



Hafez honored in Shiraz for timeless poetry

Minister hails poet's global influence, as 'one of the world's top 20'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran celebrated the annual commemoration of 14th-century poet Hafez on Saturday at his mausoleum in Shiraz. Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi called Hafez "one of the world's top 20 poets," highlighting his lasting global impact, while scholars emphasized the poet's unique literary style, spiritual depth, and ongoing influence on Iranian identity and cultural life.

Salehi, speaking at the ceremony, said Hafez, alongside Persian icons Ferdowsi, Rumi, Sa'adi, and Khayyam, occupies a peak position in world literature, IRNA reported.

"Hafez stands apart," Salehi said. "His work traveled beyond Iran, reaching India, Central Asia, and gradually the West."

The minister cited four key reasons for Hafez's international appeal: The essence of Iranian wisdom, linguistic and stylistic brilliance, independent thinking, and playful complexity.

Salehi explained that Hafez's poetry distills centuries of Iranian and Islamic thought, addressing universal spiritual and intellectual needs.

He noted that foreign travelers, including Italian Pietro Della Valle, compared Hafez's literary craft to Virgil for its rhythmic precision and depth.

Emphasizing the poet's influence on global thinkers, Salehi mentioned Russian poet Pushkin and American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who admired Hafez's defiance of fanaticism and celebration of free thought.

"His ghazals carry contradictions that enrich the human experience," Salehi said, referring to Hafez's ability to juxtapose opposing ideas in elegant harmony.

Hafez, whose full name was Khajeh Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafez Shirazi, is celebrated as one of the most beloved poets in Persian literature.

Known for his mastery of the ghazal, he blended themes of love, spirituality, and philosophy in verses that remain deeply rooted in Iranian culture.

His profound familiarity with the Qur'an infused his poetry with layers of mystical meaning, earning him the title Lisan al-Qyeb, or "Tongue of the Unseen."

Beyond Iran, Hafez's poetry has influenced great literary figures such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose West-Eastern Divan was inspired by the Persian master's work.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei posted a message on X marking National Hafez Day (October 12), praising the poet's enduring wisdom and imagination. He wrote that Hafez "blended timeless wisdom with poetic

imagination, presenting it beautifully and accessibly to all."

Baghai added that Hafez teaches "how to believe in life and love amid the hardships and uncertainties of existence." He concluded with a verse from the poet: "No one like Hafez has unveiled the mask of thought, until the hair of speech is combed with a pen."

Hojatollah Ayoubi, senior advisor to Iran's cultural heritage minister and head of international affairs at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts framed Hafez as a "fearless actor" akin to the concept described by French sociologist Alain Touraine.

Ayoubi called him a "proactive agent" who blends love, wisdom, and resistance to social conformity. Quoting Hafez, Eyubi noted: "What use is worldly prudence to the blazing wit?" to illustrate the poet's independent spirit.

Ayoubi added that Persian poetry continues to open cultural doors even when societal paths are blocked, citing international recognition of Hafez, including literary evenings in Paris's Versailles Palace.

Ali-Akbar Salehi, head of the Iranology Foundation, emphasized that Hafez's legacy extends beyond poetry into the daily life and identity of Iranians.

In a statement, he said, "Every research effort in Persian culture inevitably engages with Hafez," noting the poet's



Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi speaks during a ceremony marking National Hafez Day in the southwestern city of Shiraz, Iran, on October 11, 2025.
● IRNA

enduring guidance in wisdom, justice, love, and spiritual inquiry. He described Hafez as a living embodiment of Iran's intellectual and cultural spirit.

The commemoration coincided with international literary events. In Serbia, a session at the Serbian Literary Association explored the global impact of Hafez and Rumi.

Speakers included Nenad Milosevic, president of the association; Omra Khalilovich, Persian language scholar; Petar Janackovic, Persian translator; and Iran's Cultural Attaché Amir Pour-

pezeshk.

They highlighted Hafez's influence not only on Persian literature but also on Indian, Arabic, and Ottoman literary traditions.

Khalilovich emphasized that in Persian mystical poetry, truth is fluid and universal, while Janackovic described Hafez as a poet whose optimism and celebration of life help overcome sorrow. The session underscored Hafez's enduring role in shaping cultural identity and fostering international dialogue.

Tehran Int'l Short Film Festival to screen 94 films from 55 countries



Director of the 42nd Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) Behrouz Shoaybi addresses journalists during the festival's press release in Tehran on October 12, 2025.
● IRNA

The venue was moved from Milad Tower to Iran Mall to improve accessibility and expand screening capacity. "The central city venues had limited capacity," Shoaybi explained. "Iran Mall offered more suitable facilities, and cooperation with local authorities will facilitate audience access."

He also addressed political and cultural sensitivities in film selection. "Filmmakers created works with care and quality; we did not exclude any films due to hijab issues or political content. Only two films were excluded for technical or content reasons," he said.

Recognized by the Academy Awards, the festival continues to be an Oscar-qualifying event and holds an A-grade quality ranking. Shoaybi emphasized the collaborative effort behind the festival's success and its commitment to supporting young filmmakers, "Our role is to stand by them, even amid budget constraints, and ensure their work receives the recognition it deserves."

MENA region.

The festival has also dedicated a special section to socially relevant films. "This year, we received a substantial number of films addressing topics like resistance, Gaza, Lebanon, and the 12-day war," Shoaybi said. "The aim is to give these works visibility with respect and enthusiasm."

This year, TISFF will include restored short films from the 1930s and a special screening for the visually impaired, in collaboration with the Iranian National Cinematheque.

Shoaybi stressed that the festival will also engage young audiences, "We are hosting several art schools from Tehran and other cities to introduce students to filmmaking and the industry."

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The 42nd Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) will run from 19 to 24 October at Iran Mall, hosting 94 films from 55 countries, festival director Behrouz Shoaybi announced at a press briefing on Sunday. "We will showcase 57 narrative films, 20 animations, 20 experimental works, 21 documentaries, 35 adaptations, and 53 photographic entries," Shoaybi said, highlighting a diverse international program, IRNA reported. The largest number of submissions come from China, Spain, India, and the United States, followed by France and Brazil. Fifteen films explore artificial intelligence, while seven focus on emerging narratives from the

Tehran, Kuwait sign pact to boost land-tourism, motorsports cooperation



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The Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kuwait International Automobile Club signed a strategic memorandum in Kuwait to deepen land-tourism links and boost joint motorsport initiatives. At the ceremony, Iran's Ambassador to Kuwait, Mohammad Tout-

ounchi, witnessed the signing by Mohammad Hossein Soufi, head of the Iranian club, and Essa Hamza Al-Failakawi, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile Vice President for Mobility Essa Hamza Al-Failakawi from Kuwait, IRNA reported.

The agreement tasks both sides with easing border crossings, co-organizing tourism rallies, and exchanging road-safety training. It also mandates reciprocal roadside assistance and streamlined issuance of Carnet de Passages en Douane (custom-passage documents). Soufi called the pact "a crucial step" in expanding people-to-people ties. Failakawi described it as one that will "turn the page" in Iran-Kuwait friendly relations.

Under the deal, both clubs will jointly stage motorsport events across the region. They will pool expertise in road safety education and open new channels in mobility innovation. Officials also pledged to monitor implementation and convene periodic reviews to ensure the agreement yields measurable progress.

Iranian documentary gets kudos at Hanoi festival

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Vietnamese viewers flooded the screenings of "Tomorrow Is Not Like Today" during the first-ever Cultures of the World Festival, after the film was subtitled in Vietnamese and cleared by Iran's Embassy. Directed by Seyyed Mahdi Karbasi, the documentary unfolds in a school. It tells the moving story of pupils who build "friendship, courage and sacrifice" as they support one another through trials, IRNA reported. The festival, held from October 10 to 12 at Hanoi's Thăng Long Imperial Citadel, drew 48 embassies and

20 film-screening countries.

A dedicated Iranian pavilion showcased the nation's artistry and cuisine alongside the film.

The documentary premiered to applause. One spectator described it as "deeply human". Visitors lingered at the Iranian booth to sample saffron tea, browse handicrafts and chat with embassy staff.

A troupe of Iranian traditional musicians, named Sarafshan, also performed across the festival.

Festival organizers said the Iranian film slot reflects Vietnam's push to "bridge culture and diplomacy" by inviting global voices to share their stories on this world stage.

