



Who is Abbas Salehi, Iran's pick for Culture Ministry?

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian proposed Abbas Salehi as the new Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Salehi, a moderate figure with a background in religious education, is currently the managing director of Ettela'at Newspaper and the president of the University of Religions and Denominations.

Born in 1963 in Mashhad, Salehi has a long history in Iran's cultural and political scene. He is a well-known figure in the country's religious circles, having studied at the Qom Seminary and earned a reputation as an outstanding student of philosophy and Islamic jurisprudence, IRNA wrote.

Prior to his proposed appointment as minister, Salehi served as the deputy culture minister from 2013 to 2017, during which he worked to promote Iranian culture and art and strengthen cultural

diplomacy.

He is respected as a moderate and a proponent of dialogue, always striving to foster constructive engagement between artists, writers, and government institutions.

Salehi's other accomplishments include his scholarly and research activities in various cultural and religious fields. He has authored numerous articles and books on religious and philosophical subjects, showcasing his expertise in these areas.

Salehi served as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance (2018-2021) in president Hassan Rouhani's second term, promoting Iranian culture and art and enhancing cultural diplomacy.

Before becoming a minister, Salehi was the deputy minister of culture (2013-2017), playing a crucial role in cultural policy-making and supporting cultural and artistic endeavors.

He was the managing director of "Information, Wisdom, and Knowledge" Newspaper, focusing on philosophical and intellectual topics.

Salehi contributed to significant cultural decision-making in Iran as a member of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. Salehi began his religious studies at the Qom Seminary and pursued advanced levels of religious education, specializing in philosophy and Islamic jurisprudence.

He has written extensively in the fields of culture, philosophy, and religion, including articles and books on Islamic philosophy and religious topics.

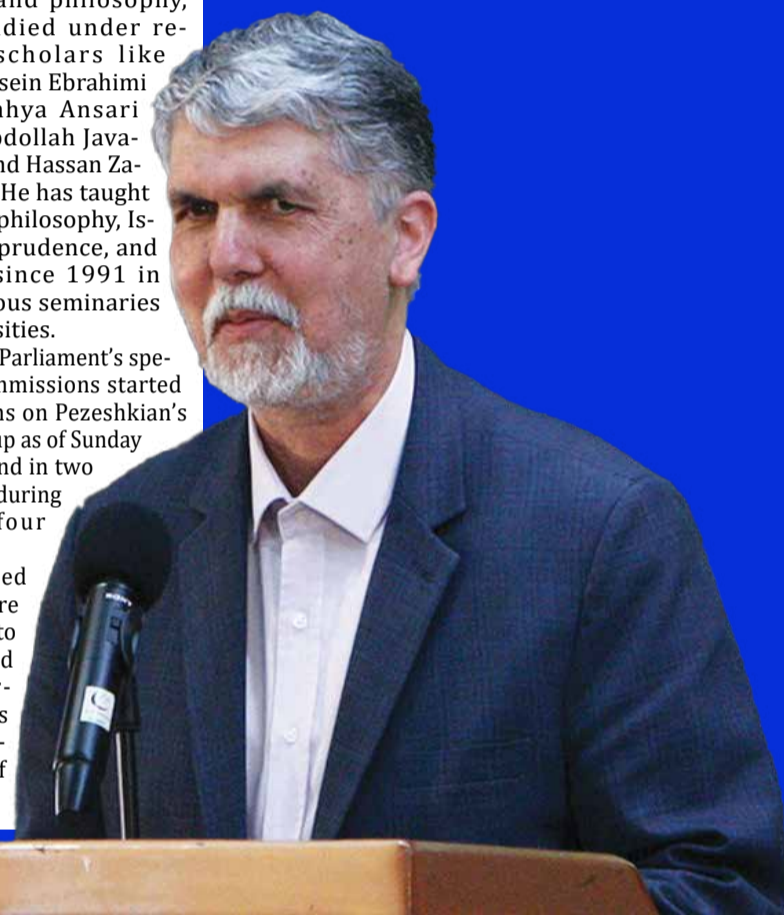
Salehi served as an editor and board member of various scientific and cultural publications.

He has taught a range of subjects, including philosophy and Islamic jurisprudence, in academic institutions and universities.

With a background in both religious and philosophy, Salehi studied under renowned scholars like Gholamhossein Ebrahimi Dinani, Yahya Ansari Shirazi, Abdollah Javadi-Amoli, and Hassan Zadeh Amoli. He has taught courses in philosophy, Islamic jurisprudence, and theology since 1991 in both religious seminaries and universities.

The Iranian Parliament's specialized commissions started deliberations on Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup as of Sunday afternoon and in two work shifts during the next four days.

The proposed ministers are also slated to be discussed in the Parliament's plenary sessions as of August 17.



Iranian-Armenian animation wins Italian accolade



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The Iranian-Armenian animated short film, 'The Song of Flying Leaves,' snagged the Best Animation Award at the 12th Ariano International Film Festival in southern Italy, adding to its impressive haul of 13 awards over the past two years. 'The Song of Flying Leaves' is a 12-minute, two-dimensional animated film about a 12-year-old girl named Sona, who lives in a forest and sleeps among the leaves. She encounters an old man in the forest who offers to teach her a secret knowledge. Directed and produced by Armenian filmmaker

Armine Anda, the film is a collaboration between Iran's Hoorakhsh Studio and an Armenian studio, Mehr News Agency reported.

Anda, who dedicated the film to her father, was inspired by the poetic cinema of Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. She teamed up with Iranian producers Ashkan and Arman Rahgozar of Hoorakhsh Studio to bring this unique blend of poetry and animation to life. The film's script was penned by renowned Armenian director Roman Balayan.

'The Song of Flying Leaves' has been on a winning streak, picking up several awards at

various festivals, including the Golden Apricot, Rolan, Ajayu, and Paris International Animation Film Festivals. The film has also received honors from Italy, Mexico, Armenia, Georgia, Australia, and more, showcasing its universal appeal and the power of cross-cultural collaboration. The 12th Ariano International Film Festival, held from July 19 to August 4 in the southern Italian region of Irpinia, aims to showcase and promote cinematic works, with a special focus on animation. The festival fosters a positive cultural exchange and provides a platform for filmmakers to connect and inspire each other.

Evaluating cabinet: Focusing ...

In contrast, there are also nominees who are expected to excel in their respective fields and serve as a source of encouragement for both the government and the people. Nonetheless, it is only fair that we give them a chance, however brief, to demonstrate which group's argument holds true. Although the selection process involved a consultative council, the ultimate decision rests with the president, who bears the responsibility for these choices. Pezeshkian is accountable for the performance of each member of his cabinet and cannot evade responsibility by citing constraints and limitations.

We are well aware of the explicit and implicit challenges that presidents face in assembling their dream teams. Pezeshkian's administration is no exception, especially given his emphasis avoiding "conflicts" and engaging with the Establishment and bringing about change desired by the people, which may have set even higher expectations for his cabinet choices. When scrutinizing the proposed cabinet, it is imperative to consider various interests, limitations, and preferences at play. For instance, these

ministers must gain the trust of a parliament that may not be politically aligned with the government or the president, a factor the president likely considered in his selections. Moreover, there are inevitable constraints in choosing certain ministers, and the president must take into account the consultative opinions of higher authorities. Nevertheless, for the government to succeed, it must find common ground with other pillars of the Establishment without sacrificing its own plans and promises. Another important consideration, regardless of one's stance on the proposed ministers, is the coherence and coordination within the cabinet. While individual ministerial performance is crucial, the collective performance of all ministries is what ultimately defines the success of the government. This is where internal cohesion and inter-ministerial collaboration become vital. A well-coordinated government has a higher likelihood of effectively implementing its programs. Thus, it is more prudent to focus on the programs and policies rather than individual personalities. Appointing renowned figures like Ali Tayebnia and Mohammad Javad Zarif to key advisory

roles may address some of the weaknesses, bolster the cabinet and strengthen the government's program-oriented approach. The president also plays a pivotal role in fostering coordination and ensuring the precise and proper execution of programs by the ministers. Lastly, some of the criticisms directed at the proposed cabinet arise from the non-partisan nature of the Iranian government. In such cases, the solution lies in prioritizing plans over personalities. Developing scientifically grounded programs that align with the country's realities and potentials and ensuring coordinated efforts within the cabinet for their implementation may outweigh the focus on individual cabinet members. Each minister contributes to a larger cohesive whole, and by fulfilling their duties, they support the president, the cabinet's commander-in-chief, in delivering on his promises and realizing his vision. It is our hope that Pezeshkian's cabinet will rise to the occasion, address the core demands of the dissatisfied majority of Iranians, and pave the way for a historic reconciliation between the people and the government/establishment.