



President hails Shams, Rumi for guiding humanity toward peace, dialogue



Tomb of Rumi
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Tomb of Shams
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Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday commemorated the towering Sufi figures Shams Tabrizi and Jalal al-Din Rumi, describing them as “two peaks of Iranian culture” whose legacy continues to illuminate human history. In a message issued for the national observance of Shams Tabrizi and Rumi on September 29 and 30, respectively, Pezeshkian said Iran, drawing on such pro-

found cultural Tomb of Rumi, could play a central role in building a world free from violence and rich in peace, dialogue, and cooperation, president.ir reported. The president’s address outlined a vision for a renewed discourse inspired by the two mystics. Pezeshkian wrote that their teachings offer a path “centered on love, justice, spirituality, and wisdom,” a dialogue he described as vital not only for Iran and its neighbors but for “all free

peoples.” He portrayed the commemoration as an opportunity to reflect on the enduring heritage left by Shams and Rumi, which, he said, transcends national and cultural boundaries. Highlighting the historical and geographical reach of the two thinkers, Pezeshkian traced their influence from Balkh to Konya, from Tabriz to Kabul, from Tehran to Istanbul, and extending to the Balkans, Europe, and the Americas.

He noted that countless individuals continue to engage with Rumi’s poetry and Shams’ spiritual insights, “shedding tears of joy and dedicating their hearts to the pure waters of love and knowledge.” For the president, this cross-border admiration exemplifies a cultural legacy that promotes unity over division, dialogue over discord, and humanity over enmity. Pezeshkian described Shams as a relentless seeker of truth, whose penetrating insight and impassioned speech “brought Rumi to an inner revolution and opened new horizons before him.” Rumi, in turn, “a singular star of literature and mysticism,” spread a flame of love and knowledge that continues to inspire generations. The president portrayed them as two facets of the same universal truth, guiding humanity beyond superficial divisions to the “boundless sky of love and unity.” In the context of contemporary global crises, Pezeshkian emphasized the urgent relevance of Shams and Rumi’s philosophy. He argued that the world, facing conflict and multiple forms of violence, must return to the “pure sources” of wisdom that these mystics embodied. Their emphasis on human dignity, spiritual enlightenment, and mutual respect, he wrote, provides a clear roadmap for constructing a future dominated by empathy and understanding rather than hostility and separation. The president called on the Iranian people to embody the principles of love, courage, and

spiritual insight exemplified by Shams and Rumi in everyday life. “If the contemporary individual, from any nation or region, applies even a fraction of Rumi’s love and Shams’ courage,” he said, “a new world can emerge—one where borders and distances dissolve before the truth of love.” He also praised the efforts of scholars, cultural officials, and organizers of the commemoration, noting that their dedication ensures that the legacy of these two figures remains alive and continues to strengthen cultural identity and international friendship. Pezeshkian reiterated that Shams Tabrizi and Rumi are enduring “peaks of Iranian culture” whose teachings, once used to illuminate the human soul in their own time, can continue to light the way for future generations. He expressed hope that, inspired by these luminaries, Iran can contribute to a global dialogue grounded in compassion, reason, and coexistence, where “empathy surpasses mere shared language” and humanity is united in the pursuit of peace.

Tajikistan selects Iranian director’s ‘Black Rabbit, White Rabbit’ for Oscar race



‘Black Rabbit, White Rabbit,’ a mystery drama by Iranian filmmaker Shahram Mokri (‘Fish & Cat’), was selected to represent the country of Tajikistan in the best international feature film category at the Oscars. The news follows the film’s International Film Festival of India – Vision Asian Award honor at the Busan International Film Festival. The movie next screens at the BFI London Film Festival and Chicago International Film Festival, The Hollywood Reported wrote.

The film, a co-production between Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates, was made with the support of Tajikfilm in Tajikistan and produced in Tajik and Persian. The cast includes a group of prominent Tajik actors, namely Babak Karimi, Hasti Mohammadi, Kibriyo Dilyobova, and Bezhan Davlatov. Mokri wrote the screenplay with Nasim Ahmadvand. The producer is Negar Eskandarfar. “A suspicious film prop, a mysterious audition, a conspiratorial road incident and multiple rabbits are woven together in this bold and beguiling drama from Tajikistan,” reads a synopsis of the movie. “A film armorer suspects a fake firearm is real. An actor arrives on set demanding a role. A car crash victim fears her accident was deliberate. Three seemingly disparate stories weave into an enigmatic whole, with flowing, expertly cho-

reographed takes, no small amount of droll humor and flashes of magic realism punctuating Iranian director Shahram Mokri’s playful, subtly provocative meta-mystery.” The DreamLab Films production is the fourth movie that Tajikistan has submitted for the international Oscar race. The Central Asian country has never been nominated. ‘Black Rabbit, White Rabbit’ is Mokri’s fourth feature film. His feature debut ‘Fish & Cat’ (2013) won a special award in the Orizzonti (Horizons) section at the Venice Film Festival. The director went on to direct ‘Invasion’ (2017), which screened at the Berlin International Film Festival, followed by ‘Careless Crime’ (2020), which screened at Venice and won the jury prize at the Chicago International Film Festival. The 98th Oscars take place Sunday, March 15.

Canadian audience to welcome Ghorbani’s concert ‘My Iran’

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Iranian vocalist Alireza Ghorbani is set to bring his acclaimed concert tour, ‘Iranam,’ which literally means ‘My Iran,’ to Canada this October. The tour will begin on October 4, at Vancouver’s Queen Elizabeth Theatre, followed by performances in Calgary on October 7 at the Jack Singer Concert Hall, Montreal on October 10 at Place des Arts, and conclude in Toronto on October 12 at the Coca-Cola Coliseum, inn.ir reported. Iranam showcases a repertoire of Persian classical and contemporary music, featuring lyrics from poets such as Rumi, Amir Khus-



row, and Ahmad Shamlou. Ghorbani is accompanied by composers Hosam Nasiri, Alireza Afkari, and Mahdiyar Alizadeh. The program includes pieces like ‘Sheyda,’ ‘Forgive Me,’ and ‘Arghavan’ reflecting the rich tapestry of Persian musical heritage.

The tour follows a successful run in Tehran’s Azadi Complex earlier this year, where over 7,500 attendees gathered each night. Subsequent performances took place in Istanbul and Yazd, further solidifying Ghorbani’s international acclaim.

Echoes of Persian luminaries in Iran’s civilizational quest for soft power

By Abed Akbari
Guest contributor

PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE

The Persian months of Mehr (September-October), in Iran’s cultural calendar, recalls great names etched into the depth of history and the collective conscience of the Iranian world; from the day commemorating Rumi, the universal mystic from Balkh who rests in Konya, to the day honoring Hafez, the “Tongue of the Unseen” from Shiraz whose words remain a universal language of love and wisdom. This symbolic simultaneity is not

merely a remembrance of the past; it is an occasion to rethink Iran’s cultural diplomacy on the basis of its civilizational luminaries—diplomacy that can revive and reimagine Iran’s soft power across a span from Balkh to Konya. Cultural Iran, as a vast civilizational sphere, carries a shared heritage of Persian language, mysticism, poetry, philosophy, and art stretching from Central Asia to Anatolia, from Khorasan to the Caucasus, and from India to Mesopotamia. This expanse, transcending today’s political borders, is the product of centuries of interaction, dialogue, and cultural synergy. Figures such as Rumi, Nizami, Bidel

Dehlavi, Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Sa’adi, and Hafez are the connectors of this historical memory. They are not merely cultural icons; they are the bearers of a common civilizational language that can serve as a foundation for renewed regional and transregional engagement. In today’s world, where hard competition and political disputes often lead to distrust and division, the diplomacy of eminent figures can act as a smart tool for broadening mutual understanding and reducing tensions. Nations that have successfully harnessed their cultural heritage—China with Confucius, India with Tagore, and Turkey with Rumi—have elevated

their national image and grounded their international relations in cultural respect. Iran, with its treasure of globally celebrated luminaries, holds a unique capacity for cultural soft power; a capacity that can complement foreign policy and reinforce the country’s regional and global standing. The opportunities ahead are extensive. Multilateral cultural cooperation with countries of the broader Iranian sphere, hosting joint festivals and commemorations of luminaries, establishing research and cultural foundations in related countries, producing multilingual works in Iranian literature and philosophy, and

strengthening cultural tourism in cities such as Shiraz, Balkh, Nishapur, Samarkand, Herat, and Konya can all foster a network of civilizational synergy. Yet, effectively tapping these capacities requires a strategic outlook, coordination among cultural and policymaking institutions, and the institutionalization of a discourse of “cultural diplomacy” alongside official diplomacy. Along this path, emphasis on shared cultural elements, avoidance of possessive approaches, and portraying Iranian heritage as a platform for dialogue, peace, and coexistence are essential. The diplomacy of eminent figures

can transform the past into capital for the future. Just as Hafez’s poetry knows no borders and Rumi’s thought inspires both East and West, a conscious engagement with these treasures can present an inspiring and human face of Iran on the global stage. In a tense world, where dialogue has been displaced by hard rivalries, Iran can, through its cultural heritage and civilizational luminaries, build a bridge of understanding and convergence—a bridge stretching from Balkh to Konya, carrying a message that resonates beyond politics, in the language of poetry, wisdom, and love.