Message to Medal Winners in Science and Sport - 26 /Oct/ 2026

In a message addressed to Iranian elites and international scientific and sporting medal winners, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, highlighted the unique role of talented young people and distinguished achievers in science and sport. He said they embody hope, progress, and vitality across the country. He singled out boundary-breaking scientific achievements by prominent figures in their fields as key to "an ever-stronger Iran." He stressed that, within the framework of the meta-strategy, "Knowledge is Power" (al-ʿilmu sultan), the country's progress requires a profound and accelerating scientific resurgence. Officials must therefore provide the infrastructure and conditions needed for this leap and make full use of these prominent figures' individual capacities and collective wisdom.

The full text of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's message, read this evening by Hujjat al-Islam wal-Muslimin Haj Ali Akbari at the ceremony honouring medallists in science and sport, titled "Patriotic Medal Winners", is as follows:

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

According to one account, these days coincide with the anniversary of the martyrdom of the Leader and Lady of the Women of Paradise, the Truthful and Pure (Siddiqah Tahirah), Fatima al-Zahra (sa). It is remarkable that the date of her martyrdom remains unknown, as does the honoured location where that divine light has been laid to rest. Similarly, on a higher level, her station and dignity are also unfathomable, lying beyond human comprehension. She is an exemplary figure in worship, devotion, and service to God. She is the supreme example in her special, all-encompassing companionship with the Great Prophet (s) and in her valiant defence of the Guardianship (wilayah) of the Commander of the Faithful (as). She is the supreme example in imparting knowledge and teaching; discerning the right moment; rising for truth; steadfastness; and elucidation. She is a first-rate model of patience, sacrifice, selflessness, unrequited service, and solidarity with society. She is a quintessential model as a wife and mother, and in raising children and generating the lineage of the pure Imams (as), the leaders of humanity. She is an exemplar of effort, striving, and struggle, and of purity, refinement, piety, luminosity, and spirituality. In a word, she is a model for all believing women and men. Among the shining virtues of the Fatimid community is that it offers the revolutionary and Muslim nation of Iran a roadmap for great social movements and for its presence in arenas of struggle, jihad, and popular movements. It does the same for the will to progress in scientific fields and for humble, selfless service.

At this historic juncture, our beloved Iran is, above all, a manifestation of determination and hope. Iran's talented, capable, and prominent individuals, along with young people, play an unparalleled role in fostering this hope, advancing progress, and moving towards its bright future. But being at the forefront is not limited to science and technology, sport, or other skills. Any positive, admirable distinction can translate into prominence in the wider world. These days, we are witnessing distinguished people in this land rise to prominence. Those with a broader horizon in view strive to raise the sacred flag of their homeland. These are the vanguards of insight and jihad. We regard people like "Rizali Khajavi" and "Ali Landi" as prominent individuals whose names should be inscribed above the entrances of cultural venues. Among these outstanding members of society, the flowers that bloom are the martyrs and those who sacrificed for the cause. By giving their lives and health, they have left an extraordinary mark on the destiny of Islamic Iran and its beloved people, to whom God has given the medal of servitude.

First, I would like to congratulate all the dear people of our country, and each and every one of you, who have brought honour to Iran through your recent sporting achievements and the numerous awards, medals, and scientific distinctions you won at the Olympiads. These include the Olympiads in astronomy and astrophysics, mathematics, earth sciences, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, artificial intelligence, and the humanities.

I would also like to express my admiration and appreciation for the determination and resolve of those leading the procession of honour and hope, and of those carrying the banner of the country's progress. They include outstanding individuals from every group, ranging from adolescents and young people to coaches, teachers, professors and scholars.

The motivation and hope of prominent individuals for transformation in the country are a blazing flame that I have witnessed, from near and far, over the past years and decades. It is an honour and a source of pride for the entire Iranian nation to see this great, hope-inspiring movement among outstanding people and the country's scientific community, and to see its results in repeated successes in annual championships, Olympiads, and sports. The outstanding rankings our country's hardworking athletes have achieved in recent months and years across various fields, along with new records, testify to their effort, perseverance, determination, and faith.

Through physical exertion and spiritual, moral, and faith-based fortitude, these athletes continually strive to strengthen dear Iran before the eyes of all nations and to show the world the vitality of the proud Iranian nation. The female athletes made the honourable symbol of Iranian women’s dress shine before the world. In their competitions, the medallists bring joy and enthusiasm to the hearts of the Iranian people and lend dignity to the proud flag of Islamic Iran. Each one, to the extent of their role, shares in and helps give meaning to a strong Iran.

As these days are marked by enthusiasm and renewed attention to science and research in universities, seminaries, and schools, I consider it appropriate to offer a brief word on this subject to lovers of knowledge, influential figures of the nation, and the scholars of dear Iran.

Excellence is a divine gift. It rests on talent and intellectual ability, and the Iranian people, especially our young people, possess this immense, God-given blessing.

Reason and servitude to God require that human beings give proper thanks for divine blessings. When gratitude is expressed on all levels: in the heart, through speech, and in action, the path to perfecting that blessing becomes accessible. Recognition and appreciation of the blessing of exceptional talent must begin with the gifted individual and then extend to those around them, including parents, family members, teachers and professors, and ultimately to the school, the university, and the country's governing system. This will enable that potential to develop, grow, and be properly utilised. Accordingly, gifted individuals bear a greater responsibility to demonstrate practical gratitude for this blessing. In addition to developing their own abilities and excellence, they should use their talents as effectively as possible to address the problems facing the country and society. An outstanding person is not someone who, merely by possessing considerable talent and intelligence, regards himself as separate from others and thinks only of his fleeting personal desires. Rather, such a person develops his abilities, sees himself as an effective member of society, and uses his talents and capabilities for both his own advancement and that of his community.

Gifted Iranians have shown that knowledge and talent can solve real problems for both the people and the country. From stem cells, nanotechnology, and biotechnology to advanced aerospace, industry, mining, medicine, agriculture, nuclear, energy, and infrastructure technologies, they have sought to make their science, knowledge, and expertise practical. We see traces of this advancing movement in real life. Examples include: electricity generated by Iranian turbines in power plants; knowledge-based technology in water-desalination plants on the southern islands; flying agricultural drones over farms, orchards, and rice paddies in the north to optimise farming, water, and soil use; the birth of children to families facing infertility through Royan’s advanced technologies; diagnosis and treatment of incurable diseases with radiopharmaceuticals; monitoring land, water, and crops using remote-sensing satellites; and improving productivity and food security through scientific and technological innovations. These are only some examples of this vast and fruitful undertaking. Many others, especially in defence and the military, have repeatedly amazed the world and will continue to do so.

A strong Iran is built on scientific and technological power. This is one of the most important components of Iran's

ability to shape global developments and the emerging world order. Therefore, the key to making Iran ever stronger lies in its elites' ability to push the frontiers of knowledge and devise solutions to the country's scientific problems. The malice and crimes committed by the enemies of Islamic Iran against its scientists and its brightest show the effective role these individuals play in strengthening the country. An enemy that assassinates our prominent scientists and high-profile individuals in their scientific institutions and in their ordinary lives, as it did during the Second and Third Imposed Wars and, indeed, for many years before them, cannot bear to witness Iran's progress and growing power. Such an enemy would use every tool and method at its disposal to weaken Iran's outstanding personalities. These methods range from sowing despair and discouragement to capturing their minds and spirits, absorbing them into the machinery of neo-colonialism, and turning them into mere components of the Western system of plunder and the domination of capital. Yet the enemy remains oblivious to the fact that every drop of blood shed by this nation's martyred elites, scientists, professors, university students and schoolchildren has unleashed, and continues to unleash, a storm of determination and progress.

The Iranian nation remembers its ancient civilisation, its many achievements in science and technology, and the distinguished scholars and scientists of world renown who emerged from its midst. It also remembers the two centuries of severe backwardness and historical passivity under the Qajar and Pahlavi periods. This nation recognises the value of the victorious meta-strategy "Knowledge is Power" (al-ʿIlmu sultan), which has led to the rejection of Western scientific domination and to rapid growth in science and research over the past three decades, driven by these outstanding individuals. Much of this is owed to the special measures and guidance of the great martyred Leader (may God sanctify his pure soul). Until the present time and the Third Imposed War, a renewed scientific resurgence was considered an essential recommendation for the country's scientific circles. The experience of the last two wars has shown that this new scientific surge must be profound and accelerated.

To achieve this objective, officials responsible for scientific, research and technological institutions and centres, together with every prominent scientist and every scholar of our beloved Iran, must devote themselves to their primary mission: building the glorious future of Islamic Iran and contributing to its progress and prosperity.

In this regard, the following points require our attention:

First, the country needs a serious, practical, and precise programme to develop the basic sciences and the humanities. The growth and development of the basic sciences, such as physics, chemistry, the life sciences, and mathematics, form the foundation for other sciences and applied technologies that drive the country's scientific and technological progress. Every nation that has achieved anything has done so through the basic sciences, and a country that fails to develop these disciplines will always fall behind.

Second, we should maintain focus on discovering previously unknown truths, pushing back the frontiers of the basic sciences, and engaging in an ongoing effort to solve the well-known unresolved problems in these disciplines, especially in mathematics. These should be regarded as clear objectives.

Third, creativity and innovation are crucial to a scientific surge. It is also necessary and beneficial to give free rein to creativity and innovation, which are the principal drivers of growth and breakthroughs across most sciences. The same holds for the scientific courage to invent, create and innovate, and for greater personal and national self-confidence to try new and untrodden paths. Offering acceptable and attractive incentives to anyone who can present a workable creative idea will help lay the groundwork for this.

Fourth, self-reliance in solving scientific problems, providing infrastructure, and removing technological bottlenecks to enable activity and engagement beyond our national borders will build the internal strength that opens new horizons worldwide.

Fifth, giving free rein to the talents of elites in the experimental and practical disciplines plays an important role in

applying knowledge and developing elites. This includes connecting industry to the university from the first years of study and facilitating knowledge-based businesses. It also means aligning the country's scientific and technological capacities and strengthening ties between elites and scientific and research centres on the one hand, and knowledge-based companies, industries, and even start-ups on the other.

Fifth: Providing opportunities in experimental and practical disciplines for talented individuals to apply their knowledge and develop their abilities is important. This includes connecting industry with universities from the earliest years of higher education and facilitating the establishment of science-based businesses. Aligning the country's scientific and technological capabilities and strengthening relationships among talented individuals, scientific and research centres, knowledge-based companies, industries, and even start-up businesses can contribute significantly to this objective. Executive bodies should also support the entire process, from knowledge generation to its practical application and consumption. By focusing on the country's major present and future challenges, from water, soil, food and energy to artificial intelligence, these measures can connect and extend the work of professors and students beyond universities and research laboratories, into workshops and factories. A rapid leap forward will become possible when economic benefits and commercial markets for products and services are combined with the motivation and will of these outstanding individuals. This will establish a stable, enduring connection between scientific and research institutions, industry, and the consumer market. In addition, the direct and effective role of outstanding individuals from all theoretical and experimental disciplines, in universities and seminaries, at the levels of planning and policymaking, will greatly advance the country's progress. Officials have a duty to make full use of individual capacities, rationality, and the collective wisdom of committed, talented individuals.

If this path is followed correctly, the centre of gravity of knowledge and its principal hubs, particularly in certain branches of the basic sciences, will gradually shift from Western countries to Iran. In the not-too-distant future, the country will become a leading authority in science and technology. The goal set earlier by our wise martyred Leader (may God elevate his honoured station) that Persian should become one of the world's reference languages of science will then be realised.

God willing, through the blessings of the blood of the martyrs in the fields of intellectual and scientific excellence, and through the benevolent prayers of our Master and Lord (may God Almighty hasten his noble reappearance), a profound and rapid scientific resurgence among the nation's elites and scholars will become a reality.

Seyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei

26th October 2026/4th Aban 1405