

Tehran, Islamabad share potential for innovation: Raisi

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi highlighted the potential for collaborative scientific advancements between Iran, Pakistan, and other Eastern nations during a meeting with scientific and cultural elites of Punjab state at GC University Lahore on Tuesday. President Raisi, in his second-day trip in Pakistan, expressed satisfaction at being in Lahore, a city rich in history and culture. He emphasized the deep-rooted ties between Iran and Pakistan, describing them as religious, cultural, and civilizational, president. ir reported. Speaking on the importance of knowledge and scientific production, president Raisi underscored their role in empowering nations and fostering pride, and the need for a synergy between faith and science for individual and societal success and happiness. Raisi praised Iqbal Lahori as a model scholar, embodying qualities such as knowledge, faith, independence, justice, and humanity. Touching upon global scientific trends, Raisi criticized the Western monopoly in the field and highlighted the potential for Eastern nations, particularly Pakistan and Iran, to pioneer new innovations. The president questioned West-

ern claims of freedom of thought, citing instances of student expulsion for supporting oppressed causes such as Palestine. "What we see in practice is that a large number of students are expelled from the university (in the US) just for supporting the oppressed people of Gaza. Is this called freedom of thought!?" he said. He denounced Western hypocrisy in defending human rights while supporting actions that violate them, particularly in the case of Palestine. He expressed confidence in the eventual liberation of Palestine and Al-Quds, condemning Zionist aggression and emphasizing the solidarity of Iran and Pakistan in defending the oppressed. "We have no doubt that the resistance of the heroic nation of Palestine will liberate Gaza, Palestine and the Al-Quds. We have no doubt that the hatred that has been created in the Islamic world and the world of humanity towards the Zionists and Americans will become the revenge of the nations and the end of the Zionist regime and the end of this child-killing regime," the president noted. Pointing to Iran's recent retaliatory operation against the Israeli military targets, the president



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his delegation visit GC University Lahore, Pakistan on April 23, 2024. ● president.ir

said, "If the Zionist regime once again makes a mistake and invades the holy land of Iran, the situation will be different and it is not clear that there will be anything left of this regime." He emphasized the importance of mutual understanding between Iran and Pakistan, despite attempts by external forces to undermine their relationship. During his visit to Lahore, president Raisi paid homage to the late Iqbal Lahori, a revered figure in Pakistan, highlighting Lahore's significance as a cultural symbol

of the country. Raisi expressed his commitment to strengthening cultural ties between the two nations. Furthermore, on the second day of his trip to Pakistan, president Raisi held a meeting with Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab State, where they discussed the growing relations between Iran and Pakistan since the Islamic Revolution. "The Punjab province and the city of Lahore are not just a cultural region, but are rapidly progressing, and I hope... we will witness

further acceleration in its cultural, social, and economic development," Raisi added. Visiting the tomb of Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore, Punjab, central eastern Pakistani province, president Raisi praised the late Iqbal Lahori's cultural influence, citing him as a beloved figure among Iranians, known as the "Star of the Eastern Sky" by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed gratitude for president Raisi's visit to Punjab and his homage to

Iqbal Lahori. She pledged to exert efforts to further enhance Iran-Pakistan relations. Both sides agreed to expand Persian language education in Pakistan, given the shared cultural background and interest in Persian language in the country. Raisi affirmed Iran's readiness to cooperate in this regard, assigning the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance to collaborate with Pakistani authorities to facilitate this initiative.

The writers group PEN America canceled its 2024 annual awards, just a week before the ceremony, after facing widespread and mounting criticism over its response to Israel's war on Gaza. Sixty-one authors and translators were nominated for awards, but 28 of them withdrew their books from consideration, according to a statement released on Monday. Nine of 10 authors nominated for the PEN/Jean Stein book award, including Maya Binyam and Camonghne Felix, withdrew from consideration, the Guardian reported. "This is a beloved event and an

PEN America cancels 2024 awards after authors drop out over Gaza



enormous amount of work goes into it, so we all regret this outcome but ultimately concluded it was not possible to carry out a celebration in the way we had hoped and planned," Suzanne Nossel, the chief executive of the literary and free expression organization, said in a statement on Monday. Clarisse Rosaz Shariyf, literary programming chief officer, added that it had been a difficult decision to

cancel. "We greatly respect that writers have followed their consciences, whether they chose to remain as nominees in their respective categories or not," said Rosaz Shariyf. The decision followed intense and escalating protests demanding that the organization take a more forceful stance on the Palestinian plight and demand a ceasefire in Gaza following Israel's military offen-

sive in the territory, in response to the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel last October. The estate requested that PEN America donate the \$75,000 award to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund. "In the context of Israel's ongoing war on Gaza, we believe that PEN America has betrayed the organization's professed commitment to peace and equality for all, and to freedom and security for writers everywhere," the letter read. The award ceremony would have taken place on 29 April at the Town Hall in New York City.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
 Cartoonist

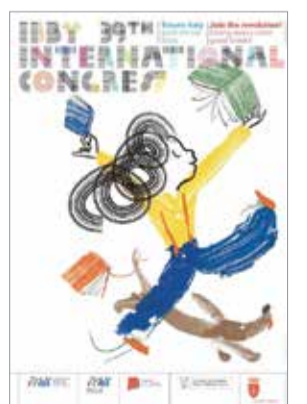


Two Iranian writers to participate in 39th IBBY Int'l Congress

Two Iranian experts from the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults have been selected to present their papers at the 39th IBBY International Congress in 2024.

Farzaneh Rahmani will discuss "Cultural Justice and Promoting Reading through Letter Writing," while Hossein Toolaei will present on "Specialized Libraries of Literary Associations as Tools for Adolescent Audi-

ence Development." Both are literary professionals from the institute and have been invited to share their insights at the congress, scheduled to take place in Trieste, Italy, from August 30 to September 1, 2024, IRNA reported. The congress theme is "Join the Revolution! Giving Every Child Good Books." The program will feature conferences, workshops, and diverse exhibitions, with a focus on sharing experiences and methods for selecting, producing, and promoting quality books,



as well as fostering reading education. The organizers of the congress have extended invitations to these two literary experts from the institute to participate and present their papers orally.