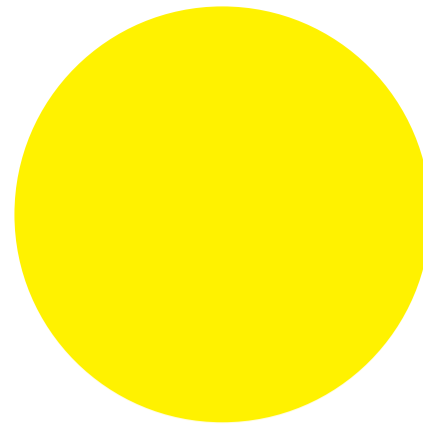




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Iran Daily



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Saffron Farm, Torbat-e Heydarieh, Khorasan Razavi Province, Iran
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Iran aims to bolster its health diplomacy

First stop: Tajikistan

Social Desk

Iran's Minister of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education underscored the importance of leveraging Iran's domestic capacity in the production of medicine and medical equipment on Sunday and highlighted the potential for strengthened health diplomacy and tourism, as well as the creation of a pharmaceutical market in Tajikistan. Bahram Einollahi hailed the cultural and linguistic ties between Iran and Tajikistan, stating that his ongoing visit to the central Asian nation is driven by several key health-related objectives, according to IRNA. The establishment of a pharmaceutical market for Iran in Tajikistan is one of the key objectives. Page 7 >

President stresses transforming security borders into safe, economic ones

Pakistan's Army praises Iran's neighborly policy

National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi emphasized his country's strategy to transform security borders into safe and economically viable ones, foster the development of border markets, and enhance energy cooperation with Pakistan. During his meeting with Pakistan's Army commander, Raeisi underscored the importance of expediting the realization of these mutual goals, according to president.ir. Highlighting that strengthening ties with neighboring, aligned, and Muslim countries remains a top priority for Tehran's foreign policy, President Raeisi pointed to the sincere determination of both Iran and Pakistan to enhance their relations. president.ir



In response, Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir lauded Iran's policy of bolstering relations with its neighbors, particularly Pakistan. Page 2 >

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gov't approves plan to support Iranian expats



IRNA – Iran's government has approved a plan to facilitate the return of Iranian expatriates to the country to encourage them to invest in Iran and use their scientific capabilities. The plan aims to help the country's development and progress. However, it needs to be approved by Iran's Parliament too.

Sandstorm send 1,047 to hospitals in southeast



IRNA – Nearly 1,050 people have been admitted to medical centers in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province after a sandstorm hit the southeastern province's five cities. Head of the province's Crisis Management Headquarters Majid Mohebbi said that at least 90 people have been hospitalized due to respiratory complications and other medical issues.

Affected by the Asian monsoon, the northern parts of Iran's largest province are slapped by strong winds and dust storms for 120 days during the hot months of the year.

Envoy: Denmark continues to invest in Iran



IRNA – Denmark's Ambassador to Iran Jesper Vahr said his country has continued to invest in Iran despite the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and re-imposition of sanctions against Iran. The Danish envoy made the comments during a visit to the central city of Isfahan on Sunday. He added that Iran and Denmark are concluding several memorandums of understanding in different fields and expressed hope for good cooperation with Iran on energy resources.

Iran VP hails French court's rejection of US anti-Iran verdict

Iran's vice president for legal affairs hailed the French Supreme Court's decision to reject a US request to confiscate \$247 million in Iranian assets and said that it marked an important achievement for the Islamic Republic.

On June 28, the French Court of Cassation upheld a March 2021 verdict by a court of appeal that refused the US call for confiscating Iranian assets as per a US federal court verdict in 1998.

"This decision marks a very important legal achievement for the Islamic Republic of Iran and the [Raeisi] administration because it cemented the failure of the US pressures to have their rulings recognized and implemented in Europe," Mohammad Dehqan said on Saturday. Dehqan argued that the verdict will have an important reverberation on European countries' judicial procedure and their courage to dismiss US bids to impose its baseless and unfounded rulings on them.

Back in 1998, a US court ordered Iran to pay \$247 million to the family of Al-



isa Flatow, a 20-year-old US citizen killed in a bomb explosion in Gaza in April 1995, claiming that Iran was responsible for her death since Iran allegedly

supported the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which claimed responsibility for the act.

The family of Alisa has been seeking to imple-

ment the ruling in a European country.

However, back in March 2021, the Paris Court of Appeals turned down the verdict issued by the US

court. The US court then appealed against the Paris court's ruling.

Flatow's verdict had been rejected before by Italian courts in 2013 and 2015.

Tehran to Moscow: Iran serious about its territorial integrity

'Parliament strongly rejects GCC-Russia statement on Iran's isles'



International Desk

Iranian Parliament speaker reacted to a recent joint statement by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Russia on Iran's three islands in the Persian Gulf, saying that Iran

is serious about its territorial integrity and will not compromise on it.

"Our Russian neighbor should know that the path of cooperation goes through respecting the red lines of the Iranian people including the territorial in-

tegrity and continuation of Iran's sovereignty over the three islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb, and the Lesser Tunb," Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said.

He said Iran's Parliament "strongly rejects" the GCC-Russia joint statement, emphasizing that Iran is very serious about its territorial integrity, which has been preserved with the blood of hundreds of thousands of its youths.

"Russia, which is itself a victim of the geopolitical expansionism of the West and NATO and is fighting against it, should not assist the West with its geopolitical scheme to de-

stabilize the Persian Gulf," he said.

"As the sole guarantor of stability in the Persian Gulf, Iran is neutralizing the West's dangerous plots in this critical region."

Qalibaf also noted that regional stability and economic development are possible only through honoring the principles of good neighborliness and respecting Iran's territorial integrity.

"Authentic historical documents prove that these islands belong to Iran and that political statements cannot distort historical facts... Iran's authority over these islands is the guarantor of the Persian

Gulf stability in the face of the US hegemony."

The Iranian nation, he said, expects Moscow to demonstrate its economic and strategic partnership with Tehran in its political and media positions to enhance mutual trust.

On Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Russia's Ambassador to Tehran, Alexey Dedov, and voiced the Islamic Republic's objection to the joint statement.

The Foreign Ministry reaffirmed that the three islands are an integral part of Iran and called on Russia to revise its stance vis-à-vis the issue.

The three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world.

However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. The islands fell under British control in 1921 but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Pakistan's Army praises ..

He regarded this approach as a highly valuable opportunity for the Muslim world.

Acknowledging the extensive common border between the two countries and the potential for increased border exchanges, Gen. Munir emphasized that bolstering economic, trade, and border interactions would lead to improved security conditions.

He also said that both sides have successfully reached agreements aimed at enhancing security along their shared borders, and



they are diligently working towards implementing these measures to establish sustainable security. Pakistan's Army chief has also held talks with his Iranian counterpart, Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, during which both sides emphasized the

significance of bilateral relations in the region.

The Pakistani official has also met with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian as well as the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Major General Hossein Salami.

Russia has sufficient stockpile of cluster bombs, Putin warns



● EVGENIY MALOLETKA/AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview published Sunday that Russia has a "sufficient stockpile" of cluster munitions, and warned that Russia "reserves the right to take reciprocal action" if Ukraine uses the controversial weapons.

In his first comments on the delivery of cluster munitions to Ukraine from the US, Putin said that Russia has not used cluster bombs in its war in Ukraine so far. The use of cluster bombs by both Russia and Ukraine has been widely documented, including by The Associated Press and international humanitarian organizations, and cluster rounds have been found in the aftermath of Russian strikes, AP reported.

"Until now, we have not done this, we have not used it, and we have not had such a need," he said. Rossiya TV reporter Pavel Zarubin published excerpts of the interview to his Telegram channel Sunday ahead of a scheduled broadcast Sunday night. The Pentagon said Thursday that cluster munitions provided by the US had arrived in Ukraine.

The munitions, which are bombs that open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets, are seen by the US as a way to get Kyiv critically needed ammunition to help bolster its offensive and push through Russian front lines. US leaders debated the thorny issue for months, before President Joe Biden made the final decision last week.

Cluster bombs have long been criticized by humanitarian groups, and some US allies, because those used in previous conflicts have had a high "dud rate," meaning that they often leave behind unexploded bomblets that can harm civilians long after a battle has ended.

Iraqi PM, Syria's Assad hold talks on security, water in Damascus

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani held talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus on Sunday in the first such visit by an Iraqi premier since the outbreak of the Syrian war in 2011.

Assad and Sudani discussed securing their shared 600km border from security threats, including Daesh terrorist group, and agreed to enhance cooperation to reduce drug smuggling, they said during a joint news conference, Reuters reported. Sudani said they also discussed ways to combat drought conditions in both countries caused by a reduction in rainfall, climate change and upstream damming by Turkey. "We need to cooperate to get our fair share of water," Sudani said.

Sudani said Iraq supported the lifting of sanctions on Syria, put in place and expanded by the US and European countries since 2011.

Iraq and Syria, which have close economic, military and political ties to regional heavyweight Iran, maintained relations throughout Syria's war even as other Arab states withdrew their ambassadors and closed their embassies in Syria. Baghdad and Damascus, along with Shia armed groups, cooperated in the fight against Daesh, which spread from Iraq into Syria and at one point controlled more than a third of both countries.

Farhad Alaaldin, foreign affairs adviser to the prime minister, said before the meeting that Sudani was set to discuss combatting the flow of the amphetamine Captagon and possibilities for reopening a Mediterranean oil export pipeline, which could help Iraq diversify its export routes. Sudani's visit comes as other countries, including Saudi Arabia, rebuild relations with Damascus after years of tensions.



● SYRIAN PRESIDENCY/
HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

China, Russia to start joint air and sea drill



REUTERS – A Chinese naval flotilla set off on Sunday to join Russian naval and air forces in the Sea of Japan in an exercise aimed at "safeguarding the security of strategic waterways", according to China's Defence Ministry. Codenamed "Northern/Interaction-2023", the drill marks enhanced military cooperation between China and Russia since the war began in Ukraine.

Heavy rains, flooding leave 37 dead in S. Korea



AFP – Rescuers battled on Sunday to reach people trapped in a flooded tunnel in South Korea, where at least 37 people have died and nine are missing after heavy rains caused flooding and landslides. South Korea is at the peak of its summer monsoon season, and there has been heavy rainfall for the last four days, causing a major dam to overflow. The Interior Ministry reported that 37 people were killed and another nine were missing nationwide in the heavy downpours, mostly buried by landslides or after falling into a flooded reservoir.

'Heat storm' stretches into southern Europe, health alerts issued

Italy issued hot weather red alerts for 16 cities on Sunday, with meteorologists warning that temperatures will hit record highs across southern Europe in the coming days. On the Spanish island of La Palma, meanwhile, at least 4,000 people had to be evacuated as a forest fire burned out of control, authorities said, Reuters

reported. Spain, Italy and Greece have been experiencing scorching temperatures for several days already, damaging agriculture and leaving tourists scurrying for shade.

But a new anticyclone dubbed Charon, who in Greek mythology was the ferryman of the dead, pushed into the region



● CANARIAS VIA TWITTER/
HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

from north Africa on Sunday and could lift temperatures above 45 Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in parts of Italy early this week.

"We need to prepare for a severe heat storm that, day after day, will blanket the whole country," Italian weather news service Meteo.it warned on Sunday. "In some places ancient heat records will be broken."

Greece closed the ancient Acropolis during the hottest part of the day on Friday to protect tourists.

Italy's Health Minister Orazio Schillaci said authorities were keeping

a close eye on Rome and urged people to take care. "Going to the Colosseum when it is 43C (109.4F) is not advisable, especially for an elderly person," he told Il Messaggero newspaper on Sunday, saying people should stay indoors during the hottest part of the day, between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Besides the Italian capital, health alerts were in place from the central city of Florence to Palermo in Sicily and Bari, in the southeast of the peninsula.

In Spain, forecasters warned of the risk of

forest fires and said that it would not be easy to sleep during the night, with temperatures unlikely to fall below 25C (77F) across the country.

The heatwave will intensify from today, with temperatures reaching 44C (111.2F) in the Guadalquivir valley near Seville in the south of the country, forecasters predicted.

Europe's highest recorded temperature of 48.8C (119.8F), registered in Sicily two years ago, could be exceeded in the coming days, notably on the Italian island of Sardinia, meteorologists have said.

Israeli plot against Iran-US talks



By **Abdolreza Farajirad**
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The recent removal of Robert Malley from his position as the US special representative in Iran affairs has prompted a range of analyses and discussions. This decision garnered significant attention due to reports of talks between Iran and the United States taking place in Oman, Qatar, and even New York, leading to the development of a potential framework for a temporary or short-term deal.

Over the past two years, Iran's negotiations with the United States regarding the revival of the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA) or the lifting of sanctions have unfolded in three distinct stages. The first stage occurred during the final months of Iran's previous government and the initial months of successor, with chief negotiator Abbas Araqchi at the helm.

The second stage, which took place last year, was led by Ali Baqeri Kani, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, and involved discussions with Western parties to the JCPOA, culminating in reaching the threshold of signing an agreement. However,

due to the outbreak of the Ukrainian war, the agreement was not finalized.

The third stage encompassed recent dialogue between the Iranian side and the United States in Oman, Qatar, and New York. As per media reports, during this phase, the two parties had come to a conclusion to sign a political understanding, rather than a long-term agreement, which also included prisoner exchange. However, it appears that these negotiations have encountered opposition and faced obstacles at this particular stage.

From my perspective, each of the three negotiation stages, which were on the brink of reaching an agree-

ment, ultimately failed due to an external conspiracy. The responsibility for leading this opposition movement also falls on the Israelis. The Russians might had also come to assist the Israelis in disrupting the talks between Iran and the United States.

Recent media reports stated that Israel intended to provide its anti-aircraft system, known as the Iron Dome, to Ukraine. However, following discussions between Israeli and Russian officials, the transfer of the Iron Dome to Ukraine was canceled. Additionally, the delivery of Russian Su-35 fighter jets, which were supposed to be provided to Iran by the Russians despite Israeli ob-

jections, has not yet taken place.

Simultaneously, opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran based overseas exerted considerable pressure on Malley, questioning his motives for engaging in negotiations with Iranian representatives and attempting to reach an agreement. There appears to be a foreign conspiracy orchestrated by those who do not wish to see a reduction in tensions between Iran and America, aiming to prevent the negotiations from reaching a conclusive outcome. It is important to note that managing or reducing tensions is distinct from establishing a full-fledged relationship between the two

countries. The current focus lies in the management and control of tensions to prevent their further escalation.

The political understanding sought by Malley was meant to serve this purpose, and it had the potential to lay the groundwork for negotiations for a lasting agreement following the US presidential election, particularly if the Democrats were to emerge victorious once again.

Nevertheless, Malley has faced domestic pressure, potentially due to his actions, including consultations held with Iranian expatriates, which may be deemed as a violation of American domestic law. His

case is currently under investigation.

However, there is still optimism as his deputy, Abram Paley, has assumed Mali's position, and the United States has affirmed its intention to resume working with Iran in a similar fashion as before.

I remain hopeful that talks between Iran and America, whether conducted in Oman, Qatar, New York, or elsewhere, will recommence soon and reach a conclusion within the next month or two. Prolonging the negotiations until the eve of the US presidential election presents challenges due to increased pressure and tensions from the opposition and Republicans.

Ilam Province capable of becoming a tourism hub



Seymareh River
elgash.com



Kabir Kuh mountain
saeednews.com



Mehran border crossing
financialtribune.com



Siah Gav Twin Lakes
iranicultura.it

Iranica Desk

The western Ilam Province, with an old civilization, rich culture and numerous natural, religious and ancient sites can turn into a tourism hub of the country.

The provincial capital city of Ilam, 710 kilometers from Tehran, surrounded by heights covered with forests, enjoys mild mountainous climate with a pleasant spring.

Ilam is one of the most important provinces of the country, capable of attracting investments in various fields including tourism, agriculture, oil and gas, according to IRNA.

Today, tourism is known as one of the world's most profitable industries in a

way that some countries earn a significant income from it.

The improvement of the tourism industry not only helps generate jobs, but transfers the culture and tradition of one land to the other.

Due to its special geographic location, Ilam Province, known as the Bride of Zagros, is a land of four seasons, which can host travelers throughout the year.

The Mehran border crossing, located in Ilam Province, is a one of the most important commercial highways linking Iran to the markets of Iraq and other regional Arab countries.

Instead of focusing on making investments in the oil and gas industries,

provincial officials are advised to develop the tourism sector and prepare suitable conditions for traveling businesspeople. Local officials believe that Ilam Province is ready to absorb investments for expanding its medical, rural, sports, cultural, nomadic and natural tourism. Undoubtedly, making investments in these sectors will produce huge benefits for investors.

Thousands of Iraqi people arrive in Iran through the Mehran border crossing to receive medical treatments in other provinces of the country, thus development of the health sector in the province and establishment of specialized hospitals and clinics is considered a profit-making investment.

Fortunately, there is a great deal of potential for medical tourism in the province, so more investment could lead to a boom in the industry. However, the tourism infrastructure of the province needs to be further developed.

Moreover, the province has 14 exemplary natural tourism sites and numerous lakes, caves, valleys, canyons, waterfalls, mountains and rivers which help create a relaxing environment for nature lovers.

Due to its geographic location, natural conditions, and the diversity of its habitats, Ilam Province is home to 32 mammals and 183 species of birds. The mountainous areas host many mammals.

In addition to having roaring rivers, artificial and natural lakes, Ilam Province is a desirable destination for those interested in mountain climbing, desert hiking and caving, biking and horseback riding.

On the other hand, Ilam Province hosts numerous remains of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. This can not only help boost the tourism sector in the province, but also promote the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom.

Various types of traditional handicrafts are presently being manufactured in Ilam Province. Production of traditional floor coverings such as kilim, is an economic activity which can be attractive to private sector investors.

Interaction between Roman and Sassanid kings

A strange occurrence at a routine diplomatic reception provides an intriguing starting point for considering the basis of Roman and Sassanid kingship and their interaction. It illustrates both the ritually charged nature of environments that grew up around the two sovereigns and the often quite unexpected possibilities that arose from them:

When [Sebuxt, the Sassanid envoy] came, Justin [II] proved not amenable to him especially since, when he entered to make the customary obeisance to the emperor, as he threw himself on the ground the cap which he wore on his head after the Persian manner happened to fall to the floor. The high officials and the rest, taking this as a good omen, flattered the emperor and excited him to think that Persia would soon submit to him.

As this quote from Menander, a Greek dra-

matist and the best-known representative of Athenian New Comedy, illustrates, in order to understand their full power, Roman and Sassanid art and architecture of power cannot be studied in isolation but must be approached in the context provided by the web of visual, spatial, and ritual correspondences in which they participated.

In marked contrast to the present status of surviving ancient art objects, which subsist now in sterile gallery or museum environments, Roman and Sassanid artistic material (including art objects, clothing, and architectural and urban elements) was originally related to and inextricable from the lush fabric of ritual practice that both cultures created and enacted over the centuries.

Art objects and urban spaces served alongside a shifting host of other independent, yet ritually linked

elements, which involved participants and onlookers alike aurally (with the blast of an organ or a roar of acclamation), olfactorily (the smell of burning frankincense and myrrh in braziers or sacred fires), gustatorily (the tastes of delicacies apportioned to a privileged guest from the imperial table), ludically (the excitement of hippodrome or polo), haptically (the tactile sensation of a silk garment given in an investiture), or somatically (the physical sensation of lowering one's body in obeisance). Quite apart from its previous history, physical qualities, original intended function, or origin, an object, image, structure, or urban space, once linked to imperial ritual, performed work in that ritual and became a necessary element in it. Through art and ritual, Roman and Sassanid sovereigns could communicate complex, multivalent, even contradictory, messages



The triumph of Shapur I over the Roman Emperor Valerian, and Philip the Arab, Naqsh-e Rostam, Fars Province

about their identity. Imperial art and architecture developed reciprocally and interdependently with imperial art, as well as serving alongside it. Sovereigns created architectural and visual environments with the knowledge that they would provide a focus for ritual activities. These ritual activities, in turn, commented on and shaped further addi-

tions and interventions. As the ritual and artistic elements of imperial ceremony were interwoven, it is not surprising that an alteration in the fabric of one had implications for that of the other. A change in ritual practice could imply a new meaning for a structure, and new structures or images within a ritual environment could modify the performance

and significance of a ritual. The accessions of Roman and Sassanid sovereigns provide illuminating examples of how differentially they used expressive events to mold their realm's urban or even provincial topography around their particular vision of kingship and appropriated the significance of important spaces by tying them into large-scale expressive

events. In the fifth and early sixth centuries, as successions in the later Roman Empire became more stable and the emperors left the new capital of Constantinople less frequently, the city, its history and institutions, and the spaces that represented them became increasingly important components of imperial ritual.

Iran moving towards international hockey heights, federation chief says



etemadonline.com

IRNA



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

Bahram Qadimi, the chairman of the Iranian Hockey Federation, says the recent achievements in the international events have laid the groundwork for the country to cement its status as a global powerhouse of the sport.

Iran has won the Men's Indoor Hockey Asia Cup on a record eight occasions, while it defeated USA in the shootout to win the bronze medal in February's FIH Men's Indoor Hockey World Cup in South Africa.

Qadimi believes the scale of investment on hockey is the difference between Iran and international opponents, describing the rivalry as an "asymmetric warfare", though he remains positive that the combination of the Iranian young talents and top-notch foreign coaches will see the country keep

flourishing on the global stage.

The following is what Qadimi had to say about all aspects of hockey in Iran in an exclusive with Iran Daily.

Would you please tell us where hockey stands in the Iranian sport, and elaborate on the key factors behind the recent success in international events?

As you know hockey is among the top three popular sports in the world, bringing large number of crowds to the venues all around the globe. That is why hockey has been a constant feature of the Olympic Games.

On the other hand, hockey is deeply rooted in the Iranian culture and history. In fact, hockey first emerged from polo, which is an authentic Iranian sport dating back thousands of years.

For all the popularity in the world, hockey was isolated in Iran for years, being thoroughly neglected

within the national sporting setup.

However, the federation has adopted a comprehensive plan in recent years to develop hockey all around the country. All those measures, coupled with the Iranian teams' efforts, have led to significant achievements in the international events, as Iran beat USA for the third place in the Indoor Hockey World Cup in February, while the women's team enjoyed a decent run at last year's Asia Cup before finishing fifth.

Why is it that we haven't heard much about the Iranian hockey over the years?

Well, as I said, hockey had been abandoned by the Iranian sport hierarchy for decades. There were several hockey pitches in Tehran when the 1974 Asian Games took place in the capital but they were all allocated to football and other sports through the years.

Hockey includes the field

hockey and the one that is played indoor. The previous Iranian federations had been solely focused on the men's indoor category but when we took over, through a step-by-step process, the national hockey body decided to equally develop the sport in the men's and women's divisions in both indoor and field hockey.

The Asian Hockey Federation, meanwhile, has provided us with free equipment and classes for hockey enthusiasts. We've also been in full collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other major academic institutes to grow hockey among lower age groups.

The vast expansion of hockey in Iran has led to the country winning major international seats in the Asian governing body of the sport.

What is the difference between Iran and its rivals?

Unfortunately, we are on a limited budget and the Sports Ministry and the National Olympic Academy need to dedicate more funds to hockey – with bonuses and prize money for triumphant national teams for instance.

The federation's annual budget is in six figures and we had to bank on the charities' support to send the team to the tournament in South Africa, while Japan, South Korea and China spend around \$50 million on hockey each year. The rivalry with those countries is like an asymmetric warfare.

However, what keeps us firm on our path is the Iranian players' pure dedication.

Tell us about the federation's efforts to identify and cultivate the hockey talents in Iran.

The provincial hockey organizations have been doing a great in that respect. A Pakistani coach has been hired by the federation to visit all provinces to identify the talented youths while the recruitment of a Chinese coach for the national women's team and an American for the men's team is also on our agenda. I believe high-profile foreign coaches are a necessity for Iranian hockey, most significantly in the women's field category, which was only introduced two years ago.

Iranian coaches will receive the required instructions in the federation's classes – which will begin later this month run through February next year – before being sent on a mission to different provincial departments.

As you mentioned hockey is among the popular sports throughout the world, but that is not the case in Iran. What have you done to create a fan-base for the sport in the country?

Different types of media platforms have been a great help in promoting the sport as the Hockey World Cup was broadcast live by IRIB TV for the first time in February. Meanwhile, eigh-

teen teams from all over the country have signed up for a new women's field hockey league which will be held in two tiers.

What are the future international events for the Iranian national teams?

A field hockey tournament will be held in Oman in September which will serve as the Asian qualifiers for the next World Cup and we expect both Iranian men's and women's teams to finish on the podium in that event. I am optimistic that the women's team will soon be among the top 10 teams in the world.

Do you see Iran win the men's world title anytime in the future?

Many countries have been majorly investing on hockey. The United States, for instance, has allocated \$5 million to its scouting system. Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Argentina, and USA are currently the top teams in the world and way ahead of us in terms of funds and infrastructures. We first need to make sure to hold on to the third-spot finish in the recent World Cup, but I'm sure even bigger achievements will be well within our reach in the coming years.

Vondrousova writes her own happy ending at Wimbledon to leave Jabeur in tears



REUTERS – When Marketa Vondrousova punched away a volley and fell to the ground after completing one of the most unexpected runs to the Wimbledon title, a jumble of thoughts must have been running through her head.

After all, Saturday was meant to be the day when Tunisian sixth seed Ons Jabeur would finally become the first Arab and first African woman to win a Grand Slam title.

Instead, a distraught Jabeur was left with tears streaming down her face as her Wimbledon dream was wrecked in the final for the second year running with a 6-4 6-4 drubbing.

In stark contrast, Vondrousova knelt down on the grass in her moment of triumph – staring at the turf that until this fortnight had not brought her much joy.

The Czech left-hander had won only one match at the All England Club before this year and 12 months ago she had come to London as a tennis tourist with her arm and elbow in a plaster cast as she recovered from a second bout of wrist surgery.

Her time out from the sport meant that she fell so far off the tennis radar that she no longer even had a clothing sponsor.

But the 42nd-ranked Czech put those problems behind her to become the first unseeded woman to lift the Venus Rosewater Dish as she completed her own phenomenal comeback story.

"I don't know what's happening right now," Vondrousova said during the presentation ceremony as she was given a standing ovation by a 15,000-strong capacity Cen-

tre Court crowd that included tennis greats Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova.

"Ons, you are such an inspiration for all of us and I hope you will win this one day; you are an amazing person."

"This time last year I had a cast on so it's amazing that I can now stand here and hold this (trophy), it's crazy," added the Czech, whose husband Stepan Simek had flown in from Prague especially for the final after being relieved of his cat-sitting duties at home.

"It's amazing as tomorrow is the first anniversary of our wedding. I am exhausted but I am so proud," said Vondrousova.

While the clearly elated Czech began her victory lap to all corners of Centre Court, Britain's Princess of Wales was left to console a sobbing

Jabeur who could not fathom how she had messed up her chance of holding aloft the most famous trophy in women's tennis.

The truth of the matter was that she was the architect of her own downfall, with the 31 unforced errors she produced telling their own story. "This is very, very, tough. I am going to look ugly for those photos," the 28-year-old Jabeur told the crowd through tears.

After the hollering fans gave the crowd favourite a prolonged ovation, she added: "This is the most painful loss of my career."

"Today is going to be a tough day for me but I'm not going to give up and I am going to come back stronger. It's been a tough journey but I promise I will come back and one day win this tournament."

Marketa Vondrousova celebrates with the Wimbledon trophy after winning the women's singles final against Ons Jabeur in London, Britain, on July 15, 2023.

AP

NEWS IN BRIEF

First in water, electricity technology, engineering services

TASNIM – The Iranian energy minister said the country ranks first in the export of technical and engineering services in the water and electricity sector as this shows the high potential of experts in the country. Talking about the significance of water-supply infrastructures in Tehran, Ali Akbar Mehrabian said on Sunday that Tehran is home to diversified water systems.

Commerce ministry to be established

IRNA – Iranian Parliament on Sunday passed a bill to establish the Ministry of Commerce.

A sum of 129 votes was cast in favor, 101 against, and four abstentions, out of the total of 238 lawmakers present in the Sunday session of the parliament.

India, UAE agree to trade in local currencies

BLOOMBERG – India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) agreed to use their local currencies for cross-border transactions, amid attempts by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to increase the rupee's role on the global stage. The Reserve Bank of India said in a statement on Saturday that Modi and the central bank's Governor Shaktikanta Das inked the agreement with the UAE's President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi. The deal will facilitate seamless cross-border transactions and payments, and foster greater economic cooperation between the two countries.

Iran still largest producer of saffron: Association head



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

By producing 90 percent of the world's saffron, Iran is still the largest producer of saffron in the world, said the head of the Saffron Exporters Association. Talking to Iran Daily, Gholamreza Miri added that the

country's saffron exports in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year have increased by 63% in weight compared to the same period last year. Referring to the growing trend of Iran's saffron ex-

ports in the current Iranian year thus far, which hit 239 tons, he added that if the trend continues, the figure will exceed 325 tons by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2024).

"We had reached an annual export of 325 tons of saffron three years ago, but due to some problems including the COVID-19 and its impact on exports, Iran's saffron exports decreased," Miri said.

Although Iran is the largest producer of saffron in the world, our share of the global saffron market is less than some other competitors, he criticized.

Many factors are effective in Iran's low share of the international saffron sales market, some of which are related to marketing and production, and some others are related to sanctions and political relations, the official explained. In addition to traditional

competitors such as Spain and Italy, some other countries including Afghanistan have joined our competitors in recent years, Miri said.

"Due to sanctions, Iran cannot export saffron to the US, and Saudi Arabia had previously embargoed many of our products due to political problems. Meanwhile, countries such as India and China had imposed high tariffs for importing saffron from Iran, but these tariffs did not exist for Afghan traders. So, we had to sell a part of our saffron through Afghan dealers," he explained.

What is more, Afghanistan is taking advantage of the markets that have been created for its saffron products by increasing its saffron cultivation and production day by day and exporting its own saffron product in addition to the Iranian saffron

it imports, Miri continued. Pointing to the improvement in relations between Tehran and Riyadh, he said: "Fortunately, Saudi Arabia has once more become a target market for Iran, but we are still facing problems of the past in many other markets such as India and China."

"Due to tariffs and high costs of exporting to some countries, part of Iranian saffron is being smuggled and sold at 20-30% cheaper price."

Available estimates show that 90 tons of Iranian saffron products were smuggled out to international markets, he said.

Talking about the price of Iranian saffron in international markets, Miri said the 500-gram packages of Iranian saffron is between \$650 and \$1,000, but the figure goes up to \$2000 for 500 grams of the product in smaller packages.

China to invest in key industrial projects: Iranian minister

Economy Desk

China has agreed to invest in major projects in Iran, Iranian Finance Minister Ehsan Khandouzi said Sunday, after attending the first Joint Economic Development Commission of Iran and China held in Beijing following a hiatus of four and a half years.

Khandouzi said the investment projects focused on the sectors of energy, industry, mining, agriculture, and healthcare, IRIB NEWS reported.

China stands as Iran's primary trading partner, with a significant share of Iran's trade, including imports and

exports, amounting to 24% of the total trade volume.

Khandouzi said opportunities for trade with China hold promising potential, although Iranian businesspeople have faced certain administrative hurdles that require approval from the Chinese authorities.

"During the commission meeting, it was agreed to streamline the issuance of these permits, and both countries reached a consensus on facilitating foreign investment," he added.

Iran's preferred collaborative plans were presented to the Chinese side at the joint commission meeting, which was attended by represen-



TWITTER

tatives from various Iranian ministries and organizations such as the Oil Ministry, Agriculture Ministry, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, Ministry of Industries, Mine and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Central Bank, Customs Administration, Trade Devel-

opment Organization, and Tax Affairs Organization.

The Chamber of Commerce of Iran and China also convened a joint meeting in Beijing, where prominent Chinese companies that are party to contracts with Iran were present. According to the Iranian minister, the

Chinese side expressed their commitment to address the obstacles hindering Iranian trade.

Khandouzi said "tangible outcomes" are expected to unfold in the coming months after the visit of the Iranian trade delegation to China.

2nd annual creative cities of Iran held in Rasht

The second annual event showcasing the "creative cities" of Iran took place in Rasht, located in northern Iran, as reported by the Bandar Abbas Municipality's Public Relations and International Affairs Department. The event, known as the Rasht Food Creative City, was held at Rasht's Central Hall from June 22 to 23. Notable creative cities such as Isfahan, Sanandaj, Bandar Abbas, and Kermanshah participated in the event.

The mayor of Bandar Abbas expressed his remarks regarding the event, which was organized by the Rasht Municipality and its Islamic Council, stating that the first national secretariat of Iran's creative cities, which would be run on a rotating basis, was opened on the first day of the festival.

According to Mehdi Nobani, several other activities took place including an exhibition featuring the creative cities of Iran and the Chess Cup of Iran's creative cities. In his speech, Nobani highlighted the Bandar Abbas' celebration of its 400th anniversary. He emphasized the national and international recognition of Bandar Abbas' artisans and handicrafts, attributing their success to the city's diverse styles, races, colors, backgrounds, and historical significance. The mayor called for



supporting these craftsmen and expanding their reach.

Furthermore, the event featured a specialized scientific workshop on the co-creation of Iran's creative cities, which was hailed as a significant achievement by the mayor. Nobani said that craftsmen and artists could enhance their knowledge and ideas through the exchange of thoughts and sharing of skills.

He added that Bandar Abbas had been designated as a creative city for handicrafts and local arts in January 2020. The Bandar Abbas creativity center diligently pursued the goals of a creative city by supporting artists and craftsmen through a well-structured strategic program.

Nobani also highlighted the city's notable accomplishment in utilizing urban spaces and beautifying the city by incorporating indigenous elements.

"The Bandar Abbas Municipality signed memorandums of understanding with universities to promote scientific and academic education in handicrafts. Preliminary measures were also taken to improve the economic conditions and livelihoods of artisans," he added.

The mayor expressed his satisfaction with the participation in Iran's creative cities and stressed the importance of periodic exhibitions and the exchange of ideas.

"The chain of creative cities in Iran should showcase their unique differences and capacities, making them an attractive destination for tourists."

Drawing attention to the historical significance of Bandar Abbas, formerly known as Gumbrown, Nobani emphasized the close relationship between handicrafts and the everyday life and clothing of the people in the southern region. He pointed out that handicrafts played a prominent role in various aspects of people's lives, from fishing and hunting tools to lifestyle, clothing, colors, and patterns.

As a symbolic gesture aligned with the goals of the Rasht Food Creative City, a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a food street took place on the sidelines of the event.

Announcement Gohar Zamin Iron Ore Company (Public Joint Stock)



Gohar Zamin Iron Ore Company intends to identify all commercial companies that are able to purchase iron ore pellets with the average FE 65% as FAS (INCOTERMS 2020) as deliver it to the customer's warehouse in Bandar Abbas to sell this product in foreign markets such as China, Turkey, India, Oman, etc. Therefore, all the capable companies which have exported more than 500 thousand metric tons of mineral products in the last two years are invited to submit the original letter of representative from the foreign producer company (End user), in addition to all necessary financial and commercial documents of their Iranian and foreign companies, through the official email of the mother company to the electronic address to read as commercial-dep@goharzamin.com until 22 July 2023. Also, that company should make the necessary arrangements to hold a meeting with the presence of the senior managers of the mother company (end user) and visiting the relevant plants.

It is obvious that the presentation of these documents does not create any rights for the participants in this announcement, and Gohar Zamin Iron Ore Company is completely authorized in her investigation and responding to the participants.

For more information, you are asked to call 021-57623 Ext. 1673 and Cellphone number 09124604691.

Educational inequality on the rise

Data revealing how badly students from lower-income groups fare in university entrance exams showcase the widening gap between Iran's rich and poor.

Social Desk

Only two percent of the ranks below 3,000 in university entrance exams in 2021-22 belong to the first, second, and third income groups, i.e., the less well-off strata.

The data was announced by Mansour Kobaghanian, a member of Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. It serves as an indicator of the role money plays in education.

According to the statistics provided by Kobaghanian, 86 percent of the entrants to the fields of medicine and dentistry are from the eighth, ninth, and tenth income groups, i.e., the well-to-do and wealthy strata. The statistic means that in the future, 86 percent of doctors will be members of rich and prosperous families. In contrast, only 1.3 percent of medical and dental students are from families belonging to low-income strata.

Nevertheless, this information is not new. Despite annual fluctuations in the

statistics and numerical data regarding participant counts, one consistent factor remains unchanged from previous years: The persistent academic challenges faced by students from lower-income backgrounds.

The statistics should sound the alarm for authorities on the increasing educational inequality in the country.

Most education analysts attribute government policies as the primary source of inequality and class-based education, particularly through the adoption of contractionary policies aligned with the principles of the free market. This alarming trend highlights the marginalization of public schools, leading to a disruption in the implementation of the 30th Article of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to this article, the government is obligated to ensure free education for the entire nation until the completion of secondary education, and to provide affordable options for higher education. However, the

core essence of this principle has been neglected, clearly reflecting the government's increasing disregard for education. As a consequence, the financial burden of the education sector has been shifted onto parents.

It's been many years that the national university entrance exams in our country have not served as a battleground where weaker and stronger candidates compete; instead, it has turned into a platform upon which schools compete, and in this competition, public schools are consistently overshadowed by private ones, with their portion of top rankings in the entrance examination gradually dwindling year after year.

All this happens despite the consistent emphasis of the Leader of the Revolution on the necessity of reinforcing the caliber of public schools. The Leader advocates for an elevation in the level and quality of education provided in these schools, ensuring that students do not perceive studying there



MEHR

as diminishing their chances of success in the entrance exam. Families, too, should be reassured that sending their children to these institutions is not akin to consigning them to a destitute environment.

Iran's turmoil within the realm of public education is unparalleled on a global scale. Extensive research conducted on 12 prominent

and pioneering countries in the education sector reveals a striking reality: Disadvantaged families receive educational, economic, and social support. However, in our country, this situation runs counter to both the 30th Article of the Constitution and the policies established at the outset of the Islamic Revolution.

Mohammadreza Niknejad,

teacher and researcher, maintains that "reverting to the law can pave the way and alleviate educational inequity. Today, Scandinavian countries are implementing Article 30 of our Constitution, whereas in our own nation, policies and laws designed to uphold social and educational justice have been inexplicably disregarded."

Festival records oral history of retirees for future benefits

Social Desk

The first-ever festival of 'Lasting Experience' concluded with an emphasis on using the valuable experiences of retired individuals.

Mohammad Chakkoshian, the cultural and social deputy of the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor, and Social Welfare, highlighted the festival's objective of collecting and preserving the oral accounts of retirees as a guiding light for the future, Fars News Agency reported.

"The festival of 'Lasting Experience' is held with the aim of recording the oral history of retirees so that we can benefit from this experiential knowledge as a beacon for the future," Chakkoshian stated.

Recognizing the vital contributions of retirees and elders

in the realms of service, work, and production, the official accentuated the significance of incorporating their experiences into societal accolades.

"Using the experiences of retirees and elders is one of the components of honoring these worthy individuals," he asserted.

The festival's underlying philosophy rests on the conviction that understanding the past correctly is essential for progress.

"Knowledge is an accumulation of experience that is presented in a systematic way, and there are many instances showing that we don't use the existing tacit knowledge," Chakkoshian explained.

Moreover, he elucidated the pivotal aspects of the Second Step of Iran's Islamic Revolution, emphasizing the impor-



tance of drawing upon the experiences of elders while nurturing the creativity and initiative of the younger generation. "The Second Step of Iran's Islamic Revolution, by the order of the Leader, should be followed by relying on the experiences of the elders and the creativity and initiative of the youth," Chakkoshian elaborated.

Chakkoshian further highlighted the perils of neglecting experiences and opting for a trial-and-error approach. "Ignoring experiences makes us move forward with trial and error," he stressed.

Iran aims to bolster its health ...

"Iran has met more than 98 percent of its pharmaceutical needs by utilizing its domestic capacity," the minister said, adding, "This capacity can create a favorable market for Iran's pharmaceutical industry in the countries of the region."

Einollahi described his two-day trip to Tajikistan as a strategic move to bolster health diplomacy. The visit will focus on exporting medical and pharmaceutical equipment, which, in turn, strengthens the capacity of knowledge-based companies active in the production and development of medical equipment in Iran's market. Doing a tour of Tajikistan's medical and academic centers is another goal of this trip.

The health official also emphasized the potential that the shared language between Iran and Tajikistan holds for expanding health tourism. "Plans are underway to select and send Iranian health advisors to friendly countries as soon as possible," he said.

"Tajikistan will be one of the first countries where we will establish the post of health advisor with the aim of developing the market for health-oriented products as well as health tourism."



IRNA

Iran's police set on curbing the problem of 'shutis'

Social Desk

Emphasizing the necessity of addressing the issue of 'shutis' seriously, the deputy police chief of Iran stated, "The utilization of these vehicles is increasingly becoming a prevalent means of transporting contraband."

Shutis are customized cars that are used in Iran to transport smuggled goods and in some cases people. In response to the rising number of such vehicles on the roads and in cities, Commander Qassem Rezaei asserted, "Shutis are unquestionably illegal, and it is the duty of the police to confront any unlawful prac-

tice," IRNA reported.

He further elaborated on the criminal and perilous behavior associated with these cars, stating, "At times, their actions result in further criminal activities and even human casualties, and on several occasions, they have resulted in the martyrdom of police officers."

The deputy police chief remarked, "What is evident is that this issue is unorthodox and spreading across various provinces. However, police officers working on multiple checkpoints and roads, as well as specialized operational teams, are working towards addressing the phenomenon."

Rezaei said the country's police force has placed significant emphasis on dealing with the shutis, stressing that the reckless actions of these illicit vehicles will be curbed.

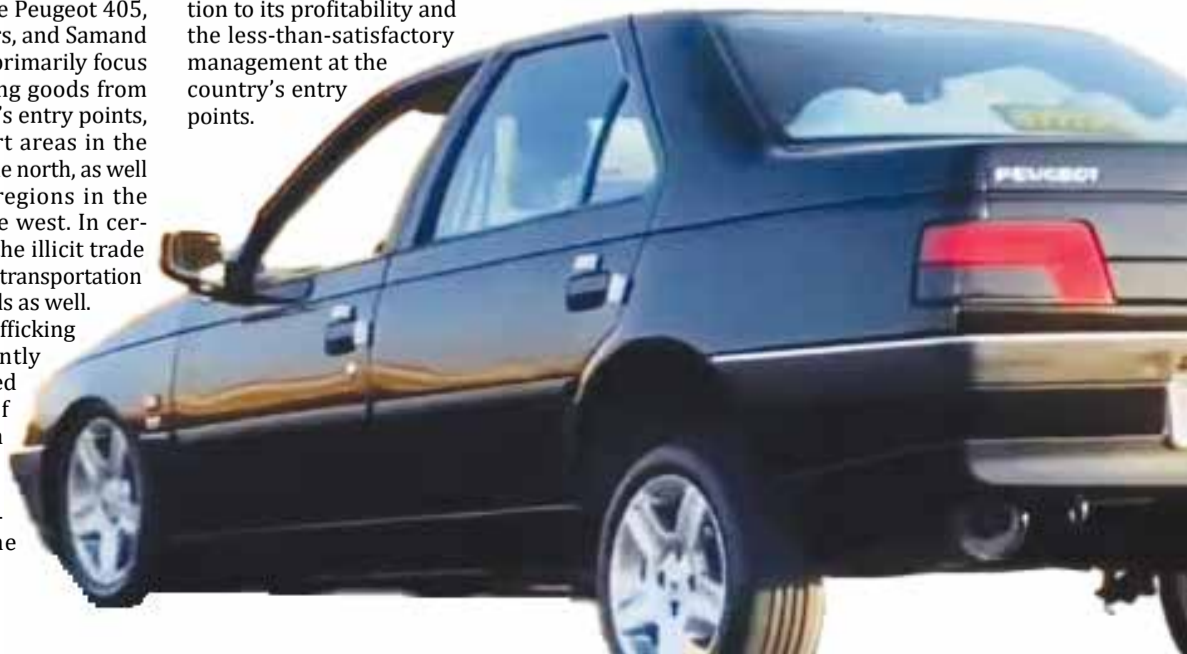
In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of so-called 'shuti' cars carrying smuggled goods, particularly in Tehran, which is the economic hub of the country. In addition to the disruptive nature of smuggling activities, the reckless behavior of the drivers of these cars on the roads contributes to a significant number of traffic accidents. These behaviors are primarily used as an attempt to escape the

police.

Shuti cars — predominantly of the Peugeot 405, Peugeot Pars, and Samand models — primarily focus on smuggling goods from the country's entry points, such as port areas in the south and the north, as well as border regions in the east and the west. In certain cases, the illicit trade involves the transportation of individuals as well.

The anti-trafficking police recently characterized the issue of shutis as a secondary problem and attributed the

prevalence of this hazardous mode of transportation to its profitability and the less-than-satisfactory management at the country's entry points.



Iran cinema awarded in Armenia



ISNA – Iranian films have achieved recognition at the 20th edition of the Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan, Armenia. The festival honored two Iranian productions with awards. The Iranian feature film 'Endless Borders,' directed by Abbas Amini and produced jointly by Iran, Germany, and the Czech Republic, received the esteemed Best Film Award in the Panorama section. The thought-provoking film explores themes of identity and personal struggle.

In addition, the FIPRESCI award, presented by the International Federation of Film Critics, was bestowed upon 'My Worst Enemy,' directed by Mehran Tamadon. This film delves into complex social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Among the other winners, the coveted "Golden Apricot" prize was awarded to the Greek film 'Black Stone,' directed by Spiros Jacovides.

The 20th edition of the Golden Apricot International Film Festival took place from July 9 to July 16 in Yerevan, Armenia. The festival provided a platform for filmmakers from around the world to showcase their creative works and foster cultural exchange.

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'Narration of the Murder of Nassereddin Shah' exhibition opens



Arts & Culture Desk

An exhibition, titled 'Narration of the Murder of Nassereddin Shah,' made its debut at Golestan Palace, marking the first time that inscriptions from the mausoleum of the Qajar king have been showcased to the public.

The golden inscriptions from Nassereddin Shah's mausoleum were loaned from the Museum of Astan-e Abdolazim Hassani and are currently on display at the Chador Khaneh of Golestan Palace, which once served as the seat of Nassereddin Shah's rule, according to ISNA.

The exhibition will be open to visitors from July 16 to July 31.

In addition to the remarkable inscriptions, the exhibition features various artifacts associated with Nassereddin Shah. These include his final diary, the blood-stained handkerchief used during his assassination, the chair upon which he sat following the attack until his death, and copies of the Qur'an from his mausoleum. During the opening ceremony, Alireza Behzadi, the executive director of the exhibition, revealed an intriguing discovery. He explained, "Last year,

we found several paintings at the Museum of Astan-e Abdolazim Hassani that depict the final days of Nassereddin Shah. Some of these paintings are currently displayed on the second floor, while the rest are kept in storage. With the assistance of the Museum of Astan-e Abdolazim Hassani, the inscriptions were safely transported to Golestan Palace."

Regarding the inscriptions, the researcher explained that they were meticulously crafted on copper sheets and adorned with gold plating. These inscriptions were installed around Nassereddin Shah's mau-

soleum four years after his burial in 1317 Hijri year. Notably, the body of Nassereddin Shah had been temporarily housed at the Takiyeh Dowlat for a year following his assassination until the completion of the mausoleum.

Speaking about the style of the inscriptions, Behzadi remarked, "The design of these inscriptions bears resemblance to Safavid-era inscriptions. We have extracted the complete text and will present it during a scholarly session on July 31."

Alireza Oudran, the head of the Museum of Astan-e Abdolazim Hassani, described

the exhibition as a momentous occasion, particularly considering its timing after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

He revealed that around 46 inscriptions, which provide a narrative of Nassereddin Shah's murder, are housed in the museum's treasury. The decorative elements surrounding these inscriptions including mirror work, gypsum work, and brickwork underwent alterations during the revolution. Consequently, the inscriptions were relocated to the Museum of Astan-e Abdolazim Hassani.

Afarin Emami, the director of the Golestan Palace

World Heritage Site, drew an analogy between historical cultural objects and words, emphasizing their collective significance. She stated, "Historical objects are similar to words in that they possess individual meanings. However, when they come together to form sentences, their meanings become richer. When these sentences are arranged side by side, they create a book. Historical objects operate in a similar manner as their collective presence conveys an accurate narrative and story, surpassing the impact of observing scattered objects."

Persian language, literature 'increase Iran's soft power'

Arts & Culture Desk

The president of the University of Isfahan (UI) emphasized the importance of promoting the Persian language and literature as vital components in enhancing the soft power and strengthening the scientific and cultural diplomacy capabilities of the country. Hossein Harsij stated that language and literature play significant roles in cultural discussions and are important indicators of soft power in every nation. During the opening ceremony of a branch of the Society for the Promotion of Persian Language and Literature at the University of Isfahan, Harsij highlighted the significance of networking in promoting the Persian language and literature, especially in the modern virtual era. He emphasized the need for universities to update the Persian language and literature books and collaborate through networking to realize the directives of the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution in transforming Persian into the language of science.



Harsij believed that this approach would revive the culture and civilization of Islamic Iran.

The university professor acknowledged that non-Iranian students in Iranian universities are interested in the culture and civilization of Islamic Iran, adding that their intellectual and spiritual development would have a positive political impact.

Harsij outlined the important and necessary missions of the society's office at the UI, stating that its primary focus is community-centric. He maintained that the office aims to contribute to the development of civilization, which in turn enhances the country's power in various dimensions.

Therefore, Harsij emphasized utilizing the University of Isfahan's capacity to

support the government's efforts in promoting the Persian language and literature internationally.

Highlighting the internationalization of universities, Harsij underscored the need to strengthen the Persian language and literature centers, particularly in regional countries. He suggested training qualified individuals who can collaborate with the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology and undertake this responsibility. Harsij identified publications as another key player in promoting the Persian language and literature at national and international levels.

He noted that many countries in the region ask for access to Iran's rich cultural resources, thereby significantly enhancing Iran's soft power.

Ali-Asghar Mirbaqerifard, the president of the Iranian Society for the Promotion of Persian Language and Literature, mentioned that the society, both in terms of its membership and activities, is one of the largest scientific societies in the country.

Mirbaqerifard highlighted the society's establishment in 1971 and some of its contributions including publishing valuable works, organizing sessions and conferences, and sending professors to foreign chairs.

He further explained that the society revised its constitution in 2004, adopting two approaches focused on scientific innovation and practical application in promoting the Persian language and literature.

Mirbaqerifard highlighted the organization's international section and mentioned its branch in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, outlining the plans to establish 10 more branches in Turkey, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

Mirbaqerifard described the provincial missions of the Society for the Promotion of Persian Language and Literature, which involve assisting in scientific research, responding to societal needs, preserving and revitalizing native literature in each province, and identifying literary talents.

PIC OF THE DAY

Kharanagh Castle, a magnificent historical fortress spanning over 10,000 square meters, proudly stands in the village of Kharanagh, neighboring the iconic Shah Abbasi Caravanserai. With a rich history dating back an impressive 4,500 years, this architectural gem has been officially recognized as a national heritage site in Iran since 2005.

Nestled in the heart of Yazd, the village of Kharanagh, locally known as "Khoranagh," carries a poetic meaning as "the birthplace of the sun." Its ancient origins are intertwined with tales of resilience, as the village faced relentless attacks from bandits and thieves in times long past. In response to these threats, the resourceful locals constructed the formidable Kharanagh Castle, seeking refuge within its fortified walls for generations.

