

Minister urges unity, transparency in Fajr Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, emphasized the importance of unity and transparency in the upcoming Fajr Film Festival, calling for a more inclusive and harmonious approach to the event. Speaking at the first meeting of the policy-making council of the 43rd edition of the festival, Salehi noted that the festival should serve as a platform for promoting national unity and solidarity among filmmakers, IRNA reported. Salehi stressed the need to shift away from the approach, which he believes has created a rift between the film industry and decision-makers, and instead adopt a collaborative approach that fosters unity and solidarity among filmmakers. He emphasized that the festival should be a celebration of Iranian cinema, rather than a platform for promoting individual interests. The minister also addressed concerns about the festival's transparency and costs, stating that these issues should be prioritized from the outset. He emphasized that the festival should be faithful to five key aspects: The eco-

nomie, artistic, technological, international, and humanitarian dimensions of cinema. Salehi also discussed the need to rebuild trust with filmmakers who have become disillusioned with the festival, stating that "if we take positive steps, we can regain the trust that has been lost." He acknowledged that there is a deep divide between the film industry and the decision-making bodies, but expressed hope that the festival can help to bridge this gap. The minister also emphasized the importance of promoting Iranian cinema on the international stage, stating that "if we don't connect our cinema to the world, it won't be recognized domestically either." He noted that the world has become a smaller place, and that Iranian cinema needs to be showcased globally in order to be successful at home. Raed Faridzadeh, head of Cinema Organization of Iran (COI), noted that the Fajr Film Festival has maintained its position among the top 14 international film festivals, despite efforts by "the Zionist regime" to undermine Iran's cinematic achievements. Manouchehr Shahsavari, secretary of



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (center) flanked by Head of the Cinema Organization of Iran Raed Faridzadeh (left), and Secretary of the 43rd Fajr Film Festival Manouchehr Shahsavari (right), attend the first meeting of the festival's policy-making council in Tehran on November 18, 2024. IRNA

the 43rd Fajr Film Festival, emphasized the need for a "realistic understanding of change" and a national approach to

the festival. He called for a shift away from a passive approach to culture and towards a more

proactive and inclusive one, stating that "we can't talk about unity without a national approach."

7,500-year-old remains unearthed in western Iran



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A team of archaeologists has made a groundbreaking discovery in the Qeshlaq mound in Kurdistan, western Iran, uncovering remnants dating back to 7,500 years ago. The excavation, led by Mahnaz Sharifi, has shed new light on the region's rich cultural heritage and its connections to neighboring civilizations, ISNA reported. The Qeshlaq mound, which has been partially submerged due to the construction of the Talvar Dam, has yielded a treasure trove of artifacts, including architectural remains, ceramics, decorative beads, and stone tools. The findings suggest that the village of Qeshlaq was inhabited as far back as the fifth millennium BC, with evidence of cultural exchange with the Hajji Firuz and Dalma civilizations. The excavation has also revealed a complex network of trade and cultural exchange between the region and other parts of the ancient world, including the eastern Anatolia and Mesopotamia. The discovery of obsidian stones, for instance, points to

trade links with the Lake Van region in modern-day Turkey. The team has also uncovered evidence of a sophisticated social hierarchy, with the presence of seals and sealings indicating a system of ownership and local exchange networks. The discovery of Ubaid-style pottery, meanwhile, suggests connections with Mesopotamia. However, the excavation has also revealed a darker side to the region's history. The presence of heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, and cadmium in the soil and water, which has been detected in animal bones dating back 7,000 years, may have contributed to the decline and eventual collapse of the village. Sharifi believes that environmental factors, including the presence of gypsum and copper deposits in the region, may have led to the accumulation of toxic substances in the soil and water, making it difficult for the population to thrive. The discovery highlights the importance of considering environmental factors in understanding the rise and fall of ancient civilizations.

Iran's traditional medicine sector holds key to billions

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

Iran boasts an unparalleled capacity for producing herbal medicine, with over 8,000 known plant species, 2,300 of which have medicinal properties, according to Mohammad Hossein Ayati, a member of the School of Traditional Medicine at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. In an interview with Iran Daily reported, Ayati highlighted Iran's rich tradition of traditional medicine, which has a history spanning over 1,000 years and has produced some of the greatest scientists and physicians of all time, including Avicenna. He noted that Iranian traditional medicine was once considered a reference point for medical centers and scientific institutions in Europe, particularly during the 200 years when it was used as a medical reference in European scientific and medical centers. Ayati emphasized that Iran's traditional medicine has the potential to generate significant revenue through herbal medicine exports, but this potential remains largely untapped. He noted that while many countries, such as China, earn about \$30 billion from exporting herbal medicines, Iran's exports in this sector are negligible, with a mere \$500 million in revenue, mostly from the raw sale of saffron. Ayati pointed out that this type of export does not add value to the country's economy, and the profit goes to other countries. He added that some Iranian pharmaceutical companies have started producing herbal medicines, but the country still lacks standards that

meet international criteria, particularly those accepted in European countries. If this issue is addressed, Iran can capitalize on its rich herbal resources to meet a significant portion of the global demand for herbal medicines. Ayati cited the example of Spain, which recently earned over \$1 billion from exporting a single herbal medicine derived from saffron. He also mentioned that countries like China, South Korea, and Japan, which have a rich tradition of traditional medicine, are promoting its use alongside conventional medicine for economic and medical reasons. Ayati highlighted the benefits of traditional medicine, citing its lower risk of side effects compared to conventional treatments, which often involve surgery and chemical drugs. He noted that conventional treatments have not been able to effectively address

many diseases, whereas traditional medicine and herbal remedies offer a safer alternative. Ayati also mentioned a study on mortality rates in the US, which found that medical interventions and pharmaceutical side effects were the third leading cause of death, after cardiovascular and cancer diseases. This, he said, highlights the risks associated with conventional treatments. Ayati emphasized the economic benefits of traditional medicine, noting that conventional treatments are becoming increasingly expensive, whereas traditional medicine and herbal remedies offer a cost-effective alternative. He concluded that Iran needs to tap into its vast potential in herbal medicine production to generate revenue and promote public health.

