



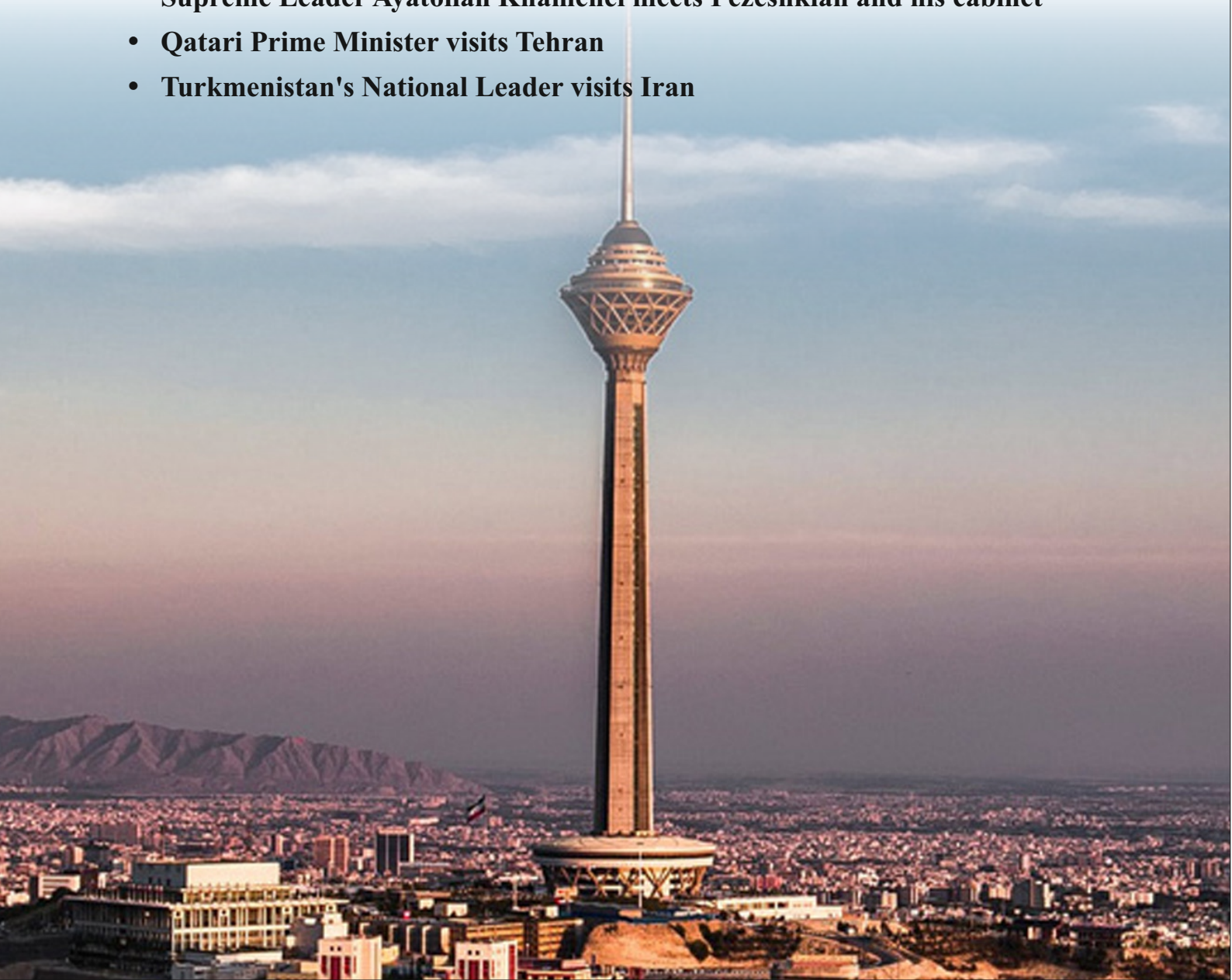
MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Digest

August 2024

- **Parliament approves President Pezeshkian's Cabinet**
- **Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei meets Pezeshkian and his cabinet**
- **Qatari Prime Minister visits Tehran**
- **Turkmenistan's National Leader visits Iran**



Parliament approves President Pezeshkian's Cabinet

On 21 August, following five days of hearings and discussions in Iran's parliament, all 19 [ministerial nominees](#) by President Masoud Pezeshkian won the vote of confidence. Ahead of the vote, [President Pezeshkian](#) addressed the conservative-dominated parliament and called for “unity and cohesion.” The cabinet is being hailed as cross-factional. Former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who was appointed by Pezeshkian as vice president for strategic affairs, and tasked with proposing the new cabinet members, had called for a younger cabinet and greater representation of ethnic and religious minorities. He resigned in protest after several ministers from Raisi's cabinet were retained. However, Pezeshkian declined to accept the resignation and Zarif resumed his duties after two weeks. Seyed Abbas Araghchi, served as deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs under Reformist president Mohammad Khatami, and as a deputy of Zarif (2013-21), was approved as the Foreign Minister. Pezeshkian told parliament that “Araghchi was the very first person who was accepted by Supreme Leader Khamenei, even before we presented the names of the ministerial nominees.” Notably, in 2021, on Khamenei's recommendation, Araghchi was appointed as the secretary of the [Strategic Council on Foreign Relations](#), which advises the supreme leader on international affairs. Majid Takht-Ravanchi, a former deputy foreign minister who was among the lead negotiators of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and then later served as the ambassador to the United Nations, has been appointed as Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs. [Mohammad Eslami](#), who was appointed as the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran by former President Ebrahim Raisi in 2021 was retained in the

position. Esmaeil Khatib, who served in different intelligence ranks within the IRGC and as Minister of Intelligence under Raisi, was retained. Farzaneh Sadegh, as the sole woman candidate was approved to head the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, where she has had a 28-year career in various positions. Abdolnaser Hemmati, who served as governor of the Central Bank of Iran and contested 2021 Presidential election was confirmed as the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei meets Pezeshkian and his cabinet

On 27 August, marking the beginning of the National Government Week, commemorating President Mohammad Ali Rajaei and Prime Minister Mohammad Javad Bahonar, who were killed in a terrorist bombing of the Islamic Republican Party headquarters by Mojahedin-e Khalq in 1981, Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Khamenei](#) met with President Pezeshkian and his cabinet members. Khamenei reiterated his advice to the administration that recognising nation's resources and potentials, including natural resources and strategic geographic location, is a prerequisite for effective governance. He called on the administration to include “young, faithful, revolutionary, and highly motivated individuals” in the government structure and underscored the necessity for the government officials for being present among the people through regular engagement and provincial trips. While stressing that nuclear energy is one of the fundamental and essential priorities for Iran's future, he spoke of the need for legal regulation for governing cyberspace and warned against Iran falling behind in mastering the deeper layers of artificial intelligence could lead to the establishment of another exclusive domain, akin to atomic energy agency, which will be controlled by

countries dominating this technology. In another remark widely seen as approval for engagement with the West, Khamenei emphasized to the Iranian President and his cabinet the importance of not relying on Iran's enemies or waiting for their approval, adding that "this does not mean that we cannot interact with the same enemy in certain situations. There is no harm in that, but do not place your hopes in them. Do not trust the enemy."

Qatari Prime Minister visits Tehran

On 26 August, Prime Minister and [Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar](#) Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani met his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in Tehran. They discussed bilateral cooperation relations and ways to support and develop them, the latest developments in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, the latest developments in mediation efforts for a ceasefire deal between Hamas and Israel. Al-Thani's visit followed the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Doha, the last stop in his regional tour that included Israel and Egypt. Blinken had sought support for the so-called ['bridging proposal'](#), a set of terms, supported by the US, Egypt and Qatar, that, if agreed on by Israel and Hamas, would allow more space for negotiations over how a broader cease-fire deal would be implemented. Together with Egypt, Qatar plays the role of an intermediary with Hamas in the ceasefire negotiations. In his meeting with Pezeshkian, Al-Thani described [Iran as a "responsible actor"](#) that can play a constructive role in the efforts to ensure a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. Qatar has played the role of an interlocutor between the US and Iran, including facilitating a prisoner swap in September 2023 that involved the transfer of US\$ 6 billion of Iranian assets frozen in South Korea to Qatari banks.

Turkmenistan's National Leader visits Iran

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, [the National Leader of the Turkmen people](#) and Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan paid a working visit to Iran. Speaking during a meeting with Berdimuhamedov and President Pezeshkian, [Supreme Leader Khamenei](#) said relations between Iran and Turkmenistan have grown significantly in recent years, but there is substantial scope for further cooperation. Defining the trade and economic sphere among the key vectors of the relations, Berdimuhamedov affirmed that the long border between Iran and Turkmenistan will always remain a "border of peace and friendship." In the [meeting between Pezeshkian and the Turkmen leader](#), the two sides discussed expanding cooperation in the gas sector, especially the swap scheme and that the work is underway to increase the volumes of gas supply to Iran up to 40 billion cubic meters per year. Türkmengaz and the National Gas Company of Iran signed a MoU on the Development of Cooperation in the Field of Natural Gas. The two sides also discussed the export of Turkmen electricity to Iran, and defined transport sector cooperation as another key vector of the relations. Turkmen side proposed that to improve cargo volumes on the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran route, a trilateral initiative involving companies of the three countries should be created. Pezeshkian called for effective usage of another transport-transit route Armenia-Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan. They also signed a MoU on sister port relationship between Turkmenbashi port and Iran's Amirabad port. The customs services of the two countries signed the Programme of Joint Activities on Deepening and Expansion of Future Cooperation for the period of 2025-2026.