

43rd Fajr Film Festival to celebrate regional talents, strengthen private sector partnership

Arts & Culture Desk

The 43rd Fajr Film Festival is set to distinguish itself from previous editions through the increased participation of regional filmmakers, said Manouchehr Shahsavari, the festival's secretary, during the second meeting of the festival's policy council held on Friday. The meeting gathered key figures from the Iranian cinema landscape, including Raed Faridzadeh, head of the Cinema Organization of Iran, and nine council members, to discuss the festival's progress and unique features for this year, IRNA reported. Shahsavari highlighted that, "The presence of young filmmakers and first-time directors from outside Tehran is one of the most significant aspects that set this

year's festival apart from its predecessors." This focus on regional talent not only promises to enrich the festival's offerings but also aims to showcase diverse storytelling from various parts of the country. The festival is characterized by its thematic diversity, which is expected to resonate with a broad audience. Shahsavari also noted the "substantial participation of the private sector," which is playing a crucial role in the festival's organization and promotion, reflecting a growing collaboration between governmental and private entities in Iranian cinema. The policy council meeting also addressed the creation of a unified visual identity across festival cinemas, further enhancing the event's professional presentation.



Book chronicles five centuries of diplomatic ties between Iran, Turkey



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A comprehensive book "Treaties of Iran and Turkey from Ottoman Era to Present (1555-2021)," showcasing five centuries of diplomatic relations between Iran and Turkey through treaties and historical documents was

published by the Turkish National Archives in Istanbul. Ahmad Mohammadi, the Iranian Consul General in Istanbul, met with officials from the Turkish National Archives and the Ottoman Archives Treasury on January 2. During the meeting, a copy of the book was gifted to the Iranian diplomat, IRNA wrote. The book is a treasure trove, containing images of treaties and documents between the two countries over the past five centuries, accompanied by explanations in both Turkish and English. It offers a unique glimpse into the diplomatic history of Iran and Turkey. During his meeting with Sebahattin Bayram, the Deputy Director of the Turkish National Archives in Istanbul, Mohammadi emphasized the im-

portance of cooperation between the two countries in the field of archives and documentation, especially with the designation of 2025 as the year of cultural exchange between Iran and Turkey. Bayram agreed, highlighting the extensive opportunities for collaboration between the two nations in the field of archives and documentation. He welcomed the idea of exchanging expertise and visits between relevant delegations from both countries. The publication of this book is not only of interest to historians and researchers but also to the general public. It showcases how these two nations have interacted over the centuries, and can serve as a symbol of the enduring friendship and cooperation between them.

Isfahan handcraft exports reach \$7.6m in 9 months

Iran's Isfahan Province reported a total of \$7.6 million in handcraft exports within the last nine months of the current Iranian calendar year. According to Nourullah Abdollahi, the official responsible for handcraft affairs in Isfahan, the province managed to export \$15 million worth of handcraft products in the previous Iranian calendar year. The figures reflect the growing prominence of Isfahan's handcraft industry both domestically and internationally, IRNA reported. Of the 602 handcrafts identified worldwide, 299 are found in Iran, with 200 of those being located in the historically significant and artistic province of Isfahan. This makes the province a strong player in the global handcraft market, as it has been able to establish a flourishing presence in other countries. Recently, a memorandum of understanding was signed between



Isfahan Province and Tehran Customs to streamline the process of exporting handcrafts. Additionally, a specialized center has been established in Isfahan to facilitate the export of these products, which are renowned for their historical and artistic value. Moreover, Isfahan Province has a vibrant community of 700 artisans, who are actively engaged in producing and exporting handcrafts. During the past four years, 40 of these artisans have received certification for their products, further enhancing the reputation of the province's handcraft industry.

Iran, Russia to ...

According to Zakharova and other Russian officials, this agreement includes collaborations in energy, transportation, industry, agriculture, and culture, potentially marking a turning point in the relations between the two countries. It will also include bilateral cooperation in media, education, space exploration, and a joint banking payment system—areas where both countries are currently under pressure and sanctions. Amidst all these aspects, however, Russia's investment in Iran's energy and transportation sectors will be the most crucial element of this strategic agreement. In the transportation sector, although Iran and Russia have both open and closed corridor files, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is the most significant among them. This corridor was established through an

agreement signed in September 2000, aimed at creating a commercial and strategic route between India and Europe, with the cooperation of both Russia and Iran. According to Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, the details of this corridor's implementation will be signed alongside the comprehensive agreement and several other documents during the upcoming presidential visit. The roadmap that Iran and Russia have laid out for their future cooperation has drawn significant political curiosity from third parties more than any other agreement. As the signing date approaches, speculation about its content has become a focal point of news analysis and media coverage. The reality is that this agreement, like many high-level documents, is influenced by various external parameters and variables, each carrying different weights and impacts, necessi-

tating careful consideration by the parties involved regarding these weights and impacts. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has recently said, "Such a comprehensive document also encompasses an international dimension. Among other aspects, this agreement pays special attention to strengthening interactions in alignment with peace and security interests at both regional and global levels, expressing Moscow and Tehran's willingness to cooperate more closely in areas of security, defense, counter-terrorism, and addressing various shared challenges and threats." This undeniable principle, which has expedited the Russian side's signature on this agreement, is strategically and tactically defined. However, an excessive focus on certain clauses could play into the hands of those third parties that are

attempting to link the entire agreement to military and security concerns, thereby escalating tensions. The reality is that emphasizing specific clauses of the agreement, given the current global situation, serves neither Russia's nor Iran's interests. Following the onset of the Ukraine war, Russia, whether intentionally or not, heightened its media narrative surrounding the capabilities of Iranian drones, as well as its passivity in the face of European accusations regarding Iran's assistance to Russia in acquiring military equipment for this conflict. This situation has inadvertently drawn Tehran into the war as a partner, despite the fact that neither Iran's interests nor its military-diplomatic doctrine favored such a partnership. Tehran has repeatedly emphasized that a) the supply of drones to Russia predates the Ukraine war, and

it has not delivered missiles to Moscow; and b) Iran does not regard war as a solution to any crisis and has expressed its readiness several times to facilitate an end to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Nonetheless, Moscow's delay in directly and explicitly affirming Iran's positions has paved the way for increased sanctions, tensions, and pressures from the European Union against Tehran. For Tehran, defense cooperation with all independent nations is a priority. However, at this juncture, Iran's primary focus is on attracting economic investments across various sectors rather than forging agreements with any particular country or government. The Russian side, understanding this important point, will come to the negotiating table to finalize a significant agreement with Iran, as described by Lavrov.