



Pezeshkian urges universities to help nation out of crises



Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday called on universities to take a front-seat role in solving the country's "critical" national and regional challenges, including budget reform, water scarcity and energy use. Speaking at a meeting on government-university cooperation in Tehran, Pezeshkian said research and scientific activity should directly serve the goal of problem-solving, president.ir reported. "We've gone down the wrong

path," he said, urging professors and institutions to "point out the mistakes" and "show the right way." The president emphasized that universities should not just offer critique but step up with concrete proposals. "We need faculties to take responsibility," he said, naming economics, energy, employment and water management as urgent areas. Pezeshkian proposed that universities form a working group to launch the overhaul of the national budgeting system. "This is a complex process," he said, adding that a one-size-fits-all budget model won't work across ministries. Pezeshkian also floated the idea of giving underperforming state-owned companies to universities, urging them to turn losses into profits

and generate revenue in the process. He pointed to practical examples where academic input could bring direct benefits—from chemical faculties finding ways to locally source raw pharmaceutical materials to geologists helping revive dormant mines. Iran faces serious water shortages, even in coastal cities like Abadan and Khorramshahr, Pezeshkian warned. He said universities should draw on global models. "Look at how Stanford or Oxford are run," Pezeshkian noted, suggesting that Iran's institutions could learn from their administrative structures and applied research approaches. The president also pointed to the country's weak planning system as a major source of economic and environmental

failure. "A country like Turkey, with its dams and water, still has a drought plan. We don't," he said. In line with a broader decentralization effort, Pezeshkian encouraged universities to offer practical solutions tailored to provincial challenges, ahead of a planned handover of authority to local governments. Prior to the president's remarks, Iran's Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Hossein Simaei Sarraf noted that university-government collaboration has grown significantly. In 2013, universities handled around 3,000 government projects; that figure has jumped to 11,000 in 2024. "That's a healthy rate," the minister said, "though expectations are higher."

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) attends a meeting on government-university cooperation in Tehran, on May 31, 2025.
● president.ir

Over 200 top designs accepted for Iran's Fajr fashion festival

Arts & Culture Desk

More than 200 fashion designs have been accepted in the first round of Iran's 13th Fajr International Fashion and Clothing Festival, set to begin June 7 in Tehran, festival secretary Mohsen Gorji told ILNA on Saturday. From a pool of over 3,200 submissions by more than 1,300 designers, "about 200 entries made the cut," Gorji said during a press briefing at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The final round of judging will take place next week with a panel of academic and industry experts. This year's festival was postponed to June to avoid overlap with other cultural events and religious holidays, he explained. "We didn't want it buried under bigger festivals," Gorji said, noting that the new schedule allows for greater exposure. The festival, which runs June 7-14 at Tehran's Aseman Cultural Center, will showcase selected works and aims to connect promising designers with commercial opportunities. The event is the only nationwide platform for fashion in the Islamic Republic. Efforts are underway to expand so-



called "mentoring hubs" in several provinces, helping young talent transition from sketches to ready-to-wear. Gorji called this a "mid-term" goal that depends

heavily on private sector support. Turning designs into mass-market products is "a complex process," he said, and will only succeed if major domestic brands step in. The festival has shifted its research division to an external team led by Al-Zahra University and no longer calls for public submissions. "We outsourced it completely," he said. Also speaking at the press event, Zahra Golpayegani, head of the National Fashion and Clothing Committee, said the festival is focused on "discovery

and support" for regional talent, especially from rural and underserved areas. "This year, we gave the same chance to a designer from the south as we did to someone from a top label in Tehran," she said. The committee also worked to simplify festival logistics. "We wanted to cut through the red tape and make it easier to take designs from the runway to the street," Golpayegani noted. This year's motto, "Discover Iran," reflects a push to uncover hidden creative voices across the country. Organizers say the festival marks a turning point toward decentralization and private sector involvement. "It's not just about the designs," Gorji stressed. "It's the designers who matter most."

Iran showcases literature, handicrafts at Tbilisi International Book Fair



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran joined the 27th Tbilisi International Book Festival this week, bringing a wide selection of books and traditional handicrafts to the annual event that opened on May 29 at Expo Georgia. Led by Mehdi Saadat Nejad, Iran's cultural attaché in Tbilisi, the Iranian delegation presented over 80 titles—ranging from contemporary and classical Persian literature to English and Georgian translations—at a national booth organized in collaboration with Iran's Alhoda International, Cultural, Artistic, and Publishing Institution, IRNA reported. The event gathered leading Georgian literary and cultural figures, including Tamar Lebnidze, director of the fair and head of the Publishers and Booksellers Association, and Ketevan Dumbadze, head of the Writers' House of Georgia. "Our participation highlights cultural diplomacy," Saadat Nejad said during the opening, describing the promotion of Iranian books abroad as "a step forward" in strengthening ties between the two nations. He called the literary exchange a way to "deepen mutual understanding." Iran's presence went beyond books. Visitors browsed a curated display

of handcrafted items reflecting Iran's rich artisanal heritage. In a series of side events, Iran's cultural mission hosted three panel sessions. The first featured a presentation by Georgian scholar Giorgi Lobzhanidze, who last year attended Tehran's International Book Fair. He praised it as "a valuable platform" for cross-cultural cooperation and emphasized the "need for deeper engagement" between publishing communities in Iran and Georgia. The second panel focused on Persian literature in Georgian translation. Iranologist Tea Shurgaya offered insights into the growing readership in Georgia. "Persian literature still holds a place," she noted, but acknowledged the stiff competition from Western authors. She stressed the importance of "sustained support" for translation efforts. On the final day of the fair, Iranian children's literature takes center stage with a discussion on Georgian translations of 'Good Stories for Good Children' by Mehdi Azar Yazdi, followed by a student reading contest. The Tbilisi International Book Festival, first held in 1998, runs through June 1. The four-day event promotes reading and supports the South Caucasus publishing industry while encouraging cultural exchange.

Three Iranian films headed to competition at 2025 Shanghai festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian films will compete at the 27th Shanghai International Film Festival, set to run from June 13 to 22. 'Daughter,' directed by Pouria Kakavand, will screen in the Asian New Talent section. Nima Mahdian's documentary 'A Part of the Land' is slated for the documentary competition. 'Dead in the Water' a short film by Leila Hekmatnia, will take part in the short film category. The

Golden Goblet Award, the festival's highest honor, will be handed out across five competition sections: main competition, Asian New Talent, documentary, animation, and short film. Italian director Giuseppe Tornatore, best known for 'Cinema Paradiso,' will preside over the main jury this year. The Shanghai International Film Festival is one of Asia's largest film events and remains a key platform for filmmakers from around the region.

