



Pezeshkian urges stronger collaborative ethos in Iranian society

Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian urged Iranians to priorities social trust and collaborative skills, saying even the brightest minds cannot succeed without human networks and the ability to work in teams. He told attendees at the closing session of the second international symposium on "Family, Future, Sustainable Bonds" that schools must teach problem-solving and communication, preparing children to face real-world challenges rather than sheltering them in elite environments, president.ir reported. "Even the brightest minds need a human network and group-work skills to succeed," Pezeshkian said, stressing that

schooling should equip children to face challenges rather than shield them. He argued that some families mistakenly believe enrolling their children in elite schools guarantees social success, but without teamwork and interpersonal skills, true excellence is impossible. Pezeshkian positioned honesty as the bedrock of durable social bonds. He warned that relationships built on superficial traits crumble under pressure. "When people and families share a sacred goal and direction, their connections deepen. No virus, no problem can cut them," he said. Pezeshkian also called for social tolerance, modesty and the ability to resolve conflicting views without turning differences into hostility.



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian delivers a speech at the second international symposium on family, future and sustainable bonds at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 1, 2025.
● president.ir

He cautioned against grudges or retribution, calling them "a scourge of human connections." In this vein, he described educational reform as "an urgent necessity," noting that schools, families, neighborhoods and communities must instill the skills to engage respectfully and constructively. Describing hardship as a path to collective growth, he likened life's difficulties to a climb toward a summit. For Pezeshkian, social reform begins at home, with values, sincerity and solidarity.



Iran pushes to transform its tourism hub into cultural engine



● ILNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ministry began restructuring its Investment and Economic Affairs Center on Monday, with Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri vowing to embed the unit at the heart of national efforts to revive tourism and cultural heritage. In a meeting with senior officials of the ministry, Salehi-Amiri laid out a three-phase roadmap. The first stage focuses on setting firm foundations, organizational structure, human resources, and financial capacity, IRNA reported. Once these are in place, the ministry will draft a ten-year master strategy to steer investment toward cultural tourism, heritage restoration and regional handicraft industries. The final phase, he said, will mobilize resources and launch concrete projects from next year. "The first task," he told ministry staff, "is to build

a solid base. Without that there can be no leap forward." He made clear the new center must evolve into "a full-fledged deputy-level body", a flagship branch overseeing all tourism and heritage investment efforts. Salehi-Amiri acknowledged the steep constraints on government budgets, so far only 12% of allocations have been disbursed, and insisted the ministry must tap private capital, regional funds and the offices of governors and local representatives. It is, he argued, the "only viable route" to revive cultural tourism across Iran's provinces. He described this revamp as more than institutional change. It marks a shift toward long-term planning, strategic execution and professionalism. "Our success today rests on skilled experts," he said. "We must prepare proposals, business plans and funding bids now, so we hit the ground running with the next big project."

Women power 30% of Iran's microbusiness jobs, lead 7,000 cooperatives



● By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Over the past decade, the quiet yet impactful presence of women in Iran's small-scale enterprise sector has steadily transformed into a powerful voice within the country's economy. Once largely confined to the margins of economic activity, women now represent a driving force in social entrepreneurship and economic resilience. Their participation in home-based businesses has quadrupled, and they now account for roughly 30% of all microbusinesses, underscoring their growing influence in shaping Iran's grassroots economy. The remarkable surge in home business licenses, rising female participation in cooperatives, and increasing focus on handicrafts, carpets, eco-tourism, and digital-based services demonstrate that women are not only key job creators but also crucial contributors to household income stability and local economic development, especially under the pressures of international sanctions. In an exclusive conversation with Iran Daily, Khatereh Ostadrezai, CEO of the Tehran Province Handicrafts Cooperatives Union, advisor to the Director-General of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor,

and Social Welfare, and chairperson of the Iran Trade Cooperatives Network, offered an in-depth look at the state of cottage industries in Iran. She discussed the entrepreneurial potential of these ventures, women's role in the sector, and the contribution of handicrafts to the microeconomic landscape. The full interview follows.

IRAN DAILY: How would you describe the state of entrepreneurship and small businesses in Iran, and what is their contribution to the economy?
OSTADREZAEI: Globally, microbusinesses play a significant role in economic production, and Iran is no exception. In the field of small and quick-return enterprises, particularly home-based businesses, we have observed remarkable activity. These businesses primarily include handicrafts, carpets, various home-based productions, and domestic services. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses had become a leading trend in the employment sector, attracting growing attention from both the public and the government. Today, this sector is one of the most important pillars of Iran's economy, especially at the household level.

What are the main opportunities for developing microbusinesses

and entrepreneurship in Iran, and how do they support the economy under sanctions?

The majority of the working-age population cannot be absorbed into the traditional public or private employment sectors, this is not unique to Iran but a global reality. Key opportunities for creating employment in home-based businesses include individual empowerment and skills training, forming small production or service teams, and expanding online and digital services. Small groups producing scalable goods and digital services play a critical role in household economies. Moreover, the shift from traditional business models to technology-driven models, especially those leveraging artificial intelligence, has significantly enhanced their impact. Even under sanctions, these sectors, less reliant on industrial raw materials, have helped sustain family livelihoods and maintain local economic activity.

How significant is women's participation in microbusinesses and entrepreneurship, and are there comparative statistics with men?

Women constitute about 51.5% of the population in terms of education and employment potential. While their representation in the formal public sector remains lower than regional and global averages, women's presence in small ventures is substantial and highly visible. Over the past seven to ten years, we have seen a four-and-a-half-fold increase in home business licenses. More than 200 occupational categories are registered in the national home business database, with women leading in many of them. This growth has been especially pronounced over the past three to four years. Although Iran still lags behind leading countries such as the US or East

Asian nations, the presence of Iranian women in this sector is both significant and steadily increasing.

What share of microbusinesses does the handicrafts sector represent?

Handicrafts and small-scale home-based productions, requiring minimal and accessible materials and moderate skills, are among the primary components of Iran's small businesses landscape. The diversity of urban and rural handicrafts, along with rural micro-credit funds, handicraft investment funds, carpets, tourism, and home-based businesses, has allowed this sector to contribute significantly to employment and income generation, especially over the past three to four years.

And what is women's share in handicraft production and related microbusinesses?

In the cooperative sector, which is my area of expertise, women dominate in handicrafts, carpets, tourism, and rural production. Currently, 7,000 women's cooperatives operate nationwide, accounting for approximately 10 percent of all cooperatives in Iran. Most of these cooperatives focus on small-scale and quick-return businesses, with 35 to 40 percent active in handicrafts, carpets, and tourism. These cooperatives have directly employed between 1.5 and 2 million people. While the activities are mostly non-industrial or small-scale, they are highly diverse. Notably, in recent years, home-based professions related to social media influencing, online services, platforms, and digital work have been officially recognized, enabling women to enter these sectors legally with financial and educational support. Overall, women now hold a growing and impactful role in both household and national economies, accounting for approximately 25 to 30 percent of all microbusiness employment in the country.