

# Excavations Near Persepolis Reveal Early Craft, Burial Practices

TEHRAN -- In a significant breakthrough just under two kilometers south of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Persepolis, archaeologists working on the Tall Rubahi Kenareh project have uncovered important evidence of early Elamite-period funerary practices and a densely stratified cultural layer associated with kiln activity.

The ongoing Determination of the Extent and Proposal of Protective Buffer Zones for Tall Rubahi Kenareh project, authorized by the Iranian Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and conducted in collaboration with the Persepolis World Heritage Base, aims to precisely delineate the boundaries of this culturally rich site in Marvdasht County, Fars Province.

Dr. Fazlollah Habibi, lead archaeologist of the Tall Rubahi Kenareh excavation and expert at the Persepolis Heritage Base, explains that the site is a key early cultural settlement dating to the Banish phase—commonly recognized as the beginning of the Elamite civilization.

Strategically located less than two kilometers south of Persepolis and approximately 1.5 kilometers northwest of the renowned Tall Bakun, Tall Rubahi Kenareh occupies a vital position in the cultural landscape of the Marvdasht Plain.

The project's primary goals include mapping the archaeological extent of Tall Rubahi, establishing an appropriate protective buffer zone to mitigate environmental and human threats, and documenting the site's stratigraphy and material culture.

The multidisciplinary approach combines traditional excavation methods with cutting-edge technology such as drone aerial photography and high-precision DGPS mapping. Additionally, laboratory analyses of surface



finds are being employed to better understand site formation processes and cultural phases.

Funded by the Persepolis World Heritage Base, the project's findings are expected to contribute crucial data for emergency conservation efforts and long-term site management plans. Furthermore, the research promises to deepen understanding of human settlement dynamics on the Marvdasht Plain during the third millennium BCE.

To date, thirteen 1x1 meter test trenches have been excavated at Tall Rubahi Kenareh, revealing noteworthy results. Among the most striking discoveries is a jar burial dating to the Banish period, alongside evidence of a densely packed cultural layer associated with kiln activity—suggesting specialized craft production or domestic industry.

Importantly, new data challenge earlier assumptions about the site's size and layout. Previously thought to be a roughly square settlement measuring no more than 100 by 100 meters, current excavations indicate that Tall Rubahi extends longitudinally along an east-west axis, measuring at least 200 meters in length and 100 meters in width. This significantly expands the known scale and underscores the site's importance as a major Early Elamite center.

# Iranian Children Sweep Awards at Japan's Painting Competition



TEHRAN -- In a remarkable celebration of creativity and environmental consciousness, eight young members of Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) have secured prestigious awards at the 24th International JKAI Environmental Painting Competition held in Japan in 2024.

This globally renowned competition attracted 8,514 artworks from 68 countries, with 160 compelling submissions from Kanoon's talented young artists. Their works stood out among thousands, earning them a distinguished place on the international stage and reaffirming Iran's vibrant tradition of youth artistic excellence.

Among the honorees, 13-year-old Sana Khodaei from the Kanoon center in Boshrooye, South Khorasan,

captured the highest distinction—the Jury's Special Prize—recognizing her exceptional artistic vision and commitment to environmental themes.

Additionally, four first prizes in the international category were awarded to remarkable young painters: 9-year-old Setayesh Ghavibazoo from Meshginshahr (Ardabil Province), 10-year-old Zahra Jalili from Tehran's Center 37, 12-year-old Mahya Asadi from Sanandaj (Kurdistan Province), and 14-year-old Mahshid Ghasemi from Kahrizsang (Isfahan Province).

The competition also acknowledged three diplomas of honor, bestowed upon 13-year-old Muhammadreza Mousaei from Tehran's Center 21, 13-year-old Hananeh Nasiri from Meshginshahr's Center 2, and 14-year-old Zeynab Rahimi from Namin (Ardabil Province).

# The School Year That Began Without 34 Young Lives

TEHRAN -- As the new academic year unfolds across Iran, classrooms fill once again with the restless energy of youth—the quiet hum of pencils on paper, whispered conversations, the hopeful anticipation of discovery.

Yet beneath this familiar rhythm lies a profound absence. Thirty-four students, vibrant young lives full of potential, will not return to their desks. They were taken in an unprovoked act of violence—the recent Israeli aggression that shattered families, communities, and futures.

These lost students, many barely on the cusp of adulthood, were robbed not only of their right to education but of the very possibility of a future.

Their absence is felt keenly across the country, a painful reminder that learning does not exist in a vacuum but within the fragile context of geopolitics, where the architecture of childhood can be reduced to rubble by the distant decisions of malign forces—indifferent to the sanctity of life, of schoolyards, of futures just beginning to take shape.

The new school year began Saturday under the solemn shadow of Sacred Defense Week, a time in Iran dedicated to remembering sacrifice and resilience. It is a period when



education is reframed not simply as intellectual pursuit but as an act of patriotism, a form of resistance against forces that seek to undermine the nation's spirit. This ethos permeates schools, where teachers are seen not only as instructors but as guardians of a cultural and moral legacy—tasked with nurturing a

generation that must carry forward a torch passed to them amid hardship.

Stories of perseverance from Iran's recent history—years of war, captivity, and hardship—were invoked as lessons for today's students. They remind young people that resilience and dedication are

not abstract virtues but lifelines, vital for overcoming adversity and forging a path forward. These narratives of endurance offer a quiet defiance against despair, underscoring the power of education as both refuge and weapon.

The students lost in the recent violence are remembered not as distant statistics, but as peers whose dreams were violently cut short. Their stories of bravery and innocence serve as a solemn call to their classmates: to honor their memory by embracing courage, responsibility, and the relentless pursuit of knowledge.

At ceremonies across the country, the ringing of a "Sacrifice Bell" by families of the fallen and school officials served as both a tribute and a vow—a commitment to preserve the sanctity of learning despite the shadows cast by war.

In the face of profound loss, Iran's educational community renews its mission: to cultivate resilience, academic excellence, and civic responsibility among its youth. The futures stolen from one generation weigh heavily, but those who remain are entrusted with carrying their peers' dreams forward—living not only for themselves but as custodians of a legacy interrupted, determined to build a future denied to so many.

# Three Iranians Named for Inaugural BRICS Literary Award

TEHRAN -- Iran has made a strong entrance into the newly established BRICS Literary Award by nominating three prominent contemporary authors: Reza Amirkhani, Majid Gheisari, and Mansour Alimoradi.

The award, launched in November 2024 by the five BRICS countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—aims to strengthen cultural ties and celebrate the literary diversity of its member nations.

According to the House of Books and Literature of Iran, the BRICS Literary Award seeks to honor works that reflect the

cultural heritage and lived experiences of the participating countries. Winners receive a diploma, a special medal, and a cash prize of one million Russian rubles.

Under the rules of the award, each member country may nominate up to three authors to compete. Iran's choice of Amirkhani, Gheisari, and Alimoradi reflects the country's rich contemporary literary scene and its engagement with global themes through distinctly Iranian narratives.

The nomination process was coordinated by Iran's House of

## BRICS Literature Award

Books and Literature in collaboration with the Iranian Cultural Attaché in Russia, with an emphasis on promoting Iranian literature internationally through translation and publication.

# Babaeifar's Short Sheep Hits Global Festivals

TEHRAN -- Sheep, the acclaimed Iranian short film written, directed, and produced by Hadi Babaeifar, continues to make waves on the international festival circuit, recently earning official selections at three notable events: the 56th Nashville Film Festival in the U.S., the 15th Aesthetica Short Film Festival in the UK, and the 16th Norwich Film Festival, also in the UK.

Founded in 1969, the Nashville Film Festival is one of the longest-running film festivals worldwide, held annually in Nashville, Tennessee. This year's edition ran from September 18 to 24, and is recognized as a qualifying event for the Academy Awards, with winners in the short fiction, documentary, and animation categories eligible for Oscar consideration.

Sheep will also screen at the Aesthetica Short Film Festival, held in York, UK, from November 5 to 30. Aesthetica is BAFTA-recognized, further solidifying the film's stature among elite international shorts.

Adding to its impressive festival run, Sheep was selected for the Norwich Film Festival, which takes place from November 3 to 16.

Established in 2009, Norwich is another BAFTA-qualifying event, showcasing outstanding

short films with strong artistic merit.

The film features performances by acclaimed actors Roz Tabatabai and Glavij Alam. The production

team includes cinematographer Adib Sobhani, editor Hamid Najafirad, production designer Faraz Modiri, and sound team led by Javad Jahangiri and Zahra

Ali Akbari. Additional credits include colorist Farbod Jalali, VFX by Bitak Akhlaghi, and international distribution handled by Denarassam.

## Picture of the Day

Rice harvesting in Gilan's paddies.

Photo by Mehr News