

# Iranian music echoes global influence at Fajr Int'l Music Festival: *Minister*

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, praised Iranian music for its longstanding role in showcasing the beauty and grandeur of Persian arts and culture.

In a message to the 40th Fajr International Music Festival, Salehi said that wherever the melodies of Iranian instruments and the voices of Iranian vocalists resonate, accompanied by the words of the nation's literary giants, they signify the global influence of Iranian thought and artistry, IRNA reported.

Salehi emphasized that art is deeply connected to human nature, guiding the soul towards spiritual elevation and enlightenment.

He added, "Music is among the arts that can refine the human spirit." He highlighted that prominent thinkers and philosophers throughout history have recognized the significance of music, viewing it as a guiding light for discovering the depths of the human soul.

The minister described Iranian music as a clear symbol of the nation's cultural and artistic



identity, with its unique melodies captivating audiences worldwide. He referred to music as the "art of dialogue," an unbounded conversation that transcends borders and speaks directly to people's hearts.

"The language of melody and rhythm, when harmonized, enchants listeners from the East to the West," Salehi noted, emphasizing music's role as a "direct dialogue with the world."

Salehi hailed Iranian musicians as cultural ambassadors, stating, "Iranian music artists are the finest carriers of our cultural heritage to the surrounding world." He expressed his delight that the Fajr International Music Festival, now in its 40th edition, continues to proudly present this valuable heritage through the innovative



works of young artists and the mastery of seasoned veterans. According to Salehi, contemporary Iranian music, with its blend of tradition and innovation, carries the significant responsibility of preserving the country's rich musical legacy while ensuring its continuity for future generations. He highlighted the Fajr International Music Festival as a crucial platform for this cultural

continuity, showcasing the vast diversity of Iranian music, from traditional classical forms to the vibrant sounds of ethnic groups, as well as pop and classical genres. "All these musical forms contribute to fostering unity and harmony within Iranian society," the minister said. Salehi also stressed the unifying power of music, particularly the melodies rooted in Iran's eth-

nic traditions. "When we listen to the tunes of various ethnic groups, it feels as if the voices of all Iranians are united as one," he remarked, calling this a "brilliant testament to the role and mission of arts in today's world." He concluded by affirming that Iranian music has always aimed to portray the beauty and majesty of Persian culture. "Wherever the sound of an Iranian instrument or the voice of

an Iranian singer echoes with the words of our literary giants, it signifies the flow of Iranian thought and art across the globe," Salehi added.

The 40th Fajr International Music Festival runs from February 11 to 17. The event features both competitive segments, including the prestigious Barbad Award, and non-competitive programs focused on promoting national unity.

## Iran offers to host ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism

# Spanish envoy: Iran, appealing destination for European investors

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran expressed its readiness to host the upcoming Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, underscoring its commitment to enhancing regional tourism collaborations.

This announcement was made during a meeting between Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, and Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), on the sidelines of the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition.

Salehi Amiri highlighted Iran's vast tourism potential, citing the country's 40,000 registered national heritage sites, 28 tangible UNESCO World Heritage sites, and 26 intangible cultural assets, IRNA reported.

He added that Iran is prepared to sign a memorandum of understanding to formalize its offer to host the event, aiming to expand cooperation with ECO in the tourism sector.

Reflecting on previous collaborations between Iran and ECO, the Iranian minister stressed the importance of bolstering cultural connections among member states.

"While governmental ties are

crucial, people-to-people connections are even more significant," Salehi Amiri noted.

He called for stronger cultural exchanges to showcase the tourism capacities of Iran and other ECO countries.

In response, Majeed Khan commended Iran for hosting the international tourism exhibition and recognized the cultural commonalities among ECO member nations as a valuable resource for tourism growth. He said, "ECO prioritizes trade, transportation, and tourism, but neglecting people-to-peo-



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri (R), meets with Spain's ambassador to Iran Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar (L) on February 12, 2025, to discuss ways to strengthen cultural and economic relations between the two nations.

ple connectivity could hinder our objectives." Majid Khan also referred to Iran as the 'tourism



To further facilitate tourism cooperation, the ECO Secretary-General underscored the need to ease or eliminate visa requirements among member states. "Simplifying visa procedures will significantly boost regional tourism," he suggested. On the same occasion, Salehi Amiri met with Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, Spain's ambassador to Iran, to explore opportunities for enhancing cultural and economic ties.

He spoke about Iran's unparalleled heritage, tourism, and handicrafts potential and expressed Tehran's willingness

to collaborate extensively with Spain in these sectors.

The Iranian minister also highlighted investment opportunities in Iran's tourism industry, portraying the nation as a safe and attractive destination for European investors.

He assured that the Iranian government supports foreign investment in tourism infrastructure, referencing the recent inauguration of a major tourism complex in Kerman as a testament to Iran's commitment to developing its tourism sector. Pointing to the historical and cultural links between the two coun-

tries, Salehi Amiri noted the sister city relationship between Isfahan and Barcelona as a promising platform for expanding cultural and tourism cooperation.

He invited the Spanish ambassador to visit Iran's tourist attractions, particularly in Isfahan and Kerman, which are celebrated for their unique cultural heritage.

Addressing the challenges posed by negative perceptions, the minister criticized anti-Iran propaganda, arguing, "Despite facing Iranophobia, Iran remains a secure and welcoming destination for tourists and foreign investors."

The Spanish envoy welcomed the idea of deepening cultural and tourism partnerships, expressing optimism about enhanced bilateral interactions. Salehi Amiri also announced that Iran has surpassed the six million mark in tourist arrivals this year, with projections to reach over seven million by the end of the year.

Speaking to reporters after a cabinet meeting, he disclosed that 5.7 million tourists had visited Iran by late December. To achieve the target of 15 million tourists set in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, the minister said that the country needs to increase its tourism capacity by 1.5 million visitors annually.