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Veteran Iranian voice actress Nahid Shashaani dies at 77

Arts & Culture Desk

Nahid Shashaani, a veteran Iranian dubbing artist whose voice featured in generations of animated films and television series, has died at the age of 77 after months of illness, Iranian media reported.

Shashaani died on Thursday, November 19. Born in Tehran in 1948, she began her professional dubbing career in 1969 and became known for bringing a range of characters to life in Persian-language versions of foreign productions.

Her best-known roles included the mother of Hutch in the anime series 'The Adventures of Hutch the Honeybee', aunt in an anime series 'Katri, Girl of the Meadows', and Aunt Martha in Japanese anime television series 'Princess Sara'.

Shashaani also worked as a dubbing director, overseeing the Persian versions of 'Spider Man', 'Batman' and 'Woody Woodpecker'. She directed the Persian dubbing of the Australian medical drama television series 'All Saints' for more than 12 years.

She was married to dubbing artist Mehdi Azhir, who died in 1987. The couple married in 1968-1969 and had two daughters, Shila and Sheyda.

In an interview with ISNA in 2018, Shashaani said Shila had followed in her father's footsteps and become a dubbing director, while Sheyda worked as a translator for dubbing productions.

Azhir was known for his ability to voice multiple characters, including animals, in children's cartoons. Shashaani said he could perform as many as 12 characters in a single cartoon, giving each a distinct voice.

The couple also worked together on the Japanese-American animated film 'The Last Unicorn'. Shashaani voiced Molly Grue, while Azhir provided the voice of the talking skeleton. She described the film as their last joint project in cartoon dubbing.

Their work formed part of a long tradition of Persian dubbing that helped introduce international films and animated series to Iranian audiences.



Iranian dubbing artist Nahid Shashaani wears headphones during a voice recording session.
ROKNA

Pezeshkian weighs limits on subsidized energy use



File photo shows gas processing facilities in Asaluyeh, southern Iran, on the Persian Gulf coast.
AP

Social Desk

Iran is considering setting limits on subsidized energy consumption and charging higher rates for usage above those thresholds, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday.

"The government seeks to curb abuses of public subsidies and redirect savings toward household welfare, healthcare and production," he added.

Speaking at a meeting on energy and fuel consumption management, Pezeshkian said sectors that have benefited from very cheap or free energy should face clearly defined limits on subsidized consumption.

Usage within normal consumption patterns would remain eligible for subsidies, while excess consumption would be charged at higher rates under approved tariffs. He said any tariff changes must be based on expert assessments of their economic and social consequences, with safeguards to protect vulnerable households. "The government would prioritize public awareness, changes in consumption habits and improved efficiency rather than relying primarily on price increases," he added.

Pezeshkian estimated that cooperation between the government, households, industries and public institutions could save between $30 billion and $40 billion annually by reducing waste and inefficient energy use.

The funds could then be directed toward improving living standards, providing medicines and medical services, and supporting domestic production.

To illustrate the scale of subsidy abuse, he cited cases including people repeatedly collecting fuel from filling stations in a single day, using subsidized electricity to operate cryptocurrency mining equipment, and individuals buying as much as 18 tons of subsidized bread per month.

The president also pointed to a decline in gasoline consumption and an 18% increase in demand for compressed natural gas (CNG) as results of existing conservation measures. The government has yet to announce specific consumption limits, the sectors covered or a timetable for implementing the proposed changes.

Polymer science puts Iran among global top ten

Social Desk

Iran ranked seventh globally in polymer science by scientific publications in 2025, according to Web of Science data, as researchers seek to turn academic advances into industrial applications despite war and international sanctions.

Mehdi Nekoomnesh, head of the Iranian Polymer Society, announced the ranking at the opening of the 17th International Seminar on Polymer Science and Technology (ISPST 2026) at Amirkabir University of Technology in Tehran.

Iran ranked 10th in polymers and plastics in the SCImago rankings and 12th in total polymer science publications tracked by Web of Science. Another recent report placed it fifth globally.

The three-day conference received 737 papers across 15 subject areas. Of these, 163 were accepted for oral presentations and 495 for posters, following reviews by 278 experts. Around 300 faculty members served on the scientific committee.



HASSAN JABI/IRNA

Morteza Ebrahimi, head of the university's Faculty of Polymer Engineering and Color Technology, said four technical sessions involving industry executives and specialists were included in the program for the first time.

Researchers from Iraq and Oman supported the event, while some Iranian researchers based abroad could not attend because of the war and sanctions. Others took part as keynote speakers.

The conference highlighted artificial intelligence applications in polymer science, the circular economy and advanced polymers with high added value.

Other topics included polymers and composites, nanocomposites, elastomers and polymer synthesis. Submissions included 121 papers on polymers and composites, 88 on polymer synthesis and 33 on artificial intelligence.

Scientific secretary Mehdi Rafizadeh said about 2,800 students study polymer science annually in Iran and more than 24,000 have graduated in the field.

Nekoomnesh said maintaining Iran's scientific standing would depend on sustained investment in research and development and stronger ties between universities, research centers and industry, alongside greater international cooperation.

Italian composer finds bridge between cultures in Iran's music

By Neda Sijani
Staff Writer

INTERVIEW

Italian composer Antonio Papalardo is drawing on Iran's traditional instruments and melodies for a new symphonic work, following an emotional Tehran performance of his oratorio 'Petrus Eni' that left him in tears and reinforced his belief in music's power to bring different cultures and faiths closer together.

The work, performed by the Tehran Symphony Orchestra under conductor Nasir Heydarian at Vahdat Hall, gave Iranian musicians the opportunity to perform the composition in the presence of its creator.

The concert was organized as part of a joint cultural project involving the Rudaki Foundation, the Islamic Culture and Communications Organization and Iran's cultural attaché office in Italy.

The initiative aimed to strengthen artistic and cultural exchanges between the two countries and promote dialogue across religious and cultural traditions.

Composed in 2006 to mark the 500th anniversary of the start of construction of the new St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, 'Petrus Eni' is a symphonic oratorio that traces the life and mission of the Apostle Peter through orchestral and choral music. Its Tehran performance coincided with the 400th anniversary of the basilica's consecration in 1626.

"I have selected some of these instruments and incorporated them into the 'Iran Symphony', which I am now completing," he said. "I have tried to capture and express, through symphonic music, some of the movements, emotions and spiritual qualities of the Iranian people."

The composition will also feature what he described as an unusually beautiful dance, which he has named the 'Dance of the Pistachios'.

The Iran Symphony is part of a collection of 14 works inspired by different nations, including Venezuela, Argentina and Portugal.

Papalardo said he believes local instruments and melodies are essential to capturing the character of a country before translating its musical identity into the symphonic form.

Reflecting on hearing 'Petrus Eni' performed in Tehran, Papalardo said he deliberately refrains from interfering with conductors' interpretations of his scores, allowing each one the freedom to bring their own understanding to the work.



Italian composer Antonio Papalardo holds a decorative vase after the performance of his symphonic oratorio at Vahdat Hall in Tehran on November 18, 2026.
AMIN JALALI/IRNA

"I was deeply moved yesterday. I cannot hide it; I even had tears in my eyes," he said. "I saw that the conductor had understood the genuine Christian emotions I had expressed in my symphony and had conveyed them successfully to the audience."

He said he had been anxious before the concert because he arrived late and had missed the orchestra's final rehearsal.

Unsure what to expect, he was relieved and pleased by the performance of the conductor, choir and professional musicians.

For Papalardo, the concert carried a message that extended beyond music itself.

Recalling a meeting with Iran's ambassador in Rome, he said the ambassador had told him that words were less important than music because musical messages were universal and could be understood by everyone.

"The more we talk, the less we can make ourselves understood; but the more music we create, the better we can communicate with one another," Papalardo recalled the ambassador saying.

He said the message had shaped his own efforts to use music to build connections between nations.

Performing a major work of the Catholic Christian tradition in Tehran, a city in a predominantly Muslim country, was intended to demonstrate the closeness between Muslim and Christian communities.

Papalardo pointed to the Quran's reverence for Jesus Christ as a great prophet and Mary, his mother, as one of the women held in the highest esteem by God.

"There is no reason for separation, distance or estrangement," he said. "We must all stand together and live in peace, respect and solidarity."

Criticizing what he described as the world's war-oriented approach, he contrasted the concert's message with the pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"Trump wants to ride atomic bombs, but with this performance in Iran, we launched a bomb more powerful than the atomic bombs of the experts," he said.

Papalardo also invited Iranian poets, composers and musicians to collaborate with him, saying he was ready to draw inspiration from the country's musical traditions.

"Poets who want to make their homeland, Iran, immortal through their verses can send me their poems, and I will compose music for them," he said.

"I am ready to discover the character of Iranian music, draw inspiration from it and create works that can introduce Iran and its culture to the world."

He said the Iran Symphony was still unfinished and that he was considering making authentic Iranian music an integral part of the composition.