



Gov't seeks educational reform, aiming to foster conscious learning



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during a national appreciation ceremony for school-building philanthropists in Tehran on January 26, 2026.

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school-building philanthropists held Monday, January 26. Addressing the gathering, Pezeshkian lauded the significant contributions of private donors to expanding educational access and equity under the current administration's fourth development plan. The president's remarks signaled a broader governmental strategy to move beyond merely constructing school buildings, aiming instead to cultivate critical thinking, teamwork, and civic engagement among students. He asserted that a fundamental shift in pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies is essential to equip future gener-

ations with the skills necessary to navigate complex societal challenges and contribute to national progress. Pezeshkian's vision extends to reforming administrative practices, suggesting that deficiencies in the public sector stem from inadequate training in collaboration and ethical conduct within the education system. Pezeshkian highlighted instances of extraordinary generosity, including individuals diverting funds earmarked for personal expenses, such as vehicle allocations or even blood money payments for deceased relatives, towards school construction projects. He characterized these acts as evidence of the nation's collective potential to overcome obstacles when citizens actively participate in addressing societal needs. "The citizens of tomorrow are the children of today, and their future is inextricably linked to

the education they receive today," Pezeshkian stated. He further emphasized that he found it "unacceptable" for Iranian citizens to face deficiencies in essential services like education and healthcare, pledging his full commitment to improving the nation's welfare. The president called for a concerted effort to address shortcomings within the education system, acknowledging that responsibility rests collectively with all stakeholders. He urged educators and administrators to continuously strive for improvement, asserting that collaborative action can overcome any impediment to national development. Pezeshkian concluded by emphasizing the transformative power of education, stating that a reformed education system holds the key to resolving Iran's social tensions and empowering future generations to tackle the nation's challenges.

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud

Pezeshkian underscored a commitment to overhauling Iran's educational system and fos-

tering a more holistic learning environment during a national appreciation ceremony for

My Iran section of Fajr Int'l Theater Festival

From 12-day war to national epics



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The 44th Fajr International Theater Festival has taken another step towards strengthening a national and identity-focused perspective in performing arts with the addition of a new section. The 'My Iran' section, developed in collaboration with the festival's policy council, provides a new platform for artistic portrayals of concepts such as patriotism, Iranian Islamic power, and reflections on events related to the 12-day war and the axis of resistance.

It appears this section not only responds to the contemporary societal need for a re-examination of national identity but also demonstrates the festival's attention to the deep connection between art, contemporary history, and the nation's strategic concerns.



Farhad Besharati, judge of the 'My Iran' section of the 44th Fajr International Theater Festival, told Iran Daily in an interview, referring to the addition of this section in the 44th iteration of the festival, that 'My Iran' has been added this year and features works created by theater groups across the country, or commissioned by various institutions, focusing on themes of resistance, Iranian power, the 12-day war, and its aftermath.

According to him, the subject matter and themes of the works in this section relate to patriotism and Iranian Islamic power. Some of these works have been previously showcased at other festivals, while others are participating in the Fajr Theater Festi-



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val for the first time and have been selected for performance. He added that judging the 'My Iran' section is separate from the usual judging process of the Fajr International Theater Festival, and 'My Iran' is, in fact, one of the five sections whose works will be evaluated by the judges this year.

The judge, commenting on the number of works selected for this section, revealed that a total of 21 theatrical productions have qualified for the 'My Iran' section, slated for performance in both stage and street theater formats. "To date, we, as the judging panel for this section, have meticulously evaluated and assessed a number of submissions. The plays explore themes centered around the 12-day war and the ongoing discourse surrounding the axis of resistance in Lebanon and Palestine." He added, "Several of the works were remarkably compelling, exhibiting strong playwriting alongside commendable directing, acting, and design. Skilled and seasoned professionals have contributed to the production of these pieces, bringing a distinctly professional approach to these theatrical endeavors. It's fair to say that, overall, these are commendable and well-supported works."

Besharati emphasized that "we assess these works solely in comparison to others created on similar themes. Fundamentally, the discussions of patriotism and Iranian power, the core objectives of the 'My Iran' section, are effectively conveyed within these productions." He further elaborated, "There are also works that delve into national and patriotic narratives, with some groups drawing inspiration from the 'Shahnameh' to craft their pieces. It appears that the 'My Iran' section, with its exploration of love and affection for Iran and a diverse range of other subjects, possesses the potential to flourish in the years to come, given the demonstrated public interest in national and patriotic themes. As we've witnessed previously, works related to the 'Shahnameh' and Iran's epic tales have consistently garnered a positive reception." The jury member concluded, "groups undertaking the creation of such works should avoid overly direct references to these themes, lest the pieces become excessively propagandistic. Instead, they should strive to address the themes indirectly and with greater depth, approaching and narrating them with enhanced artistry and creativity."

Philippine's cultural heritage on display in Tehran



Philippine Ambassador Roberto G. Manalo points to a photo on the wall of the Maryam-e Moqaddas (Persian for Holy Virgin Mary) metro station in Tehran, Iran, on January 26, 2026.

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Arts & Culture Desk

A photographic exhibition highlighting the Philippines' natural beauty and cultural heritage, titled 'The Hidden Pearl,' opened on January 26 at the Maryam-e Moqaddas (Persian for Holy Virgin Mary) metro station in Tehran. The event, attended by Philippine Ambassador Roberto G. Manalo and Tehran municipal officials, marks the 62nd anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and the Philippines, Hamshahri Online reported. The exhibition aims to provide Iranian commuters with a visual introduction to the Philippines' rich culture and architecture, serving as a cultural bridge between the two nations. "We are proud to carry the distinction of transporting over two million passengers daily," stated Masoud Lotfi, CEO of Tehran Urban & Suburban Railway Operation Corporation. "We must leverage these opportunities to

elevate the travel experience and improve the well-being of our citizens. These art galleries offer a valuable platform to foster familiarity with diverse cultures and expand the intellectual horizons of our society."

Ambassador Manalo underscored the potential for further collaboration, noting that the Philippines, with its archipelago of over 7,000 islands, currently has only one city with a metro system.

He expressed the Philippines' eagerness to partner with Iranian metro construction companies to expand urban transportation infrastructure. "We are prepared to collaborate with Iranian metro construction companies to develop metro lines in the Philippines," Manalo stated. He also highlighted the extensive cooperation between the Philippines and Iran over the past 62 years, emphasizing the exhibition as a key element in sharing Filipino culture with the Iranian public. The Philippines, a nation with a significant Muslim population in its southern regions, hopes the exhibition will dispel misconceptions and showcase the country's diverse landscapes and attractions.

Iran to resubmit Masuleh cultural landscape for UNESCO World Heritage listing

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran intends to soon submit an updated nomination dossier for Masuleh and its cultural landscape to UNESCO, a senior cultural heritage official said on January 26. The dossier, which has been completed and signed, will be resubmitted following further studies requested during a previous review by the World Heritage Committee. Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister for Cultural Heritage emphasized that the dossier is ready to be sent to UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It is hoped that this action will be an effective step towards registering this historic and beautiful village on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The move represents a sig-

nificant step in preserving the integrity of Masuleh, a picturesque village nestled within the verdant Hyrcanian forests. Experts believe the successful inscription would underscore Iran's rich industrial heritage, specifically demonstrating iron extraction practices dating back to the Islamic era. The village's strategic location, diverse ethnic demographics, and distinctive architectural style further bolster its claim to global recognition, potentially boosting tourism and safeguarding its cultural identity. Darabi noted that the dossier had previously been presented at the 45th UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in September 2023, where further research was requested.