

Iran candidates square off in first TV debate



Iranian presidential candidates (L to R) Mostafa Hashemitaba, Hassan Rouhani, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Eshaq Jahangiri, Ebrahim Raisi and Mostafa Mirsalim attend a live debate on state TV

Tehran

The six candidates standing in Iran's presidential election squared off in their first ever live television debate Friday, with moderate President Hassan Rouhani coming under fire from a key rival.

Televised debates are a relatively new feature of Iranian presidential elections, and are

believed to have influenced the results in 2009 and 2013.

Ahead of the May 19 poll, the interior ministry had announced a ban on live television debates, triggering an outcry that prompted a reversal of its decision. Three live debates are now expected to take place.

Rouhani, who is hoping for a second term in office, and

conservative rivals Ebrahim Raisi and Tehran mayor Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf all rejected the ban.

On Friday, during the first live debate, Ghalibaf hammered Rouhani and his confidant and first vice-president, Eshaq Jahangiri, with both sides trading accusations of "lies" and making "insincere" comments.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

Turkey, US can turn Raqqa into 'graveyard' for IS: Erdogan

Istanbul

Turkey and the United States can join forces to turn the Islamic State jihadist group's de-facto capital of Raqa in Syria into a "graveyard" for the extremists, the Turkish president said yesterday.

The Turkish government is pressuring Washington to stop backing Kurdish fighters as an ally in the fight against IS jihadists in Syria, in a dispute that has limited cooperation between the NATO allies.

"The huge America, the coalition and Turkey can join hands and turn Raqa into a graveyard for Daesh," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told an Istanbul meeting, using an alternative name for the IS group.

"They (the jihadists) will look for a place for themselves to hide," he said.

Erdogan's comments come ahead of a meeting with President Donald Trump on May 16 in the United States, their first face-to-face summit since the American leader took office in January. Ankara is hopeful about

the future of the relationship with Washington under Trump after ties frayed in the final years of Barack Obama's administration.

The two countries have bitterly disagreed over the role of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria.

Turkey sees the group as a terrorist group linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been waging a deadly insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984.

But for the United States, the YPG is essential in the fight against IS jihadists.

The dispute has until now held up any joint American-Turkish operation to seize Raqa and Erdogan is clearly hoping for a breakthrough at his meeting with Trump.

Turkey this month announced it had completed its half-year Euphrates Shield operation in northern Syria against jihadists and Kurdish militia, although it is keeping a presence to maintain security in towns now under control of pro-Ankara Syrian rebels.

Erdogan said he would present Trump at their meeting next month with "documents" proving the YPG's links to the PKK, which is designated as a terror group by Ankara and Washington.

"We are telling American friends not to take a terror group along with them," the Turkish leader said.

Turkey on Wednesday carried out several strikes in Syria and Iraq against separatist Kurdish rebels and their allies, drawing the wrath of US officials who accused Ankara of lacklustre coordination.

The strikes in the Sinjar area of northern Iraq were against positions held by the Yazidi Protection Units (YBS), a militia supported by the PKK.

"We launched strikes against Sinjar, and the other place (in Syria) and killed 210 to 220 terrorists there. Why? You cannot play with this nation," Erdogan said.

He hinted at future operations against the YPG and PKK in Iraq and Syria. (AFP)

A Venture of VKL Holdings & Al Namal Group

MIDDLE EAST HOSPITAL
TRUSTED HEALTH CARE FOR LIFE



مستشفى الشرق الأوسط
رعاية صحية متميزة مدى الحياة



Specialized in Brain Surgery

- ▶ Brain Tumors
- ▶ Brain Hemorrhage (Bleeding)
- ▶ Head Trauma
- ▶ Epilepsy Surgery
- ▶ Brain Endoscopic Surgery

Spine Surgery

- ▶ Lumbar & Cervical Microscopic Disc Surgery & Fixation

Surgery of Spinal Cord Tumors

Surgery of Peripheral Nerve Injury & Entrapment Syndromes

DR. SAMY GOUDA

MD, MS, PHD

Consultant of Neurosurgery & Spine Surgery



Management of Cases:

- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Pain of arms & hands
- ◆ Neck pain
- ◆ Epilepsy
- ◆ Memory, Cognitive & Behavioral Diseases
- ◆ Head, spine & spinal cord injuries
- ◆ Low back pain & leg pain (Sciatica)
- ◆ Facial pain & Trigeminal Neuralgia
- ◆ Dizziness & Vertigo
- ◆ Weakness & difficulty in walking
- ◆ Bleeding in the brain (stroke)

Our Insurance Partners



For Appointments
17 36 22 33

24x7
EMERGENCY

Near Al Hayat Shopping Centre, Segaya Avenue, Kingdom of Bahrain

www.mehospital.com | Follow us @ mehospitalbh