

Rainbow Festival award for 'Motherless'

'Motherless,' directed by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Mor-teza Fatemi, emerged triumphant at the 24th Rainbow International Film Festival in East London, garnering the Best Director Award. The festival, which took place from May 28 to June 4, showcased exceptional films from around the world, highlighting outstanding cinematic achievements. Featuring an exceptional cast, 'Motherless' showcases the remarkable talents of Amir Aqaei, Mitra Hajjar, Pejman Jamshidi, Pardis Pour-Abedini, Ali Owji, Bitra Aziz, Sara Moham-madi, and Fatemeh Mirzaei.

Dolmens in northwestern Iran in need of more attention

Iranica Desk

Dolmens, properly called portal tombs, mark burial places in a very distinctive way, with large capstones elevated at an angle and held up by huge standing stones.

As the ancient objects date back to the Iron Age, they have not been immune to natural disasters and the effects of climate change.

In addition to Iran, dolmens, which seem to be the remains of collective or individual graves, are found in many European countries, including France and England, IRNA wrote.

The stone structures have been discovered in the north and northwestern Iran, in the vicinity of Meshginshahr, Namin, Astara and Talesh.

Yahya Asgari, a history researcher, said that the dolmens of Namin, a city in Ardebil Province, are mostly located at the confluence of two rivers known as "Chay Qushan".

Regarding the way in which the large stones were transported in ancient times despite the absence of elevators and machinery, he said, people probably first placed the stones standing in some pit, surrounding it with soil, and then put a piece of stone over them as a roof.

Referring to the artifacts discovered in the tombs, Asgari noted that in ancient times, it was believed that the dead would come back to life after some time and need some pottery items and tools, thus they buried such things next to the corpses.

Head of the Archeology Department of Ardebil Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Ruhollah Mohammadi said that more excavation projects should be carried out on portal tombs.

He said a major part of the budget of the Cultural Heritage Organization is allocated to the renovation and preservation of the historical monuments; this is while significant attention should be paid to the implementation of research projects on the sites hosting the dolmens.

He said the upright stones presently put on people's graves are reminiscent of dolmens.

Archeologists believe that the upright stones of Shahr-e Yeri, located 65 kilometers from Ardebil, and 31 kilometers from Meshginshahr, belong to rulers and warriors who won victories in several battles. The number of standing stones placed on their graves is equal to that of the number of people they killed in these wars.

The official said that dolmens and other ancient structures are not considered treasures and sources of income in Europe, while a number of people have carried out illegal drilling on some ancient sites in Iran to acquire wealth.

He noted that the people of Meshginshahr and Namin, with a rich cultural and historical background, expect related officials to carry out further research to discover the secrets of the dolmens.

The dolmens of northwestern Europe were built in the early Neolithic period (New Stone Age), which began in Brittany at about 5,000 BCE, and in Britain, Ireland and southern Scandinavia at about 4,000 BCE.

Sites in central and southern Europe were constructed at a similar date, but that corresponds to the middle or late Neolithic period in those areas. Outside Europe, dolmens were built over a long time, and they continue to be constructed in some parts of the world — such as the island of Sumba, Indonesia — up to the present day.



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Natanz historical castle should be saved from oblivion

Iranica Desk

Iran boasts hundreds of historical sites which draw a large number of tourists every year. Tarqrud Castle is one of these monuments located in a suburb of the city of Natanz in Isfahan Province. Its construction dates back to the Parthian Empire (247 B.C. to 224 A.D.). The castle has an area of 30,000 square meters, with more than 400 units. The rock, on which the castle has been built, is between eight to twelve meters high. Unfortunately, it is among historical monuments that have slid into oblivion.

Historical evidence suggests that the castle had no residential use; it was used for defensive purposes. People took shelter in the fortress to save their lives when they came under attack. Two-story warehouses were built under the rooms of the castle to store supplies of food and keep sheep. The fortress

is situated adjacent to a lake with the same name, Tarqrud Lake. The man-made lake made it difficult for invaders to reach the castle.

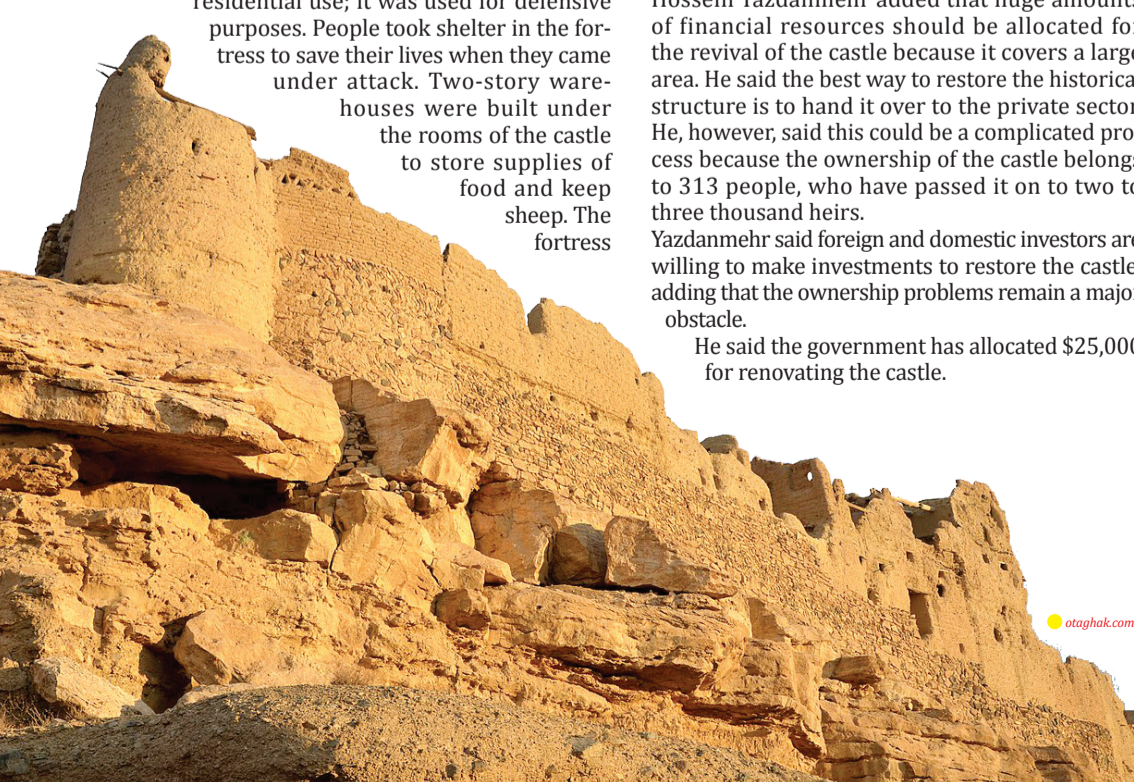
A cultural heritage expert told IRNA that the castle currently has private owners. Majid Nouri said women of Tarqrud town are the owners of the castle. In fact, the ownership pertains to their marriage portion.

Nouri noted that the castle has been badly damaged and should be renovated.

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Natanz also said that the historical monument was renovated four times. Hossein Yazdanmehr added that huge amounts of financial resources should be allocated for the revival of the castle because it covers a large area. He said the best way to restore the historical structure is to hand it over to the private sector. He, however, said this could be a complicated process because the ownership of the castle belongs to 313 people, who have passed it on to two to three thousand heirs.

Yazdanmehr said foreign and domestic investors are willing to make investments to restore the castle, adding that the ownership problems remain a major obstacle.

He said the government has allocated \$25,000 for renovating the castle.



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Tehran to host Islamic coexistence confab with focus on Sharia goals

Arts & Culture Desk

The University of Tehran is set to host the second international conference on peaceful coexistence on June 10, which is expected to bring together 500 scholars, thinkers and academics from Iran and 18 other nations.

Mostafa Zolfaqar-Talab, the chair of the conference, told a press briefing on Tuesday that during the academic gathering titled 'Convergence of the Islamic world and its civilizational prospects in the light of Sharia objectives,' participants would discuss six main topics.

Zolfaqar-Talab added that the topics include the application of Sharia objectives in jurisprudence, the manifestation of moderate thoughts rooted in Sharia objectives, the future of unity in the Islamic world premised on Sharia objectives, the synergy of Islamic movements and parties toward a new Islamic civilization founded on the goals of the Sharia, the role of Muslim women in advancing the convergence of the Islamic world in light of the future civilizational horizon, as well as issues related to media and the future of Islamic unity. The upcoming conference, as elucidated by Zolfaqar-Talab, marks a sequel to the first of its

kind held four years ago. "That conference had then created a significant impact in the Muslim world, which was grappling at a time with multifaceted crises and tensions, and strived to bridge the ideological chasm amongst its constituents," he pointed out.

The conference chair noted that the goals of Sharia possess enormous potential to foster greater convergence within the Islamic world and engender a new Islamic civilization.

anti-Islamism, and arrogance. Mahmoud Vaezi, the head of Tehran University's Faculty of Theology and Islamic Studies, who has co-organized the upcoming event, said the conference seeks to demonstrate that religion is an embodiment of peace and humanity, rather than a source of hardship and misfortune. Vaezi emphasized the significance of such programs to provide a platform for showcasing the true face of Islam to the world.



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Moreover, the Palestinian issue has been accorded particular attention at the conference. Zolfaqar-Talab averred that, in adherence to the tenets of the Sharia, the Islamic world and its intellectuals must come to an understanding that the plight of Palestine could serve as a unifying factor for the liberation from subjugation, oppression,

"Islam is a faith founded on the principles of peace and amity, but its enemies try to vilify it through their Islamophobic agenda." The dean further warned that anti-Islamic forces manipulate the media to propagate falsehoods about Islam and sow seeds of discord among Islamic nations.