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# Italian-made Shahnameh facsimile arrives in Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

An Italian-made facsimile of one of the most complete known copies of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh has arrived in Iran on November 8, 2026.

As a separate Armenian translation of the epic was unveiled in Armenia on Sunday, underscoring efforts to promote the Persian literary heritage abroad.

Mohammad Taghi Amini, director general for Europe and the Americas at Iran's Culture and Islamic Relations Organization and a former cultural attache in Italy, presented the volume to Ali Darabi, deputy minister of cultural heritage, in Tehran on Sunday.

Amini said three specialist teams from an Italian institute had traveled to Tehran to examine the original manuscript at the historical Golestan Palace in the heart of the capital.

Shahnameh, the celebrated epic by Persian poet Ferdowsi (c. 935–c. 1020–1026), comprises nearly 60,000 verses. It recounts the history of Persia's kings, from mythical times to the 7th century, drawing on accounts preserved in Pahlavi (Middle Persian).

For nearly 1,000 years, it has remained one of the most popular works in the Persian-speaking world.

They studied its illustrations, portraits, gilding and other artistic details to ensure the reproduction closely matched the original.

The manuscript, preserved at the palace, contains 700 pages and 22 rare illustrations.

"It is a uniquely complete copy among known versions worldwide. The project required considerable time and expense and was intended to strengthen cultural ties between Iran and Italy," Amini said.

A collection of scholarly articles on the project is also planned.



*Iranian cultural official Mohammad Taghi Amini (L) and Deputy Cultural Heritage Minister Ali Darabi pose with an Italian-made facsimile edition of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in Tehran, Iran, November 8, 2026.*
*IRNA*

The facsimile will be unveiled in Italy after its presentation in Iran.

Darabi called the Shahnameh, a cornerstone of Iranian cultural and historical identity.

"The words 'Iran' and 'wisdom' appear more than 1,200 and 650 times, respectively, in the epic, which opens with the phrase 'In the name of the Lord of life and wisdom'," Darabi said.

The facsimile will be transferred to the Golestan Palace World Heritage complex for an official unveiling.

Separately, an Armenian translation of the Shahnameh was unveiled at a meeting between Iranian Budget and Planning Organization chief Hamid Pourmohammadi and a group of Iranologists in Armenia.

Composer Loris Tjeknavorian was honored for adapting the epic into an opera.

Pourmohammadi described the work as a source of wisdom, ethics and guidance for good governance, citing tragedies including the stories of Rostam and Sohrab and Siavash.

# Iranian documentary wins top award at Africa festival



*A scene from 'Throne of Wood' directed by Sadegh Kazemi*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian short documentary 'Throne of Wood' has won the award for best short documentary at the 15th Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), held in Lagos, southwestern Nigeria.

Directed by Sadegh Kazemi, the film is a production of Iran's Documentary House. It received the award at the festival, which ran from November 1 to 7, 2026, bringing together films from around the world.

Locally named 'Soghra Rais' (chief Soghra in Persian), the social documentary tells the story of a woman around 100 years old whose determination to maintain her independence remains central to her life, despite having dozens of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

At the heart of the film is her insistence on continuing her distinctive habit of collecting firewood, a choice that reflects her determination to live on her own terms.

'Throne of Wood' previously won the Best Documentary Award at the seventh Kobani International Film Festival, strengthening its profile on the international festival circuit.

The festival was held in Lagos over seven days in early November.

# Karachi Culture Festival to screen Iranian films

Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian films, one feature and two shorts, have been selected for the third Karachi International Culture Festival, running from October 29 to November 22 in Karachi, Pakistan.

The selected films are the feature 'Call Me Ziba' by Rasoul Sadr-e Ameli and the shorts 'Minab' by Marziyeh Jafari and 'Bang Bang' by Pouya Shahjahani, ILNA reported on Monday.

'Call Me Ziba' follows Khosrow, who has been forcibly hospitalized in a psychiatric institution and has spent years thinking of his daughter Ziba. Today is Ziba's sixteenth birthday, and Khosrow refuses to let the day pass like any other.

'Minab' is a short film in memory of 168 children killed in the attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab, southern Iran, which was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran.

It follows children in a classroom drawing pictures of their future careers, only for their imaginative world to be shattered by the sound of aircraft and a sudden explosion during a devastating attack on a school in Minab, paying tribute to young lives cut short.

'Bang Bang' is about a young child sitting in the back seat of a car, desperately trying to find a way out of their world as their parents relentlessly quarrel during the drive.




Hosted by the Pakistan Arts Council, the 25-day festival covers music, theater, dance, visual arts and cinema, including film screenings. More than 1,000 artists from over 150 countries are taking part this year, alongside more than 500 Pakistani artists.

Iran's participation with three films provides an opportunity to showcase a selection of its cinematic productions alongside works from around the world.

# Iran's ancient water systems offer lessons for climate adaptation



*Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System in Khuzestan province, southwestern Iran*

Social Desk

Iran's traditional water systems, including underground qanats (ancient underground water networks) and community-based irrigation, could help inform efforts to tackle water scarcity and adapt to climate change, cultural officials and experts said on Monday.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the World Day for Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Hassan Fartousi, secretary-general of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO, said generations of Iranians had developed ways to manage scarce water in the country's arid and semi-arid regions.

"Qanats were not merely historic engineering structures but embodied technical skills, cultural beliefs and social practices developed around managing limited water resources," he said.

The head of the UNESCO office in Tehran said traditional irrigation, rainwater harvesting and community-led water management could support more sustainable and equitable approaches to water use. He called for these skills to be passed on to younger generations.

Mahmoud Golabchi, an Iranian architecture and engineering scholar, said the country's historic water infrastructure reflected the integration of engineering, architecture and environmental knowledge.

He cited the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System in Khuzestan province, southwestern Iran, and the country's qanats as examples of advanced water management.

The Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System in southwestern Iran dates back to the 5th century BC, during the reign of Darius the Great. Built around two diversion canals on the Karun River, the system combined dams, bridges, tunnels, mills and water channels to supply the city and irrigate farmland across the Mianab Plain.

"Historic bridges in Isfahan, in central Iran, and traditional ice houses in Yazd, also in central Iran, showed how builders adapted structures to local climate conditions and made use of natural resources," he added.

The speakers said intangible cultural heritage should be seen not simply as a legacy of the past, but as a living body of knowledge that could help communities address current and future environmental challenges.