

Pezeshkian urges universities to become driving force for tackling nat'l challenges



President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd L) speaks at a meeting with senior officials of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran, Iran on May 31, 2026. president.ir

Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian called on Iran's universities to become engines of practical problem-solving during

a meeting with senior officials from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology in Tehran, stressing that scientific capital must be transformed into tangible solutions for the country's

economic and social challenges. Reviewing higher education policies in the aftermath of the recent conflict and the government's plans to reshape science, technology and education strategies, Pezeshkian said universities should move beyond their traditional teaching role and assume a more active position in national development, president.ir reported.

"The country's progress depends on converting knowledge into problem-solving capacity," he said, adding that higher education institutions are best placed to identify challenges, generate expertise and deliver workable solutions.

Pezeshkian argued that universities should be assessed primarily on their ability to address real-world issues rather than on academic output alone. He urged every university, regardless of size or location, to engage with the needs of its surrounding community and contribute to resolving regional

and national challenges.

He also emphasized the need for multi-disciplinary approaches to increasingly complex problems, calling for greater involvement by academics, researchers and students in policymaking and implementation.

Criticizing the expansion of some higher education institutions without clear objectives or measurable impact, the president said resource allocation and performance evaluations should be redesigned around effectiveness, scientific output and mission fulfillment.

He advocated merit-based funding and remuneration systems that reward meaningful contributions to research, education and social development.

Pezeshkian further encouraged stronger student participation in practical initiatives ranging from social and cultural programs to efforts aimed at improving productivity and efficiency, saying direct engagement would strengthen responsibility and civic in-

volvement.

Addressing governance, he said national management should not remain concentrated within a limited circle of decision-makers and stressed the importance of drawing on the expertise of a broader range of scholars and specialists.

The president also stressed the importance of accurate public communication during sensitive periods, warning against narratives that could create distorted perceptions of national realities. He said universities have a responsibility to promote evidence-based analysis, strengthen public understanding and help guide decision-making through credible research.

Pledging full government support for academic participation in tackling national challenges, Pezeshkian said mobilizing the country's scientific and human resources could help accelerate development and narrow remaining gaps with more advanced nations.

Tehran Virtual Book Fair draws strong demand with 804,000 copies sold

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian readers purchased more than 804,000 books during the Seventh Tehran Virtual Book Fair, featuring the resilience of the country's literary culture despite post-war time circumstances, Ebrahim Heydari, chief executive of Iran Book and Literature House and deputy head of the Tehran International Book Fair, announced. The nationwide online fair, held from

May 16 to May 25 under the slogan "Let's Read for Iran," generated book sales worth about 3.19 trillion rials, equivalent to roughly \$1.87 billion at the stated exchange rate. Government support for book purchases and postal costs totaled more than 410.6 billion rials, or about \$241,000, IRNA reported.

Heydari said domestic print and digital publishers, alongside foreign Arabic- and Latin-language publishers, offered 496,129

titles for readers to browse. Of those, 134,491 titles recorded sales, including 132,772 from Iranian publishers and 1,719 from foreign publishers.

In total, readers bought 804,421 copies, highlighting sustained public engagement with books and publishing across the country.

Heydari said the turnout delivered a clear message about the enduring vitality of Iranian culture, noting that readers continued

to support the publishing industry even during difficult periods.

He thanked book lovers nationwide for backing authors, publishers and booksellers through their purchases.

The annual virtual fair has become an important platform connecting readers with publishers across Iran, extending access to books beyond major urban centers and helping broaden the reach of the country's publishing sector.



Iran eyes handicrafts centers nationwide to boost cultural economy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri called for the establishment of specialized handicrafts centers in cities across the country on Sunday in Tehran, saying dedicated venues for showcasing and selling traditional crafts are essential to strengthening the cultural economy and supporting urban development.

Speaking at a meeting with mayors of Iran's major cities, Salehi-Amiri said the handicrafts sector's most pressing challenge remained marketing and sales, ILNA reported. He described specialized marketplaces and exhibition centers as a missing link in the value chain, helping artisans and craftspeople bring their products to wider domestic and international markets. The minister said the ministry was also looking to harness startups



and emerging technologies to expand the global reach of Iranian handicrafts, while pointing to successful cooperation with Tehran's municipal authorities as a model that could be replicated elsewhere. Salehi-Amiri said closer coordination between city administrations and the ministry would help safeguard historical identity, strengthen tourism infrastructure and advance sustainable urban development. He stressed that heritage preservation must remain central to urban planning, describing the historical fabric of Iranian cities as a civilizational asset shaped

by archaeological research and cultural evidence over centuries. He also proposed a structured mechanism for resolving shared issues between municipalities and the ministry. Under the plan, discussions would first be handled at the provincial level by governors, heritage officials and mayors before being elevated to the national level for final review. "Every issue can be resolved through dialogue, understanding and shared determination," Salehi-Amiri said, urging the country's major-city mayors to establish a regular channel for consultation and cooperation with the ministry.

Smoking claims 60,000 lives yearly in Iran as youth tobacco use alarms health officials

Social Desk

Smoking-related diseases claim about 60,000 lives in Iran each year, while tobacco use among adolescents, particularly teenage girls, is rising at an alarming pace, senior health officials said on Sunday in Tehran during the 22nd Health and Life Conference focused on tobacco-free hospitals. Mohammad Reza Masjedi, secretary-general of the Iranian Anti-Tobacco Association, said tobacco use remains one of the country's most pressing public health challenges, with annual deaths equivalent to the loss of two passenger aircraft every year, ISNA reported.

He warned that the age of tobacco initiation has fallen sharply, with some cases reported among children as young as nine and 10.

Masjedi said official studies showed tobacco consumption among girls aged 13 to 15 surged by 135% between 2017 and 2021. He attributed the trend to aggressive marketing strategies targeting young consumers through flavored products, including electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. He also noted a marked rise in tobacco use among women, with prevalence increasing from around 1%-1.5% in previous years to nearly 5% today. While rates remain lower than in several neighboring countries, the upward trajectory represents a growing public health concern, he said. Health authorities urged stronger enforcement of tobacco-control laws, including restrictions on advertising, wider public education campaigns and higher tobacco taxes. Masjedi said Iran was among the earliest

signatories to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and called for renewed efforts to implement its key provisions.

Alireza Raeisi, deputy health minister, said tobacco consumption in Iran reaches an estimated 77 billion cigarettes annually, generating a vast market that places heavy pressure on the healthcare system. He warned that the increasing normalization of smoking, including through electronic cigarettes and vaping products, risks drawing more young people into nicotine addiction.

Officials also called for stricter measures to prevent underage access to tobacco products and for healthcare facilities to play a larger role in promoting smoking cessation and tobacco-free environments.

Second Announcement
Call for Tender 1st Announcement
for Purchase of Hub Connector
for Belal Gas Field Development Project
Tender No. 1011012

Iranian Offshore Engineering and Construction Company intends to purchase the Tender of Hub Connector for Belal Gas Field Development Project through a public tender. Therefore, the applicants are allowed to have 30 days after the date of 2st publication of the tender notice in the newspaper to participate in this tender. To download the tender documents, please visit the tender's section of the IOEC's website: WWW.IOEC.COM/EN/TENDERS, and Please do not hesitate to contact with Transaction Committee office with Tel: +9821-82841632 under sign for any inquiries and more information.