

Government moves to protect handicraft sector

Iranica Desk

A meeting of professional guilds and handicraft entrepreneurs was held with the participation of Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. The gathering was aimed at fostering synergy between policymakers and those who are active in the field, and was dedicated to examining the existing challenges and charting the future path of the handicraft sector amidst the country's complex economic conditions.

According to ISNA, Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, by outlining an analytical framework of the current situation, emphasized the necessity of forming a "shared mindset" between the government and those who are actively working in this field. He stated, "In the present circumstances, it is essential to simultaneously analyze three key components in order to reach a common understanding of the situation and the path for-



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ward." Referring to the government's supportive approach toward handicrafts, he added, "We are thinking about the sur-

vival of the handicraft sector, and this survival is defined around three fundamental axes: first, the continuity of production; second, the pres-

ervation and sustainability of employment; and third, the strengthening of the marketing and sales system." He explained, "In the current

situation, it is natural for society's priorities to shift toward meeting basic needs. However, our duty is to protect the sectors of tourism and handicrafts and to prevent any disruption in their cycle of life."

Salehi Amiri went on to announce the government's facilitation measures in the area of financing and stated, "In line with supporting small handicraft workshops, we raised the issue of removing the insurance requirement for receiving financial facilities with the government and successfully finalized it, in order to ease the path of access to financial resources for these production units."

He also announced the holding of specialized meetings with bank managing directors and added, "In the sessions that have been held so far, the issues and obstacles related to the payment of facilities have been examined in great detail, and we are actively following up to facilitate the relevant processes."

Emphasizing the ministry's intermediary and driving role in transmitting demands to the country's high decision-making levels, he stated, "Our duty is to convey your issues and concerns accurately and operationally to the government, and to have executive mechanisms properly designed and consistently pursued in order to solve them."

He also announced effective interaction with other executive bodies and said, "Appropriate cooperation has been established with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare in all related fields, and this cooperation is currently being expanded further."

Salehi Amiri stressed the importance of continued dialogue and constructive interaction between the government and the private sector, considering it a necessary condition for successfully navigating the current situation and maintaining the dynamism of the country's handicraft industry.

Comprehensive strategic plan unveiled for Arg-e Naderi Hill

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Arg-e Naderi Hill (Naderi Citadel) in Shirvan, North Khorasan Province, an ancient remnant whose occupation dates back to the mid-fourth millennium BCE, is now on the verge of a new transformation with the formulation of the "comprehensive strategic plan for cultural heritage protection and development management at Arg-e Naderi of Shirvan."

The plan, resulting from a joint collaboration between the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of North Khorasan Province and

the Architecture Department of Bojnord University, adopts an innovative approach seeking to transform the current challenges facing this national heritage site into an opportunity for integrated development and the strengthening of Shirvan's urban identity.

Ali-Akbar Vahdati, head of the Historical Heritage Preservation and Restoration Department of North Khorasan Province, wrote that Arg-e Naderi Hill is registered on Iran's National Heritage List and is considered one of the most significant prehistoric settlements in the north-eastern region of the country,

according to chtn.ir. Archaeological evidence from excavations conducted by a joint Iran-China mission reveals an urban center with extensive cultural and commercial ties from the Chalcolithic period (Copper Age) through the Qajar era.

However, the destruction of the old city of Shirvan in the earthquake of 1929 has severed this valuable

hill from the living fabric of the city and turned it into a symbol of neglect. Vacant lands, abandoned and unsafe spaces within the 23-hectare perimeter surrounding the hill have exacerbated physical and social

disintegration, giving rise to greater damage that has not only fueled an unbalanced urban landscape but also sparked social disorders in this area. The complexity

of the situation has been compounded by the mixed ownership structure and the lack of integrated management. The comprehensive strategic plan seeks to forge a deep connection between cultural heritage and modern urban life.



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Reading Room

New study explores poetry, poetics of Iran's Constitutional era

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Recently, Morvarid Publishing released Poetry and Poetics in the Constitutional Era, a research-based and analytical work examining one of the most pivotal periods in Iranian literary history. Translated by Behzad Zarehdaran, the book compiles a series of essays by various scholars, curated by Hodayoun Katouzian and Alireza Korangi. It offers a comprehensive picture of the transformation of Persian poetry during the Constitutional Revolution, exploring its roots, precursors, and the ways it reflected social and political change. The work examines poetry's role in shaping public awareness and discourse, the transition from traditional poetic forms to socially and politically engaged expression, thematic innovations, and the contributions of key poets of the period.

Hodayoun Katouzian, one of the book's editors and contributors, noted in an interview with IBNA that the volume highlights aspects of Constitutional-era literature that have received less attention in previous studies. "A significant body of work already exists on this period,

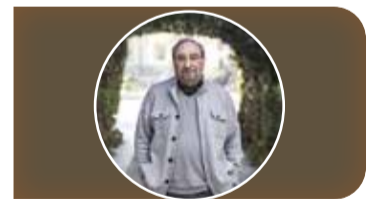
but we focused on areas that have been relatively underexplored," he explained. Katouzian added that while the literature of the Constitutional era is extensive and important, research has tended to emphasize only a few poets and satirists, leaving room for further exploration. One of the essays in the book, authored by Katouzian, focuses on the poet Iraj Mirza, titled Iraj: Poet of Love and Satire. The essay emphasizes the role of humor and satirical literature in the Constitutional era. Katouzian explained that only a portion of his essay was published in the book, noting that only one satirical poem by Iraj from the Constitutional Revolution period survives. Later works established him as one of the most prominent Persian satirists of the twentieth century, though he was not politically active in the strict sense.

Katouzian also highlighted the key difference between satirical poetry of the Constitutional period and classical Persian satire, "Constitutional-era satire is largely political, unlike classical satire. For instance, works by Ubayd Zakani (and Iraj) contain sharp social critique but generally lack explicit political objectives."

Another essay in the collection, Anthem of Freedom: Women and the Praise of Poets during the Constitutional Era, explores the contributions of female poets. Katouzian emphasized that the themes and forms of women's poetry in this period mirrored those of male poets, since the subject matter was largely political and introduced many new terms and expressions.

Other essays include The Gilaki Poetry of Mohammad Ali Afarashteh and the Legacy of the Constitutional Revolution by Nasrin Rahimiyeh. Katouzian noted that while Afarashteh's poetry in the Gilaki language differed slightly in colloquial tone, its structure and themes were closely aligned with other Constitutional-era works. Afarashteh later became a skilled political satirist writing in standard Persian, publishing much of his work in the satirical newspaper Chelanger, which he directed and edited.

A defining feature of Constitutional-era poetry, Katouzian explained, was the introduction of new themes into classical forms. In the essay The Song of Modernity in the Language of Tradition: Theory and Literary Practice of Moham-



Hodayoun Katouzian

mad-Taqi Bahar by Salur Malayeri, this feature is explored, raising questions about potential tensions between form and content. Katouzian stressed that no such incompatibility existed: classical forms could accommodate any content, and many new words and expressions emerged in this poetry, even in Bahar's work. He further noted that certain forms, such as Mostazad poetry, which had nearly disappeared, were revived during this period, opening new literary paths alongside the introduction of political and social themes.

When asked about the necessity of revisiting Constitutional-era literature, Katouzian stated that while he does not see it as essential, "every poem has value and deserves attention." He emphasized the importance of pursuing neglected research in this field, though he currently has no plans for further projects on Constitutional-era literature.

