

Iran assures Persepolis, Pasargadae UNESCO sites remain safe amid rumors



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, proclaimed on Sunday that the status of the UNESCO-listed sites Persepolis and Pasargadae remains "fully stable" and dismissed recent rumors of any danger to them.

Addressing a joint meeting with Abdolkarim Hosseinzadeh, Iran's Vice President for Rural Development and Deprived Areas in Tehran, Salehi-Amiri said there has been "no official report, correspondence or warning" from UNESCO or any international body regarding threats to the ancient monuments, IRNA reported.

He added, "If even the slightest threat existed, the ministry would pursue it and issue public notice." He noted that, having visited the province of Fars himself, he found "no new incidents" at Persepolis and Pasargadae and described the situation as "completely stable". He added that he has held multiple field and headquarters meetings — most recently in Tehran yesterday — with the provincial heritage director. According to his account, no construction or "threatening activity" has taken place inside the protected zones of

either site. Moreover, "when no correspondence or warning exists, it is clear that these claims have no basis and reflect misunderstanding of the field reality." Salehi-Amiri closed by urging that "if there is any real documented threat, the reports should be officially forwarded to the ministry so that legal review and action may follow," reiterating that "to date, no such document has been received." At the same meeting, Farhad Azizi Zalani, Director-General of the Global Heritage Sites Department of the ministry, also weighed in. He denied rumors that Iran's world-heritage properties might be removed from UNESCO's list. He said, "Listing or de-listing of sites is a complex, expert process at international level. If change were triggered by the slightest construction or threat, then many other countries would long ago have lost listings." He added that instead of "alarm-raising", local authorities, institutions and the public should act together to protect these "heritage places not just for Iran but for the world."

Zalani also reported that monitoring of sites such as Persepolis, Dome of Soltaniyeh (Gonbad-e Soltaniyeh) and Fin Garden is underway and any unauthorized activity in their buffer zones will be "pursued with rigor". He said, "We will under no circumstances allow the values of these global heritage places to be compromised." He described how a management-and-protection blueprint for all Iran's world heritage sites is currently being updated, and once finalized, projects such as visitor-access reconfiguration and infrastructure improvements will be carried out. Finally, he cited a construction breach near the site of Gonbad-e Soltaniyeh which was promptly halted and is now under legal follow-up, as demonstration of the ministry's commitment.

18th Marivan Int'l Street Theater Festival opens with vibrant parade

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The 18th Marivan International Street Theater Festival officially opened on Sunday, October 26 in the Kurdish border city of Marivan, drawing large crowds of local residents, theater enthusiasts, and visiting artists from across Iran and abroad. The festival will continue through October 30, IRNA reported. The opening ceremony featured performances by Marivan's children, who delivered short plays and poetry centered on "environmental protection and care for nature," spreading messages of "friendship, peace and respect for the earth." A colorful parade followed, moving to Mellat Park, with local drummers, ritual performers, and twelve horse-riders performing Kurdish dances, filling the streets with music, joy, and cultural unity.

Over 200 theatrical works were submitted nationwide, with 43 groups selected for participation, including troupes from Tunisia and India. Shows span categories such as open competition, ritual-traditional, experimental, youth and children, international, and retrospectives of award-winning past performances, highlighting both local traditions and contemporary innovations in street theater. In a message read during the ceremony, Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, described street theater as "a living, popular art form" and "a clear symbol of the coexistence of cultures and indigenous arts under national unity." He said the festival fosters "interaction and exchange of new ideas" among artists of different ethnicities and nations, enriching theatrical knowledge and creativity. Salehi added that the festival also contributes to local economic development, "By attracting culture and art enthusiasts, the wheels of the regional economy are set in motion, creating new job opportunities and promoting the creative economy of Kurdistan Province." The Marivan festival has emerged over the years as one of Iran's most prominent outdoor theater events, bringing performances out of traditional stages and into everyday public spaces, allowing citizens to experience theater as part of daily life. This year's edition promises to showcase a rich blend of local culture, innovative artistic expressions, and international exchange. He expressed hope that the event would "generate hope and vitality, strengthen public participation, and continue to convey a message of peace, friendship, and progress for all Iranians."

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Iranian filmmaker wins top prize at Japan's Nikon contest



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Iranian filmmaker Hamed Nobari won the Grand Prize at the Nikon Film and Photo Contest 2024-2025 in Japan for his 40-second environmental short "The Small Red, Big Blue". The awards ceremony was held on October 12

at Nikon's headquarters in Tokyo, where Fatemeh Abdi accepted the prize on behalf of the film crew. The contest, launched in 1969, is among the world's oldest and largest global competitions for short films and photography. This year's entries came from more than 180 countries

and regions, IRNA reported. Nobari said the theme of this year's contest was Inspire and that his minimalist single-take film draws attention to "the silent collapse of marine life" caused by pollution. "It's only 40 seconds long, but it carries the weight of an ocean's cry," he told Iranian state media. "The Small Red, Big Blue" has already made a mark on the festival circuit, earning more than 40 international awards and official selections at nearly 300 global events. Its recent accolades include top honors at the 33rd Croatian One-Minute

Film Festival (2025), the Jákotpuszta Shepherd's Day and Nature Film Festival in Budapest (2025), and the Marano Ragazzi Spot Festival in Naples (2024). The Nikon Grand Prize marks the first time an Iranian filmmaker has captured the top award in the competition's history — a milestone that highlights the growing global presence of Iran's short-form cinema and its creative engagement with environmental issues. Nikon said the winning works will be exhibited in Tokyo and other major cities in the coming months.

Italy's Fano festival applauds Iran's 'Comment' with Special Jury Prize

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Iranian filmmaker Ali Sokhangoo's short film 'Comment' clinched the Special Jury Prize at the 37th Fano International Film Festival in Italy on October 25. The festival, held in Bellocchi di Fano from October 21 to 25, recognized the film's poignant exploration of human connection and communication, ILNA reported. Starring Sara Najafi and Masoud Mohammadi, 'Comment' explores the complexities of online interactions and their impact on personal relationships. The film's subtle narrative and compelling performances have garnered international acclaim.



Following its success in Italy, 'Comment' is set to be showcased at the 43rd Torino Film Festival and the 40th Berlin Black International Film Festival. Also, it has been selected for broadcast on Germany's ALEX Berlin network, expanding its reach to a broader European audience. The international distribution of the film 'Comment' is handled by Stock Film Company, managed by Sattar Chamanigol and Vida Salehi.

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