



Pezeshkian calls on gov't to lead toward car-free culture

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called on government bodies to take the lead in launching a "one day a week without cars" initiative, while stressing the need to protect low-income groups during the implementation of the country's gasoline plan. Speaking at a Cabinet meeting in Tehran, Pezeshkian said public institutions, government offices, organizations, and state-owned companies should set the example and help turn the initiative into a broader social movement through sustained public participation. The president also praised the cooperation of citizens, drivers, fuel-station operators, and executive agencies involved in carrying out the gasoline plan. "All of us have a duty to provide the necessary cooperation for the proper implementation of public plans and policies," Pezeshkian said, stressing that the interests and concerns of all stakeholders must be taken into account. He called for measures to prevent undue pressure or losses on different segments of society, particularly dis-

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian chairs a Cabinet meeting in Tehran on September 9, 2026. president.ir

advantaged groups, and emphasized safeguarding their livelihoods. Pezeshkian also urged officials to provide "clear" and accurate information to the public and maintain regular communication with citizens. He said authorities should listen responsibly to public criticism, demands, and concerns and work to address them wherever possible. Ministers and Cabinet members presented updates on the latest measures and programs undertaken by their respective institutions during the meeting. The Cabinet also reviewed a detailed report by the government secretariat on the two-year performance of the 14th administration. The assessment examined the implementation of government programs and the performance of executive bodies during different periods, particularly under conditions arising from the war.



Iran welcomes 2m foreign tourists in five months, Iraqis lead arrivals



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran welcomed two million foreign tourists between March 21 and August 21,

with Iraqi visitors accounting for 56% of arrivals, the deputy tourism minister said during a national pilgrimage tourism meeting in

the holy city of Qom. Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, deputy tourism minister at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, pointed to pilgrimage tourism as a major draw, with many foreign visitors including Iran's holy sites among their travel destinations, IRNA reported. Iran received 7.399 million foreign tourists in the year ended March 20, 2025, Mohseni-Bandpey said. Some 52% of those visitors included pilgrimage tourism as part of their trip. He said the National Pilgrimage Task Force had introduced measures to support and expand the sector,

while efforts were under way to remove obstacles to increasing the country's accommodation capacity. The plans aim to encourage greater investment in hotels and other lodging facilities while ensuring compliance with international standards, he said. Mohseni-Bandpey also outlined a new domestic tourism initiative under which Iranians will receive travel cards with credit limits of up to five billion rials. Accommodation providers and other tourism-related businesses will also be able to tap into the scheme under the planned framework, he said.

'Land of Angels' wins three awards at Kazan film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Babak Khajepasha's 'Land of Angels' won three awards at the 22nd Kazan International Film Festival in Kazan, Russia, including the festival's Grand Prix.

The film also earned the Best Actress award for Solaf Fawakherji and Best Cinematography for Alireza Barazandeh, underscoring its strong showing at the festival, held from Sept. 4 to 8 in the capital of Russia's Republic of Tatarstan, IRNA reported. Written and directed by Khajepasha and produced by Manouchehr Mohammadi, 'Land of Angels' is a joint production of Tasvir Shahr Institute and Soureh Cinema Organization. The film previously emerged as the most decorated entry at the 44th Fajr Film Festival, where it received five



Crystal Simorgh awards and eight Certificates of Merit. Featuring Arab actors, the film presents a human-centered narrative set against war and crisis in Gaza, while drawing on an international cast and production approach. Land of Angels is set to continue its festival run at the sixth edition of the Slemani International Film Festival, where it will compete alongside other international productions. Soureh International is handling the film's international distribution.

China brings together journalists from around world for media exchange

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT

The China International Press Communication Center (CIPCC) opened its second-half 2026 program on Monday at Renmin University of China, bringing together more than 100 journalists from around 100 countries, including Iran, for three and a half months of journalism training, professional exchange and cultural activities. The opening ceremony was hosted by CIPCC Director Yu Lei and featured addresses by senior Chinese officials, including Assistant Foreign Minister Hong Lei, Vice President of the China Public Diplomacy Association Tong

Xiaoling, and Renmin University CPC Committee Secretary Zhang Donggang. Journalists who had previously participated in the CIPCC program also shared their experiences and delivered remarks at the ceremony, including Mark Longyen from Nigeria and Mahendra Subedi from Nepal. Now in its 13th year, the CIPCC program has grown from a small initiative launched in 2014 into an international platform for media professionals from developing countries. The 2026 program, initiated by the China Public Diplomacy Association under the guidance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brings together journalists from Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, Eurasia, the Arab world, and Central and Eastern Europe.

Participants are divided into groups based on five working languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic. According to CIPCC Director Yu Lei, a central aim of the program, alongside introducing China's development and achievements, is to strengthen ties with countries of the Global South and promote greater cooperation in pursuit of shared development. The journalists will live on the Renmin University campus, giving them an opportunity to experience university life while studying at one of China's leading institutions for journalism and communication. The program combines professional journalism training with diplomatic briefings, cultural activities and field trips to provinces and regions

across China. Participants will also undertake internships at major Chinese media organizations, including CGTN, Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily, providing them with first-hand exposure to China's media industry and the way Chinese media organizations operate. Running through mid-December, the program is designed to build professional and personal links between journalists from China and developing countries while encouraging greater cross-cultural understanding and media cooperation.

What it means for Iran

For Iranian participants, the program provides an opportunity to gain a more direct and comprehensive understand-

ing of China's economic, technological and social development and to convey those experiences to Iranian audiences through journalism. It can also contribute to closer media ties between Iran and China by creating direct professional connections between Iranian journalists and their Chinese counterparts. Beyond bilateral relations, interaction with journalists from dozens of other countries provides an opportunity to exchange views on international developments, compare media experiences and develop professional networks across the Global South. Such exchanges can be particularly valuable for Iran as it seeks to deepen its engagement with Asian, African and other developing countries.