

# Fajr theater festival launches 'My Iran' patriotic competition with 21 productions

## Arts & Culture Desk

The 44th Fajr International Theatre Festival will feature a new patriotic competitive section titled "My Iran," focused on themes of sacred defense and resistance, the event's secretary announced on Tuesday. The section, after securing sponsorship from a cultural foundation, will now feature 21 productions, IRNA reported. The festival's restructuring and financial model highlight the increasing role of institutional backers in Iran's cultural landscape, while organizational challenges and geopolitical tensions continue to impact its international profile. The pivot towards competitive domestic themes and decentralized hosting aligns with the cultural ministry's stated

policy directives. Speaking at a press conference in Tehran's Theater City Hall, Secretary Vahid Fakhr Mousavi outlined the festival's revised format. The festival launched in the southeastern city of Kerman on January 17, hosting five sections as part of a cultural decentralization drive championed by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi. The main program runs in Tehran across venues including City Theater, Iranshahr Hall, and Sangelaj Theater. Fakhr Mousavi disclosed the approved festival budget stands at 280 billion rials (nearly \$200,000), a decrease from the previous year. He acknowledged logistical and publicity hurdles, alongside the non-attendance of invited companies from Italy, Germany, Georgia, Armenia,

Iraq, and Russia. Submissions for the festival's main stage competition reached 274 works, with 62% originating from Iranian provinces outside Tehran. A total of 16 works were selected for the final program. In the international section, only seven productions were chosen from 223 submissions, with no foreign groups currently confirmed to perform. The secretary noted commemorations for four veteran artists are scheduled, while dedicated sections for radio plays, street theatre, and research seminars will proceed. Executive Secretary Abbas Ghaffari, also present, paid tribute to theatrical figures who died in recent months and emphasized the rigorous selection process across provinces.



## Iran's landmark cinematic event draws 122 films, spotlights first-time directors



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Iran's annual Fajr Film Festival announced on Tuesday that 122 feature films have applied for competition in its 44th national edition, highlighting a significant contingent of emerging film-

makers. The applicant pool signals a notable generational shift within the country's cinema industry. More than 45 percent of submissions, a total of 55 films, are from first-time directors, while 67 entries are from established

Iranian filmmakers, IRNA reported. The prominent festival, a key event in the regional cultural calendar, also received two films created using artificial intelligence tools for competition consideration.

The advertising section of the festival has attracted roughly 300 entries, including 145 teasers and trailers, 109 posters, and 44 distinct photo collections. All promotional materials correspond to films released by January 4, 2026.

Veteran Iranian photographer Mohammad Foghani oversees the advertising segment. The 44th Fajr Film Festival will run in Tehran from February 1 to 11.

## Three Iranian works compete at India's Third Eye event

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Three acclaimed Iranian films screened in the Asian competition segment of the 22nd Third Eye Asian Film Festival in Mumbai, India.

The festival concluded with an award ceremony at the P.L. Deshpande Academy Theatre. The curated Iranian slate featured Mehran Modiri's '6 in the Morning' Mehdi Jafari's 'Tear of the Reedbed (2025)', and Mohammad Mehdi Katirchi's 'in Other Words', IRNA reported.

The festival was held in Mumbai and Thane from January 9 to 15. These works, spanning contemporary social drama to historical narrative, showcased the diversity of Iranian cinema and drew strong audience and critical reception.

The event, orchestrated by the



Asian Film Foundation in collaboration with Prabhat Chitra Mandal and the Enlighten Film Society, hosted 56 Asian and Indian features and shorts from nations including China, Nepal, and Thailand. Iran's Cultural Attaché in Mumbai, Mohammadreza Fadel, presented awards during the closing program and a special memorial tribute for founding

figure Sudhir Nandgaonkar was bestowed upon distinguished critic and curator Minakshi Sheth.

The Mumbai-based Third Eye Asian Film Festival, launched in 2002, has established itself as a prominent platform for independent Asian art cinema and has consistently featured Iranian films as leading regional works.

## Bosnian publisher releases Persian market study, echoing historical ties

## Arts & Culture Desk

A study of Iranian marketplaces, 'Iranian Bazaars,' was published in Bosnian, reflecting a shared cultural heritage and architectural legacy between the two regions, the Iranian Cultural Center in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bookline Publishing House announced Tuesday. The project was supported by the Center for Coordination of Translation and Publication of Islamic Concepts and Humanities, affiliated with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, Ana News Agency reported.

Translated by Hadis Terzić from the original Persian work by Hossein Soltanzadeh, the book was edited by Munir Drkic, a professor of Persian Language and Literature at the University of Sarajevo. The publication holds particular



significance for Bosnian readers, as many Balkan cities, including Sarajevo, retain the term "Čaršija," derived from the Persian "Charsou," to denote the historic city center and marketplace. The word, originating in Persian and entering Balkan languages via Turkish, signifies a market or central trading hub. Notably, the architecture of traditional covered markets, such as Sarajevo's Bezistan, bears a striking

resemblance to Iranian market designs, indicating a familiarity among Bosnians with the structure and function of Eastern markets. Bookline Publishing House, a prominent Bosnian house, will distribute the book widely throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The preface to "Iranian Bazaars" highlights the historical importance of markets as central communication and urban spaces in Iran, often developing along major routes and extending from city gates to the core. The study examines the history, social characteristics, functions, and architecture of Iranian bazaars, including their administration, security, and regulations. Chapters explore historical and social aspects, functions, urban features, and architectural elements like storefronts, caravanserais, and central squares.

## Politics outweigh law ...

What ramifications does this action have for Iran, and what tools does the Iranian government have to counteract those impacts?

Davos, as one of the world's largest economic gatherings, provides Iran with an opportunity to showcase its role in global economic developments. This event is not only a venue for discussing economic issues but also a chance for Iran to actively participate in major economic debates and decision-making. Iran can use its presence at Davos as a symbol of its foreign policy aimed at constructive engagement and cooperation with the world. This is particularly important for countries that do not recognize Iran as a credible trading partner. The message of Iran's presence at Davos is that Iran, as an independent and insightful nation, is ready to participate in the global arena. Perhaps laying the groundwork for participation in similar events and taking a more serious approach to attending other such forums by the Iranian diplomati-

c and scientific/research communities could offset some of the negative narratives surrounding the country.

How will this decision impact the functioning of the World Economic Forum's mechanisms in the future? Can it be said that this double standard will undermine the forum's standing?

Institutions born from the liberal order, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and others, no longer possess their former power—though it's premature to declare the end of these organizations. However, they have not played a significant role in moderating the aggressive actions and policies of major powers. Various governments are preparing and adapting to the new international order in different ways, with some countries adapting quickly and others slowly. Given that there's no escaping this new situation, countries have realized the need to have sound policymaking in this area before opportunities turn into threats.