

# Underprivileged gifted students to study tuition-free at NODET schools

## Social Desk

Gifted Iranian students from low-income groups will now have the opportunity to study for free at NODET schools.

The Iranian Minister of Education announced that the government would cover registration fees for exceptional students, who come from low-income backgrounds, in the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents (NODET) schools, according to ISNA.

The resolution was passed by the Council of Ministers and will take effect in the new academic year.

The decision to provide financial assistance for registration and education expenses aims to support talented individuals from disadvantaged families. Minister of Education Reza-Morad Sahraie confirmed this initiative during a government meeting on August 2, 2023. He emphasized that these students would not be charged any tuition fees, as the government would cover all their costs.

The plan also extends to current NODET school students. However, due to unexpected credit issues, their tuition fees

will fall under what is referred to as the "President's Special Gift" category, and will be paid accordingly.

To ensure its swift implementation, a notification regarding financial support for under-

privileged gifted students was promptly delivered to Iran's Planning and Budget Organization within one week.

Funds dedicated specifically towards assisting gifted students from families in lower

income brackets attending NODET schools will be allocated through approved credit facilities. The Ministry of Education and NODET will receive the necessary funding via the president's scholarship

programs.

Furthermore, an approval letter issued by the Board of Ministers highlighted that this initiative aims to remove barriers faced by talented students from low-income families when pursuing studies at NODET schools. By encouraging them to participate in entrance exams at such institutions, adequate funding provided through relevant approved credit facilities allocated towards Ministry of Education as well as NODET will cover registration fees and educational aid.

Additionally, cooperation between NODET and Imam Khomeini Relief Committee has facilitated enrollment processes for supported students, resulting in increased attendance rates among relief committee beneficiaries at these schools. This resolution ensures that supported students no longer have to worry about paying their education expenses at these institutions.

On August 5, the results for seventh and tenth-grade exams at NODET schools were announced. This year's entrance exams saw a total of 294,300 individuals participating across both grades.



## Iranian biodegradable waste bags in Armenian market



By Yeganeh Kiani  
Staff writer

The generation of urban solid waste and the subsequent disposal of it are among the most critical environmental issues around the world. Among these wastes, plastic has a large volume due to mismanagement as well as incorrect human usage. Currently, most plastics are not biodegradable.

In order to solve the issue, we can use nanobiodegradable plastic as alternatives to current common plastic.

In an interview with Iran Daily, Abbas Khodabandehlou, who runs a business in nanotechnology, says nanoplastic bags decompose much faster than other types of plastic bags.

"Nanoparticles are the most important materials used in the production process of all kinds of nanobags. Nanotechnology is the brand-new technology in the field of producing various compounds including plastic bags," he said. According to Khodabandehlou, these goods have many benefits over ordinary plastics, including great tensile strength, heat resistance and biodegradability. "Also they can be used repeatedly and, for this reason, in addition to reducing the need for bags, they provide more protection for the environment. In fact, they are environmentally friendly. These bags are beneficial for farmers and businesspeople, who are about to import goods like fruits and vegetables. They protect the produce from decaying and preserve them for about one month without any

change in quality," he said.

Regular bags can only preserve such goods for about two weeks. "Current nanostartups in Iran require better domestic investments due to the fact that essential materials for this technology are so expensive, and also there is the need for contemporary fully automatic machine manufacturers to reduce labor and save on cost," he said. Khodabandehlou further stated that some knowledge-based start-ups in cities like Tehran, Isfahan, and Qom are making a lot of effort to produce raw materials for nanobag production.

"Meanwhile, there are others which import raw materials from neighboring countries like Turkey, which leads to high expenses in producing these goods." In other news, there has been a contract signed between one of the Iranian nanocompanies and Kapan City Municipality in Armenia that will see the export of the company's biodegradable and antibacterial polyethylene rubbish bags to the city.

The company has formerly exported its goods to Germany and Uzbekistan as well as Turkey and Armenia, according to the CEO. These types of bags are also being used in fruit and vegetables markets in Tehran and Mashhad. Each individual should make an effort to preserve the environment. It would be better to use alternatives like cloth bags and paper bags. Moreover, if we are using plastic bags, we had better reuse them. We also should consider switching from plastic water bottles, which greatly contribute to plastic pollution, to bottles made of metal or glass.

## Athletes, environmentalists join forces to cleanse Tehran's Tochal resort

### Social Desk

A collaborative effort between Iranian athletes, environmentalists, Iranian Ski Federation, Tehran Province's Department of the Environment, and Tochal resort complex has led to a successful cleanup initiative in parts of Tochal resort in northern Tehran. This cultural program, aimed at fostering environmental awareness, took place earlier this week. During the ceremony, Abbas Nazarian, head of the country's Ski Federation, stressed that the environment serves as a crucial platform for cultural development across various domains, with particular emphasis on environmental protection, according to IRNA. "Green marketing, processes, and studies have gained significant attention over the past decade. These initiatives aim to convey an essential message: Earth and its environment require safeguarding – a responsibility shared by individuals from diverse backgrounds," he said.

With more than 236 active sports federations operating in Iran across various sectors, Nazarian emphasized that each sporting community possesses a unique connection to nature due to their activities' inherent relationship with it. By leveraging this bond effectively, the sports sector can contribute substantially towards preserving the environment while fostering responsible practices within the society.

Nazarian also revealed that special attention is being given to environmental concerns by including them as major programs within the World Skiing Federation's agenda for its new term. This focus will extend beyond Iran's borders, serving as an influential force globally in addressing environmental challenges.

Alireza Rahmati, the deputy director of Tehran Province's Department of the Environment, stressed the critical importance of mountain ecosystems. He noted that these ecosystems not only provide clean air but also support the strength and survival of cities and villages. Rahmati further emphasized proper utilization and sincere respect for the natural world when engaging with nature. He highlighted Iranians' innate love for nature, resulting in the country having a strong environmentalist culture.

"Iran encompasses both the

hottest and coldest points on Earth – displaying remarkable climatic and biologic diversity," Rahmati said, urging citizens and sporting communities to actively participate in preserving the country's environment, taking advantage of the country's unique geographic qualities.

Rahmati noted that the popular garbage-free campaign in Tehran Province, which began at the beginning of the year, had received wide acceptance and acclaim.

"With such initiatives gaining momentum, now we see that the environment has become a concern for various segments of society," he said. Following a successful cleanup effort in Tochal complex, athletes and environmentalists united to sign a statement affirming their support for nature preservation and environmental protection.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### US suicide deaths hit record high in 2022



**REUTERS** – The number of people who died by suicide in the US hit an estimated record 49,000 in 2022, a 2.6 percent increase over the prior year, government data showed. Over half of all US suicides in 2022 involved firearms, according to the figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Nine in 10 Americans believe America is facing a mental health crisis. The new suicide death data reported by CDC illustrates why," US Health Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement.

He added that many people still believe that asking for help is a sign of weakness.

The suicide rate in 2022 – 14.9 deaths for every 100,000 people – is 5 percent higher than the previous record high of 14.2 deaths for every 100,000 people from 2018. Suicide deaths rose from 48,183 in 2021 to an estimated 49,449 deaths in 2022, CDC said.

### US citrus crops ravaged by disease and climate



**THE GUARDIAN** – Orange juice prices are expected to rise further in the US after a bacterial disease and extreme weather intensified by global heating ravaged this season's crop of the citrus fruit.

Last year Florida, which produces more than 90 percent of the US's orange juice supply, was hit by Hurricane Ian, Hurricane Nicole and freezing conditions in quick succession, devastating orange producers in the Sunshine State.

Producers also battled an incurable citrus greening disease that is spread by an invasive insect, rendering fruit unusable. Most infected trees die within a few years, and some producers told the media they were giving up farming and selling their land. Industry figures said US orange production would reach its lowest level for more than a century.