

VP urges collaborative action to strengthen social capital for sustainable development

Social Desk

Iran's Vice President Mohammadreza Aref emphasized the necessity of leveraging historical opportunities for sustainable development while addressing the pressing need to enhance the nation's social capital. Aref made the statements during a meeting with social scientists and prominent academics, adding "We welcome any strategies that contribute to preserving the social capital of the system." During the gathering, Aref highlighted the imperative that solutions proposed by social and economic elites should not be limited to academic discourse but should also embrace practical, field-based approaches. Reflecting on the socio-political landscape of the early 2000s, he noted, "Some elites should have stepped forward and taken responsibility during

that time, as the weaknesses in political performance were not adequately analyzed." Aref pointed out that the failure to address these shortcomings has resulted in lost opportunities for social capital over the years. He stressed the importance of a thorough analysis of past actions and urged political figures to accept their roles in the collective failures. "Instead of wasting social capital in previous years, we must identify and rectify the loss of certain opportunities," he asserted. The official also discussed how certain decisions and policies have inadvertently led to crises at different points in time, stating that such mismanagement leaves a lasting impact on the collective memory of society and exacerbates generational divides between the government and future generations. He emphasized the need to prevent

confrontational behavior and labeling of well-meaning individuals and experts in the country. He noted that while the filtering of social media networks may not have initially appeared significant, it has become a contentious issue, and the government is committed to addressing this matter through national consensus. He reiterated that the government is focused on ensuring the sustainability of its actions and achievements, stating, "Instead of temporary solutions and 'band-aid' fixes, we are seeking fundamental remedies." Aref recognized the discourse of national unity as a historic opportunity for the administration to correct past mistakes and achieve sustainable economic development. In his concluding remarks, Aref called on social scientists to provide actionable solutions to bridge generational



gaps and restore hope within society. He underscored the urgent need for a robust plan to attract an estimated \$150 billion in investments, which is crucial for achieving an eight percent growth rate, sustainable employment, poverty reduction, and stabilizing inflation.

Persian short film 'Maral' picked for Stuttgarter festival



The Iranian short film 'Maral' has been selected, as the only Iranian film, to compete at the 38th Stuttgarter Filmwinter - Festival for Expanded Media, marking its debut at this festival. The Stuttgart Film Festival, also known as Stuttgart Film Winter, is an annual event held in Stuttgart, Germany, during the month of January. For over 35 years, the festival has been dedicated to transcending the boundaries between cinema and media art, featuring an adventurous international program of films, workshops, media exhibitions, and performances for all ages. From December to February, the city's events revolve around the festival's theme, which this year is "Breathe the Air of Another Planet."

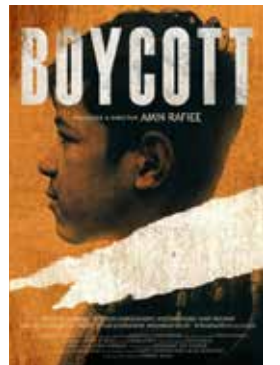
From January 15 to 22, all films, media, exhibitions, and performances will explore this thought-provoking theme. 'Maral' has previously been screened at the 30th German Short Film Week, the 22nd Tirana International Film Festival, and the 1st National Iranian Ethnic Film Festival. Written and directed by Parinaz Mehri and produced by Amir Etminan, 'Maral' tells the story of a 15-year-old girl who, in the absence of her father, is forced by her grandfather and uncle to marry her cousin, who has an intellectual disability. The film stars Firouz Agheli, Samaneh Nourivand, Hadi Eftekhazadeh, and Bahram Nobaripour, among others.

Iranian 'Boycot' awarded at Italian film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The short film 'Boycot', directed and produced by Amin Rafiee, has once again made a remarkable achievement by winning the Best Short Film award at the 5th Nostalgia Film Festival in Italy. The festival, held in Rome from November 15 to 17, showcased cinematic works from around the world. 'Boycot', which previously participated in the 13th Crime and Punishment Film Festival in Turkey, focuses on the themes of peace and reconciliation. The film's

powerful narrative and the compelling performances by its cast caught the attention of the festival's jury. The short film features talented actors such as Abolfazl Shirzad, Mostafa Ahadi, Amir Moghimi, Farshad Khorsand, Ali Valiani, Ehsan Azar Bahram, Mohammad Baghi, Mohammad Reza Alizadeh, and Setayesh Sadeghzadeh, whose performances greatly contribute to the film's impactful message. Solmaz Etemad handles the international distribution of 'Boycot', and her efforts have led to the film's successful presence in various international festivals.



Iranian children shine at abacus competition in Taiwan



Five Iranian smart kids from Kish Island achieved outstanding success at the AIAMA 2024 WAPR Q1-Q4, hosted by Taiwan. The young minds secured one first-place and four second-place honors, bringing pride to their country. The AIAMA 2024 WAPR Q1-Q4 saw participation from over 1,200 children and teenagers across 13 coun-

tries, including the US, Japan, Indonesia, South Africa, India, Panama, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, IRNA reported. Maryam Akbarpour, the coach of these talented students and the director of Zehn-e No institute in Kish—which represents the PAMA Global Abacus Mental Arithmetic Association in Iran—expressed her delight at the achievements of these young prodigies. "The success of our students on an international stage highlights the educational potential of Kish," she stated. Among the notable achievements, Yasna Pajoohi claimed the top posi-

tion in the world, while her peers—Parmis Ekhlaspour, Bahar Shiraali, Seyedeh Sedna Kamakeli, and Seyed Hossein Moravej Al-Ali—each secured second-place honors in various categories of the competition. Akbarpour emphasized that these students had previously excelled in national selection competitions, paving their way to this global event. The young champions from Kish, aged between 6 to 13 years, are currently honing their skills in abacus classes at the cultural centers on the island, laying a strong foundation for future successes.

Iran's minister champions strategic tourism development, reinforcing nat'l identity

Arts & Culture Desk



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, emphasized the importance of strategic tourism development on Hendorabi Island, highlighting its potential to reinforce national identity during a recent visit to Kish. The minister's review of a tourism plan, presented by local officials, aims to elevate Hendorabi into a major tourist destination, reflecting the Iranian government's dedication to enhancing the cultural and economic vitality

of its islands, ILNA reported. The minister issued critical recommendations and directives to enhance the island's tourism framework, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts among stakeholders. In his remarks, Salehi Amiri emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to the development of the Persian Gulf region. "In the island development plan, the comprehensive development of the Persian Gulf must be taken into account," he stated, noting that the progress of Hendorabi would be supported by a dedicated committee

formed specifically for island development. The minister also referenced the "sea-oriented development" directive. "We are seriously pursuing the development of a sea-oriented economy, with tourism being one of its most vital components," he added. Furthermore, Salehi Amiri called for the identification of the unique capacities of Hendorabi Island, emphasizing the importance of branding it effectively to achieve targeted and impactful results. "We should leverage the special features of Hendorabi to drive its develop-

ment in a focused and effective manner," he remarked. The minister reiterated the significance of Iranian islands as a matter of national identity, stressing that their development carries added importance. "The issue of Iranian islands is tied to our national identity, and the development of these islands is of paramount importance," he stated. The tourism development plan for Hendorabi Island is currently being executed by Macan Company, which aims to enhance the island's appeal and infrastructure to attract more visitors.