



Skilled people are Iran's greatest asset: *President*

Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that Iran's greatest asset was its people, stressing that investment in education and skills training was essential to national development. Pezeshkian made the remarks at a ceremony where he remotely launched 3,851 educational, cultural and sports projects nationwide by the Ministry of Education, IRNA reported. The event was held at Imam Ali Smart School in Eslamshahr, southwest of Tehran. He said the goal of Iran's educational equity initiative should go beyond building schools to improving the quality of

education.

"Schools should help develop a generation that is skilled, creative and responsible, able to cooperate with others, solve problems and contribute to society," he said.

Strengthening practical skills, he added, could help address youth employment challenges and enable young people to play a greater role in tackling the country's problems. Pezeshkian also called for better-equipped schools and improved educational services, saying investments in buildings and equipment would not deliver their full value without trained people able to use them effectively.

He urged provincial officials, Friday prayer leaders, families



President Masoud Pezeshkian (1st R) pays tribute to school children lost their lives in a US missile strike on a primary school in southern Iran earlier this year at an educational center near Tehran on October 17, 2026.

● IRNA

and the public to work together to advance educational equity. He praised charities involved in school construction and called on Iranians to contribute what they could toward improving education. The president highlighted the education system's role in developing the country's specialized workforce and capabilities, stressing the need to pool resources to improve both school facilities and learning outcomes.



Iranian illustrators, authors shortlisted for Swedish festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Five Iranian authors and illustrators, along with a reading-promotion initiative, have been nominated for the 2027 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, an international prize honoring contributions to children's and young adult literature, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Abbas Jahangirian (author) and Amir Shabanipoor (illustrator) were nominated by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Children's Book Council, the Iranian Association of Writers for Children and Young Adults, and the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature nominated other candidates; Atoosa Salehi (author), Hoda Haddadi



(illustrator), and Alireza Goldouzian (illustrator). Jahangirian has more than five decades of experience in fiction writing, playwriting, research and education. Shabanipoor was recognized for his distinctive visual style, creative use of color and composition, and ability to tell stories through illustrations. Alireza Goldouzian is known for his illustration in children's books. He has won several international

awards including the Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2014, 2018 and 2021. Hoda Haddadi, illustrator, began publishing stories in an Iranian young adult magazine in the 1980s and later illustrated books by many prominent Iranian writers for children and young adults. Atoosa Salehi is an award winning, well-known Iranian author. Salehi has written and translated over 90 books and won

numerous awards, such as Book of the Year. The 'Read with Me' project was nominated in the reading-promotion category. 'Read with Me' is a project designed and implemented by the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature, to promote reading for/with disadvantaged children who are generally at risk.

The 2027 award list includes 277 candidates from 80 countries and regions, 85 of them first-time nominees. Established by the Swedish government in 2002 in memory of 'Pippi Longstocking' creator Astrid Lindgren, the award carries a prize of five million Swedish kronor.

A 12-member jury selects the winner, who will be announced on April 6, 2027, during the Bologna Children's Book Fair in northern Italy.

Iran, China seek concrete steps to boost tourism

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and China are discussing new travel packages and improved visitor services to attract more Chinese tourists to Iran, as flight disruptions and other barriers hinder tourism ties, IRNA reported.

Officials and tourism industry representatives met on Friday at the Iranian Embassy in Beijing, to explore avenues to turn cooperation into actual visitor exchanges. Iranian Ambassador Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli highlighted the countries' historical ties along the Silk Road, which carried not only goods but also culture, art, music and traditions. He called for removing barriers and better organizing tourism cooperation, describing China as an important partner and saying both countries sought peace and security in the Middle East. A proposal from Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri also presented during the meeting. It included forming a joint working group for travel agencies and tour operators, developing at least three packages for the Chinese market, arranging familiarization trips for Chinese travel executives and journalists, expanding Chinese-language guide and payment services, and setting targets and deadlines for visitor exchanges.

Chinese tourism representatives said Iran was an attractive destination and that Chinese travelers were interested in



Iranian Ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli (R) addresses a tourism meeting at Iran's diplomatic mission in Beijing, China on October 16, 2026.

● IRNA

visiting.

They cited unstable flight schedules linked to the 40-day US-Israeli war that broke out in late February, the lack of an Iranian tourism promotion office in Beijing and difficulties organizing familiarization tours as key obstacles.

Iranian officials said the country could host 15 to 20 Chinese tour operators in the near future. A ministry representative encouraged them to visit Iran, invoking a Chinese proverb: "Hearing something a hundred times is not as good as seeing it once." The discussions underscored the need for practical improvements in transport, marketing and visitor services to turn interest into actual trips.

Two Iranian novels published in Turkish

Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian religious and historical novels have been translated into Turkish, introducing Turkish-speaking readers to stories rooted in Islamic history and Persian fiction.

'Elena' by Reza Vahid, translated by Musa Denizjan, and 'The Thief and the Prince' by Majid

Mollamohammadi, translated by Aykut Pazarbaşı, were published by Turkish publisher Unsöz in Turkey, Iran's Mehr News Agency reported on Saturday.

'Elena' is set in the early years of Islam and the Byzantine Empire (330-1453). It follows Dihya al-Kalbi, an envoy of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) sent to deliver a letter to Byzantine

Emperor Heraclius. The novel explores themes of justice and human emotion through the intertwined lives of its characters.

'The Thief and the Prince,' published under the Turkish title 'Hırsız ve Şehzade,' blends historical fiction with time travel. It follows Zar'ah, a soldier in the army that martyred Imam

Hussain (PBUH) 14 centuries ago. Zar'ah suffers from an unending thirst. Seeking a cure, he travels to the present day to abduct a boy named Peyman. The boy's escape sets off a series of events in Kufa, in present-day Iraq.

The translations extend the reach of Iranian religious and historical fiction to readers in the Turkish-language market.

