

Iranian students collect 10 medals at global math, economics Olympiads

Social Desk

Iranian students won a combined 10 medals at the 2026 International Mathematical Olympiad and the International Economics Olympiad in China, earning two gold, two silver and six bronze medals, while also receiving the competition's highest finance score, according to Iran's Education Ministry. The latest results showed another strong showing for Iran in two of the world's most prestigious academic contests, with students excelling in advanced mathematics, economics and finance against top competitors

from more than 100 countries. Iranian students also claimed the overall team championship at the 67th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO 2026), finishing with two gold and one silver and three bronze medals. The IMO 2026 was held from July 10 to 21 in Shanghai. Ali Joonbakhsh claimed and Alireza Sharifi claimed gold, Seyed Amirhossein Tayyeb won silver and Arsha Azizeddin, Radin Nik Eghbali, and Arian Zandi each took bronze. At the 9th International Economics Olympiad, staged in Shenzhen from July 12 to 20 with more than 270 students



representing 54 countries, Mobin Karimi Dizicheh captured a silver medal and posted the highest score in the finance section, earning the event's top finance award.

Mohammadhossein Rahimi-Nejad, Alireza Atashi and Ehsan Zolfaghari each received bronze medals, while Amirreza Nematollahi was awarded an honorary diploma. "This distinction reflects excellence in finance as well as economics," organizers said in announcing Karimi Dizicheh's performance after he recorded the highest mark in the finance competition. The economics team built on last year's success at the 2025 International Economics Olympiad in Azerbaijan, where Iran won two silver and two bronze medals.

The latest achievements extend a series of strong international performances by Iranian students this year. Earlier this month, the country's chemistry and biology teams won eight medals, including three golds, at the International Chemistry Olympiad in Uzbekistan and the International Biology Olympiad in Lithuania. Iran's physics team also secured three gold and two silver medals at the 56th International Physics Olympiad in Colombia, reinforcing the country's sustained presence among the world's leading academic Olympiad contenders.

Direct Tehran-Minsk flights to revive bilateral tourism



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Belarus are moving to revive bilateral tourism by paving the way for direct flights between Tehran and Minsk, officials said at a tourism cooperation meeting in Tehran on Sunday, as both countries push to implement a tourism agreement signed by their presidents during Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Minsk in August 2025. The meeting brought together Belarusian Ambassador to Tehran Dmitry Koltsov, officials from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, the Foreign Ministry, the Iran Chamber of Commerce, lawmakers, tour operators and tourism executives, who stressed the need to translate strong political ties into tangible cooperation in the travel sector. "The Islamic Republic of Iran views tourism as one of the most effective tools of international diplomacy," said Moslem Shojaei, director general of the ministry's Office of International Tourism Marketing and Development. He emphasized that expanding tourism relations with Belarus "should be driven by the private sector," while the government provides the necessary framework for cooperation. Shojaei noted that Belarus has been designated as one of Iran's target tourism markets and that Belarusian citizens have been able to visit Iran without visas since 2023. He also proposed establishing a joint technical tourism committee and invited Belarusian travel companies to participate in an upcoming gathering of international tour operators in Iran. A major breakthrough appears to be within reach after Belarus completed the regulatory steps required for direct air services. "Following Mahan Air's trial flight two years ago, the Civil Aviation Department of Belarus has issued all the necessary permits for direct flights," Ambassador Dmitry Koltsov said. "Iranian airlines can now launch the route." Koltsov said the tourism cooperation agreement signed during President Pezeshkian's visit to Minsk is now entering the implementation stage, with the relevant organizations working to put the required infrastructure in place. "We can expect to witness real growth in tourism between Iran and Belarus," he said. Mostafa Mousavi, head of the Tourism Commission at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, described the absence of direct flights as the biggest obstacle to expanding tourism and broader economic ties. He said stronger tourism exchanges could also stimulate trade, investment and business cooperation, proposing joint working groups on aviation connectivity, travel package development and medical tourism. Koltsov also encouraged Iranian tour operators to attend Belarus' annual international tourism exhibition, saying the event would provide "a good starting point" for expanding cooperation between tourism businesses in the two countries.

SCO film festival hands two acting awards to Iranian cinema

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinema emerged among the standout winners at the fourth Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) International Film Festival after the Iran-Tajikistan co-production 'Fish on the Hook' captured the festival's Best Actor award and Iranian actress Shabnam Ghorbani won Best Actress for her performance in 'The Gambler'. The awards were presented at the closing ceremony on July 19 at the Ruh Ordo Cultural Center in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, capping the four-day festival held on the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul from July 16 to 19. The event brought together filmmakers, actors, producers and screenwriters from eight Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states to show-

case films and expand regional cinematic collaboration. The international jury jointly awarded the Best Actor prize to Khurshid Mustafayev and Abdullo Abdurahimzoda, the lead actors of 'Fish on the Hook'. Directed by Muhiuddin Muzaffar, the film is a co-production of Tajikfilm, Tajikistan's Dov Film, and Iran's iFilm and SiKAAP Film, underscoring growing cinematic cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan. Ghorbani received the festival's Best Actress award for her role in the social mystery thriller 'The Gambler'. Unable to attend the ceremony, director Mohsen Bahari accepted the award on her behalf. On stage, Bahari dedicated the Golden Crane award to the memory of the 168 students and teachers killed in Minab.

Produced by the Farabi Cinema Foundation, 'The Gambler' has now won awards at international festivals in North Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan. 'Fish on the Hook' follows a 10-year-old boarding school boy who embarks on a cross-country journey through Tajikistan with a gambler in search of his mother, weaving together themes of hope, human dignity and personal transformation. The film has continued to build momentum on the international festival circuit, winning the top prize at Russia's Zabaikalsky International Film Festival earlier this year after claiming the Grand Prix at Tajikistan's National Cinema Awards in 2024. The festival's Grand Prix, the Golden Crane, went to Kyrgyz director Aktan Arym Kubat for



'Black, Red, Yellow'. Other winners included China's Lan Hongchun for Best Director with 'Dear You', Kazakhstan's Azat Khakimov for Best Screenplay with 'Autumn Breeze', Russia's Sergey Astakhov for Best Cinematography with 'Angels of Ladoga', Belarus' Olga Reshetnikova for Best Editing with 'One for Two', and Kasym Muinzoda for Best Music for 'The Great Amir and Donna Anna'.

Historic Chehel Sotoun columns show structural deformation after blast damage

Arts & Culture Desk

Structural engineers confirmed deformation and buckling in several columns of the UNESCO-listed Chehel Sotoun Palace in Isfahan following extensive post-war assessments, the site's director said, as conservation experts moved ahead with emergency stabilization plans while preparing a long-term restoration program. Mostafa Hadipour, director of the Chehel Sotoun World Heritage Site, said high-precision surveys carried out by consulting engineering firm Emarat-e Khorshid (sun mansion) formally verified that columns surrounding the palace's central reflecting pool had shifted, while structural damage was also identified along the building's southern rear wall, IRNA reported. "The deformation has now been technically confirmed," he said, adding that emergency reports and conservation studies have been submitted to Tehran to support the next phase of restoration. The Safavid-era pavilion, one



of Isfahan's architectural masterpieces, sustained damage after blast waves from attacks on the nearby Safavid Government House compound during the 40-day war. Hadipour said specialists began monitoring the monument immediately after the explosions, documenting progressive cracking and a gradual deviation in the central columns. "Daily photographic monitoring showed that the cracks were advancing and the columns were gradually shifting," he said. Temporary stabilization measures, including protective shoring, crack monitoring, non-destructive testing and three-dimensional documentation, are already underway. Hadipour said the comprehensive reinforcement project will begin once funding is secured,

while engineers continue evaluating whether the affected columns require dismantling or can be strengthened in place using less invasive techniques. Faramarz Parsi, head of the restoration consulting team, said the columns are not in immediate danger of collapse but require detailed structural modeling to safeguard the monument over the long term. He compared the proposed conservation approach to minimally invasive surgery, saying modern engineering techniques would allow restorers to reinforce the structure while preserving its historical authenticity. "We no longer need to dismantle the columns completely. Today's technology allows us to strengthen them with minimal intervention," he said. According to provincial cultural heritage authorities, 28 historic monuments across Isfahan were damaged during the attacks, including sites within the protected buffer zones of Naqsh-e Jahan Square and the UNESCO-listed Chehel Sotoun Palace.

Iran's ground superiority ...

The IRGC confronted them inside the Strait of Hormuz, while the Army engaged them 20 kilometers from Bandar Abbas. They suffered heavy losses in these clashes.

The reason US media are now reporting around 35 deaths and more than 200 wounded is largely these direct confrontations, which resulted in such a high number of casualties. But they have concealed the figures because they know that if the news gets out in the United States, there will be an uproar. Such an operation would also have no impact on the situation in the Strait of Hormuz. Everyone agrees on this. Even JD Vance said a few days ago that the Strait of Hormuz cannot be reopened by force. A bomb can be placed even on a toy drone and used to attack a ship passing through the strait. Commercial vessels would then not dare to pass through it. The strait must be reopened through a political agreement, in calm and peace, not through aggression.

Given the potential for US military casualties in the event of a ground or amphibious operation, what impact could such a scenario have on public support in the United States and on Donald Trump's political legitimacy at home? If Trump were to commit such an act of madness, it could perhaps be described as the final blow to the political future of Trump and anyone who supports him.