

New Excavations Begin at 5,200-Year-Old City of Anshan



TEHRAN -- Archaeological excavations have resumed at one of the most significant birthplaces of urban civilization on the Iranian plateau—Anshan (Tall Malyan)—a city that thrived some 5,200 years ago as the capital of the ancient Elamite kingdom.

After decades of intermittent investigation, researchers have returned with renewed vigor, aiming to uncover new evidence of habitation during the Middle Elamite period, as well as to trace and reveal portions of the city's massive fortification walls and the deeper cultural layers beneath.

Located in Malyan, within the county of Beyza in Fars Province, the latest phase of archaeological fieldwork is being led jointly by Dr. Kamyar Abdi, faculty member at Shahid Beheshti University, and Dr. Alireza Sardari, of the Archaeological Research Institute.

According to Dr. Abdi, "This site represents one of the earliest and largest urban centers on the Iranian plateau, dating back more than five millennia."

Excavations conducted in the 1970s uncovered extensive remains of mud-brick structures alongside inscribed tablets, confirming that this site is indeed the legendary ancient city of Anshan—the political and cultural heartland of the Elamites.

Situated in the elevated terrains of southern Iran's plateau, in today's Fars province, Anshan stood alongside the city of Susa in the lowlands of Khuzestan as a principal center of Elamite civilization during the third and second millennia BCE.

"Malyan is among the first fortified cities in Iran, enclosed by formidable ramparts since the late fourth millennium BCE, covering an area of approximately 200 hectares. It was also a pivotal hub for the emergence of writing in ancient Iran, predating even the famous Achaemenid capitals," Dr. Abdi says.

The history of archaeological research at Tall Malyan began in earnest with an American-led expedition

before the 1979 Iranian Revolution, intending to establish the site as a cornerstone project for understanding the origins of Iranian history, culture, and identity through the lens of Elamite civilization, extending up to the dawn of the Achaemenid Empire in Fars. Despite promising starts, investigations ceased after three decades, with brief resurgences in 2004 and 2017, only to halt again.

The current campaign, commencing in 2025, aims to excavate the core of the city and uncover evidence of Middle Elamite occupation, as well as to map and expose sections of the city's defensive walls and earlier strata.

"This season's work is not only about unearthing structures and artifacts but also serves as the foundation for a long-term, comprehensive archaeological and cultural heritage program. Our goal is to ensure the protection of this invaluable site and its architectural remnants," Dr. Sardari, the excavation co-director, said.



Beyond its academic significance, the revitalization of Tall Malyan is envisioned as a cultural beacon and tourism hub in northern Fars—boasting a historical pedigree far surpassing that of Pasargadae, Persepolis, Estakhr, and other prominent Sassanian cities in the region.

As the shovels and brushes return to the ancient earth of Anshan, the world awaits new discoveries that will deepen our understanding of one of the earliest chapters of urban life on the Iranian plateau and the enduring legacy of the Elamite civilization.

Samineh Baghcheban, Champion of Deaf Education, Passes Away

TEHRAN — Samineh Baghcheban, an influential Iranian educator, author, and advocate for children with hearing impairments, passed away on Wednesday at the age of 97, her colleagues confirmed.

Born in 1927 in the "Baghche-ye Atfal" kindergarten in Tabriz, she was the daughter of Jabar Baghcheban, a pioneering figure in education for deaf children in Iran.

Ms. Baghcheban's remarkable career spanned decades of dedication to creating educational and cultural institutions for children who were deaf or hard of hearing. She graduated from the Daneshsara-ye Aali (High Teacher Training College) in Tehran with a degree in English and later received a master's degree in special education for the deaf from Columbia University in New York. She further pursued studies in speech therapy at Columbia, shaping her lifelong commitment to innovative education for children with disabilities.

After returning to Iran, she joined her father's school for the deaf and mute, contributing significantly to the development of teaching methods and curriculum. Her involvement in national education reforms included participation in key meetings of the Ministry of Education, alongside prominent intellectuals such as Abbas Yamini Sharif and Touran Mirhadi.

In 1961, she was appointed to oversee training programs for first-grade teachers across the country, pioneering modern teaching approaches based on the legacy of her father's work. Her book Teaching Methods became a standard in Iran and was used in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

In addition to her educational work, Ms. Baghcheban was an accomplished children's writer. Her books The Wooden Bridge and Nowruz and the Kites were



recognized by the Children's Book Council of Iran. Other notable works include Jamjamak Leaf of Autumn, What Color is the Sun and Moon?, and Illuminator of Darkness, a tribute to her father. She also innovated by incorporating Persian sign language into multimedia, producing a video version of the folk song "I Ran and I Ran" to make it accessible to deaf children.

She played a critical role in founding the National Welfare Organization for the Deaf and served as director of the Baghcheban Educational Institute and technical manager of the Deaf and Mute Society. Her dedication extended to clinical education, where she led training programs for audiology specialists at the University of Tehran.

Samineh Baghcheban's legacy is one of unwavering advocacy and pioneering education, bridging gaps between hearing and deaf communities through her writings, teaching, and organizational leadership. Her funeral service is expected to be held Thursday at the Baghcheban School in Tehran.

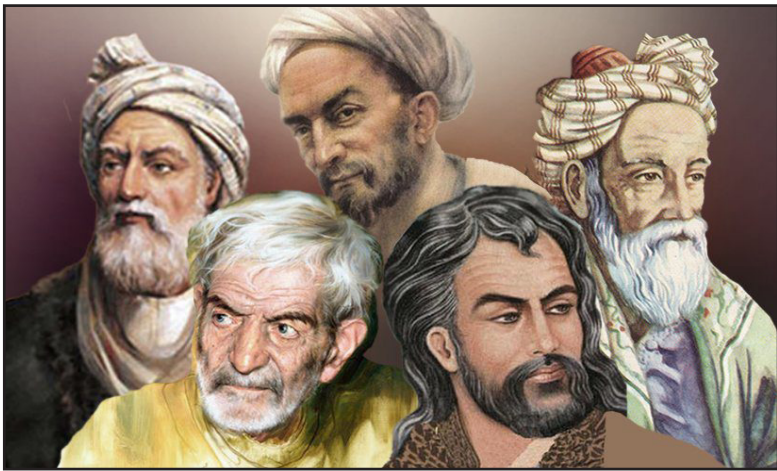
Honoring Shahriar and Others, Iran Marks National Poetry Day

TEHRAN -- Iranians on Thursday commemorate the National Day of Persian Poetry and Literature, a date deeply etched in the country's cultural calendar in honor of the esteemed poet Muhammad-Hussein Shahriar.

The occasion, far beyond a mere remembrance, stands as a testament to the enduring vitality of Persian literary heritage and its intimate bond with national identity.

In a statement, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi described the Persian language as "the enduring emblem" of Iranian identity. He poetically likened Persian to "a river flowing calmly through centuries," nourishing the soul and spirit of the nation. To Salehi, poetry is not merely an art form but "the highest window into meaning and hope," a collective memory and emotional archive reflecting the joys, sufferings, faith, and aspirations of Iranians across millennia.

Salehi highlighted Shahriar as "one of the brightest stars" in this poetic constellation—a figure whose passion-



ate ghazals have rekindled the hearts of countless lovers of poetry. The minister's call to action emphasized the importance of inviting younger generations into this timeless tradition, fostering a renewed friendship with poetry to keep this "illuminating torch" alive for future generations.

Complementing this cultural reflec-

tion, Esmail Baghaei, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, echoed the sentiment that Persian poetry is far more than a literary inheritance—it is a "pillar of national identity and cohesion."

He invoked the names of classical giants—Ferdowsi, Saadi, Hafez, Rumi, Nizami, and Khayyam—to situate

Shahriar within an unbroken lineage of poets whose work not only preserves Iranian culture but contributes to the world's literary civilization.

Baghaei underlined that Persian poetry has always served as a platform for dialogue, friendship, and empathy among diverse peoples and cultures. Shahriar's own verses, rich in accessibility and humanity, continue this tradition by translating the spirit of the era into the universal language of poetry.

Shahriar, whose masterwork Heydar Babaya Salam ("Greetings to Heydar Baba") is celebrated as a crowning jewel of Azerbaijani-Turkic literature, represents a rare poetic voice that bridges linguistic and cultural divides within Iran.

His dual legacy—in Persian and Azerbaijani—embodies the complex tapestry of Iranian cultural identity. The day dedicated to him thus serves a dual purpose: it venerates one of the most luminous poets of modern Iran and underscores the unifying power of the Persian language.

‘Cause of Death: Unknown’: Cause of Selection for Oscar Also Unknown

TEHRAN -- In a surprise move that has shaken up Iran's award season chatter, the country has officially submitted Cause of Death: Unknown as its entry for the 2025 Academy Awards in the Best International Feature Film category, bypassing higher-profile contenders like Oldboy and Woman and Child.

The announcement comes just days after actor Hamed Behdad publicly endorsed Oldboy at an industry event, expressing hopes that director Oktay Baraheni would don a bow tie for the Oscars. But the selection committee opted for Ali Zarnegar's long-shelved social drama—a politically charged road movie that was denied release under the previous administration and only recently screened after years in limbo.

The Iranian Oscar committee, often mired in controversy and opaque deliberations, reviewed over a dozen films before narrowing the shortlist to five: Oldboy, Woman and Child by Saeed Roustayi, Release by Hesam Farahmand, Call Me Ziba by veteran director Rasoul Sadri-Ameli, and Cause of Death: Unknown.

While the industry buzz was cen-

tered on Oldboy and Woman and Child—both of which had global festival traction and international distribution strategies in place—the committee's final decision landed on a title with a fraught release history.

Originally selected for Iran's 2021 Fajr Film Festival competition, Cause of Death: Unknown was later pulled by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and denied a screening license. The film eventually premiered in a limited theatrical run last fall amid a glut of domestic comedies, before moving to digital platforms.

Set on a tense journey to Kerman with seven passengers and layered with socio-political undertones, Zarnegar's film reflects the darker, more introspective side of Iranian cinema—one that has historically found resonance with Academy voters.

Iran's history with the Academy dates back to 1977 with the submission of The Cycle by Dariush Mehrjui. After a long hiatus post-1979, the country returned to Oscar contention in 1994 with Abbas Kiarostami's Through the Olive Trees, marking a new era of consistent participation.



Iranian auteurs like Majid Majidi and Asghar Farhadi have since become Oscar regulars. Majidi holds the record for most submissions from Iran, with six of his films—Children of Heaven (1998), The Color of Paradise (1999), Baran (2001), The Song of Sparrows (2008), Muhammad: The Messenger of God (2015), and Sun Children (2020)—representing the country. Farhadi has had five of his works submitted, winning the Academy Award for A Separation in 2012 and The Salesman in 2017, making him Iran's most internation-

ally awarded filmmaker. More recent submissions have varied from socially conscious dramas (No Date, No Signature in 2019) to unexpected entries like Finding Farideh (2020), the first Iranian documentary ever submitted to the Oscars.

In 2022, Farhadi's A Hero was selected after its Cannes premiere and made it to the shortlist but failed to secure a nomination. Last year, Babak Khajepasha's In the Embrace of the Tree was submitted with little international fanfare.

Etesami Lotus Festival Opens Submissions to Honor Women in Arts

TEHRAN -- The Lotus National Film and Theater Festival (bearing the name of legendary poet Parvin Etesami) has officially opened submissions for its first-ever edition, slated for winter 2025. Helmed by festival director Maziar Rezakhani, this groundbreaking event marks a fresh and vibrant platform spotlighting women's stories and their impact on society.

What sets Lotus apart is its core mission: to empower women through art and honor both female creators and male artists who thoughtfully explore women's issues on stage and screen. The festival's thematic scope is broad yet deeply rooted in social relevance, focusing on women's roles in strengthening family bonds, nurturing future generations, bridging generational gaps, fostering social cohesion, and forging Iranian cultural identity. It also addresses urgent social challenges like addiction and delinquency, while championing women's autonomy in life's critical choices.

The festival unfolds across two main arenas: cinema and theater. In the film segment, works across multiple formats—including narrative features, documentaries, animation, and experimental films—will vie for attention. The theater portion, meanwhile, will debut with an invitational selection of performances, ensuring a curated experience of innovative and meaningful storytelling.

A host of awards awaits the

winners, headlined by the prestigious Lotus Grand Prize—a substantial 200 million-toman grant aimed at supporting the creation of the artist's next work. Additional honors include the Tooba,

Termeh, Cheshmeh, and Persian Gulf prizes, as well as the Golden Statue for Men's Role in Supporting Women, acknowledging the essential contributions of male allies.

Artists and filmmakers eager to participate can register and upload their works via the official festival website. The deadline for submissions is November 10, 2025.

Picture of the Day



Founded 23 years ago, the Taba rehabilitation center near Varmanjeh village, 42 km northwest of Kermanshah, provides care for more than 300 mental health patients with therapies including occupational therapy, psychotherapy, and group activities, managed by two retired welfare officials.

Photo by IRNA