



UNESCO lists Alamut Castle as Iran's 30th World Heritage Site

Global recognition indicative of country's diverse history: **President**

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran secured UNESCO World Heritage status for the 1,100-year-old Alamut Castle and its associated medieval fortifications on Sunday during the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, making the fortress complex the country's 30th cultural property on the prestigious list.

President Masoud Pezeshkian welcomed the inscription in a post on X, describing it as recognition of "part of Iran's diverse and shared history." He said cultural heritage has the power to unite society despite its differences, writing, "Cultural heritage can bring us together despite our differences and remind us that Iran belongs to all Iranians."

The inscription of "Alamut Castle and Its Associated Fortifications" crowns years of conservation and documentation efforts and is expected to raise Iran's international cultural profile while strengthening heritage tourism. The serial property comprises seven interconnected medieval fortresses across the Alamut Valley and the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountains, showcasing sophisticated military engineering, water management and architectural innovation developed between the 11th and 13th centuries.

Culture Minister Reza Salehi Amiri, who headed Iran's delegation in Busan, described the inscription as "the affirmation of Iran's intellectual legacy, historical memory and cultural capac-

ity within the global heritage system." Calling the designation "a symbol of the continuity of Iran's civilizational identity," Salehi Amiri said cultural heritage is inseparable from peace, security and dialogue among nations. "The protection of world heritage is possible only through peace, mutual respect and constructive cooperation among states and peoples," he said.

The minister said Iran is home to more than one million historical sites, 43,000 nationally registered monuments and now 30 UNESCO World Heritage properties.

Referring to Alamut's significance, he said the fortress complex "is a cornerstone in the evolution of Iranian architecture, engineering and defensive systems," adding that the inscription marks "the beginning of an even greater responsibility for conservation, research, education, knowledge exchange and international cooperation."

Alireza Izadi, director general for the registration, preservation and restoration of Iran's cultural and natural heritage, said UNESCO's evaluators endorsed the nomination, paving the way for its approval by committee members.

Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushiravan Mohseni-Bandpey said the inscription "once again reminds the world of the grandeur of Iranian civilization" and opens a new chapter for cultural tourism in Qazvin Province.

He described Alamut as "a symbol of resilience, architectural ingenuity and Iran's historical identity" that con-



tinues to attract scholars and visitors from around the world.

Qazvin provincial heritage chief Maryam Mahdavi said the successful nomination resulted from close cooperation among heritage experts, local communities and civil society. "This was not the achievement of a single institution but the result of a collective

effort to introduce one of Iran's historical masterpieces to the world," she said, adding that the designation also places greater responsibility on authorities to protect and promote the site.

The National Commission for UNESCO in Iran also welcomed the decision. Secretary-General Hassan Fartousi said the nomination was approved by

consensus without opposition, demonstrating "the scientific and technical strength of the dossier" and the site's outstanding universal value.

He said the recognition should serve as a springboard for expanding cultural tourism, safeguarding the monument and presenting Iran's rich civilization to a wider international audience.

Kashmir readers turn to Iranian revolutionary memoir at Srinagar book fair



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian prison memoir 'Cell No. 14,' recounting the imprisonment of Iran's martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei under the Pahlavi regime, emerged as one of the bestselling titles at the third Chinar

Book Festival in Srinagar, India, held from July 18 to 26, drawing strong interest from readers seeking a deeper understanding of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

The nine-day festival, hosted at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), brought together more than 200 publishers and booksellers from across India, IRNA reported Sunday, citing The Hindu.

The Motahari Center's pavilion attracted heavy foot traffic, with daily attendance reaching about 20,000 visitors. Local Shia clerics also shared videos of their purchases on social media, further amplifying interest in the

collection.

Alongside works by Imam Ruhollah Khomeini, the architect of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, 'Cell No. 14' stood out as the pavilion's flagship title. "The memoir has generated tremendous interest. We sell dozens of copies every day," one bookseller said, adding that a visitor from the Chenab Valley purchased 60 copies in a single order.

Rashid Ahmad, a student at the University of Kashmir, said the memoir offers "a glimpse of what Iran's revolutionaries endured under the Shah's regime" and helps readers understand the country's political evolution

and resilience.

The appeal extended beyond the region's Shia community. Sunni visitors also browsed the Iranian collection, reflecting broader curiosity about Iranian intellectual and revolutionary literature. Another bookseller said local politicians and senior bureaucrats were among those purchasing books by Iranian leaders.

The 2026 Chinar Book Festival marked the first time that several Shia publishers collectively mounted multiple pavilions at the annual event, where books in English, Urdu, Kashmiri, Hindi, and other Indian languages were showcased.

Shared heritage frames Iran-Azerbaijan dialogue in Ardabil

Arts & Culture Desk

The head of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences said that culture, science, and tourism will drive deeper ties between Tehran and Baku during talks with Ardabil Governor Masoud Emami Yeganeh. Habibbeyli described science, culture, and shared civilization as enduring foundations linking the two neighboring nations, saying Azerbaijan is keen to broaden academic and cultural engagement with Iran, IRNA reported.

"Tourism is one of the strongest bridges between our peoples," he said, adding that greater two-way travel would not only bring citizens closer together but also facilitate economic exchanges and broaden commercial interaction.

He said Azerbaijan had already benefited from expanding economic cooperation with Iran and noted that increased visits by Iranian travelers could further reinforce those gains. Habibbeyli also under-

scored the importance of sustained dialogue between officials from both countries, saying recent meetings between the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan, along with signed agreements, had opened "a new atmosphere" for wider bilateral cooperation.

"Focusing on our shared historical, cultural, and scientific heritage will further strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between the two neighboring countries," he said.

The remarks came during a visit to Ardabil by a senior Azerbaijani delegation attending Ardabil Week, an annual celebration honoring Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili.

The delegation included the president of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the deputy culture minister, a lawmaker, and Azerbaijan's consul general in Iran. The festival showcases the province's cultural and literary heritage while encouraging cultural exchanges between the neighboring countries.

Oscar-qualifying TISFF draws 8,755 entries from around globe

Arts & Culture Desk

The 43rd Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) has attracted 8,755 submissions from filmmakers worldwide for its international section, organizers said, showing the event's growing global reach ahead of its October 17-22 edition in Tehran.

An Academy Awards-qualifying festival and one of Asia's leading short film events, TISFF offers its Grand Prize winner eligibility for Oscar consideration in the short film categories under the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' rules, ILNA reported.

The entries span six competition categories, including 4,372 fiction films, 1,157 AI-generat-



ed works, 1,079 documentaries, 804 animated films, 715 experimental productions, and 628 submissions for the Emerging Horizons Award, highlighting the festival's widening embrace of both established and emerging cinematic forms.

China topped the list with 3,263 submissions, followed by Spain with 846, the US with 391, India with 374, Brazil with 342, France with 302, Italy with 209, South Korea with 206, the UK with 202, and Turkey with 155, reflecting broad participation from major filmmaking hubs across Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The selection process is now underway, with the official competition lineup scheduled to be unveiled in the second half of September 2026. Directed by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Behrouz Shoaibi, the 43rd TISFF will run October 17-22, 2026, bringing together filmmakers from across the globe as Tehran once again opens its screens to new voices in short-form cinema.