Presidential race in Iran

Why in news?

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President elections are going to be held in Iran, on May 19 2017.

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How president elections will take place in Iran?

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- The Iranian presidency is not a strong institution compared to other presidential systems.
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- In the Islamic Republic, **real power lies with the Supreme Leader** (a clergy), who is not directly elected by the people.
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- The office of the President lends authority to the country's theocratic system, and a visionary, popular leader can plan within the limitations and push his agenda gradually.
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What is the Status of Economic sanctions on Iran?

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- Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979 to overthrow **Pahlavi dynasty** who was supported by USA, the United States imposed economic sanctions against Iran and expanded them in 1995 to include firms dealing with the Iranian government.
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- In 2006, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1696 and imposed sanctions after Iran refused to suspend its uranium enrichment program.
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- U.S. sanctions initially targeted investments in oil, gas, and petrochemicals, exports of refined petroleum products, and business dealings with the

Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps.
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- This encompasses banking and insurance transactions (including with the Central Bank of Iran), shipping, web-hosting services for commercial endeavours, and domain name registration services.
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- Though the UN-mandated sanctions on Iran were lifted after the nuclear deal, **the non-nuclear sanctions imposed by the U.S. are still in place.**
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What are the issue with current president?

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- The odds appear to be in favour of the incumbent Hassan Rouhani, the current president of Iran.
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- He was the first president of the Islamic Republic, who had been impeached, have served two terms.
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- He is particularly popular among the reformist section of the electorate, and is seeking to return to office on a clear political platform of integrating Iran further with the global order and initiating reforms at home.
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- He had promised to break Iran’s isolation, resolve the nuclear crisis through diplomatic means and turn that into economic benefit for all citizens.
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- He clinched the nuclear deal and oversaw greater Iranian engagement on the world stage.
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- But he has yet to make good on his goal of attracting foreign direct investment and modernising the economy.
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- It is partly not in his hands, International companies and banking giants still shy away from making deals with Tehran.
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What is the way forward?

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- The expected thaw in relations between Washington and Tehran did not take

place in the wake of geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Worse, the Trump administration’s anti-Iran rhetoric is not only scaring off western investors but also playing it into the hands of the hardliners in Iran.
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- It is now his chance to convince voters to give him one more term so he can continue this gradualist but substantive reform agenda.
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Source: The Hindu

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