



Two Iranian projects among finalists of 2025 Aga Khan Award for Architecture

Arts & Culture Desk

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture shortlisted two Iranian projects, Tehran's Jihad Metro Station and Majara Residence on Hormuz Island, for its 2025 prize, according to city-affiliated news outlet Shahr.

The award, one of the most important in global architecture, is granted every three years to projects that demonstrate excellence in design while making a meaningful social, cultural, and environmental impact in Muslim communities.

Tehran's Jihad Metro Station, designed by KA Architecture Studio, earned praise for its locally handmade

brickwork and vaulted structures. The station has become a recognizable landmark in the city and was noted for its natural airflow and daylight integration, creating a more inviting public space for commuters.

On Hormuz Island, Majara Residence — designed by ZAV Architects under the direction of Mohammadreza Qodousi — also made the shortlist. Built with the help of local labor, the project features colorful domes and offers both tourist lodging and facilities for local residents, including a library, prayer space, and community center.

Both Iranian entries were selected from a pool of 369 candidates. They



now stand among 19 finalists competing for a share of the \$1 million prize. The 2025 cycle will culminate with

winners announced next year. The Aga Khan Award was established in 1977 and is known for spotlighting

projects that respond to the needs and aspirations of Muslim societies worldwide.



Minister: Iran eyes two million medical tourists by 2030



Social Desk

Iran plans to draw two million medical tourists over the next five years, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri said on Saturday, outlining the country's long-term strategy to boost health tourism and fight regional stigma.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran, Salehi Amiri said Iran's advanced medical infrastructure, skilled doctors, and lower treatment costs make the country a competitive destination for patients across the region,

IRNA reported.

"With over 1,200,000 health tourists in 2024 alone, bringing in more than \$2 billion, the numbers speak for themselves," he said. "We're not just talking about tourism. This is about diplomacy, economics, and public health."

Salehi Amiri added that Iran would host the third ECO Health Tourism Conference this month in Hamedan, positioning the western province—with its natural springs and modern hospitals—as a future hub for regional care.

He acknowledged that lack of coordination among state bodies had slowed progress in the past. But new joint committees with the health and welfare ministries are working to align policies and streamline licensing for private sector players.

"Iran has what it takes to lead in health tourism," Salehi Amiri said. "If we play our cards right, this could help counter Iranophobia and show a different face of the country to the world."

Iranian photographer Mehdi Ashna wins silver in Norway

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian photographer Mehdi Ashna took home the silver medal at the 15th Arctic Exhibition of Photographic Art 2025, organized by the Nordic Society of Photography (NFFP) in Norway, the festival committee announced on Saturday.

Three of Ashna's works were selected for the exhibition, and one was awarded silver by the international jury. The event, held under the patronage of the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP), drew submissions from artists across Europe and Asia, ILNA reported.

Ashna, based in Tehran, is widely recognized for his work in theater, film, and television photography. He currently heads the Iranian Theater Photographers Association and has served as juror and executive director in several national arts festivals, including the Fajr International Theater Festival.

He has earned gold medals at FIAP-endorsed festivals in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and has also received honors from international competitions in Nigeria, Taiwan, Romania, and Canada. In 2024, his images won top prizes at Nigeria's African Wind



Circuit, including Nigerian Circuit Diploma and Port Harcourt Diploma awards.

Ashna's portfolio includes decades of work documenting Iran's theater scene and numerous acclaimed exhibitions. His latest recognition in Norway adds another international laurel to his growing list of achievements.

13th Fajr Int'l Fashion, Clothing Festival launched in Tehran

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Iran's 13th Fajr International Fashion and Clothing Festival kicked off on June 7, at the Aseman Cultural and Artistic Complex in Tehran, drawing designers, entrepreneurs, and senior officials.

Mohsen Gorji, the festival's director, said more than 3,200 works from nearly 1,300 designers were submitted for review. Of those, just over 200 pieces were selected after a rigorous two-phase evaluation process led by academic and industry experts, IRNA reported.

The event showcases apparel, bags, shoes, and jewelry, and runs through June 12.

Gorji noted that the festival's aim is to connect top talent with real market opportunities, though he stressed that turning designs into mass-produced items remains a complex, mid-term goal requiring robust private sector involvement.

This year, organizers shifted the research component of the festival to the private sector, with Alzahra University leading the initiative.

"We didn't issue an open call for papers this time. Instead, we outsourced the work to spe-



cialized academic teams," Gorji explained.

He also announced the launch of mentoring centers across provinces, adding that the festival's broader mission is to identify and train standout designers through localized models inspired by Stanford and Japanese systems.

"We've reached 200 strong teams. These talents shouldn't be left behind," he said.

The festival's policy, Gorji emphasized, is to move operations and support fully into private hands to boost professionalism in Iran's fashion industry. A second edition of the festival is planned for February.

Iran to host Russian Cultural Week

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Russian Cultural Week will open in Iran on June 9, bringing a prominent performing arts group to Tehran and Isfahan for a five-day program, Pavel Shevtsov, deputy head of the Federal Agency for International Humanitarian Cooperation, told Iran's IRNA news agency on Saturday.

The event, which runs through June 13, is part of ongoing efforts to deepen bilateral cultural exchanges.

Shevtsov said the program reflects the "dynamic development" of Russian-Iranian ties and aims to strengthen mutual understanding between the two nations.

"When we host Iranian cultural days in Russia and, in turn, organize Russian events in Iran, we help our peoples gain a clearer picture of each other's cultural identities and scientific progress," Shevtsov said. According to Iranian officials, the Russian delegation includes a top-tier artistic ensemble set to perform in both cities.

Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipour, head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, confirmed that the invitation had been extended by Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi.

Past events under this framework have drawn considerable public attention. Iran held a cultural week in Moscow and St. Petersburg in July 2023,



which was well attended.

Shevtsov also noted growing academic ties, pointing to an increasing number of Iranian students in Russian universities, particularly in medical fields, as well as early signs of interest among Russian youth in studying in Iran.

"I believe this trend will gain pace, and in time, we'll see a more balanced exchange of students between our countries," he said.

He added that while Russian government scholarships are available, many Iranian students choose to study in Russia independently.

Shevtsov described both Russia and Iran as culturally rich nations with longstanding traditions. "Each of Russia's many regions has its own religious and cultural features. I'm confident Iranian audiences will find much to admire during the upcoming week in Tehran and Isfahan," he said.