

Italian Film Festival Features Iranian Documentary



TEHRAN -- Iranian documentary **The Last of the Whale Shark** has entered Italy's Asolo Art Film Festival.

According to iFilm, the docu-

mentary, made by Iranian filmmaker Ramtin Balef, was selected for the 41st Asolo Art Film Festival, scheduled to take place in June 2025.

The documentary tells the emotional story of the last known whale shark in the Persian Gulf, as it searches for its lost mate. The film highlights how human activities, such as pollution and over-fishing, have damaged marine life, making the whale shark's search for love even more challenging.

The film has already won multiple awards, including Best Music & Best Cinematography at the Iran International Documentary Film Festival, Cinema Verite, and an Honorary Diploma at the Fajr Film Festival in Iran.

The Asolo Art Film Festival is one of Italy's oldest art-focused film events. It showcases creative and artistic films from around the world.

Toubiron Valley's Breathtaking Beauty

TEHRAN -- Toubiron Valley, located just 20 kilometers from Dezful in Iran's southern Khuzestan province, offers visitors a breathtaking escape from the region's intense heat.

The remarkable canyon features towering 100-meter-high sedimentary rock walls that provide constant shade and cool temperatures, often staying around 25°C even when nearby Dezful experiences 40°C+ heat.

According to IFP News, the valley's name comes from local dialect, with "Tou" meaning fever/heat and "Biron" meaning to cut – appropriately describing its natural air-conditioned environment.

Visitors can walk along the shaded riverbed, surrounded by wild grapevines, fig trees, and crys-



tal-clear springs that support diverse aquatic life.

Geologically formed through millennia of water erosion, Toubiron's unique conglomerate rock formations create a surreal landscape.

The valley serves as a natural drainage system, with groundwater emerging through its walls even in dry seasons.

Tourism officials recommend visiting between April and September for optimal conditions.

Figurine From Mesolithic Era Found in Cave in Azerbaijan

BAKU (Arkeonews) -- A groundbreaking discovery has been made in the Damjili Cave in Azerbaijan's Gazakh district: the first human figurine from the Mesolithic era.

Dr. Yagub Mammadov, head of the Azerbaijani-Japanese Damjili International Archaeological Expedition at the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), confirmed the finding, as reported by local media. This figurine marks a significant milestone in understanding the Neolithization of the South Caucasus, revealing that this transformative process occurred in stages rather than as a singular event.

The figurine, which is unlike any other found in Mesolithic sites along the Kura River or throughout the Caucasus region, was unearthed during joint Azerbaijani-Japanese archaeological excavations in 2023. Mammadov noted that similar human figurines have not yet been found in the known Mesolithic sites on the Kura River and its environs, as well as in the Caucasus as a whole.

The newly discovered stone figurine, dated to the late 7th millennium BCE, is an elongated piece made from hard sandstone, featuring intricate engravings that depict a human figure. The stone figurine measures just 51 mm in length and 15 mm in width. It features intricate engravings that depict a human figure with a neat hairstyle and a belt with engraved lines, but notably lacks facial features. The question of whether this figurine symbolizes a man or a woman remains a subject of debate among researchers. The figurine was meticulously studied at a museum in Japan using modern laboratory techniques to gain further insights into its origins and significance.

The figurine's design, which lacks



Microphotographs of the Mesolithic stone figurine from the Damjili Cave.

facial features but includes detailed representations of hair and clothing, stands in stark contrast to Neolithic figurines, indicating a potential cultural divergence during this transitional period.

This discovery is particularly significant as no similar artifacts have been found in the surrounding area, highlighting the uniqueness of the Damjili find. The figurine was discovered by Ulviyya Safarova, a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology of ANAS, and has already captured academic attention, with the first official article about the figurine published in the 42nd issue of the journal *Archaeological Research in Asia*—a prestigious journal indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases, holding a Q1 category ranking.

Recent archaeological research has indicated that the Neolithization in the South Caucasus was likely influenced by a combination of cultural exchanges and human migrations from the Fertile Crescent in Southwest Asia. While the timeline

and mechanisms of these processes have remained ambiguous, recent multidisciplinary studies have shed light on the swift arrival of Neolithic culture in the region.

The Damjili Cave's stratified sequence from the late Mesolithic to early Neolithic is of paramount importance, providing a unique dataset that highlights both continuity and discontinuity in local material culture. For instance, while pottery became prevalent in the Fertile Crescent during the 7th millennium BCE, the earliest Neolithic inhabitants of the Damjili Cave lived an almost aceramic lifestyle, reminiscent of their Mesolithic predecessors. This suggests that the transition was not merely a cultural replacement but involved the integration of indigenous communities.

Despite the significance of this find, the ideological and symbolic aspects of the Neolithization process remain underexplored. The figurine from the Damjili Cave provides a rare opportunity to investigate the continuity or discontinuity of portable art between the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. The study emphasizes the need for further research into the symbolic changes accompanying the Neolithization process, not only in the South Caucasus but also in a broader context across Southwest Asia.

As researchers continue to analyze the implications of the Damjili figurine, it becomes increasingly clear that the Neolithization of the South Caucasus was a complex and multifaceted process. This discovery not only enriches our understanding of the region's prehistoric cultural landscape but also highlights the importance of examining small artifacts that may hold the key to unraveling the intricate narratives of human development during this pivotal era.

Irish Translation of Ibn Sina's Canon Discovered

DUBLIN (Dispatches) -- A recently discovered ancient Irish manuscript reveals an unexpected connection between Irish Gaelic culture and the Islamic world.

According to a report by Al Jazeera, the small piece of skin, part of a medieval Irish manuscript and a section of a book used between 1534 and 1536 as a Latin guide for the local government of London, has recently been discovered.

This book was in the possession of an English family in Cornwall, who strangely has preserved it as a family heirloom to this day.

The manuscript is a small portion of "The Canon of Medicine" by Iranian scientist Ibn Sina (Avicenna), translated into Irish.

Avicenna's book was an important medical reference in medieval Europe and was translated into various languages, including Latin and English.

A century after the book was printed, part of the original manuscript, which had been used for binding and decorating its cover and edges, was discovered by Professor Pádraig Ó Macháin from the Irish Studies department at University College Cork, a leading expert in his field, who became fascinated by the manuscript.

Macháin believes that Irish physicians in the 5th century AD benefited from medical knowledge that had come from the Middle East and Iran.

His discovery also proved that the famous book "The Canon of Medicine" by Avicenna was used in medieval Ireland to train new doctors.

Machain says that in European customs, it is not unusual to use original fragments of ancient manuscripts as bookmarks but this is the first time a piece of a manuscript has been found accompanying a book in the style of the Irish Gaelic language.

Gaelic is the national and historic language of the Irish people and is spoken as one of the country's two official languages alongside English.

Irish Gaelic refers to the political, social, and cultural system that prevailed in Ireland until the early seventeenth century.



This social system in Ireland was typically organized as a confederation of tribes, governed by numerous kings and clan chiefs.

Machain adds that one-quarter of the surviving Irish manuscripts from the late Middle Ages contain medical content, demonstrating the practical purpose these books served in Ireland at that time.

Avicenna's book in medicine is considered the main medical textbook worldwide and consists of five volumes. It was written by Avicenna in 1025 AD. The book reflects medical knowledge in the Islamic world but is also influenced by Iranian, Greco-Roman, and Indian medicine.

The newly discovered manuscript contains sections from the early chapters on the physiology of the jaw, nose, and throat.

Given the significance of this discovery in the history of medical education in Ireland, the enthusiasts of The Canon of Medicine have agreed to publish this manuscript and make it digitally accessible to the public.

Abu Ali Hussein ibn Abdullah ibn Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sina, famously known as Abu Ali Sina, Ibn Sina, Poursina, and Sheikh al-Raeis (980–1037 AD), was an Iranian physician, mathematician, astronomer, physicist, chemist, geographer, geologist, poet, logician, philosopher, musician, and statesman.

He is one of the most renowned and influential philosophers and scholars of Iran and the world, particularly noted for his works in philosophy and medicine.

His major contributions include two comprehensive scientific and philosophical encyclopedias called "Shifa (The Book of Heal-

ing)" and "The Alai Encyclopedia", as well as Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb (The Canon of Medicine), one of the most famous works in the history of medicine, which has served as a primary reference in major medical universities worldwide.

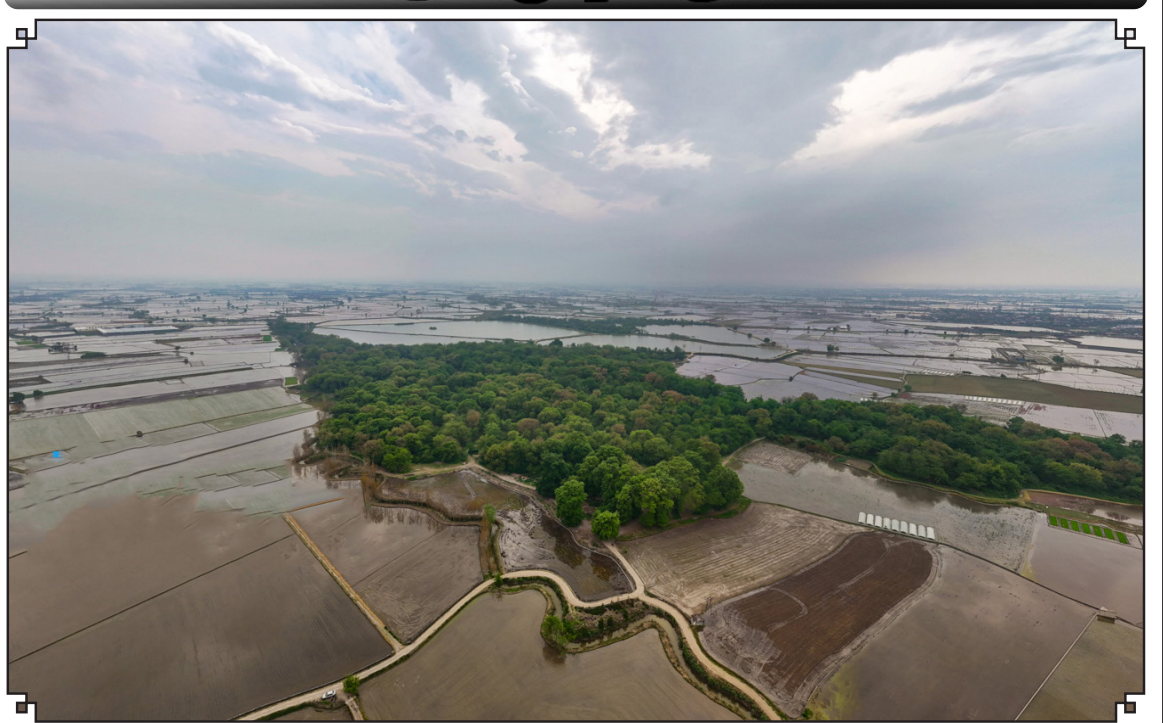
He was born in Bukhara and died in Hamadan. He authored 450 books on various subjects, many of which focused on medicine and philosophy.

The Iranian scholar possessed remarkable intelligence. By the age of ten, he had learned the Holy Quran and literature. He then went on to study various sciences, including medicine.

He showed exceptional talent in childhood and, as a young man, was one of the distinguished scholars and physicians at the court of Amir Nuh Samani in Bukhara. After the decline of the Samanids and the advancing threat of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni's army, he fled Bukhara for Gurgan in Khwarezm, and from there sought refuge with the rulers of the Ziyarid dynasty in Gorgan. Later, he entered the service of Majd al-Dawla Rustam, an Amir of the Buyid dynasty in Rey. Afterwards, he served as minister to Shams al-Dawla Daylami in Hamadan. Following the amir's death, he was imprisoned but managed to escape and sought the protection of Ala al-Dawla, the ruler of Isfahan from the Kakuyid dynasty, serving under him until he ultimately died in office during a journey to Hamadan.

Numerous portraits and statues of Ibn Sina exist in museums and universities worldwide, immortalizing his name.

Picture of the Day



Every year, with the arrival of spring, farmers and rice growers in Mazandaran begin to irrigate and prepare agricultural lands for planting rice in both traditional and mechanized ways.

Photo by IRNA