

Literature serves as asset in calligraphy: Iranian virtuoso

Arts & Culture Desk



A senior Iranian calligrapher believes that Persian literature is an integral part of calligraphy in a way that if the art is taken away, it will lose all its value.

Alireza Zandi, a virtuoso at the Iran Calligraphers Association, has told IRNA that literature and calligraphy are like two inseparable wings that enable the art to fly. "Calligraphy has a unique sanctity among other forms of art due to its connection with the writing of the Qur'an and exquisite Persian poetry. If we separate literature from calligraphy, we will have taken away its entire value," Zandi explains.

Zandi, who holds a badge of honor for his art from the Iranian Culture Ministry, emphasizes that "patience in learning and teaching" is one of the most distinct features of calligraphy. "Without patience, no results will be achieved, and only those who exercise patience will become successful in this art."

He considers calligraphy "sacred" because it has flourished through the writing of Islam's holy book and Persian poetry. "Inscribing the Qur'an, exquisite poetry, and ancient Persian texts has given this art an unparalleled sanctity, dressing it in the attire of conceptualism, which can, alongside the artist's patience, add a fresh dimension to the elegance and dignity of the calligrapher." According to Zandi, in art forms like music, some masters believe that an artist cannot play their instrument to "perfection" unless they have reached "unity" with it. "In visual arts, especially calligraphy, the artist's tool is the medium between their hand and emotions, and it is obvious that a form of unity must be established between the visual artist and their tool to ease the transmission of the artist's emotions to the audience."

"The calligrapher sees himself as committed to conveying the moral, social, and philosophical messages of sages, mystics, and religious scholars, and this mission is an inseparable link between these two concepts."

Zandi considers Nastaliq to be the "spring" of Iranian calligraphic hands. "Nastaliq is the most authentic Iranian calligraphic hands, which, in addition to adhering to the principles of ancient artists, has elevated into a new form in contemporary times, symbolizing its freshness and novelty, like spring."

The artist touches on the relationship between calligram – a set of words arranged in such a way that it forms a thematically related image – and the social and mental changes that an artist undergoes, saying, "Every era has its own unique circumstances, and it is the responsibility of every artist to respect tradition while catering to the needs of their audience, essentially being a product of their time and speaking the language of their generation. This mindset drives contemporary artists to come up with innovative approaches."

Zandi says described calligram as a style that has been shaped by the skilled hands and creative minds of renowned Iranian artists such as Reza Mafi and Farahmarz Pilaram, and continues to thrive to this day.

"These masters have made groundbreaking innovations in their work, which can be seen as a collection of bold departures from traditional forms and content."

According to Zandi, talented calligram artists have emerged in the present day, producing thought-provoking works that hopefully will follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and carry the torch forward.

Iran, Qatar ink deals as Pezeshkian visits Doha for Asian summit

Economy Desk

Iran and Qatar on Wednesday inked six agreements and memoranda of understanding (MoU), paving the way for cooperation in various fields, including economy and culture.

The deals and MoUs were signed in a ceremony in the Qatari capital Doha, by the Iranian ministers of energy, foreign affairs, and sport and youth with their Qa-

tari counterparts, IRNA reported.

They covered such areas as collaboration on the development of Iran's Bandar-e Dayyer on the Persian Gulf coast, bilateral trade, cooperation in the health and welfare sectors as well as a joint cultural cooperation program by the end of March 2027 and a sports cooperation scheme that will go on until 2026.

The deals were

clinched shortly after President Masoud Pezeshkian's arrival in Doha, where he was welcomed by Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Pezeshkian is visiting Qatar for bilateral talks, followed by a private meeting between the two leaders.

The ACD is an inter-governmental organization created on June 18, 2002 to promote Asian cooperation at a continental level and to



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani inspect a guard of honor in Doha on October 2, 2024. [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)



ensure coordination among different regional organizations such as the ASEAN, the Persian Gulf Co-

operation Council, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,

and the SAARC. It is the first international organization to cover the whole of Asia.

Iran, Armenia sign barter trade deal, open major trade center

Iran and Armenia on Tuesday signed a barter trade deal after opening a large Iranian trade center in the Armenian capital Yerevan. Under the deal, which the two sides agreed to assign companies as their operators in three months which will put forward a list of items to be bartered, ISNA reported.

The agreement was signed in a ceremony in Yerevan attended by Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak and Armenian Economy Minister Gevorg Papoyan. Iran views barter agreements as a major tool to avoid US sanctions that restrict its access to international trade, Press TV wrote.

The signing of the deal came after Iran opened its trade center in Yerevan. The center, built over an area of 18,000-square meters, has 107 booths and stalls

that sell Iranian-made consumer goods, chemicals and other industrial products. Armenian businesses have also a share in the retail and wholesale facility.

Iranian ambassador in Yerevan Mehdi Sobhani described the facility as the "largest Iranian trade center in the world", saying it will lead to a major increase in trade ties between Iran and Armenia.

Iran and Armenia seek to increase the value of their trade ties to \$3 billion per year. Iran also views Armenia as a gateway to trade with members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). Iran and the EAEU, which includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, are currently in a preferential trade arrangement but they will enforce a free trade deal signed in December last year once parliaments of the two sides ratify the agreement.

Minister: No plan to push up gas prices

State distributor to maximize fuel output ahead of winter

Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad on Wednesday ruled out rumors about a government plan to hike gasoline prices.

"The government have no such plans on the table," Paknejad told reporters Paknejad after a cabinet meeting in Tehran IRNA reported.

The minister said that the Oil Ministry's priority was not to raise gasoline prices but rather to "manage fuel demand" and curb consumption. He added that any decision to increase gasoline prices would need to be taken by the all branches of power, rather than being made unilaterally by the Oil Ministry.

His comments came after lawmaker Ali-Asghar Nakhaei-Rad revealed last month that the government might push up gasoline prices by 20% next year, following a six-year hiatus.

Currently, gasoline is sold under a rationing system in which each car gets a monthly quota of 60 liters, priced at 15,000 rials per liter (around \$0.025), that is dispensed through dedicated fuel cards at the pump. For additional gasoline, drivers pay



double the price of subsidized fuel while still using their fuel cards.

With a 20% rise, the new rates would be 18,000 rials per liter (around \$0.03) and 18,000 rials per liter (around \$0.06).

The last time gasoline prices were raised, which was by 200%, deadly street protests erupted in some Iranian cities.

Iran cranks out around 110 million liters of gasoline per day, while daily consumption hovers above 120 million liters.

To plug the deficit, the country has been forced to import fuel since 2021. Estimates suggest that it will bring in around \$3 billion worth of gasoline this year.

Fuel output to increase

President Masoud Pezeshkian has on several occasions criticized the allocation of such a large budget for gasoline

imports, describing it as "irrational" to buy gasoline at free market dollar prices only to sell it at the pump with massive subsidies.

Meanwhile, the state fuel distributor said on Tuesday that it would "maximize" gasoline and diesel fuel production for the winter season.

Keramat Veis-Karami, the head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Co. (NIOPDC), said that ramping up fuel output was a "top priority" and the company was fully ready to meet fuel demand during the coming cold months, Shana reported.

Veis-Karami also said that the delivery of liquid fuel to thermal power plants had surged by around 40% this year.

Iran's power plants, which rely on alternative fuels such as mazut and diesel fuel during the cold season due to

skyrocketing gas consumption, have seen a significant spike in mazut burning.

According to a senior official at the Iranian Energy Ministry, the use of mazut in thermal power plants has almost doubled compared to last year, largely due to a gas shortage.

Veis-Karami went on to say that daily gasoline usage in the first half of the year averaged 124.5 million liters, suggesting a 7.3% increase in the same period last year when it was 116 million liters.

Regarding diesel, he noted that the NIOPDC had distributed an average of around 110 million liters since the beginning of the current Persian calendar year which started on March 20. According to Veis-Karami the volume was up by 4.3% on the 104 million liters recorded last year.

Legitimate defense rather...

Iran's president, by nature, is a peace-loving individual, and accordingly, his primary foreign policy slogan is "constructive engagement with the world." On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, European delegations even asked Tehran to cooperate in advancing the peace negotiations in Gaza.

Iran spared no effort in working towards a ceasefire. However, despite these efforts and European wishes, Netanyahu, drunk on the blood of Palestinian and Lebanese victims,

paid no heed to the ceasefire and instead escalated his threats against Iran, seeking to redraw the Middle East's geographical map.

It was, therefore, necessary for someone to stand up to his excessive demands. When Iran's restraint failed to prompt serious action from the US and Europe to pressure Israel into a ceasefire, Tehran had no choice but to deliver a firm slap to the killer, shattering his illusions and making him and his supporters understand that Iran is a key player in West Asia, serious

about defending its national dignity. Thus, Iran's missile operation does not contradict the peaceful nature of Iranians and their president. Iran's response does not signify warmongering but rather legitimate self-defense. Sometimes, military might must intervene to advance diplomacy. The Iranian president had previously emphasized in a press conference that Iran will strike back should Israel strike.

In perfect coordination between various branches, including military and

non-military, and based on the legitimate right to self-defense, the Islamic Republic of Iran launched Operation True Promise 2 in response to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and the assassination of Hezbollah's leader and Iran's military advisor in Lebanon. This operation was more successful than its predecessor and will undoubtedly have positive effects in various domains, including the global Islamic public opinion and the battlefield. It will boost the morale of resistance forces against Israeli aggres-

sion. It was announced on Tuesday that the Israeli army had penetrated 400 meters into Lebanese territory but faced fierce resistance from Hezbollah, forcing them to retreat and incur losses. This morale boost will gradually manifest itself in occupied territories as well, with predicted increases in martyrdom operations against Israelis and insecurity in occupied lands.

It is advisable for Israel's supporters to rein in Netanyahu and Israel to protect their own interests.

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