

Iran’s cultural diversity to be showcased at Hormozgan’s handicrafts expo

Iranica Desk

The Seventh National Handicrafts Exhibition will be held from 22 to 26 December 2025 in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province. This national event provides a distinguished platform to showcase the cultural richness of Iranian provinces and to strengthen the tourism value chain across the Persian Gulf region. Handicraft works created by veteran and young artists from 30 provinces across the country will be displayed in 153 specialized pavilions at Bandar Abbas Mall, offering a magnificent and comprehensive showcase of authentic Iranian identity, creativity, and traditional artistry, IRNA reported.

Bandar Abbas Mall, a large tourism, commercial, and cultural complex, functions not only as a shopping center but also as a multifaceted tourism destination. The complex includes a children’s tourism center, a health tourism center, two cinema halls, a study and cultural tourism center, as well as accommodation and hospitality facilities. The complex also features two

elements registered on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list — oud (the craftsmanship and performance of oud music) and Lenj (the traditional knowledge of building and navigating wooden vessels of the Persian Gulf) — while simultaneously introducing the historical, cultural, and tourism attractions of Hormozgan Province. Bandar Abbas Mall is located in the northern Golshahr district of Bandar Abbas.

The Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Hormozgan Province said the national cultural event offers a valuable opportunity to provide direct support for handicraft artists, introduce the cultural capacities of Iran’s provinces, and strengthen the cultural tourism axis in Hormozgan. Emphasizing the role of handicrafts in safeguarding cultural identity, he noted that handicrafts represent a living manifestation of Iran’s intangible heritage, indigenous knowledge, and the artistic expression of its people. National exhibitions, he added, create a platform for showcasing these capacities, facilitating the transfer of experience, and reinforcing



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ing cultural continuity and intergenerational ties. Describing the National Handicrafts Exhibition as a driving force behind cultural tourism development, he stated that such events enhance the cultural appeal of cities, attract domestic and international tourists, increase the length of tourist stays, and contribute to the economic vitality of host destinations. Hosting the exhibition in Bandar Abbas, he said, presents a valuable opportunity to introduce Hormozgan’s cultural and artistic capabilities at the national level.

Referring to the economic impacts of the event, he explained that the exhibition enables the direct supply and sale of handicraft products, facilitates direct interaction between artists and audiences, and helps identify investment opportunities.

These outcomes, he noted, play an effective role in job creation, production growth, and the strengthening of the creative economy. He added that the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Hormozgan Province, with a strategic focus on supporting handicraft producers and expanding sales markets, is seriously pursuing the organization of national and

specialized events. Currently, more than 80,000 handicraft artisans are active in Hormozgan Province, about 60,000 of whom have received official operating licenses. In addition, licenses have been issued for 11 handicraft shops across the province. With more than 900 kilometers of coastline stretching from the border with Sistan and Baluchestan Province in the east along the Sea of Oman to the border with Bushehr Province in the west along the Persian Gulf, Hormozgan boasts the longest coastline in the country. The province is also home to Iran’s most strategic islands, endowed with vast oil and gas reserves. Covering a land area of 71,193 square kilometers, Hormozgan ranks as the eighth-largest province in the country. Owing to its strategic location along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Hormozgan enjoys a privileged position for commercial activities, particularly in the maritime-based economy. Its rich historical background further attests to the province’s exceptional strategic importance and its enduring value to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mashhad conference to explore historical ties across Greater Khorasan

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The First National Conference on the Archaeology, Culture and Civilization of Khorasan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia will be held on December 17 in Mashhad, with the participation of researchers, university professors, and students. Seyyed Javad Mousavi, Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Khorasan Razavi, said the conference is being organized

in line with the organization’s research mission and aims to create a scientific platform for the exchange of views among scholars, as well as to present the latest achievements related to the archaeology of Greater Khorasan, chtn.ir reported. He noted that planning for the event began last year in cooperation with national and world heritage sites and leading academic centers in the province, particularly Neyshabur University. The

conference will coincide with Research Week (December 13-19), and efforts are underway to ensure the continuity of this series of events in order to facilitate scholarly interaction, knowledge sharing, and academic dialogue among researchers interested in the cultural heritage of Greater Khorasan. Mousavi added that the many shared cultural elements between present-day Khorasan and vast regions of Afghanistan and Central Asia reflect

deep and enduring roots in cultural and archaeological contexts. Paying attention to these cultural ties, he said, will significantly contribute to deeper mutual understanding and the development of international cultural diplomacy. Mahmoud Toghraei, Executive Secretary of the conference, said the cultural event will include the unveiling of a book containing the conference proceedings, along with several selected lectures and

presentations, during which the latest scientific findings will be reviewed and discussed. He added that given the expansion and diversity of archaeological research in recent years, and the importance of explaining the historical role of Khorasan in the culture and civilization of the Iranian cultural sphere, plans are in place to continue organizing and holding this series of conferences in the coming years.



The Reading Room

Zhaleh Amouzegar illuminates ancient Iranian culture, mythology

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Zhaleh Amouzegar is a distinguished scholar of ancient Iranian languages, a mythologist, and a leading researcher at the Iran Culture Foundation. She is widely recognized as one of the foremost figures in contemporary Iranian studies. Her mastery of Pahlavi and Avestan languages has consistently bridged the gap between rigorous academic research and the general public’s appreciation of Iran’s cultural heritage. For Amouzegar, the concept of homeland holds a special significance. In her view, the homeland is defined not by political borders but by the breadth of Iranian culture and collective memory. She regards Iran primarily as a civilizational heritage — rooted in language, myths, and an-

cient rituals — that shapes the identity of today’s Iranians. To her, homeland is culture rather than soil; memory rather than territory. Its survival depends on the preservation of language and storytelling, ensuring that this culture continues to thrive, according to IBNA. Amouzegar emphasizes that the Persian language is the most important link between Iranians and their past. Language, she explains, is a vessel where history and collective sentiment are embedded, and protecting it is tantamount to protecting the homeland. This perspective underpins her insistence on preserving ancient words, stories, and narratives, each carrying a fragment of the nation’s collective memory. Iranian identity, in her view, forms a continuous chain of mythological, historical, and cultural layers. Iran is nei-

ther frozen in the past nor confined to the present; it is a living entity that evolves over time. For her, being Iranian entails a cultural responsibility: the duty to safeguard heritage, language, and the cultural diversity of a land that has fostered shared narratives for millennia. Born on December 3, 1939, Amouzegar has taught at the University of Tehran for over 30 years. She holds a PhD in ancient languages and Zoroastrian literature from the University of Sorbonne and is often referred to by colleagues as the “Grand Lady of Ancient Iranian Studies.” Her notable works include «Zoroaster’s Mythological Life», “Pahlavi Language” (co-authored with Ahmad Tafazzoli), and Mythical History of Iran. Experts in Iranian studies consider her a pioneer in

ancient Iranian studies. Her publications and research provide essential tools for teaching and learning ancient texts, presented in clear and accessible language. She is proficient in English, French, Turkish, Pahlavi, and Avestan. Among her numerous honors, Amouzegar has received both national and international awards, including France’s Legion of Honour from the Ministry of Culture and the Iranian Sarv Prize for Cultural Heritage in 2016. Amouzegar is also an accomplished translator. Her joint translation with Ahmad Tafazzoli, The First Humans, the First King in Iran’s Legendary History (1989), won the Book of the Year award and a commendation from the University of Tehran. Her most recent work, “Iran Again”, offers readers another



opportunity to benefit from her vast knowledge and meticulous scholarship. In this book, she explores one of the fundamental recurring patterns in Iranian culture and mythology: the seven-stage structure. These stages are not merely a number but symbolize the arduous journey toward per-

fection — a test of worthiness and the passage from the material world to spiritual truth. She explains how heroic stages in the Shahnameh, often associated with the number seven, such as the Seven Labors of Rostam and Esfandiar, represent symbolic journeys of growth, evolution, and human perfection.