



Russian Orthodox Patriarch praises Leader's message, backs closer religious ties

Arts & Culture Desk

Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, hailed as "valuable" a message from Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, after receiving it from Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali during a meeting at his residence. Jalali delivered the message and thanked Patriarch Kirill for sending separate messages offering condolences over the martyrdom of former leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and congratulations following the election of his successor IRNA reported on Friday. Ayatollah Khamenei was assassinated at the age of 86 in an airstrike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war on Iran, along with a number of senior military commanders. His son, Mojtaba, was wounded in the attack and was elected as Iran's third Leader by the Assembly of Experts on March 8. A delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church attended Ayatollah Khamenei's funeral in Tehran in early July. Patriarch Kirill said members of the delegation had reported receiving a warm welcome from both Iranian of-

ficials and ordinary citizens. "This reflects the closeness between Iran and Russia, as well as the closeness between the followers of Islam and Christianity," Patriarch Kirill said. Expressing deep sorrow over the suffering and killings in different parts of the world, including the Iranian nation's confrontation with their enemies, the Patriarch said he prayed for peace and security in the region and especially for the well-being of the Iranian people, "who are standing firm and resisting." The cleric commended dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and Iran's Islamic denominations, as well as the work of the two countries' joint commission, and called for the talks to continue. "Russian Christians today enjoy good relations with Iran's Islamic community... The Russian Orthodox Church and Iran's Muslims share close and common positions on various issues, including moral values, the role of religion in everyday life, family relations and family issues," he said. The top clergyman also stressed the importance of bolstering religious, academic and scientific cooperation



Iranian Ambassador in Russia Kazem Jalali (2nd R) gives a book to Patriarch Kirill (2nd L), head of the Russian Orthodox Church, during a visit in Moscow on July 31, 2026.
● ORTHODOX TIMES

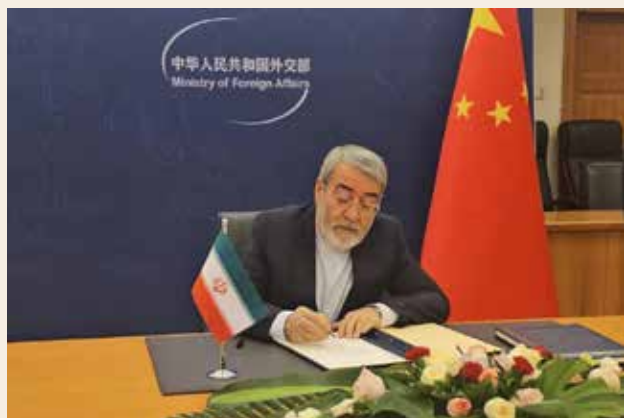
between Iran and Russia. "In light of the close relations between our two countries, there is a good opportunity to exchange views on bilateral ties," he added. Jalali express gratitude to the Russian government, people and the Russian Orthodox Church for expressing sympathy with Iran following the "criminal aggression" by the United States and Israel and the assassination of the former leader. "They believed that by assassinating our leader and military commanders they would take over our country. But it can be said that Iran experienced a rebirth after these events, and that reality was reflected in the magnificent farewell and funeral ceremonies for the martyred leader," the envoy said. He added that Iran was "standing up to" aggression in line with its moral, humanitarian and Islamic principles. Elsewhere in his remarks, Jalali said



the 12 rounds of dialogue between Islam and Orthodox Christianity had produced constructive results and announced Tehran's readiness to host the 13th round of the talks. At the end of the meeting, the ambassador presented Patriarch Kirill with

the Persian translation of "Freedom and the Sense of Responsibility," a book originally published in Russian by the Patriarch and translated and published by the Centre for Interfaith Dialogue of Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Iran joins founding members of global AI cooperation body launched by China



The photo published by ISNA on July 31, 2026 shows Iran's Ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli signing a document in Beijing that makes the country a founding member of an international AI organization launched by China.
● ISNA

Social Desk

Iran has become a founding member of the newly established World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) after signing its founding charter, with Tehran saying it aims to play an active role in promoting international cooperation on AI. Iran's Ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli inked the founding document on behalf of the Iranian government, formally placing Iran among the founding members of the organization, ISNA reported on Friday. After signing the charter, Rahmani Fazli met Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin and stressed the importance of multilateral cooperation in shaping the future of advanced technologies. "Iran is ready to play an active role in the scientific,

research and practical development of AI, as well as in creating international mechanisms for the fair use of this technology," the envoy said. He added that by joining the international initiative as a founding member, Iran was pressing ahead with its approach of constructive engagement in emerging technologies and using the potential of AI to promote sustainable development and social progress. The World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization (WAICO) was set up on July 16 at the initiative of China on the sidelines of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai. Under its founding charter, the WAICO is an independent intergovernmental organization headquartered in Shanghai that aims to promote international cooperation in AI, strengthen global

governance of the technology and ensure its healthy, safe and fair development. Iran established the Headquarters for the Development of AI Technology and Applications in May last year to coordinate policymaking and expand the use of AI in the country. Earlier this week, Emadeddin Fatemizadeh, head of the headquarters' secretariat, said Iran's ranking for AI adoption had improved from 93rd at the end of 2024 to 76th in 2026. Fatemizadeh said Iran ranked within the world's top 20 in AI research, but the technology's penetration across government institutions remains below expectations. "Iran's position in AI research is between 12th and 18th, but we do not have a satisfactory situation in the operational use of this technology across government bodies," he said. He added that expanding the operational use of AI would require cooperation between government agencies, knowledge-based companies and end users.

Ancient Gate of Parseh to become museum site with Italian assistance



● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian and Italian experts are coming together to restore the ancient Tol-e Ajori archaeological site near Persepolis and convert it into a museum site that will open the remains of what archaeologists believe was the gateway to the ancient city of Parseh to visitors, local cultural heritage officials said, IRNA reported on Friday. Tol-e Ajori, located about 3 km west of the UNESCO-listed Persepolis complex in Iran's southern Fars province, contains the remains of a monumental Achaemenid gateway regarded by archaeologists as the entrance to the ancient city of Parseh, one of the ceremonial capitals of the Achaemenid Empire. Known from archaeological and historical evidence as the Gate of Cyrus or the Gate of Parseh, the structure is believed to have been built before the Persepolis terrace and to have served as the main entrance to the city. Archaeologists believe it was probably constructed during the reign of Cyrus because its design incorporates Babylonian

art and architectural elements. According to historical findings, the structure measured at least 33 by 33 meters and was built using thousands of glazed bricks. Alireza Askari Chaverdi, an archaeologist at the University of Shiraz, said Tol-e Ajori occupied a special place in the cultural project "From the Gate of Parseh to the Gate of All Nations" because it served as the entrance to the civilization of Parseh and linked the Achaemenid Empire with Mesopotamia. Chaverdi said archaeological excavations at the site had been completed and restoration plans had been sent to Italian counterparts for final approval. He said that once the restoration plans were finalized, work would get under way on a protective structure around the site and on tourist access routes. "The project will be carried out in three phases covering structural calculations, design and construction," Chaverdi said, adding that technical specialists from Iran, particularly the Fars Province Construction En-

gineering Organization, would also take part to help convert the site into a museum as quickly as possible. The Fars Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts is working with the provincial Construction Engineering Organization to turn Tol-e Ajori into a museum site accessible to visitors, according to IRNA. Farzad Zarei, acting head of public relations at the Fars Department of Cultural Heritage, said on Thursday that the engineering organization would cooperate in the design and construction of the Tol-e Ajori museum site. Speaking after a group of engineers visited the site, Zarei said the cooperation would draw on the province's technical expertise in structural engineering, tourism planning and lighting design. He added that the joint effort would create infrastructure to support sustainable tourism development in Fars province while paving the way for better protection and presentation of the region's archaeological heritage.