



Tehran, Dushanbe map reciprocal museum exhibitions in Shiraz

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Tajikistan agreed to stage reciprocal museum exhibitions, including a showcase of Tajik historical heritage in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz, as the two countries move to scale up cultural diplomacy anchored in shared Persianate history. Zarifi Alisher Najmiddin, First Deputy Director of the National Museum of Tajikistan, made the proposal on Tuesday during talks in Shiraz with Behzad Moridi, director general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts for Iran's Fars Province, IRNA reported. The Tajik official said deeper museum cooperation could sharpen regional and international recognition of the two nations' common cultural legacy. Under the plan, a curated exhibition of selected artifacts from the Jondishapur Museum of Trade History will be mounted at the National Museum of Tajikistan to coincide with the international Nowruz celebrations. A second phase will bring an exhibition

of historical and artistic works from the National Museum of Tajikistan to a museum or cultural venue in Shiraz. Moridi welcomed the proposal, describing museum and cultural exchanges as a core pillar for consolidating bilateral ties. He said Zarifi's visit marked a practical step toward durable, goal-oriented cooperation between Iranian and Tajik cultural institutions. Fars province, home to Shiraz and widely regarded as a cradle of Iranian civilization, is prepared to broaden museum collaboration with Tajikistan, Moridi said. He cited the province's dense concentration of museums, archaeological sites and listed monuments as a platform for joint international exhibitions and long-term partnerships. The cooperation agenda under discussion spans conservation and restoration of historical artifacts and sites, joint scientific research, professional training and capacity building, and systematic cataloging and documentation



Zarifi Alisher Najmiddin (R), first deputy director of the National Museum of Tajikistan, reads a Tajik text to Behzad Moridi, director general of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts for Iran's Fars Province, during a meeting in Shiraz, Fars Province, on December 23, 2025.
● IRNA

of collections. The two sides also exchanged technical experience in museology and reviewed mechanisms to streamline bilateral engagement in cultural heritage management. Shiraz has emerged in recent months as an active node in Iran's cultural and economic outreach. Since the last Nowruz, the city has hosted multiple high-level gatherings involving leaders from countries within the broader Persian cultural sphere. It also served as the venue for the 17th session of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Economic Commission, underscoring its growing role in Iran's external engagement.



Iran, Kazakhstan frame shared heritage as bridge for cultural dialogue



Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Iran, Ontalap Onalbayev (L), speaks during the Iran-Kazakhstan cultural night at the Niavaran Cultural and Historical Complex in Tehran on December 22, 2025.
● ISNA

Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts said that shared heritage can serve as a platform for dialogue and cultural peace, as Tehran hosted a joint Iran-Kazakhstan cultural evening at the Niavaran cultural and historical complex. Speaking at the gathering in Tehran on December 22, Reza Salehi-Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, described ancient rituals, scientific figures and long-standing traditions across the region as assets that transcend modern borders and bind societies together. He said the responsibility

of governments was to understand these legacies more deeply and present them credibly on the global stage. The event marked the first installment of a new series titled 'Shared Heritage, Everlasting Ties', launched by the ministry as part of its cultural diplomacy agenda. The initiative is designed to use heritage, tourism and the creative industries as low-cost, high-impact instruments of engagement at a time when formal political channels across Eurasia face persistent constraints. Salehi-Amiri pointed to Yalda, the ancient winter solstice celebration observed across Iran and Central Asia, as one of the region's most enduring shared traditions, carrying a message of continuity and

social cohesion. He also cited previous high-profile cultural programming, including the Armenian Philharmonic's performance at Persepolis, as evidence that culture operates as a transnational language with durable soft-power returns. Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Iran Ontalap Onalbayev, told the audience that expanding relations with Iran remained a key priority of Astana's foreign policy. He said historical exchanges along the Silk Road had positioned both countries as connective corridors between East and West, facilitating trade, scholarship and literature over centuries. Onalbayev described Iran as a significant political and economic partner in the Middle East and the wider Islamic world, adding that recent high-level exchanges and the signing of several cultural memoranda had created operational momentum for cooperation in areas such as archives, cinema and cultural exchanges. A focal point of the evening was the

joint submission by Iran and Kazakhstan of a UNESCO commemorative dossier on the philosopher Al-Farabi, which Salehi-Amiri described as a template for future multilateral heritage projects, similar to the earlier multinational registration of Nowruz. He confirmed that Tehran will host a global Nowruz celebration and a meeting of tourism ministers in March 2027. Held alongside exhibitions of books, photographs and traditional crafts, including a Kazakh nomadic yurt, the Niavaran event drew diplomats, lawmakers and cultural figures. Iranian and Kazakh musicians performed traditional repertoires, underscoring the organizers' emphasis on tangible cultural expression rather than formal declarations. Iranian officials said the 'Shared Heritage, Everlasting Ties' program would continue on a rotating country basis, positioning culture as a practical channel for sustained regional engagement rather than a symbolic add-on.

'Mitosis' picked for competition at Russia's Echo BRICS Film Festival

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Iranian short film 'Mitosis', directed by Raha Haji Zeinal, was selected to compete at the ninth Echo BRICS Film Festival, scheduled to run from December 23 to 27, in Moscow. The annual, in-person festival is set to screen entries from a broad slate of countries, including Poland, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran, underscoring the event's widening geographic footprint on the Eurasian cultural circuit. Echo BRICS is regarded as one of Russia's established international film platforms, awarding prizes across feature, documentary and short formats, as well as acting, screenwriting and directing categories, according to ILNA. 'Mitosis' was written by Ali Safari and produced by Anahita Mogouei alongside Soran Karimi. Iranian actors Mehdi Abouhamzeh and Farid Zangi lead the cast. The short centers on moments of rapid decision-making and their lasting consequences, a narrative approach that has helped the film gain traction on the global festival calendar. The film previously received an honorable mention for best film at the World Culture Festival in Karachi, Pakistan, an event that has scaled up quickly into the country's largest cultural showcase. More than 1,000 artists from 140 countries took part in the Karachi festival's second edition, which combined film screenings with theater, photography and visual arts programming. Beyond South Asia, 'Mitosis' has screened in Europe and Latin America, including at the Norwich Film Festival in eastern England and Colombia's Palooza Film Festival.

Iran, Uzbekistan float joint Avicenna film in push for cultural diplomacy

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Iran's Academy of Arts and Uzbekistan's Embassy in Tehran agreed to explore a joint feature film on the life of Avicenna and to expand exchanges of historical records, opening a new phase of bilateral cultural diplomacy aimed at safeguarding shared heritage, Iranian state news agency IRNA reported. At a meeting in Tehran, Majid Shah-Hosseini, president of the Academy of Arts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Fariddin Nasriyev, Uzbekistan's ambassador, framed culture and the arts as a practical entry point for deeper cooperation between two civilizations with intertwined histories.

Shah-Hosseini proposed co-producing a film on Avicenna, known as Ibn Sina, arguing that joint stewardship of cultural icons can counter historical distortion and elevate authentic narratives. Shah-Hosseini said Uzbekistan's recent opening of a major Center of Islamic Civilization in Tashkent underscored the momentum for hands-on collaboration. He described the academy as the country's top arts planning body, with specialist groups spanning art research, traditional and visual arts such as architecture and miniature painting, and modern disciplines including cinema and theater. Those capacities, he said, position the academy to translate cultural intent into

executable projects. He also expressed hope that Akmal Nuriddinov, head of Uzbekistan's Academy of Arts, would visit Iran next month with a delegation to finalize groundwork for a five-year operational plan now being drafted as a memorandum of cooperation. Proposed deliverables include exchanging digital copies of reference art books, staging reciprocal cultural weeks in Tehran and Tashkent, and coordinating preservation of shared cultural assets. Shah-Hosseini criticized what he called flawed Western cinematic portrayals of Avicenna, citing the 2013 film 'The Physician,' and said neglect by rightful heirs invites misrepresentation by others. He emphasized that

honoring civilizational figures requires sustained institutional action rather than symbolic gestures.

Nasriyev welcomed the academy's hospitality and pointed to the recent expansion of Iran-Uzbekistan civil ties. He said Tashkent favors broader engagement between the two academies and supports hosting Iranian delegations in Uzbekistan. Noting the depth of overlapping historical sources, he said Uzbek specialists are prepared, subject to Iranian consent, to review relevant archives in Iran and transfer materials to Uzbek libraries or the Tashkent civilization center. On Avicenna, Nasriyev proposed

a co-produced film with location shooting split between Bukhara, the philosopher's birthplace, and Hamedan, his burial site. A shared creative lens, he said, could deliver a credible, high-standard production. He also invited Iranian officials to mark Avicenna's commemoration with a symbolic appearance at his statue in Tehran. Abdolrahim Firouzabadi, director for the academy's presidential office and international relations, said parallel talks with Uzbekistan's Academy of Arts have advanced ideas ranging from book exchanges and a Central Asian art section at the academy library to cooperation in miniature painting education and joint study of Timurid-era works.