

'The Wastetown' set for public release in France



ISNA – 'The Wastetown,' a film directed by Ahmad Bahrami and produced by Reza Moqaddas, is set to be released in French cinemas starting from August 2.

Bahrami was previously honored with the Best Director Award at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival for his exceptional work on 'The Wastetown,' a film that is yet to be released in Iran.

In the meantime, Reza Moqaddas, the producer of 'The Wastetown,' is currently presenting Hadi Mohaqeq's movie 'Scent of the Wind' in French cinemas, which has reportedly attracted an audience of over 20,000 viewers.

Starting a talented cast, including Baran Kosari, Ali Baqeri, and Babak Karimi, 'The Wastetown' features a compelling story set in a remote brick manufacturing factory that uses ancient methods for brick production. The factory employs families from different ethnic backgrounds, and the boss holds the key to resolving their challenges.

The film revolves around Lotfollah, a 40-year-old supervisor born on-site, who acts as a mediator between the workers and the boss. As the boss announces the factory's imminent shutdown, Lotfollah's priority becomes safeguarding Sarvar, the woman he has loved for a long time, from harm.

'The Wastetown' marks Ahmad Bahrami's second feature-length film, following 'The Wasteland,' which received the prestigious Horizons Award at the Venice Film Festival.

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Iran's minister calls for ISESCO's stance on offense to Qur'an

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance has sent a letter to the director-general of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), urging the organization to take an official stance against the desecration of the Qur'an.

Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili wrote to Salim bin Mohammed al-Malik on July 24, expressing concern over the issuance of an official government permit for the burning of the Qur'an in Sweden.

He noted that this regrettable incident took place with the backing of the Swedish government, leading to dissatisfaction among Muslims worldwide. An official position from ISESCO could serve as a formal declaration of protest and dissatisfaction.

Esmaeili added, "I am confident that decisive action will be taken to prevent similar actions in other countries and to promote peace among Islamic nations. Furthermore, the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to host an extraordinary conference of culture ministers from Islamic

countries to discuss unified and coordinated responses to offenses against the sanctity of the Qur'an."

ISESCO is an affiliate of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The organization aims to facilitate coordination, expand educational, scientific, and cultural interactions among Islamic countries, inspired by the principles and teachings of Islam.

ISESCO has signed cooperation agreements with 114 specialized organizations, United Nations agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions.



Iran, Japan discuss potential collaboration in cinematic works

Arts & Culture Desk

In a meeting held at the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), Kenjo Murakami, the chargé d'affaires of the Japanese Embassy in Tehran, and Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam, the CEO of the center, explored possibilities for joint cinematic ventures between Iran and Japan. During the meeting, Murakami highlighted the cultural commonalities between the two nations and praised the interest of many Japanese filmmakers in Iranian cinema.

He commended the artistic achievements of Iranian directors and expressed

hope for continued collaboration in film, animation, and television production, according to ILNA.

Drawing attention to the popular Iranian series such as 'Oshin,' and the animation 'Ganbare, Kickers!,' Murakami expressed his desire to establish an ongoing showcase of Japanese series and cartoons in Iran, reminiscent of the flourishing exchange between the two countries during the 1980s and 90s. He further emphasized Japan's historical and cultural values, deeply rooted in tradition, family, and respect for others' rights and hard work.

Hamidi-Moqaddam acknowledged the

profound cultural ties between Iran and Japan and recalled successful collaborations in the past, citing 'The Wind Carpet' by Kamal Tabrizi as an example of a joint production that captured the cultural affinity of both nations.

Both parties expressed their interest in formalizing contracts and agreements to enhance cooperation in various aspects of filmmaking, including production, distribution, and screening of Iranian and Japanese films at festivals and networks.

Hamidi-Moqaddam underscored Japan's expertise in animation, recognizing its potential to contrib-

ute to the development of animation in Iran, which has already demonstrated considerable talent and capacity.

The meeting participants delved into the shared historical experiences of both nations, including the tragic events surrounding the bombing of Sardasht during World War II. They viewed this common ground as a potential source of inspiration for future joint productions.

Murakami announced the forthcoming visit of a delegation of Japanese diplomats focused on sports and culture, aiming to foster further collaboration in cinema, television, and animation. The dele-



gation plans to explore avenues for cooperation with both the governmental and private sectors in Iran. Additionally, the possibility of organizing film festivals emerged as another potential platform to strengthen ties between Iran and Japan in the realm

of cinema. Both sides expressed optimism that this constructive dialogue would pave the way for fruitful cinematic collaborations between the two nations, enriching the cultural landscape of both countries.

At least 125 tombs discovered at Roman-era cemetery in Gaza

Archaeologists working on a 2,000-year-old Roman cemetery discovered in Gaza last year have found at least 125 tombs, most with skeletons still largely intact, and two rare lead sarcophagi, the Palestinian Ministry of Antiquities said. The impoverished Palestinian territory was an important trading post for civilisations as far back as the ancient Egyptians and the Philistines depicted in the Bible, through the Roman empire and the crusades, Reuters reported.

In the past, local archaeologists reburied findings for lack of funding but French organisations have helped excavate this site, discovered in February last year by a construction crew working on an Egyptian-funded housing project. "It is the first time in Palestine we have discovered a cemetery that has 125 tombs, and it is the first time in Gaza we have discovered two sarcophagi made of lead," Fadel Al-A'utul, an expert at the French School of Biblical

and Archeological Research, told Reuters at the site. One of the two sarcophagi was decorated with images of grapes and the other with dolphins said A'utul, whose organisation is supervising the work with help from French aid agency Premiere Urgence Internationale. "We need funds to preserve this archeological site so that history does not get washed away," he added. A'utul said he hoped the site would become a tourist destination, with a museum

to display the findings. At least 25 engineers and technicians were engaged on Sunday, despite the soaring heat, in digging, clearing the dirt, and preserving the skeletons. They have also been piecing together clay jars found inside some of the graves. "This is unprecedented," said Jamal Abu Reida, General-Director of Gaza's Antiquities Ministry. "It deepens Palestinian roots on this land and shows they date back thousands of years," he said.

