

The Quarterly Cultural Magazine of  
**ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE (ECI)**  
*Specialized Agency of*  
**Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)**

# ECO HERITAGE

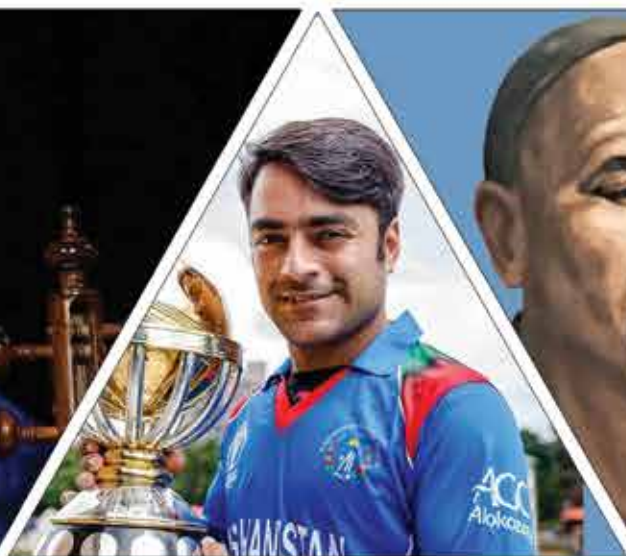
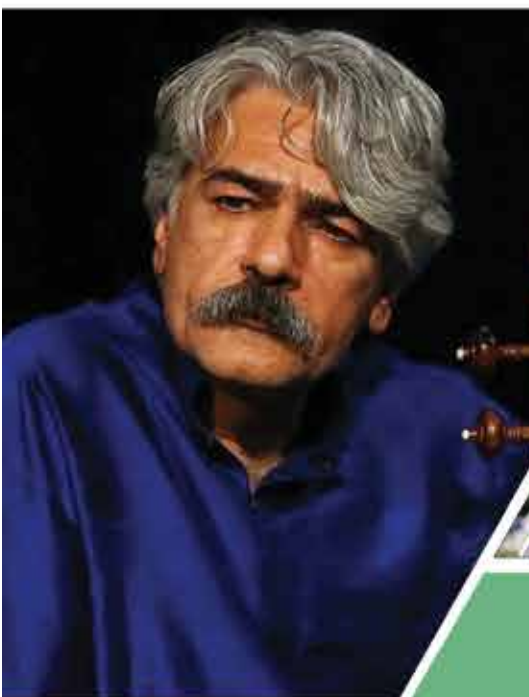
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17-Cİ ZİRVƏ GÖRÜŞÜ  
KHARKIV, AZERBAIJAN  
3-4 İYUL 2021



17<sup>TH</sup> SUMMIT OF THE ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION ORGANIZATION  
KHARKIV, AZERBAIJAN  
JULY 3-4, 2021



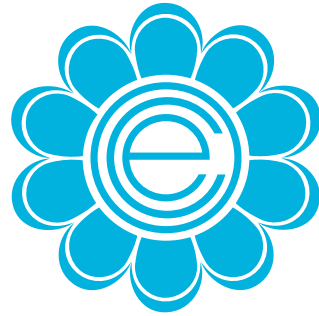
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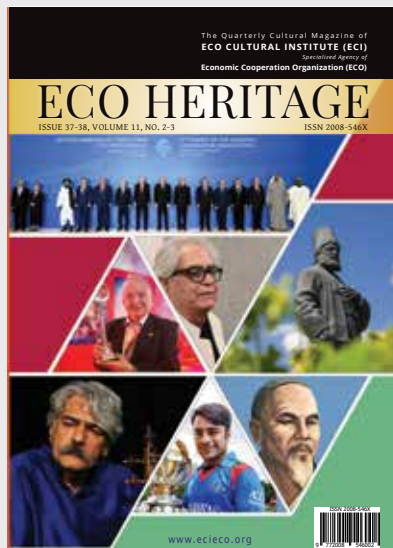
Headquarters - Tehran

# Showcasing the richness and diversity of cultural expressions around the ECO Region

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## Voices in Color

Opening of The Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition by Women from Afghanistan and Iran and Poetry Reading

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President, ECO Cultural Institute  
دکتر سعید علی خان  
رئیس هیئت مدیره

**Speakers**



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دکتر جلال شیرینی  
نویسنده، محقق، استادیار

**Special Guests**



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شاعر و نویسنده

**Special Guests**



Fakhrokh Dehghan  
Poet  
شاعر



مختصات نمایشگاه: ۸۴۲۷ میرداماد ۱۳۰۴

**Exhibition Duration:**  
24 - 30 July, 2025

مسابقات: بازدید نمایشگاه تا صبح ۸ شهریور ۱۴۰۴

**Date:** Thursday, 24th July, 2025, 15 - 16:30  
**Venue:** 10, Baqer Al-Nemr (ex. Nazi) St, Movahed Danesh Ave., Aqdasiyeh

تاریخ: پنجشنبه ۲۴ مرداد ۱۴۰۴ از ساعت ۱۵ تا ۱۶:۳۰  
محل برگزاری: آدرس: خیابان میرداماد، کوچه باقر النمر، پلاک ۱۰



مدرسین و هنرمندان

هما گورمیلو  
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شادی باغاطیله  
اوهام بیت شکن  
آناه بیومند  
آندیس بسطامی  
منصوره یوسفنده  
هدیه نواکلیان  
منّا جعفریاده  
سمانه حسن خانی  
شهره جانی  
انطام واسطی  
نارزین زهتابیان  
ساینا سیوف نراقی  
تلقاتی صادقی  
فریتم صادقی  
فریبا صدراپی  
مهره قرانداد  
نرگس قاضی  
سلیمه هاشمدی  
فرشته ملقدر  
زهرآ نجفی  
زهرآ نسیمی  
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• مدت زمان: ۲ ماه  
• روزها: دوشنبه‌ها و سه‌شنبه‌ها  
• زمان: ۱۳:۰۰ - ۱۷:۰۰



**Registration deadline:** Sunday, 17th August, 2025  
**Venue:** 10, Baqer Al-Nemr (ex. Nazi) St, Movahed Danesh Ave., Aqdasiyeh

مهلت ثبت نام: یکشنبه ۱۷ مرداد ۱۴۰۴  
محل برگزاری: آدرس: خیابان میرداماد، کوچه باقر النمر، پلاک ۱۰

لینک ثبت نام: <http://forms.gle/MeZ5WmKJtmUzrj5WA>

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Date: Tuesday, 24th June, 2025, 15-18  
Venue: 10, Baqer Al-Nemer (ex. Naz) St, Movahed Danesh Ave., Aqdaslyeh

تاریخ: سه شنبه ۲۴ خرداد ۱۴۰۴، از ساعت ۱۵ تا ۱۸  
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شروع از: ۲۳ خرداد ۱۴۰۴  
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- Live performances by Ayye Shadi Choir and Dastan Group
- Speeches by prominent cultural and artistic figures
- Opportunity to meet the artists and view their works

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- منتخبی از آثار هنرمندان خودآموخته
- اجرای زنده گروه «آوای شادی» و گروه موسیقی «دستان»
- سخنرانی چهره‌های برجسته فرهنگی و هنری
- دیدار و گفت‌وگو با هنرمندان



In Collaboration with the Self-Taught Artists Association  
Date: Thursday, 29th May, 2025, 15 pm - 17pm  
Venue: 10, Baqer Al-Nemer (ex. Naz) St, Movahed Danesh Ave., Aqdaslyeh

تاریخ: پنجشنبه ۲۹ خرداد ۱۴۰۴، از ساعت ۱۵ تا ۱۷  
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مدت نمایشگاه: ۲۹ خرداد - ۳۰ خرداد  
مکان: آفیس خیابان موحده دانش، کوچه باقرنمر، پلاک ۱۰

ورود برای عموم آزاد است

Free Admission | All are Welcome

بزرگداشت استاد ساعد نفیسی و رونمایی از کتاب «اسطوره نفیسی به هشت روایت»: نوشته جناب پیمان طالبی

Commemoration of Professor Saeed Nafisi & unveiling of the book "Saeed Nafisi in Eight Narrations", written by Mr. Peyman Talebi



Speakers	
Dr. Saad Khan, President, ECO Cultural Institute	آقای دکتر ساعد خان، رئیس مؤسسه فرهنگی اِکو
Dr. Noormiddin Zohdi, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the Islamic Republic of Iran	آقای دکتر نظام‌الدین زاهدی، سر کنسول لیتوانی در جمهوری اسلامی ایران
Mr. Ahmad Shahrizay, President poet and researcher	آقای احمد شهریار، شاعر و محقق
Mr. Sam Saeed Nafisi, grandson of Professor Nafisi, researcher and representative of the Saeed Nafisi Memorial Center	آقای سام ساعد نفیسی، نوه استاد ساعد نفیسی، محقق و نماینده مرکز ساعد نفیسی
Mr. Abbas Khairabadi, Iranian researcher and scholar	آقای دکتر عباس خیرآبادی، محقق و پژوهشگر ایرانی
Mr. Dr. Naderreh Nafisi, Chairman of the Iranian Dialects Department of the Great Islamic Encyclopedia Center	خانم دکتر نادره نفیسی، رئیس بخش گویش‌های ایرانی مرکز دائرةالمعارف بزرگ اسلامی
Dr. Noormohammad Noorizadeh, former faculty member at Saqi and Samangan universities, head of literary center "Qajar" in Saqi	آقای دکتر نورمحمد نوریزاده، دانشمند ادبی، رئیس مرکز ادبی «قاجار» در ساقی
Mr. Yavta Varan, poet and researcher of Persian poetry	آقای یارتا وارن، شاعر و پژوهشگر شعر پارسی
Mr. Peyman Talebi, author of the book "Saeed Nafisi in Eight Narrations"	آقای پیمان طالبی، نویسنده کتاب «سعد نفیسی به هشت روایت»
Shahmohammad Shahmorza, Member ECO	آقای شاه‌محمد شاه‌میرزا، عضو اِکو

Music performance by the Choral Band (band leader Mr. Arash Fallahi)

Time: Sunday, June 15, 2025, 15 - 16:30

Venue: ECO Cultural Institute, 10 Shakh Nemer St, Aqdaslyeh, Tehran

زمان: یکشنبه ۱۵ خرداد ۱۴۰۵، ساعت ۱۵ تا ۱۶:۳۰  
مکان: آفیس موحده دانش، کوچه باقرنمر، پلاک ۱۰



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Headquarters - Tehran

NO. 2-3, 2025

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Meddah: The Master Storytellers of Türkiye's Rich Oral Tradition



**Mehrdad Rakhshandeh**  
Acting President/Executive Director  
ECO Cultural Institute

# Editorial

As we unveil the latest edition of ECO HERITAGE, we invite readers on a compelling journey through the vibrant expressions of art, history, and cultural activities that define our region. This issue serves as more than a collection of stories—it is an homage to the creative legacies that transcend borders and bind us in unity.

In the Historical Figures segment, we shine a light on Barpi Alikulov, a luminary of Kyrgyz literature whose poetic verses echo with themes of love, resilience, and national pride. His legacy continues to shape the literary traditions of the Kyrgyz people. We also honor Amir Kabir, the great 19th-century reformer of Iran, whose bold vision transformed governance, education, industry, and public health, leaving a legacy of progress that still inspires generations.

The Arts and Crafts section celebrates Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov, an artistic visionary from Turkmenistan whose mastery

of painting breathes life into his nation's heritage. His creative expressions serve as bridges between tradition and modernity. The section also transports readers into the imaginative, symbol-rich world of Eldar Babazade, the Azerbaijani artist whose fusion of Eastern and European imagery reveals a surreal beauty and bridges time-honored techniques with modern sensibilities.

In Literature, we pay homage to Abai Kunanbaiuly, a towering figure in Kazakh letters whose poetry and philosophical "Book of Words" championed moral integrity, intellectual awakening, and cultural pride—an enduring voice for humanistic values. Also, we read about Samig Abdukakhkhar who emerges as a master architect of Uzbek storytelling and his sharp-witted Uzbek fables bending humour toward truth.

Cinema takes center stage with Zaur Dakhte, an accomplished cinematographer whose storytelling has captivated audiences,

leaving an indelible mark on the world of film. Also, we review the moving Kyrgyz drama “Paradise Under Mothers’ Feet”, an odyssey of love, faith, and perseverance that has captivated audiences and garnered international recognition.

We then turn to the world of music, where we pay tribute to Kayhan Kalhor, an exceptional maestro of Persian classical music. His profound artistry ensures the endurance of this soulful musical tradition. The Music section also pays homage to Turkmen composer Rejep Rejepov, whose evocative scores for film and concert stage have shaped the soundscape of his homeland and touched hearts far beyond its borders.

And then there is sport - a language of unity that needs no translation. This issue spotlights Afghanistan’s cricketing prodigy Rashid Khan Arman, whose record-breaking rise from Nangarhar’s cement-track games to captaining his nation on the world stage embodies resilience, pride, and the power of play to carry a country’s spirit far beyond its borders. Also, we pause on the football fields of Tajikistan, where the sport’s history and present-day triumphs reflect both national spirit and the pursuit of excellence.

Culinary treasures make an appearance as we explore the Adana Kebab, a savory delight from Türkiye that has graced tables across generations, carrying the flavors of tradition and celebration. Also, the section brings us the vibrant green noodles of Shivit Oshi from Khiva, Uzbekistan—a dish as visually striking as it is rich in heritage.

Our Museums and Cultural Centers spotlight

opens the doors to Pakistan’s National Museum, home to artifacts that chronicle millennia of civilizational splendor. Also, a glimpse into Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum reveals the intricate beauty of woven storytelling, a craft that intertwines artistic mastery with cultural preservation.

In Tourist Attractions, Afghanistan’s Darul Aman Palace rises as a beacon of resilience, its restored neoclassical grandeur a symbol of hope after decades of turmoil. For those drawn to history and exploration, we present Mohenjo-daro, an awe-inspiring ancient marvel of the Indus Valley Civilization, reminding us of the enduring brilliance of human ingenuity.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage section revisits Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu, a timeless Kazakh love story that continues to captivate hearts with its poetic romance. The section also celebrates Türkiye’s Meddah storytellers, masters of wit and wisdom whose oral performances have carried moral lessons and social reflection across centuries.

We also look inward at the ECO Cultural Institute’s own initiatives in “In the Spotlight,” and celebrate its unwavering efforts to nurture regional artistry, cultivate collaboration, and illuminate the essence of our shared cultural identity.

Finally, in In the Spotlight, we embark on a closer exploration of the arts and culture within the ECO region, emphasizing the diverse artistic expressions that contribute to our shared cultural identity.

# BARPI ALIKULOV:

The Heartbeat of Kyrgyz Literature





Barpi Alikulov, is a celebrated figure in Kyrgyz literature and culture. His life and works have left an indelible mark on the literary landscape of Kyrgyzstan and the broader Turkic world. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of his life, literary contributions, and the enduring legacy he has left behind.

## FROM ACHI TO RECOGNITION: BARPI ALIKULOV'S EARLY LIFE

Barpi Alikulov was born in 1884 in the village of Achi, served by the "XX Party Congress" collective farm in Suzak district of the present Jalal-Abad region, Kyrgyzstan. His early life was marked by the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Kyrgyz people. Growing up in a rural setting, Alikulov was deeply influenced by the oral traditions and folklore that were an integral part of Kyrgyz culture. These early influences would later shape his poetic voice and thematic concerns.

## THE POET'S PALETTE: EXPLORING ALIKULOV'S LITERARY THEMES

Alikulov's literary career began in earnest in the early 20th century. He was known for his lyrical poetry, which often explored themes of love, nature, and the human condition. His poems are characterized by their emotional depth, vivid imagery, and a profound sense of national identity. Alikulov's work is also notable for its improvisational quality, a hallmark of Kyrgyz oral poetry.

One of the defining moments in Alikulov's life was his meeting with Toktogul Satylganov, another giant of Kyrgyz literature. This encounter had a profound impact on Alikulov, inspiring him to further hone his craft and contribute to the rich tradition of Kyrgyz poetry. Some of his most famous works include "Burakcan," "Mirzayım," "Arzıkan," "Mölmölüm," "Dilbar," "Güldögen kız," and "Ak yıldız".

Mastering various characters makes Alikulov an artist who captures the essence of life. The poet's psychological portrayals

of good and bad men and women differ significantly, infused with rich details and unique expressions. The contrasting positive and negative characters, with their distinct traits and actions, unfold vividly before the reader's eyes.

## TRIUMPH OVER TRIALS: ALIKULOV'S JOURNEY THROUGH BLINDNESS

In 1929, Alikulov faced a significant personal challenge when he lost his eyesight due to a severe illness. Despite this setback, he continued to write and remained an active participant in social and cultural life. His resilience in the face of adversity is a testament to his dedication to his art and his unwavering spirit.

## REMEMBERING A LEGEND: 140 YEARS OF BARPI ALIKULOV

Barpi Alikulov's contributions to Kyrgyz literature have been widely recognized and celebrated. In 2024, the 140th anniversary of his birth was commemorated with various events and activities. The International Kyrgyz-Uzbek University hosted an international round table dedicated to his life and work, highlighting his enduring influence on Kyrgyz poetry. Additionally, a bust of Alikulov was unveiled at the Kyrgyz National Philharmonic Hall in Bishkek, further cementing his status as a cultural icon.

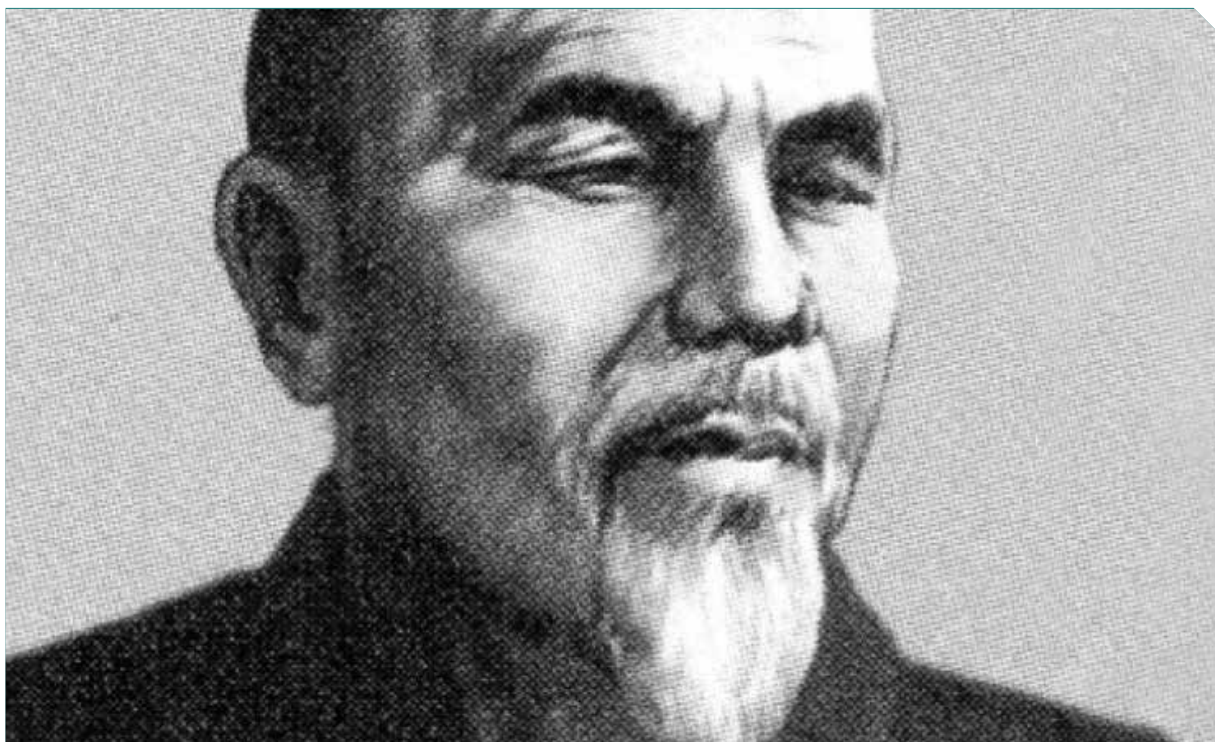
## PRESERVING THE PAST: ALIKULOV'S CONTRIBUTION TO ORAL TRADITIONS

Barpi Alikulov's influence on Kyrgyz literature extends beyond his own works. He played a crucial role in preserving and promoting the oral traditions of the Kyrgyz people. His poetry often drew from the rich tapestry of Kyrgyz folklore, weaving traditional themes and motifs into his verses. This not only helped to keep these traditions alive but also introduced them to new audiences, ensuring their continued relevance in a rapidly changing world.

Alikulov's work is also notable for its exploration of social and political themes. He lived through a period of significant upheaval in Central Asia, including the Russian Revolution and the subsequent establishment of Soviet rule. These events had a profound impact on Kyrgyz society, and Alikulov's poetry reflects the complexities and challenges of this era. His ability to capture the spirit of his times, while also addressing universal themes, has made his work enduringly popular.

"Akkan Suu" (Flowing Water) is a well-known theme among Kyrgyz poets. Various poets have explored





this theme, yet each has approached it in their own way. Alikulov's "Flowing Water" distinguishes itself from these other works. In this poem, the poet strips away the attributes of God, presenting them in relation to real life. "Flowing Water" is celebrated as a song of one of Mother Earth's children. Additionally, Alikulov's philosophical poem dedicated to the sun is crafted at a high poetic level, showcasing his ability to elevate simple themes into profound reflections.

### **BARPI ALIKULOV'S IMPACT ON FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Barpi Alikulov's legacy continues to inspire new generations of poets and writers in Kyrgyzstan and beyond. His work is studied in schools and universities, and his poems are frequently included in anthologies of Kyrgyz literature. Alikulov's ability to capture the essence of the human experience, while also addressing the specific cultural and historical context of his time, has made

his work a valuable resource for those seeking to understand the complexities of Kyrgyz identity. In addition to his literary contributions, Alikulov's life story serves as a powerful example of resilience and determination. Despite the challenges he faced, including the loss of his eyesight, he remained committed to his art and continued to produce work of exceptional quality. This unwavering dedication has made him a role model for aspiring writers and artists, demonstrating the importance of perseverance in the pursuit of creative excellence.

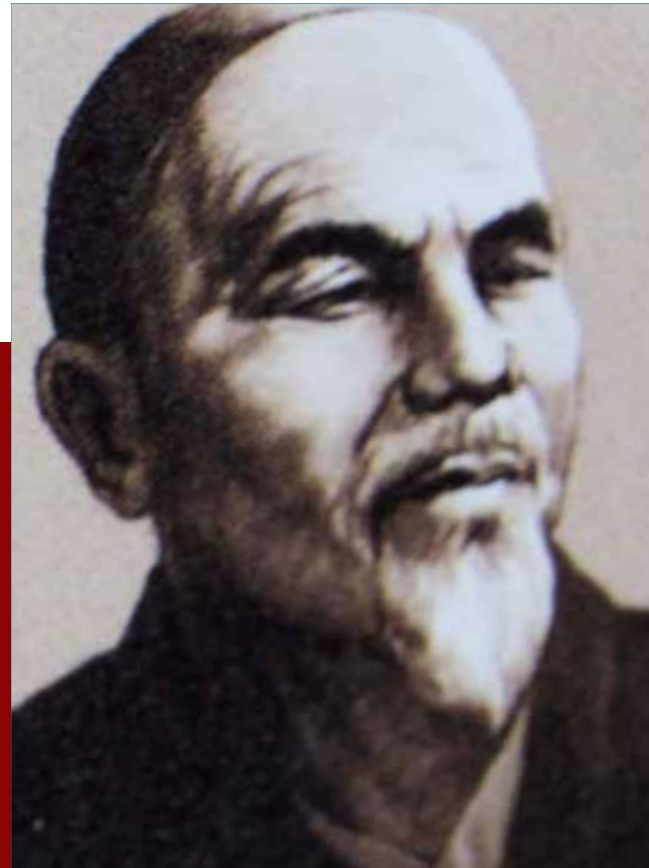
### **A LASTING INFLUENCE: THE ENDURING RELEVANCE OF BARPI ALIKULOV'S WORK**

Barpi Alikulov's life and work represent a significant chapter in the history of Kyrgyz literature. His poetry, characterized by its emotional depth, vivid imagery, and profound sense of national identity, continues to resonate with readers today. Alikulov's ability to capture the essence of the human experience, while also addressing the specific cultural and historical context of his time,



has made his work enduringly relevant.

As we reflect on Alikulov's legacy, we are reminded of the power of literature to transcend time and connect us to our shared cultural heritage. His contributions to Kyrgyz literature have not only enriched the literary landscape of his homeland but have also left an indelible mark on the broader Turkic world. Through his poetry, Barpi Alikulov has ensured that the voices and traditions of the Kyrgyz people will continue to be heard and celebrated for generations to come.



**SOURCES:**

- (1) Barpy Alykulov – biography. [https://sputnik-kg.translate.goog/20161121/barpy-alykulov-omur-bayany-1030394697.html?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ky&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://sputnik-kg.translate.goog/20161121/barpy-alykulov-omur-bayany-1030394697.html?_x_tr_sl=ky&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc)
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# AMIR KABIR:

## The Great Reformer of Iran





## HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Amir Kabir, born Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani on January 9, 1807, in Hazaveh, Arak, Iran, came from humble beginnings. His father, Karbalayi Mohammad Qorban, was a cook in the household of Mirza Isa Qa'em-Maqam, a prominent statesman. Despite his modest background, Amir Kabir's intelligence and diligence caught the attention of Mirza Isa, who ensured that he received a proper education alongside his own children<sup>1</sup>.

## ASCENSION IN GOVERNANCE

Amir Kabir's rise to power was marked by his exceptional administrative skills and dedication to public service. He began his career as a military registrar and gradually climbed the ranks. His significant contributions during his tenure in various governmental positions earned him the trust

of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, who appointed him as the chief minister in 1848, a position that further solidified his influence as he also became part of the royal family by marrying Izzat al-Dowleh, the sister of Naser al-Din Shah. His tenure lasted from October 20, 1848, to November 13, 1851, a brief period of 39 months, yet it was marked by significant and lasting reforms that established him as a prominent figure in Iranian history.

## THE MAN BEHIND THE REFORMS

Despite his humble beginnings as the son of a cook, Amir Kabir was raised among one of the most distinguished families of his time. He was well aware of the common people's needs and was familiar with the thoughts of the nation's elite. Having personally witnessed the hardships faced by the populace; he placed their welfare as

his top priority. Amir Kabir was not only a man of profound religious beliefs but also an adept manager, skilled politician, patriot, and a devoted advocate for the people, committed to serving them.

## AMIR KABIR'S REFORM AGENDA

One of Amir Kabir's most notable legacies lies in his extensive reforms aimed at the advancement of Iran. He sought to transform Iran's administrative, economic, and educational systems. Some of his key reforms include:

1. **Administrative Reforms:** Amir Kabir restructured the government by creating new ministries and rationalizing governmental functions. He aimed to eliminate corruption and improve efficiency within the administration.
2. **Educational Reforms:** Understanding the importance of education, Amir Kabir established the Dar ul-Funun, Iran's first modern university, in 1851. This institution aimed to provide scientific and technical education, marking a departure from traditional learning.
3. **Economic Reforms:** He implemented measures to improve Iran's financial system, including tax reforms and efforts to boost domestic production. He also sought to reduce the country's dependence on foreign imports.
4. **Judicial Reforms:** Amir Kabir prohibited bribery and the torture of defendants

and prisoners. He aimed to create a more just and transparent legal system.

5. **Media Reforms:** Amir Kabir initiated the publication of *Vaqaye' Ettafaqiyeh*, Iran's first official newspaper. This endeavor aimed to promote transparency and inform the public about government activities and societal issues, marking a significant step towards modern communication in the country.

## FOREIGN POLICY

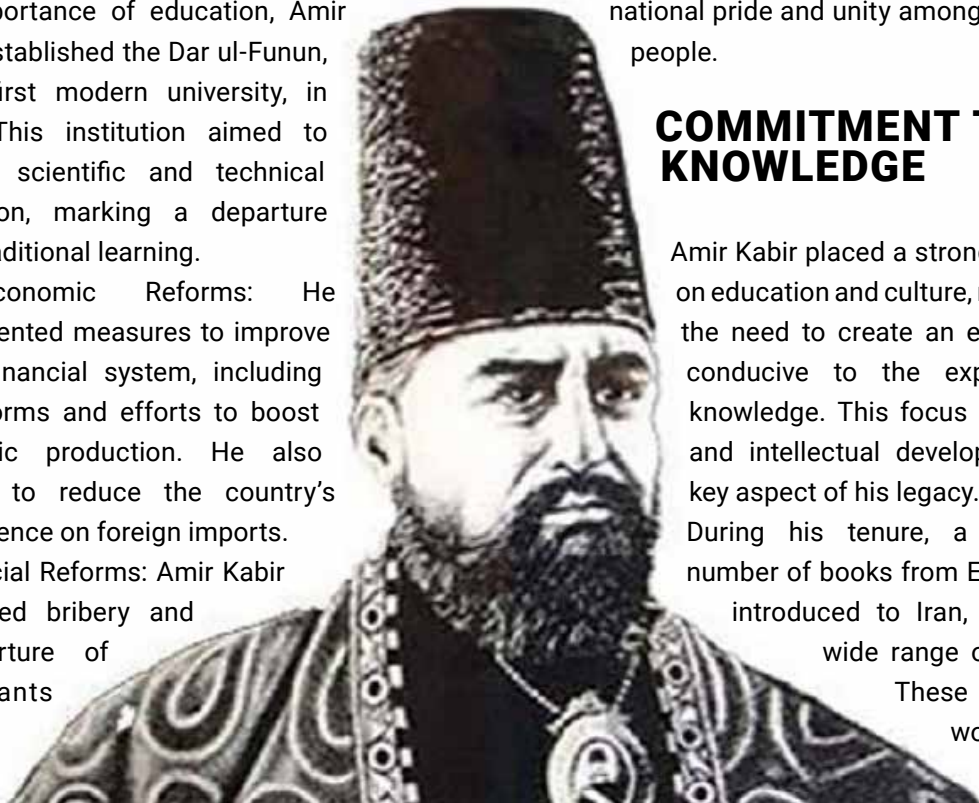
Amir Kabir was a staunch opponent of foreign exploitation and interference in Iran's affairs. He advocated for national independence and resisted unjust demands from foreign powers, striving to avoid granting any concessions to them. His policies emphasized the importance of self-reliance and sovereignty, aiming to strengthen Iran's economy and military capabilities. He believed that true progress could only be achieved through the rejection of external pressures and the promotion of domestic development, fostering a sense of national pride and unity among the Iranian people.

## COMMITMENT TO KNOWLEDGE

Amir Kabir placed a strong emphasis on education and culture, recognizing the need to create an environment conducive to the expansion of knowledge. This focus on learning and intellectual development is a key aspect of his legacy.

During his tenure, a significant number of books from Europe were introduced to Iran, covering a wide range of subjects.

These included works on





natural sciences, industry, agriculture, trade, economics, politics, mining laws, animal husbandry, horticulture, military organization, medicine, veterinary science, and more. Additionally, Amir Kabir brought together 323 geographical maps of the world to enhance the understanding of geography.

He also established a library adjacent to the Dar al-Funun school, allowing students to explore subjects of their interest. The establishment of a printing house at Dar al-Funun was another of Amir Kabir's forward-thinking initiatives, making the printing of books more accessible, faster, and cost-effective.

**Industrial and Agricultural Advancements**  
Recognizing the importance of industrial development, Amir Kabir focused on enhancing both industry and agriculture. He initiated the establishment of factories for sugar, textiles, paper, metalwork, glass, and ceramics, and encouraged the importation of modern machinery and European

expertise to train local craftsmen.

## HEALTH INITIATIVES

Amir Kabir also prioritized public health, which had been largely neglected prior to his tenure. He introduced vaccination against smallpox and translated necessary medical texts into Persian. His efforts included the establishment of hospitals and the training of physicians.

## EXILE AND ASSASSINATION

Despite his numerous achievements, Amir Kabir's reforms and policies faced opposition from various factions within the court. His enemies, including influential courtiers and Mahd-e Oliya, the Shah's mother conspired against him. In 1851, he was dismissed from his position and exiled to Fin Garden in Kashan. On January 09, 1852, he was assassinated by order of Naser al-Din Shah.

## HIS MARK ON IRANIAN HISTORY

Amir Kabir's legacy as a visionary reformer continues to be celebrated in Iran. His efforts to

modernize the country and improve the lives of its citizens have left an indelible mark on Iranian history. The Dar ul-Funun, which he founded, remains a symbol of his commitment to education and progress.

## CULTURAL DEPICTIONS

Amir Kabir's life and contributions have been depicted in various Iranian films and television series, including:

- Sultan Sahib Qaran (directed by Ali Hatami) featuring Nasser Malek Motiee as Amir Kabir.
- Naser al-Din Shah, a Cinema Actor with Dariush Arjmand in the role of Amir Kabir.
- Amir Kabir series starring Saeed Nikpour.
- Saalhaay-e Mashruteh (The Constitutional Era) series, directed by Mohammad Reza Varzi, Mohammad Sadeghi played the role of Amir Kabir.

- Symphony No. 9, Pejman Bazghi took on the role of Amir Kabir.

These portrayals highlight his significant impact on Iranian history and culture.

## CONCLUSION

Amir Kabir stands as a pivotal figure in Iranian history, renowned for his visionary reforms and unwavering commitment to the advancement of the nation. His multifaceted contributions, spanning administrative, educational, economic, and healthcare reforms—reflect a profound understanding of the needs of the Iranian people and a dedication to fostering a modern, self-sufficient society.

His efforts to resist foreign exploitation and promote national sovereignty will always remain in the minds of Iranians as a source of inspiration and pride. Moreover, the cultural depictions of Amir Kabir in films and television serve to remind future generations of his impact on the nation's trajectory.







# FROM INITIATIVE TO ACHIEVEMENT

A BRIEF REVIEW OF  
ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE'S  
JOURNEY IN NURTURING REGIONAL  
ART AND CULTURE



### Children's Choir Performance at ECI in Celebration of Nowruz

As part of the Nowruz celebrations, a children's choir performed at the ECI. The choir consisted of students who have been attending music courses for many years at the Tehran Yunus Emre Institute. Led by music teacher and choir conductor Zohre Abdholi, the concert offered an unforgettable experience for the audience.

The choir presented a repertoire featuring songs in multiple languages, reflecting the joy and cultural

diversity of Nowruz. At the end of the concert, the participants were awarded certificates in appreciation of their efforts and talents.

The event was highly appreciated as a meaningful gathering that not only strengthened cultural ties but also provided a platform for young talents to showcase their skills.





### The Melody of “Nahoft” Echoes Through ECO Cultural Institute

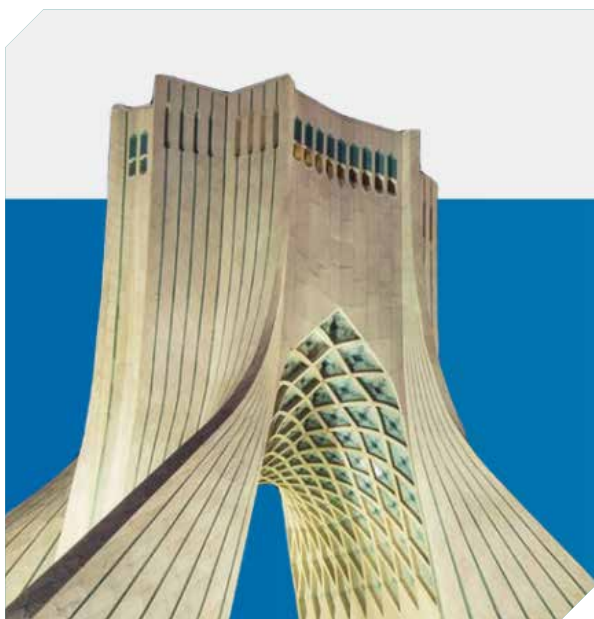
On April 10, 2025, the ECO Cultural Institute welcomed an audience of music lovers to an enchanting evening of traditional Iranian music with the “Nahoft” concert.

Blending classical Persian music with regional folk melodies, the performance offered a unique and soulful musical experience. The ensemble of acclaimed musicians captivated the audience with their masterful use of traditional instruments and expressive vocals, weaving together refined compositions.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Dr. Saad Khan, Ex-president of the ECO Cultural Institute, emphasized the unifying role of music as a shared language among cultures and highlighted its significance in deepening cultural ties within the ECO region.

Following the event, both the ECO Cultural Institute and the performing group expressed their intent to continue cultural cooperation and explore opportunities to present similar performances across other ECO member states.





### ECI Ex-president Explores Nowruz Exhibition at Tehran's Azadi Tower

Dr. Saad S. Khan, Ex-president ECI, visited Tehran's Azadi Tower to explore the Nowruz exhibition featuring photographs contributed by ECI. His visit underscored the institute's commitment to promoting cultural diversity and shared heritage among ECO member states. Appreciating the exhibition's efforts, Dr. Khan reaffirmed ECI's dedication to fostering cross-cultural understanding. The visit highlighted the importance of public cultural platforms in strengthening intercultural ties and celebrating regional traditions.



### ECI Launches Book Documenting Dynamic Library Achievements

organized into eight chapters and enriched with tables, charts, and images-chronicles the Diplomatic Library's achievements from 2019 to 2024 in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of ECO member nations.

During a meeting on March 13, 2025, Ambassador Dr. Nizomiddin Zohidi of Tajikistan lauded the work for clearly documenting the library's vibrant collaborations with literary figures across ECO countries. In his remarks, he emphasized that the preservation of written heritage serves as both a legacy for future generations and a bridge that fosters intercultural dialogue. Dr. Saad Khan's warm greetings, conveyed by Director of the ECI's library, further underscored the commitment to ongoing cultural exchange.

This publication not only archives a significant period of the library's dynamic activities but also stands as a call to sustain the vital mission of linking diverse cultures through shared historical and artistic treasures.

In a demonstration of cultural commitment, the ECI launched its latest publication, "ECO Diplomatic Library, a Mirror of Harmonization among ECO Nations." This 216-page book-



**ECI Ex-president Highlights Cultural Heritage and Shared Regional Identity**

Dr. Saad S. Khan, Ex-president ECI explored Tehran's iconic Milad Tower, emphasizing the cultural richness and modern architectural achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

A historian by background and deeply interested in cultural heritage, Dr. Saad Khan toured various sections of the tower, including the observation deck offering panoramic views of the capital, and appreciated the cultural and artistic exhibits displayed at the venue.

On this occasion, Dr. Khan extended his heartfelt greetings for Nowruz, wishing continued prosperity and harmony throughout the ECO region.

This engagement reflected ECI's enduring connection with the cultural heritage of its host country and reaffirmed the Institute's commitment to promoting shared values and fostering regional unity.





### ECI Delegation Visits Turkmenistan Embassy for Productive Cultural Dialogue

On April 23, 2025, a delegation from the ECI, including Mr. Omraninejad, Head of the ECI's Publication; Mr. Nasrollahi, IT Manager; and Ms. Maryam Shayegan, Focal Person for Turkmenistan, visited the Embassy of Turkmenistan. The meeting was marked by warm hospitality and constructive cultural discussions. The esteemed Ambassador of Turkmenistan proposed several avenues for deeper cultural collaboration between ECI and Turkmenistan. Notably, he suggested cooperation in the publication of books that reflect Turkmenistan's culture and heritage through ECI's platform. He also expressed interest in contributing scholarly articles on Turkmenistan to be featured in ECO Heritage, ECI's cultural magazine.

In a reciprocal gesture, the Ambassador requested that articles from Iranian authors be

submitted for publication in the official magazine of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. This exchange of cultural and literary works aims to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

The two sides also discussed expanding collaboration on upcoming cultural events, emphasizing the importance of celebrating shared heritage through joint initiatives. Both parties expressed a strong interest in organizing events and publishing articles that highlight significant cultural occasions such as the Horse Festival, Carpet Day, and other heritage-related observances. The ECI delegation confirmed that the Institute will actively contribute content and support for these initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to cultural diplomacy.



**ECI Delegation Participates in Iran Expo 2025**

The ECI delegation, comprising Dr. Shahmansour Shahmirza, Cultural Expert of Tajikistan, and Ms. Maryam Shayegan, Executive Secretary to the President, participated in the 7th Iran Expo 2025 held at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground.

Organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the exhibition gathered over 800 Iranian companies and more than 2,500 international delegates, showcasing Iran's achievements across various sectors of industry, culture, and services.

The ECI delegation engaged with cultural representatives and institutions, exploring avenues for enhancing cultural exchanges and fostering closer ties among ECO Member States. The visit underscored ECI's ongoing commitment to promoting mutual understanding, cultural dialogue, and regional solidarity.





### ECI Holds an Event on Allama Iqbal's Intellectual and Cultural Legacy in the ECO Region

On the occasion of the death anniversary of the great philosopher-poet Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the ECI organized a program titled "The Intellectual and Cultural Legacy of Allama Iqbal in the ECO Region" at Tehran's Art Bureau. The event featured distinguished Iqbal scholars and cultural figures.

Speaking on the occasion, ECI Ex-president Dr. Saad S. Khan, himself a historian and senior Pakistani diplomat, highlighted Iqbal's contributions to both Persian and Urdu literature, stating that wherever these languages are spoken, Iqbal is revered. He emphasized Iqbal's pivotal role in connecting the literary and cultural traditions of the ECO region.

The event, hosted by Samana Abid, featured notable scholars and admirers of Iqbal, including renowned Iqbal studies personalities and university professors such as Dr. Mohammad Baqai Makan, Dr. Zahid Munir Amir, and Dr. Mohammad Reza Sangari. Media figures Ms.

Shaista Durrani and Mr. Azfar Kazmi from Sahar International Urdu Channel also participated. Mr. Farhan Ali, Head of Chancery at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran, was also present at the event. A documentary on Allama Iqbal's life and work was screened. Mr. Ahmad Shahryar recited poetry on Allama Iqbal, followed by live musical renditions by Mr. Ghafar Hassani.

A side exhibition showcased ECI's publications, further celebrating Allama Iqbal's enduring literary legacy.





### ECO Cultural Institute showcases the Harmony of Calligraphy and Peace

The ECI organized a program titled “Borderless Borders”, a cultural event featuring the works of emerging Iranian calligraphy artist Aatefeh Noushavand. The program highlighted the profound connection between traditional art and the universal message of peace.

As a committed platform for cultural collaboration, ECI continues to support initiatives that bring together artists, intellectuals, and peace advocates from its member states. In his remarks, Dr. Saad S. Khan, Ex-president of ECI, praised Ms. Noushavand’s creative vision

and emphasized the role of cultural programs in promoting peace.

Prominent figures from the calligraphy community, including Mr. Sandoogh Abadi, Mr. Ali Ganji, and Mr. Buroonmand, attended the opening ceremony, showing their support and appreciation for Ms. Noushavand’s artistic contributions.

The event also featured musical performances by the Saba Music Group at the opening and conclusion.



**ECI Hosts National Festival of "The Splendor of Wisdom and Art in the Thought of Ferdowsi"**

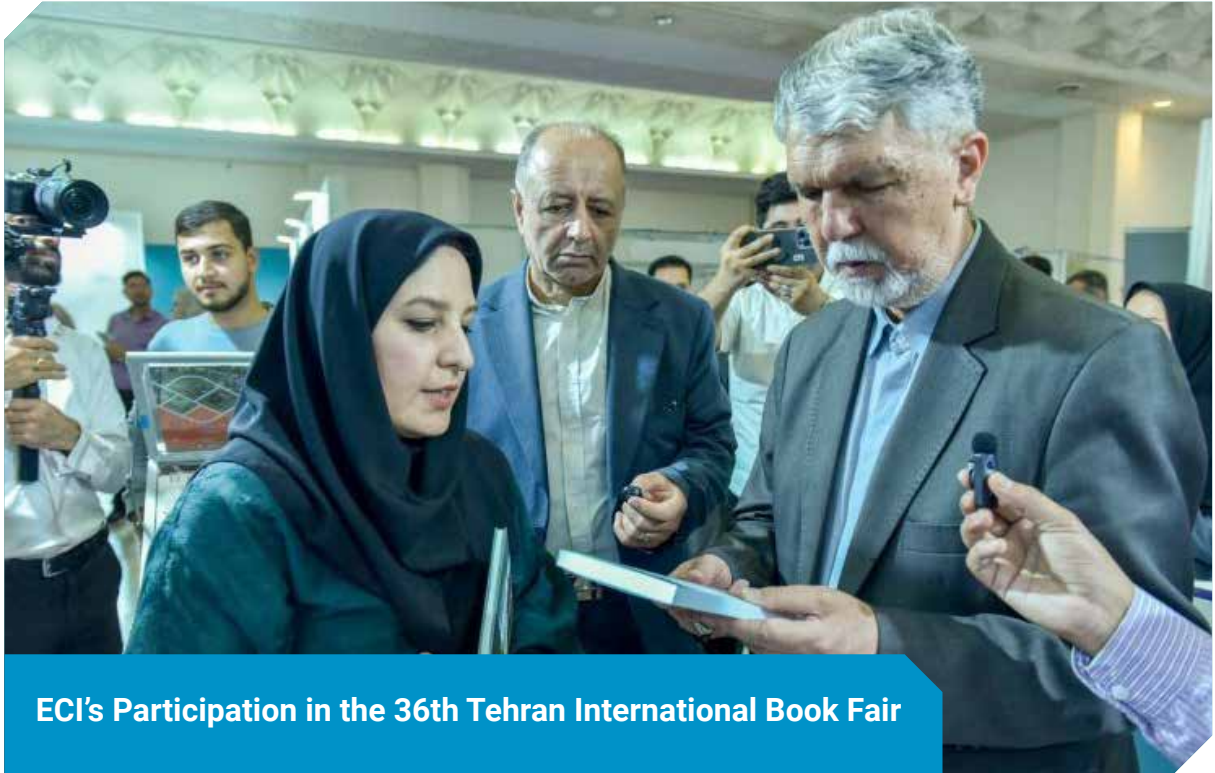
The National Festival of "The Splendor of Wisdom and Art in the Thought of Ferdowsi", hosted by the ECO Cultural Institute on May 24, 2024, honored Hakim Abolqasem Ferdowsi and his masterpiece, Shahnameh. Scholars and artists from ECO member states gathered to explore Ferdowsi's enduring influence on literature, wisdom, and art.

The event featured insightful speeches on Ferdowsi's role in strengthening cultural bonds, recitations by Ms. Baran Nik Andish, and a lecture on wisdom in the Shahnameh by Dr. Mozaffar Ahmadi. Professor Mohammad Baqer Aghamiri reflected on Ferdowsi's impact on

Iranian artistic traditions.

A theatrical performance, Seven Demises, directed by Ms. Mojdeh Zamani, dramatized themes from the Shahnameh. Meanwhile, art exhibitions showcased miniature paintings, reverse glass paintings, and mirror paintings, merging traditional techniques with modern interpretations.

The festival concluded with a ceremony honoring outstanding artists, reinforcing the importance of preserving and celebrating Persian literary and artistic heritage.



### ECI's Participation in the 36th Tehran International Book Fair

In its dedication to reaching wider audiences, the ECI proudly participated in the 36th Tehran International Book Fair. This active involvement allowed the ECI to pay tribute to literary giants such as Mawlana Rumi and Allama Iqbal. The launch of Dr. Mahmood Shalooei's English translation of "The Transcendent Unity of Religions in Mawlana's Thought" ignited engaging discussions on the themes of religious unity and love within Rumi's philosophy.

Furthermore, the ECI's initiative, Mashal-e-Urdu, celebrated Urdu literary heritage, culminating in the release of "Khutoot-e-Akbar Ba Naam-e-Iqbal", a collection of correspondence between Akbar Ilah Abadi and Allama Iqbal. The ECI stall

also hosted a gathering of distinguished poets from ECO member states, including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, who shared their poetry and contributed their books to the ECI's library.

The stall was honored by a visit from the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who recognized the ECI's efforts in publishing literary works from the ECO region. Additionally, the signing ceremony for the Kazakh translation of "One-Page Book" took place at the ECI's stall, attended by the book's Kazakh translator and author. The event welcomed publishing professionals from Iran, Türkiye, and Kyrgyzstan.





**Flavours of Iran: A Culinary Journey from Gilan to Yazd**

On May 15, 2025, the ECO Cultural Institute hosted a special event centred around the diversity of Iranian cuisine, titled "Exploring Extreme Gastronomy Destinations of Iran - Gilan & Yazd: The Most & Least Rainy Provinces."

Held at the ECI, the event showcased the striking contrasts in Iran's geography and culinary traditions, from the lush, rainy forests of Gilan to the hot, arid deserts of Yazd.

Visitors enjoyed cultural exhibitions, museum presentations, and virtual tours led by tourism experts. The highlight of the event was the tasting section, where guests were treated to traditional snacks and sweets from Gilan and Yazd, which received a warm reception from attendees.

The ECI continues its mission to promote the shared heritage and cultural richness of the ECO region through such engaging events.





### The Honorable Cypress of Speech – A Tribute to Hakim Abolqasem Ferdowsi

On 18 May 2025, ECI hosted a significant cultural event titled The Honorable Cypress of Speech to honor the legacy of Hakim Abolqasem Ferdowsi, the revered Persian epic poet. The event underscored the profound impact of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, a monumental work that not only shapes Persian identity but also encompasses the historical and cultural narratives of 22 countries, including those in the ECO region. This highlights the Shahnameh as a mutual cultural

element that fosters regional connections and shared heritage.

The program included the launch of the Spanish translation of the Shahnameh, a pivotal step in extending the reach of Persian literature to global audiences. This initiative aligns with ECI's mission to foster regional cultural connections and to celebrate literary heritage as a unifying force across diverse societies.





### ECI Hosts Exhibition Showcasing Iranian Self-Taught Talent

The ECI hosted the remarkable art exhibition, “The Interpreter of That Eternal Moment - Art Beyond Education; From the Soul”, which took place on Thursday, May 29, 2025, at the ECI Headquarters in Tehran.

This extraordinary event showcased 60 original artworks by a group of exceptionally talented Iranian self-taught artists, whose creativity flourished beyond the boundaries of formal academic instruction. The exhibition celebrated raw artistic expression, offering visitors a glimpse

into the depth and diversity of untrained yet profoundly skilled artistry.

Adding to the vibrant atmosphere, attendees enjoyed live musical performances by the renowned Avaye Shadi Choir and Dastan Group, enhancing the evening with soul-stirring melodies. The event also featured insightful speeches by distinguished cultural and artistic figures, further enriching the experience.





### Painters' magnificent tribute to Master Mahmoud Farshchian

On September 13, 2025, the ECO Cultural Institute hosted a group exhibition of Gohar Asl's paintings to honor the late Master Mahmoud Farshchian, a legendary figure in Iranian painting. The event gathered artists, cultural figures, researchers, and diplomats from ECO member states at the ECI amphitheater. At the opening of the event, Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President of ECI, emphasized the Institute's mission to preserve and promote the shared cultural heritage of the region.



### ECI Hosts National Festival of "The Splendor of Wisdom and Art in the Thought of Ferdowsi"

On September 9, 2025, Mr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President and Executive Director of the ECO Cultural Institute, met with Mr. Najjar, Secretary of the Kish International Short Theater Festival, to discuss collaborative opportunities for the upcoming 6th edition of the festival. Mr. Rakhshandeh emphasized ECI's commitment to promoting cultural exchange

among ECO member states and expressed support for showcasing the festival through official channels. Then Mr. Najjar shared insights from previous editions and welcomed ECI's comprehensive cooperation. The festival is scheduled to take place on Kish Island from October 18 to 21, 2025.



### ECI and Turkish Embassy Plan Joint Cultural and Educational Programs

Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President and Executive Director of the ECO Cultural Institute, met with Dr. Umut Başar, Türkiye's Scientific and Educational Attaché in Tehran, to strengthen cultural and educational ties between the Institute and the Turkish Embassy. The meeting emphasized the importance of collaborative,

high-impact programs across ECO member states, with both sides advocating for deeper engagement in cultural, artistic, and educational initiatives. Discussions included future joint events and workshops, and concluded with mutual appreciation and optimism for sustained regional cooperation.



### ECI and Malek Museum Explore New Cultural Horizons

On September 15, 2025, Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President of the ECO Cultural Institute, met with Mr. Noshad Rokni, head of the Malek National Library, to explore deeper collaboration between their institutions. Dr. Rakhshandeh emphasized the role of libraries in cultural diplomacy and introduced ECI's Diplomatic Library, proposing joint initiatives such as a ceremony during Book and Reading Week. Mr. Rokni welcomed the idea and expressed readiness to cooperate in preserving written heritage and launching shared cultural and artistic programs.



### Art and Culture at the Heart of ECI-Tajikistan Cooperation Agenda

Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President of the ECO Cultural Institute, met with Tajikistan's Ambassador to Iran, Dr. Nizomiddin Zohedi, to strengthen cultural ties between ECO member states. They discussed shared cultural heritage, proposed collaborative initiatives—including a meeting of Culture Ministers, a joint special report, and celebrations for the 85th birthday of Tajik poet Loyiq Sherali—and affirmed their commitment to expanding cooperation in arts and culture in the coming year.



### ECI Hosts Exhibition of Shahnameh-Inspired Miniatures and Mythical Art

The ECO Cultural Institute hosted the official opening of the “Simorgh Imagination and Shahnameh Frames” exhibition on 18 September 2025, in celebration of Persian Poetry and Literature Day. The event featured speeches by Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Dr. Farzaneh

Zarei, and artist representative Taha Ghasemi, highlighting Ferdowsi's epic legacy and Iranian miniature art. The exhibition showcased artworks inspired by the Shahnameh and the mythical Simorgh.



### ECI Launches Latin Calligraphy Course with First Session on Copperplate Style

The ECI has launched a Latin calligraphy course, inaugurating it with a specialized Copperplate workshop held on September 25, 2025, at the Institute's Diplomatic Library. Led by Master Sattar Mokless, the session brought together youth and adults in separate groups, offering

hands-on instruction in one of the most refined and practical styles of Latin script. Through foundational techniques such as pen-loading, ink-handling, and stroke control, participants were introduced to the discipline and elegance that define Copperplate calligraphy.



### ECI and Pakistan Reaffirm Commitment to Cultural Cooperation

On 22 September 2025, Dr. Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Acting President of the ECO Cultural Institute, met with H.E. Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran to discuss strengthening cultural cooperation. In a cordial and constructive exchange, Dr. Rakhshandeh expressed gratitude for Pakistan's continued support and outlined recent institutional reforms, while Ambassador Tipu congratulated him on his appointment and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to future collaboration on cultural initiatives.

# Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov:

The Master Painter, Preserving Turkmenistan's Cultural Heritage Through Art



Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov is a renowned figure in Turkmenistan's art and cultural heritage. His contributions as a People's Artist, designer, and candidate of historical sciences have significantly impacted the cultural landscape of Turkmenistan.

## EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov was born in Turkmenistan, where he developed an early interest in the arts. The musically gifted



10-year-old boy from the village of Govshut in the Kaakhka district was admitted to the Republican Music Boarding School in Ashgabat. Ovezmuhammet could have become a good pianist; however, he was more fascinated by painting than by playing the piano. Every time he met children attending an art school, he dreamed of being among them. Nobody knows what his life might have been like if he had not gotten seriously sick one day, forcing his father to take him home.

After completing an eight-year school, the teenage boy left for Ashgabat in the hope that his childhood dream of becoming an artist would come true. Ovezmuhammet found a job as an assistant at the Opera and Ballet Theatre's property shop. Surrounded by artists, he began to draw and paint as well. "You should apply to an art college,"

his older colleagues exclaimed when they saw his drawings. In 1970, Mammetnurov entered the Turkmen State College of Arts, specifically in the department of theater. Under the guidance of renowned Turkmen masters, he honed his skills and expanded his knowledge of fine arts. He credits his father, a lifelong educator, as his main teacher and influence in his artistic development.

## ARTISTIC CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Mammetnurov's career is marked by a unique blend of traditional and modern art forms. He has painted hundreds of artworks, including landscapes, sketches, still lifes, and portraits, many of which are inspired by the beauty of his homeland. His works often reflect a deep connection to Turkmenistan's



cultural heritage, incorporating elements of national traditions and customs. Mammetnurov expresses that his native places provide love, strength, and inspiration, highlighting the beauty of daily life in his village.

Like all outstanding and creative individuals, Ovezmuhammet has non-trivial views of the world around him. His associative thinking abounds with colors. When asked to share his impressions of a recent trip, the painter always starts with the description of the color palettes of the places he has visited.

Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov has traveled extensively around the world. His paintings have been shown in Germany, Türkiye, Finland, Iran, England, Austria, Poland, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. And yet, he sees a 1983 trip to the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) construction site as part of an agitprop group as the most important. Together with journalist Balkan Gafurov, bagshi (folk musician) Chary Shammaev, and his other fellow workers, he was sent to the north-western section of the BAM at Larba Station, where a crew of tracklayers from Turkmenistan was working. The freezing cold

weather made oil paints crumble, allowing drawing with charcoal and sanguine only. Nonetheless, Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurovich completed scores of sketches. He took a keen interest in everything: the vigorous and strong-willed BAM builders, construction projects, and local landscapes. The exhibited BAM series, with a touch of light frost, exudes romance and enthusiasm. One of the sketches depicts bagshi Chary Shammaev in his half-length fur coat and hat playing to his fellow countrymen.

One of Mammetnurov's notable achievements is the album "Colors Illuminated by Love," which showcases a collection of his paintings and graphic works. This album is a testament to his creative exploration and dedication to his craft. Each piece in the collection represents a moment of inspiration and a reflection of his life's experiences. Despite his recognition as a master artist and public figure, he maintains a youthful enthusiasm for his work, often carrying sketchbooks during travels to capture inspiration. He recalls making sketches in harsh conditions during his youth, indicating his dedication to art.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE MUSEUM OF TURKMENISTAN

In addition to his work as an artist, Mammetnurov has played a significant role in preserving and promoting Turkmenistan's cultural heritage. As the head of the State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan, he has been instrumental in curating exhibitions that highlight the country's rich history and cultural





achievements.

One of his notable contributions was the renewal of the museum's exposition halls dedicated to the history and culture of the Middle Ages. This project aimed to attract public interest, especially among the youth, to the national heritage. The exhibition featured rare artifacts and dioramas that depicted significant periods in Turkmenistan's history, from the Dark Ages to the Renaissance and the Late Middle Ages.

## RECOGNITION AND LEGACY

Mammetnurov's contributions to the arts and culture have earned him numerous

accolades and recognition. He is celebrated as a People's Artist of Turkmenistan, a title that reflects his impact on the nation's cultural landscape. His work continues to inspire the younger generation, instilling in them a deep appreciation for their cultural roots and traditions. In 2024, the Museum of Fine Arts of Turkmenistan celebrated Mammetnurov's significant milestone with an exhibition titled "Döredijilik pursatlary." This exhibition showcased his recent works and highlighted his creative journey over the years. The event was attended by his students, admirers, and prominent cultural figures, who expressed their admiration and appreciation for his contributions. Sculptor Saragt Babaev reflects on their long friendship





and mutual encouragement, emphasizing the supportive artistic community that surrounds Mammetnurov.

## CONCLUSION

Ovezmuhammet Mammetnurov's life and work are a testament to the power of art in shaping cultural identity and preserving

heritage. His dedication to his craft and his efforts to promote Turkmenistan's cultural heritage have left an indelible mark on the nation's artistic landscape. As a People's Artist, designer, and historian, Mammetnurov continues to inspire and influence future generations, ensuring that the rich traditions and customs of Turkmenistan are cherished and celebrated for years to come.

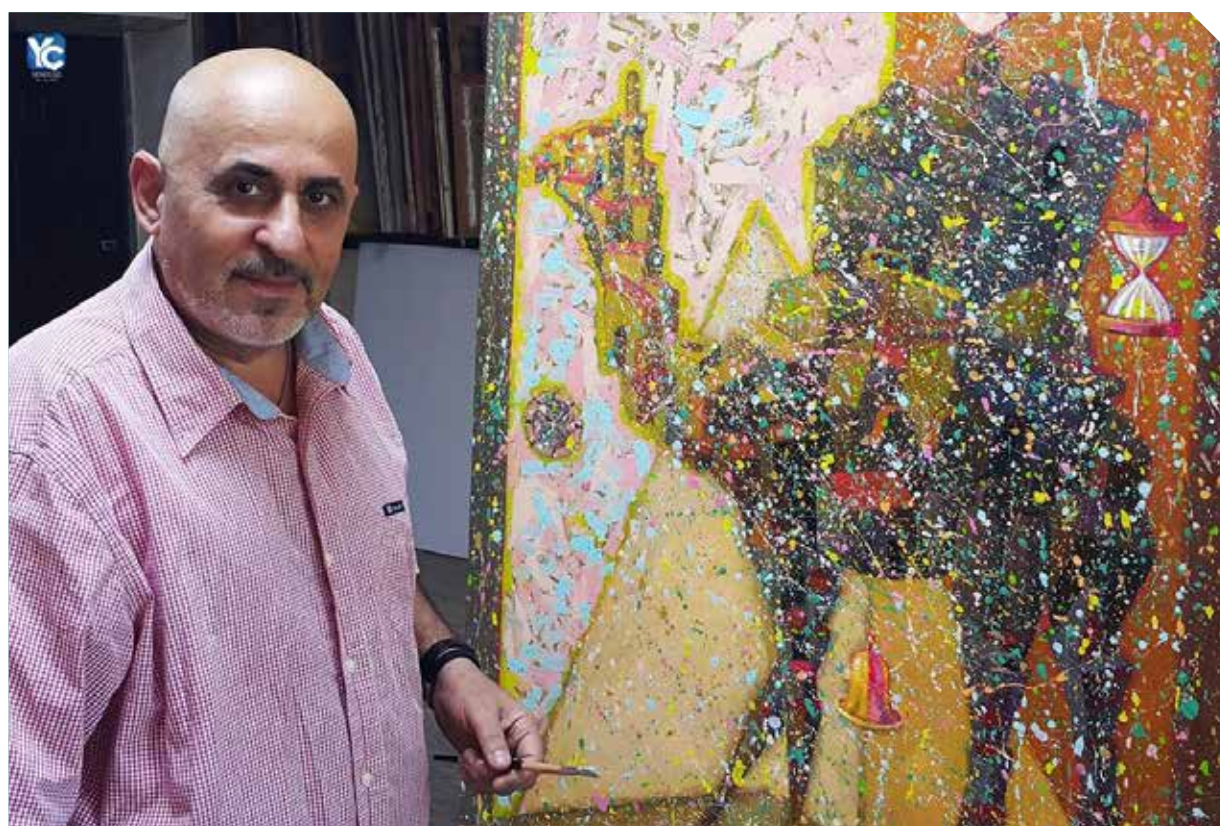
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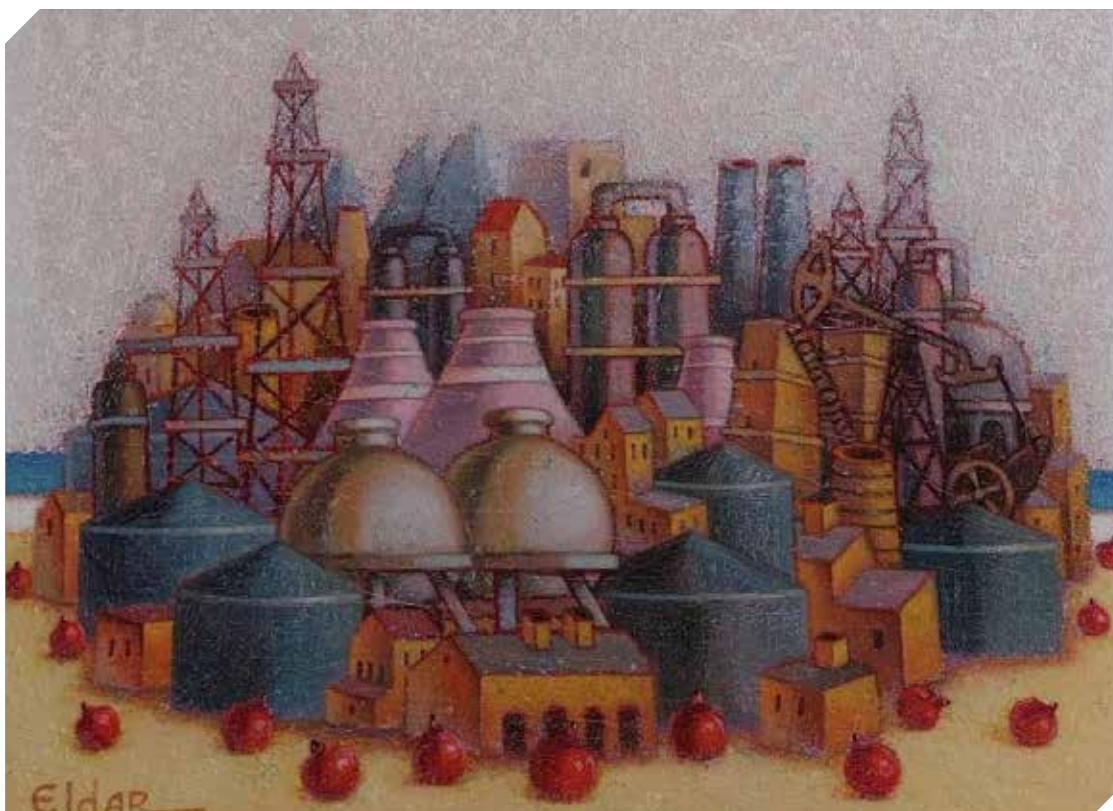
The Imaginative World of:

# Eldar Babazade

Art Beyond Reality



Eldar Babazade is a renowned Azerbaijani artist whose work has captivated audiences both locally and internationally. Born on January 3, 1962, in Baku, Azerbaijan, Babazade has made significant contributions to the world of art through his unique style and profound artistic expressions.



## EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

The main reason why Eldar Babazade, who was aiming to become a soldier, crossed paths with art was that he opened his eyes to the world in the family of well-known artists of Azerbaijan. His father was the well-known Azerbaijani sculptor Marif Babayev, and his mother was Aziza Aliyeva, a ceramicist. It is not for nothing that it is said; "A child's first teacher is his mother, and his first school is his family." Eldar Babazade probably also had invaluable ceramic samples of his mother, who was an inspiration in this long artistic path. This artistic influence has not lost its power not only on Eldar Babazade but also on his sister Kamala Babayeva. However, as young Eldar Babazade matured, he found the meaning and image he was looking for in painting and instilled a kind of power in his artistic means of expression. Among

his teachers who taught him while he was a student were master artists Gayyur Yunus, Agali Ibrahimov, and others.

He pursued his formal education in art at the Azerbaijan Pedagogical University, where he studied at the Faculty of Graphics from 1984 to 1989. This period was instrumental in honing his skills and developing his distinctive style.

## ARTISTIC CAREER

Babazade's career as an artist began in earnest in 1990 when he started working at the Azerbaijan Art Foundation. His dedication and talent quickly earned him recognition, and by 1997, he became a member of the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan. Over the years, Babazade has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, showcasing his work to a global audience.



## STYLE AND INFLUENCES

Thinking like a surrealist requires courage. In fact, in any field of art, an artist needs courage to assert himself. Babazade's art is characterized by a surrealistic approach that blends Eastern and European imagery. His paintings often feature symbolic images and signs, hinting at the secret sense and ambiguity of existence on Earth. This unique style allows viewers to interpret his work in various ways, finding their own harmony and beauty within his creations.

Painting, graphics, decorative-applied art, medallion art, and sculpture have a special place in the work of the artist who does not like to repeat himself. The first thing that stands out in Eldar Babazade's creations are purple colors that shine like the sun. The colorful solution of the talented painter also reminds us of stained-glass art. It is no coincidence that stained glass technique has a special

place among his creative activities. It is very interesting to see the imitation of stained glass art, which requires elegance, neatness, and precision, in the artist's artistic-philosophical canvases. This combination contains the harmony of east and west. The national and traditional color solution is unequivocally suitable for modern shapes and lines. The fragile spirit of "renaissance", miniature art, "Venetian modernism" and "orientalism" lives in Eldar Babazade's works.

## ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY

For Babazade, art is not just a profession but a way of life. Growing up in an artistic environment, he developed a deep appreciation for the philosophical aspects of art. Through his work, he explores themes of love, life, and the human experience. His paintings are a reflection of his inner world, offering



viewers a glimpse into his unique perspective on life.

The greatest weapon of the artist, who always wanted to be a soldier, became his artistic activity, which was shaped and individualized over the years. From this point of view, behind every composition of an artist with a warrior spirit, which catches the eye at first glance, there is a completely different world, a mysterious world, a great struggle.

## IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

Imagination is not only at the center of artistic creativity but also at the foundation of human existence. This imagination is like a huge, mysterious universe hidden behind a world limited by our vision. The artist Eldar Babazade, who shares the visual images of his imagination with us in an artistic way, thus sheds light on his "creative" spirit. The master artist draws on history,

mythology, dreams, and fairy tales for his unique images. He often uses symbolism to enrich the content of his artwork; beautiful and delicate ornaments add elegance and brilliance to his intricate and expressive paintings. Intricate textures, and different shades demonstrate the technical finesse and perfect imagination of the brush master





in his compositional arrangement. Every viewer traveling to the magical world of the artist, plunging into the border of his lyricism and dreams, seems to disappear.

## SYMBOLISM AND EXPRESSION

The artist's compositions bear the traces of time and are completed with images that whisper the deepest feelings and desires of humanity. The facial expression of each of these characters is liminal. Each of them is stuck between the conscious and unconscious state. The artist's figures represent existence and are symbols of the world, as well as the complete embodiment of mother nature. The female characters that the artist often turns to are more mysterious, unreal, and symbolic than they look like real people. A mystical "meaning" is shadowed in their eyes. That meaning can confuse and enchant the viewers. At this point, we remember that behind working with oil paint there really is a

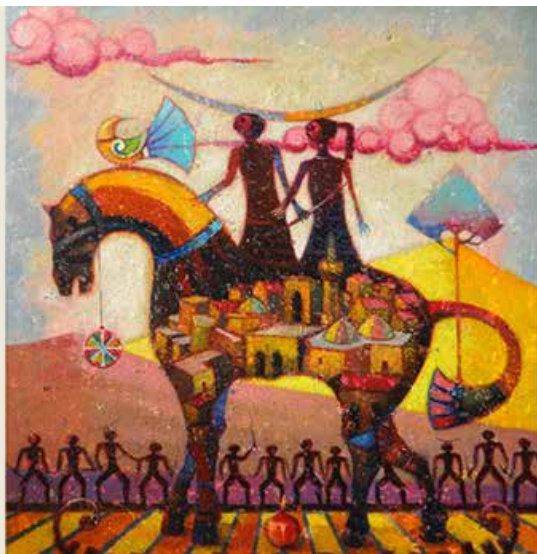
secret, a mysterious science. The artist manages to hold a mirror to this science.

## NOTABLE EXHIBITIONS

Babazade has held several solo exhibitions throughout his career. In 2001, he opened a solo exhibition titled "Absheron" in Baku, Azerbaijan. A decade later, in 2011, he held another solo exhibition in Uttersberg, Sweden. These exhibitions have been pivotal in establishing his reputation as a prominent artist.

In addition to his solo exhibitions, Babazade has participated in numerous group exhibitions. Some of the notable ones include:

- "Khojaly 22" at Natavan Gallery, Baku, Azerbaijan (2014)
- "Colours of a Wind and Fire" in Italy (2014)
- "Dialogue of Paints" at Museum Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan (2013)
- "3rd International Exhibition" at Art Centre, Gabala, Azerbaijan (2013)



- "Mood" at State Art Gallery, Sumgait, Azerbaijan (2012)
- "The Paint of Novruz" at Museum Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan (2012)
- "White-Black" at Museum Centre, Baku, Azerbaijan (2011)
- "Germany through the Eyes of Artists" at Kapellhaus, Baku, Azerbaijan (2006)

#### Awards and Recognition

Throughout his career, Eldar Babazade has received several honors and awards. In 2012, he won first place at the "Khojaly" Competitive Exhibition held at V.Samedova Art Salon in Baku, Azerbaijan. His works are part of various prestigious collections, including the National Art Museum in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the Ethnography Museum in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan.

## CONCLUSION

Eldar Babazade's contributions to the world of art are significant and enduring. His unique style, characterized by a blend of Eastern and European imagery, has

earned him recognition and admiration from art enthusiasts worldwide. Through his paintings, Babazade invites viewers to explore the deeper meanings of existence and find their own interpretations of his work. As he continues to create and exhibit his art, Babazade's influence on the art world is sure to grow, leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.

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# Samig Abdukakhkhar

## A Pioneer of Uzbek Literature



Samig Abdukakhkhar was a prominent Soviet and Uzbek author and screenwriter who played a central role in the development of the modern fable genre in 20th-century Uzbek literature. He is considered one of the founders of this genre and significantly contributed to the development of Soviet and Uzbek satire. Born on February 22, 1922, in Tashkent,

Soviet Union, he passed away on February 9, 1990, in Tashkent. His prolific career spanned from 1937 to 1990, resulting in a lifetime circulation of over 1.1 million copies of his 38 published books in Uzbek and Russian. His works, which include humorous short stories, satirical poems, fables, and feuilletons, have left a lasting impact on the literary world.

## SAMIG ABDUKAKHKHAR: FROM TASHKENT TO LITERARY FAME

Samig Abdukakhkhar, grew up in Tashkent. In 1936, he completed the then-standard seven years of secondary education and entered the Party Newspaper School at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, graduating in 1938. His early education laid the foundation for his future career in literature and journalism.

### INITIAL STEPS IN THE LITERARY WORLD

Abdukakhkhar began his creative activity in 1937, publishing several satirical stories and essays in republican newspapers and magazines. In 1938, he started working at the editorial office of the republican satirical magazine "Mushtum," first as a literary employee and later as the head of the department. His early works were characterized by their humor and satirical edge, which would become a hallmark of his writing style.

### EXPLORING DIFFERENT LITERARY AVENUES

Abdukakhkhar had a diverse career, working as a writer, screenwriter, playwright, and translator. He wrote extensively in both Uzbek and Russian languages. His literary output was extensive and diverse, including numerous collections of stories, poems, and fables, with some works translated into Belarusian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Turkmen, Hungarian, and English. His works



explored various themes, including social inequality, human nature, and the impact of Soviet society on individuals. He gained recognition for his unique storytelling style and ability to captivate readers with his vivid characters and imaginative plots.

### WORLD WAR II AND POST- WAR CAREER

In 1942, Abdukakhkhar was drafted into the Soviet Army and served in the border troops until May 1946. He was a participant in the Great Patriotic War, an experience that influenced his later works. After the war, he worked in various editorial positions, including as the head of the department at the editorial office of the newspaper "Lenin Uchquni" (Lenin's Spark) in Tashkent, and as a correspondent for the Uzbek Telegraph Agency (UzTAG) for the Kashkadarya region.



## LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Abdukakhkhar is regarded as a central figure in the development of the modern fable genre in Uzbek literature. His works often contained elements of satire and humor, making them accessible and enjoyable to a wide audience. He was a regular contributor

to the satirical magazine “Krokodil” from the 1960s to the 1980s and was involved in the creation of the Uzbekistani satirical newsreel “Nashtar” (Scalpel) with Anatoly Kabulov.

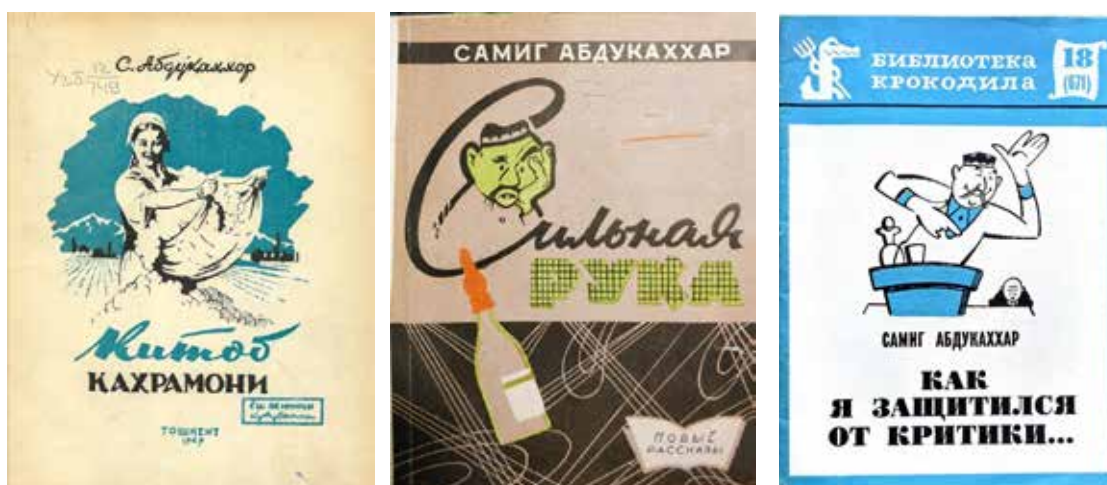
## PUBLISHED WORKS

Abdukakhkhar’s published works include books, fables, essays, and short stories. He published several books in Russian, including “Green Island: Essays,” “A Strong Hand,” and “How I Defended Myself from Criticism...” He also published works in Uzbek, such as “Kitob qahramoni - Heroes from Kitab: An Essay” and “Masallar - Fables.” His works were well-received and widely read both nationally and internationally.

## THE INTERSECTION OF LITERATURE AND FILM

In addition to his literary works, Abdukakhkhar was also a prolific screenwriter. He wrote scripts for more than 50 fictional and documentary episodes of the “Nashtar” newsreel and was the director of several episodes. He was also





the scriptwriter for several episodes of the television anthology series "Fitil" and the feature-length film "The Age of Anxiety."

## AWARDS AND TITLES

Medal "For Distinguished Labor" (March 18, 1959) - for outstanding services in the development of Uzbek art and literature and in connection with the decade of Uzbek art and literature in the city of Moscow; Honorary title "Honored Worker of Culture of the Uzbek SSR" (1972).

## PRAISE FROM FELLOW WRITERS AND CRITICS

Soviet writer, author of the anthems of the USSR and Russia Sergei Mikhalkov described Samig Abdukahkhar as a "fighter of a difficult genre". "Samig Abdukahkhar has chosen a difficult profession for himself. The writer is faithful to the difficult genre of satire. Why difficult? Because the satirist constantly has to "spoil relations" with that part of the readers who recognize themselves in his works. An old Uzbek proverb says: "Before choosing a place for a house, choose a neighbor". I would choose Samig Abdukahkhar as my neighbor.

Because both of us show intolerance in our work ... to everyone who prevents honest people from living and working," Mikhalkov wrote in the preface to the book "Take Care of Men". Samig Abdukahkhar is considered one of the founders of the genre of the modern fable in Uzbek literature of the 20th century. Doctor of Philology, Professor S.Z. Mirzaev in his monograph "Uzbek Literature of the 20th Century" (2010) gave the following assessment of his work: "It was during these years [the 1950s] that the folk genres of parables and fables, which had remained without attention after Hamza and Elbek, were revived. Let us note the particularly successful experiments in this genre system of Samig Abdukahkhar, Yamin Kurban, Olim Kuchkarbekov... The fable [of Samig Abdukahkhar] is distinguished by the metaphorical nature of the poetic style, apt figurative language. The satirical and humorous poems [of Samig Abdukahkhar] expanded the genre system of Uzbek poetry".

The USSR Academy of Sciences publication "History of Uzbek Soviet Literature" (1967): "During this period [post-war], many fables appeared in republican newspapers and magazines. Among them, the fables of Sami

Abdukakhkar, published as a separate collection, attract attention.

## TRIBUTES AND MEMORIALS IN HIS HONOR

A street in the city of Sherabad in the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan is named after Samig Abdukakhkar.

Samig Abdukakhkar's books are kept in the Russian State Library, the Library of Congress of the United States, the German National Library, the National Library of Australia, the National Library of Belarus, the Alisher Navoi National Library of Uzbekistan, the National Library of Armenia and other libraries around the world.

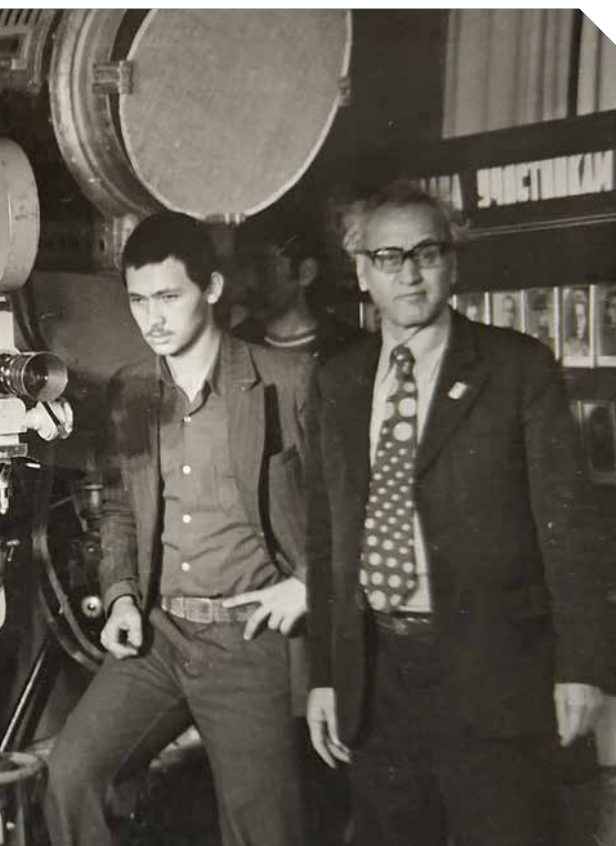
In the main exhibition of the Alisher Navoi State Museum of Literature in Tashkent there is a stand dedicated to Samig Abdukakhkar.

Excerpts from the works of Samig Abdukakhkar are used in school textbooks on native language and literature, applied in comprehensive schools of Uzbekistan.

## THE ENDURING IMPACT OF SAMIG ABDUKAKHKHAR

Samig Abdukakhkar's contributions to literature and film have left a lasting legacy. He is regarded as one of the most prominent figures in Uzbek literature and a pioneer in the development of the modern fable genre. His works continue





to be studied and appreciated for their literary merit and social commentary. He received numerous honors and awards for his contributions to literature, including the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and the USSR State Prize.

## CONCLUSION

Samig Abdukakhkhar's life and work are a testament to his talent and dedication to his craft. His contributions to literature and film have had a lasting impact, and his works continue to be enjoyed by readers and viewers alike. His legacy as a central figure in 20th-century Uzbek literature is well-deserved, and his influence can still be seen in the works of contemporary writers and filmmakers.



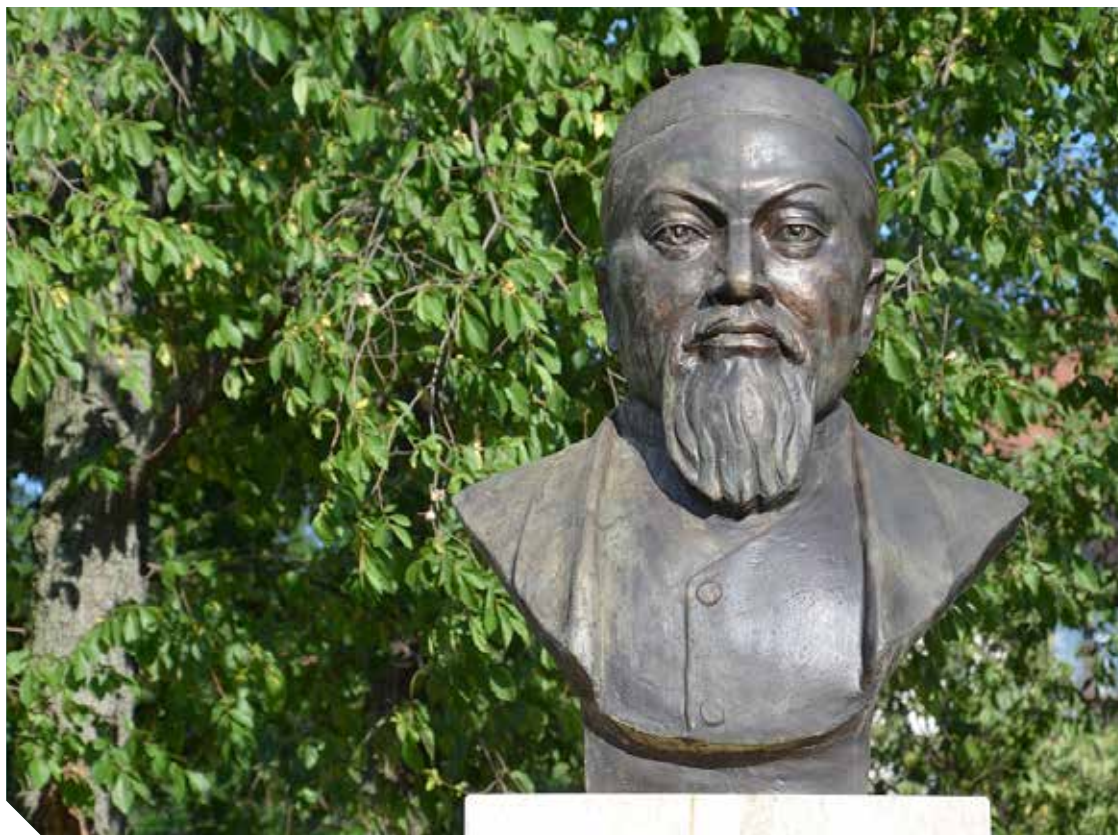
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# Abai Kunanbaiuly:

A PILLAR OF KAZAKH LITERATURE AND CULTURE





## EARLY LIFE AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Abai Kunanbaiuly, born Ibrahim Kunanbaiuly on August 10, 1845, in the Chinggis Mountains of what is now eastern Kazakhstan, emerged as a seminal figure in Kazakh literature and intellectual history. His early life was deeply intertwined with the cultural and social transformations of the Kazakh steppe during the mid-19th century. Born into a prominent family of Kazakh nobility, Abai's father, Kunanbai Oskembayuly, was a respected local chieftain who played a significant role in shaping his son's education and worldview. His mother, Ulzhan, and grandmother Zere were instrumental in nurturing his intellectual

curiosity and fostering his love for poetry through their storytelling traditions.

From an early age, Abai exhibited an exceptional aptitude for learning. He initially received traditional Islamic education at a local madrasa and soon found himself drawn to broad horizons of knowledge. His father recognized his potential and sent him to study under the tutelage of Mullah Ahmed Riza in Semipalatinsk (now Semey), where he was exposed to classical Persian literature, Islamic theology, and the Arabic language. The confluence of these diverse educational influences laid the foundation for Abai's later works that seamlessly blended Kazakh oral traditions with Eastern philosophical thought. The social milieu of his upbringing also played a crucial role; providing Abai with a unique vantage point



to observe both the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakhs and the emerging influences of Russian culture.

## THE EVOLUTION OF ABAI'S LITERARY STYLE

Abai Kunanbaiuly's literary journey was intertwined with his quest for knowledge and reform. Initially influenced by traditional oral poetry and folklore, Abai's early works reflected the rich tapestry of Kazakh storytelling, characterized by vivid imagery and rhythmical cadence. However, as he matured as a thinker and poet, his style began to incorporate elements of Russian literature and philosophy, showcasing a remarkable synthesis of Eastern and Western

inspirations.

This transition is evident in Abai's later poetry, where he adopted a more introspective tone and explored complex themes such as individualism, morality, and justice. His use of the Kazakh language became increasingly sophisticated; he eschewed simplistic forms for nuanced expressions that conveyed deeper meanings. The incorporation of philosophical reflections marked a significant departure from traditional forms, allowing him to engage with contemporary issues facing his society.

**Key Themes and Motifs in Abai's Works**  
Abai Kunanbaiuly intricately weaves themes of morality, individuality, and cultural identity throughout his works.

One of the most prominent motifs is the quest for knowledge and self-awareness. Abai emphasizes the importance of education as a means to enlightenment, urging his readers to pursue intellectual growth and moral integrity. This pursuit often reflects his personal struggles with the limitations imposed by tradition.

Another key theme in Abai's poetry is the exploration of human emotions and relationships. He delves into the complexities of love, friendship, and social bonds, portraying them with profound sensitivity. His reflections on these connections reveal a deep understanding of human nature, capturing both its beauty and its vulnerabilities.

#### Literary Contributions and Major Works

Abai's poetry is characterized by its lyrical beauty, philosophical depth, and social critique. He addressed themes such as love, nature, morality, and justice while also delving into the complexities of human existence. His collection of poems often critiques societal norms and calls for ethical and intellectual awakening among his compatriots. Through his verse, Abai encouraged the embrace of education, rational thought, and moral integrity.

One of his most significant works is "The Book of Words", a series of philosophical essays that explore various aspects of human nature and society. These writings go beyond mere reflection; they serve as a guide for personal development and social reform. In these essays, Abai discusses topics ranging from the pursuit of knowledge to the importance of unity among people. In his

first word, translated by the Leneshmidt Translations Resource Library, Abai reflects on his life journey.

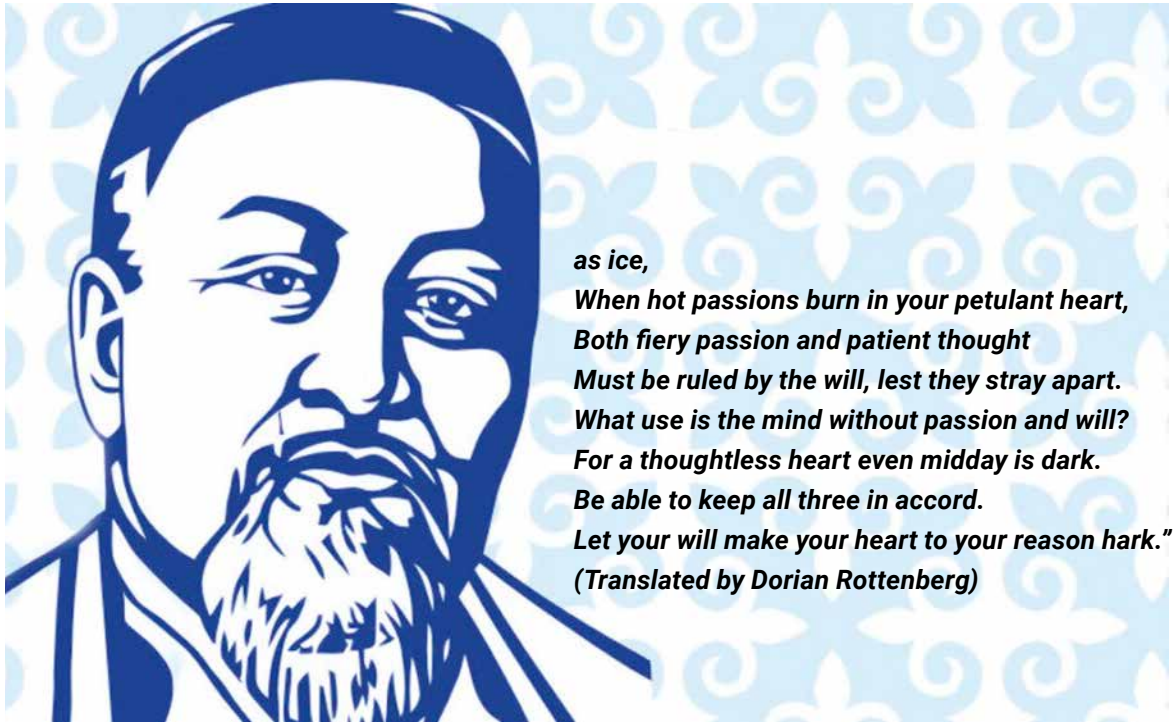
"Whether for good or ill, I have lived my life, traveling a long road fraught with struggles and quarrels, disputes and arguments, suffering and anxiety, and reached these advanced years to find myself at the end of my tether, tired of everything. I have realized the vanity and futility of my labors and the meanness of my existence. What shall I occupy myself with now and how shall I live out the rest of my days? I am puzzled that I can find no answer to this question. (...) Well, I have decided at length: henceforth, pen and paper shall be my only solace, and I shall set down my thoughts," reads his first "word."

That heartfelt piece is, perhaps, Abai's most astonishing achievement. His deeply personal "Book of Words" served as a mirror on which society could reflect on themselves, on their flaws, and the best qualities within humanity.

## ABAI'S INFLUENCE ON KAZAKH LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Abai Kunanbaiuly profoundly influenced the cultural landscape of Kazakhstan through his poetry and philosophical thought. His works transcend mere literary merit; they reflect the rich tapestry of Kazakh identity, weaving together traditional values with contemporary issues. Abai's poetry often addresses themes such as love, nature, and social justice, resonating deeply with the struggles and aspirations of his people:

*"When your mind is as keen and as cold*



One of Abai's significant contributions was his ability to articulate the complexities of Kazakh life during a period of rapid change. He encouraged a critical examination of societal norms and traditions, urging his compatriots to embrace education and enlightenment. This call for intellectual growth laid the groundwork for modern Kazakh literature by inspiring future generations to explore their cultural heritage while engaging with global ideas.

Moreover, Abai's incorporation of Russian literary techniques broadened the scope of Kazakh storytelling. By blending indigenous oral traditions with written forms, he established a new literary language that enriched Kazakh expression. His influence extends beyond literature into music and philosophy, as many artists continue to draw inspiration from his work.

#### Legacy and Commemoration of Abai Kunanbaiuly

Abai Kunanbaiuly's legacy is deeply woven into the cultural and intellectual fabric of Kazakhstan, transcending his lifetime to influence generations. As a pioneering figure in Kazakh literature, Abai's poetry and philosophical writings addressed profound themes such as morality, social justice, and the importance of education. His ability to blend traditional oral poetry with contemporary literary forms set a precedent for future Kazakh writers, establishing him as a cornerstone of modern Kazakh literature.

In commemoration of Abai's contributions, numerous institutions have been named in his honor, including schools, universities, and cultural centers dedicated to the study of his works. Every year on August 10th,



Kazakhstan celebrates Abai Day, reflecting on his enduring impact on national identity and cultural heritage. This observance not only serves as a tribute to his literary genius but also promotes discussions around the values he championed.

Moreover, Abai's thoughts continue to resonate in contemporary Kazakh society as educators draw upon his teachings to inspire critical thinking and creativity among students. His works are frequently incorporated into academic curricula across various disciplines. As Kazakhstan embraces modernization while honoring its rich traditions, Abai Kunanbaiuly remains an emblematic figure whose legacy serves as both a guidepost for ethical conduct and an inspiration for artistic expression in an ever-evolving world.

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# Zaur Dakhte:

## The Cinematographer Who Captured Hearts



### FOUNDATIONS OF A CINEMATIC VISION

Zaur Rustamovich Dakhte was born on August 18, 1936, in Dagestan, USSR. From a young age, he exhibited a profound interest in visual storytelling, which led him to pursue studies in cinematography. He graduated from the International Children Boarding School in Ivanovo, Russia, in 1958, before

furthering his education at the camera department of the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (1966). This formal education laid the foundation for a prolific career that would span several decades and leave an indelible mark on Tajik and Soviet cinema.

## MILESTONES IN FILMOGRAPHY

Dakhte's career as a cinematographer began in the 1960s at the Tajikfilm studio, a period marked by significant developments in Soviet cinema. He quickly gained recognition for his unique ability to capture the essence of his subjects, whether in feature films or documentaries. His work is characterized by a deep emotional resonance and a keen eye for detail. One of Dakhte's most notable achievements was his work on the film "Meeting at the Old Mosque" (1969), which is considered the first Soviet eastern and has since become a classic of the genre. This film showcased his ability to blend cultural narratives with compelling visual storytelling, earning him widespread acclaim.

Throughout his career, Dakhte served as the cameraman for numerous films, capturing diverse subjects ranging from Afghan war chronicles to the archaeological discovery of a sleeping Buddha statue in Tajikistan. His filmography showcases a significant contribution to Tajik cinema.

## SIGNATURE FILMS AND SERIES

Some of his most significant works include:

- "Rustam and Suhrab" (1972): A film that highlighted his skill in capturing dramatic and emotional moments.
- "Legend of Rustam" (1971): Another testament to his ability to bring epic tales to life through his lens.
- "A Man Changes His Skin" (1978): A television series based on Bruno Yasensky's novel, which showcased his talent in adapting literary works for the screen.
- Dakhte also made significant contributions to children's cinema, with films like "A Tiger is Required," "Brave Chirac," and "Once

Upon a Time We Were in the First Class." These films allowed him to explore the whimsical and imaginative world of childhood, bringing joy to young audiences.

## DOCUMENTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to his feature films, Dakhte was a prolific documentary filmmaker. His documentaries often explored themes of love for the homeland and the cultural heritage of Tajikistan. Some of his notable documentaries include:

- "Abdurakhman Jami" (1964)
- "Premiere" (1976)
- "Mirzo Tursun-zadeh-70" (1981)
- "Nurek Without Legends" (1982)
- "Our Malika" (1983)
- "September Meetings" (1987)
- "Fellow Countrymen" (1989)
- "Sofya Tuybaeva" (1991)

The Photographic Art of Zaur Dakhte

Zaur Dakhte is also remembered as a highly regarded photographer, with his first photo exhibition taking







place in Dushanbe in 2003. His photography garnered significant international recognition and focused on capturing the essence of life and the beauty of nature around him. He contributed to several publications, showcasing his engagement with cultural documentation and analysis. In 2008, he published a collection titled "Monuments of Culture and Nature of Tajikistan" and a photo album "Tajikistan through the Eyes of Zaur Dakhte," further showcasing his dedication to cultural documentation.

His vibrant and active career continued until his untimely death, highlighting the lasting impact of his artistic vision.

## INFLUENCE ON TAJIK AND SOVIET CINEMA

Zaur Dakhte's work significantly influenced both Tajik and Soviet cinema.

His unique approach to cinematography, characterized by a deep understanding of cultural narratives and a keen eye for visual storytelling, set a new standard in the industry. Dakhte's films often explored themes of identity, heritage, and the human condition, resonating with audiences across the Soviet Union and beyond.

## CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

Dakhte's films were not just visually stunning; they were also rich in cultural representation. He had a profound ability to weave the cultural and historical context of Tajikistan into his films, making them not only entertaining but also educational. This cultural authenticity helped preserve and promote Tajik heritage, making his work a valuable asset to the nation's cultural history.



## TECHNICAL MASTERY

Dakhte was known for his technical mastery in cinematography. His innovative use of lighting, camera angles, and composition brought a new level of sophistication to Soviet cinema. He was adept at using these techniques to enhance the emotional impact of his films, creating a more immersive experience for the audience.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Throughout his career, Zaur Dakhte received numerous awards and accolades for his contributions to cinema. His work was celebrated at various film festivals, and he was often recognized for his artistic excellence and technical prowess. Some of the notable awards he received include:

Honored Worker of Culture of Tajikistan (1980), laureate of the award Lenin

Komsomol of Tajikistan (1987), Academician of the Academy of Arts of Tajikistan (2010). He was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Exhibition of Economic Achievements of the USSR (1980), the Order of Khizmati Shoista (For Valorous Labor, 2005). Excellence in cinematography of the USSR. Member of the Union of Cinematographers of the USSR (1968).

## GUIDING THE NEXT GENERATION

Beyond his work as a cinematographer, Dakhte was also a mentor to many young filmmakers and cinematographers. He was passionate about sharing his knowledge and skills with the next generation, ensuring that his legacy would continue through their work. Many of his protégés have gone on to have successful careers in the film industry, carrying forward the techniques and principles they learned from Dakhte.



## THE LAST CHAPTER

### Beyond the Lens: Personal Insights

Zaur Dakhte was known for his humility and dedication to his craft. Despite his fame and success, he remained deeply connected to his roots and was always eager to explore new stories and perspectives. He had a love for nature and often drew inspiration from the landscapes of Tajikistan, which featured prominently in his films. In his personal life, Dakhte was a family man who valued his relationships with his loved ones. He often spoke about the importance of family and community, themes that were also reflected in his work.

In the final years of his life, Dakhte continued to work on various projects, always pushing the boundaries of his craft. Tragically, he passed away on August 15, 2024, at the age of 88 in a car accident near Khunjand, Tajikistan. His sudden passing was a great loss to the film community, but his legacy lives on through his films and the many filmmakers he inspired. His contributions to cinema have left an indelible mark on the industry. His work continues to be studied and admired by filmmakers and audiences alike, ensuring that his legacy will endure for generations to come.

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# 'Paradise Under Mothers Feet'

A film from Kyrgyzstan

"PARADISE UNDER MOTHERS' FEET" (ALSO KNOWN AS "HEAVEN IS BENEATH MOTHER'S FEET") IS A 2024 KYRGYZSTANI DRAMA FILM DIRECTED BY RUSLAN AKUN AND WRITTEN BY AKUN AND EMIL ESENALIEV. THE FILM TELLS THE POIGNANT STORY OF ADIL, A 35-YEAR-OLD MAN WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY, AND HIS UNWAVERING BOND WITH HIS 75-YEAR-OLD MOTHER, RAIKHAN. THIS ARTICLE DELVES INTO THE FILM'S PLOT, THEMES, PRODUCTION, RECEPTION, AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA.



## PLOT SUMMARY

The film centers around Adil with cognitive challenges who lives in a small village with his elderly mother, Raikhan, who constantly reassures him that he is specially loved by God and destined for Paradise. However, Adil is adamant that he does not want to go to Paradise without his mother.

One day, Adil learns from an 8-year-old boy that if he takes his mother on foot to the holy city of Mecca, she too can go to Heaven. Determined to ensure his mother's place in Paradise, Adil embarks on an arduous journey, pushing his mother in a wheelbarrow across various countries. The film follows their journey through Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, highlighting the challenges they face and the kindness they encounter along the way.

## THEMES

"Paradise Under Mothers' Feet" explores several profound themes, including:

1. **Mother's Love:** The film underscores the unconditional love and sacrifice of a mother. Raikhan's devotion to Adil and her constant reassurance of his special place in God's eyes form the emotional core of the story.
2. **Faith and Spirituality:** The journey to Mecca symbolizes a spiritual quest, reflecting the deep faith that drives Adil and his mother. The film portrays the pilgrimage as a testament to their unwavering belief in divine providence.
3. **Human Kindness:** Throughout their journey, Adil and Raikhan encounter numerous individuals who offer help and support. These acts of kindness highlight the shared humanity that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. The



film also demonstrates the spirit of unity and brotherhood among the nations along the pilgrimage route. Adil and his mother meet people from various walks of life who show unparalleled hospitality and kindness. The warm and affectionate relations between Central Asian people, who communicate effortlessly without translation, further emphasize this theme.

4. Resilience and Determination: Adil's determination to fulfill his promise to his mother, despite his intellectual limitations and the physical challenges of the journey, exemplifies the power of resilience and perseverance.

5. Cultural Diversity and Solidarity: The film provides tangible evidence of the diversity of Central Asian cultures and scenery while reinforcing solidarity and broader cultural dialogue. This theme is vividly portrayed through the interactions and connections made during the pilgrimage, showcasing the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

## PRODUCTION

The film was shot across multiple countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. This extensive filming process added authenticity to the portrayal of Adil and Raikhan's journey, capturing the diverse landscapes and cultures they encounter.

The cast includes Emil Esenaliev as Adil, Anarkul Nazarkulova as Raikhan, and Bolot Tentimyshev in a supporting role<sup>12</sup>. The performances, particularly those of Esenaliev and Nazarkulova, have been widely praised for their emotional depth and authenticity<sup>1</sup>.

## RECEPTION

"Paradise Under Mothers' Feet" premiered on March 1, 2024, in Kyrgyzstan and was subsequently released in Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan. The film received critical acclaim for its heartfelt storytelling,

powerful performances, and its exploration of universal themes.

At the box office, the film established itself as one of the highest-grossing films of 2024 in the Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan markets. It grossed over \$1 million in Kazakhstan within four days of its release, surpassing major international releases<sup>2</sup>.

## SIGNIFICANCE

The film's significance extends beyond its commercial success. It was selected as Kyrgyzstan's entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 97th Academy Awards. This recognition underscores the film's impact and its potential to resonate with audiences worldwide.

"Paradise Under Mothers' Feet" also sheds light on the experiences of individuals

with intellectual disabilities, offering a nuanced portrayal that emphasizes their humanity and the challenges they face. The film's depiction of Adil's journey serves as a powerful reminder of the strength of the human spirit and the enduring bond between a mother and her child.

## CONCLUSION

"Paradise Under Mothers' Feet" is a moving and thought-provoking film that explores themes of love, faith, and resilience. Through the story of Adil and Raikhan, the film highlights the power of a mother's love and the strength of the human spirit. Its critical and commercial success, along with its selection for the Academy Awards, cements its place as a significant work in contemporary cinema.



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# Kayhan Kalhor:

A MAESTRO OF PERSIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC





## EARLY LIFE AND MUSICAL BEGINNINGS

Kayhan Kalhor, born on November 24, 1964, in Tehran, Iran, is a renowned Iranian kamancheh and setar player, and a composer celebrated for his contributions to Persian classical music. Kalhor's journey into the world of music began at a tender age. Born into a Kurdish family, he was exposed to the rich musical traditions of Iran from an early age. By the age of seven, he had already started his formal music education under the guidance of Master Ahmad Mohajer.

At thirteen, Kalhor's prodigious talent earned him a place in the National Orchestra of Radio and Television of Iran, where he performed for five years. His early exposure

to professional music set the stage for a career that would see him become one of the most influential figures in Persian classical music.

## EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER

Kalhor's quest for musical knowledge took him across Iran, where he studied the diverse musical traditions of various regions, particularly those of Khorasan and Kordestan. His studies were not confined to Iran alone; at the age of seventeen, he left Iran to study Western classical music in Rome. This journey was arduous, involving travel through Türkiye, Romania, and Yugoslavia.

After his studies in Rome, Kalhor moved to



Canada, where he graduated from the music program at Carleton University in Ottawa. His time in Canada was marked by a deepening of his understanding of both Western and Persian musical traditions, which would later influence his unique style.

## MUSICAL STYLE AND INFLUENCES

Kalhor's music is a rich tapestry woven from the threads of Persian classical music, Kurdish folk music, and Western classical traditions. His primary instrument, the kamancheh, is a traditional Persian spike fiddle known for its soulful and expressive sound. Kalhor's mastery of the kamancheh has earned him international acclaim, and he is known for his ability to evoke deep emotions through his playing.

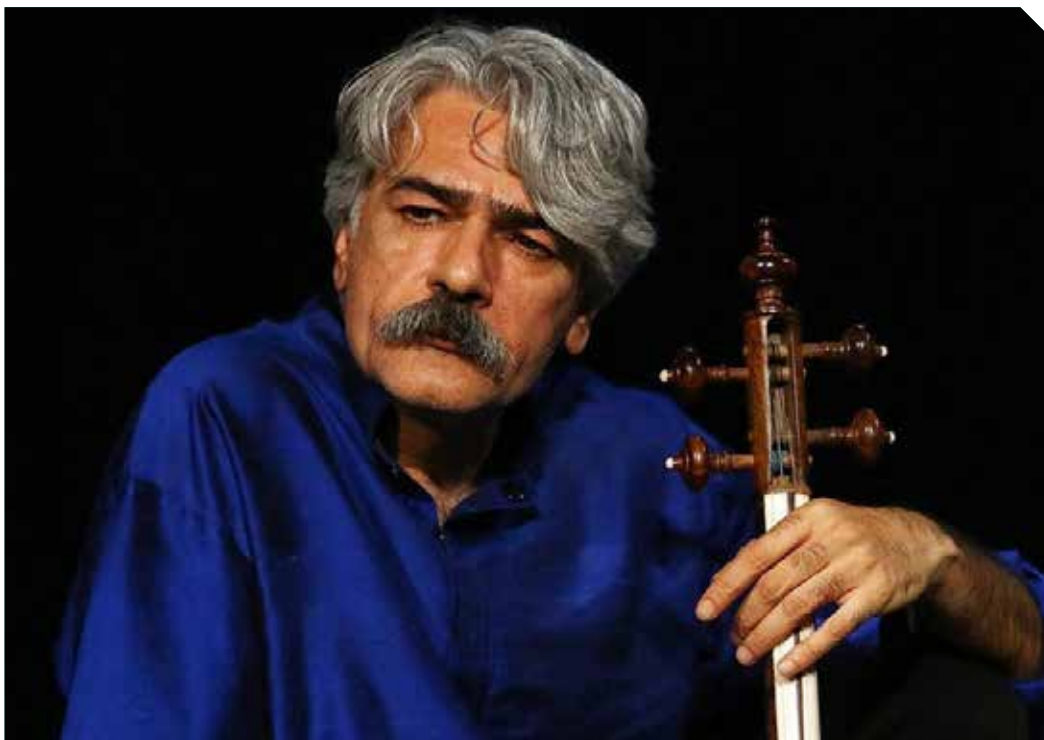
In addition to the kamancheh, Kalhor is also proficient in playing the setar, a

Persian lute. His compositions often blend the intricate melodies of Persian classical music with the rhythmic and modal structures of Kurdish folk music. This fusion creates a sound that is both timeless and contemporary, resonating with audiences around the world.

## COLLABORATIONS AND PROJECTS

Throughout his career, Kalhor has collaborated with numerous renowned musicians and ensembles, crossing cultural and musical boundaries. One of his most notable collaborations is with the Silk Road Ensemble, founded by the celebrated cellist Yo-Yo Ma. As a member of the ensemble, Kalhor has contributed to several Grammy-nominated and Grammy-winning albums.

Kalhor has also worked with Indian sitar player Shujaat Husain Khan and



Indian tabla player Swapan Chaudhuri in the group Ghazal, blending Persian and Indian musical traditions. His collaboration with Turkish baglama virtuoso Erdal Erzincan resulted in the critically acclaimed album "The Wind," which features both Turkish and Persian pieces.

In addition to these collaborations, Kalhor has composed music for and performed with some of Iran's most famous vocalists, including Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Shahram Nazeri. His ability to seamlessly integrate different musical traditions has made him a sought-after collaborator in the world of classical and world music.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Kalhor's contributions to music have been recognized with numerous awards and accolades. He has received three

Grammy Award nominations for Best Traditional World Music Album and has won a Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album as a member of the Silk Road Ensemble. In 2005, he was awarded the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik (German Record Critics' Award).

His recordings have been praised for their artistic excellence and have garnered critical acclaim from music critics around the world. Albums such as



“Hawniyaz” and “The Wind” have been particularly well-received, showcasing Kalhor’s ability to innovate within the framework of traditional music.

## PERSONAL LIFE AND LEGACY

Kalhor’s personal life has been marked by both triumph and tragedy. Four years after he left Iran, his parents and brother were killed in an Iraqi missile attack during the Iran-Iraq War. Despite this personal loss, Kalhor has continued to dedicate himself to his music, using it as a means of expressing his emotions and connecting with audiences.

Kalhor’s legacy extends beyond his recordings and performances. He is a co-founder of the renowned ensembles Dastan and Masters of Persian Music, both of which have played a significant role in preserving and promoting Persian classical music. His work has inspired a new generation of musicians to explore and innovate within the tradition of Persian music.





## CONCLUSION

Kayhan Kalhor's journey from a young prodigy in Tehran to an internationally acclaimed musician is a testament to his talent, dedication, and passion for music. His ability to bridge cultural divides through his music has made him a global ambassador for Persian classical music. As he continues to perform and compose, Kalhor's influence on the world of music remains profound, ensuring that the rich traditions of Persian music will continue to resonate with audiences for generations to come.

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## A Symphony of Heritage: Celebrating

# Rejep Rejepov's

### Impact on Music



Rejep Rejepov, a distinguished Turkmen composer and People's Artist of Turkmenistan, has left an indelible mark on the world of music, particularly in the realm of film scores. His contributions have not only enriched Turkmenistan's

cultural heritage but have also resonated with audiences far beyond its borders. This article delves into the life, career, and legacy of Rejep Rejepov, exploring his musical journey and the impact of his work.

## SEARLY LIFE AND MUSICAL BEGINNINGS

Rejep Rejepov was born on February 23, 1944, in Kizil-Arvat, Turkmenistan, into a family of hereditary carpet craftsmen. This region has been famous for its beautiful Turkmen carpets since ancient times. From a young age, he exhibited a profound interest in music, which was nurtured by his family and teachers. His early exposure to traditional Turkmen music and classical compositions laid the foundation for his future career.

Rejepov's parents worked at the carpet artel and later at the carpet factory, where they lived for many years. He was an independent child, with a particularly strong connection to his mother, who regarded him as her hope and pride. His formal music education began at the Turkmen National Conservatory, where he studied under esteemed musicians, including the talented Durdy Nuryev, who recognized Rejepov's passion for composing and offered him valuable guidance.

## RISE TO PROMINENCE

Rejepov's talent and dedication quickly set him apart from his peers. After graduating with honors from music school, he continued his studies at the Moscow Conservatory, a traditional path for talented Turkmen youth during the 1960s and 70s. In Moscow, he formed significant creative relationships, including with composer Nury Khalmamedov, who invited Rejepov to participate in recording music for the film "Competition." This experience deepened his love for film music.

Rejepov began composing music for



various mediums, including orchestral works, chamber music, and songs. His most popular operas are "Gerogly" and "Tales of the Karakum Wind". However, it was his work in film music that truly brought him widespread recognition. His ability to create evocative and memorable scores made him a sought-after composer in the Turkmen film industry.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO FILM MUSIC

Rejepov's film music is characterized by its emotional depth and melodic richness, often evoking the wonderful years of the unprecedented rise of Turkmen musical art and cinematography. He composed scores for over 59 films, each showcasing his versatility and creativity. Some of his most notable works include:

- "The Daughter-in-Law": This film is



remembered for its genuine characters and Rejepov's remarkable music, which captures the essence of the story.

- "Fragi, Separated from Happiness": The music for this film is deeply moving and soulful, reflecting the poignant narrative of the poet's dreamed encounter with Mengli.

- "Man Overboard": In addition to

composing the music, Rejepov played a cameo role and sang a song about geologists, making this film a favorite among audiences.

Rejepov's scores often remained in his archive, showcasing his meticulous approach to composing music that penetrated deeply into the plot and dramaturgy of the films.



## NOTABLE COMPOSITIONS AND PERFORMANCES

Rejepov's contributions extend beyond film music. He has composed numerous orchestral pieces, chamber works, and songs performed by renowned musicians and ensembles in Turkmenistan. His works include:

- Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra: Considered one of the pinnacles of Rejepov's career, performed by the State Symphony Orchestra of Turkmenistan,



with Didar Yumudov as the soloist.

- The Children's Suite: This orchestral piece premiered at a concert marking Rejepov's 75th birthday, receiving a warm welcome from the audience.

- The Suite in the Old Style: Dedicated to conductor Rasul Klychev, this suite reflects Rejepov's ability to integrate folk music instruments, primarily the dutar, into his symphonic works.

## LEGACY AND INFLUENCE

Rejep Rejepov's music has profoundly impacted Turkmenistan's cultural landscape. His compositions are celebrated for their emotional depth, melodic beauty, and ability to capture the essence of Turkmen culture. Many of his songs became popular among the people, and he took pride in this recognition, considering it the highest appreciation of his work. His influence

extends to the next generation of musicians and composers, many of whom have been inspired by his work and studied under his guidance.

The musical dramaturgy of his works is studied in detail at the Department of Theoretical Music at the Turkmen National Conservatory, where Rejepov taught for many years. Today, hundreds of beginner musicians enjoy his rich musical heritage.

## HONORS AND RECOGNITION

Throughout his career, Rejepov has received numerous accolades and honors, including the title of People's Artist of Turkmenistan and the Magtymguly State Prize. These honors reflect the high regard in which he is held by his peers and the broader cultural community.

## PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND ANECDOTES

Rejepov's colleagues and students often speak of his kindness, humility, and dedication to his craft. His every visit home to Ashgabat was a festive occasion for his family, filled with gifts from Moscow and extraordinary guests, including musicians, composers, singers, poets, directors, and actors.

Rejepov's musical journey is a testament to the transformative power of music and the enduring impact of a dedicated artist. His legacy will continue to inspire and resonate with audiences for generations to come.

## CONCLUSION

Rejep Rejepov's contributions to music, particularly in the realm of film scores, have left an enduring legacy. His ability to create evocative and memorable compositions has enriched Turkmenistan's cultural heritage and inspired countless musicians and composers. As we celebrate his life and work, we are reminded of the power of music to transcend boundaries and connect us to our shared humanity.

His music lives on, telling stories about its creator that go beyond what is known about him, shaping the very image of the composer and musician whose life was entirely devoted to art.

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# Interview



Interview with  
*A Prominent Pakistani Poet and a Former ECI President*  
***His Excellency Prof. Iftikhar Hussain Arif***



QUESTION 1: IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ROLE DOES LITERATURE PLAY IN BRIDGING CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING WITHIN THE ECO REGION?

Literature represents contemporary social history of the land and people where it originates from. It speaks for the civilization and culture to which it belongs. It encodes the dreams, ideals, aspirations and memories of the collective in a given territory. Literature significantly enhances cultural understanding by providing a window into different societies' values, beliefs, and experiences. It promotes empathy, challenges stereotype, and foster appreciation for diversity by exploring diverse perspectives and narratives. Literature sparks conversations about different cultures, encouraging dialogue and exchange of ideas, fostering a sense of regional and global citizenship. While exploring specific cultures, literature often touches upon universal themes of love, loss,

identity, and the human condition, allowing readers to find common ground and shared experiences. In essence, literature acts as a bridge between cultures, promoting empathy, understanding, and respect for the rich tapestry of human experience.

If we glance over the ECO region, we find that the ten member countries of this alliance are culturally aligned in multiple aspects, while maintaining their individual identity. A system of common cultural and civilizational values has been a common identity mark for them since last many centuries. This common identity has manifested in various forms, combining geographic, social, linguistic, spiritual and historical elements. For instance, Persian language is a common heritage of the region. Firdousi, Nizami, Saadi, Hafiz, Rumi, Nawai, Khujandi and Iqbal, though living in different temporal and spatial sphere, represent a common great literary tradition. This commonality is also found in other branches of arts and knowledge such as architecture, and music. With the passage of time, local languages,



customs, and traditions have evolved in various parts of the ECO region, however, despite the changes brought about by the process of historical evolution, these societies in their essence still espouse a common foundational meaning for righteousness and unrighteousness. It is imperative for us to recognize the evolutionary processes and their outcome. I am certain that promoting translations of intra-regional literary works will continue to develop regional understanding and strengthen our historical bonds.

QUESTION 2: YOU HAVE RECEIVED NUMEROUS PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER. WHICH ONE HOLDS THE MOST PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOU AND WHY?

Thanks be to the Lord for His gift of creativity to my pen! I have been writing for the last five decades. I have sought to embody 20th century sensibility of South Asian Muslims in

a fast-changing world beset with challenges of identity, modernity and post colonialism in the context of a heroic past. I have strived to stylize my creative expression in Urdu classicism, and aesthetics. My works have been translated in English, Russian, German, Persian, Hindi and Bhasha. Indeed, I am very lucky to have been recognized by Urdu readership, contemporary Urdu critics and state as a distinguished Urdu language poet. It is heartening to see that my poetry has inspired a generation of poets, writers and readers. Last year, the Government of Pakistan conferred Nishan-e-Imtiaz upon me. It is the highest civil award in Pakistan. Most of the time, this has been posthumously awarded to poets and writers. I am fortunate that I received it in my life time. In the past, I also received Hilal-e-Imtiaz, ranking second and Sitara-e-Imtiaz, the third highest award in the hierarchy of civil awards in Pakistan. This year, I also received Kamal-e-Fun Award, a lifetime achievement literary honour by the Pakistan Academy of Letters. Earlier, I also

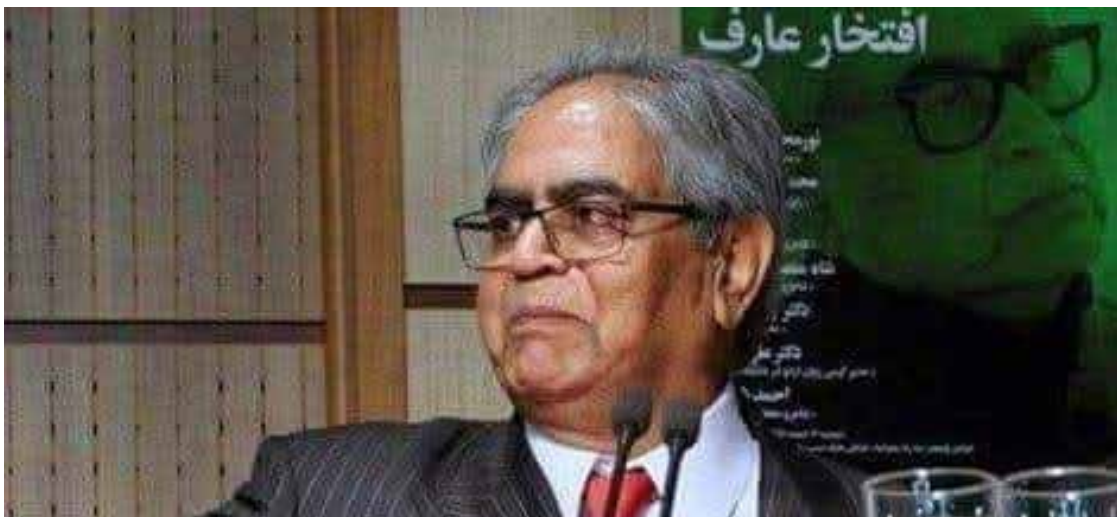


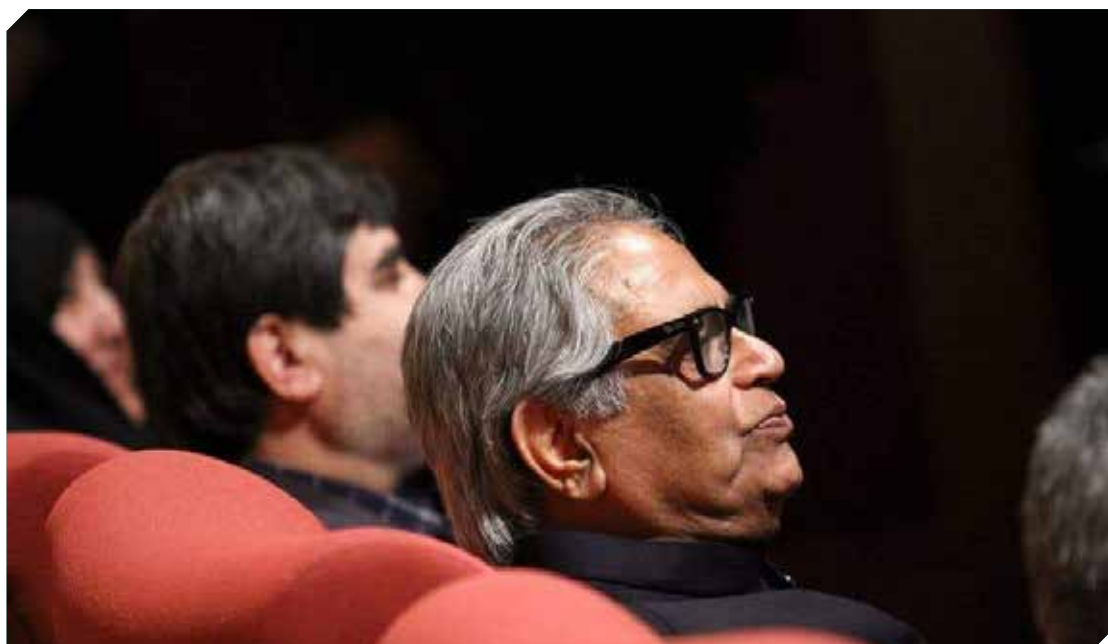
received an award of honour in appreciation of my literary contribution from literati in Kannada, India.

In my view, each award brought recognition to a particular phase in my literary evolution as a poet. Each of these awards has brought a peculiar sense of satisfaction to my soul and evoked in me feeling of gratitude to my Lord. Thus, I am thankful to the State, and establishments tasked with promotion of literature for honouring me.

QUESTION 3: WHO ARE SOME OF THE WRITERS OR CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF THE ECO REGION THAT HAVE INFLUENCE YOUR CAREER? WHICH ONE HOLDS THE MOST PERSONAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOU AND WHY?

The Persian and Turkic regions boast a rich and diverse poetic tradition, encompassing





various forms and styles. Persian poetry, particularly, has influenced literature across a vast geographical area, from the Ottoman Empire to the Indian subcontinent. I have also keenly read very accomplished works of my contemporary poets from the region. Therefore, I being a poet rooted in the classicism originating from this region, cannot deny to have imbibed classical influences on my creative thoughts. Great poets leave a significant impact on their contemporary and later poets, shaping their style, themes, and overall development. They can inspire, challenge, or provide a point of comparison, influencing another poet's creative process and artistic direction. However it is never easy for a poet to be able to describe the direct and indirect influences of other poets on his or her works. Only, the critics with their expanse of study of poetry and analytical skills may seek to inform the readers about it.

QUESTION 4: DURING YOUR TENURE AS PRESIDENT OF THE ECO CULTURAL INSTITUTE (2013-16), WHAT WERE SOME OF THE KEY INITIATIVES YOU SPEARHEADED TO PROMOTE CULTURAL COOPERATION AMONG ECO MEMBER STATES?

The activities of ECO Cultural Institute during my tenure as the first non-Iranian, and first Pakistani President are well documented and published. I can instantly recall to mind some of very significant activities that the Institute undertook, these included: ECO Poetry Recitals, Calligraphic Exhibitions, Commemoration of Rumi, Jami and Iqbal, Handicraft Exhibitions, Pictorial Exhibitions, Participation in Book Fair, Sufi Music Concerts, Folklore Music Concerts, Urdu Translation of Persian language works, Scholarships for ECO countries' students,

Discussions on Islamic Architecture, book launches, Discussion on poetry and fiction in the region, seminars on (a) globalization and its cultural impacts, (b) common culture and history. Under our publishing agenda, we published about ten books including translations for the regional readership.

QUESTION 5: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE CURRENT STATE OF CULTURAL COOPERATION WITH THE ECO REGION, AND WHAT AREAS DO YOU THINK NEED MORE ATTENTION?

Cultural cooperation signifies collaboration among states to promote and protect cultural plurality through the adoption of appropriate measures and policies. This includes formal cooperation across national boundaries to share knowledge, culture and art. The aim is to bridge the divide, promote understanding and foster a sense of regional and global citizenship as outlined in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and committed in the ECO Charter. The diverse cultural landscape of the ECO region is seen as a valuable asset for regional integration and sustainable development, promoting cultural harmony and mutual respect. The ECO recognizes the shared cultural heritage of its member states and thus emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting these traditions for future generations.

Currently, the global political situation is in greater disarray than it was a decade ago. In particular Muslims are faced with anti-Muslim frenzy and Islamophobia in western societies. This is based on irrational fear,

hatred and prejudice directed at Islam and Muslims. It manifests in various forms including hate speech, discrimination and violence, often stemming from stereotypes and misinformation about Islam and its followers. Witnessing the emergence of a global order incentivizing inequity and injustice, Muslim states and populations are perturbed by the plight of their brethren in various regions of the world. Particularly, the military aggression of Israel against Palestinians; and the denial of rights to Muslims in Kashmir for freely determining their political choices are two burning issues, which may threaten the global peace. Simultaneously, economic hardships faced by post-colonial Islamic states are creating hardships for their



citizens. Resolution of all these issues require greater cooperation among Muslim polities. In this context, there is an urgency for making the regional cooperation more active by going beyond formal relations; extending level of cooperation in every field of activity among the governments and strengthening linkages among people.

QUESTION 6: HOW WILL YOU DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN IRAN?

Born as a South Asian Muslim, I was educated and groomed with a strong sense of my spiritual, social, cultural, and literary heritage rooted in medieval Persian, Turkish and Turkic history. Naturally, this evinced in me urgings to passionately study the evolution of South Asian Muslim identity in the context of this region. Thus, Iran has always been one of my favorite destinations. Before my appointment as President of ECO Cultural Institute, I had the opportunity of several visits to Iran for personal and official business. I remember a memorable official visit to Iran as the Chairperson of Urdu Language Authority, Pakistan, on the invitation of Dr. Haddad Adil, my dear friend and President of Farhangistan e Zaban O Adab, Iran. Where these visits helped me develop a better sense of contemporary scholarly and literary traditions in Iran, they also facilitated my orientation in Iranian geography, and landscape.

During my stint at the Institute, I have had the privilege of making several pilgrimages to the holy shrines of Imam Ali Reza (Aleh Salam) at Mashad and Syeda Fatima Masuma (Salam Ullah Ilayha) at Qum. I feel





myself lucky to have been to these places to earn spiritual rewards and seek blessings. In Tehran I stayed in a neighbourhood close to the mausoleum of Imam Rahil Khomeini. Therefore, I never missed an opportunity to make a visit there for paying my homage. For presenting my tribute to their legacies I also visited the tombs of revered Iranian poets, Firdousi, Saadi, Hafiz, Attar, Khayam, Sohrab Supahri, Ahmed Shamloo, Shehryar and Firogh Farrukhzad.

As a routine I would visit Iranian universities and cultural institutions. There was a lot to learn from their work and direction. My fondness for books always drove me to Khiaban-e-Inqilab, where I enjoyed seeing and buying books.

Iran offers a rich and diverse cultural experience rooted in a cherished history spread over thousands of years, blending ancient traditions with contemporary influences. Exploring the country involves immersing yourself in its vibrant art, cuisine, and social customs. From ancient ruins of great civilizations that flourished there to bustling bazaars and warm hospitality, Iran provides a captivating journey into the heart of Persian culture.

# Rashid Khan Arman:

## The Prodigy of Afghan Cricket



RASHID KHAN ARMAN WAS BORN ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1998, IN NANGARHAR PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN. GROWING UP IN A LARGE FAMILY WITH TEN SIBLINGS, RASHID'S EARLY LIFE WAS MARKED BY THE CHALLENGES OF LIVING IN A WAR-TORN COUNTRY. THE 9/11 ATTACKS AND THE SUBSEQUENT WAR IN AFGHANISTAN FORCED HIS FAMILY TO MOVE TO PAKISTAN FOR SAFETY. DESPITE THESE HARDSHIPS, RASHID'S PASSION FOR CRICKET FLOURISHED. HE IDOLIZED PAKISTANI CRICKETER SHAHID AFRIDI AND OFTEN PLAYED CRICKET WITH HIS BROTHERS ON CEMENT TRACKS.



## RISE TO PROMINENCE

Rashid's journey to international cricket began at a young age. He made his One Day International (ODI) debut for Afghanistan against Zimbabwe on October 18, 2015, at the age of 17. His impressive performances quickly caught the attention of cricket enthusiasts worldwide. Rashid's ability to bowl leg-spin with remarkable accuracy and his aggressive batting style made him a valuable asset to the Afghan national team.

## CAREER ON THE WORLD STAGE

Rashid Khan's international career has been nothing short of spectacular. He made his Test debut against India on June 14, 2018,

in Afghanistan's first-ever Test match. Although the match was challenging for Afghanistan, Rashid's performance was commendable. He continued to excel in limited-overs cricket, becoming the youngest bowler to top the ICC ODI rankings in February 2018.

In September 2019, Rashid became the youngest cricketer to captain a Test match side when he led Afghanistan against Bangladesh. Under his leadership, Afghanistan secured a historic victory, winning the match by 224 runs. Rashid's leadership qualities and exceptional skills have made him a key figure in Afghanistan's cricketing success.



## FRANCHISE AND T20 LEAGUES

Rashid Khan's talent has made him a sought-after player in various T20 leagues around the world. He has played for several franchises, including Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Adelaide Strikers in the Big Bash League (BBL), Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League (PSL), and Gujarat Titans in the IPL. His performances in these leagues have been consistently outstanding, earning him accolades and recognition.

In the IPL, Rashid made his debut for Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2017 and quickly became one of the most effective bowlers in the league. He played a crucial role in helping Sunrisers Hyderabad reach the finals in 2018. In 2022, Rashid joined Gujarat Titans and played a pivotal role in their title-winning campaign.

## MILESTONES AND HONORS

Rashid Khan's list of achievements is extensive. He holds the record for being the fastest to reach 100 ODI wickets. In T20 Internationals, he has the most four-wicket hauls, surpassing notable players like Shakib Al Hasan. Rashid's ability to consistently perform at the highest level has earned him numerous awards, including the ICC Associate Cricketer of the Year in 2017. One of Rashid's most memorable performances came in a T20I against Ireland, where he took 5 wickets for just 3 runs, helping Afghanistan maintain a record 11-match T20I winning streak. His contributions have been instrumental in Afghanistan's rise in international cricket.



## OFF THE FIELD

Despite his busy cricketing schedule, Rashid Khan remains grounded and connected to his roots. He is known for his humility and dedication to the sport. Rashid's family has been a significant source of support throughout his career. Tragically, he lost his father in 2018 and his mother in 2020. These personal losses have only strengthened his resolve to succeed and make his country proud.

Rashid is also known for his philanthropic efforts. He has been involved in various charitable activities, including supporting education and healthcare initiatives in Afghanistan. His commitment to giving back to his community has endeared him to fans worldwide.



## RECENT PERFORMANCES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Rashid Khan continues to be a dominant force in international cricket. In September 2024, he delivered a stunning performance, taking a five-wicket haul against South Africa in an ODI, leading Afghanistan to a series victory. His ability to consistently perform under pressure makes him a valuable asset to any team he represents. Looking ahead, Rashid's future in cricket appears bright. He remains focused on improving his skills and contributing to Afghanistan's success on the global stage. With his talent, determination, and leadership qualities, Rashid Khan is poised to achieve even greater heights in the years to come.

## IMPACT ON AFGHAN CRICKET

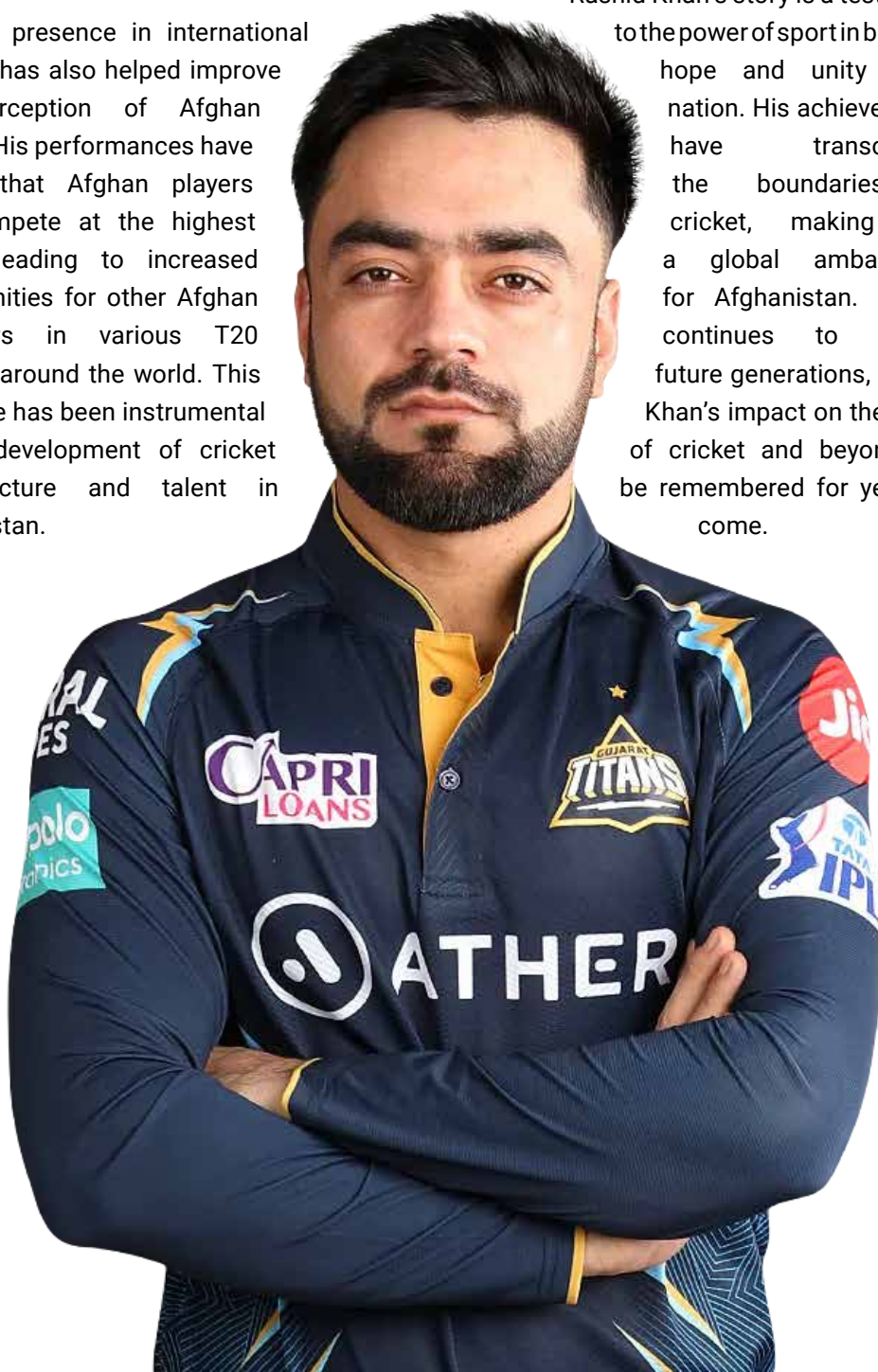
Rashid Khan's influence extends beyond his individual performances. He has played a crucial role in putting Afghan cricket on the global map. His success has inspired a new generation of cricketers in Afghanistan, providing them with a role model to emulate. The rise of cricket in Afghanistan, largely driven by players like Rashid, has brought hope and joy to a nation often plagued by conflict.

Rashid's presence in international leagues has also helped improve the perception of Afghan cricket. His performances have shown that Afghan players can compete at the highest levels, leading to increased opportunities for other Afghan cricketers in various T20 leagues around the world. This exposure has been instrumental in the development of cricket infrastructure and talent in Afghanistan.

## CONCLUSION

Rashid Khan Arman's journey from a war-torn country to becoming one of the world's best cricketers is nothing short of inspirational. His dedication, hard work, and exceptional talent have made him a role model for aspiring cricketers worldwide. As he continues to break records and achieve new milestones, Rashid's legacy in the world of cricket is firmly established.

Rashid Khan's story is a testament to the power of sport in bringing hope and unity to a nation. His achievements have transcended the boundaries of cricket, making him a global ambassador for Afghanistan. As he continues to inspire future generations, Rashid Khan's impact on the world of cricket and beyond will be remembered for years to come.



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# Football in Tajikistan





## INTRODUCTION

Football is the most popular sport in Tajikistan, a country that gained independence in 1991. The sport has a rich history in the region, dating back to the Soviet era, and continues to be a significant part of the country's culture and identity. This article provides a comprehensive overview of football in Tajikistan, covering its history, development, key players, and current status.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### SOVIET PERIOD

Football in Tajikistan began to develop in the 1920s. The Tajikistan National Football Federation was established in 1936, and the first championship of the Tajik SSR

(Tajik League) was held in 1937. Dynamo Stalinabad became the first champion, and the team made its debut in the USSR Cup the same year.

During the Soviet era, several Tajik footballers were members of the USSR national football team. Notable players included Sergei Nikulin, Edgar Gess, Oleg Shirinbekov, Oleksiy Cherednyk, and Sergey Mandreko. The only football club from the Tajik SSR that played in the USSR Top League was SKA-Pamir Dushanbe, which participated in three consecutive seasons from 1989 to 1991.

### POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

The Tajikistan National Football Federation was revived in 1991. Since then, the national association has regularly participated in

competitions organized by FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) at both senior and youth levels. The President of the Federation is the Mayor of Dushanbe Rustami Emomali. The Tajikistan Football Federation has implemented various programs to promote the sport among young people and improve the overall standard of football in the country.

## DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL IN TAJIKISTAN

### DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS

The Tajikistan Football League, also known as the Tajik League, is the top-tier football league in the country. It consists of several teams that compete annually for the championship title. The league has seen various champions over the years, with clubs like FC Istiklol and FC Khujand being prominent contenders.

The Tajikistan Cup is another significant domestic competition. It is a knockout tournament that features clubs from different divisions, providing an opportunity for lower-tier teams to compete against top-tier clubs.

The Tajikistan Football Federation Cup has been played since 2012. The tournament replaced the Rustam Doltabaev Memorial. The first winner of the trophy was Tursunzade's Regar-TadAZ.

The Tajikistan Super Cup has been played since 2010. Dushanbe's FC Istiklol has won the trophy twelve times.

### NATIONAL TEAM

The Tajikistan national football team, also known as the "Crowns," represents the



country in international football. The team is controlled by the Tajikistan Football Federation and plays its home matches at the Pamir Stadium in Dushanbe. The national team has participated in various international competitions, including the AFC Asian Cup, AFC Challenge Cup, and the CAFA Nations Cup.

The team debuted in the AFC Asian Cup in 2023, won the AFC Challenge Cup in 2006, and took part in the inaugural CAFA Nations Cup in 2023.

### KEY PLAYERS AND FIGURES

Several players have made significant contributions to Tajik football over the years. Some of the most notable players include:

- Manuchekhr Dzhalilov: He has scored 20 goals in 52 senior appearances for Tajikistan, which is the highest tally for the national team.
- Akhtam Nazarov: The player with the most



caps for the national team, having made 92 appearances.

- Sergei Mandreko: A former player who represented the USSR and CIS national teams.

## INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE

Participation in international competitions provides valuable exposure for Tajik players and helps raise the profile of football in the country. The national team's qualification for the AFC Asian Cup in 2023 is a significant milestone and an opportunity to showcase Tajik football on a larger stage.

## CONCLUSION

Football in Tajikistan has a rich history and continues to be the most popular sport in the country. The sport has made significant strides in recent years, with the national



team's qualification for the AFC Asian Cup being a notable achievement. With continued efforts to develop the sport at the grassroots level and increased international exposure, the future of football in Tajikistan looks promising.

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The Allure of

# ADANA KEBAB

A Culinary Delight from Türkiye

ADANA KEBAB, A CULINARY GEM FROM THE CITY OF ADANA IN SOUTHERN TÜRKIYE, IS A DISH THAT HAS CAPTURED THE HEARTS AND TASTE BUDS OF FOOD ENTHUSIASTS AROUND THE WORLD. THIS ICONIC KEBAB IS NOT JUST A MEAL; IT'S AN EXPERIENCE THAT EMBODIES THE RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FLAVORS OF TURKISH CUISINE.

## ORIGINS AND TRADITION

Adana Kebab, also known as Adana Kebap, is named after the city of Adana, where it originated. This region is renowned for its love of spicy and flavorful dishes, and Adana Kebab is no exception. The kebab is traditionally made from hand-minced lamb meat, combined with a generous amount of tail fat, which gives it its signature juiciness and rich flavor.

The preparation of Adana Kebab is an art form in itself. Skilled chefs, known as "usta," use a special knife called a "zirh" to finely chop the meat and mix it with spices. This meticulous process ensures that the meat is perfectly seasoned and has the right texture. The mixture is then molded onto long, flat metal skewers and grilled over open coals, allowing the flavors to meld and the meat to develop a delicious char.



## INGREDIENTS

The ingredients for Adana Kebab are simple yet essential to achieving its unique flavor. Here is a list of the key ingredients:

- Ground Lamb: The primary ingredient, providing the rich and savory base.
- Tail Fat: Adds juiciness and enhances the flavor.
- Red Pepper Flakes: For a spicy kick.
- Sumac: Adds a tangy, lemony flavor.
- Cumin: Provides a warm, earthy taste.
- Garlic: Enhances the overall flavor profile.
- Salt and Black Pepper: For seasoning.
- Paprika: Adds color and a mild sweetness.
- Fresh Parsley: For a hint of freshness.

## HOW TO COOK

Cooking Adana Kebab requires attention to detail and a bit of skill, but the results are well worth the effort. Here is a step-by-step guide to making this delicious kebab:

1. Prepare the Meat Mixture: Start by finely chopping the lamb meat and tail fat using a zirh or a sharp knife. Mix the meat with red pepper flakes, sumac, cumin, garlic, salt, black pepper, paprika, and fresh parsley. Knead the mixture well to ensure all the ingredients are evenly distributed.

2. Shape the Kebabs: Take a handful of the meat mixture and mold it onto a long,



flat metal skewer. Press the meat firmly to ensure it adheres to the skewer and forms an even, elongated shape.

3. Grill the Kebabs: Preheat your grill to medium-high heat. Place the skewers on the grill and cook for about 4-5 minutes on each side, or until the meat is cooked through and has a nice char on the outside. Be sure to turn the skewers occasionally to ensure even cooking.

4. Serve: Once cooked, remove the kebabs from the grill and let them rest for a few minutes. Serve the Adana Kebabs with flatbreads, sumac-seasoned onions, grilled tomatoes, and fresh parsley. A side of ayran, a tangy yogurt-based drink, is also a perfect accompaniment.

## FLAVOR PROFILE

The flavor of Adana Kebab is a harmonious blend of spices and herbs. The key ingredients include red pepper flakes, sumac, cumin, and garlic, which infuse the meat with a robust and slightly spicy taste. The addition of tail fat not only enhances the flavor but also keeps the meat moist and tender during grilling. One of the unique aspects of Adana Kebab is its balance of heat and flavor. While it has a noticeable kick from the red pepper flakes, it is not overwhelmingly spicy. Instead, the spices are carefully balanced to complement the natural richness of the lamb, creating a dish that is both flavorful and satisfying.

## SERVING AND ENJOYMENT

Adana Kebab is typically served with a variety of accompaniments that enhance its flavors. It is often paired with flatbreads, such as lavash or pita, which are perfect for wrapping around the succulent meat. A side of sumac-seasoned onions, grilled tomatoes, and fresh parsley adds a refreshing contrast to the rich kebab<sup>4</sup>.

In Türkiye, it is common to enjoy Adana Kebab with a glass of ayran, a tangy yogurt-based drink that helps balance the spiciness of the dish. The combination of the juicy kebab, warm flatbread, and cooling ayran creates a delightful culinary experience that is hard to forget<sup>5</sup>.

## A GLOBAL FAVORITE

While Adana Kebab remains a beloved dish in Türkiye, its popularity has spread far beyond the country's borders. Today, you can find variations of this kebab in many parts of the world, each with its own unique twist. However, the essence of Adana Kebab—the perfect blend of spices, the juicy lamb, and the smoky char from the grill—remains unchanged.

Whether you are enjoying it at a bustling street market in Adana or at a Turkish restaurant in your hometown, Adana Kebab offers a taste of Türkiye's rich culinary heritage. Its irresistible flavors and cultural significance make it a dish worth savoring and celebrating.

So, the next time you have the opportunity to try Adana Kebab, take a moment to appreciate the craftsmanship and tradition that goes into every bite. It's more

than just a meal; it's a journey through the vibrant and flavorful world of Turkish cuisine.

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# SHIVIT OSHI

A Culinary Gem from Khiva, Uzbekistan

SHIVIT OSHI, ALSO KNOWN AS SHIVIT OSH OR KHOREZM LAGMAN, IS A UNIQUE AND VIBRANT NOODLE DISH THAT HAILS FROM THE ANCIENT CITY OF KHIVA IN UZBEKISTAN. THIS DISH IS A TRUE REPRESENTATION OF THE RICH CULINARY HERITAGE OF THE KHOREZM REGION, KNOWN FOR ITS DISTINCTIVE FLAVORS AND INGREDIENTS.

## ORIGINS AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Khiva, a city on Uzbekistan's border with Turkmenistan, was once a significant stop on the Silk Road. The city's historical significance is mirrored in its culinary traditions, with Shivit Oshi being one of the standout dishes. The name "Shivit" refers to dill, which is a key ingredient in this dish, giving the noodles their characteristic green color.



## INGREDIENTS AND PREPARATION

The preparation of Shivit Oshi involves making bright green noodles infused with dill. The noodles are typically served with a hearty beef stew, which includes potatoes and carrots. The dill infusion not only adds a unique color but also imparts a fresh, aromatic flavor to the noodles.

## INGREDIENTS:

- Fresh dill
- Flour
- Eggs
- Water
- Beef
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Onions
- Garlic
- Spices (such as cumin and coriander)
- Yogurt or sour cream (for serving)



## PREPARATION STEPS:

1. Noodle Dough: The dough for the noodles is prepared by mixing flour, eggs, water, and a generous amount of finely chopped dill. The dough is then rolled out and cut into thin noodles.
2. Cooking the Noodles: The green noodles are boiled until they are cooked through.
3. Beef Stew: The beef is cut into small pieces and cooked with onions, garlic, potatoes, and carrots. Spices such as cumin and coriander are added to enhance the flavor.
4. Serving: The cooked noodles are topped with the beef stew and served with a side of tangy yogurt or sour cream.

## WHERE TO TRY SHIVIT OSHI

Shivit Oshi is a specialty of Khiva and can be found in many local restaurants and eateries in the city. Some of the best places to try this dish include the Khorezm Art Restaurant, which is known for its authentic regional cuisine.

## CONCLUSION

Shivit Oshi is more than just a dish; it is a culinary experience that reflects the rich history and culture of Khiva. The vibrant green noodles and flavorful beef stew make it a must-try for anyone visiting Uzbekistan. Whether you are a food enthusiast or a traveler looking to explore new tastes, Shivit Oshi offers a delightful journey into the heart of Uzbek cuisine.



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# AZERBAIJAN

## National Carpet Museum

A Cultural Treasure



THE AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL CARPET MUSEUM, LOCATED IN BAKU, STANDS AS A TESTAMENT TO THE RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARTISTIC TRADITIONS OF AZERBAIJAN. THIS MUSEUM, WHICH HOUSES THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF AZERBAIJANI CARPETS IN THE WORLD, IS NOT ONLY A REPOSITORY OF EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP BUT ALSO A CENTER FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE WILL EXPLORE THE HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE, COLLECTIONS, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL CARPET MUSEUM.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum was established in 1967, initially known as the Azerbaijan State Museum of Carpet and Folk Applied Arts. The museum was founded with the aim of preserving and promoting the art of carpet weaving, which has been an integral part of Azerbaijani culture for centuries. The museum's first exhibition was held in 1972 in the Juma Mosque, a historical building in Icheri Sheher, Baku.

Over the years, the museum underwent several name changes and relocations. In 1992, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the museum was moved to the second floor of the Baku Museum Center, a building that had originally been the Lenin Museum. In 2014, the museum moved to its current location on Baku's seafront park, housed in a purpose-built structure designed to resemble a rolled carpet.

## ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

The current building of the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum is an architectural masterpiece. Designed by Austrian architect Franz Janz, the structure took over six years to complete and was officially opened on August 26, 2014. The building's unique design, which mimics the appearance of a rolled carpet, is a fitting tribute to the art form it celebrates. The museum's location on the Seaside Boulevard offers stunning views of the Caspian Sea, adding to its allure.

The museum's interior is equally impressive, with spacious galleries and state-of-the-art facilities that provide an ideal environment for the display and preservation of delicate textiles. The building's design also incorporates elements of traditional Azerbaijani architecture, creating a harmonious blend of the old and the new.

## COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum boasts an extensive collection of over 10,000 items, including



carpets, textiles, ceramics, metalwork, jewelry, and other examples of folk applied arts. The museum's collection spans several centuries, showcasing the evolution of carpet weaving techniques and styles in Azerbaijan.

One of the highlights of the museum's collection is the display of carpets from various regions of Azerbaijan, each with its own distinct patterns and motifs. These carpets are not only works of art but also valuable historical documents that reflect the cultural and social life of the communities that produced them.

The museum also houses a significant collection of items from the Shusha Museum of History, which were relocated to Baku during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. These items, including 600 carpets, are part of an exhibition titled "Burned Culture," which serves as a poignant reminder of the cultural heritage lost during the conflict.

In addition to its permanent collection, the museum regularly hosts temporary exhibitions that highlight different aspects of Azerbaijani culture and art. Recent exhibitions have included "Climates and Carpets," which explored the relationship between climate and carpet design, and "Designs a Collection Based on Samples of Karabakh Carpets and their Unique Patterns."

## EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum is not just a place to view beautiful carpets; it is also a center for education and research. The museum offers a range of educational programs and workshops for visitors of all ages, from schoolchildren to adults. These programs provide hands-on experiences in carpet weaving and other traditional crafts, helping to keep these skills alive for future generations.

The museum also conducts research on the history and techniques of carpet weaving, publishing its findings in academic journals and books. This research is essential for the preservation and understanding of Azerbaijan's rich textile heritage. The museum's library, which contains a vast collection of books and manuscripts on carpet art, is a valuable resource for scholars and researchers.

## CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum plays a vital role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Azerbaijan. Carpets have long been a symbol of Azerbaijani identity, representing the country's artistic



traditions, craftsmanship, and way of life. The museum's efforts to collect, preserve, and display these carpets ensure that this important aspect of Azerbaijani culture is not forgotten.

The museum also serves as a cultural ambassador, fostering international understanding and appreciation of Azerbaijani art. Through its exhibitions and educational programs, the museum reaches a global audience, showcasing the beauty and diversity of Azerbaijani carpets.

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE

A visit to the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum is a journey through the history and culture of Azerbaijan. The museum's well-curated exhibitions provide a comprehensive overview of the art of carpet weaving, from its ancient origins to its modern interpretations. Visitors can admire the intricate designs and vibrant colors of the carpets, each telling its own unique story.

The museum also offers guided tours, which provide deeper insights into the history and significance of the exhibits.

These tours are available in multiple languages, making the museum accessible to international visitors. The museum's gift shop offers a range of souvenirs, including books, postcards, and replicas of traditional Azerbaijani carpets, allowing visitors to take a piece of Azerbaijani culture home with them.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

The Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum continues to evolve, with plans for new exhibitions, educational programs, and research initiatives. The museum's commitment to preserving and promoting Azerbaijani carpet art ensures that this cultural treasure will be enjoyed by future generations.

In conclusion, the Azerbaijan National Carpet Museum is more than just a museum; it is a cultural institution dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Azerbaijani heritage. Its impressive collection, innovative architecture, and educational programs make it a must-visit destination for anyone interested in the art and culture of Azerbaijan.

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# A Visit to the National Museum of Pakistan:



## INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PAKISTAN, LOCATED IN KARACHI, IS A BEACON OF THE COUNTRY'S RICH CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE. ESTABLISHED IN 1950, THE MUSEUM HAS GROWN TO BECOME ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN PAKISTAN. IT HOUSES AN EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF ARTIFACTS, MANUSCRIPTS, AND ARTWORKS THAT SPAN THE DIVERSE HISTORY OF THE REGION. THIS ARTICLE DELVES INTO THE HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE, COLLECTIONS, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF PAKISTAN.



## HISTORY

The National Museum of Pakistan was inaugurated in Frere Hall on 17 April 1950, replacing the defunct Victoria Museum. Frere Hall, built in 1865, was a tribute to Sir Bartle Frere, a commissioner of Sind during the 19th century. Once the museum was inaugurated, the Government of Pakistan deemed it wise to constitute an Advisory Council in 1950 with the primary duty of counseling the museum on enriching its collection through new acquisitions and the purchase of antiquities and works of art. In 1970, the museum was relocated to its current premises in Burns Garden, Dr. Zia-ud-din Ahmed Road, Karachi. Initially, there were only four galleries in the museum. Over time, the museum grew, and it now houses a total of eleven galleries, including a "Quran Gallery."

## ARCHITECTURE

The museum's building, designed by Italian architect Alfredo Kotzian, is a fine example of traditional Pakistani architecture. The structure features a high and open lobby, with two entrances—one facing DJ College and the other on Strachan Road. The main entrance is adorned with a stunning arch and calligraphic tiles from Bhambore. The museum's lawn boasts two impressive stone-cut statues and additional calligraphy tiles.

## COLLECTIONS

The National Museum of Pakistan is home to an extensive and diverse collection of artifacts, manuscripts, and artworks. The museum's collection includes:



## INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION ARTIFACTS

The museum houses a significant collection of artifacts from the Indus Valley Civilization, one of the world's oldest urban cultures. Notable items include the iconic "Priest-King" statue, terracotta toys, and various stamp seals.

## GANDHARA CIVILIZATION SCULPTURES

The museum's collection of Gandhara civilization sculptures is a testament to the region's Buddhist heritage. These sculptures, made from stone and stucco, depict various Buddhist deities and scenes from the life of Buddha.

## ISLAMIC ART

The museum's Islamic art collection includes intricate miniature paintings, calligraphy, and decorative arts. These items reflect the artistic and cultural achievements of the Islamic world.

## MANUSCRIPTS AND COINS

The museum boasts a collection of over 300 copies of the Holy Quran, all of which

are exactly the same, with around 52 rare manuscripts on display. Additionally, the museum has a vast collection of 58,000 old coins, some dating back to 74 AH-Hijra.

## ETHNOLOGICAL GALLERY

The Ethnological Gallery features life-size statues representing the diverse ethnic groups of Pakistan. This gallery provides insight into the cultural and social fabric of the country.

## POLITICAL HISTORY

The museum also houses items related to Pakistan's political history, including personal belongings of national heroes such as Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's pen, cuffs, and sword; Allama Iqbal's personal chair and pen; and Liaquat Ali Khan's personal itar bottle, watch, and walking stick.

## OTHER GALLERIES

There are galleries that showcase the clothing Muslims used to make, the pottery work done by people, glasses made by Muslims, and the apparatus that was used. The museum also has a collection of seals and statues found at the Mohenjo-daro site.



## SIGNIFICANCE

The National Museum of Pakistan plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting the country's cultural heritage. It serves as an educational resource for students, researchers, and the general public. The museum regularly hosts exhibitions, seminars, and conferences to foster an understanding of Pakistan's rich history and culture.

## FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The museum offers various facilities and services to enhance the visitor experience. These include:

- Auditorium: The museum has a large auditorium with a seating capacity of 250 people. It is used for seminars, meetings, and conferences.
- Library: The museum's library contains

around 70,000 publications, books, and other reading materials from the Archaeology and Museums Department.

- Laboratory: A well-equipped laboratory is available for students to conduct studies on the museum's exhibits.
- Exhibitions: The museum hosts around a dozen exhibitions annually on national days and other occasions.

## CONCLUSION

The National Museum of Pakistan is a vital institution that preserves and showcases the country's rich cultural heritage. Its extensive collections, educational programs, and exhibitions make it a must-visit destination for anyone interested in the history and culture of Pakistan. As the museum continues to grow and evolve, it remains a testament to the enduring legacy of Pakistan's diverse and vibrant heritage.

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# Mohenjo-daro

The Ancient Marvel of the Indus Valley Civilization



## Mohenjo-daro, meaning “Mound of the Dead Men”

in Sindhi, is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the world. Located on the right bank of the Indus River, 510 km northeast of Karachi and 28 km from Larkana city in Pakistan’s Sindh Province, this ancient city was one of the largest settlements of the Indus Valley Civilization, which flourished between 2500 and 1500 BCE. Mohenjo-daro is a testament to the advanced urban planning and sophisticated culture of the Indus Valley people.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the Harappan Civilization, was one of the world’s earliest urban cultures, contemporaneous with ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Mohenjo-daro was a major city of this civilization, which spanned much of what is now Pakistan. Built around 2500

BCE, the city was abandoned around 1900 BCE for reasons that remain unclear. Its ruins represent a metropolis that exercised considerable influence on the subsequent development of urbanization.

### DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION

The archaeological ruins at Mohenjo-daro are the best-preserved urban settlement in South Asia, dating back to the beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE. The site was rediscovered in 1922 by archaeologists, revealing evidence of the customs, art, religion, and administrative abilities of its inhabitants. The well-planned city, mostly constructed with baked bricks, featured public baths, a college of priests, an elaborate drainage system, wells, soak pits for sewage disposal, and a large granary.



This highlights its importance as a metropolis with a well-organized civic, economic, social, and cultural system. The site was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980.

## URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

One of the most remarkable aspects of Mohenjo-daro is its urban planning. The city was laid out in a grid pattern, with streets intersecting at right angles. This level of planning indicates a highly organized society with advanced knowledge of urban design. The city comprises two sectors: the Citadel area in the west, where a Buddhist stupa was constructed with unbaked brick over the ruins of Mohenjo-daro in the 2nd century AD, and the Lower Town, which spread out along the banks of the Indus. The Citadel contained important buildings such as the Great Bath, a large granary, and assembly halls, while the Lower Town was where the majority of the population lived and worked.

## THE GREAT BATH

The Great Bath is one of the most iconic structures of Mohenjo-daro. It is a large, rectangular tank made of baked bricks and measures approximately 12 meters long, 7 meters wide, and 2.4 meters deep. The tank was likely used for ritual bathing, indicating the importance of cleanliness and possibly religious practices in the Indus Valley culture.

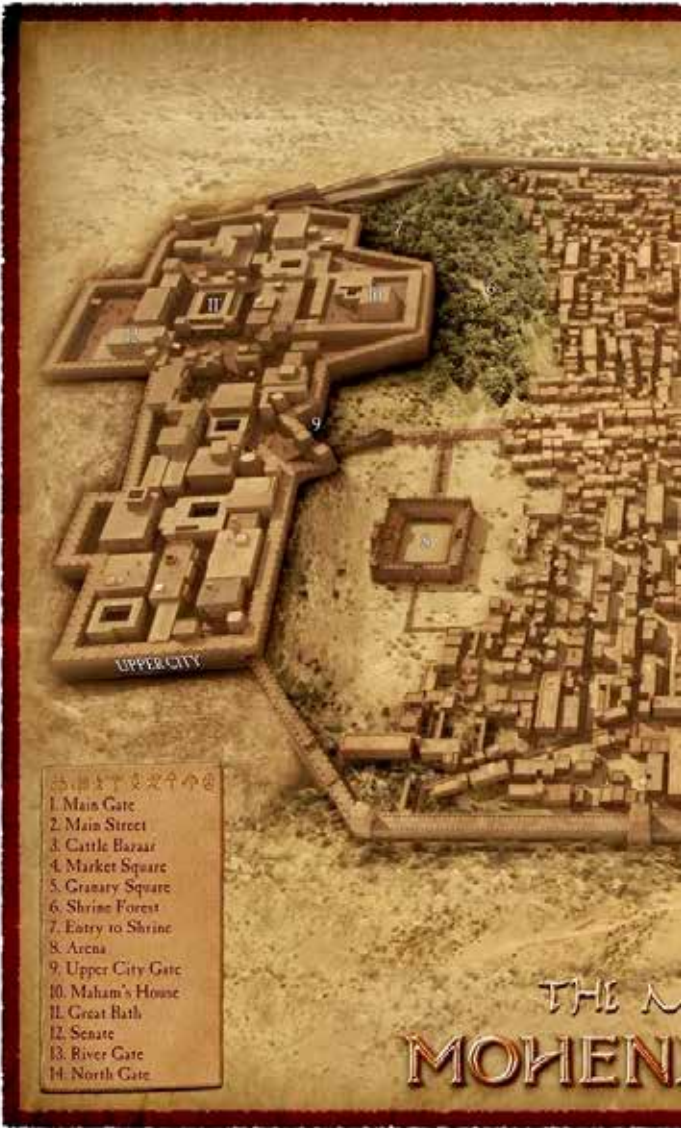
## RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

The residential buildings of Mohenjo-daro were also well-planned and constructed. Houses were made of baked bricks and often had multiple

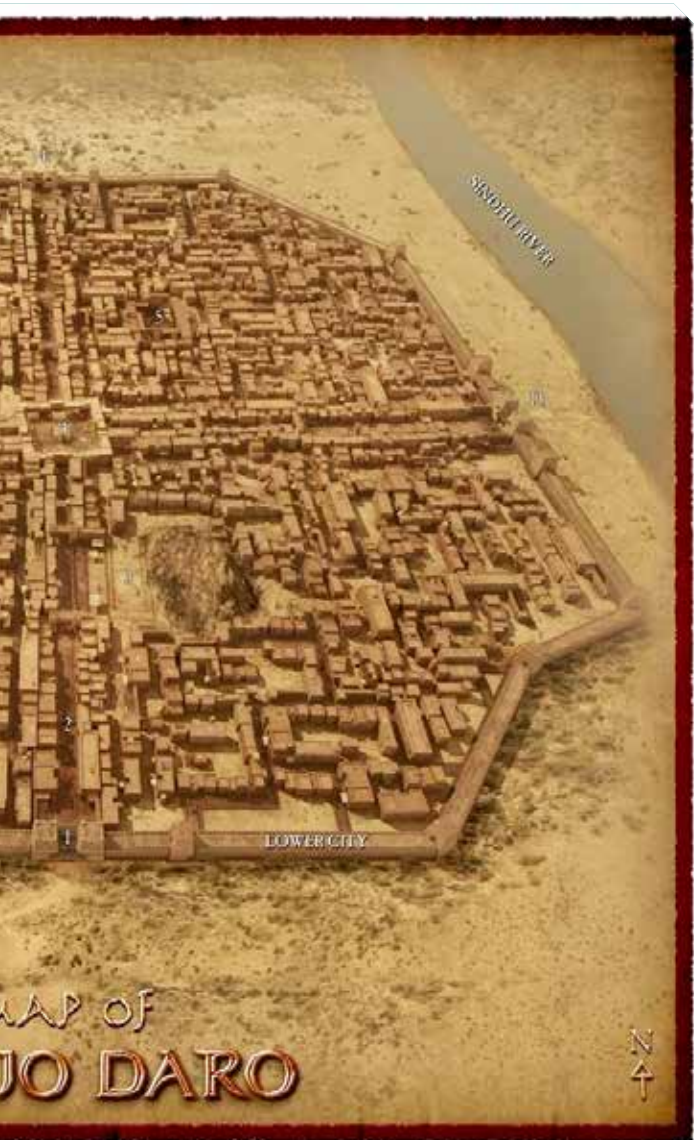
rooms, courtyards, and private wells. The presence of private bathrooms and an advanced drainage system suggests that the inhabitants valued hygiene and sanitation.

## ARTIFACTS AND CULTURE

Numerous artifacts have been discovered at Mohenjo-daro, providing insights into the



culture and daily life of its inhabitants. These include pottery, tools, jewelry, and seals. The seals, often made of steatite, are particularly significant as they feature intricate designs and inscriptions that remain undeciphered. The artifacts suggest that the people of Mohenjo-daro were skilled artisans and traders. The presence of items made from materials not native to the region indicates that the city was part of a vast trade network.



## DECLINE AND ABANDONMENT

The reasons for the decline and abandonment of Mohenjo-daro around 1900 BCE remain a subject of debate among historians and archaeologists. Some theories suggest environmental changes, such as shifts in the course of the Indus River or climate change, may have played a role. Others propose that invasions or internal conflicts could have led to the city's downfall.

## CONCLUSION

Mohenjo-daro stands as a testament to the ingenuity and sophistication of the Indus Valley Civilization. Its advanced urban planning, impressive architecture, and rich cultural artifacts provide a window into a remarkable ancient society. As we continue to study and preserve Mohenjo-daro, we gain a deeper understanding of our shared human heritage and the achievements of our ancestors.

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# Darul Aman Palace

A Symbol of Afghanistan's Resilience and Hope



## Introduction

**D**arul Aman Palace, meaning “Abode of Peace,” is a majestic three-story palace located in Darulaman, approximately 16 kilometers southwest of Kabul, Afghanistan. This iconic structure stands as a testament to Afghanistan’s rich history, architectural grandeur, and the nation’s enduring spirit amidst decades of conflict and turmoil. Built during the 1920s by King Amanullah Khan, the palace was intended to be part of a new capital city and symbolize the modernization of Afghanistan. Over the years, Darul Aman Palace has witnessed significant historical events, periods of destruction, and remarkable restoration efforts, making it a symbol of resilience and hope for the Afghan people.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The construction of Darul Aman Palace began in the early 1920s as part of King Amanullah Khan’s ambitious plans to modernize Afghanistan. Amanullah Khan,

who reigned as Emir of Afghanistan from 1919 to 1926 and as King from 1926 to 1929, envisioned the palace as the centerpiece of a new capital city called Darulaman. The city was to be connected to Kabul by a narrow-gauge railway, reflecting the king’s vision of a modern and progressive Afghanistan.

To bring his vision to life, Amanullah Khan invited 22 architects from Germany and France to design and construct the palace. Darul Aman Palace holds immense historical significance as it represents a pivotal period in Afghanistan’s history. The palace was intended to be a symbol of progress and modernization, reflecting Amanullah Khan’s efforts to transform Afghanistan into a modern nation. However, the palace’s history is also marked by periods of destruction and conflict.

In 1929, Habibullah Kalakani forced King Amanullah from power, leaving the palace unused and partially complete for many years. The palace suffered further damage during the 1970s when it was set on fire, and



in the 1990s, it was shelled by mujahideen forces during the civil war.

Despite these challenges, Darul Aman Palace has remained a symbol of resilience and hope for the Afghan people. The palace's walls contain the history of Afghanistan's ambitions, struggles, and the enduring spirit of its people.

## ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Darul Aman Palace is an imposing neoclassical building situated on a hilltop overlooking a flat, dusty valley in the western part of Kabul. The palace's design includes several notable features that set it apart from other buildings of its time. One of the most significant aspects of the palace is its central heating and running water systems, which were among the first in the country. The palace also boasts spiral marble staircases, adding to its grandeur and elegance.

The palace's exterior is characterized by its symmetrical design, large windows, and decorative elements that reflect the neoclassical style. The interior of the palace includes 150 rooms, each designed with meticulous attention to detail. The spacious halls and rooms were intended to serve as the seat of a future parliament, reflecting Amanullah Khan's vision of a modern Afghanistan.

## RESTORATION EFFORTS

In recent years, significant efforts have been made to restore Darul Aman Palace to its former glory. The restoration project began in 2016 and was completed in 2019, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of Afghan independence. The restoration work was carried out by a team of Afghan engineers and architects, with the support of the Afghan government and international donors.

The restoration project aimed to preserve the palace's historical and architectural significance while making it accessible to the public. The restored palace now serves as a symbol of national pride and a testament to Afghanistan's resilience and determination to rebuild and move forward.

## CULTURAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Darul Aman Palace holds a special place in the hearts of the Afghan people. It is not only an architectural marvel but also





a symbol of the nation's rich cultural heritage and history. The palace has been the site of numerous cultural events, exhibitions, and ceremonies, reflecting its importance as a cultural and social landmark.

The restoration of Darul Aman Palace has also had a positive impact on the local community. The project created job opportunities for local workers and artisans, contributing to the economic development of the region. Additionally, the palace's restoration has attracted tourists and visitors, boosting the local tourism industry and promoting Afghanistan's cultural heritage on the global stage.

## CONCLUSION

Darul Aman Palace stands as a symbol of Afghanistan's resilience, hope, and determination to overcome adversity. From its construction in the 1920s to its restoration in the 21st century, the palace has witnessed significant historical events and periods of destruction and renewal. Today, Darul Aman Palace serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of the Afghan people and their commitment to preserving their cultural heritage and building a brighter future.

As Afghanistan continues to navigate its path towards peace and stability, Darul Aman Palace remains a beacon of hope and a reminder of the nation's rich history and cultural legacy. The palace's story is a reflection of Afghanistan's journey, marked by challenges and triumphs, and its unwavering resilience in the face of adversity.

constructed with baked bricks, featured public baths, a college of priests, an elaborate drainage system, wells, soak pits for sewage disposal, and a large granary.

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# KOZY KORPESH BAYAN SULU

## A Timeless Kazakh Love Story

Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu is one of the most cherished and enduring love stories in Kazakh folklore. Often compared to the tale of Romeo and Juliet, this epic narrative has been passed down through generations, capturing the hearts and imaginations of the Kazakh people.

### THE LEGEND

The story begins with two childhood friends, Sarybai and Karabai, who vow to marry their children to each other. Tragically, Sarybai dies before his son, Kozy Korpesh, is born. Despite never having met, Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu are bound by this prenuptial agreement. As they grow older, they fall deeply in love, even though they have never seen each other.

However, the path to their union is fraught with obstacles. Karabai, Bayan Sulu's father, reneges on his promise and decides to marry his daughter to Kodar, a local hero who once saved his flocks. Kodar becomes the primary barrier between the lovers.





In a dramatic turn of events, Bayan Sulu devises a plan to rid herself of Kodar. She promises to marry him if he digs a well with spring water for her. As Kodar works, Bayan Sulu cuts off her braids, causing Kodar to fall into the well and die. Overcome with grief and guilt, Bayan Sulu takes her own life at Kozy Korpesh's grave.

#### Cultural Significance

The tale of Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu is more than just a love story; it is a reflection of the values and traditions of the Kazakh people. The



story has inspired countless poets, playwrights, and artists over the centuries. It is a testament to the enduring power of love and the tragic consequences of broken promises.

## THE MAUSOLEUM

The Kozy Korpesh-Bayan Sulu Mausoleum, located near the village of Tansyk in the East

Kazakhstan region, is one of the oldest surviving monuments in Kazakhstan. Erected between the 5th and 11th centuries, this mausoleum stands as a testament to the timeless love story. The tombstone features carvings of the two lovers, symbolizing their eternal bond.

## MODERN INTERPRETATIONS

The legend of Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu continues to inspire modern interpretations. One notable adaptation is the ballet "Kozy Korpesh - Bayan Sulu," which combines classical and modern dance techniques with Kazakh folk traditions. This ballet, performed by the Astana Ballet, brings the ancient tale to life with stunning choreography, vibrant costumes, and evocative music.

## CONCLUSION

The story of Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu is a poignant reminder of the power of love and the enduring nature of cultural legends. It continues to resonate with audiences today, preserving the rich heritage of Kazakh folklore for future generations.

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# MEDDAH:

## The Master Storytellers of Türkiye's Rich Oral Tradition

The Arts of the Meddah, or public storytelling, is a rich and vibrant tradition that has been an integral part of Turkish culture for centuries. This unique form of oral storytelling, performed by a single storyteller known as a meddah, has played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural values, social norms, and historical narratives across generations. In this article, we will explore the origins, characteristics, and significance of the Arts of the Meddah, as well as its evolution and current status as an intangible cultural heritage of Türkiye.

### ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The term "meddah" is derived from the Arabic word "maddah," which means "to praise." Historically, meddahs were itinerant storytellers who traveled from town to town, performing in various public spaces such as caravanserais, markets, coffeehouses, mosques, and churches. The tradition of meddahlik can be traced back to the medieval period, and it flourished during the Ottoman Empire, particularly in urban centers like Istanbul.

Meddahs were highly respected figures in society, known for their eloquence, wit, and ability to captivate audiences with their tales. They were not only entertainers but also educators and social commentators, using their stories to convey moral lessons, critique social and political issues, and foster a sense of community among their listeners.





## CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDDAH PERFORMANCES

A typical meddah performance is characterized by its simplicity and reliance on the storyteller's skills rather than elaborate props or stage settings. The meddah usually performs alone, using minimal props such as a handkerchief, a walking stick, or a fan to represent different characters and situations. The performance is highly interactive, with the meddah engaging directly with the audience, often incorporating their reactions and feedback into the narrative. One of the key features of meddah performances



is the use of improvisation. While the meddah may have a repertoire of well-known stories, legends, and epics, the success of the performance largely depends on the storyteller's ability to adapt the material to the specific audience and context. This requires a deep understanding of the audience's cultural background, interests, and current events, as well as a keen sense of timing and humor.

Meddahs also employ a range of vocal techniques, gestures, and facial expressions to

bring their stories to life. They often mimic the voices and mannerisms of different characters, creating a vivid and dynamic narrative that keeps the audience engaged. The use of satire and humor is another important aspect of meddah performances, allowing the storyteller to address serious issues in a light-hearted and accessible manner.

## THEMES AND CONTENT

The content of meddah performances is diverse, encompassing a wide range of themes and genres. Some of the most common types of stories include:

- Romances and Love Stories: These tales often revolve around the themes of love, loyalty, and sacrifice, featuring heroic characters who overcome various obstacles to be with their beloved.
- Legends and Epics: Meddahs frequently draw on the rich tradition of Turkish and Islamic folklore, recounting the exploits of legendary heroes, saints, and historical figures.
- Moral and Didactic Stories: Many meddah performances have an educational purpose, using stories to impart moral lessons and ethical values. These tales often feature allegorical characters and situations that illustrate the consequences of virtuous or immoral behavior.
- Social and Political Satire: Meddahs are known for their sharp wit and ability to critique contemporary social and political issues through satire. By using humor and irony, they can address sensitive topics in a way that encourages reflection and discussion among the audience.

## SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

The Arts of the Meddah has had a profound impact on Turkish culture and



society. As a form of oral storytelling, it has played a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage, particularly in a predominantly illiterate society. Meddahs have served as custodians of collective memory, passing down historical narratives, folk tales, and moral values from one generation to the next.

In addition to its cultural significance, meddahlik has also contributed to the development of other forms of Turkish performing arts, such as theater and cinema. The improvisational skills, vocal techniques, and narrative structures used by meddahs have influenced the work of playwrights, actors, and filmmakers, enriching the artistic landscape of Türkiye. Furthermore, the interactive and communal nature of meddah performances has fostered a sense of social cohesion and solidarity among audiences. By bringing people together to share in the experience of storytelling, meddahs have helped to strengthen community bonds and promote a sense of shared identity and belonging.

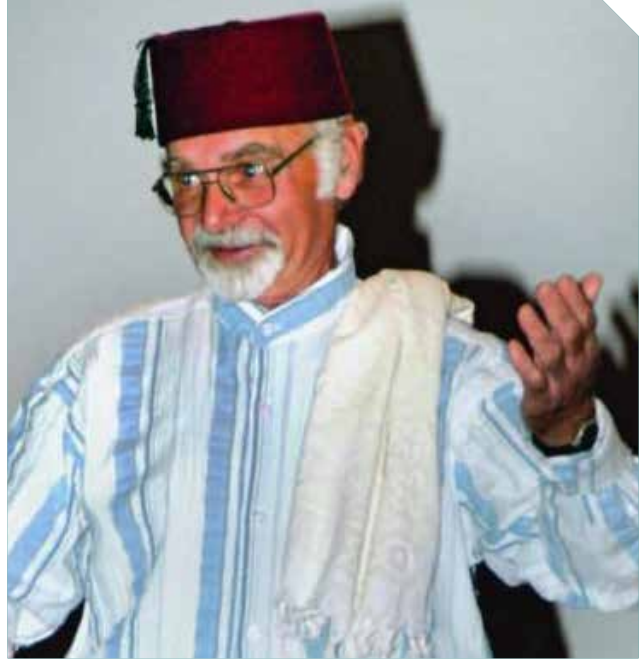


## EVOLUTION AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

While the tradition of meddahlik has declined in recent decades due to the rise of mass media and changes in social and cultural dynamics, it remains an important aspect of Türkiye's intangible cultural heritage. In recognition of its significance, the Arts of the Meddah was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.

Today, efforts are being made to revive and preserve this unique art form. Some meddahs continue to perform at celebrations, cultural festivals, and on television shows. Additionally, there are initiatives to document and study the tradition of meddahlik, ensuring that it is passed down to future generations.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the revival of traditional storytelling practices, both in Türkiye and around the world. This resurgence reflects a broader recognition of the value of oral



traditions in fostering cultural diversity, promoting intercultural dialogue, and addressing contemporary social and environmental challenges.

## CONCLUSION

The Arts of the Meddah is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling as a means of cultural expression, education, and social commentary. As an intangible cultural heritage of Türkiye, it represents a rich and diverse tradition that has shaped the country's cultural identity and continues to inspire and engage audiences today. By preserving and revitalizing this unique art form, we can ensure that the legacy of the meddahs lives on, enriching our understanding of the past and guiding us towards a more inclusive and interconnected future.

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**IN THE SPOTLIGHT:**

A Closer  
Exploration of Arts and  
Culture in **ECO Region**

## Afghanistan



### Herat Girls Revive Ancient Miniature and Illumination Arts

Local officials in Herat pledge that they support artists to help the growth of the country's traditional arts.

A group of young female artists in Herat are striving to preserve and expand the historical arts of miniature painting and illumination from the Herat school.

According to these girls, these delicate art forms are part of the country's history and cultural identity, and they are committed to keeping the Herat artistic tradition alive.

After being deprived of formal education, these girls have turned to learning miniature and illumination arts. These two art forms are considered the foundational pillars of the Herat school of art. Arezo Mohandeszada, an art student, told TOLONews in Herat: "We want to expand and develop the ancient Herat-style arts of illumination and miniature with the cooperation of our teachers, fellow students, and colleagues."

These arts require precision and delicacy. These young female artists work patiently for days and even weeks on each piece of

their artistic creations.

Farsila Noorzai, another art student in Herat, said: "This art requires attention to fine detail and takes a lot of time, but when I work on miniature and illumination art, I never feel tired."

Mona Ziaee is another girl determined to keep these two arts alive. She told TOLONews: "Miniature is an art of delicacy and has a history of several hundred years. That's why I wanted to learn it."

Local officials in Herat pledge that they support artists to help the growth of the country's traditional arts.

Hamidullah Ghiyasi, head of culture and arts at the Herat Department of Information and Culture, said: "The Department of Information and Culture of Herat Province, in cooperation with artists—especially in the field of illumination and miniature—and in partnership with cultural institutions and art galleries, has managed to establish strong connections."

Source:

<https://tolonews.com/arts-culture-194617>

## Afghanistan



### Islamic Emirate Vows Support for Libraries, Reading Culture

The two-day “Kabul Book” festival, organized under the Public Libraries Directorate of the Ministry of Information and Culture, concluded on July 15, 2025.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Minister of Information and Culture Mawlawi Khairullah Khaikhwa emphasized that reading is essential for the growth and peace of the human mind. He called on all Afghans to join hands in promoting a culture of reading across the country to enlighten minds and protect the next generation from ignorance and misfortune. The Minister urged youth and children to make wise use of their time, develop their talents through reading, and raise their educational and informational standards. He also encouraged responsible use of modern technology to contribute to national development.

Khaikhwa reaffirmed the Ministry’s commitment to supporting reading culture, expanding library infrastructure, and providing resources to young readers and

writers within the ministry’s available means. He also called on national and international organizations to partner in these efforts.

In his remarks, Deputy Minister for Youth Affairs Mawlawi Mohammad Younus Rashid stressed that books and reading are the only reliable path to academic advancement. He appealed to international partners to support Afghanistan’s cultural and educational sectors and to assist in establishing and equipping libraries, especially for youth in the provinces.

Head of Public Libraries, Hafiz Nematullah Muntazir, also spoke about the spiritual and historical value of reading, stating: “The worth of books and study is deeply rooted in our religious identity and Islamic civilization. Allah (SWT) built human knowledge on the foundation of the pen and learning.”

At the end of the event, gifts were distributed to orphans and children without guardians by the Minister and senior officials.

Source: <https://www.bakhtarnews.af/>

## Azerbaijan



## Culture Ministry unveils second phase of professional development training for teachers

Based on the results of the accreditation of music and art schools in the Baku, Absheron-Khizi, Guba-Khachmaz, Shirvan-Salyan, and Mil-Mugan regions, the second phase of training for teachers has been launched, Azernews reports citing the Culture Ministry. Training, organized by the Scientific-Methodical and Professional Development Center for Culture and supported by the Azerbaijan Cultural Workers Trade Union, will last for two months.

More than 70 teachers specializing in piano, music theory, tar, kamancha, accordion, mugham singing, and percussion are participating in the program.

The training is being held at the Muslum Magomayev 26th Specialized Music School and the Fikrat Amirov 6th Specialized Art School in Baku. Classes are conducted by experts with pedagogical experience, using individual and group methods,

interactive models, and modern educational technologies.

On the first day of the training, the acting director of Scientific-Methodical and Professional Development Center for Culture, PhD in Art Studies, Associate Professor Vagif Humbatov, the chairman of the Culture Workers' Trade Union, Elkiyar Ziyadov, and the vice-chairman Taleh Huseynli met with the teachers and stated that the main goal of the initiative is to enhance knowledge and skills, adopt modern teaching methods, and support professional development.

Over 100 teachers participated in the first phase of training, held between May and July.

### SOURCES:

<https://www.azernews.az/culture/246227>

## Azerbaijan



### Azerbaijan represented at 4th OTS International Youth Festival

Kazakhstan's Almaty officially opened the 4th International Youth Festival of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) on August 19, marking its designation as the Youth Capital of the Turkic World for 2025.

At the opening ceremony, representatives from the Azerbaijani city of Lankaran solemnly handed over the symbolic key to the youth of Almaty, continuing the relay of brotherhood, trust, and new opportunities.

Representatives from OTS member states, including Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan share their experiences at the event in implementing projects focused on youth policy, entrepreneurship, civic engagement, and the development of social initiatives.

#### SOURCES:

[https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijan\\_represented\\_at\\_4th\\_ots\\_international\\_youth\\_festival-3707011](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijan_represented_at_4th_ots_international_youth_festival-3707011)

## Iran



## National Museum of Iran celebrates UNESCO inscription of Khorramabad Valley Prehistoric Sites

The National Museum of Iran recently hosted a ceremony celebrating the UNESCO World Heritage inscription of the Prehistoric Sites of Khorramabad Valley. The event brought together archaeologists, government officials, and heritage advocates, who reflected on the years-long collaborative process that led to recognition. This included preparing and defending the inscription dossier, addressing challenges such as preserving caves, relocating herders, improving infrastructure, and safeguarding surrounding cultural landscapes. The inscription marks Iran's first Paleolithic sites on UNESCO's list, highlighting the Baradostian culture—known for unique artifacts like decorative pendants and advanced stone tools—as a key regional prehistoric tradition. Experts emphasized that the achievement represents not just historical preservation, but also a strategic cultural milestone, boosting Iran's scientific

standing and cultural diplomacy.

Speakers noted that the Khorramabad Valley, located in the Central Zagros, served as a human refuge for over 60,000 years and holds evidence of early modern human behaviors that replaced Neanderthal presence about 40,000 years ago. The recognition underscores the valley's role as one of Southwest Asia's richest Paleolithic research areas, with archaeological work dating back to the 1940s. Presenters stressed that inscription is only the beginning—ongoing responsibilities include implementing management plans, promoting public understanding, and transforming heritage sites into international research hubs. For Iran's archaeological community, this milestone opens new avenues for global collaboration, elevating the profile of prehistoric studies alongside the country's more famous historical treasures.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com>

## Iran



### Shiraz Emerges as a Leading Hub for Health Tourism in the Region

Shiraz, Iran's cultural center, has rapidly emerged as a top destination for regional medical tourism. Shiraz, says the provincial tourism chief, provides world-class medical services, up-to-date healthcare facilities, and specialist medical teams, which make it one of the top destinations for foreign health tourists looking for good treatments.

The medical tourism of the city has expanded considerably, with visitors not only from inside Iran, but from all neighboring countries as well. The development of an integrated health tourism network is to further boost Shiraz's position as a medical tourism destination.

**Comprehensive Health Tourism System for Shiraz and Beyond**

A key feature of the new system is its streamlined approach to medical tourism. Health tourists can now access a wealth of information about permitted hospitals, health travel service offices, and professional tour guides through a centralized platform. This system aims to simplify the process for international travelers by offering direct services and providing a way to register complaints, should any issues arise during their medical journey.

According to Ziaei, the tourism chief, the

system will play a vital role in ensuring transparency and efficiency in the medical tourism industry. He also emphasized that complaints related to travel services and medical centers will be managed through a legal mechanism, with strict oversight, ensuring a high standard of care and complete satisfaction for visitors.

**A Bright Future for Shiraz's Tourism Sector**  
With Shiraz taking the lead in this emerging sector, the city is positioning itself as a global health tourism destination. Its growing number of tourism events, world-class healthcare facilities, and increasing international partnerships show that the city is more than just a cultural hub—it is a dynamic medical tourism destination that continues to attract visitors seeking both quality healthcare and affordable treatments. The health tourism system is a step forward in positioning Iran as a key player in the global medical tourism market, especially in the Middle East. As other regions within Iran also develop their own health tourism infrastructures, Shiraz's success could serve as a model for future expansion in medical tourism throughout the country.

<https://www.travelandtourworld.com>

## Kazakhstan



### Kazakhstan debuts at ASEAN Film Festival with historical film 'Tomiris'

Kazakhstan took part for the first time in the annual ASEAN Film Festival held from August 8 to 30 in the Hong Kong, the press service of the Kazakh MFA reported.

The Kazakh side presented historic epic Tomiris at the event, with the support of the Consulate General of Kazakhstan in the Hong Kong and Macao SARs of the PRC,

The event drew consular corps, members of the Kazakh diaspora and Hong Kong film enthusiasts, strengthening cultural ties between Central and Southeast Asia.

The screening of Tomiris sparked considerable interest and admiration among the ASEAN Film Festival attendees. Captivated by the film's epic scale and narrative depth, the audience gained a profound appreciation for Kazakhstan's cinematic craftsmanship,

marking a resonant debut for Kazakh cinema at the ASEAN Film Festival.

Source:

<https://qazinform.com/news/kazakhstan-debuts-at-asean-film-festival-with-historical-film-tomiris-66a134>

## Kazakhstan



### Kazakhstan to Open University Branch in Osh

Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic announced the opening of a new branch of the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University at Osh State University during the seventh meeting of the Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic Higher Interstate Council on Aug. 22 in Bishkek, reported the Akorda press service. The council was co-chaired by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov, who highlighted the significance of strengthening strategic cooperation and fostering closer bilateral relations.

Tokayev noted that relations between the two nations have evolved into a strong partnership based on mutual trust and respect, highlighting that the Kyrgyz Republic remains one of Kazakhstan's key strategic partners in the region. "The volume of bilateral trade has reached nearly \$2 billion, and there is significant potential to further increase this figure. Investment cooperation is expanding every year, enabling the successful implementation of a number of joint projects. We are also coordinating efforts in the water and energy sectors while continuing to strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties," President Tokayev said.

He expressed confidence that, through high-

level political dialogue, cooperation between countries will advance to a qualitatively new stage. "Our countries have always supported each other both in challenging times and moments of joy. This time-tested friendship is a spiritual heritage passed down through generations," Tokayev said.

Tokayev recalled the historic Treaty on Deepening and Expanding Allied Relations signed last year and highlighted the adoption of a new Comprehensive Cooperation Plan, which he said would give fresh impetus to the development of Kazakh-Kyrgyz relations. He urged both governments to be guided by the goals and objectives set out in the plan.

In his remarks, President Japarov reaffirmed the Kyrgyz Republic's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Kazakhstan based on friendship, good neighborliness and historic brotherhood.

"Historically, our people have lived in harmony and supported each other. Based on these traditions of friendship, I am confident that we can jointly resolve all emerging issues. As the great Abai once said, 'No Kazakh will doubt the common origin of the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs,'" President Japarov said.

Source: <https://astanatimes.com/>

## Kyrgyzstan



## Albina Imasheva appointed new artistic director of Kyrgyz Drama Theater

Actress Albina Imasheva has been appointed artistic director of the Kyrgyz National Academic Drama Theater named after Toktobolot Abdumomunov. The press service of the Ministry of Culture of Kyrgyzstan reported.

The new artistic director was introduced to the theater staff by the Minister of Culture Mirbek Mambetaliev.

Albina Imasheva was born on June 6, 1983 in the village of Bokonbaevo, Ton district, Issyk-Kul region. In 2000, she graduated from the Karl Marx secondary school in her native village. In 2005, she graduated from the Institute of Arts named after Bubusara Beishenalieva in Bishkek. Since 2002, she has been working at the Kyrgyz National Academic Drama Theater named after

Abdumomunov.

In 2008, at the International Issyk-Kul Film Festival of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, she received «The Best Actress» prize for the film «Tengri». In 2009, she was awarded the «Excellent Worker of Kyrgyz Cinema» badge. In 2011, she became a laureate of the Kuyukova Prize. In 2017, she received the Certificate of Honor from the Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2018, she became the owner of the Certificate of Honor of the Kyrgyz Republic.

In 2024, Albina Imasheva was awarded the title of Honored Artist of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Source:

<https://24.kg/english/340157>

## Kyrgyzstan



### Kyrgyzstan Hosts Inaugural World Festival of Traditional Culture and Music “Rukh Sanat”

From August 1-3, the cultural and ethnographic complex Rukh Ordo, on the shores of Lake Issyk-Kul, hosted Kyrgyzstan’s first World Festival of Traditional Culture and Music, Rukh Sanat. The event brought together more than 130 performers, researchers, and artisans from 37 countries. The festival opened with a parade of participants and a theatrical ceremony celebrating nomadic traditions and harmony with nature. Kyrgyz Minister of Culture, Information and Youth Policy Mirbek Mambetaliev described Rukh Sanat as “a new cultural doctrine” where tradition “sounds, lives, and interacts.”

The program included an International Competition of Oral-Professional Musical Art, featuring 82 soloists and ensembles from 14 countries. The Grand Prix was

awarded to the Kyrgyz ensemble Akak, while laureates included performers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, South Korea, and India.

Alongside the performances, the International Council for Traditional Music and Dance (ICTMD) held a symposium attended by more than 100 scholars from 40 countries, addressing the preservation and transformation of intangible cultural heritage.

The festival concluded on August 3 with a gala concert of laureates. Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Edil Baisalov announced that the next Rukh Sanat will be held in Kyrgyzstan’s Jalal-Abad region in 2027.

Source: <https://timesca.com/>

## Pakistan



### Pakistan, Türkiye strengthen cultural and educational ties

A significant meeting was held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) between the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and a visiting Turkish Student Delegation representing the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF) on August 20. The meeting marked a major milestone in strengthening the cultural and educational ties between Pakistan and Türkiye. Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, warmly welcomed the delegation, emphasizing the deep-rooted, brotherly relationship between the two nations.

He highlighted Türkiye's unwavering support for Pakistan during times of need and the strong cultural ties shared between the two countries. The meeting focused on the Youth Cultural Exchange Program, a new initiative designed to promote mutual understanding and collaboration in fields such as education, entertainment, and language.

The program aims to provide a platform for students from both countries to engage in

shared learning and explore each other's cultures in more depth. The Turkish delegation shared details of a new initiative by the Turkish government, offering fully funded scholarships for 250 Pakistani students.

This initiative aims to facilitate academic exchanges and provide Pakistani students with the opportunity to study in Türkiye, allowing them to experience its rich educational and cultural environment.

The meeting concluded with plans to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the Turkish Maarif Foundation, aimed at fostering cultural exchanges and educational collaborations.

The MoU is expected to further strengthen the bond between the two nations and provide new opportunities for students and youth. The Turkish Maarif Foundation, established by the Turkish Parliament, is committed to providing educational services abroad and fostering global cultural and educational exchanges.

Operating in 67 countries with a network of 332 institutions, TMF serves over 40,000 students and offers programs ranging from preschool to higher education. The meeting was attended by a high-level delegation from Türkiye, including representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Türkiye Republic, and the Turkish Maarif Foundation. The Pakistani side was represented by officials from the Prime Minister's Youth Programme and the International Maarif School, Islamabad.

Source:

<https://leadpakistan.com.pk>

## Pakistan



### PNCA marks I-Day with cultural showcase

The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in collaboration with the Pakistan Cultural Forum and the Directorate of Ideology of Pakistan, hosted a grand Independence Day celebration, showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage through a diverse range of performances and activities. The programme featured acclaimed artists, including the Hariz Bazmi Group, Raasta Band, Raheel Mustafa, Liya Faras, Humaira Younis, and the Khushak Group, among others. Distinguished guests, including the chief guest, MNA Farah Naz delivered speeches.

In her address, Naz reflected on the nation's journey, resilience, and the vital role of the arts in fostering unity and a shared national identity. "Our greatest joy lies in the fact that we have emerged victorious in the battle for truth," she said.

"Pakistan and our freedom are blessings from Almighty Allah, for which we offer gratitude with every breath. Our armed forces haven't only defended our borders but have also elevated the nation's honour around the world. Let us all join hands to keep alive the spirit of unity, sacrifice, and patriotism forever."

The event also included a cake-cutting ceremony and a photo session attended by the distinguished guests and performers. The celebration concluded with resounding applause and a renewed sense of national pride, as attendees left inspired by the cultural richness and artistic brilliance on display - a testament to the power of arts and culture in uniting citizens and strengthening national identity.

Source:

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2561647>

## Tajikistan



## A gift from the president. A new edition of the Shahnameh has been distributed free of charge to residents of Tajikistan

The books have already been received by the residents of Gorny Badakhshan, and now the two-volume book is being presented to the population of the Rasht region.

The local authorities distributed a two-volume edition of the epic poem "Shahnameh" by Abdulkasim Firdowsi free of charge to residents of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO). The distribution of books began in the cities and districts of the Rasht region. Each family receives two volumes of the book, each of which consists of 1,200 pages.

According to Tajikistan's Deputy Minister of Culture Manuchehr Sharifzoda, who is responsible for distributing the Shahnameh in Rasht district, the books have already been distributed in Lakhsh and Tajikabad districts, and distribution is currently continuing in Rasht district. Then the two-volume book will be presented to residents of Nurabad,

Sangvorsky, Rogun and Fayzabad districts.

The Shahnameh is published at the expense of the Reserve Fund of the President of Tajikistan.

The edition was published by the Sharky Ozod publishing house of the Executive Office of the Head of State.

The preface to the book states that it is a gift from Emomali Rahmon on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of state independence. Each Tajik family will receive a book of "Shahnameh"

It should be noted that the order to publish and distribute the book "Shahnameh" free of charge among the population of the country was given in December 2023 by the President of Tajikistan at an international symposium in honor of the 115th anniversary of Academician Bobojon Gafurov.

Source:

<https://asiaplustj.info/en/news>

## Tajikistan



### Tajikistan Delegation Participates in “Silk Road Youth Symphony and Gathering in China for Peace” Program

A youth exchange program titled “Silk Road Youth Symphony and Gathering in China for Peace” has commenced in China, involving young representatives from Central Asia and China.

Running from July 23 to 30 across Beijing, Yulin, and Zhengzhou, the program aims to foster cultural cooperation, strengthen friendship, and promote regional peace and stability.

Participants come from China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan.

The Tajik delegation toured Yulin, Shaanxi Province, engaging in cultural and educational events including visits to the Northern Shaanxi Folk Song Museum,

participation in the traditional Yangge song and dance, and a visit to Zhengbeitai Fortress near the Great Wall. They also explored Yulin’s historic street at night, experiencing intangible cultural heritage such as paper cutting, wood carving, and willow weaving.

The program continues with student meetings, cultural exhibitions, Dragon Boat races, and visits to museums, innovation hubs, and historic sites in various Chinese cities.

Source:

<https://eng.khovar.tj/2025>

## Türkiye



## Ministry taps Turkish drama fame to promote destinations abroad

The Culture and Tourism Ministry is set to leverage the global popularity of Turkish TV dramas to attract more visitors, launching destination-themed miniseries for international digital platforms.

The latest project, “Istanbul My Love,” will air in countries with a strong interest in Turkish productions, particularly in the Middle East and Latin America, as part of the ministry’s August-October promotional campaign.

A 30-second television adaptation of the miniseries will also be broadcast in selected Gulf states.

Another production, “Antalya Gambit,” targeting Russia as its primary market, will feature a short commercial version for Russian television.

Istanbul My Love stars Engin Akyürek and Afra Saraçoğlu, both well-known in the Gulf, while Antalya Gambit features Meryem Uzerli and Kaan Urgancıoğlu.

Meanwhile, work is also underway to produce and distribute a Marmaris-focused ad campaign in target countries, while the ongoing

“Turkaegean/Bodrum” commercials will continue airing in Russia.

A newly completed Mersin-Adana-Hatay route film will debut this month on Russian TV and digital platforms.

The “Eastern Anatolia” promotional film will run online until the end of August, while the Ankara route campaign will continue digitally through October. Campaigns highlighting the Black Sea region and Cappadocia will run until year-end.

Special projects are planned in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and the Netherlands. By the end of the year, Turkish series and film promotions will have a digital presence in 72 countries and TV broadcasts in 29.

Ministry data shows that from January to June 2025, campaigns across 25 films and 74 websites reached 6.7 billion impressions and 1.9 billion views in 75 countries.

Social media content will also continue through GoTürkiye accounts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and X.

Turkish dramas are exported to over 150 countries — 200 when including digital platforms.

Industry estimates suggest one billion unique viewers worldwide, with more than 300 domestic productions exported in 2024, generating \$500 million in revenue.

Source:

<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com>

## Türkiye



## Türkiye launches major project to preserve Turkish-Islamic tombstones

The General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums, under the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has launched a comprehensive six-year project to preserve and document tombstones from the Turkish-Islamic era. The initiative, currently underway in Istanbul, Tokat, Denizli and Diyarbakır, aims to read, document, restore and conserve these historical artifacts; create a digital archive; and compile a comprehensive corpus for future generations.

### Moving discovery on display

As part of the “Golden Age of Archaeology” exhibition, recently opened at the Presidential National Library, 485 previously unseen artifacts were unveiled. One standout piece is the restored tombstone of a soldier discovered during fieldwork and brought to light during President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s visit to the Troy Museum.

Bülent Gönültaş, deputy director general of cultural heritage and museums, explained that the tombstone belonged to Halim Efendi, a

cadet who was martyred on March 18, 1915, during the first day of the Çanakkale (Gallipoli) Naval Battles at Dardanos Battery. When the tombstone was discovered and transferred to the Troy Museum, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan personally examined it during his visit to the site. Upon further study, the inscription was deciphered and its historical significance was recognized.

A special exhibition space was subsequently created on the top floor of the Troy Museum’s Gallipoli section to display the restored tombstone. Gönültaş noted that Halim Efendi’s surviving relatives were contacted, informed of the discovery and invited to the museum.

Gönültaş elaborated on the broader project, explaining its aim to document and digitally archive all Turkish-Islamic tombstones within Türkiye’s borders. Restoration and conservation work are also key components.

To ensure efficient and accurate transcription, museum specialists have received training in Ottoman Turkish. Supporting infrastructure, including software development, has been completed and fieldwork has begun in the four selected pilot provinces. The pilot phase is expected to conclude by the end of this year, with full project completion targeted within six years.

“This is a cultural legacy that we aim to document, protect and pass on to future generations through a comprehensive corpus,” said Gönültaş.

Source:

<https://www.dailysabah.com/arts>

## Turkmenistan



### 85th birthday of Gözel Shagulyeva celebrated in Ashgabat

The 85th birthday of Gözel Shagulyeva, one of the leading figures of Turkmen literature, Hero and People's Poet of Turkmenistan was celebrated with a magnificent ceremony held on August 11th, 2025 in Ashgabat. The event, attended by artists, authors and intellectuals from various countries of the Turkic World, served as an expression of respect for the poet's rich literary legacy.

At the ceremony, a special book on the poet's literary personality, poetic understanding, and precious contribution to the Turkic World prepared with the contribution of the International Organisation for Turkic Culture TURKSOY and dedicated to the poet was handed over to Gözel Shagulyeva.

TURKSOY Secretary General Sultan Raev's congratulation message was conveyed to the poet during the ceremony, expressing gratitude and appreciation for her contributions to the common cultural heritage of the Turkic World.

In the speeches delivered at the event, it

was emphasised that the heroic poet Gözel Shagulyeva is a source of inspiration not only in Turkmenistan but throughout the Turkic World. Participants also highlighted the importance of her poetry in strengthening bonds between people through language, culture, and literature. In her speech, Mrs. Gözel Shagulyeva expressed her gratitude to everyone who remembered and honoured her on this meaningful day.

The event ended with the performance of selected pieces of Turkmen music and readings from the poet's works.

Source:

<https://www.turksay.org/en-US/news>

## Turkmenistan



### Exhibition of national robes opened in Ashgabat

On August 15, an exhibition of national robes entitled “Our National Treasures – an Example of Turkmen Beauty” opened at the State Museum of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan.

The exhibition presents visitors with a unique collection of ancient Turkmen robes from the late XIX – early XX centuries, which were previously stored in museum storerooms. The exhibition demonstrates the diversity of national clothing typical for different regions of Turkmenistan.

The exhibition presents men’s, women’s and children’s robes, reflecting the rich cultural traditions of the Turkmen people. Among the exhibits you can see women’s robes with hand embroidery, cloth robes with patterned decor, items with silver decorations and buttons, velvet robes decorated with pieces of fabric and tassels.

Particular attention is drawn to robes with national ornaments: yellow with red and

green stripes, Khiva robes with cotton padding, silk and semi-silk products, as well as robes made of lamb and camel wool, demonstrating the skill of ancient artisans.

The exhibition aimed to introduce visitors to the national heritage and demonstrate how the Turkmen people have preserved their cultural traditions and mastery of decorative and applied arts for thousands of years.

Source:

<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/en/post/95373/lebap-velayat-special-art-school-celebrates-its-50th-anniversary>

## Uzbekistan



### A significant event in Uzbekistan's history: A piece of the Kaaba door cover has been brought to the country

An extremely important and unforgettable event has occurred in Uzbekistan's history – a complete section of the Kaaba's sacred cover (kiswah) from Saudi Arabia has been brought to Uzbekistan. This unique artifact is planned to be displayed as a special exhibition at the Museum of the Center for Islamic Civilization.

The Kaaba is covered with a new kiswah every year, and it is a symbol of spiritual and sacred value for Muslims. Therefore, even a small piece of this cover holds immense significance in the Muslim world. The kiswah is always considered sacred and invaluable, and every piece of it carries great importance. It is also worth mentioning that in February of this year, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev received a delegation led by the Minister of Hajj and Umrah of Saudi Arabia, Tawfiq bin Fawzan al-Rabiah. During this meeting, a precious gift from Saudi King Salman Al Saud to the people of Uzbekistan was handed over

– a piece of the sacred Kaaba kiswah.

Over time, this artifact has been brought to Uzbekistan and is now being exhibited at the Center for Islamic Civilization. This important event not only highlights Uzbekistan's religious and cultural heritage but also symbolizes the strengthening of ties with Saudi Arabia.

The Center for Islamic Civilization has announced that this kiswah will be displayed at the museum and will be open to thousands of pilgrims and researchers. Through this important artifact, the history of the Muslim world and the symbolic value of cooperation with Saudi Arabia will be further illuminated.

Source:

<https://zamin.uz/en/uzbekistan/157713>

## Uzbekistan



### Uzbek Cuisine and Culture Festival Showcases Food, Art and Tourism in Freiburg

The German city of Freiburg has hosted a festival of Uzbek cuisine and culture, organised by Uzbekistan's Embassy together with compatriots Evgeny and Yulia Schatz. The event aimed to promote the country's cultural heritage and tourism potential. Guests enjoyed traditional dishes such as somsa, pilaf and tandoor-roasted meat, with a pilaf masterclass by the embassy's chef proving especially popular. Exhibitions displayed national costumes, handicrafts including suzani embroidery and atlas-adras fabrics, as well as artworks reflecting Uzbek life and traditions.

Workshops in Ebru painting and traditional Uzbek games were held, alongside an information stand with travel brochures in German and English.

Organiser Yulia Schatz said: «We are delighted to have created an atmosphere

of Uzbek hospitality abroad. Each year we also organise trips to historic cities such as Samarkand and Shakhrisabz, and next year we plan to introduce new destinations.»

Also Uzbekistan's Committee for Tourism has introduced a new circular tourist route connecting Turkmenistan, Khorezm, Karakalpakstan and Kazakhstan.

Source:

<https://uz.kursiv.media/en/2025-08-20>





Established in 1995, ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) is a specialized, international organization, located in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, which aims at fostering public awareness and preserving the rich cultural heritage of its member states.

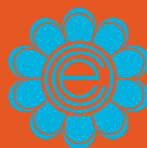
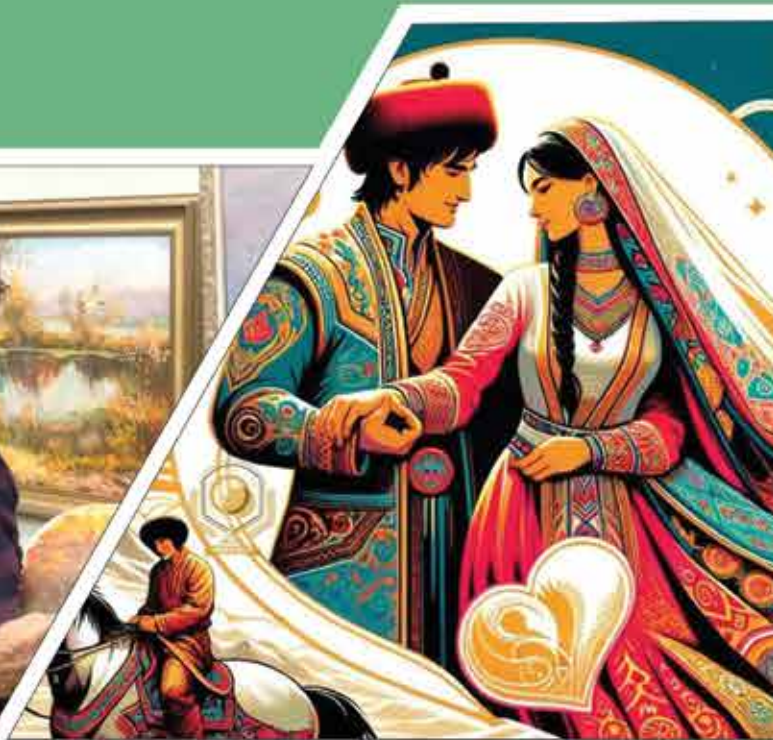
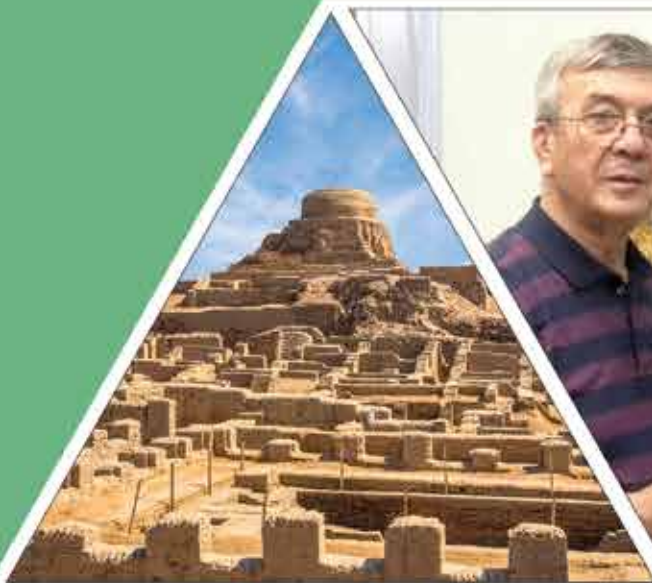
Within the framework of its Charter, which has been approved by the member states, ECI has been entrusted with the key mandate to preserve and promote the common cultural heritage of the ECO region to encourage understanding among the nations of the region.

To this end, ECI has always organized a diverse range of art, cultural, literary, research, academic and sporting events and has published books and journals in English, Farsi, Russian and Urdu with the approach to strengthen cooperation and preserve the common cultural heritage of the member countries.

The ECO region is a vast territory with centuries-old history, rich civilization and culture which includes 10 member states, namely the Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.







### ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

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