



Pezeshkian urges publishers to meet society's 'current needs'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday called for books to reflect the "issues and needs" of modern society, saying only then can they serve as a tool to improve the country's cultural and social landscape. Visiting the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, Pezeshkian said books should be grounded in expert knowledge and written in a way that speaks to the present. "Only in that case," he said, "can books truly contribute to social development." The president toured the fair, joined by Culture Minister Abbas Salehi. He walked through

various booths, held brief talks with publishers, and listened to complaints—chief among them, a persistent shortage of paper, president.ir reported. Pezeshkian flipped through a mix of genres: History, religion, poetry, memoirs from the Iran-Iraq war, novels, philosophy, and the 'Shahnameh,' the Persian epic. He praised the variety on display and stressed the need for books to stay current. Speaking with Iran's state broadcaster, IRIB, after his visit, Pezeshkian said time for reading has grown scarce since he took office. "Being here is personally valuable," he said. He urged young people to read



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd R), accompanied by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (1st R), browses books during a visit to the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, on May 16, 2025.
● president.ir

more, calling it a "way to grasp beliefs, ideas, and past experiences." On the issue of paper supply, he directed the culture ministry to conduct a thorough review and promised the government would do "whatever is in its power" to resolve it. The annual Tehran book fair opened May 7 and runs through May 17.



Iraq makes strong showing as guest of honor at Tehran Int'l Book Fair



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iraq is participating as the guest of honor in the international section of the 36th Tehran International Book Fair, bringing with it a collection of 3,000 book titles. This year's presence is marked by a collaboration between Iranian and Iraqi publishers, resulting in the planned publication of 150 new titles in both Arabic and Persian. Iraq's delegation includes 20 publishing houses. With the largest pavilion in the international section—spanning 360 square meters—the country is showcasing titles across various genres, including science, culture, history, and literature. The aim of Iraq's special status this year is to promote "historical, cultural, and literary ties" and foster what has been described as cultural diplomacy. "This year, our presence is more prominent than ever," said Thaer Jafar Al-Osami, deputy head of Iraq's Publishers Union. "We've been part of the fair in past years to boost cultural and

publishing exchanges, but being the guest of honor has taken it to a new level." Al-Osami noted that a significant portion of the showcased titles are children's books. In recent years, Iraqi and Iranian children's publishers have worked closely together. Many titles have been translated and distributed in both countries, strengthening cooperation in this niche market. The Iraqi booth was organized with the support of the country's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Iraqi Publishers Union. Al-Osami said the display has received "a warm welcome" from Iranian visitors. This is the second year the Iraqi Publishers Union has taken part in the Tehran fair. According to Al-Osami, the union has played a key role in connecting publishers from both sides. He recalled that last year, joint contracts were signed, leading to the publication of 30 translated books. "This year, we're aiming to bring out 150 more titles in both Arabic and Persian." Shared cultural and religious roots between the two nations have deepened

mutual interest in literary works. "Our people are naturally drawn to each other's literature," said Al-Osami, attributing it to "cultural similarities." Al-Osami praised the Tehran Book Fair as one of the world's largest in both scale and quality. With over 5,500 publishers attending this year, the fair has gained global standing. "This scale inspired us to take part even more seriously," he said. The 36th Tehran International Book Fair runs from May 6 to May 16, 2025, at the Imam Khomeini Grand Prayer Grounds, under the theme "Let's Read for Iran." An online version of the fair is also accessible via book.icfi.ir, offering remote book purchases.

Over 20 copyright deals

The first Tehran Publishing Fellowship, held alongside the book fair, has led to more than 20 copyright agreements for children's books. A representative from Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults met with publishers from countries including Russia, Italy, China, In-



dia, Turkey, Nepal, Indonesia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Mongolia. The fellowship, held from May 12 to 16 at the western wing of the fairground, was organized with support from the Iran Book and Literature House, the Iranian Grant Plan Secretariat, and the Children's Publishers Association.

During these meetings, the Iranian representative presented both new and existing titles from the institute. The negotiations resulted in copyright sales for translations into Chinese, Turkish, Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, English, Istanbul Turkish, Albanian, Assamese, and Arabic.

Ferdowsi's enduring heritage ...



Participants also included representatives from foreign consulates, cultural and literary figures, university professors, and researchers dedicated to Ferdowsi. The celebration took place in a lively atmosphere, warmly received by the public and poetry and culture enthusiasts. During the event, officials, poets, and guests paid homage to Ferdowsi's memory and commended the high stature of this celebrated epic poet. The program featured performances such as heroic sports displays, epic music, poetry recitations, and reenactments of scenes from the 'Shahnameh,' (Book of



A group of daf (frame drum) players perform during a ceremony marking National Ferdowsi Day at the tomb of Persian poet Ferdowsi in Tus, Khorasan Razavi Province, northeastern Iran, May 15, 2025.
● iran-daily.com

Kings) a long epic poem written by Ferdowsi, creating an environment full of enthusiasm and grandeur. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian issued a message on this occasion, which was read at the ceremony by Mahmoud Shalouei, head of Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries. In his message, he emphasized that this day is a celebration of the Persian language, a recognition of cultural identity, and a tribute to Iran's glorious civilization. Ferdowsi, through his monumental 'Shahnameh,' not only preserved Iran's history from forgetfulness but also created an everlasting model for our cultural life. This model is rooted in the ideals of freedom, justice, and self-respect. Today, it is essential for us to revisit and revive this heroic spirit—a spirit in which this revered poet, both outwardly and inwardly, spoke of human dignity, national pride, and hope

for victory over oppression and decay. The Persian language embodies this enduring unity, representing not just the historical identity of Iranians but also serving as a mirror of the shared culture of the peoples of this expansive land. Addressing the ceremony, Esmaeili said, "Let us unite and pledge beside the tomb of the great Ferdowsi to uphold and preserve the Persian language, script, history, and literature of Iran. Take pride in them, pass them on to future generations, and safeguard them as a treasured legacy. He emphasized that 'Shahnameh' is more than just poetry; it is a guide to manners, morals, and wisdom. "By reading the 'Shahnameh,' we naturally transmit the values we hold dear—patriotism, sacrifice, selflessness, and kindness—to the generations to come. All these virtues are embedded throughout the epic.