



Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards

Culture minister calls nation ‘land of stories’



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's literary depth and geographic diversity offer vast inspiration for writers and documentarians, Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi said at the closing ceremony of the 18th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards on January 7 at the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI). Salehi emphasized that Iran is “a land of stories and subjects,” praising the late author Jalal Al-Ahmad for recognizing the country's narrative potential decades ago, IRNA reported. He noted that writers and documentarians encounter Iran's expansive



Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi speaks during the closing ceremony of the 18th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards at the national Library and Archives of Iran on January 7, 2026.
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cultural and geographic capacity, a legacy reflected in Al-e Ahmad's works, including ‘The School Principal,’ and ‘Bread and Pen’. The ceremony, held in the National Library's Qalam Hall, showcased Iran's enduring literary traditions, from pre-Islamic storytelling centers at the ancient Jundishapur hospital to the flourishing of narrative poetry and prose under classical figures. Salehi cited encyclopedist Ibn al-Nadim, whose book compiled Persian knowledge later translated and enriched by successive generations, illustrating centuries of cross-cultural literary exchange. Iranian storytelling, he said, has persisted and evolved. From Rudaki's adaptation of ‘Kalila and Dimna’ into Persian verse to over 400 mystical stories in Rumi's ‘Masnavi’, narrative forms have remained central to Iranian culture. “Storytelling runs through Iran's

history. Iran is, above all, a land of story,” Salehi affirmed. He also pointed to the nation's natural and ethnic diversity as fertile ground for documentary work. “Apart from polar and equatorial climates, Iran encompasses every other climatic zone. Coupled with linguistic and ethnic variation, this creates unparalleled material for writers and documentarians alike,” he said. The Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, established to honor the late author and promote contemporary Iranian literature, celebrate works in fiction, nonfiction, and literary criticism that capture both historical depth and modern complexity. By linking classical literary heritage with contemporary creative practice, the event reinforced Tehran's role as a hub for Iranian literary and documentary production.

National wrestling museum opens in Tehran

Iran inaugurated its National Wrestling Museum in Tehran on Wednesday, commemorating the sport's century-long contribution to national pride and coinciding with the anniversary of legendary wrestler Gholamreza Takhti's death.

The museum, named after martyr Gholamreza Kianpour, preserves medals, uniforms, and memorabilia of 127 Iranian wrestlers from global competitions and Olympic tournaments. It aims to enshrine wrestling not only as a sport but as a vital element of Iran's cultural heritage, IRNA reported.

Speaking at the opening, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salahi-Amiri lauded wrestling as “the pride of Iranian sport,” asserting that the discipline



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salahi-Amiri inaugurates its National Wrestling Museum in Tehran on January 7, 2026.
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has fostered national identity, joy, and social unity for over a century. Salahi-Amiri highlighted the role of Alireza Dabir, Olympic and world champion turned federation president, as a model of ef-

fective leadership capable of elevating Iran's sporting and cultural stature internationally. He also emphasized Takhti's enduring legacy, noting that wrestling transcends medals and tournaments

to leave lasting imprints in the hearts of the people. “Only a few champions remain immortal in our collective memory, and Takhti is among them,” he said. The minister announced that all museum artifacts will soon be registered in Iran's comprehensive national property system, with plans to elevate the museum to national, and eventually international, status within a month. A new publication, ‘Wrestling in the Shahnameh,’ was also unveiled, linking the sport to Persian literary heritage and reinforcing its cultural significance. Salahi-Amiri concluded by affirming government recognition of wrestling's social impact, describing it as a source of national pride and a legacy to be transmitted to students, youth, and future generations.

National Calligraphy Biennale held in Qazvin

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The eighth National Calligraphy Biennale held at the historic Ali Qapu complex in Iran's western city of Qazvin on January 6, 2026, drawing artists, scholars, and cultural enthusiasts from across the country. The exhibition showcased the richness and diversity of Persian calligraphy, from classical styles to contemporary interpretations, highlighting the art form's central role in Iranian culture, literature, and identity, IRNA reported.

Organizers described the Biennale as a key platform for preserving centuries-old traditions while nurturing emerging talent. The event featured works that illustrate the integration of calligraphy into literature, architecture, and daily life, underlining its historical and aesthetic significance. Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, attended the closing ceremony, noting the art form's broader cultural and spiritual importance. He described calligraphy as embodying discipline, patience, and moral

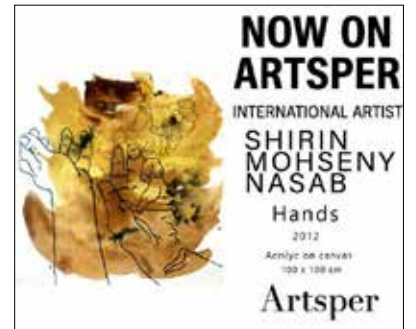


cultivation, with a historic role in governance where mastery of the script once determined eligibility for public office. Salehi also emphasized its ties to the Qur'an, presenting the art as a vessel of religious and aesthetic expression.

Iran's painter Mohseny Nasab awarded at Italian event

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Tehran-based painter Shirin Mohseny Nasab claimed a special award at the international “Temple of Dreams” art exhibition in Italy, for her piece ‘Hands’. The accolade recognized her work as one of the most acclaimed visual art entries by the Palmieri Foundation. The award, granted alongside two other works, included a formal certificate signed by the foundation's curator, publication in the winter 2025 issue of Art and Beyond Art magazine, and a four-month display on the Artsper platform with the option to replace sold works, IRNA reported. Mohseny Nasab's selection also secures her a place in the 2026 iteration of the “Dream Art” exhibition, reinforcing her international visibility. ‘Hands’ exemplifies a fusion of abstraction and figurative design, drawing attention to both the aesthetic and symbolic role of hands in artistic creation. Critics highlight the painting's nuanced interplay of earthy browns and orange tones, precise line work, and dynamic contrast between bold



backgrounds and intricate hand forms, describing it as a compelling visual dialogue between color and form. In her own account, Mohseny Nasab explained that ‘Hands’ evolved spontaneously through free, expressive lines inspired by the form of her left hand. Developed without preliminary sketches in a style blending abstraction and action painting, the series reflects her view of hands as instruments of creation and conduits of life. She aims to invite audiences into a personal interpretive experience, emphasizing minimalism as a gateway to introspection rather than narrative.

Short film ‘Birthday’ selected for Poppy Jasper Festival in California

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Iranian filmmaker Raheleh Karami's short film ‘Birthday,’ produced by Hojjat Babaei, will screen at the 20th Poppy Jasper International Film Festival (PJIFF) in Morgan Hill, California, from April 8 to 15, 2026. The festival, a leading platform for independent cinema in California, showcases short and feature films from around the world while

championing diversity, social engagement, and the voices of emerging filmmakers, ILNA reported. ‘Birthday’ follows a young woman navigating the complexities of a pivotal birthday, capturing intimate familial dynamics and personal reflection. The film features performances by Shaghayegh Faryad Shiran and Mahana Ekhlas, whose portrayals bring nuanced emotional depth to the narrative.