



# Five Iranian illustrators reach finals of Shanghai Golden Pinwheel



## Arts & Culture Desk

Five Iranian artists were named among the 69 finalists of the 2025 Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators Competition in Shanghai, according to the Iran Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. The annual contest, staged alongside the China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair (CCBF), has grown into one of the world's leading showcases for young talent, IRNA reported. This year's edition drew 2,828 submissions from 78 countries, with jurors selecting 50 works in the publishing category and 19 in the commercial category. The Iranian finalists are Parvin Heydarizadeh, Mojdeh Kianzadeh, Bahareh Sa'adatmandi, Maryam Mahmoudi-Moghadam and Najla Mahdavi-Ashraf. Mahdavi-Ashraf's illustrations for 'A

Sun in the Turkmen Desert,' published by the children's cultural institute, were among the works chosen in the book section.

Organizers said the competition, launched in 2015, aims to "build bridges" between illustrators and publishers worldwide. It not only highlights emerging artists but also runs exhibitions, yearbooks and promotional campaigns.

The jury of eight includes experts from China, South Korea, Italy, Belgium, the United States and Germany. Winners will be announced at the book fair, with top prizes going to one Chinese and one international illustrator, along with a special award and a public choice prize.

The selected works will be featured in a dedicated catalog and displayed from Nov. 14 to 16, 2025, at the Golden Pinwheel showcase during the Shanghai fair.

## 13 looted antiquities repatriated to Iran from Italy

### Arts & Culture Desk

Thirteen Iranian antiquities, including a rare Iron Age vessel and centuries-old ceramics, were formally returned to Tehran in Rome after joint efforts by the Iranian Embassy in Italy and the country's heritage police.

The handover ceremony, attended by Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Reza Sabouri and commander of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage in Italy Giorgio Zarbonello, capped a two-year legal process, Asriran reported.

The artifacts had been seized in the northern Italian province of Trento during investigations that began in 2022. Officials said the restitution underscores growing cultural cooperation between the two nations, which have both been victims of illegal trafficking of historical objects.

Among the returned items are twelve decorative ceramics—bottles, bowls, jugs, and plates—from diverse periods of Iran's history. They include Qajar works from



the 19th century, Nishapur pottery from the 10th century, Tabaristan wares from the 10th and 11th centuries, Kashan and Gorgan pieces from the 12th and 13th centuries, and lusterware and enameled ware ceramics from Rey and Kashan.

The most striking object is a black clay spouted jug, traced back to the second to first millennium BC. Experts said it originated from Lorestan, a region known for its Iron Age craftsmanship. The jug had been smuggled abroad following illicit excavations before resur-

facing in Italy. Scholars noted its resemblance to pieces held at the British Museum in London. Sabouri described the return as a "clear sign" of cultural partnership between Iran and Italy. "Such exchanges help restore the missing fragments of historical and cultural memory to nations," he told reporters at the embassy. Iranian officials said they hope to build on this case by expanding cooperation with Italy to safeguard ancient heritage and prevent further losses to the black market in antiquities.

## Iran sets €6b health tourism target

### Social Desk

Iran is seeking €6 billion in revenue from health tourism under its Seventh Development Plan, a senior official said on Saturday, stressing that medical visitors spend about four times more than leisure travelers.

Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, deputy minister for tourism and head of the Health Tourism Council, said during the International Private/Public Hospitals Congress and Exhibition aka IPH2025 in Tehran that the sector could boost foreign exchange earnings, generate jobs and "strengthen international trade ties," IRNA reported.

The exhibition brought together hospital executives, healthcare specialists and tour operators from Europe, Africa and the Middle East, aiming to showcase Iran's capacity and build new partnerships. He called medical tourism one of Iran's fastest-growing markets.

Iran has about 300 licensed hospitals and treatment centers authorized to serve international patients, along with nearly 700 agencies offering health tourism packages.

Officials say upgrading service quality and ensuring transparency are central to winning trust abroad as Iran seeks to connect more closely with the "global system of health and tourism."

Bandpey said demand is driven by Iran's advanced medical techniques in fields



such as organ transplants, orthopedics and fertility treatment, combined with lower costs, shorter waiting times and cultural proximity to key markets including Iraq, Oman, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

He outlined four policy priorities: building a national brand for health tourism, strengthening oversight through new regulations and digital platforms, training and empowering professionals, and fostering cooperation between ministries and private operators.

He said responsibilities had been divided, with the Health Ministry overseeing hospitals, the Foreign Ministry handling visas, and the Tourism Ministry managing accommodation, transport and wellness packages.

The Tehran event, billed as the region's largest medical and health tourism gathering, was backed by the Tehran Health Tourism Association, the Health Tourism Development Center of Islamic Countries and other international groups.

## Environment chief urges global unity to combat plastic pollution

### Social Desk

Iran's Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment (DoE), Shina Ansari, emphasized the necessity of international collaboration to address the escalating plastic pollution crisis. Speaking at the 'Addressing Plastic Pollution: Challenges and Opportunities' conference in Tehran on Saturday, Ansari highlighted that environmental issues cannot be resolved in isolation, IRNA reported. She stressed that "environmental issues must be addressed regardless of political challenges," underscoring the importance of

global cooperation in tackling such crises.

Ansari pointed out that plastic pollution, particularly microplastics, poses significant threats to human health and ecosystems. She noted that these pollutants have infiltrated water sources and even human bloodstreams, leading to widespread concern. Despite the challenges, she acknowledged the petrochemical industry's growing commitment to environmental responsibility. Ansari praised the sector's shift towards sustainable practices, including the development of eco-friendly polymers and waste reduction initiatives. She

expressed optimism that these efforts would contribute to mitigating plastic pollution's adverse effects.

The conference also featured discussions on Iran's strategic plans to enhance its petrochemical sector's sustainability. Currently, polymers account for approximately 10% of Iran's annual petrochemical production capacity, with plans under the Seventh Development Plan to increase this figure to 130 million tons.

The focus is on producing recyclable materials and reducing waste, aligning with global trends towards environmental efficiency. Ansari emphasized that address-

ing plastic pollution requires a multifaceted approach, combining technological innovation, industry cooperation, and public awareness.

She reiterated that "no single organization will be able to successfully preserve the environment on its own," advocating for collective action across all sectors of society.



Head of Iran's Department of Environment, Shina Ansari, addresses attendees during the 'Addressing Plastic Pollution: Challenges and Opportunities' conference in Tehran on September 6, 2025.  
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