



Pezeshkian calls students Iran's main national asset

Modern education set to focus on 'practical skills, creativity, problem-solving'

Social Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday described students as Iran's "main reserves" and the country's future builders as he inaugurated the country's first smart police boarding high school in Tehran, calling education the most vital issue for Iran's future. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Sepahbod Shahid Mohammad Bagheri Educational and Cultural Complex, Pezeshkian said Iran's education system must move beyond conventional schooling and equip students to turn scientific knowledge into practical capabilities, president.ir reported.

"Our students and children are our main assets," Pezeshkian said. "If their talents are allowed to flourish, we will never bow before our enemies."

The president said natural resources such as oil, gas and mineral deposits were discoveries and achievements of humanity, while Iran's true reserves were its students. A transformed education system, he argued, could help young people become problem-solvers and contributors across every field.

"We must educate students in a way that enables them to turn their scientific abilities into action," he said.

Pezeshkian stressed that quali-



ty education should encompass teamwork, problem-solving, effective communication and man-

agement, alongside academic instruction. Developing such skills, he said, would foster dynamic and



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during the inauguration of the country's first smart police boarding high school, in Tehran, Iran, September 5, 2026. ● president.ir

creative minds capable of moving beyond routine approaches. He also called for closer coordination among government bodies and greater cross-sector cooperation to support Iran's development. "For building Iran and achieving progress, our thoughts and ideas must be aligned," he said, urging institutions to pool their expertise and make fuller use of the country's intellectual capacity.

Pezeshkian said the newly opened complex should not be viewed simply as a school building, but as part of a broader effort to modernize education and maximize the use of educational infrastructure. Referring to the recent war, the president condemned what he described as an "inhumane and anti-human" assault by the United States and Israel, saying no words could fully convey the gravity of the actions.

He stressed that Iran's future depended on cultivating a generation with knowledge, skills, creativity and a commitment to serving the country. "Our children are the builders of tomorrow," Pezeshkian said.

Soltaniyeh Dome restoration begins as 14-hectare site set for revival

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts for Zanjan Province has announced the launch of a restoration and revitalization program for the Soltaniyeh Dome, the world's largest brick dome, saying funding has been earmarked for restoring the dome itself and rehabilitating and revitalizing the 14-hectare grounds surrounding the World Heritage site.

Mikaeil Mousavi, speaking to Iran Daily, said funds were set aside for the restoration and revitalization of the Soltaniyeh complex during last year's visit



Mikaeil Mousavi

by the president to Zanjan Province, as well as during the visit by the minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Implementation of the project began this year.

He added that provincial funding will also be used to restore the Soltaniyeh Dome. The provincial governor's office has also contributed to the project, allocating funding from its urban regeneration budget to revitalize, upgrade and prepare the grounds surrounding the World Heritage site. Mousavi said the Soltaniyeh Dome occupies a site of about 14 hectares and that the restoration plan covers both the monument itself and its surrounding grounds.

"Our plan is not limited to restoring the structure itself. We also intend to rehabilitate and revitalize the grounds so they can better serve both tourists and local residents," he said.

As part of the restoration plan, the dome itself will undergo conservation work, while a large wooden door will be installed on the eastern side of the structure to serve as an entrance for visitors. Measuring approximately 3 by 9 meters, the door is intended to help organize visitor access and the circulation route through the site.

Mousavi also referred to archaeological excavations carried out on the eastern side of the Soltaniyeh Dome, saying the areas uncovered during those excavations will be restored and organized so that the archaeological features identified there can be preserved, revitalized and prepared for public viewing.

"The eastern wall of the complex will also be restored," he said, adding that efforts are being made to organize these sections in a way that allows visitors to make better use of the complex.

Restoration of large inscription beneath the dome

Mousavi identified the large inscription beneath the dome as another important component of the restoration project.

"There is a large inscription beneath the Soltaniyeh Dome that requires restoration, and this section has also been included in the conservation plan," he said. The dome stands approximately 48 meters high, presenting particular challenges for restoration work on the inscription and other elevated sections of the interior. Scaffolding is currently installed inside the dome.

Mousavi said one of the priorities emphasized by the minister of Cultural Heritage is to accelerate restoration work and remove the scaffolding as soon as possible in order to improve the appearance and visual quality of the complex's interior.



Revitalizing 14-hectare Soltaniyeh grounds

Mousavi also outlined plans to revitalize the 14-hectare grounds surrounding the Soltaniyeh Dome, saying the work will be carried out in cooperation with the provincial governor's office and Soltaniyeh Municipality. The governor's office has allocated funding for the project from its urban regeneration budget. In cooperation with the municipality, officials are working to rehabilitate the 14-hectare site and prepare it for public use. Mousavi said part of the grounds could eventually be converted into an urban park, noting that the Soltaniyeh Dome complex is located within the city. "Rehabilitating these grounds will not only contribute to tourism but also have a significant impact on the city's appearance and urban landscape," he said. He described the revitalization of the grounds as a demand of both Soltaniyeh residents and visitors to the site.

"Our goal is to turn this historic space, in addition to preserving its heritage value, into an appropriate environment for residents and tourists," Mousavi said. He added that visitors should not come to the complex solely to see the dome itself. The surrounding grounds should also offer an attractive setting for recreation, walking and sightseeing.

Restoration work gets under way

Mousavi said the groundwork

for implementing the project has already been completed.

"Preparatory work has begun, and implementation of the plans to restore the dome itself and rehabilitate the grounds is also being pursued," he said. He added that the necessary coordination with the municipality had been completed regarding the grounds and that officials are now awaiting the release of the funding earmarked by the provincial governor's office.

Once those funds are provided, he said, work to revitalize the grounds can move forward more quickly.

Mousavi expressed hope that, with the remaining funding secured and continued cooperation among the relevant agencies, restoration of the dome and revitalization of the 14-hectare grounds would proceed satisfactorily and be completed and opened to the public by next year.

Soltaniyeh Dome: Zanjan's world heritage landmark

Mousavi concluded by underscoring the significance of the Soltaniyeh Dome, describing it as one of Zanjan Province's most prominent historic monuments and one of Iran's most important architectural landmarks.

"As a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, it belongs to all the people of Iran as well as the global community," he said.

He stressed that the Cultural Heritage authorities are seeking, through restoration work and the rehabilitation of the surrounding grounds, to create conditions in which the Soltaniyeh Dome can be visited and experienced more fully and in a manner befitting its historic and global significance.

Iran broadens UNESCO bid for Persian mosque heritage ahead of 2027 submission

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has expanded its proposed UNESCO World Heritage nomination for the country's historic mosques, with 17 provinces now seeking to put forward sites and the submission targeted for 2027, Alireza Izadi, director general of the Office for Registration and Protection of Historic and Natural Heritage, said.

UNESCO added the "Persian Mosque" serial nomination to Iran's Tentative List in December 2024, ILNA reported.

The nomination initially began with 26 candidate mosques but has since grown as provinces put forward additional historic sites. Izadi said the delay would allow the Cultural Heritage Ministry to broaden and strengthen the dossier before sending it to UNESCO. "Competition" among provinces has intensified, he said, with Semnan and Borujerd among the areas seeking to include prominent historic mosques in the national nomination.

The expanded approach could turn the dossier into a more comprehensive account of Iranian mosque architecture rather than a limited selection of individual monuments. Izadi said the ministry wants to identify the strongest examples from across the country and present the architectural tradition as a connected historical development.

More than 1,000 mosques nationwide have reportedly been reviewed during the preparation process, with successive rounds of screening narrowing the field. Recent ministry reports have identified 52 mosques across 17 provinces as candidates for consideration.

Semnan's Jameh Mosque is among the newer proposals, alongside Tarikhaneh of



Damghan and the Jameh Mosque of Forumad. In Borujerd, the more than 1,200-year-old Jameh Mosque is also being considered, offering a distinctive example of the architectural transition that followed the advent of Islam in Iran.

The existing UNESCO tentative nomination comprises at least 17 historic mosques, including the Jameh mosques of Fahraj, Saveh, Neyriz, Natanz, Isfahan, Ardestan, Zavareh, Yazd, Gonabad and Nain, as well as Tarikhaneh in Damghan and several major Safavid and Qajar-era mosques. UNESCO describes it as a serial nomination illustrating the development of Persian mosque architecture over centuries.

Izadi said the objective is not simply to secure recognition for a handful of monuments but to showcase the depth of Iranian architectural heritage and its evolution across the Islamic era. "If a mosque meets the necessary criteria," it can be considered for inclusion, he said, stressing that the nomination could ultimately encompass sites from across Iran. The ministry now plans to complete its expanded review and prepare the "Persian Mosque" dossier for submission in 2027, potentially giving UNESCO a broader picture of the country's distinctive mosque-building tradition.