

Iran pays tribute to Khayyam as his global legacy lives on

Arts & Culture Desk

Khayyam's enduring legacy as a poet, mathematician and philosopher took center stage on May 18 as officials, scholars and cultural figures marked Iran's annual commemoration of the 11th-century polymath in Nishapur and other cities nationwide. Celebrations focused on the global reach of Khayyam's work, from his philosophical quatrains and reforms to the Jalali calendar to his pioneering studies in algebra and astronomy, achievements that helped cement his stature far beyond the Persian-speaking world. President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a formal message, described

Khayyam as a rare convergence of "global science and Iranian literature," calling him a figure who mapped "dimensions of truth" across mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. He pointed to Khayyam's contributions to solving cubic equations, advancing non-Euclidean geometry and designing the Jalali calendar as evidence of his scientific precision. Pezeshkian urged younger generations to draw inspiration from his legacy in pursuing knowledge and cultural advancement. Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi framed Khayyam's work as part of a long-standing Iranian tradition of intellectual inquiry, saying his

poetry invites readers to reconsider "meaning, existence and the human condition." He said Khayyam's verse, which blends scientific reasoning with poetic expression, remains relevant in an age marked by speed and distraction, offering space for reflection and dialogue. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei also praised Khayyam as a "bright star of Iranian and human civilization," noting that his work shows the importance of questioning assumptions and resisting intellectual rigidity. He said Khayyam's legacy reflects a broader cultural heritage rooted in diversity of thought and philosophical depth.

Beyond official tributes, Khayyam's global resonance was again stressed by the enduring influence of 19th-century English translation by Edward FitzGerald, which helped introduce his quatrains to Western audiences and cement his reputation as a universal voice of existential inquiry. More than nine centuries after his death, Khayyam's concise verses continue to circulate across languages and cultures, distilling complex philosophical questions into brief, contemplative lines. In Iran's commemorations, he was once again presented not only as a figure of the past, but as a living intellectual presence in debates over knowledge, meaning and the limits of human certainty.



Minister hails museums as guardians of national memory



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Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri on Monday opened the country's Her-

itage Week and International Museum Day ceremonies at the National Museum of Iran in Tehran, casting the annual event as a celebration of Iran's "civilizational grandeur," national identity and cultural resilience in the face of recent attacks on historical sites. Addressing museum officials, restorers, scholars and foreign cultural guests gathered for the May 18-24 observance, Salehi-Amiri said Iran's vast historical legacy had become a pillar of national cohesion and soft power, CHTN reported. He described cultural heritage workers as custodians of the country's "an-

cient treasure" and said Iran remained "stronger and more united" through its historical memory and cultural continuity. The minister condemned recent strikes that damaged historical landmarks across the country, describing the attacks as a form of "civilizational hostility" targeting Iran's cultural identity. He said 149 historical monuments had sustained damage during what he called US and Israeli aggression against Iran. "Iran is a land of narratives, civilizations and humanity's historical memory," Salehi-Amiri said. "This heritage is a strategic asset that must be preserved

and presented to the world." He also highlighted Iran's international cultural footprint, saying the country holds more than one million historical artifacts and 43,000 nationally registered heritage sites, placing it among the world's leading centers of civilization and cultural influence.

'Standing in the Dust' shows heritage scars

Alongside the ceremony, officials inaugurated the photo exhibition 'Standing in the Dust' at the National Museum of Iran, showcasing 30 images documenting damage inflicted on historical

buildings and heritage sites during recent attacks. The exhibition presents visual narratives of scarred monuments, mosques and centuries-old structures, portraying what organizers described as the endurance of Iranian civilization through war and upheaval. Curators said the collection sought to underscore museums' role as guardians of collective memory and national identity. Held under the slogan "Museums, Guardians of Identity and National Unity," the exhibition was organized by the ministry's public relations and cultural affairs department.

Omar Khayyam: A philosopher for this world

By Asgar Ghahremanpour
 Editor-in-chief

OPINION

On the anniversary of Omar Khayyam, it may be time to look beyond the familiar image of the solitary philosopher contemplating eternity. Khayyam was certainly a mathematician, astronomer, and poet of immense brilliance. Yet what makes him enduringly modern is not simply his philosophical skepticism, but his deep concern for human life as it is lived here and now. Khayyam belonged to a turbulent age shaped by political uncertainty, rigid orthodoxy, and social anxiety. In such a world, his poetry carried a quietly radical message: life itself matters more than dogma. While many thinkers of his time turned their attention toward metaphysical salvation, Khayyam turned toward the ordinary individual, toward joy, love, companionship, and the fleeting beauty of existence. From a sociological perspective, Khayyam can be read as a profoundly worldly and human-centered thinker. His verses repeatedly challenge fear-driven morality and rigid claims to absolute truth. He questioned those who sought authority through piety while making life harder for ordinary people. In doing so, he defended something remarkably simple yet deeply political: The right to live fully. This is why the secular dimension of Khayyam's thought remains so compelling. His secularism was not necessarily an outright rejection of faith, but rather a refusal to sacrifice human exper-

ience to abstract promises and imposed certainties. Again and again, he reminds readers that life is brief, uncertain, and irreplaceable. The tragedy, for Khayyam, is not death itself but failing to truly live before death arrives. Even the recurring image of wine in his poetry should not be reduced to literal indulgence. In many ways, wine becomes a metaphor for liberation, a symbolic rejection of hypocrisy, repression, and joyless conformity. His invitation to "seize the moment" is therefore more than poetic sentiment. It is a subtle form of social resistance against cultures of fear and denial. What distinguishes Khayyam from many classical philosophers is that he never loses sight of the human being behind the abstract idea. He does not ask people to withdraw from life in pursuit of unreachable perfection. Instead, he urges them to embrace the fragile and temporary nature of existence with honesty and dignity. Happiness, companionship, and inner freedom are not distractions from truth in Khayyam's world; they are part of truth itself. That is why Khayyam still feels strikingly contemporary nearly a thousand years later. In an age once again marked by anxiety, ideological certainty, and social fragmentation, his voice sounds unexpectedly modern. He reminds us that before becoming followers of doctrines or prisoners of fear, we are human beings, and that perhaps the deepest wisdom lies not in escaping life, but in learning how to live it well. As Khayyam himself wrote: "This meadow that delights us today Will grow from our dust tomorrow."

Tehran publishers call for stronger state support at virtual book fair

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Iran's publishing industry is facing mounting economic pressures and requires greater government support, Tehran Publishers and Booksellers Union head Ibrahim Karimi said, as the seventh Tehran Virtual Book Fair opened on May 16 on the book.icfi.ir platform under the slogan "Let's read for Iran". Karimi said the virtual fair is intended to ease book

sales while reinforcing Iran's long-standing cultural engagement with literature, Nournews reported. He added that the format could be strengthened through broader cultural programming, including online sessions with writers, translators, poets and illustrators, to partially replicate the dynamics of physical exhibitions. He noted that the publishing industry is grappling with constrained liquidity,

declining purchasing power and rising production costs, which have driven print runs down to as low as 200-300 copies for many titles. He also pointed to administrative and structural challenges, including tax-related issues, insurance contributions and the proliferation of unauthorized reproductions of bestselling books, which he said have weighed on publishers.

Karimi said that while economic strain persists, recent months have shown a mild increase in footfall at bookshops, suggesting that public interest in reading remains intact. He added that reducing production costs would help ease retail prices and encourage wider readership, stressing that coordinated state support and cultural planning are essential to sustain the sector's long-term vitality.

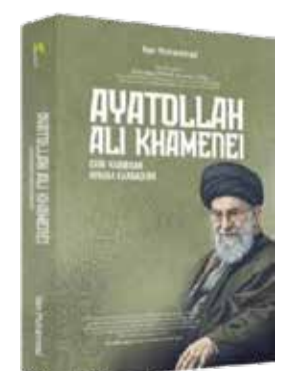
Indonesia publishes new biography of martyred leader

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An Indonesian publishing house has released a new Indonesian-language biography of Iran's former leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, expanding the reach of works on the Islamic Republic's leadership in Southeast Asia's largest Muslim-majority nation. The 304-page volume, titled 'Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: Dari Haribaan Hingga Keabadian' ('Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: From the Cradle to Eternity'), has entered Indonesia's publishing market through Penerbit Imania and is being distributed by the Mizan Group and Mizan Store network, Mehr News

Agency reported. Written in an analytical and narrative style, the book traces the life, intellectual outlook, political struggles and spiritual character of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, while examining his role in contemporary developments across the Islamic world. According to the publisher, the work reaches beyond a conventional biography, seeking to acquaint Indonesian readers with Ayatollah Khamenei's ideological steadfastness, civilizational vision and diplomatic and political approach. The release marks the second standalone Indonesian publication on his thought

issued since his martyrdom, with pre-orders reportedly drawing strong interest. The first standalone Indonesian-language title on Khamenei's thought, 'Dinamika Pemikiran Sayyid Ali Khamenei' ('The Dynamics of Seyyed Ali Khamenei's Thought'), appeared in October 2025. Jakarta-based Sadra Press issued the 417-page volume, a compilation of nine academic studies examining the late leader's Quranic psychology, social ethics, and civilizational outlook. Several Indonesian academics and researchers, including Middle East expert Professor Yun Mahmudhi, deputy for academic affairs



at the University of Indonesia, endorsed the publication, describing it as a profound study of principled resilience and ideological consistency.