



# Over 3m Arbaeen pilgrims cross Iran's border into Iraq

## Social Desk

More than three million pilgrims have crossed Iran's borders to attend this year's Arbaeen pilgrimage, the commander of Iran's national police announced Sunday. Arbaeen, a major Shia Muslim event commemorating the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), draws millions annually to the holy city of Karbala in Iraq, IRNA reported. The pilgrimage, marked by a mass walk toward Karbala, has seen a significant surge in numbers this year. "From the start of this year's operation, over three million pilgrims have crossed our borders," said Commander Ahmad Reza Radan during a visit to the official Khosravi border crossing. He added that more than 1.3 million

pilgrims have already returned to Iran. Khosravi Border Terminal, a key gateway between Iran and Iraq, accounted for nearly 450,000 departures and about 120,000 arrivals, Radan noted. He highlighted the improved facilities and better weather conditions at Khosravi compared to other crossings such as Shalamcheh and Mehran, calling it "a reliable and convenient choice for pilgrims." The commander emphasized that the border's welfare services and infrastructure allow pilgrims to pass through "with speed and ease." Thanks to coordination between the Kermanshah governor, police, and border officials, services at Khosravi have been enhanced this year. Development plans are underway to further improve conditions for pilgrims next year.

Radan urged those planning to travel in the remaining days before Arbaeen to choose Khosravi crossing, assuring that security forces are fully committed to ensuring their safety. The Khosravi border is Iran's oldest official crossing to Iraq for pilgrims heading to the holy shrines in Karbala and Najaf. Historically part of the Silk Road, it remains a strategic gateway linking Iran to Baghdad and beyond. The border town of Qasr-e Shirin, with over 27,000 residents and more than 186 km of Iraq border, hosts Khosravi and Parvizkhan crossings. It offers 14 lodging facilities with 322 rooms and 1,200 beds to accommodate travelers. Last year, about one million pilgrims crossed Khosravi during Arbaeen, and this year's figures have doubled, signaling the growing importance of this route for the pilgrimage.



● IRNA

## Iranian students bag top prizes at Yakutsk, Seoul science contests



## Social Desk

Iranian students took home top honors at two global innovation events in Russia and South Korea in July, the Iranian Education Ministry. The teams competed at the Yakutia International Science Fair (YISF) from July 6 to 9 in Yakutsk and the World Invention Creativity Olympics (WICO) from July 17 to 19 in Seoul. The dual triumph underscored Iran's growing presence on the international science stage, with young inventors

showcasing projects from AI-driven waste segregation systems to seizure-predicting medical devices. Both contests drew hundreds of participants from more than two dozen nations, offering what officials called "a global stage" for emerging talent. At YISF, which brought together 129 teams from 10 countries, Mehran Rajabi and Alireza Jafarnejad won first place in physics, astronomy and engineering for their "EcoNet Bin," an AI-powered, IoT-enabled waste sorting system. Siblings Moeid and Helena Rajabi took second place for a smart child safety solution using IoT and image processing. Third place went to a team led by Artin Radmatin for a project on magnetic gears in process systems. Zhina Aminorroaya-Karladani won a special prize for her "UVGuard

Grooming Brush." In the mathematics, computer science and IT category, Artin Salari and Amir-Abbas Kavosi Amin ranked second with smart glasses for the blind using real-time object detection, while Ilia Majidzadeh Heravi and Parsa Karimi Yazdi placed third for a deaf communication app called "CommunityMate." At WICO, hosted by the Korea University Invention Association, 313 teams from 28 countries competed. Radin Abbasi and Sam Rashidi won gold for "NannyBot," a humanoid robot designed to manage children's activities through IoT. Silver medals went to Matin Hayati for seizure prediction via EEG frequency band analysis and to Raman Nafarieh for research on plant nanogels in skin cancer treatment.

## Pezeshkian: Farshchian's name will remain 'forever' in Iran's cultural history

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian declared that master painter Mahmoud Farshchian's name will remain "forever" in the nation's cultural history, issuing a tribute after the 95-year-old miniature artist died in the United States. Pezeshkian's statement positioned the artist's death as a profound cultural loss, emphasizing that Farshchian had breathed "fresh spirit" into Iran's ancient painting traditions while elevating the country's profile on the world stage, IRNA reported. "Without doubt, the memory and name of Master Farshchian and his brilliant works will remain like a shining jewel in the history of culture and art of this land," the president wrote in his condolence message released through the government information portal. The president specifically praised three of Farshchian's masterpieces, The Evening of

Ashura, 'Kawthar,' and 'The Guarantor of the Gazelle,' describing them as mirrors of "love, faith and the glory of Islamic Iranian culture and Shiite history." Pezeshkian called the Isfahan-born artist's passing a "bitter loss" for Iran's artistic community and cultural enthusiasts nationwide. He extended formal condolences to Farshchian's family while highlighting the painter's role as both guardian and innovator of Persian miniature art. The presidential tribute underscored Iran's efforts to project cultural soft power through its artistic heritage. Pezeshkian emphasized that Farshchian had not only preserved "the authenticity and glory of Iranian painting" but had also brought international recognition to the country through his "unparalleled innovation and taste." Farshchian died Saturday after battling pneumonia, according to the Iranian Academy of Arts.



The artist had lived in the United States for years while maintaining strong ties to his homeland's cultural institutions. Pezeshkian called on future generations of artists and students to carry forward Farshchian's "glorious and valuable school" of painting. Born January 24, 1930, in Isfahan, Farshchian carved out a unique position in modern Iranian art by revitalizing miniature painting for contemporary audiences. His works frequently drew from Islamic narratives and Shiite religious themes, resonating deeply with Iran's cultural identity.

## Iranian radio productions named as finalists in ABU Prizes 2025

## Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian radio works have advanced to the final round of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Prizes 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The ABU Prizes, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, are among the region's most prestigious media awards, ILNA reported. The finalists from Iran include the radio documentary 'The Hidden Path', produced by Zahra Sarbazi for Radio Iran; the audio feature 'Far East, Near East', written, directed and hosted by Mohsen Rasuli for Radio Goftogoo; and the radio drama 'Autumn Dream', written and directed by Fereydown Mehrabi for Radio Namayesh. These works will compete in their respective categories—documentary, pod-

cast/audio feature and long-form drama, under this year's theme, "Journey". 'The Hidden Path' follows two young Iranians through their "secret" illegal migration, capturing their hopes and fears both before departure and years later, offering a powerful, time-spanning contrast. 'Far East, Near East' explores the cultural and economic spread of South Korea's "Hallyu" wave, juxtaposing it with perceived neglect of Iran's rich cultural legacy. 'Autumn Dream', a loosely adapted radio version of Nader Ebrahimi's novel 'Once Again the City I Loved,' was performed and recorded in Studio 8 of Radio Namayesh with Mehrabi leading a radio ensemble in Tehran. Final winners across radio and television will be announced during the ABU annual general assembly, scheduled for September of this year in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

## Shapouri wins best director at Milan Gold Awards

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ashkan Shapouri took home the Best Director Award at the Milan Gold Awards on August 9 for his drama 'The Last Tango with Pari'. The festival jury praised Shapouri's "classic, ambitious direction" and awarded him for creating a gripping dramatic atmosphere. Shapouri dedicated the prize to the children of Gaza, highlighting the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region, IRNA reported. The film is a dark romantic drama that follows Mahour, a theater makeup artist caring for her father who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. The film holds the record at

the Los Angeles Hollywood Festival with nominations in 11 artistic categories. Shapouri's work has also won the Best Screenplay award at the Athens Film Festival earlier this year and earned accolades at other international festivals, including Route 66 (USA), Athens (Greece), and Love Film Festival (USA). The film's power lies in its simple yet striking portrayal of Alzheimer's, a subject close to Shapouri's heart. "Ten years ago, I was making a film in a nursing home, where some patients had Alzheimer's. I wanted to tell a story about an Alzheimer's patient," he said. Shapouri explained that his own grandmother struggled with the disease



for years, which motivated him to bring this story to the screen. A Belgian doctor who watched the film recommended it to medical colleagues and families of Alzheimer's patients for its sensitive depiction. Shapouri reflected on why the film resonated with audiences and judges alike, "The bridge it builds with viewers through straightforward storytelling

and its subtle romance moved the jury deeply." Regarding his decision to dedicate the award to Gaza's children, Shapouri said, "What Israel is doing is sheer destruction. The injustice against the children and people of Gaza is a humanitarian disaster. We cannot stay silent." He called on filmmakers with a global voice to speak out against such tragedies.