

Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential election amidst increased voter turnout

TEHRAN – Veteran parliamentarian and former health minister Masoud Pezeshkian has emerged victorious in Iran's runoff presidential election, defeating former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili in a tight race.

The Interior Ministry announced Pezeshkian's victory on Saturday, marking the conclusion of an election that saw significant voter participation despite numerous challenges.

In his first remarks since being declared the winner, Pezeshkian extended his regards to all Iranians. "We will extend the hand of friendship to everyone; we are all people of this country; we should use everyone for the progress of the country," he said on national television. Page 3

Leader's guidance key in peaceful election, says president-elect Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian credited the Leader's guidance for the peaceful election process and the accurate counting of votes during a speech at the Imam Khomeini Shrine on Saturday evening.

Addressing the public and his campaign staff, Pezeshkian emphasized his commitment to honesty and transparency.

The event, held to renew commitment to the ideals of the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, was attended by a large crowd.

President-elect Pezeshkian expressed his gratitude to his supporters, stating, "I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart. Your presence, enthusiasm, and support have deeply moved me." > Page 3

Pezeshkian's election win strengthens unity

By Xavier Villar

MADRID- On Friday, July 5, Masoud Pezeshkian was elected as the new President of Iran after winning the second round of elections with approximately 16.4 million votes. His opponent, Saeed Jalili, received around 13.5 million votes.

Official figures released by the electoral headquarters of the Ministry of Interior indicate that voter turnout in this second round was 49.8%. Over 30 million out of 60 million eligible voters in Iran participated in Friday's elections, marking an increase of nearly 10% compared to the first round.

In his first post-election address, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, expressed gratitude to all candidates, emphasizing the need to harness national capacities "for the well-being and progress of the people." He also added that "with the grace of God, the great nation of Iran held free and transparent elections, electing a president with a clear majority of votes." > Page 2

Iran's snap elections showcased country's ability to handle crises: member of Leader's office

TEHRAN – The swift and successful organization of snap presidential elections, along with the active participation of citizens in the voting process, demonstrated Iran's adeptness in navigating through unprecedented crises, the deputy chief of the Office for the Preservation and Publication of the Works of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution told the Tehran Times.

Mehdi Fazaeli explained that Iran's 2024 snap elections had clear messages for both Iran's allies and adversaries: that the country can remain robust no matter what challenges are thrown at it. "Our nation boasts a well-structured system poised to effectively navigate through any crisis or unforeseen implications. We stand united and prepared to tackle challenges head-on," he said. > Page 2

Pezeshkian's cabinet likely to comprise of moderate figures: expert

TEHRAN – The July 5 runoff presidential elections in Iran, which saw reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian emerge victorious over conservative Saeed Jalili, has sparked debate about the future direction of the country. Political observers are now analyzing the potential composition of Pezeshkian's administration and its impact on Iran's domestic and foreign policies.

Parviz Amini, a university professor and prominent political expert, believes that Pezeshkian's government will likely be dominated by moderate factions.

Amini, in an interview with Farhikhtegan Newspaper, pointed out that Pezeshkian's campaign lacked concrete details about his governing strategy. "The performance of his administration will heavily depend on his cabinet appointments," Amini stated. ▶ Page 2

Straight Truth **TEHRAN TIMES**

— TEHRAN PAPERS←

The victory of the people, the defeat of Iran's enemies

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

In an analysis, Kayhan dealt with the increase in people's participation in the run-off election of Iran and wrote: The run-off presidential election was held and the great nation of Iran once again took part in the election, forming long lines in front of polling stations. In the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the people's vote is decisive and determines the future of the country. One of the hopes of the defeated enemies of the Islamic Revolution is the non-participation of everyone in the elections. For this reason, they put the election boycott project on the agenda with rumors and political propaganda. But the aware people of Iran, with their decisive presence, dealt a fatal blow to all the enemies of Islamic Iran and defeated them once again. The opposition networks targeted participation in the elections on a large scale and tried to induce despair, but they were faced with the hopeful presence of the nation and once again defeated their vain enemies.

Iran: Barbarism against the republic

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed the opposition's prevention of the participation of foreign Iranian citizens in the elections and wrote: A week after the first round of the 14th presidential term was held, the run-off elections were held on Friday. The people's participation in the run-off increased compared to the first one. Both inside the country and in the polling stations abroad, we saw the presence of more of our compatriots at the ballot boxes. But just like the first round of the elections, the rabble affiliated with the Iranian opposition in some countries tried to prevent Iranian citizens from participating in the elections by using obscenities and creating disturbances. In London, people affiliated with MKO and monarchists tried to prevent our compatriots from voting by harassing the citizens of our country. They were holding the flag of the hated Zionist regime. But they faced a decisive response from the voters and they failed again.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Iran's real democracy or the British royal system with the mask of democracy?

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the tarnishing of Iran's democratic elections by the anti-revolution media. It wrote: There are

governments in the world that show sensitivity to the elections in Iran and focus on it, and even in their media they plan against the elections in Iran. These media have always focused their activities on reducing participation and have advertised that elections in Iran are not democratic and free. At the same time as the presidential election in Iran, the Labor Party won the British Parliament. The BBC Persian reporter described the parliamentary elections in this country as one of the most democratic elections in the world, while the political system of this country is royal and hereditary and the parliament is completely show and sham. However, this network and other similar networks did not consider the elections in Iran to be democratic and tried to insinuate that it was rigged. Iranian people always choose their presidents and representatives and democracy has been ruling in Iran. However, media such as the BBC, International, and other Persian and non-Persian language media consider Iran's elections

Javan: Taliban's tension with Iran

In a commentary, Javan discussed the third Doha meeting about the latest developments in Afghanistan. The paper said: The remarkable thing is that as a result of many diplomatic exchanges during the past months to satisfy the Taliban to participate in the Doha meeting, a superficial and false understanding has been given to the Taliban that the West is ready to open its arms to them. Under the influence of such a perception, we are witnessing an increase in tension and a change in the type of behavior and approach of the Taliban with Iran. It seems that the relations between the Taliban and Iran are undergoing some changes. It is quite obvious that the Taliban, in a change of tone and now participation in the Doha meeting, is seeking to change its approach and policy towards Western countries. The previous approach of the Taliban was close interaction and coordination with the neighbors and regional powers. If the Taliban loses the alignment and companionship of the three powers Iran, Russia, and China due to false signals from the West, it will definitely be alone in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy.

Tehran hosts families of Al-Agsa Storm martyrs

By Shima Naseri

TEHRAN - Recently, Tehran welcomed the families of the martyrs from Gaza involved in the "Al-Aqsa Storm" operation.

This event aimed to show solidarity with the Palestinian people and honor their sacrifices and bravery during the conflict.

The ceremony saw the attendance of Iranian Palestinian groups. It provided a platform to reaffirm the unwavering support of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the Palestinian Resistance and to honor the families of Gaza's martyrs. Iranian officials, in their speeches, emphasized the importance of unity and solidarity within the Islamic world against Israeli aggression, reiterating that Iran has always stood by the oppressed Palestinian people.

"The sacrifices of Gaza's martyrs and the perseverance of their families inspire the struggle against oppression and injustice. As a nation that has itself suffered from the tyranny and aggression of outsiders, we have a duty to stand by you," one official stated.

The ceremony featured cultural and artistic programs dedicated to honoring the martyrs of Gaza and the Palestinian Resistance. These included musical performances, documentary

screenings, and various speeches. These activities aimed to keep alive the memory of the Palestinian martyrs and to strengthen the spirit of Resistance and solidarity between the people of Iran and

This gathering not only signified deep solidarity between the people of Iran and Palestine but also sent a strong message to the international community about Iran's unwavering support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and its stance against oppression and aggression. The families of the Gaza martyrs expressed their gratitude for the hospitality and support of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

One representative of the martyr families said, "We thank the people and government of Iran for their unwavering support. Your presence alongside us gives us hope and strength to continue our fight."The event in Tehran showcased a successful example of international cooperation in supporting resistance and justice. It demonstrated that through joint efforts and strengthened global cooperation, it is possible to achieve a safer world free from oppression and aggression. The ceremony also underscored the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support the oppressed Palestinian people and to continue the fight against the occupation and aggressions of the Israeli regime.

People's participation despite boycott calls was a shining endeavor: Leader

TEHRAN - The Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has lauded the increased participation of people in the presidential runoff, calling it "a shining endeavor" that occurred despite the enemies' calls to boycott the event.

In a message on Saturday, the Leader thanked all the candidates and participants involved in the elections.

He encouraged the newly elected president to utilize the nation's vast resources for the people's well-being and the country's advancement, continuing the legacy of the late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi.

The text of the Leader's message is as follows:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

All praise is due to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon our Master, Muhammad, and his pure Progeny, particularly the Remnant of God on earth (may our souls be sacrificed for his sake).

Praise God, the Almighty and Merciful, for through His will and blessings the great nation of Iran was able to organize and conduct the presidential election swiftly within the short legal



timeframe following the tragic loss of the martyred president. Free, transparent elections were held in two consecutive Fridays, and the president of the country was elected from among several candidates based on a majority of the votes.

Our respected election officials fulfilled their duties with the required promptness and with the utmost integrity. Our dear people came to the polls due to their sense of responsibility creating a warm, enthusiastic atmosphere and filling the ballot boxes with over 55 million votes in two stages.

This great movement in the face of the tumult calling for a boycott of the elections, which was orchestrated by the enemies of the Iranian nation to induce despair and a feeling of hopelessness, was a shining, unforgettable endeavor. All the respected candidates and all those who tirelessly worked day and night for weeks for the victory of each of them have a share in this honor and reward.

The Iranian people have now chosen their president. I extend my congratulations to the nation, the newly elected president, and all those who were active in this critical process, especially the enthusiastic youth who worked in the candidates' campaign headquarters. I encourage everyone to work together and with goodwill for the increased progress and honor of our country. It is befitting that the competitive behavior of the election period be transformed into feelings of camaraderie, and everyone

must strive in accordance with their capacity for the material and spiritual advancement of the country.

I would like to recommend Pezeshkian, the elected president, put his trust in God, the Compassionate, and set his vision on high, bright horizons. In following the path of Martyr Raisi, I encourage him to make the best use of the abundant capacities of the country especially our young, Revolutionary, faithful human resources - for the well-being of the people and the progress of the country.

Once again, I would like to thank Almighty God and extend my greetings and salutations to the great Remnant of God [Imam Mahdi (may our souls be sacrificed for his sake)]. I would also like to honor the memory of the esteemed martyrs and their magnanimous Imam [Imam Khomeini]. I sincerely thank all the respected candidates, those who actively took part in the election process during this critical period, as well as the national media, those who protect national security, and the governmental bodies responsible for the administration of the election.

> Sayyed Ali Khamenei July 6, 2024

Most prominent issue of today is the West's moral-political failure

TEHRAN- Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has issued a message to the Union of the Islamic Students Associations in Europe and America in which he highlighted the West's moral-political failure.

The message was issued on July 5, 2024.

The full text of the message is as follows:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the

Dear students!

Your deep-rooted, reputable union, along with the continuation of its activities, is a promising phenomenon. This collective presence - in its own capacity – can play a role in the current complex issues of the world. The ability to have an impact on major issues, depends more on the motivation, faith, and confidence of the activists involved, than on their numbers or how well-equipped they are and this valuable asset, praise God, is present and evident in you, the faithful and Revolutionary Iranian youth.

You are familiar with important global issues and its fresh and old wounds. The most recent is the unprecedented tragedy in Gaza; the most prominent is the moral, political, and social failures of the West, its politicians, and Western civilization; the most instructive [global issue] is the inability of liberal democracy to establish

freedom of expression and their fatal neglect of the issue of economic and social justice. The dim but encouraging glimmer of hope seen in the widespread [pro-Palestinian] protests, especially among students in the United States and Europe, is also an important current issue. The West Asia region and our beloved country also face numerous small and large issues.

All of these are grounds for thought, work, and initiative for a blessed organization like your union. I pray for your success from the Almighty and Wise God.

> Sayyid Ali Khamenei July 5, 2024

Pezeshkian's election win strengthens unity

From page 1 > Ayatollah Ali Khamenei described the elections as "a brilliant and unforgettable response to fabricated boycotts by enemies." He further advised Pezeshkian to "trust in God, aim high, and follow the path of the martyr President Raisi."

Meanwhile, Saeed Jalili called on his supporters to rally behind Pezeshkian, underscoring the importance of uniting efforts to strengthen the newly elected leader.

Following Masoud Pezeshkian's victory in the second round of Iran's elections on Friday, July 5, various personalities and world leaders have extended their congratulations and expectations towards the newly

elected president. Russian President Vladimir Putin was among the first to congratulate Pezeshkian, emphasizing the importance of bilateral relations between Russia and Iran. Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus and Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan also congratulated Pezeshkian and extended invitations for official visits, underscoring the expansion of dialogue and bilateral cooperation.

The South Korean government expressed hopes of improving bilateral relations with Iran under the new government, highlighting the importance of regional stability. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and leaders from Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Iraq also conveyed their congratulations to Pezeshkian, emphasizing the importance of strengthening regional and bilateral ties.

Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed readiness to closely collaborate with Pezeshkian to advance the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Iran. From Pakistan, both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Asif Ali Zardari expressed optimism and willingness to cooperate with Iran for regional peace and prosperity.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also conveyed a message of collaboration and strengthening bilateral relations between India and Iran.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, a strategic ally of Iran in the region, sent his congratulations, highlighting the longstanding friendship based on decades of mutual respect, common understanding, and firm principles between Syria and Iran.

As detailed in previous articles, Pezeshkian's political program advocates for a reduction of state intervention in the economy, which includes, according to his own statements, the elimination of certain subsidies, including those for gasoline.

Regarding foreign policy, while Pezeshkian campaigned on priorities such as lifting sanctions and pursuing a nuclear agreement with the West, it is important to note that Iran's foreign policy is "shielded" from partisan deviations as it is defined by the Supreme National Security Council.

The powers of the Supreme Council are clearly defined in Article 176 of the Iranian Constitution, amended in 1989.

This article outlines the Council>s responsibilities as follows:

- Defining national defense and security policies within the framework of general guidelines set by the Supreme Leader.
- Coordinating political, intelligence, social, cultural, and economic activities in line with general defense and security policies.
- Mobilizing the country>s material and intellectual resources to address both internal and external threats.

The Council is composed of the heads of the three branches of government, the Chief of the Supreme Command Council of the Armed Forces, the Planning and Budget Organization chief, two representatives appointed by the Supreme Leader, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Intelligence, a specialized minister, as well as senior officials from the Armed Forces and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's snap elections showcased country's ability to handle crises: member of Leader's office

From page **1** ▶ Fazaeli also commented on the fairness and transparency of elections held in Iran. "If we take a look at Iran's elections throughout the years, there are many signs that prove they are fair and free. One is the fact that no one can usually predict the outcome of the elections. Every candidate is always urging his supporters to participate until the very last minutes of voting

hours," he explained.

"Additionally, political parties with opposing views take the elections very seriously and spend great sums of money during their campaigns to sway voters. Last but not least, a notable trend in Iran's presidential elections is the transfer of power from one administration to another, even when the incoming political group holds starkly contrasting views."

The 2024 snap presidential elections in Iran concluded with the triumph of reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian, who secured more than 16.5 million votes in the decisive runoff contest, which witnessed a 50 percent voter turnout. His predecessor, Ebrahim Raisi was close to conservative factions. He lost his life during a helicopter crash in May, while he still had a year to complete his first term in office.

Conservative candidates congratulate

TEHRAN - Conservative rivals of reformist Masoud Pezeshkian who won Iran's July 5 runoff elections have congratulated him on becoming the next

Pezesehkian's opponent in the second round of the presidential race, Saeed Jalili, hailed the participation of Iranian voters before stating that it is now everyone's "responsibility" to respect and aid the president-elect.

"The great nation of Iran, in

competition, once again demonstrated the steadfastness and the depth of the people's religious democracy and the republic system in a healthy and safe environment. Now it is everyone's responsibility to respect the elected by the people and support them in advancing the country and elevating the sacred system of the Islamic Republic," he said in a statement released on Saturday.

current parliament speaker Mohammad Bager Qalibaf said he would make sure that the Iranian parliament would help Pezeshkian's administration in managing the country. "Parliament will do everything in its power to show support," he said

claimed were crafted with the help of intellectuals.

From page **1** • "There are various factions within the reformist movement, and the individuals chosen for economic, cultural, and foreign policy positions will significantly shape his presidency," he said, adding that he believes moderate politicians will play a central role in Pezeshkian's administration.Pezeshkian was often accompanied by prominent reformist figures during his presidential campaign including former foreign minister

Mohammad Javad Zari and former finance

minister Ali Tayebnia. On the 10 percent increase in turnout rates during the second round of the presidential elections, Amini suggested that the two presidential debates held in the week leading up to the runoff played a significant role in boosting

Pezeshkian's cabinet likely to comprise

of moderate figures: expert

"The debates provided a platform for both candidates to present their visions and appeal to different segments of the electorate. Jalili attempted to sway voters away from Pezeshkian by portraying his

potential administration as a continuation of President Hassan Rouhani's two terms, which some viewed as a period of stagnation. Conversely, Pezeshkian aimed to attract Jalili's supporters by emphasizing Jalili's perceived conservative approach to cultural and social issues," the expert explained

Pezeshkian is to succeed the late President Ebrahim Raisi after winning over 53.7% of the vote. Over 16.3 million people voted for the candidate rallied by reformists.

president-elect on victory widespread participation and serious

Iranian president.

Another conservative candidate and

Tehran mayor Alireza Zakani also congratulated the reformist winner, saying he is ready to share his devised plans with Pezeshkian, which he

voter participation.

Pezeshkian wins Iran's presidential election amidst increased voter turnout

From page 1 Later, he took to X (formerly Twitter) to thank the Iranian people for their trust, pledging not to let them down. "Dear people of Iran, the elections are over and this is just the beginning of our togetherness. The difficult path ahead will not be smooth except with your companionship, empathy, and trust. I extend my hand to you and I swear on my honor that I will not leave you alone on this path. Don't leave me alone."

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi also expressed his gratitude to the voters and congratulated Pezeshkian on his victory. "Thanks God, the 14th presidential election ended in full security, soundness, and serious competition of candidates and the participation of over 30 million people of Iran, and the ninth president of Iran was elected. Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian was elected as the head of the 14th government, and I would like to congratulate him," Vahidi said.

Vahidi addressed previous analyses and efforts suggesting that elections in Iran held no meaning, asserting that the results proved these claims



invalid. He thanked everyone who contributed to creating a positive election atmosphere, especially the voters, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for his guidelines, senior clerics who encouraged voting, and the families of martyrs, including the late President Ebrahim Raisi.

The runoff election, held on Friday, was a response to the June 28 ballot, a snap election to find a successor to President Raisi, who tragically died in a helicopter crash. Pezeshkian initially ran against a field of five candidates, securing the largest number of votes but falling short of a majority, which led to the runoff against Jalili.

The runoff began at 8 a.m. local time at nearly 59,000 polling stations nationwide and abroad. The voting period was extended three times, each for two hours, due to high voter turnout. Electoral authorities reported that Pezeshkian received 16,384,403 votes, while Jalili garnered 13,538,179 out of over 30 million

The Election Headquarters Spokesperson Mohsen Eslami announced the results, stating that the total number of votes cast

was 30,530,157, with a turnout of 49.8 percent. Eslami highlighted that Pezeshkian's victory was achieved with over 42 percent of the total votes in the first round of the presidential election.

The Leader cast his ballot at a polling station in Tehran and emphasized the election's importance, calling it "an important political affair of the country."

Pezeshkian, 69, is a cardiac surgeon. He was the parliament's first deputy speaker from 2016 to 2020 and served as health minister between 2001 and 2005 under former President Mohammad Khatami. He had previously run for president in 2013, withdrawing from the race, and failed to qualify in his second attempt in 2021.

The strong turnout and the determination of the Iranian people to participate in the electoral process, despite facing harassment and violence, underscore their commitment to democratic principles and their hope for a better future under Pezeshkian's leadership.

Leader meets with President-elect Pezeshkian, Jalili

TEHRAN – The winner of Iran's July 5 runoff presidential elections met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei congratulated Masoud Pezeshkian on his victory in the election and commended the increased voter turnout in the second round.

He expressed hope that Pezeshkian would lead the country towards progress and prosperity by harnessing the potential of the people and other resources available.

The Leader also offered his prayers

and best wishes for the success of the president-elect and provided some valuable recommendations for the future.

Ayatollah Khamenei met with Pezesehkian's defeated rival, Saeed Jalili, as well, thanking him for his constructive positions while taking part in the snap elections.

Iranian voters abroad show increased participation despite challenges

TEHRAN - Despite facing significant challenges adversity, Iranians living abroad turned out in increased numbers to vote in the runoff presidential election on Friday.

The head of the election headquarters abroad, Alireza Mahmoudi, reported a notable 20% increase in voter turnout, highlighting the dedication and commitment of the diaspora to participate in their nation's democratic process.

Mahmoudi, who oversees the foreign election headquarters based in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, noted, "We witnessed the presence of more Iranians at the ballot boxes in the second round. has For this reason, two additional ballot boxes were provided in Spanish agencies and at Najaf airport."

increased turnout prompted logistical adjustments, including the addition of a new voting branch at the U.S.-Canada border within the Washington Office of Interest Protection.

The voting process began in the easternmost part of New Zealand and continued across the globe, culminating in the United States. Mahmoudi emphasized the improved security measures at polling stations, stating, "The security situation of the branches

improved significantly, and according to the will of the countrymen, the colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were able to provide better conditions."

However, the journey to cast votes was not without difficulty for those outside Iran. Many Iranian voters abroad faced harassment and even assault in the first round of the election.

On June 28, thousands of Iranians living in Britain visited polling stations in cities including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Glasgow, and Cardiff to cast their votes. Outside these polling

stations, they were subjected to verbal, and even physical abuse by anti-Iran individuals.

Reports indicate that some attackers filmed themselves sexually abusing female voters, using derogatory language and making rape threats.

Male voters also faced assaults from individuals linked to terrorist groups, monarchists, and separatist factions.

attackers later These bragged on social media about their efforts to intimidate and dissuade voters through

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Who is Masoud Pezeshkian?

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN - Iran's Interior Ministry declared In this article, we will be taking a look at the Masoud Pezeshkian the winner of the runoff 69-year-old's life and rise to nower presidential election on Saturday.

Pezeshkian secured a decisive victory, garnering 53.7% of the vote in the second round of the snap election. He outpaced conservative candidate Saeed Jalili, who garnered over 13.5 million votes, by a substantial margin of over 3 million votes.

While Pezeshkian has personally stated that he does not align himself with any political party and therefore does not consider himself a reformist, all prominent figures and politicians who supported him during his campaign were predominantly from the reformist camp. Additionally, his expressed views often mirror those of previous reformist leaders.

Pezeshkian, who also secured the highest number of votes during the first round of the presidential race, emerged victorious despite being the only reformist-affiliated candidate approved by the Guardian Council to compete in the election. His supporters erupted in celebration across the streets around midnight, as he managed to establish a lead over Jalili since the very beginning of

Early life and education

Masoud Pezeshkian was born on September 29, 1954, in the northeastern city of Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province. He received his early education in his hometown before moving to the province's largest city, Urmia, to attend an agricultural high school and earn a diploma.

In 1973, during his active military duty, Pezeshkian was assigned to Zabol in Sistan and Baluchestan province. His time in Zabol was marked by his commitment to community service: he established a mosque, participated in cultural activities, and fostered connections with the local community. Despite facing reprimands for disobeying orders from the Shah's army, Pezeshkian remained steadfast in his mission to spread the teachings of Islam.

The transformative experiences of his military service led Pezeshkian to pursue a career in medicine. Following the completion of his military duty, he obtained a science diploma in 1976 and gained admission to a medical program in Tabriz that same year.



During the Iran-Iraq war, Pezeshkian served as the leader of medical teams deployed to conflict zones. He bravely played a dual role as a combatant and a doctor, providing critical medical care to wounded soldiers stationed behind the front lines. His dedication and service during this challenging period shaped his future path and solidified his commitment to humanitarian work.

Career and entrance into politics

After completing his medical studies in 1985, Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian initially delved into teaching physiology to university students. In 1990, Dr. Pezeshkian earned his specialization in general surgery from Tabriz University, marking the beginning of his journey toward becoming a renowned heart

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Leader's guidance key in peaceful election, says president-elect Pezeshkian

From page **1** ► He highlighted his commitment to honesty during the election campaign, saying, "In this election, I did not make false promises. I did not say anything that I would not be able to fulfill, only to have it revealed as a lie later. For years, we have stood behind

podiums, making promises and then failing to keep them. This has been the greatest flaw among us officials."

Pezeshkian also praised the Leader's role in ensuring a smooth election process. "During this peaceful election process, with

votes accurately counted, I must first thank the Leader of Islamic Revolution. Without his guidance, I do not believe my name would have emerged from these ballots. It was through his leadership that we were able to reach this point," he remarked.

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Jose Morais to remain Sepahan coach: IPL

TEHRAN - Portuguese coach Jose Morais will continue his cooperation with the Iranian club

He was named as head coach of the Isfahanbased club in June 2022 but has failed to lead the team to win the Iran Professional League (IPL) title so far.

Morais, 58, helped Sepahan win the 2023-24 Hazfi Cup in late June.

Media reports had suggested that he is reluctant to lead Sepahan but he has reportedly reached an agreement to coach the team for another season.

Milad Zakipour returns to Esteghlal: IPL

TEHRAN - Milad Zakipour returned to Esteghlal football club after four years.

The 29-year-old left back has penned a twoyear contract with the Blues.

Zakipour was a member of Esteghlal from 2016 to 2020 and then joined Gol Gohar. He left the Sirjan-based club after two years to join

Zakipour had also been linked with a move to Esteghlal's archrival Persepolis.

Iran futsal to play Croatia, Kazakhstan

TEHRAN - Iran national futsal team will play friendly matches with Croatia and Kazakhstan. Team Melli will face Croatia in Tehran's

Dastgerdi Stadium on August 24 and 26. Iran will then travel to Kazakhstan to play the

team on August 30 and September 1. The friendly matches will be held as part of preparation for the FIFA Futsal World Cup

Uzbekistan 2024. Iran has been drawn in Group F along with Venezuela, Guatemala and France.

The 24 teams were divided into six groups for the September 14-October 6 global showpiece that will be contested in three cities: Andijan, Bukhara and Tashkent.

Spanish coach Garrido officially named Persepolis coach

TEHRAN - Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido was officially unveiled as the new head coach of Persepolis, one of Iran's most decorated and popular football clubs. The 55-year-old signed a one-year deal with the club after arriving in Tehran Saturday morning.

Garrido, who most recently worked as head coach of Algerian club USM Alger, will replace Brazilian coach Osmar Loss, who led Persepolis to the title in the 2023/24 Iran Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL).

The Spaniard has a wealth of experience in European and African football, having previously managed the likes of Real Betis, Club Brugge, Al Ain (UAE), Ismaily (Egypt), and Wydad (Morocco).

"It is a great honor for me to be the head coach of a popular and successful team like Persepolis, who have passionate fans," Garrido said. "I had previously traveled to Iran as the head coach of the UAE's Al Ain team to play against Esteghlal, but during this time I had the opportunity to get to know Persepolis, their fans, and their place in the hearts of the Iranian people and in Asian football.

"I am also eagerly waiting to be in the competitions with Persepolis. I know how much the Iranian people love football. I hope we create good and interesting things through good cooperation and companionship together," he

Garrido is expected to bring an attacking style of football to Persepolis, which will be exciting for the club's fans. He is also a known disciplinarian, which could be key in keeping the squad focused on their goals.

Persepolis will be competing in the first edition of the AFC Champions League Elite this year, and Garrido will be hoping to lead them to glory on the continental stage.

Only time will tell if Garrido can be the man to take Persepolis to the next level, but he has certainly made a positive first impression on the club's fans and hierarchy.

Iran to compete at World **Freediving Indoor Championships**

TEHRAN - Iran will participate at the 2024 CMAS 14th World Freediving Indoor Championships.

Iran has sent three men and one woman to the competition.

The World Championships will be held in the city of Belgrade, Serbia from July 6 to 9.

This prestigious event will witness more than 230 elite athletes representing 39 countries, showcasing their exceptional skills and talents.

2024 Asia Triathlon Central Youth Championships: Rasouli wins silver

TEHRAN - Iranian triathlon athlete Parsa Rasouli claimed a silver medal at the 2024 Asia Triathlon Central Youth Championships

The event began with a 750-metre swim in an open lake, to be followed by a 20km bike ride on asphalt city streets, and ending with a 5km run on flat asphalt pavement.

The Asia Triathlon Cup Kokshetau is part of the World Triathlon calendar.

Iran ranks third at ACBS Asian Snooker **Championship 2024**

TEHRAN - A three-member team from Iran has finished third at the ACBS Asian Snooker Championship 2024 held in Saudi Arabia.

The latest edition of the Asian snooker championship kicked off on Thursday evening and continued until July 5.

The Iranian team featured Amir Sarkhosh, Ali Gharagozlou, and Arman Dinarvand. Iran conceded defeat against Thailand and

finished third in the championship. More than 200 male and female players

representing 15 Asian countries participated in the event, Saudi media reported. According to the Saudi Press Agency, in

addition to Saudi Arabia, the participants included players from Bahrain, Hong Kong, India, Iran, South Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the UAE.

The Asian Confederation of Billiard Sports (ACBS), which governs non-professional snooker and English billiards in the Asian region, organized the international snooker tournament.

Iran U18 basketball lose to Russia in 2024 Kalleh Cup

TEHRAN - Iran U18 basketball team lost to Russia 81-65 in three-team 2024 Kalleh Cup on

Iran will play Turkey on Sunday in Tehran's Azadi Hall.The tournament is being held in Tehran from July 6 to 8.

Iran and Russia sports teams have developed cooperation in the recent years.

ECONOMY



China's import of Iranian crude hits 8-month high



TEHRAN - China's independent refiners have increased their crude imports from Iran by 4.3 percent in June to an eight-month high of around 6.1 million metric tons.

Iranian crudes, which are much cheaper than Russian ESPO crudes, have gained more popularity among independent refineries in recent months, S&P Global Commodity Insights reported.

China's independent refiners, mainly in eastern Shandong province, increased their Iranian crude imports by 4.3% in June to an eight-month high of around 6.1 million mt to cut feedstock costs and combat weak refining margins, according to sources and S&P Global Commodity Insight data

The volume was the highest since October 2023, when it hit 6.22 million mt, the data showed.

Iranian crude accounted for about 65.7% of the total feedstock portfolio of small-sized independent refineries in Shandong in June, compared with 54.2% in May.

June's higher imports were mainly due to feedstock requirements of the independent refineries, which have been struggling with weak refining margins for most of 2024 so far, and are more selective with their feedstock, sources said.

Iranian crudes, which are much cheaper than Russian ESPO crudes, have gained more popularity among independent refineries in recent months.

"Other crudes are not [as cheap as] Iranian crudes," said a trader source.

Early deals for August-arrival ESPO sold to China were heard at discounts of around 60-80 cents/b to ICE Brent, according to trade sources.

In comparison, Iranian Heavy was at a discount of around \$9/b to ICE Brent on a DES Shandong basis, about \$3/b lower than that of \$5-\$6/b for Iranian Light crude on the same basis, making it more attractive, especially under the weak margins, sources said.

More Iranian Heavy crude cargoes have been

arriving in the Shandong market than Iranian Light crude, due mainly to the relatively lower prices, sources said.

Data from local energy information provider OilChem showed the monthly average margin at Shandong independent refineries, from processing imported crudes, fell 32.3% on the week to Yuan 83.5/mt July 4, amid high crude benchmarks coupled with lower oil product prices.

The average utilization rate also dropped marginally by 0.4 percentage points on the week to around 50.5% on July 4, OilChem data showed.

This is their lowest utilization since May 2022, when China's financial and industrial center Shanghai was locked down to control COVID-19.

Imports up 22% in H1 2024

In the first half of 2024, combined feedstock imports from Iran rose 22.3% on the year to 30.2 million mt from 24.7 million mt, Commodity Insights data showed.

These cargoes accounted for around 52.2% of feedstocks imported by independent refiners during the same period, growing from a low base of 35.8% in the corresponding period last year.

In comparison, imports from Russia fell 31.5% on the year to 20.78 million in H1 2024.

Iranian cargoes are usually masked as blended crudes that originate from Malaysia, such as Mal Blend as in the tables.

Iran output rising

Iran boosted its crude oil production by more than 70% over the past three years to 3.6 million b/d, following a \$34 billion investment in 155 projects, Oil Minister Javad Oji said on June 24.

Oji was quoted by oil ministry news service Shana at the inauguration ceremony of a project in the onshore western oil field of Danan, which added 11,000 b/d to its output after 11 wells were drilled for \$135 million, increasing its processing and production capacity to 19,000 b/d.

Independent refinery sources said the Iranian cargoes available in the market were mostly heavy crude, which was more economical, with slightly less light crude.

Commodity Insights collects information from trade and independent refinery sources, Kpler, shipping brokers, port sources, and S&P Global Commodities at Sea, and the information has been confirmed by sources with knowledge about the

Renewables share of electricity generation rises by 28%

Renewable sources generated more than 230 million kilowatt hours of electricity, an increase of 21 percent in comparison with a month earlier.

Wind power plants held the lion's share of the rise in the production of electricity by renewable

The installed capacity of electricity generation by renewables is around 1.2 gigawatts.

Based on the Energy Ministry data, renewables, currently, account for nearly seven percent of the country's total electricity generation capacity.

Of the country's total renewable capacity, 44 percent is the share of solar power plants while the share of wind farms stands at 40 percent and small-scalded hydropower plants generate 13 percent of the total renewable capacity.

The head of the Nomads Affairs Organization of Iran said in June that more than 20,000 solar panel sets have been distributed among the country's nomadic households over the past 2.5 years, IRNA reported.

According to Shayan Naderi, the number of solar panel sets provided to nomadic households across the country increased from 700 sets in August 2021 when the current government took office has reached 20,480 sets.

Knowledge-based and indigenized technologies are used in carrying out this project.

The government pays 90 percent of the costs of each system. Solar panels are used to easily provide electricity in far-off places. It is not only clean but also cheap and limitless.

Solar-powered photovoltaic panels convert the sun's rays into electricity by exciting electrons in

TEHRAN - The electricity generated by silicon cells using the photons of light from the renewable sources increased by 28 percent in sun, which is the cleanest, most reliable form the third Iranian calendar month (ended on June of renewable energy, and can be used in several 20) compared to the same month last year, ISNA forms to help generate electricity along with

> Back in October 2019, the energy ministry announced the implementation of a program for supplying the country's nomadic households with mobile small-scale power stations.

> Iran's Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) inked a memorandum of understanding in November 2019 with Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation and the Organization for Mobilization of the Oppressed for the construction of 20,000 photovoltaic power stations (known as PV systems) across the country.

> According to the Deputy Head of PBO, Hamid Pour-Mohammad, the project was part of a bigger program in which in the first phase 20,000 PV systems would be constructed for rural and nomadic households, and in the next phases, the number will be raised to 100,000 stations.

> The latest statistics released in a report on "Statistical Review of the Global Energy" show that Iran generated 382.9 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2023, registering a 4.3 percent hike compared to a year earlier.

> Iran generated more than 367.1 terawatts/hour of electricity in 2022.

> The growth of Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 was nearly twice that of the average growth of the generation of electricity in the world.

The report put the total generation of electricity worldwide in 2023 at more than 29,924 terawatts/hours, which was 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier. Iran's generation of electricity in 2023 exceeded that of industrialized countries like the UK, Italy, and Spain as well as Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Thailand, the report added.

Russia's Alexey Ivanov: Multipolarity unites BRICS

"BRICS countries are not members of the closed clubs"

By Mehdi Garshasbi

MOSCOW/GENEVA - Alexey Ivanov, Director of the BRICS International Center Competition Law and Policy, tells the Tehran Times that "multipolarity" unites BRICS members.

Iran officially joined BRICS in January 2024.

Ivanov also says dollarization could be a milestone in the history of BRICS.

Following is the text of the interview:

How can BRICS achieve the goals it has set for itself? Would you please explain about the long-term goals of BRICS?

BRICS is the largest international association to date. It envisages the largest formats of interaction in all spheres of mutual interests - from economy, technological cooperation to tourism. Therefore, I will not define the goals and objectives for the entire association, but I am ready to talk about cooperation in the field of antimonopoly regulation.

How can BRICS establish a global action platform for fair market competition?

During the latest meeting held in Geneva, the Russian side brought forward the proposal that an enhanced cooperation platform be launched to institutionalize and thus further deepen the BRICS partnership towards an inclusive, diverse, and just economic order - the BRICS Global Action Platform on Fair Market Competition developed by **BRICS Competition Law and Policy** Centre. The meeting was attended by representatives of relevant agencies of all BRICS members, including those countries that ioined BRICS in January of this

All of them expressed support for the initiative to create such a platform. The BRICS competition authorities supported the initiative, proposed to start its development and to present concrete mechanisms for the implementation of this platform within a year, by the next BRICS competition authorities conference in Cape Town in 2025.

The BRICS Centre will provide intellectual resources to facilitate the launch of the Action Platform.

What steps are needed to create an "expert center" with the centrality of BRICS to generate knowledge and exchange knowledge?

So far, cooperation in the field of antitrust regulation has been conducted on a loosely formalized basis, relying on soft forms of cooperation and interaction between expert communities, and it will be difficult to use such a format in the enlarged BRICS, given the diversity of legal and economic systems. But Russia's chairmanship of BRICS this year, which is initiating the creation of such a center, gives a chance that the parties will be able to agree on the creation of the first joint institution for regulating the global economy, which could be an institute for antitrust policy in key markets.

According to the vision of the Russian side, the center will make it possible to develop a mechanism for coordinating positions on how to jointly influence the global economy, global markets and global value chains. This is an opportunity to develop effective approaches to influence global markets and put them into practice. The BRICS governments have already supported the idea of creating a grain exchange, and this initiative also represents an element of integration and facilitation of agreements in other sectoral areas.

The next conference of BRICS antimonopoly authorities in 2025 will determine more precisely the timeframe for the establishment of the center.

A BRICS Global Action Platform on Fair Market Competition is planned as an inclusive and participatory format for cooperation in competition policy. The mandate follows the outstanding needs of the BRICS competition authorities and develops the UNCTAD competition mandate on a superregional level:

Accumulation of knowledge to provide technical and analytical assistance to the competition authorities (including market screening mechanisms for mergers and cartels)

investigation mechanisms

Policy research and analysis Capacity building

A forum for policy and academic

Do you think BRICS can challenge Western-dominated institutions in the global marketplace of ideas?

As the BRICS countries represent the world's majority and strive to preserve and further develop their growing and diverse economies, they are alarmed by a persisting increase of power imbalances and structural inequalities in the global economy.

Dominant players, first of all those in the Western world, that abuse their economic power undermine the fragile foundations of the interconnected globalized economic order that is supposed to rest on equality, equity, and the mutual respect of its participants. These abuses suppress healthy competition, hinder the smooth functioning of global markets, and reduce the efficiency and resilience of the global economy. This leads to economic imbalances that directly harm the most vulnerable people in the BRICS countries. Abuse of economic power and crippling monopolization disrupt the smooth functioning of global value chains, create unnecessary bottlenecks and disparity in bargaining positions, deter both innovation and proliferation of technologies, and lead to exploitation of consumers and exclusion of small and mediumsized entrepreneurs.

Global competition agenda is based on the dominant (Western) narrative, and the BRICS academia is underrepresented in the market of ideas often due to the lack of demand for the BRICSfocused research.

the Addressing current complex reality requires an effective platform for a new BRICS thinking and academic research with the aim of adding diversity and new voices to the global market of ideas.

How can BRICS members maintain healthy competition?

Without healthy competition, market economies run out of steam and lose energy. And this happens, as a rule, due to the concentration of market power "in one hand" - whether it is the result of collusion or other monopolization of markets. This power allows privileged market participants to act not in a competitive, but in a monopolistic logic, parasitizing consumers and other participants of economic relations. It cannot be said that the architects of the modern system of regulation of the world economy do not understand this. Initially, the design of the WTO contained a universal agreement on the protection of competition in the global economy, similar to the TRIPS Agreement, which introduced uniform standards of intellectual property protection for all WTO member countries. Such uniform standards of competition protection at the world level could well balance the processes of globalization.

The BRICS countries are an interesting group of economies that are united by the fact that for a number of reasons they are not members of the "closed clubs" of the "capitalist core" countries. In many ways, they are strangers to the still dominant in international affairs: the US, EU and their closest allies. And each country is alien to this close group for different reasons and to different degrees. The grouping has many differences - economic, social, and geopolitical.

However, it is precisely because of their differences that the BRICS countries can agree on what they do not want the world economy to be. And the key word that already unites them on this issue is "multipolarity" - in other words, the diversity of formats, ways and means of organizing economic

What the BRICS countries lack is diversity in global economic life. There are too many rigid forms imposed by the dominant group. Such a struggle for diversity is not very profitable for the dominant actors, as it reduces their monopolistic rents. But a more diverse, multi-format system of organization of the world economy seems to be important for countries that are already capable of competing at the global level, but are in a less advantageous position due to this mono-organization of the world economic system.

Does BRICS seek enlargement and de-dollarization? If so, what approaches is it taking?

This could be a milestone in the history of BRICS, an alliance of newly industrialized countries formed in 2001: according to information circulated by the Russian Embassy in Kenya, the countries currently in BRICS (i.e. Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, UAE, Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia) have repeatedly expressed their intention to introduce their own

It would be backed by gold and/ or other raw materials such as silver or rare earth metals. From the point of view of BRICS states, the creation of their own currency would facilitate international

But above all, de-dollarization will make the Global South more independent of the muchweakened reserve currency (the US dollar) and help the emergence of a multipolar world order.

Over 98% of villages have access to high-speed internet

TEHRAN - More than 98 percent of villages from rural areas to cities. with a population of over 20 households across the country have now access to highspeed internet, Issa Zarepour, the Minister of Information and Communications Technology,

By connecting some eight thousand villages with a population of more than 20 households and three thousand villages with less than 20 households, now 98.5 percent of the rural population have access to high-speed

In April 2023, Zarepour said many of the villages that were connected to high-speed internet in Iran over the past two years were located in hard-to-reach areas, making it more difficult and more expensive for the government to supply the infrastructure needed for the network.

Many efforts have been made over the past couple of years by the government to support villagers and slow down the trend of migration

The internet penetration rate in Iran has exceeded 123 percent, according to the latest statistics of the Communications Regulatory Authority, published in January.

> Many of the villages were located in hard-to-reach areas.

The data showed that the mobile internet penetration rate in the country has reached 109.27 percent, up by over 26 percent compared to figures reported in 2019.

Moreover, the number of Iranian mobile users reached nearly 135.890 million, according to the CRA which put the mobile phone penetration rate in the country at 161.67 percent.

The figures showed, however, that fixed broadband adoption in Iran had stalled at 14 percent with nearly 11.921 million customers having access to the Internet via those

This statistic shows that fixed broadband internet has grown by less than 2 percent compared to last year and mobile internet has experienced a growth of 10 percent. However, it can be said that the speed of mobile internet expansion is 5 times the speed of fixed internet.

The opposite is true in most countries, where fixed internet is growing faster.

Access to telecommunication services in rural areas of the country had improved over the period as the overall number of villages with access to communication services rose to 52,182, around 93 percent of all villages, while 47,837 villages had access to home landline services.

Which world leaders congratulated Pezeshkian on his election win?

TEHRAN- Iran's newly elected president, Masoud Pezeshkian, has received warm congratulatory messages from across the world, including the leaders of neighboring countries and prominent international organizations. They have called for strengthening relations and cooperation with the Islamic Republic on global and regional issues.

Putin praises "constructive" ties

Russian leader Vladimir Putin congratulated Pezeshkian on his victory in the presidential runoff and attached significance to the improvement of ties with Iran.

"I hope that your activity as president will facilitate the further boosting of constructive bilateral cooperation on all tracks to benefit our friendly peoples, in the interests of easing regional security and stability," he said in a statement published on the Kremlin website.

The Russian president said Moscow and Tehran "efficiently coordinate efforts in resolving the pressing issues of the international agenda".

Addressing Pezeshkian, he said in the statement, "I wish you success, good health and prosperity."

Both Iran and Russia have been targeted by stiff Western sanctions

Xi commends strategic mutual trust

The Chinese president issued a similar message.

"I attach great importance to the development of China-Iran relations and am willing to work with the President to lead the China-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership towards deeper advancement," state news agency Xinhua cited Xi Jinping as saying.

Xi added that Iran and China "have a long history of friendly exchanges, and bilateral relations have maintained healthy and stable development... for over half a century."

He also highlighted strategic partnership between Tehran and Beijing.

"Faced with complex regional and international situations, China and Iran have always supported each other, worked together and continued to consolidate strategic mutual trust. This has not only brought benefits to our two countries' peoples, but has also made active contributions to promoting regional and world peace and stability," the Chinese president said.

KSA demands stronger ties

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called for promoting ties with Iran as he congratulated Pezeshkian after winning the presidential election run-off.

"I affirm my keenness on developing and deepening the relations between our countries and people and serve our mutual interests," Saudi Arabia's state news agency, SPA, quoted bin Salman as saying.

Last year, a China-brokered deal saw Riyadh and Tehran re-establish diplomatic relations after years of tensions. The two Persian Gulf countries have since increased regular contact in an effort to bolster ties.

Iraq seeks closer ties

The Iraqi president wished Pezeshkian success in his duties and in "fulfilling the ambitions and aspirations or the Iranian people".

"We affirm our keenness to strengthen relations between Iraq and Iran in a way that serves the interests of the two neighboring countries and peoples," Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid said in a message to Iran's president-elect.

Senior Iraqi Shia leader Ammar al-Hakim, a former leader of the



er said.

Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq and current head of the National Wisdom Movement, also sent congratulations and expressed hope that Pezeshkian can help resolve regional differences.

Other Persian Gulf Arab leaders, including Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar, Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman and Sheikh Mishal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah of Kuwait also extended their congratulations to the Iranian president-elect.

Pakistan pushes for closer re-

The Pakistani prime minister called for efforts to "ensure a bright future" for the two neighbors

"Heartiest congratulations to my brother Dr. Massoud Pezeshkian on his victory in Iran's presidential elections! I look forward to working closely with President-elect Dr. Pezeshkian to further strengthen Pakistan-Iran bilateral ties & promote regional peace & stability. As neighboring countries, Pakistan & Iran enjoy a close & historic relationship. We must ensure a bright future for our two peoples through mutually beneficial cooperation" Shehbaz Sharif wrote in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The Pakistani president also hoped that Tehran-Islamabad relations will grow under the Pezeshkian presidency.

"Pakistan looks forward to working together with Iran for the peace and prosperity of the region," Asif Ali Zardari said.

India hails long-standing relationship

The prime minister of India also extended his congratulations to the newly elected Iranian president

"Congratulations @drpezesh-kian on your election as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Looking forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our warm and long-standing bilateral relationship for the benefit of our peoples and the region," Narendra Modi said in a post on X.

South Korea wishes Iran pros-

In East Asia, South Korea expressed hope for improving relations between Tehran and Seoul.

"We wish Iran a path of prosperity and development under the new government, contributing constructively to regional stability. We look forward to further enhancing our friendly relations with Iran," South Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Malaysia urges fruitful collaboration

The Malaysian prime minister said in a message to Pezeshkian that the outcome of Iran's election reflects the vibrant spirit of Iranian democracy and heralds a promising future for the country.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said with its rich and ancient civilization, Iran occupies a unique and prominent place in world history, and the potential for Malaysia-Iran relations is immense and filled with promise.

"We look forward to strengthening our bilateral mechanisms to deepen and broaden cooperation between the two countries. We are committed to collaborating on international platforms such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Developing-8 (D8)," the Malaysian lead-

"I look forward to welcoming Pezeshkian to Malaysia at the earliest opportunity," he said.

Syrian president hails strategic relationship

In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad expressed hope in a message to Pezeshkian that Tehran and Damascus will cement their "strategic" ties.

"We will work with you to boost the Syrian-Iranian strategic relationship and open new promising horizons for bilateral cooperation as resistance will remain the common approach that we follow in order to preserve the pride of our countries and defend the interests of their peoples," al-Assad

The Syrian president added in his message, "Your country, which is impregnable as it has always been, is one of the most important countries with which we are keen to ensure that the relationship is at its peak because this relationship is based on roots established through decades of mutual respect, common understanding and firm principles to which Syria and Iran have always adhered."

Aliyev invites Pezeshkian to visit Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's president extended an invitation to Pezeshkian to visit his country.

"I heartily congratulate you on your election as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite you to pay a visit to Azerbaijan to exchange views on the prospects for development of our bilateral cooperation," Ilham Aliyev said in a letter to the Iranian newly elected president.

He also threw a spotlight on friendly ties between Iran and Azerbaijan.

"We attach great importance to the relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran built on solid foundations such as common religious and cultural roots, friendship and brotherhood. Today, the agreements reached on the future development areas of Azerbaijan-Iran relations based on mutual respect and good neighborliness and the implemented joint projects serve the well-being of our countries, the sustainable development and security of the region as a whole," he said.

Armenia PM hails warm, friendly ties

The Armenian premier also called for deepening bilateral relations in a congratulatory message to Pezeshkian.

"Relations with the brother country of the Islamic Republic of Iran are of special importance for the government and people of the Republic of Armenia, which has been continuously developing since the declaration of independence of Armenia," Nikol Pashinyan said.

"Continuous deepening of warm relations between Armenia and Iran in the field of bilateral cooperation and stability and prosperity of the region is of particular importance," he added.

"I am confident that with the joint efforts of our governments, the agreements reached between the Republic of Armenia and the Islamic Republic of Iran will be implemented and we will jointly implement a number of new programs for the welfare of the friendly people of Armenia and Iran," Armenia's prime minister concluded.

Venezuela calls for confronting hegemony

Venezuela hailed Iran for its "commitment demonstrated to democracy" during the two rounds of elections.

"Venezuela expresses its conviction that the decision made by the Iranian people will contribute to the prosperity of this nation, as well as its consolidation as an emerging power in the nascent multipolar world," Venezuela's foreign minister said.

Yvan Gil said Pezeshkian will have the "absolute support" of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his government with the aim of expanding relations and continuing to defeat "the hegemonic pretensions that threaten multilateralism and world peace".

Iran and Venezuela signed a 20year strategic cooperation plan in 2022 in Tehran.

Both countries have been under US sanctions.

Lukashenko urges strategic partnership

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said in a congratulatory message to Pezeshkian that he is convinced the two countries will promote ties.

"The dialogue between Minsk and Tehran at all levels is steadily expanding. I am convinced that in the near future we will be able to implement all the agreements reached, including those on raising the level of the Belarusian-Iranian relations to a strategic partnership," Lukashenko said.

Serbia sends message of hope

The Serbian President also congratulated Iran's president-elect.

"Sincere congratulations to Iranian President @drpezeshkian. Your victory reflects citizens' trust in your vision for the future, dedication to peace, and desire for your country's progress. I am confident that your leadership will bring prosperity and well-being to your people," Aleksandar Vucic said in a post on X

SCO "committed to working with Iran"

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is among international organization that congratulated Pezeshkian on his election as Iran's president.

"The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is committed to working with Iran to jointly achieve sustainable development as the main guarantor of global stability, ensuring regional security and a mechanism for equality," Zhang Ming, the organization's secretary general, said in his congratulatory message.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an intergovernmental entity formed in 1996 by the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, aims to foster multilateral security, economic, and political cooperation.

Iran's membership was initially agreed upon during late President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on September 17, 2021, and later ratified by the Iranian parliament on November 27, 2022. The formal announcement of Iran's membership occurred during a virtual summit of SCO heads of state on July 4, 2023.

INTERNATIONAL

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

WORLD HEADLINES -

British protesters urge Labour to act over Gaza

Pro-Palestine demonstrators marched in London calling on the newly elected Labour government to take action over the situation in Gaza.

The Met Police deployed 700 officers across the capital in anticipation of the rally and other potential demonstrations, standard.co.uk reported

Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, explained the purpose of the march: "We're here to show the new government that we're not going away and to demand they take decisive action to end UK complicity in Israel's genocide in Gaza and defend Palestinian rights."

Jamal criticized Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer's previous stance on the Gaza conflict, saying that he had instructed Labour MPs not to vote for a ceasefire. The PSC director emphasized the need to "ramp up" pressure on the new Labour administration.

UNRWA highlights plight of children in Gaza

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UN-RWA" says children in Gaza spend six to eight hours a day collecting water and food, carrying heavy weights and walking long distances.

"Sanitation facilities and infrastructure are severely compromised, forcing thousands of families to rely on seawater to wash, clean and even drink," it added on X, calling for a ceasefire.

Nearly 160 journalists killed in Gaza since Oct. 7

Israeli forces have killed four more journalists in Gaza, raising the total number of media professionals killed since October 7 to 158.

Palestinian journalist Amjad Jahjouh was killed on Saturday morning along with his wife, journalist Wafaa Abu Dabaan, and their child in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza, according to the Palestine Chronicle.

On Friday evening, Palestinian journalists Saadi Madoukh and Ahmed Sakr were killed by an Israeli airstrike that targeted the Madoukh family's home in the Al-Daraj neighborhood of Gaza City.

Palestinian sources reported that the bodies of five martyrs were recovered from the rubble of the targeted house.

Palestinian activists shared a video showing the destruction of the Madoukh family home and the rescue of martyrs and wounded individuals.

Images of the late journalist Saadi Madoukh, holding a camera on a street in Gaza, were also circulated on Palestinian websites and social media platforms.

Health Ministry: Fuel crisis suspends hospital departments in Gaza

The Ministry of Health in Gaza has said the continuing fuel crisis has been affecting the work of the remaining functioning health institutions in the enclave – in particular, the use of their generators, oxygen stations and refrigerators for storing medicines, Al Jazeera reported.

"Currently, work has been suspended in many departments within the remaining operating hospitals," the ministry said.

It said strict austerity measures are being followed in fuel use at hospitals.

"We repeat our appeal to all concerned, international and humanitarian institutions to intervene and quickly provide the fuel necessary to operate the generators," the statement concluded

Hamas vows to fight any foreign forces

Palestinian resistance rejects plans about foreign troops entering Gaza

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN- The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has rejected any measures that would override the "will of Palestinians" regarding the future of Gaza, emphasizing that the administration of the territory constitutes a "purely Palestinian affair"

In a statement, Hamas expressed its refusal to accept any plans, projects, proposals, statements, or positions supporting moves for the entry of foreign forces into the territory under any name or pretext.

The statement emphasized that "the administration of Gaza, after repelling this fascist (Israeli) aggression, is a purely Palestinian matter, agreed upon by our Palestinian people in all its factions."

Hamas pointed out that "the Palestinian people will not allow any guardianship or imposition of external solutions or equations that diminish their constants based on their inherent right to achieve their freedom and determine their destiny."

The movement called on all Arab and Islamic countries to pressure for the cessation of the genocide against the Palestinian people and to provide all means of support and backing in their struggle to defend their existence on their land.

It urged these countries to fulfill their obligations towards the Palestinian people, their land, and the Islamic and Christian holy sites, stating that Israeli settler gangs are corrupting these sanctities.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian resistance committees rejected the deployment of any international forces or others in Gaza, affirming that the Palestinian people "decide their destiny and determine their future."

The resistance committees said it considered any attempt to deploy international or other forces in Gaza as aggression against the Palestinian

people, stressing that they would deal with international forces as they have dealt with the Israeli occupation forces.

In a statement, they highlighted that the people and their resistance reject any imposed solutions or guardianship from any party.

They affirmed that "those who seek the benefit of Gaza and its people should support and assist them and work diligently to stop the aggression, genocide, and ethnic cleansing committed against all aspects of life in the sector, supported by military, financial, and political backing from the U.S. administration and its allies."

According to the American news website Axios, a senior Israeli official expressed optimism about negotiations for an exchange of Palestinian prisoners for Israeli captives and a ceasefire in Gaza.

The official indicated that an agreement could be reached within two to three weeks once negotiations on the details begin, which could involve a foreign force deployed to Gaza.

Other reports have also emerged of an international force or even an Arab force being deployed to Gaza as part of negotiations to reach a ceasefire. Hamas has said any deal must end the genocidal war on the enclave and bring a full Israeli withdrawal from the Strip.

Critics have questioned whether this deployment would bring peace to the enclave considering the stance of the Palestinian resistance committees who have warned any external force would be targeted in a similar fashion to the operations against the Israeli military inside Gaza.

There is a consensus among military experts, who say the Israeli army has been unable to achieve any of its stated goals after nearly nine months of air, sea and ground assaults on the small Palestinian territory.

TOURISM

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Tehran seeks to expand tourism relations with Indonesia



TEHRAN – Iran's deputy tourism minister has highlighted opportunities to expand tourism relations between the Islamic Republic and Indonesia.

Shalbafian on Thursday emphasized the potential for Indonesian [medical] tourists to benefit from Iran's advanced medical and healthcare services. He stated, "Iranian medical and healthcare facilities offer cutting-edge and efficient services that Indonesian tourists can utilize."

He was speaking on the sidelines of a roadshow that marked the final stop of Iran's East Asia tourism roadshow in Jakarta, following successful events in Vietnam and Malaysia. The one-day event saw key officials and private sector leaders from both nations engaging in business meetings and discussions on future tourism agreements.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shalbafian described the tourism relations between the two countries as active and growing. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its rich cultural and historical resources, along with specialized medical and healthcare opportunities, offers an attractive destination for Indonesian tourists," he said.

He also mentioned the concept of "Umrah Plus" tours, positioning Iran as a stopover destination for pilgrims traveling to Saudi Arabia for Hajj rituals.

The event, which aimed to showcase Iran's tourism capacities, saw significant participation from over 120 Indonesian tourism companies

Shalbafian underlined the broader impact of tourism, noting, "We believe that the development of tourism not only contributes to the economic growth of countries but also strengthens cultural and social bridges between nations. "We are ready to elevate Iran-Indonesia tourism to higher levels through closer cooperation and shared experiences and knowledge."

The official pointed out Iran's diverse tourism capacities and extensive opportunities for developing the tourism industry, including investments in infrastructure, the creation of accommodation and recreational centers, and the expansion of tourism services. He invited Indonesian investors to explore these opportunities, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and experience exchange in this sector's development.

Highlighting another significant step to foster tourism exchange, Shalbafian announced Iran's unilateral visa waiver for Indonesian citizens. "Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, and given the extensive Halal tourism offerings in Iran, including food, sports, and beach activities, Iran can be a suitable destination for Indonesian Muslims."

Shalbafian also stressed the importance of establishing direct flights to reduce travel costs and enhance tourism exchanges between the two countries. "Direct flights can pave the way for more robust connections among private sector players from both nations"

In his concluding remarks to the private sector participants, Shalbafian assured them of the professionalism and reputation of the Iranian delegation. He invited all participants to visit Iran and experience its attractions and beauty firsthand. "We are fully prepared to welcome you and hope you have a memorable and delightful experience in Iran."

Moreover, Tehran's ambassador to Jakarta, Mohammad Boroujerdi, discussed the progress in tourism cooperation between the two nations. "We are working with the Indonesian government to finalize administrative steps to obtain direct flight permits between Iran and Indonesia," the envoy said.

The roadshow continued with the signing of a memorandum of understanding for cooperation between the Head of the Iranian Tour Association, Mustafa Shafiei-Shakib and the General Chairperson of the Central Executive Board of the Indonesian Tour and Travel Association (ASITA), Nunung Rusmiati.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 27 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage

Glimpses of World Heritage sites

Mbanza Kongo

The town of Mbanza Kongo was the political and spiritual capital of the Kingdom of Kongo, one of the largest constituted states of Southern Africa, which was active from the 14th to the 19th century.

Located on a plateau at an altitude of 570 meters, it was prosperous when the Portuguese arrived in the 15th century.

To the large existing urban conurbation built in local materials, the Portuguese added and substituted stone buildings constructed in accordance with European construction methods, including several churches.

According to UNESCO, the town then experienced the expansion of Christianity with the

Westernisation of the local elites, without however renouncing its culture.

In its built structure and archaeological vestiges, the town retains the traces of its customary, colonial, and religious past, of which it is an eminent place of remembrance.

The Kingdom of Kongo was at the center of the most important route for the trade of enslaved persons, who were deported to the Americas and the Caribbean. No material vestige attesting to the slave trade has been found up to now.

The authenticity of the property stems from the fact that since its foundation it has continuously maintained its sacred and symbolic function.

Arash the Archer symbol of bravery and peace, RICHT director says

TEHRAN – The director of Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has emphasized the deep roots of the ancient festival of Tirgan in Iranian culture, stating that Arash the Archer symbolizes both peace and bravery.

Mostafa Dehpahlavan highlighted the profound historical significance of the festival, noting: "Today, we remember historical figures like Arash and many others who embodied his spirit throughout the history of this land"

Arash the Archer is a heroic figure in Iranian mythology. According to Iranian folklore, Arash determined the boundary between Iran and Turan by launching an arrow with his life force. The arrow traveled for days before finally landing on the bark of a walnut tree on the other side of the Oxus River, hundreds of miles away from the launch site atop a mountain.

Dehpahlavan made the remarks on Thursday in an address to a meeting held to celebrate the Tirgan Festival and one of its coral elements, Arash the Archer, coinciding with a memorial ceremony for the esteemed cultural and literary figure of Mazandaran

A gathering of cultural heritage researchers, archaeologists, Iranologists, literati, and intellectuals attended the event.

"As an archaeologist who has studied and experienced the history of this country, I can say that Iran, due to its geographical position, has always been a crossroads for many invasions. Throughout history, many brave individuals have stood against the enemies of this land," Dehpahlavan said.

"Today, among Iranian ethnic groups, such as those in the Zagros region, Lorestan, Baluch-



Arash the Archer is a heroic figure in Iranian mythology. According to Iranian folklore, Arash determined the boundary between Iran and Turan by launching an arrow with his life force.

istan, and others, firearms hold great importance, with many stories of bravery associated with them. If we look further back, we see that these firearms were once bows and arrows."

Dehpahlavan noted, "On the tombs and monuments of the Achaemenid kings, you see the king depicted with a bow in front of a fire altar.

Similarly, on Achaemenid and Parthian coins, without exception, the king is shown holding a

Therefore, bows and arrows were of great significance to Iranian men and warriors in defending their existence, and Arash is a symbol of this bravery and peace."

He further explained, "Throughout history, we see that Iranians have rarely been the aggressors in wars, often defending themselves instead. These are historical truths, and we hope to continue witnessing peace, prosperity, and flourishing in our land and globally in the future."

Dehpahlavan concluded by expressing gratitude to the organizers and participants of the

ceremony and paid tribute to the late Farhoud Jalali, the esteemed cultural and literary figure of Mazandaran.

Tirgan is one of the biggest festivals in ancient Iran. Traditionally, it is held on the Tir day (ancient days) of Tir month, equal to the 13th of the month in the Zoroastrian calendar, and equivalent to the 10th of Tir in Shamsi year.

Each year, the Zoroastrians celebrate this day in honor of Tishtar and perform some special rituals.

Tishtar is a star that brings news of rain, and in the Iranian culture, it is the brightest star in the sky, and it will soon rain once it appears.

Tirgan is the annual celebration of the day that Arash the archer, the legendary hero of Iran, fired his arrow to determine the border of Iran and sacrificed himself for his country. This day is also the celebration of the writers in ancient Iran.

It is noteworthy that the date to observe this festival varies in different regions of the country.

For instance, Tirgan is celebrated Tir 13 in the foothills of

Rineh city of Larijan in Amol, Mazandaran province. In Farahan of Markazi province, at the beginning of the summer, 1st of Tir, they celebrate the ripening of the wheat and its harvest as the first Tirgan.

In Gilan, a day named Tirmasinezeh is registered as a spiritual heritage of Iran. In Mazandaran, according to Tapuri calendar (Tabari or Mazandarani), Tirgan is celebrated on the 13th of Aban and is called the Tir Mah Sizdahsho festival, and in Ardehal of Kashan province, on the 13th of Mehr.

In Mehdishahr of Semnan province, it is called Tir Mo Ee Sizdah on the 22nd of Aban, and in Karizat of Yazd it is celebrated on the first day of Tir and is called Ab, Tir, Mahi.

In addition, the Armenian-Iranian people of Isfahan celebrate it on the 13th of January, and the Zoroastrians of Kerman celebrate it on the second week of Tir and call it Tir o Jashn.

In some parts of Iran, it is celebrated on the 13th day of Farvardin. In many cities, since this day is not an official holiday, it is celebrated on the closest weekend to it.

This celebration is held near water sources, and people gather there excitedly and pour water on each other, and call it Ab Rizan, Ab Pashan, or Sarshuran.

There are other traditions related to Tirgan, and they vary in each region. They include staying up all night, playing games, and local competitions, having sweets and fruits, singing songs, and reading poems of Hafez, Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, etc.

Tomb of Cyrus the Great to undergo restoration

TEHRAN – The Tomb of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the ancient Achaemenid Empire (c. 550 – 330 BC), will undergo restoration, Fars province's tourism chief said on Saturday.

"The tomb of Cyrus will be restored as part of a larger project to be carried out on the UNESC?O-registered Pasargadae," Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi said, adding: "Today marks the 20th anniversary of Pasargadae's inscription as a World Heritage site."

"This world heritage site includes various structures such as palaces, a tomb, a caravanserai, royal gardens, bridges, pavilions, and more, which were listed as a World Heritage Site under number 1106 in 2004."

Regarding previous efforts in the year before, the official said: "Fortunately, in the past year, significant and appropriate actions have been taken in the areas of restoration, protection, and organization, as well as the implementation of cultural programs at this world heritage site."

"For instance, actions such as improving the access staircase to the defensive fortifications of the Tall-e Takht, constructing a canopy, organizing restrooms, monitoring the area and boundaries of Pasargadae, determining routes, and overseeing the project



of transferring water from the Persian Gulf to Fars and Isfahan provinces, preparing reports and organizing the discovered ancient cultural artifacts at this world heritage site can be mentioned."

Founded in the 6th century BC, Pasargadae was the earliest capital of the Achaemenid (First Persian) Empire. Created by Cyrus the Great with contributions from various peoples of the first great multicultural empire in Western Asia, Pasargadae showcases the initial phase of Achaemenid royal art and architecture.

The site's archaeological remains, including its palaces, garden layout, and the tomb of Cyrus, provide exceptional testimony to Achaemenid civilization.

The "Four Gardens" royal ensemble, con-

ceived in Pasargadae, became a prototype for Western Asian architecture and design. The 160-hectare archaeological site presents some of the earliest manifestations of Persian art and architecture.

Among its monuments are the compact limestone tomb on the Morgab plain that once held Cyrus the Great's gilded sarcophagus, and Tall-e Takht ("Solomon's Throne"), a great fortified platform built on a hill later incorporated into a sprawling citadel with substantial mud-brick defenses.

The royal ensemble consists of several palaces originally located within a garden layout, the so-called "Four Gardens.

"This design became a prototype for the Persian Garden concept, characterized by four quadrants formally divided by waterways or pathways, with architecture noted for its refined details and slender verticality.

Pasargadae represents the first phase of the development of distinct architectural elements, which later found its full expression in the city of Persepolis.

Shahrestanak; a blend of history and nature near Tehran

TEHRAN - Nestled in the Alborz Mountains, Shahrestanak is a picturesque countryside district that captures the essence of Iran's natural beauty and rich history.

Just 70 kilometers from Karaj, Shahrestanak offers a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of Tehran, making it an ideal destination for one-day trips. The journey to this enchanting village is an adventure in itself, as it takes you along the scenic Karaj-Chalus road, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes.

To reach Shahrestanak, travelers must navigate a charming 10-kilometer byway that branches off near

Gachesar, just past the village of Asara. This short detour leads to a realm of tranquility and stunning vistas, where the air is crisp, and nature's beauty is on full display.

For those who enjoy hiking and climbing, an alternative route begins at the summit of Tochal and descends into the village, offering spectacular panoramic views along the way.

One of the most captivating attractions in Shahrestanak is the historical Naseri Palace. Once a royal summerhouse belonging to Naser-Al-Din Shah Qajar, this historic palace now stands in ruins, whispering tales of its glorious past. Nearby, a stone inscription from

the same era adds a touch of historical intrigue to the site. Although the palace is mostly in ruins, its remnants offer a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of Iran's past monarchs.

History enthusiasts will also be drawn to the ruins of the Shahrestanak fortress. Perched atop a mountain, the fortress requires a bit of a hike to reach, but the effort is well worth it. The remaining walls of the fortress tell a story of resilience and ancient defense mechanisms, providing a tangible connection to the region's storied past.

Nature lovers may find Shahrestanak to be a veritable paradise. A gentle riv-

er meanders near the Naseri Palace, creating a soothing soundtrack to the village's serene ambiance.

Among Shahrestanak's most remarkable natural wonders is an ancient Juniperus tree, locally known as Hoorast. Believed to be around 2,500 years old, this venerable tree stands as a testament to the enduring power of nature

One unique feature of Persian architecture that visitors can experience in Shahrestanak is the Koochehbaq. These narrow passages wind between orchards, with clay walls and overhanging branches providing shade. Some Koochehbaqs even have ditches run-

ning through them, creating a cool and pleasant walking environment. Many of these charming passages date back over a century, offering a walk through history as well as nature.

Shahrestanak's charm is enhanced by the changing seasons. Spring brings a burst of vibrant colors and blossoming flowers, making it the ideal time to visit. Summers are refreshingly cool, offering a pleasant retreat from the heat. Autumn, however, is perhaps the most magical time in Shahrestanak. The orchards transform into a kaleidoscope of red, orange, and yellow hues, with falling leaves creating a picturesque and almost surreal atmosphere.



Whether you are seeking historical insights, natural beauty, or simply a peaceful retreat, Shahrestanak has something to offer. Its combination of historical sites, and enchanting natural features make it a destination worth exploring.

Iran ready to help Turkey launch genetic bank

TEHRAN -Iran is ready to share its expertise and extensive experiences in genetics information bank with Turkey, and cooperate in establishing a genetics bank in the country, the head of the Department of Forensic Medicine has said.

"The genetic bank is a source of national pride for the country," IRNA quoted Abbas Masjedi-Arani as say-

He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran on Friday with Hizir Asliyuksek, the president of the Turkish Forensic Medicine Institute.

The genetic bank in Iran has been successfully launched and is now operational. The genetic profiles of criminals with repeated crimes are stored in the bank, and the storage of genetic profiles of people with high-risk jobs such as journalists, firefighters, and pilots is also on the agenda, he noted.

In addition to genetics kits, some laboratory devices, equipment, and software are also domestically made by experts, Masjedi-Arani added.

The center mainly focuses on providing scientific and educational services to people.

Department of Forensic Medicine is also involved in tissue processing. Since more than 400,000 patients benefit from processed tissues every year, the department has started taking serious measures in this regard.

He also highlighted that boosting



scientific interactions between the two countries will lead to other collaborations

Asliyuksek, for his part, said Turkish Forensic Medicine has made significant progress in the past two years. The two countries can exchange experts to enhance cooperation in specialized fields.

Observing part of the achievements and productions of Iran's forensic research center, the Turkish official extended an invitation to the center to feature their products and achievements at the Forensic Science Congress, which will be held in Turkey with the participation of 20 countries.

Intl. Genetics exhibition

The 6th international and 18th national congress on genetics will be held in Tehran from July 7 to 9.

Hosted by Shahid Beheshti University, the three-day event will be conducted under the theme of 'genetics for health; food security; conservation of genetic resources, immediate needs and future necessity',

Held every two years, the congress's primary objective is to share the latest global scientific achievements among genetic professors, researchers, and experts.

IRNA reported.

International universities from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Russia cooperate with Shahid Beheshti University to hold the congress this year, IRNA quoted the president of the Iranian Genetics Society as saying.

While there are 13 climates or variable weather conditions across the world, Iran benefits from eleven climate diversity which has resulted in a variety of genetic and plant diversity. It is considered a highly valuable natural resource for the country, Mokhtar Jalali-Jouran said.

The value of the biological, plant, and animal genetic diversity in Iran is far more than the oil and gas, he stressed.

In terms of genetic science production, Iran ranks 2nd in the region and 22nd worldwide, ISNA quoted the scientific secretary of the congress as saying.

Researchers from 15 countries namely Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, Finland, Australia, the U.S., Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Hungary, Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey have submitted articles to the Congress, he said.

Out of 794 submitted articles, 758 have been accepted. 64 articles will be presented in the form of lectures and 694 in the form of posters, he

The accepted articles were in the fields of human genetics (475), plant genetics (188), animal genetics (179), ethics and biosafety (29), stem cells, and micro-organisms (15).

There will be 20 lecturers both online and in person; and a total of 17 educational workshops will be held during this year's congress, he added.

Iran-Turkey tech cooperation

In September 2023, the Turkish ambassador to Iran, Hicabi Kirlangic, and the Iranian deputy science minister, Vahid Haddadi-Asl, stressed boosting technological cooperation, particularly joint scientific collaboration.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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Tehran hosting Pharmex intl. exhibition 2024

TEHRAN -The 6th Pharmex international exhibition is being held in Tehran from July 4 to 7.

It is known as the largest international pharmaceutical industry event in Iran and West Asia.

Out of 500 companies participating in the exhibition, half are knowledge-based companies.

The exhibition serves as a platform to display Iranian companies' potential and expertise. It showcases cutting-edge achievements as well as innovative products.

Trade delegations from 37 countries along with their ambassadors are attending the 6th Pharmex exhibition, ANA reported.

"Some 71 percent of the country's raw pharmaceutical needs are provided domestically, Mehr news agency quoted Faramarz Ekhteraei, the chairman of the Iranian Pharmaceutical Industries Syndicate, as saying.

Iranian companies are highly proficient in producing effective medicinal substances and the country will soon commence exporting these substances, he added. In addition to holding B2B meetings, a total of 100 educational workshops are planned to be held during the four-day event which mainly aims to boost the knowledge and expertise of the experts.

For the first time, artificial intelligence (AI), and robots will help the organizers to welcome and

Pharmaceutical Packaging Syndicate in collaboration with the National Food and Drug Administration, the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education, and the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade has organized the event.

Pharmaceutical factories abroad

In June, Ekhtarei said, "Iran is planning to establish 16 pharmaceutical factories in foreign countries and is currently finalizing contracts."

However, the official did not provide further details on the target countries.

"Currently, more than 70 percent of the raw materials required by the country's pharmaceutical factories are domestically produced."

Highlighting the country's capabilities and potential of pharmaceutical factories for exports, the official said that imposed sanctions have posed many obstacles making it difficult to export products. Once such factories are constructed, the true potential of the country's pharmaceutical industry, which is a step above manufacturing pharmaceutical products, will be demonstrated.

Medicine exports to increase

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is developing a plan to increase pharmaceutical exports by 30 percent in the mid-term, an official with the FDA has said.

"In the past years, medicine exports in Iran accounted for a small share of non-oil exports. However, over the past year, it experienced a growing trend," IRNA quoted Seyyed Ali Maboudi as saying.

The official went on to point out that the exports of raw materials and pharmaceutical products over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2023-March 2024) were valued at more than 100 million dollars. "The Food and Drug Administration is planning to double the medicine exports in the short term and tenfold in the long term," the official added.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Health ministry to develop training package to control dengue fever

TEHRAN – The health ministry is planning to develop a training package to inform individuals, particularly passengers, medical staff, and journalists of the ways to prevent, or manage dengue

Dengue is a viral infection transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes, IRNA quoted Farshid Rezaei, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

It is found in tropical and subtropical climates worldwide. Despite the spread of dengue fever, there are no travel limitations. However, travelers, especially in countries such as the UAE and Thailand, should be aware of self-care tips and know how to prevent dengue fever and mosquito bites.

People in the country should also observe the essential hygiene points such as wearing clothes that cover most parts of the body, like socks, longsleeved clothes, and long pants. Use insect repellants when traveling to the provinces at risk, which are mainly southern cities, he highlighted.

Stating that the mortality rate for dengue fever is about 1 percent, Rezaei emphasized, "About 40 to 80 percent of patients with dengue have mild or no symptoms, by adhering to sanitation practices, can reduce dengue fever cases by 70 percent.

Dengue virus, which is part of flaviviruses, has four serologically related but genetically distinct viruses, DENV serotype-1, DENV-2, DENV-3, and

It means that it is possible for a person to be infected with the virus 4 times. The second serotype is the dominant serotype.

Dengue virus is transmitted through the bite of Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquitoes. These mosquitoes also transmit Zika and Chikungunya virus.

Dengue disease has different infectious phases, including the fever phase, critical phase, and re-

Since April 20 this year, 138 cases of dengue fever have been diagnosed, most of whom are from the UAE, Pakistan, and Iraq, and only seven cases were from inside the country.

These provinces that are at risk include Hormozgan, Sistan- Baluchestan, Bushehr, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan.

Dengue fever, like other infectious diseases such as corona, and malaria, can be transmitted from infected human to healthy human. Fortunately, treatment guidelines for treating the disease are available in the country.

Will Iran go through La Niña episode?

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –According to recent forecasts, there is the possibility of either neutral conditions or a transition into La Niña.

Concerning the fact that the cycle is currently moving from El Niño to La Niña, Sadeg Ziaeian, an official with national center for forecasting Iran metrological organization, said: "There is over 60 percent chance for neutral conditions and 38 percent chance for experiencing La Niña in the country" by August 20, ISNA reported.

El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a climate phenomenon that has three parts El Niño, La Niña, and neutral phases.

El Niño and La Niña are opposite extremes of the ENSO, which refers to cyclical environmental conditions that occur across the Equatorial Pacific

La Niña is characterized by unusually cold ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific, compared to El Niño, which is characterized by unusually warm ocean temperatures in the Equatorial Pa-

These changes are due to natural interactions between the ocean and the atmosphere. Sea surface temperature, rainfall, air pressure, and atmospheric and ocean circulation all influence each

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

What are Pezeshkian's views on 29 key issues?

TEHRAN - Veteran parliamentarian Masoud Pezeshkian has won Iran's presidential election, ushering in a new era of leadership for the country.

Known for his progressive views and commitment to reform, Pezeshkian's presidency is set to bring significant changes to Iran's political and social landscape. Below, we delve into Pezeshkian's key ideas and stances on various critical topics, offering an in-depth look at the policies and vision that will define his administration and potentially reshape the future of the nation.

Politics

Restoring public trust

He argues that the key to solving the country's problems lies in fostering internal unity and cohesion and stopping mutual accusations. He believes that society should not be driven into conflict with religion or faith to build trust in religious democracy.

Engagement with the Leader

He expresses his unwavering support for the Leader, stating that from the moment he registered, he has committed to following the Leader's general policies. He believes the country's salvation depends on implementing the Leader's policies, including the Seventh Development Plan.

Engagement with society, youth, and elites

He believes that to fix the economy, we need empathy, participation, and trust in experts and specialists. He emphasizes that we are not weaker than any other nation and that we should provide opportunities for girls, women, and youth to flourish in society.

Reforming the administrative sys-

He insists that administrative reform is independent of other organizations. To reform the system, one must evaluate its performance, according to him. Additionally, he emphasizes that discussions should involve experts in each field, not individuals with connections to high-

Right to Protest

Protesting is a fundamental right and does not require permission. If protests are allowed, why would people act irrationally and create unrest? We need to listen to students and intellectuals instead of accusing and expelling them.

Participation in Elections

It's unacceptable that 60% of the population doesn't vote. This is partly due to the lack of participation and the marginalization of women and ethnic groups. They feel that if their rights are ignored and their demands are rejected, why should they participate?

Foreign Policy

He stresses the JCPOA's importance for improving relations with neighboring countries. He questions the validity of claims against the agreement, citing the Raisi administration's efforts to revive it as evidence of its importance.

Neighborhood Policy

He emphasizes building strong and comprehensive relations with neighbors to create a unified and prosperous region. He aims to attract foreign investment for economic development

FATF

He views FATF membership as crucial for addressing Iran's economic woes and improving international relations. He argues it is necessary to overcome unjust sanctions and improve Iran's position in international trade.

Axis of Resistance

He focuses on strategic planning to combat the Zionist regime as a central element of Iran's foreign policy. He envisions dedicated working groups to address the Palestine issue and promote a regional and Islamic approach to resolving it.

Relations with East and West

He stresses the importance of a balanced foreign policy, engaging with both the West and the East. He favors strategic and reciprocal relationships with China and Russia, advocating against a single-option approach.

Sanctions and Negotiation

If the other side does not engage, we will rely on our own capabilities to solve our problems, but we will be isolated from the global community. We will advance our foreign policy based on the principles of dignity, wisdom, and expediency.

Economy

The first step

"With this level of strife within the government and the gap between the people and the government, it is not possible to do any major work to solve the economic problems.

"I want to put a model of policy-making and political ethics aimed at convergence and harmony at the top of my agenda and reduce the intensity of political conflicts and the gap between the government and the people and trust economic experts," he explained.

Inflation

Regarding the plans for curbing inflation, Pezeshkian believes the only way to reduce inflation and boost economic growth is to negotiate with the world and be open to economic relations with the

"Whenever we negotiated and agreed with the world, the inflation rate decreased and the economic growth rate increased, and whenever we did not intend to negotiate, the economic growth rate decreased and the inflation rate increased," he said.

Tax collection

Pezeshkian insists on levying taxes and believes that tax evasions should be prevented by creating appropriate mechanisms and connecting the national code and postal code of people to the banking

Subsidy

Pointing out that the higher classes of the society currently receive more subsidies than those with lower incomes, Pezeshkian emphasized that this situation must change.

Privatization

In this regard Pezeshkian believes that the main economic challenge of the country is the failure to properly implement Article 44 of the Constitution and

the order of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution regarding the strengthening of the private sector and cooperatives.

"In some cases, I do not believe in privatization. For example, I believe that the field of health and treatment cannot be left to the market, but I agree with a free market in other fields," he said.

The Stock Market

With regard to the stock market, Pezeshkian relies more on the opinion of experts and says: "my plan for the stock market is to listen to the experts according to scientific evidence in the first place."

He believes that the stock market problems are the result of the country's economic problems, improper government interference in businesses and international sanctions.

Housing

So far, Pezeshkian has not announced a clear vision and plan for resolving housing problems, however, he believes that this problem will not be solved by the government's intervention and the construction of government housing.

Women

I am strongly opposed to the "morality police" because this is a humiliation for women.

Internet

I will remove internet filtering. [Social media] are the place for cultural

Education

We will place the priority on expanding schools in remote and underdeveloped areas.

Environment

I will resist any project that may harm the environment. Development should be based on environmental protection.

Domestic tourism

Pezeshkian has promised his supporters that he would save Lake Urmia from drying up. "With your help, we will save Lake Urmia." Over the past years, many measures have been taken to save this important tourist destination in northwestern Iran, but none have vielded definitive results.

Tourism economy

Pezeshkian recently underscored the importance of the tourism industry and the necessity of addressing its issues. He emphasized that developing tourism can help improve the national economy and requires special attention from the government.

Culture

We have issues in the fields of cinema

Cinema

and art that need to be addressed. Lifestyle We should start education from school

and kindergarten as we can change the lifestyle of children through school education.

Cultural Management I believe that the government should not interfere in the field of culture and art and should only be a policymaker.

Game developers can be profitable for our country if they fill the space with games that cater to children's tastes.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There are two kinds of people who are greedy and never satisfied: seekers of learning and lovers of the world.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:08 Evening: 19:24 Dawn: 3:08 (tomorrow)

Tehran cultural center to review George Clooney's "The Ides of March"

TEHRAN- "The Ides of March", a 2011 political drama film by American actor and filmmaker George Clooney, will be reviewed at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday evening.

Film critic Kurosh Jahed is scheduled to attend a screening of the film followed by a review session.

"The Ides of March" is based on Beau Willimon's 2008 play "Farragut North". The movie stars Ryan Gosling and Clooney alongside an ensemble cast, including Philip Seymour Hoffman, Paul Giamatti, Marisa Tomei, Jeffrey Wright, and Evan Rachel Wood.

The film premiered at the 68th Venice International Film Festival and the 27th Haifa International Film Festival, and was later shown at the Toronto International Film Festival. Upon its wide release in 2011, "The Ides of March" received widespread critical acclaim and grossed over \$76 million worldwide. The film was chosen as one of the top ten films of 2011 by the National Board of Review, and earned Ryan Gosling a Golden Globe nomination for his performance. George Clooney, Grant Heslov, and Beau Willimon were also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The story follows Stephen Meyers (Ryan Gosling), a junior campaign manager for Governor Mike Morris (George Clooney), who is running for the Democratic presidential nomination. As Morris's campaign struggles to secure the endorsement of influential Senator Franklin Thompson, Meyers becomes embroiled in a web of deceit and corruption. The stakes are high, as both campaigns vie for control of 356 delegates that would clinch the nomination.

Meyers's world begins to unravel when he receives a cryptic phone call from Tom Duffy (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the campaign manager of rival candidate Ted Pullman. Duffy offers Mevers a position in Pullman's campaign, but Meyers refuses. Meanwhile, Meyers starts a romantic affair with Molly Stearns (Evan Rachel Wood), an intern whose father is the chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

As tensions rise, Meyers discovers that Molly is pregnant with Morris's child and helps her obtain an abortion. However, this secret is soon revealed to the press by an anonymous source, leading to a series of events that threaten to destroy Morris's campaign. In a desperate bid to save his boss's reputation, Meyers makes a Faustian bargain with Duffy, agreeing to help Pullman secure Thompson's endorsement in exchange for his own

In the climactic final scenes, Meyers confronts Morris and demands that he give up his integrity and offer Thompson the position of Vice President. Morris reluctantly agrees, sacrificing his values for the sake of his political ambitions. As the dust settles, Meyers emerges as a key player in the campaign, but at what cost? The film ends with Meyers sitting down for an interview with CNN's John King, haunted by the ghosts of his own

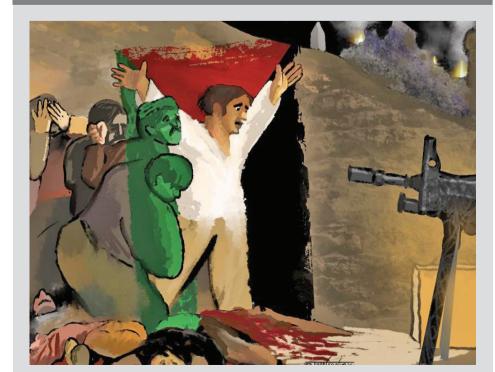
Throughout the film, Clooney's direction masterfully weaves together themes of politics, power, and corruption, raising important questions about the nature of integrity and dignity in public life.

George Clooney has had a successful career as an actor, director, and producer in Hollywood. He made his directorial debut with the 2005 film "Good Night, and Good Luck," which was nominated for several Academy Awards. He went on to direct the films "The Good German" in 2006 and "Leatherheads" in 2008, which received mixed

Clooney's acting career has been marked by a range of successful films, including "Syriana" (2005), "The Descendants" (2011), "Argo" (2012), and "Gravity" (2013). He has been nominated for several Academy Awards and has won several Golden Globes and BAFTAs.

In recent years, Clooney has directed and produced several films, including "The Monuments Men" (2014), "Tomorrowland" (2015), and "The Tender Bar" (2021). He has also appeared in films such as "Money Monster" (2016) and "The Midnight Sky" (2021).

Cartoon of Day



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From left: An untitled calligraphic painting by Mohammad Ehsai, "End of an Era" by Aydin Aghdashloo, "Black Numbers on White" by Farhad Moshiri

20th Tehran Auction realizes

over \$3 million

TEHRAN-The 20th Tehran Auction was held on Friday at Tehran's Parsian Azadi Hotel, where it realized over \$3 million.

At the auction, which included 115 works by modern and contemporary Iranian artists, 107 pieces, over 93 percent of the offered lots, were sold at over 1,900 billion rials (\$3.175 million), Khabar Online reported.

Voice-over artist and actor Shahryar Rabbani served as the auctioneer at this edition, which presented 99 paintings and calligraphic paintings, 12 sculptures, and four photos.

A total of 65 buyers participated in the auction, 15 of whom did so for the

Of the 115 sold lots, 41 items were sold at prices higher than 10 billion rials (\$16,667).

The highest-grossing piece at the auction was a painting titled "End of an Era" from the "Memories of Destruction" series by Aydin Aghdashloo which was sold for \$205,333.

The second most expensive work was a piece of mixed media "Black Numbers on White", realizing \$187,000.

An untitled calligraphic painting by Mohammad Ehsai was also among the top three works of the auction, sold for \$183,333.

The auction also presented works by other renowned Iranian artists such as Aneh Mohammad Tatari, Kambiz Derambakhsh, Mokarrameh Ghanbari, Reza Bangiz, Taha Behbahani, Shirin Taraghijah, Mahmoud Zenderoudi, Nasser Assar, Ali Shirazi, Jazeh Tabatabai, and Sadegh Tabrizi among

The first of its kind in Iran, the Tehran Auction was launched in 2012 as an independent and private initiative to introduce the best in Iranian art, ranging from established and emerging Iranian artists to art collectors and the global audience.

Ettehadieh, Farshid Mesghali, Farideh It aims to address the Lashai, Hossein Mahjoubi, Nasrollah increasing interest in modern Afjei, Bita Vakili, Behzad Shishegaran, and contemporary Iranian art and Reza Derakhshani, Mansour Ghandriz, facilitate the acquisition of quality on canvas by Farhad Moshiri titled Sirak Melkonian, Mohammad Ali works in reliable ways.

2 Iranian documentaries present at Portugal's International Heritage Film Festival

TEHRAN-Two documentaries from Iran are present at the 6th International Heritage Film Festival in Évora, Portugal.

"Into Zephyr" co-directed by Amin Nazari and Seyed Morteza Sabzeghaba and "Farrash" by Mohammad Mehdi Fekriyan are the two Iranian documentaries participating in the Documentaries section of the festival, IRNA reported.

"Into Zephyr" focuses on the remote village of Tange Dez in northern Dezful, Khuzestan Province.

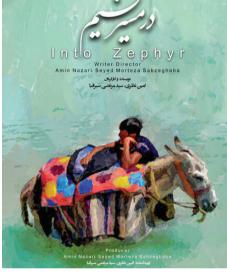
The village lacks basic living facilities and can only be accessed by crossing the salty water river.

The film has previously won awards at the 2nd Varsity International Film Festival in Africa and the 1st Bioscope Global Film Festival in India.

Three Acts of Goodness Micro Film Festival in

It was also nominated for Best Film at the 6th

"Farrash" is a short poetic documentary, which has an interesting and musical look at making



Established in 2016, the International Heritage

Film Festival aims to promote cultural heritage through various media, with a focus on cinema. The festival showcases anthropological films that highlight the material and immaterial heritage, customs, education, architecture, and the sustainability of communities.

The festival projects cinema in emblematic architectural spaces, preferably outdoors, and with debates with its authors, promoting dialogue and international collaborations.

On the one hand, it aims to encourage sustainability linked to communities and promote a reinterpretation of what can be valued as cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of heritage education.

It also seeks to encourage new ways of transferring knowledge, encouraging intercultural dialogue, and giving way to international scientific collaboration through partnerships.

This year's edition of the festival runs from June

16 to September 30 in Évora, Portugal.

Jules Verne's "The Green Ray" available in bookstores

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the novel "The Green Ray" written by the French author Jules Verne has been released in the Iranian book market.

has published the book in 239 pages with a translation by Sogol Farahani, Mehr reported.

"The Green Ray" was originally published in 1882 and named after the optical phenomenon of the same name.

Unlike most of Verne's other works, this novel is much more of a romance and travelogue than adventure or even sci-fi.

In the book, Verne has fabricated the ancient Scottish legend of the Green Ray, a flash of green light that sometimes appears just as a distant shore - and beyond

the sun is passing the horizon at - braving hurricanes, testing into his own heart and read the selves. hearts of others.

about the legendary Green Ray's elevating effects on the mind and soul, Helena Campbell vows to experience it for herself, postponing the wedding being forced upon her against her will.

Together with her uncles, Sam and Sib Melville, she sets off on what becomes a near-epic quest. Joining them in the search are two would-be suitors for Helena, one an artist, the other an amateur scientist.

Together, they will voyage to

sea when the sky is clear, and the their patience and resolve, and viewer is enabled to see closely ultimately finding their own true

Jules Verne (1828-1905) was Qoqnoos Publishing Group When the Morning Post writes a French novelist, poet, and and underwater travel before playwright.

> He is considered to be an important author in France and most of Europe, where he has had a wide influence on the literary avant-garde and surrealism.

> Verne was born to bourgeois parents in the seaport of Nantes. where he was trained to follow in his father's footsteps as a lawyer but quit the profession early in life to write for magazines and the stage.

> His collaboration with the publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel led

to the creation of the "Voyages Extraordinaires," a widely popular series of scrupulously researched adventure novels.

Verne wrote about space, air, people invented navigable aircraft and practical submarines and devised any means of spacecraft.

He ranks behind Agatha Christie as the second most translated author of all time.

People often refer to Verne alongside Herbert George Wells as the "father of science fiction" for novels including "Journey to the Center of the Earth" (1864) "Around the World in Eighty Days" (1873), and "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" (1870) among many others.

SXSW Festival cuts ties with U.S. military following boycott from over 80 artists

SXSW Festival will not be sponsored by the U.S. Army and defense contractor RTX Corporation for its forthcoming events in 2025, the festival has announced.

In a statement on its website, SXSW (AKA South By South West) said that "after careful consideration, it would be revising its sponsorship model," Mixmag reported.

"As a result, the U.S. Army, and companies who engage in weapons manufacturing, will not be sponsors of SXSW 2025," it confirmed.

The announcement follows the withdrawal of over 80 artists who had been scheduled to participate in this year's festival due to its sponsorship from the US Army and weapons manufacturers, said to have ties to the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) amid its ongoing invasion of Gaza — which the UN has called genocide against Palestinians.

The boycott was started by Chicagobased songwriter Squirrel Flower (real name Ella Williams), who said in a statement on Instagram: "I have decided to pull out of my official SXSW showcase in protest of SXSW's ties to the defense industry and in support of the Palestinian people."

"I don't believe that a music festival should include profiteers of war - I believe that art is a tool to create a better world and has no place alongside warmongers," the statement

Following this statement, over 80 other artists went on to join the boycott, including Irish rap group Kneecap, Noor Khan from indie group Mamalarky, singer-songwriter Eliza McLamb, Shalom and Lambrini Girls.

The Texas-based festival had the U.S. Army listed as a "super sponsor," as well as Collins Aerospace (a subsidiary of weapons manufacturer RTX Corporation).

SXSW is a multi-faceted creative event, spotlighting film, interactive media, music, emerging technology, marketing, and other forms of cross-functional art, drawing around 300,000 guests yearly to its Austin Texas home making it one of the world's largest festivals.