



Culture minister calls Minab tragedy document against cruel wars

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi said Monday that the Minab school tragedy should be preserved as a lasting symbol of the Iranian people's suffering and resilience, describing it as a powerful cultural document against unjust wars.

Speaking at the 126th meeting of the Art Council in Tehran on September 14, Salehi said the tragedy possessed distinctive features that set it apart from many other painful events in Iran's recent history, IRNA reported.

"Over the past five decades, we have experienced many events combining grief and heroism," he said. "But the Minab school has characteristics that distinguish it from many other incidents." Salehi said the tragedy should not be allowed to fade into the past as a distant memory. Instead, he called for keeping

its story alive through cultural and artistic work.

"The Minab school tragedy is a symbol of the innocence of the Iranian people and a document for deterrence against cruel and unjust wars," he said, describing it as a "flag" representing the suffering endured by Iran.

The minister recalled other attacks on schools during the Sacred Defense era, including an incident in Borujerd, but said the Minab tragedy had acquired a broader resonance because it occurred on the first day of a large-scale war and quickly established a powerful connection with wider public consciousness.

The US attack on Shajareh Tayebbeh Elementary school in the city of Minab left 175 students and teachers dead. On the same day, the US carried out another airstrike on a sports hall in the city of Lamerd in Fars Province, killing 24 innocent Iranians and injuring over 130 others.

Its particular circumstances and the innocence of its victims gave the event an enduring humanitarian dimension, he said. Salehi argued that preserving the tragedy through art and culture could give it a lasting place beyond Iran's borders.

"It can become a deterrent force against the unjust wars launched by the cruel powers of the world," he said.

The Art Council meeting also reviewed proposed amendments to regulations governing the establishment and supervision of private art schools. Members discussed preparations for a national survey on literary, cultural and artistic literacy, as well as cultural and artistic initiatives undertaken to commemorate the Minab school tragedy.

The discussions focused on how cultural institutions and artists can help preserve the memory of a tragedy that Salehi said should remain part of Iran's living cultural narrative.



Tehran, Tashkent chart new tourism roadmap built on Silk Road heritage

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Uzbekistan are preparing a 10-point roadmap to expand tourism, cultural heritage and handicrafts cooperation, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri said Monday during a meeting with Uzbek Ambassador Fariddin Nasriyev in Tehran.

Salehi-Amiri said the two countries were ready to open a new chapter in tourism cooperation by linking their private sectors, easing visa procedures and expanding direct air connections, CHTN reported.

"We are ready to define a new horizon in tourism, cultural heritage and handicrafts between the two countries," Salehi-Amiri said, calling for practical joint measures to turn their shared civilizational heritage into stronger people-to-people ties.

The roadmap calls for closer links among private companies, tourism operators and major business groups, as well as the creation of a joint technical



Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri (R) presents a commemorative handicraft piece to Uzbek Ambassador Fariddin Nasriyev in Tehran in Tehran on September 14, 2026.

● CHTN

committee in Tehran and Tashkent. Cooperation on restoring historic monuments and reviving the cultural identity of the Silk Road also features prominently.

Salehi-Amiri pointed to the architectural and cultural affinities between Iran's Isfahan and the Uzbek cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, describing them as expressions of a shared cultural landscape.

He also highlighted Iran's decentralization policy as an opening for greater regional cooperation, saying provinces such as northern Mazandaran were prepared to work with Uzbekistan on handicrafts, restoration expertise and tourism. Nasriyev welcomed the pro-

posals and said Uzbekistan received 11 million international tourists last year, including 23,000 Iranians. He said existing direct flights between the two countries were operating at full capacity and that Tashkent was seeking to add more regular weekly services.

The ambassador also invited Iranian artisans and restoration specialists to conduct training programs in Tashkent and Bukhara, while pledging to relay the 10-point proposals to Uzbekistan's Culture Ministry and tourism authorities.

The initiative builds on recent bilateral efforts to deepen cooperation in tourism and cultural heritage, including plans for a joint tourism committee.

Tehran exhibition celebrates enduring legacy of Palestinian painter Suleiman Mansour

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran opened an exhibition featuring 17 works by the late Palestinian painter Suleiman Mansour in Tehran on Sunday, honoring the enduring artistic legacy of one of the most influential figures in contemporary Palestinian art.

'Painter of the Wounded Land,' curated by Mohammadreza Vahidzadeh, opened at the Art Bureau's Ali Gallery and brings together selected works that explore Palestinian land, memory, identity and everyday life through Mansour's distinctive visual language.

Mansour, who died in Jerusalem on Aug. 24 at the age of 79, spent more than five decades developing an artistic vocabulary deeply rooted in Palestinian landscape, heritage and lived experience. His work became widely recognized for transforming elements of the natural environment and traditional culture into powerful visual motifs.

Vahidzadeh, the exhibition's curator, said the presentation grew out of research on Palestinian art and Mansour's work. The exhibition was organized alongside a specialized discussion examining different artistic, cultural and social dimensions of his oeuvre.

Some of the works on display have complicated histories. Four originals are held by Tehran Museum of Con-

temporary Art, but access to them proved difficult, prompting organizers to produce high-quality reproductions for the exhibition.

Many other original works have also been separated from the artist over the years. Some were lost or stolen, while others were destroyed amid the difficult conditions surrounding Palestinian cultural life.

Mansour's own circumstances left a strong imprint on his artistic practice. Vahidzadeh noted that the painter frequently moved from one exhibition to another under conditions in which artworks had to be transported quickly. This led him to work in smaller formats that could be carried with relative ease. His choice of materials also became an important part of his artistic vocabulary.

At one point, Mansour and fellow artists decided to stop using Israeli-made art supplies and turned instead to locally available materials, including henna, plants and burnt wood.

Clay eventually became particularly significant to his work. Mansour had grown up in a village surrounded by the material and began incorporating mud into his paintings. As the clay dried, cracked and deteriorated, he initially regarded the changes as a problem. He later recognized their artistic potential.

The cracks became part of the image it-

self, evoking the fragility, endurance and passage of time embedded in Palestinian life.

Mansour's use of indigenous materials was part of a broader artistic shift that helped establish a distinctly Palestinian visual vocabulary. Art institutions and museums have noted his use of clay, straw, chalk, natural dyes and other materials drawn from the local environment.

"He never gave up art," Vahidzadeh said, describing Mansour's persistence through years of upheaval and uncertainty.

The curator also described the painter as a major cultural figure whose work offers an essential reference point for understanding contemporary Palestinian visual culture.

"Anyone seeking to understand the life of the contemporary Palestinian must turn to Suleiman Mansour's works," he said.

Mansour's artistic legacy extends well beyond the region. His works are held by major international collections, including the British Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the Institut du Monde Arabe. He received the Palestine Prize for Visual Arts and the Grand Nile Prize in 1998 and the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture in 2019.

The Tehran exhibition runs through October 14 at Ali Gallery of the Art Bureau.

Economic diplomacy: a ...

Economic diplomacy must help bridge this gap. Iranian embassies and diplomatic missions should not be confined to political functions. They should also serve as platforms for identifying markets, attracting investment, showcasing Iranian productive capacity, and facilitating connections between business communities. The diplomatic establishment should work closely with economic ministries, the Central Bank, investment agencies, and the private sector to set clear and measurable objectives for each country and target market.

In this context, diversifying Iran's foreign economic relations is particularly important. Turning toward the East should not mean abandoning other economic opportunities around the world. Iran should not simply replace one form of dependence with another. A successful foreign policy

is one that expands a country's economic choices. Relations with China, India, Russia, Central Asian and Gulf countries, cooperation through the Eurasian Economic Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and even dialogue with European countries can each form part of a broader, more balanced, and more diversified economic network.

International politics offers many examples of countries maintaining economic cooperation despite serious political and security disputes. This is precisely where diplomacy demonstrates its value. Political disagreements do not necessarily have to result in the closure of every economic channel. States can cooperate in areas such as trade, energy, transportation, transit, technology, environmental protection, and food security on the basis of shared interests. One important principle of Iran's foreign policy, there-

fore, should be not to close any diplomatic channel before exploring its potential. This is also where BRICS matters for Iran. The group could provide a platform for expanding trade in national currencies, developing banking cooperation, creating alternative payment mechanisms, attracting investment, and strengthening joint infrastructure projects. Yet none of these objectives will materialize automatically. Membership without an implementation strategy is little more than a title. The government needs clear targets, defined timelines, and effective mechanisms for measuring progress if it is to make meaningful use of BRICS.

At the same time, it would be unrealistic to expect BRICS alone to resolve Iran's economic challenges. Domestic economic reforms, regulatory stability, an improved business environment, lower investment

risks, a stronger private sector, and banking reform are essential complements to economic diplomacy. Foreign investors do not enter a country simply because of favorable political relations. They also need a predictable and credible economic environment.

The Pezeshkian government should therefore approach economic diplomacy with strong political will, genuine determination, and a clear focus on opportunity. Regional and extra-regional opportunities should not be left to chance or simply expected to come knocking on Iran's door. They must be identified, pursued, negotiated, and ultimately translated into contracts and concrete projects. The success of economic diplomacy should not be measured by the number of summits attended or meetings held. It should be measured by increases in trade, investment, exports, technology transfer, and employment.

The BRICS summit should therefore be understood in precisely this way: neither as a miracle cure for Iran's economy nor merely as another political gathering, but as one opportunity among many. In international politics, the door to diplomacy remains open as long as there is the political will to open it. The Pezeshkian government has an opportunity to make smarter use of regional and extra-regional alliances and to place foreign policy more firmly at the service of economic development.

Today, more than ever, Iran needs a form of diplomacy that moves beyond conference rooms and into the real world of trade and investment. It needs diplomacy capable of turning political agreements into tangible economic opportunities—and of transforming the country's considerable geopolitical and economic potential into greater prosperity for its people.