



Three Iranian villages join UNWTO global network

Iran's rural communities shine again on world tourism map: *Pezeshkian*



year. After rigorous review based on criteria such as tourist appeal, environmental protection, economic viability, and governance, three, Soheili (Qeshm Island, Hormozgan Province), Kandelous (Mazandaran province) and Shafiabad (Kerman Province), were accepted into the network, IRNA reported.

Soheili was selected for its mangrove forest preservation, eco-tourism schemes, and night-stay fishing boat accommodations. Kandelous stood out for its local museum, literary trails, herbal plant economy and community innovation. Shafiabad, positioned on the edge of the Lut Desert, was praised for historic architecture, desert heritage, and integration of tourism with local social structures. Mohseni Bandpey stressed that women's participation and youth engagement were key to their success. He acknowledged that infrastructure—roads, electricity, water, health services and internet connectivity—had long been a barrier. "We pushed hard this past year to fill the gaps," he said.

He added that Iran had previously registered two villages, but this triple success was a rare feat.

The recognition in Hangzhou grants these villages global visibility, technical support, and inclusion in international rural-tourism networks. It also strengthens Iran's position in cultural diplomacy and sustainable development forums.

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran secured global recognition Friday for three of its villages, which were officially admitted into the UNWTO Global Network of Tourism Villages at a meeting in

Hangzhou, China. The registration ceremony took place on October 17, 2025. Following the announcement, President Masoud Pezeshkian praised the achievement, saying the villages "once again illuminated Iran's name on the world

tourism map." In a post on X (formerly Twitter), he wrote, "From the heart of the desert to the foothills of Alborz and the azure coast of the Persian Gulf, the villages of Shafiabad in Kerman, Kandelous in Mazandaran, and Soheili in Qeshm have

once again made Iran shine on the global tourism map. Iran, the land of courage and art, embraces a grand destiny." Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said Iran had submitted applications for eight villages this

Iran-Turkey co-production 'Intoxicated by Love' debuts across Europe, North America



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The Iranian-Turkish historical drama 'Maste Eshgh' (Intoxicated by Love) premiered October 16 in Turkey and 10 European countries, marking its international debut. The film, directed by Iranian filmmaker Hassan Fat'hi, explores the profound bond between the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi and his spiritual mentor Shams Tabrizi. Parsa Pirouzfar portrays Rumi, while Shahab Hosseini plays Shams. Produced by Mehran Broumand and Hassan Alizadeh, the film has already achieved significant success in Iran. Upon its

release in April 2024, it attracted over two million viewers and grossed 120 billion tomans, making it the highest-grossing non-comedy film of the year in the country. The European release is managed by AF Media Group, with screenings scheduled in major cities across Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. The film is also set to debut in Russia, India, and the Persian Gulf countries in the coming weeks. In North America, the film's release is backed by a distribution agreement guaranteeing a minimum box office revenue of \$1 million, reflecting the growing interest in Iranian cinema abroad. The film features a talented cast, including Turkish actors Ibrahim Çelikkol and Bensu Soral. The film's cinematography, led by the late Morteza Poursamadi, showcases stunning visuals of Istanbul, Konya, and other Turkish locales. The musical score, composed by Fahir Ataköglü, complements the film's emotional depth.

Farshchian Museum turns 23

Sacred toil of miniature art

By Saeideh Ehsani Rad
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

In the heart of Tehran's Sa'dabad Cultural-Historical Complex rises a Qajar-era mansion that now safeguards the luminous legacy of Master Mahmoud Farshchian — a painter and miniaturist whose art redefined the boundaries of Persian imagination. Today, the building stands in solemn tribute, veiled in mourning banners and the soft glow of black candles, as if the walls themselves grieve the master's departure. Within its quiet halls, 50 of his masterpieces shimmer like fragments of a spiritual dream, each a window into the mystical soul of Iranian art, where color, poetry, and devotion intertwine.

On the 23rd anniversary of the museum's inauguration, October 18, Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Mahnaz Asadollah, the museum's director, to talk about its origins, memories, and the void left behind by the master's death.

IRAN DAILY: How did this Qajar mansion in Sa'dabad come to be assigned to the Farshchian Museum?

MAHNAZ ASADOLLAH: In 2001, during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami, Master Farshchian requested that a museum be established for his works. After several consultations, this Qajar-era build-

ing — which had been used as a storage facility — was vacated and adapted to become the Farshchian Museum.

How were the artworks selected and arranged for display?

Thirty-six of the works were donated and endowed by the Farshchian Foundation. Several others were loaned from different institutions. Some pieces, originally created for the Astan Quds Razavi shrine, were temporarily exhibited here for a year before being transferred to Mashhad.

Given Sa'dabad's numerous palace museums, how well is the Farshchian Museum received by visitors?

It's among the most visited art museums in the complex. Besides general tourists, we have regular visitors who return monthly — people who spend hours in front of the paintings, sometimes moved to tears. During holidays and festivals, we host up to two thousand visitors a day. We also welcome school groups throughout the academic year.

What makes running an art museum like this a unique experience?

Visitors don't come to Sa'dabad just for the royal palaces; many are drawn to its specialized art museums as well. Among them, the Farshchian Museum stands out — partly because of the master's



immense reputation among miniature artists. His name alone attracts art lovers, ensuring the museum remains one of the complex's top cultural destinations.

You worked with Master Farshchian for years. What are some of your lasting memories of his visits?

There were truly golden days when the master himself attended events here. I've witnessed extraordinary moments — artists bringing their works for him to critique, seeking his gentle yet precise corrections. When I first joined the museum, I met him in person. His humility was disarming. Despite his fame and mastery, he treated everyone like family — patient, warm, and fatherly. During exhibition openings, which sometimes gathered 400 or 500 guests, he was deeply attentive, always reminding us to treat visitors with utmost respect.

How did the master himself feel about this museum?

He followed everything closely. Every week, he would call to ask about the museum's condition and our visitors. He cared deeply — this



place was a part of him. I used to send him photos and short videos from events and the crowds, which he appreciated immensely.

How has the atmosphere changed since his passing?

There's an undeniable emptiness. I used to speak with him every week — he was my source of strength. Now, his daughter, Leila Farshchian, and his niece, Parvindokht Farshchian, are continuing his legacy. I keep them updated with photos and videos of the museum's ongoing activities, and I also stay in touch with his wife regarding museum affairs.

How do you plan to honor the master's wishes and continue his vision?

His voice still echoes in my ears — he used to say, "Treat these works as if they were your own." That sense of responsibility weighs heavily on me. He often spoke about how he worked tirelessly from dawn, driven by love and devotion. The museum now holds 61 of his pieces across five galleries, yet his total body of work exceeds a thousand — many of which have been sold or gifted.