



Pezeshkian hails Iran's historic feat

Iran bags 3 golds, 2 silvers at World Physics Olympiad in Colombia

Social Desk

Iran's national Physics Olympiad team won three gold and two silver medals at the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) in Bucaramanga, Colombia, the Education Ministry announced on Sunday, as President Masoud Pezeshkian praised the students for showcasing the country's scientific excellence on one of the world's most competitive academic stages. Held from July 4 to July 12, the annual competition brought together more than 400 high school students from over 90 countries to compete in rigorous theoretical and experimental physics examinations. Hirbod Foudazi, Kian Zarabian and Mohammad Mirmohammadi earned gold medals, while Nima Koushki and Amirsam Goharpey captured silver medals, delivering one of Iran's strongest performances in recent years, IRNA reported.

The achievement went beyond the medal count. Zarabian finished first worldwide in the experimental physics examination, becoming the first Iranian contestant to claim the top global ranking in that section of the Olympiad. The highest score in the theoretical examination was awarded to a student from South Korea. In a message released after the results were announced, Pezeshkian called the outcome "another golden chapter" in Iran's scientific achievements and said the students had demonstrated "the scientific capability, outstanding talent and admirable perseverance of the nation's youth," president.ir reported. "Iran's sons and daughters have once again proved that knowledge, hard work and hope open the way to distinguished success on the global stage," the president said. He added that the accomplishment underscored the need to invest further in talented young people, strengthen quality education and pro-



Members of Iran's national Physics Olympiad team pose during the closing ceremony of the 56th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO) in Bucaramanga, Colombia, on July 12, 2026, after winning three gold and two silver medals.

● IRNA

vide equal opportunities for scientific growth. The International Physics Olympiad is regarded as one of the world's most prestigious science competitions, testing participants through two demanding five-hour examinations in theoretical and experimental physics designed to assess analytical thinking, scientific creativity and problem-solving skills. Iran's latest success also marked an improvement on its performance at the 2025 IPhO in Australia, where the national team collected two gold, three silver and one bronze medal to finish 12th overall.



The result extends a strong run for Iranian students in international academic competitions. Earlier this month, Iran claimed the overall team championship at the International Mathematics Summer Camp in China after winning four

gold and two silver medals, highlighting the continued success of the country's young scholars in global science Olympiads and reinforcing Iran's reputation for producing top-performing students in mathematics and physics.

Historic prayer niche unearthed at listed Pasargadae caravanserai



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian conservators uncovered a historic prayer niche (mihrab) during restoration work at the UNESCO-listed Mozaffari Caravanserai in Pasargadae, opening a new chapter in the study of the site's architectural evolution and religious history, Abdolmajid Abedi, head of Pasargadae's Office of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said on July 12. The discovery was made as conservation crews carried out restoration work at the centuries-old caravanserai, part of the UNESCO-inscribed Persian Caravanserai serial property, CHTN reported. Abedi said the structure was immediately documented under scientific conservation proto-

cols to preserve its architectural and historical integrity. "This remarkable find stands out for its architectural design, construction techniques and artistic features," Abedi said. "It can provide valuable evidence about the site's religious past, historical transformations and the evolution of its architecture." He said teams of archaeologists, conservation specialists and architectural experts have launched detailed studies to determine the mihrab's construction period, original function and role within the caravanserai's spatial layout. The work includes comprehensive documentation, condition assessment, comparative research and technical analysis. Preliminary examinations indicate that the craftsmanship and decorative elements reflect a high level of technical expertise, suggesting the structure once occupied a prominent place within the historic complex, Abedi said. Emergency conservation, continuous monitoring and scientific documentation are underway in line with national and international heritage conservation standards. The findings of the ongoing research will be released after experts complete their studies, potentially shedding fresh light on the cultural and architectural history of one of Iran's UNESCO-listed heritage sites.

Isfahan researcher wins silver at IFIA Geneva Innovation Competition for AI tourism platform

Social Desk

An Isfahan tourism researcher won a silver medal at the 6th International Invention and Innovation Competition, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from July 3 to July 5, for developing an artificial intelligence platform designed to modernize tourism services. Ehsan Aghajanirizi received the award for NASTE AI, an AI-powered smart tourism platform, at the competition organized by the International Federation of Inventors' Associations (IFIA), which brought together innovators from around 50 countries. Davoud Abyan, deputy head of tourism at Isfahan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said the platform demonstrates how artificial intelligence can reshape destination management and strengthen tourism services. "Using AI in tourism is no longer optional," he said, adding that advanced technologies

can enhance marketing, digital content creation, and visitor guidance while improving the overall travel experience. Abyan described the IFIA competition as a globally recognized event judged under international standards, saying the award helps showcase Isfahan's technological capabilities alongside its cultural heritage. He said AI applications should increasingly underpin tourism management, from travel planning and event organization to hospitality, transportation, and inbound tour operations. Integrating AI specialists with tourism managers, he added, would improve services for international visitors and reinforce tourism diplomacy. Home to more than 22,000 historical and architectural sites, Isfahan remains one of Iran's leading cultural tourism destinations, with its rich tangible and intangible heritage providing a strong foundation for adopting next-generation tourism technologies.

Alamut fortress complex clears key ICOMOS review ahead of UNESCO decision

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's nomination of the Alamut Castle and its related fortifications cleared a major hurdle on the path to UNESCO World Heritage inscription, with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) endorsing the property's Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity, integrity, and management framework ahead of the upcoming World Heritage Committee meeting in Busan, South Korea, according to the director of the nomination dossier. Mohammad Hassan Talebian, who leads the UNESCO nomination, said ICOMOS had recommended the property under Criterion (iii) of the World Heritage Convention, recognizing the serial site as an exceptional testimony to the cultural traditions of the Nizari Ismaili state between the 11th and 13th centuries. He said the technical evaluation also endorsed the site's conservation plans, restoration methods, monitoring system, tourism strategy, and community participation, significantly strengthening its prospects for inscription. The nomination brings together seven interconnected castles and fortifications: Alamut Castle,



Lambsar, Ilan, Shirkuh, Navizar Shah, Qostin Lar, and Shams Kalayeh. Although physically separate, Talebian said they functioned as an integrated mountain defense and governance network linked through visual, structural, and operational connections across the Alamut Valley. "Comparative studies found virtually no parallel for the Alamut fortification network," Talebian said, adding that the ensemble preserves a rare combination of military engineering, territorial defense, water management, agriculture, governance, and cultural life within a single cultural landscape. Perched atop a steep rocky outcrop, Alamut Castle served as the political, administrative, intellectual, and religious center of the Nizari Ismaili state, while the surrounding fortresses safeguarded communication routes and reinforced the broader defensive

system. Talebian said the mountain strongholds incorporated sophisticated water storage systems, reservoirs, tunnels, watchtowers, and defensive structures designed in harmony with the rugged Alborz landscape, where the natural terrain itself became part of the defensive architecture. He described the nearly 2,000-square-kilometer cultural landscape as extending beyond the castles to include villages, farmland, orchards, and water-based agricultural systems that sustained the region's economy and society. Calling the nomination one of Iran's most technically demanding World Heritage dossiers, Talebian said years of archaeological research, documentation, conservation work, and multidisciplinary field studies in the remote Alborz Mountains laid the foundation for the submission. "The Alamut complex stands not only as an outstanding example of advanced military engineering, but also as a center of governance, scholarship, and cultural achievement in Iranian and Islamic history," he said. "The final decision now rests with UNESCO's World Heritage Committee."

'Shelter' gives 26 Iranian artworks new home in Oman

Arts & Culture Desk

Eighteen Iranian artists will showcase 26 works in the 'Shelter' Online Group Exhibition, opening in Oman on July 14, according to the event's media office, in a cultural initiative aimed at expanding Iranian visual arts and handicrafts to regional audiences. Organized by the Aytist Art Group in partnership with Oman's Rawad

Al-Tijarah Al-Intaj Al-Alami" Institute, the virtual exhibition is curated by Iranian painter and Aytist director Aynaz Zarei. The event, scheduled to run through July 19, brings together artists working across contemporary visual arts and traditional handicrafts, reflecting the breadth of Iran's artistic heritage through a digital platform. "The exhibition creates a new space

for Iranian artists to engage with audiences beyond national borders," Zarei said, adding that Panah seeks to present diverse artistic voices while strengthening cultural dialogue through art. The exhibition features works by 18 Iranian artists, including Atousa Absalan, Babak Zirak, Kiomars Pilechian Langroodi, Mahboobeh Rastegari, Mehdi Fayeze, Sara Kian, and Zahra Navabi.