



Iran launches cultural ncyclopedia project with Austria in Vienna

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization launched a new project to compile a bilingual encyclopedia documenting the cultural ties between Iran and Austria, the Iranian cultural attaché in Vienna announced. The initiative aims to chronicle centuries of historical, artistic, and academic exchange between the two nations. The encyclopedia, to be published in Persian and German, is being developed at the Iranian Cultural Mission in Vien-

na and will serve as a long-term reference to boost future cooperation. The editorial team includes Iranian and Austrian researchers and writers with backgrounds in literature, history, and cultural studies. The project is led by Reza Gholami, a university professor and scholar of the philosophy of culture and civilization. He oversees content policy, scientific integrity, and overall editorial direction. The structure of the encyclopedia is designed around ten thematic pillars, covering shared cultural

heritage, historical monuments, academic collaborations, prominent cultural figures, language and literary exchange, tourism, the Iranian diaspora, and joint institutional efforts. The content follows established standards of encyclopedic writing, with a focus on combining academic precision with public readability. The first step has involved identifying roughly 100 entries using the Delphi method in consultation with subject experts. These entries will be drafted in phases, with priority given to the most historically



Cover design of the 'Iran-Austria Cultural Relations Encyclopedia,' a bilingual reference work currently in development under the supervision of Iranian scholar Reza Gholami

and diplomatically significant topics. The first edition is scheduled for publication—both digitally and in print—in early 2026. According to the cultural mission, the format will allow for regular updates and editorial revisions to reflect ongoing developments in bilateral relations.



'Waiting' heads to Japan's Sapporo film festival

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Iranian short film 'Waiting', directed by Amir Rooini, was officially selected to compete at the 20th Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market, organizers announced. The festival will run from October 10 to 13 in Sapporo, northern Japan, ILNA reported. The Sapporo event, recognized as a Canadian Screen Award-qualifying festival, is among Asia's most prominent short film markets. 'Waiting' is the only Iranian entry in this year's lineup, standing out from a crowded field of international submissions. The film centers on two schoolboys, Navid and Hamid, who anxiously wait every day

for their parents at the school gate — a routine that unsettles Hamid more than Navid. Rooini's 2023 production has already made the rounds at 13 international festivals, including the 25th Santa Fe Film Festival in the US, the seventh FilmKörbes in Germany, and the 17th Media Film Festival in Pennsylvania. It took home the Jury's Special Prize at Taiwan's Chiayi Film Festival and clinched Best Short Film at Madeira Curtas in Portugal. The film was also screened in Bulgaria's Quarantine Film Festival and the 21st Patheos Festival in the US. Rooini has described the film as a story about "childhood fear and quiet desperation," unfolding through the silent



routine of waiting. The narrative, told in a sparse visual style, offers "more questions than answers," reflecting the emotional ambiguity of the boys' daily ordeal.

Iranian journalist Mansour Jahani named 2026 Golden Globe voter

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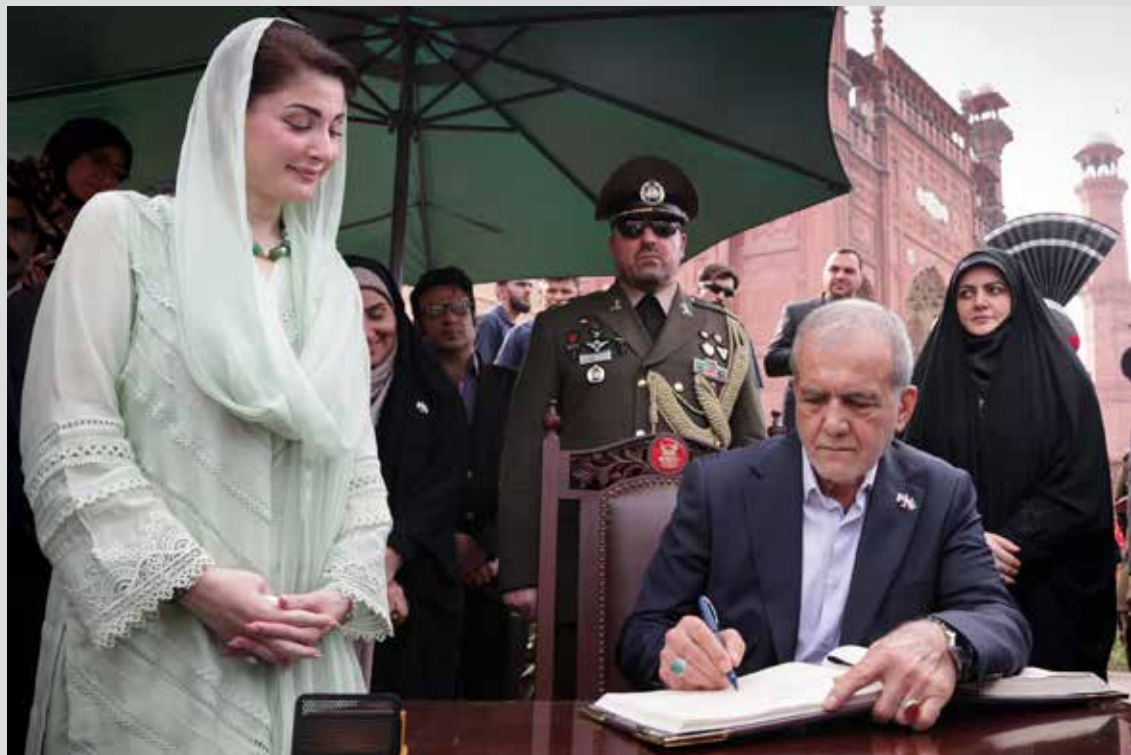
Iranian film journalist Mansour Jahani was selected as one of the voting members for the 83rd Golden Globe Awards, set to take place in January 2026 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles. The invitation came from Tim Gray, executive vice president of the Golden Globes and a former editor of Variety, Asriran reported. Jahani, a seasoned independent cinema journalist, has contributed to major global outlets including AFP, Reuters, The Guardian, Le Monde, and Hollywood Reporter. He previously served as a jury member for IndieWire's critics' poll during the 2023, 2024 and 2025 Cannes Film Festivals. His inclusion in

the Golden Globe voting roster puts him among a select group of international entertainment journalists tasked with casting ballots in one of the industry's most closely watched award races. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), reorganized in recent years under new management, has broadened its voting pool to include a wider range of global voices. Jahani joins over 300 journalists from around the world who track trends in film and television and report from major international festivals throughout the year. Voters are expected to assess entries with "sharp eyes" and stay in tune with evolving industry currents. Fluent in English, Persian, Arabic and Kurdish, Jahani



holds memberships in the International Federation of Journalists (Belgium), the Iranian Society of Film Critics and Writers, and the International Sports Press Association (AIPS). His journalism has earned recognition from the Goteborg Art Association in Sweden.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signs the visitors' book at the mausoleum of Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore during an official visit to Pakistan, August 2, 2025. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and local officials accompanied him at the ceremony honoring the Persian-speaking philosopher-poet.

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Iran tracks declining births, launches family support programs

Social Desk

Fewer than one million Iranian women gave birth last year despite over 16 million being of reproductive age, Deputy Health Minister Alireza Raisi said during a population planning meeting at the Ministry of Health in Tehran. Raisi was speaking at the fifth session of the National Coordination Council for Population Growth, where officials unveiled a new legal abortion registration system. He noted that Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, and Sistan-Baluchestan recorded the highest number of births over the past two years. Still, the overall fertility rate remains low, with "60 percent of women of childbearing age now between 35 and 49," a demographic that signals later motherhood and fewer children. Iran's population is aging fast. The country's median age has climbed to 35. Raisi compared the trend to that of Japan—where 30% of the population is now over 65—calling it "a demographic trap" that's difficult to escape once entered. He added that India, by contrast, remains one of the youngest large economies, with an average age of 28.7.

Iran is not alone in tackling declining birth rates. Raisi pointed to similar incentive-based efforts in China. Domestically, the government has ramped up support schemes, including stepped pay increases through 57 universities of medical sciences, a 100% rise in child allowance payments to students, and a 76% boost in married student housing. Marriage, however, is trending down. The most marriages between 2012 and 2024 occurred in Tehran and Khorasan Razavi. The average age at first marriage stands at 27.5 for women and 32 for men, with the lowest average in Sistan-Baluchestan and the highest in Tehran and Ilam. Caesarean births are also on the rise. Last year, 56.6% of deliveries were C-sections—peaking at 80% in Gilan, with Abadan showing the lowest rate. Still, maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped, with neonatal deaths now at 8.3 per 1,000 births. Raisi highlighted the efforts of the Nafas centers—a network of 357 local organizations supporting pregnancy continuance—saying over 15,000 women decided against abortion in the past two years.