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Semnan's ancient water-sharing system wins heritage award

Arts & Culture Desk

An ancient water-sharing system in Semnan, central Iran, has won the Living Heritage and Water Award, recognizing a traditional method of managing scarce water resources that has remained in use for more than 1,000 years.

The system was among three initiatives selected from Iran's Semnan, Hormozgan and Fars provinces for the award presented by the Regional Research Center for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in West and Central Asia.

The ceremony was held on Monday at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in Tehran to mark the International Day of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The recognition highlights the historical significance of Semnan's water-management practices, which have continued across generations with little change, according to Mohammad Azizoddin, co-author of a book documenting the city's water history.

Azizoddin told IRNA that the fourth-century Hijri geographical work "Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim," by al-Muqaddasi, referred to Semnan's congregational mosque, canals emptied in rotation and urban reservoirs.

"The account showed that the water-sharing system had existed for more than a millennium," he said.

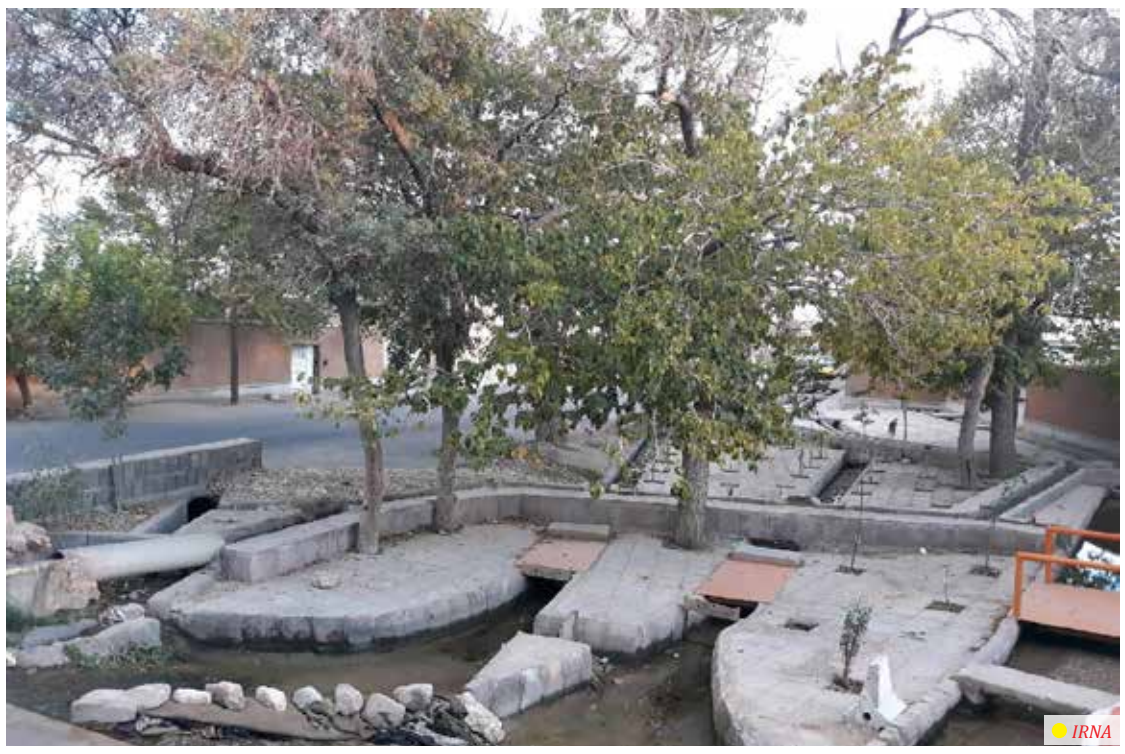
He added that the reservoirs remained in their historical locations and that traditional methods of controlling water outlets and distributing supplies were still used.

Wooden devices continue to regulate water flows, preserving practices developed for the city's dry climate.

The book, titled 'A Thousand Years of Water and Irrigation in Semnan', was written by Azizoddin, Mahmoud Daraei and Mohammad Amouzadeh, with financial and institutional support from Semnan Municipality.

Azizoddin said international recognition could help raise awareness of Semnan's historical identity and cultural heritage, while supporting the city's tourism potential.

He also called for continued cooperation among local authorities, cultural heritage organizations and civil society groups to promote the city's historical legacy.



IRNA

Iran tops global handicrafts list with 17 cities, villages



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran leads the World Crafts Council's global network with 17 designated handicraft cities and villages, more than twice the number of any competing country.

Narges Rajaei, director general of handicraft education and promotion at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said Iran had more than twice as many registered locations as some of its closest competitors.

China ranks second with eight, followed by Uzbekistan with seven and Chile with six. India and Vietnam each have four registered cities or villages.

The Iranian locations include Isfahan in central Iran, Tabriz in the northwest, Mashhad in the northeast, Shiraz in the south, as well as Lalejin, Sirjan, Meybod, Zanjan, Kashan and Dezful.

They are recognized for traditional skills and products including carpet weaving, pottery, zilu mat weaving, kilim making, jewelry production and wickerwork.

Yazd, in central Iran, was also designated a World Crafts City for its traditional jewelry in 2025.

Meanwhile, the nomination of Kerman for global handicraft city status is being pursued by the ministry. The city has already received national handicraft city status but has yet to secure a place on the WCC list.

"The designations were intended to boost domestic and international tourism and showcase Iran's handicraft potential," Rajaei said.

The WCC launched its World Crafts Cities program in 2014 to highlight the cultural and economic potential of local communities and strengthen cooperation among handicraft-producing centers.

'People's Child' grabs top prize at Russian festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian feature film 'People's Child', directed by Mahmoud Karimi, has won the Best Fiction Feature award at the inaugural BRICS+ International Film Festival in Russia.

The film follows an orphaned teenager forced to leave his care home. After discovering in his personal file that his family had lost him, he sets out to find his relatives, hoping for a reunion. The journey ultimately becomes a path to growing up and discovering himself.

The first BRICS+ International Film Festival was held from October 29 to November 3, 2026, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, however the winners were announced at a press conference in Moscow on November 6.

The film also received recognition at Iran's 43rd Fajr Film Festival in 2025, where it earned 14 Crystal Simorgh nominations, three awards and an honorary diploma.

It received 327 submissions from 22 countries, with its international jury selecting winners across 12 award categories.



The event brought together feature films, short films and documentaries from BRICS+ countries and partner states, aiming to promote cultural exchange and cooperation through cinema.

'People's Child' was named best fiction feature, while Iranian films also received special recognition in other categories.

Iran, Senegal plan Persian classes, scholarships

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and a Senegalese religious organization have agreed to pursue Persian-language training for teachers in Senegal and scholarships for its graduates at Iranian universities, as part of efforts to expand educational and cultural ties between the two countries.

The agreement was reached during a meeting between Mehdi Khaleghi Rad, Iran's acting cultural counselor in Senegal, and Sheikh Yassine Mbengue, secretary-general of Senegal's Council of Ahl al-Bayt Scholars.

The two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in cultural, religious, scientific and educational fields, as well as opportunities for academic exchanges and joint activities.

Mbengue outlined the council's history, structure and activities, saying it operates a network of schools and religious seminaries across Senegal, in West Africa.

He also highlighted its cooperation with Al-Mustafa International University in Senegal and thanked the university for helping identify graduates and arrange their admission to further studies in Iran.

Mbengue requested that Iran's cultural mission send a Persian-language instructor to train teachers and educators within the council's network.

He also sought assistance in securing scholarships for the council's graduates at Iranian universities.

Khaleghi Rad welcomed the proposals and said the cultural mission was prepared to cooperate in arranging Persian-language instruction. He added that scholarship requests would be pursued within available capacities and existing regulations.

The Iranian representative also praised the council's work in promoting the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, supporting their followers and providing religious and social services to Senegalese communities.

