



## Tehran International Book Fair

# Books to lead Iran-Turkey cultural year planned for 2025

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Staff writer

### INTERVIEW

Iran and Turkey are gearing up for a year of cultural exchange in 2025, with literature set to play a central role in the joint agenda. Speaking to Iran Daily at the Tehran International Book Fair, Nizar Kara of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism said books and literary programs are a "significant part" of this plan. The announcement follows a bilateral agreement between Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and Turkey's culture ministry to expand cultural ties

next year. Kara, who heads the Turkish publishing delegation, said Turkey is present at this year's fair with eight publishers, six authors, and some 1,500 titles. "We've also arranged a series of literary events," he said. He noted that eight more Turkish publishers will soon arrive in Tehran to join the fair's First Tehran Fellowship Program, which aims to foster copyright exchange and literary partnerships. "Altogether, about 20 Turkish publishers will take part." Turkish publishers, he explained, are participating under TEDA—a government initiative that supports the promotion of Turkish literature abroad. "We give Irani-

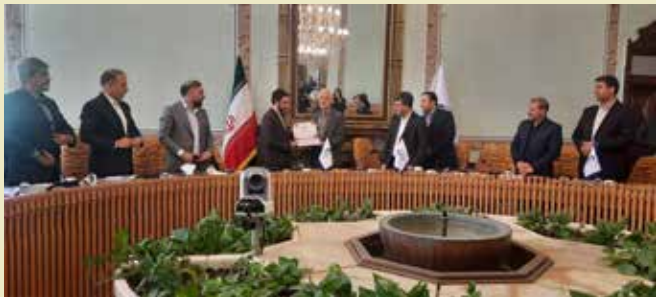
an publishers the rights to translate and publish Turkish works in Persian." Iran, in turn, has a similar project called Grant, which backs the translation and distribution of Iranian books in foreign markets. Kara said these programs could help bring more Persian literature to Turkish readers. So far, 238 Turkish titles—mostly literary and cultural—have been translated into Persian under TEDA. Kara, who also attended the fair two years ago, said this year's event is "bigger and better" than before. Asked about Turkish readers' familiarity with Persian literature, he said classical poets such as Sa'adi, Hafez, and Rumi are well

known. But awareness of contemporary authors on both sides remains low. "Through events like this, we hope to introduce modern literature from both countries." He described Rumi as a cultural link. "Although his poems are in Persian, Rumi's spiritual and literary legacy is deeply rooted in Turkish tradition." Kara noted that Rumi's tomb in Konya continues to draw visitors from Iran and across Turkey. His descendants, he added, are recognized Turkish poets who wrote in Turkish. The 36th Tehran International Book Fair opened on May 7 at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla.



Running through May 17, the event brings together more than 2,300 publishers under the theme "Let's Read for Iran."

## Isfahan named Asian Capital of Urban Tourism for 2025



Isfahan Mayor Ali Ghasemzadeh (5th L) and Secretary of the Asian Mayors Forum Hamidreza Gholamzadeh (4th L), attend a ceremony announcing Isfahan as the Asian Capital of Urban Tourism for 2025, in Isfahan, Iran, May 11, 2025.

● IRIB

Zereshk mansion in Isfahan. The event was attended by a number of local officials, international guests, and members of the Asian Mayors Forum. The city, with its deep cultural roots, stood out for its "remarkable" heritage and international engagement, IRIB reported. Officials say the designation marks a major step forward in

connecting Isfahan to a broader Asian tourism network. Mayor Ali Ghasemzadeh highlighted the city's historic depth. Out of 24,000 hectares, 1,600 are made up of historic fabric dating back to the Buyid, Seljuk, and Safavid periods. He called it "a valuable core" that makes Isfahan a distinct destination for urban tourism. Beyond its monuments, Isfahan has hosted major cultural events such as the International Children's Film Festival and the Children's Painting Festival. These festivals, Ghasemzadeh noted, offer "strong potential" for expanding tourism outreach across Asia. The Asian Mayors Forum, which

includes over 120 member cities, spearheaded the selection. Secretary of the Asian Mayors Forum, Hamidreza Gholamzadeh, said Isfahan's focus on cultural and historical initiatives tipped the scales. "Following careful evaluations," the city was chosen for its stand-out performance, he said. Other cities also earned honors: Kerman was named cultural capital, while Antalya and Tabriz received environmental titles. Gholamzadeh praised the active cooperation between the AMF and Isfahan's municipality over the past three years, which has led to significant progress in various fields.

Tourism adviser to the Isfahan Governor, Masoud Nikaein, said the city's tourism model could "set a global example." He proposed that Isfahan host the 2025 Asian Tour Operators Summit to further boost its regional leadership. Councilman Mostafa Nabati-Nejad urged planners not to see this as a "local affair." With its new international convention center, Isfahan is poised to handle major global events. Kamal Heidari, who leads the 2025 tourism secretariat, called the announcement a "flagship" moment for the city and urged authorities to elevate it into one of Asia's top international tourism showcases.

## Iran literary, artistic heritage on display in Doha

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran opened its national booth at the 34th Doha International Book Fair, joining more than 500 publishers from 43 countries at Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC). The booth, set up with support from Iran's Book House Institute and Al-Mustafa International University, offers a wide range of titles in Persian, Arabic, and English, ILNA reported. The exhibition opened on May 8 at the DECC and will continue until May 17. Visitors are introduced to Iran's "classic literature," Islamic studies, and arts through the works of poets like Hafez, Saadi, Rumi, and Ferdowsi. The event's slogan this year, "From Script to Writing,"



inspired one of the booth's standout features — a Persian calligraphy workshop. Run by master calligrapher Abbasi, the workshop gives visitors a chance to try their hand at Nasta'liq, a traditional Persian script. Alongside live demonstrations, books and guides on calligraphy are on display. A live oil painting performance by a Tehran-based artist also drew crowds, adding what one organizer

described as a "special atmosphere" to the space. Iran's cultural attaché in Qatar, Ali Bakhtiari, called the participation an important opportunity to "highlight authentic Iranian culture and art." He said the booth had seen strong interest from the public since opening day. This year's fair is the largest in its history, with 522 publishers attending. Palestinian publishers are featured as special guests.

## Iranian poet Abdolmalekian wins Italy's Ceppo literary prize

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian poet Garous Abdolmalekian has taken home the 69th Ceppo international literary prize, an award recognizing excellence in poetry and fiction. The award ceremony wrapped up in the main hall of Florence's regional government building. Abdolmalekian was named this year's laureate for his "emotional sincerity" and "poetic force," according to a statement from the prize jury, IRNA reported. Each year, the Ceppo honors a poet or author whose work has been translated into Italian. Past winners include Mario Vargas Llosa, Mohamed Bennis, and Antonio Carvajal. The 2025 jury, made up of 35 Italian poets and writers, called Abdolmalekian's voice "fresh" and "deeply moving." His poetry, the statement read, begins from a "personal lens" but



stretches outward to reflect "the current conditions of Iran and the Middle East." "He writes with an aesthetic power that transforms social concerns into striking language," the panel noted, calling his work a "continuation" of Persian poetry's rich heritage. During the three-day festival, the Ceppo Academy hosted readings, talks, and discussions with Abdol-

malekian in multiple venues across Florence. A new essay by the poet, titled 'Poetry, the Shelter of the Contemporary Human,' was also launched during the event as part of a collected volume on poetry. Several of Abdolmalekian's books have been translated into Italian over the past few years by Faezeh Mardani and Francesco Occhetto.