghchi calls Munich Conference a 'circus'

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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday branded the Munich conference a "circus" and the European Union an "aimless" bloc over the pair's lack of understanding about Iran.

"Sad to see the usually serious Munich Security Conference turned into the 'Munich Circus' when it comes to Iran," Araghchi wrote on X, arguing that the annual gathering in Germany had declined as it preferred "substance" over "performance."

He accused Germany of "wholly surrendering its regional policy to Israel."

The top diplomat took a swipe at the EU,

calling it a "confused" entity that had "lost all geopolitical weight" in the West Asia region.

Araghchi said the EU and the three European powers – Germany, France and Britain or E3 – which were parties to the tattered 2015 Iran nuclear deal, had become "paralysis and irrelevance" as they had been sidelined in the ongoing talks between the Islamic Republic and the United States to hammer out a new agreement.

"Instead, our friends in the region are far more effective and helpful than an empty-handed and peripheral E3," he said in a clear reference to mediation efforts by several regional nations including Oman, Qatar and Egypt to help progress fresh Iran-US talks that began on February 6 in



the Omani capital Muscat.

Earlier on Friday, the Iranian foreign minister in a phone conversation with Cypriot Minister of Foreign Affairs Constantinos Kombos, whose country holds the rotating presidency of the EU, said the bloc is needed to make a serious revision in its "unconstructive" approaches toward Tehran.

Araghchi criticized the EU's inappropriate approaches towards Iran, particularly the recent offensive move by the Council of the European Union in blacklisting the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) as "terrorist organizations" and the union's unwarranted interference in Iran's internal affairs.

On January 30, the European Union added the IRGC to its terrorist list in response to Iran's measures against rioters who violently wreaked havoc across the country on the invitation of a monarchist and the public incitement of US and Israeli leaders in late December.

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