



Iran, Turkey sign cinema cooperation pact to boost joint production

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Turkey formalized a broad cinema cooperation agreement during the International Cinema Cooperation Conference in Shiraz, held December 1-3 alongside the Fajr International Film Festival. Raed Faridzadeh, head of Cinema Organization of Iran, and Birol Güven, the General Director of Cinema of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, signed the pact, IRNA reported. The agreement sets a framework for joint projects across multiple genres, including feature, documentary, short, and animated films, emphasizing shared historical and cultural themes. It allows films from both countries to be exchanged and

screened in targeted markets, aiming to broaden audiences and boost international reach. Filmmakers will gain mutual access to studios and shooting locations, easing logistical challenges and supporting the smooth execution of co-productions. The pact also encourages exchanges of filmmakers, technical crews, and specialists, while offering students and instructors opportunities for cross-border learning to strengthen professional and educational capacities. Regular film-weeks in Iran and Turkey are planned to introduce audiences to each other's cinema and reinforce cultural diplomacy. Officials described the initiative as "a strategic step" for deepening bilateral cultural and cinematic ties.

The Shiraz conference drew ministers, deputy ministers, senior cinema executives, and ambassadors from 23 countries, signaling regional interest in cross-border collaboration. The forum provided a platform to discuss joint production models, co-funding, and regulatory alignment to support festival participation and international distribution. Observers said the pact builds on years of informal collaboration between Iranian and Turkish filmmakers, ranging from co-produced shorts and documentaries to festival exchanges. Previous efforts were largely project-based; the new agreement establishes a formal structure with operational and strategic guidelines for sustained cooperation.



Head of Cinema Organization of Iran Raed Faridzadeh (R) and General Director of Cinema of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey Birol Güven, shake hands after signing a cinema cooperation agreement at the International Cinema Cooperation Conference in southwestern city of Shiraz, held December 1-3 alongside the Fajr International Film Festival.

● IRNA

Six Iranian films advance to India's Kerala festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Six films from Iran are among the line-up at this year's International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK), which runs from December 12 to 19 in the southern Indian state's capital. The Iranian entries include 'Black Rabbit, White Rabbit' by Shahram Mokri, which competes in the festival's International Competition section. Also featured is 'It Was Just an Accident' by Jafar Panahi, presented under the festival's "popular films" strand, ISNA reported. In addition, retrospectives of four earlier Iranian



works have been selected under a special package for previous award-winners: 'About Elly' by Asghar Far-

hadi, 'The Dark Room' by Rouhollah Hejazi, 'Parviz' by Majid Barzegar and '10+4' by Mania Akbari.

The four films are among past recipients of the festival's Golden Crow Pheasant award. The 30th-edition IFFK boasts more than 200 films from nearly 70 countries, screened at 16 theaters across Thiruvananthapuram. Organized by the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy, the festival remains a key platform for world and Asian cinema. Attendance is expected to exceed 15,000 delegates this year, with an expanded schedule and several curated packages showcasing international and regional cinema.

Tehran, Yerevan hold 5th joint tourism cooperation meeting

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's delegation is in Yerevan for the fifth meeting of the joint technical tourism committee with Armenia, taking place December 7-9, the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Ministry announced. The team is led by Iran's Deputy Minister of Tourism and includes senior officials from East Azerbaijan province and the ministry's marketing and foreign tourism department. The three-day conference focuses on deepening bilateral ties and easing travel for visitors between the two neighbors. Agendas include expanding cultural and road-travel routes, streamlining border-crossing procedures and promoting joint tourism packages. Officials are also convening a round-table between Armenian tour

operators and Iranian private-sector representatives. Discussions cover medical tourism, heritage-site visits and coordinated marketing efforts. Additional meetings are scheduled with Armenia's health ministry, national tourism board, and economy ministry. The session continues the structured cooperation begun at the fourth committee meeting in Tehran during the 2022 Iran International Tourism Exhibition. Armenia has emerged as a key outbound destination for Iranian travelers, particularly in shopping, medical travel and cultural heritage. The current meeting follows broader bilateral agreements signed in August 2025 across tourism, culture, trade and infrastructure, showing Yerevan's growing role in Iran's regional tourism strategy.

Birth rate hits historic low in Iran as permanent singlehood surges seven-fold



Social Desk

Iran is facing a sharp demographic shift, according to new remarks by Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi, secretary of the National Population Headquarters. In an interview with Tasnim News Agency, she disclosed that the rate of permanent singleness (women reaching age 50 unmarried) has surged seven-fold, rising from 1.1 % in 1986 to 7.7 % in 2023. Births in 2024 reportedly dipped below one million for the first time, marking a low-water point in the

country's post-revolution demographic trajectory. Total fertility has fallen from an average of 6.8 births per woman in the mid-1980s to under 1.5 today. At the same time, registered marriages have dropped from roughly 800,000 annually between 2011 and 2013 to around 480,000 last year. Vahid-Dastjerdi pointed to shifting social norms. More people simply believe there is "no need to marry." Many now prioritize education, careers and financial stability. Where earlier couples wed despite unstable incomes or housing and often lived in extended family households, today

those patterns have largely disappeared. The data show that the average Iranian woman now gives birth to her first child at 27.5 years. In Tehran and other large cities the age is closer to 30. The lag between marriage and first birth has widened to an average of 4.5 years, while the interval between first and second child has stretched to about six years. These trends, she warned, are steering Iran toward a shrinking population of working-age adults, shrinking labor supply, and a bulging elderly cohort, amplifying long-term pressures on health, pension systems and social services. Unless the current trajectory changes, Iran may soon lose the narrow demographic window that once offered a youthful, economically active population, a window many analysts regard as critical for sustainable growth and innovation. "Attitudes and lifestyles have shifted," said Vahid-Dastjerdi. Without a reversal, the consequences could be profound.



Chakavak Orchestra to revive Pazouki legacy in Tehran

Arts & Culture Desk

Chakavak Orchestra will perform works by veteran composer Jahanbakhsh Pazouki on December 25 at Vahdat Hall in Tehran. Under conductor Reza Shayesteh the private ensemble will present, for the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, several pieces by Pazouki.

Vocalists Vahid Nooraei and Mehrdad Peykarzadeh will join the orchestra on stage, ILNA reported. Shayesteh said the concert will mark the debut performance in Iran of "all the pieces" selected for the evening, drawn from the repertoire of Pazouki, one of the country's most influential songwriters and composers.

He added that Chakavak Orchestra remains "the only orchestra authorized to perform all his works in Iran". Formed roughly 27 years ago, Chakavak Orchestra has established a steady record in the Iranian music scene. Over the years it has helped launch the careers of numerous emerging vocal talents.