

● License Holder  
● ICPI CEO  
● Editor-in-chief  
● Deputy Editor-in-chief  
● Int'l & National Desk  
● Economy Desk  
● Sports Desk  
● Iranica Desk  
● Arts & Culture Desk  
● Language Editor

Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
Ali Motaghian  
Asgar Ghahremanpour  
Mostafa Shirmohammadi  
Javad Mohammad Ali, Amir Mozaffari, Delaram Ahmadi  
Zohreh Qanadi, Sadeq Dehqan  
Amirhadi Arsalanpour  
Leila Imeni  
Hamideh Hosseini  
Mehdi Ebrahim

● Editorial Dept. Tel  
● Address  
● ICPI Publisher  
● Advertising Dept. Tel/Email  
● Website  
● Email  
● Printing House

+98 21 84711225  
208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran  
+98 21 88548892-5  
+98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com  
www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir  
irandaily@icpi.ir  
Iran Cultural & Press Institute



> [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir) | [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir) | [IranDailyWeb](http://IranDailyWeb)

Vol. 8007 ● Saturday, December 20, 2025 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

# 17th Int'l Festival of Tribal Culture wraps up Golestan ethnic event bridges Central Asia, sparks tourism growth

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran highlighted deep-rooted cultural affinities with Central Asian neighbors at the 17th International Festival of Tribal Culture in the northern province of Golestan, as senior officials said strong public turnout indicates rising cultural tourism and growing regional engagement.

Ali Darabi, deputy cultural heritage minister, said Iran shares longstanding cultural and artistic common ground with countries including Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, IRNA reported.

Culture and art, he said, often succeed in building bridges where formal politics reach a "dead end", making festivals an effective instrument for dialogue, peace and social cohesion.

The festival, hosted in Gorgan and several other cities across Golestan through December 19, brought together representatives from all 31 Iranian provinces alongside ethnic groups resident in the province and cultural delegations from Central Asia, Afghanistan and other Asian countries.

The program featured ritual ceremonies, traditional music, handicrafts and ethnic products, staged at the

province's permanent exhibition center and in decentralized venues across Golestan.

Darabi said the scale of public participation during the first days of the event reflected months of sustained preparation by provincial authorities and cultural institutions. Visitors arrived from across Golestan as well as neighboring provinces, he said, describing the turnout as a "clear sign" of the province's growing appeal as a cultural tourism destination.

The deputy minister said one of the defining advantages of the 17th edition was the inclusion of dedicated cultural nights hosted by Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The performances, which highlighted shared musical traditions and artistic heritage, were met with strong public interest and reinforced the festival's international character, he said.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri, also addressing the festival, framed the event within the government's broader rural development and tourism strategy.

Emptying villages, he warned, would amount to distancing the country from its cultural ideals. Sustaining families

in rural areas, supporting local production and ensuring access to financing and raw materials within the same geography were central to national policy, he said.

Salehi-Amiri outlined a strategy summarized as "one village, one ec lodge", aimed at steering tourists towards rural areas and traditional accommodation. The government's target, he said, is to direct at least half of domestic tourists to villages and eco-tourism facilities, integrating women, artists and handicrafts into local value chains while cutting out "unnecessary intermediaries".

The ethnically diverse Caspian province of Golestan hosts more than 1,000 nationally registered heritage sites, from the ancient Gorgan Wall to the UNESCO-listed Gonbad-e Qabus tower. Officials say the province is positioned for a major cultural and tourism expansion, supported by its geography, ethnic mosaic and historical assets.

A rural heritage museum is under construction across 50 hectares within the 650-hectare Qoroq forest park, located in the Hyrcanian woodlands, authorities said, adding to Golestan's cultural infrastructure and tourism



offering. Mohammad Hamidi, Golestan's deputy governor for political, security and social affairs, said strong public engagement reflected the province's long-standing tradition of peaceful coexistence among ethnic groups. Cultural diversity, he said, has

strengthened social cohesion and collective identity, rather than fragmenting it.

The festival featured more than 20 cultural and artistic groups and over 60 musicians and artisans from Iran and abroad, alongside 170 handicrafts booths representing Iranian provinces.

## Minister frames Yalda as regional cultural diplomacy tool ahead of solstice

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri urged countries across the Nowruz civilizational sphere to harness the ancient Yalda night as a platform for dialogue and cohesion, describing the ritual as a "civilizational discourse" that can advance cultural diplomacy and regional convergence.

In a video message to the "Chelleh Mehr" cultural and artistic program hosted by the ECO Cultural Institute on the eve of Yalda, Salehi-Amiri said the winter solstice observance went beyond a calendrical festivity, framing it as a shared language of conversation, solidarity and peace spanning families, societies and regions, ISNA reported.

The intervention underlines Tehran's effort to lean on soft power amid a fragmented regional landscape. By foregrounding common rituals across the Nowruz zone, which spans parts of Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf, officials aim to thicken cultural linkages where political channels are constrained.

The approach mirrors a broader recalibration towards non-coercive tools, with cultural exchange positioned as a low-cost, high-impact vector for engagement.

"Yalda is not merely a night,"

the minister said, calling it a "deep-rooted" practice of togetherness that begins at home and extends into public life. He described the night-long gatherings and conversation as a social rehearsal for cohesion, capable of carrying meaning "beyond political borders" and national demarcations.

Salehi-Amiri linked Yalda to a continuum of Iranian rites, including Nowruz, Chaharshanbe Suri and Sizdah Bedar, portraying them as an integrated civilizational system that channels society away from "fracture" towards unity.

Yalda, he said, acts as a bridge that "moves us from division to consensus".

Emphasizing the regional dimension, the minister said the Nowruz area could activate a durable cultural current centered on dialogue, with Yalda as a "prominent symbol".

He pointed to the existing alignment of 13 countries around Nowruz as a template for elevating Yalda into a shared marker across Iran, ECO members, Central Asia, the Caucasus and neighboring Persian Gulf states. The minister contrasted cultural and political diplomacy, arguing that the former prioritizes shared heritage and peaceful coexistence over power and rivalry. Yalda, he said, inherently carries those values and can draw states and societies "from tension towards dialogue".

## Tehran Symphony stages Mendelssohn, Iranian music in 'Whispers Within'



### Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra staged a two-night program blending canonical European romanticism with contemporary Iranian composition at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 18 and 19, performing German Felix Mendelssohn's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream

Overture' alongside Mohammad Reza Tafazzoli's 'Symphony No.1,' under the baton of its permanent conductor, Nasir Heydari, the orchestra said. The concerts opened with Mendelssohn's 'Op.21 overture,' a staple of the global symphonic repertoire, written when the German composer was

17 and inspired by Shakespeare's play, IRNA reported.

The brisk, gossamer string passages and sharply etched woodwind colors were shaped into a tightly paced reading that leaned into the work's "concert overture" independence rather than programmatic narrative, drawing sustained applause.

Mendelssohn, often cast as a bridge between classical form and romantic imagination, wrote the overture decades before completing the incidental music. Its structural autonomy and lucid orchestration have kept it in heavy rotation at major halls, from Leipzig to

London.

The second half turned decisively inward. The orchestra performed Tafazzoli's 'Symphony No.1,' a four-movement work first recorded in 2016 with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. In Tehran, the ensemble presented all four movements across the two evenings, foregrounding a score that absorbs Iranian melodic logic into Western symphonic form without quotation.

The opening sonata movement sets two ideas in parallel motion, followed by a taut scherzo. A passacaglia draws on a theme linked to the coda of Gustav Mahler's

'Seventh Symphony,' before a finale that fuses introduction and rondo with Kurdish-inflected rhythmic drive. The writing is dense and technically demanding, with exposed brass and string figurations that test ensemble precision.

Addressing the audience, Heydarian framed the program as part of a broader push to put Iranian composers "first at home", arguing that sustained domestic performance is a prerequisite for international circulation.

Premieres, he noted, rarely arrive fully formed, but repeated exposure builds both technique and audience familiarity.

## Canadian resolution vote ...

It underscores the reduced influence of Western alliances and the weakening willingness of other countries to fall in line with Western lobbying within international bodies.

**What motivates Canada to pursue this resolution annually, and what domestic or foreign objectives does it seek to advance? Can this trend be viewed as part of broader Western pressure on Iran?**

Canada, as a country with its

own record of indigenous genocide, mass graves of indigenous children, systemic racism, and a deafening silence in the face of Israel's crimes in Gaza, lacks the moral standing to pursue such resolutions. Nevertheless, given the shared and specific mission defined by US allies to sustain maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran, while hoping to create internal fractures and weaken Iran's international position, Canada remains active in promoting double standards under the banner of human rights norms.

**Given that the human rights allegations raised by Canada could implicate many countries, why is the primary focus placed on Iran?**

Canada's focus on the Islamic Republic of Iran, despite its own systematic silence, alongside other Western allies, regarding Israel's war crimes and human rights violations, clearly demonstrates the lack of sincerity in Canada's professed commitment to UN human rights norms and its alignment with the United States. Iran, during periods of internal and external tension, has acted

against domestic offenders in accordance with judicial laws and within cultural, human, and ideological frameworks. In such circumstances, Iran's enforcement of its laws is portrayed by US Western allies as non-compliance with human rights standards. By contrast, Israel and numerous other countries, despite supporting terrorism and disregarding humanitarian principles, receive no meaningful warnings from international organizations due to their alignment with Western objectives and lobbying efforts.