

# Tehran's unsafe buildings revealed

Authorities follow up on their promise to take care of unsafe buildings in Tehran once and for all.

The safety of buildings has been an ongoing concern for the citizens of Tehran. In light of this, Gholamabbas Torki, the deputy for people's rights and crime prevention of the prosecutor-general of Iran, recently announced that there is no legal prohibition on publishing a list of unsafe buildings in Tehran. The announcement has sparked both concern and relief among the city's inhabitants. The former is because there are almost 100 unsafe buildings scattered around the capital, and the latter is because

now the citizens finally know which buildings they better avoid. The publication of the list of unsafe buildings in Tehran is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. It demonstrates the seriousness of authorities in taking care of the safety of citizens, especially after the tragic collapse of the Metropol High-rise last year. It is a testament to their commitment to fulfilling their promises. Tehran firefighting experts visited 33,000 unsafe buildings ever since. The level of unsafety varies be-

tween buildings, and there were 129 high-risk buildings in Tehran. However, some of them have since been made safe, and currently, the number of such unsafe buildings has decreased to below 100. The CEO of the Tehran Fire Department also announced a few days ago that he had sent a list of unsafe buildings to judicial authorities, according to Fars News Agency. In this regard, Gholamabbas Torki stated in an interview with IRNA, "Publishing the names of unsafe buildings in Tehran

transparently and identifying their unsafety from a legal perspective does not have any legal prohibition." The responsibility of identifying these unsafe buildings falls on the Tehran Municipality, which has, in turn, entrusted the task of announcing the names to judicial bodies to take into account the psychological safety of shopkeepers, citizens, and property owners. This move is a step towards ensuring the safety and security of citizens in Tehran. In recent years, there have been several incidents of building col-

lapses and fires in Iran, resulting in the loss of many lives. The collapse of a 17-story commercial building in Tehran in 2017 resulted in the death of at least 20 firefighters. The importance of the safety of buildings cannot be overstated, and showing transparency in identifying unsafe buildings is a necessary step toward addressing this issue. The move also highlights the need for governments to prioritize the safety and security of their citizens, especially in matters as crucial as this.

● FARS

## Paralyzed man walks using device that reconnects brain with muscles

A man who was paralyzed in a cycling accident in 2011 has been able to stand and walk with an aid after doctors implanted a device that reads his brain waves and sends instructions to his spine to move the right muscles.

Gert-Jan Oskam, 40, was told he would never walk again after breaking his neck in a traffic accident in China, but has climbed stairs and walked for more than 100 meters at a time since having the operation, The Guardian reported.

"A few months ago, I was able, for the first time after 10 years, to stand up and have a good time with my friends," said Oskam, who is from the Netherlands. "That was pretty cool. I want to use it in my daily life." The "digital bridge" is the latest from a team of neuroscientists in Switzerland who have a long-standing program to develop brain-machine interfaces to overcome paralysis. The project aims to use wireless signals to reconnect the brain with muscles that are rendered useless when spinal cord nerves are broken.

In a previous trial, Oskam tested a system that recreated the rhythmic steps of walking by sending signals from a computer to his spinal cord. While the device helped him take several steps at once, the movement was quite robotic and had to be triggered by a button or sensor. For the latest update, Professor Jocelyne Bloch, a neurosurgeon at Lausanne University hospital, installed electrodes on Oskam's brain that detect neural activity when he tries to move his legs.



The readings are processed by an algorithm that turns them into pulses, which are sent to further electrodes in his spine. The pulses activate nerves in the spine, switching on muscles to produce the intended movement. "What we've been able to do is re-establish communication between the brain and the region of the spinal cord that controls leg movement with a digital bridge," said Professor Grégoire Courtine at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. He said the system could "capture the thoughts of Gert-Jan and translate those thoughts into stimulation of the spinal cord to re-establish voluntary leg movements". The device does not produce swift, smooth strides, but Oskam said the implant, described in Nature, allowed for more natural movements than before, because standing up and walking were initiated and controlled by thinking about the actions. The signals stimulate muscles needed to flex the hip, knee and ankle. The device also appears to boost rehabilitation. After more

than 40 training sessions with the implant, Oskam, who did not sever all the nerves in his spine, regained some control over his legs, even when the device was turned off. Courtine believes that reconnecting the brain and spine helps to regenerate spinal nerves, recovering some of the patient's lost control. While the work is at an early stage, the researchers hope that future, miniaturized devices will help stroke patients and paralyzed people to walk, move their arms and hands, and control other functions, such as the bladder, which is often affected by spinal cord injuries. Arm and hand movements may be more difficult, as they are more complex than walking. With Oskam showing progress more than a decade after his accident, the team is confident that other patients with more recent injuries could fare better. With Oskam "it's more than 10 years after the spinal cord injury", Courtine said. "Imagine when we apply the digital bridge a few weeks after spinal cord injury. The potential for recovery is tremendous."

### PIC OF THE DAY

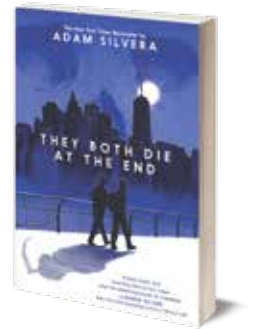


Since a few years ago, during the spring season, the village of Dareh Tafti, located 15 kilometers west of Marivan, has become a host to a large number of migratory storks that nest and breed in this village. The arrival of storks in Dareh Tafti, particularly during this season, along with other natural and tourist attractions, has transformed the village into a destination for a significant number of domestic and foreign tourists. The storks build their nests in the alleys of the village, on top of electricity poles, and on oak trees. The villagers treat them kindly, which has led to an increase in the number of migratory storks each year. The storks make a stop in Dareh Tafti on their migration route to warmer regions in Saudi Arabia and Jeddah. For this reason, the people of the region also call this migratory bird "Haji Lak Lak" or "Haji Laq Laq."

● MOHAMMAD LATIF HOSSEINI NASAB/ILNA

### IRAN READS

## 'They Both Die at the End' by Adam Silvera



One of Iran's bestsellers this week is "They Both Die at the End" by Adam Silvera, originally published in 2017.

Adam Silvera's wildly popular novel is a poignant and thought-provoking young adult novel that explores the themes of mortality, friendship, and living life to the fullest. The book follows two teenage boys, Mateo and Rufus, who receive a call from Death-Cast informing them that they will both die within the next 24 hours. The two boys decide to spend their last day together, experiencing new things and forming a deep connection. Silvera's writing is raw and emotionally charged, drawing readers into the story and making them feel as though they are experiencing the characters' emotions firsthand. The premise of the book is unique and captivating, making it difficult to put down once you start reading.

The characters of Mateo and Rufus are well-developed and relatable, making it easy for readers to empathize with their struggles and root for them throughout the book. The bond that forms between them is heartwarming and genuine, adding an extra layer of emotional depth to the story.

While the title may suggest a predictable ending, Silvera manages to keep readers on their toes until the very last page. The book is a reminder to cherish every moment and live life to the fullest, even when faced with the inevitability of death. Perhaps that's why it has struck a chord with so many readers worldwide, including Iran. An interesting comment found on an online bookshop by Nadia A. reads, "It's true that the book is intended for the young adult age group, but in my opinion, reading it can be enjoyable and worthwhile for adults as well in order to cherish every moment of life. Overall, it was an interesting book. Although I accidentally ordered this book, I do not regret reading it."

"They Both Die at the End", currently rated 3.8 out of 5 on Goodreads, is a powerful and thought-provoking novel that will stay with readers long after finishing it. Silvera's writing is honest and heartfelt, making this a must-read for anyone looking for a moving and impactful story.