

Golestan to host 17th Handicrafts Expo alongside Tribal Culture Festival

Iranica Desk

The 17th National Handicrafts Exhibition of Golestan Province will be held concurrently with the 17th International Festival of Tribal Culture, featuring works by artists from across Iran as well as neighboring countries, displayed over an area of 3,600 square meters, said Maryam Haji-Ebrahimi, deputy head of the Golestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization. She pointed to the diversity and wide-ranging participation of nationally and internationally recognized handicraft cities and villages, noting that four globally registered cities and villages — Lalejin, Shiraz, Meybod, and Qasemabad village — will take part in the event, showcasing their internationally recognized capacities through the presentation of high-quality works. In addition, nine nationally



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registered cities and villages, including Gonbad-e Kavus, Aliabad-e Katul, Khor, Fashtakeh

village, and Bafroiye, will present their prominent traditional crafts, playing a key role

in introducing local identity and strengthening the handicrafts economy, according to chn.ir.

Referring to the exhibition's innovative and supportive sections, Haji-Ebrahimi said a knowledge-based handicrafts pavilion has been set up, focusing on products developed through modern technologies and the practical application of knowledge in the handicrafts sector. She further noted that a pavilion dedicated to home-based business supporters has been established to assist home-based handicraft producers and connect them to target markets. Meanwhile, the veterans' section provides an opportunity for experienced artists from Golestan Province and other parts of the country to present their valuable works and authentic techniques to the public. Highlighting the broad provincial participation, she said that 27 provinces have been finalized for participation in this year's exhibition, with 66 artists

attending from other provinces. In addition, 205 artists from Golestan Province are presenting their works at the event. She added that a total of 164 handicrafts pavilions have been set up at the exhibition, while foreign artisans from Central Asian countries are also in attendance, introducing their traditional handicrafts. Haji-Ebrahimi stressed that the main objective of holding the exhibition is to provide a suitable platform for introducing the handicrafts of Golestan and other provinces, expanding interprovincial and international cooperation, and enhancing artists' skills, enabling them not only to sell their works but also to gain practical knowledge and experience. The 17th International Festival of Tribal Culture of Iran will be held from December 16 to 19 at the province's permanent exhibition venue.

Iran's art of mirrorwork reaches new milestone at Golestan Palace

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Global registration of the art of mirrorwork in Iranian architecture known as Ayeneh-Kari is a source of pride for Iran's cultural heritage, said the director of the Golestan Palace World Heritage Site. Afarin Emami added that the restoration and conservation of the mirrorwork masterpieces at Golestan Palace have reached a new milestone — one that ensures the continued brilliance and splendor of this art form in Iranian architecture, according to chn.ir. She noted that coinciding with the inscription of "the art of mirrorwork in Iranian architecture" on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the organization and restoration of the mirrorwork in the entrance hall of the Mirror Hall at Golestan Palace have been completed. Emami continued that this measure represents a significant step in the protection and restoration of the extensive mirror decorations of this site, adding that the opportunity created by the temporary closure of museums and their gradual reopening was used in the best possible way. Referring to the importance of the mirrorwork at Golestan Palace, Emami emphasized that

the extensive and unique mirror decorations of the building — created between 1874 and 1882 by the renowned Iranian artist Sani ol-Molk — are among the most radiant and magnificent works in the history of Iran's architecture. She added that, within the framework of plans for the reopening of the main halls of the palace, including the entrance hall, the Mirror Hall, and the Salam Museum Hall in the coming days, special attention was paid to these decorations.



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Accordingly, immediately after the large-scale and integrated organization and restoration of the Hall of Dishes and its mirrorwork embellishments on stucco, the restoration of the Mirror Hall was also carried out. She further explained that although the protection, maintenance, and restoration of mirrorwork in the buildings of the Golestan Palace Complex have been ongoing for nearly two centuries, since 2019 this effort has gained renewed importance through reliance on the knowl-

edge and expertise of master craftsmen and restorers, as well as systematic conservation management. Alongside conservation and restoration efforts in all other decorative elements of the complex, the extensive mirrorwork decorations have been recognized as a focal point of artistic creativity and aesthetic sensibility, contributing to the continuity of the palace's vibrant and living architecture. The official pointed out that over the past years, a total of nine large-scale conservation and restoration projects have been implemented exclusively on mirrorwork surfaces in an extensive and integrated manner within the complex.

Humans settle, expand knowledge in Neolithic Iran

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For millions of years, humans lived according to a common pattern of hunting and gathering, and the shift in lifestyle was not a sudden decision but a process spanning thousands of years. Around 12,000 years ago, this process culminated in the Neolithic period, or the beginning of settled village life, which many scholars consider the most important event in human history. Mohammad Hossein Azizi Kharanqi, an archaeologist, told chn.ir that one of the most fundamental chapters in human evolution shows that "humans did not leave the caves by a sudden decision." He explained that the most important feature of the Neolithic era was domestication. Humans gradually abandoned full-scale hunting and began integrating species that could be domesticated into their lives. The oldest evidence of goat and sheep domestication in Iran dates back approximately 10,000 years and has been identified at sites such as Ganj Dareh in Kermanshah, chn.ir wrote. He added that during the same period, humans domesticated wheat and barley — the foundations of human subsistence even today — for the first time. Archaeological studies show that the earliest evidence of wheat domestication in Iran, around 11,000 years ago, was found at the Chogha Golan site in Ilam. Azizi emphasized the importance of pottery technology in the history of civilization, stating that pottery was humanity's first technological product. Before this, humans were mere consumers of nature; but by firing clay to produce durable vessels, they made a fundamental leap. The oldest examples of pottery in Iran have been discovered in Kermanshah, Ilam, and later in Khuzestan, and even after 9,000 years, they



Chogha Golan
IRNA



Ganj Dareh
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retain the same strength and durability. He stressed that cooking food in clay vessels allowed humans to extract more calories and nutrients, which in turn influenced cognitive development, improved nutrition, and contributed to the formation of complex biological and mental structures. The archaeologist pointed to mental transformations during the Neolithic, noting that settled life, regular sleep, cooked food, and increased caloric intake fostered the growth of the abstract mind. Humans began to think not only about the tangible world but also about abstract concepts, leading to a flourishing of art. The production of various pottery forms and decorations enabled ideas and beliefs to be transmitted between communities, expanding artistic expression. He also noted changes in environmental practices and human perceptions of death during the Neolithic. Burials increasingly took place inside homes. Children were buried in clay vessels, while adults were generally interred lying down, facing the sun, under

the floor. Many scholars believe this practice signified a lasting connection to ancestors and strengthened people's attachment to their environment and settlements. Azizi continued, stating that ancient humans were already familiar with fire and used it for warmth, defense, and cooking; but in the Neolithic, fire was harnessed industrially for the first time. The controlled use of fire in simple kilns for pottery production marked the beginning of human awareness of fire's technical potential — knowledge that later enabled metal smelting and subsequent industrial revolutions. He added that with sedentary life came the construction of houses, the establishment of farms, the domestication of animals, and the emergence of the concept of ownership. Many epidemics also began during this period. For this reason, some researchers argue that although the Neolithic was the greatest transformation in history, it may also have been the most difficult and burdensome change for humanity — a shift that separated humans from millions of years of freedom.