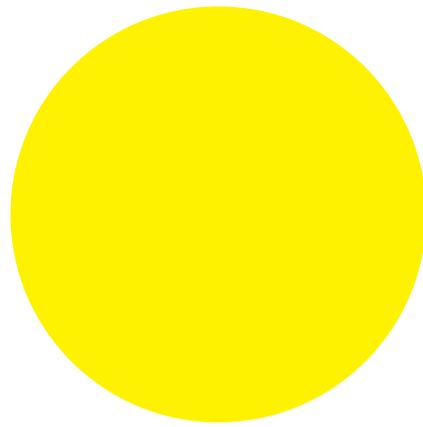


Leader demands maximum punishment for Qur'an desecrator



Iran Daily



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'Still Streaming' exhibition underway

An art enthusiast looks at one of the artworks on display at the 'Still Streaming' exhibition.

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Russia learning sanctions evasion from Iran: **Report**

International Desk

Even though the US and the EU are imposing new sanctions on Russia and Iran almost every day, Moscow has been more successful in evading the harsher impacts of sanctions after picking up a few lessons from Iran. According to a report by FOX News, companies based in Kyrgyzstan, the UAE, and Serbia are all facing penalties for helping aid Russia's war. "They're making their alternative web of alliances in the world," said former US ambassador to Poland, Daniel Fried.



"Iran is certainly helping Russia. It's an alliance of convenience." The two countries are trying to ease the economic pressure that sanctions have caused and recently linked their banking systems.

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Iran oil income in 2022 beat post- JCPOA era last year

Iran's oil revenues in 2022 hit 42.6 billion, exceeding the country's oil revenues in the first year of implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), according to the statistical bulletin of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 2023. Iran's oil revenues in the first year of implementation of the JCPOA stood at \$41.1 billion, Tasnim news agency reported. The rise in Iran's oil exports to 1.4 million barrels of oil per day (bpd) at the end of 2022, according to Kepler statistics, and the price hike of crude oil are the main reasons for Iran's oil revenues reaching

the pre-sanctions levels, the report added. After withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, former US president Donald Trump re-imposed sanctions on Iran as part of what he called a "maximum pressure" campaign against the country. Those sanctions are being enforced to this day by the Joe Biden administration, even though it has repeatedly acknowledged that the policy has been a mistake and a failure. Tehran says it will not be able to trust Washington as long as Biden continues Trump's wrong policy against Iran.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia learning ...

"You see the Russians beginning to pick up on some of the tactics perfected by the Iranians, as well as continue to deepen their political, economic, and security ties with Tehran," said Behnam Ben Taleblu, a security expert. "Iran has a masterclass in sanctions-busting, helping to teach the Russian Federation at the moment." Iran's largest source of revenue is from oil exports. Since the US re-imposed economic sanctions, Iran's output has hit a new high despite the additional pressure. "While these sanctions remain on the books, the problem here is that they're not being actively enforced. This lack of active enforcement, coupled with a very public desire for diplomacy and de-escalation with Iran, is encouraging more risk-tolerant actors to buy more Iranian oil," Taleblu said. "Iran continues to thumb its nose at US sanctions," US Congressman Mike Lawler said.

Portuguese parl. recognizes Palestinian Nakba Day

PRESS TV - The Portuguese parliament has overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution recognizing Nakba Day or "Day of Catastrophe," when Israel was created at the expense of the forced expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland. At the same time, the Portuguese resolution condemned the Israeli regime's expansionist and annexation policies, emphasizing the practices are in blatant violation of international laws.

North Korea fires cruise missiles: S Korean military



REUTERS - North Korea fired several cruise missiles toward the sea to the west of the Korean Peninsula, the South Korean military said on Saturday. This would be North Korea's latest missile launch since it fired two ballistic missiles on Wednesday, as Pyongyang and Washington step up displays of military force in a standoff over the country's nuclear weapons and missile programs. A number of cruise missiles launched since around 4 a.m. Saturday local time were detected, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

Leader demands maximum punishment for Qur'an desecrator

International Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei

called a recent desecration of the Muslims' holy book in Sweden as a bitter, conspiratorial and dangerous incident, calling for the maximum punishment for the perpetrator.

Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message on Saturday that there is a consensus among all Islamic scholars that the perpetrator of the crime should face the maximum punishment.

On Thursday, Salwan Momika, a Sweden-based Iraqi refugee, desecrated the Muslim holy book during a demonstration outside the Iraqi Embassy in Stockholm amid strict protection provided by the Swedish police. This was the second time Momika was disrespecting the holy book amid the approval of Sweden's authorities. He set a copy of the Qur'an on fire on June 28. Also, members of an Islamophobic group called Danske Patriotier burned the Muslim holy book in front of Iraq's Embassy in the Danish capital city of Copenhagen on Friday. Ayatollah Khamenei said

that the Swedish government should hand over the perpetrator to the judicial systems of Islamic countries.

"The Swedish government should also know that by supporting a criminal, it has taken a battle formation against the Islamic world and attracted the hatred and enmity of Muslim nations and many of their governments," he said.

The sacrilegious move prompted protests across the Muslim world. People in many countries staged massive rallies to condemn the blasphemous act.

On Thursday, demonstrators in Baghdad broke into the Swedish Embassy and set part of it on fire to show their anger at the sacrilegious act.

Iranians also took to the streets across the country after Friday prayers to voice their strong condemnation of the recent desecration of the Holy Qur'an.

People in Lebanon and Pakistan staged similar rallies on Friday.

The Iraqi government has ordered the Swedish ambassador to leave the Arab country and decided to withdraw its envoy from Stockholm.

Sweden's envoys summoned

On Thursday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry summoned the Swedish ambassador to Tehran and conveyed Iran's strong condemnation of the sacrilegious act.

The Danish ambassador was also summoned to the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Saturday. Earlier in the day, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Denmark must prevent the desecration of the Qur'an and other Muslim sanctities and prosecute those who commit such acts.

Iran has said it will not accept a new Swedish ambassador until Stockholm takes a serious and effective measure to deal with the continuous violation of Islamic sanctities.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Friday called for an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in a phone call with the group's Secretary General Houssein Ibrahim Taha.

The UAE Foreign Ministry also called in Sweden's chargé d'affaires in Abu Dhabi and conveyed its strong objection to the sacrilegious move.



"Sweden has disregarded its international responsibilities and demonstrated a lack of respect for social values in this regard," the Emirati Foreign Ministry said. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the countries' governments must fulfill their responsibilities to deal with such crimes, prevent their repetition, and punish the perpetrators.

"Egypt's Foreign Ministry strongly condemns the action of the Swedish authorities in granting permission

to an extremist person to repeat the insult to the Holy Qur'an," the statement added. The Kingdom of Jordan condemned the desecration "as a reckless act that fuels hatred, and a manifestation of Islamophobia that incites violence and insult to religions".

The Qatari Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Swedish authorities should take "all the necessary measures to stop these shameful acts".

Saudi Arabia summoned the Swedish charge d'affaires in



A demonstrator holds a copy of the Muslims' holy book, Qur'an, during a rally after the weekly Friday prayers denouncing the burning of the book in Sweden in Iraq's central city of Kufa on July 21, 2023.

● QASSEM AL-KAABI/AFP

Riyadh and handed him a note of protest.

The leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, Hassan Nasrallah, called on Arab and Muslim countries to follow Iraq's steps and expel Swedish ambassadors from their countries.

High flight of dollar in Pakistan to top ₹300 this fiscal year



Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

The worsening economic situation of Pakistan is not being managed that has affected the national currency devaluation for two years.

According to the latest estimates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the exchange rate of the dollar during Pakistan's current fiscal year may be as high as 305 rupees, which is much higher than the rate used in the current budget of Pakistan. Ac-

ording to the sources, the latest estimate of IMF is lower than the rate of State Bank of Pakistan. State Bank is working at the rate of 308 rupees to the dollar. Basic estimates are used to estimate the current account deficit. However, the federal government has made the current budget at an exchange rate of 290 rupees to the dollar. If the dollar exceeds 300 rupees during the fiscal year, the impact will be evident on the defense budget, foreign debt repayments.

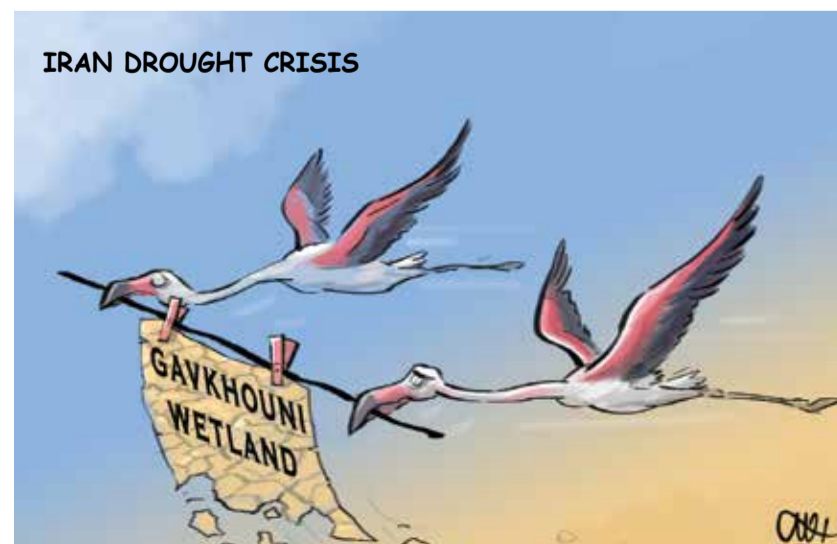
According to the interim data of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, during

the last fiscal year 2022-23, Pakistan received 10 billion 800 million dollars in external debt, while the government of Pakistan estimated the receipt of external debt of 22 billion 600 million dollars during the last financial year, that is, during the last financial year, Pakistan received 11 billion 800 million dollars or 53% less external debt.

All the economists of Pakistan agree that the country needs a stable government and until this happens there will be no economic stability and the value of the rupee cannot remain stable.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Drone hits Crimean ammunition depot as Russia attacks 11 regions in Ukraine



A plume of smoke rises over an ammunition depot where explosions occurred at the facility in Kirovsky district in Crimea, Russia, on July 19, 2023.

● VIKTOR KOROTAYEV/
Kommersant Publishing House via AP

A Ukrainian drone hit an ammunition depot in central Crimea on Saturday, sparking an explosion, less than a week after a pre-dawn strike on a key bridge linking the peninsula to Russia.

Sergey Aksyonov, the Kremlin-appointed head of the territory said in a Telegram post that there were no immediate reports of casualties but that authorities were evacuating civilians within a five-kilometer (three-radius) of the blast site, AP reported.

The Ukrainian military appeared to confirm it had launched the drone strike, claiming through its press service that it had destroyed an oil depot and Russian arms warehouses in the Krasnohvardiiske area, although without specifying what weapons were used.

Social media posts circulating on Saturday had earlier referenced unconfirmed reports of "several" drones targeting an oil depot and airstrip, as well as a loud blast resembling the sound of detonating shells. The explosion in Krasnohvardiiske came less than a week after a Ukrainian strike Monday on the crucial Kerch bridge linking Crimea with Russia, which killed two people and left a section of the roadway

hanging perilously.

Moscow on the same day ended its participation in a wartime deal that allowed Ukrainian grain to be exported through the Black Sea and later pounded Ukraine's seaports with drones and missiles after vowing "retribution" for the attack on the bridge, a key supply route for Russian forces in Ukraine.

On Wednesday, a fire broke out within military training grounds in eastern Crimea that forced the evacuation of more than 2,000 people and the closure of a nearby highway, according to Aksyonov. Neither Moscow nor local Kremlin-appointed authorities gave reasons for the blaze, and Ukraine did not comment.

The Russian company operating the Kerch bridge announced on Saturday morning that it was temporarily halting all traffic across it, without giving reasons. Traffic was later allowed to resume crossing. Also on Saturday, Ukrainian authorities reported that Russian attacks on 11 regions across the country over the previous day killed at least eight civilians and wounded others, as fierce fighting continues in Kyiv's attempts to dislodge Russian forces from territory.

Minister: Iran has long-term plan to repatriate ancient artifacts



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ezzatollah Zarghami, revealed a long-term plan to repatriate ancient artifacts to the country, emphasizing their commitment to the plan. According to ILNA, Zarghami addressed the issue of

returning other ancient artifacts, such as the Sasanian bas-relief, to Iran. "We have a long-term plan in this regard, and it is not a mere project; it's a process," stated the minister. Zarghami lamented that many valuable Iranian artifacts are currently located in other countries due to various historical reasons.

He pointed out that during the pre-Islamic Republic era, particularly in the Pahlavi era, these countries claimed to have legally acquired and documented these artifacts after taking them out of Iran. When asked whether ancient artifacts could be legally removed from the country, Zarghami re-

plied, "Yes, they claim that these items were acquired through a contractual agreement, and they possess documents. However, we can pursue those cases which we can prove were smuggled, such as the Sasanian soldier's relief, which was a smuggling case that occurred in the 1980s, and we could re-

patriate it." The minister stressed that while some actions may have been deemed legal during the pre-revolution era, they do not recognize the legality of the transactions and commercial activities by individuals and dealers, and they are actively taking legal measures to reclaim these artifacts.

'Still Streaming' exhibition underway

The 'Still Streaming' exhibition, a retrospective of the reflection of the Ashura movement in contemporary visual arts, opened at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art on July 19, coinciding with the beginning of the lunar month of Muharram.

The exhibition is featuring 80 artworks by 35 artists, including pieces from the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art's collection and artworks from the art community. Art enthusiasts can visit the exhibition until September 13.

'Still Streaming' is a research-oriented event that presents this collection for observation and examination, free from any prejudice, to provide a platform for reinterpretation and contemplation.

Iran's Qorbani to stage concerts globally

After a series of successful concerts, titled 'Sing with Me,' in Tehran and other cities across Iran, Alireza Qorbani, the renowned Iranian vocalist, is set to embark on an international tour to Canada, Australia, and Europe in November of this year, Mehr News Agency reported.

In a note regarding his upcoming concerts, Qorbani stated: "It is an honor to have the opportunity to serve our dear compatriots in Canada following the concert tour in Iran."

The concerts in Canada are scheduled to take place in the first two weeks of November 2023. The Vancouver concert will be held at the Orpheum Theatre on November 5, and the Toronto concert will take place at the Meridian Hall on November 11, delighting audiences with Qorbani's mesmerizing vocals.

Ticket sales for these concerts will begin on July 23, through the designated websites.

Further details about other concerts on this tour in Canada, Australia, and Europe will be announced soon.

17th Tehran Auction grosses over \$4m

Arts & Culture Desk

Tehran Auction, the renowned platform for Modern and Contemporary Iranian art, held its 17th auction at the Azadi Hotel in Tehran on July 21. This prestigious event featured an impressive collection of artworks that attracted art enthusiasts and collectors from around the world. The auction proved to be a remarkable success, achieving a total sale of 4,224,200, further establishing itself as a vital contributor to the country's thriving art market. The economic art event once again fulfilled its mission

of bringing prosperity to Iran's art industry, showcasing the immense talent and creativity of Iranian artists to a global audience. According to IRNA, the three-day event, dedicated to "Modern and Contemporary Art," took place from July 28 to July 30 at the Parsian Azadi Hotel. On July 28 and 29, a captivating exhibition of artworks from renowned artists, including Aydin Aghdashloo, Houshang Pezeshknia, Monir Farmanfarman, Farideh Lashai, Sohrab Sepehri, Mohammad Ehsaei, Nasrollah Afjei, Hossein Zenderoudi, Sirak Melkonian,

and many others, delighted the art enthusiasts in attendance. A total of 110 pieces, comprising 97 paintings, 9 sculptures, and 4 photographs, were presented by a diverse group of 100 artists, including 79 male and 21 female creators. The selection represented a rich tapestry of styles, techniques, and artistic visions, reflecting the diversity and vibrancy of Iran's contemporary art scene. Notably, the top record-breaking sale of this auction belonged to Sohrab Sepehri's 'Untitled' piece, which sold for an astonishing 21 billion and 300 mil-

lion Iranian rials (\$426,000), setting a new benchmark for Iranian art auctions. Another 'untitled' piece by Sepehri went under the hammer and was sold \$248,000. Among the notable sales was an artwork titled 'Untitled,' a pastel and mixed media on cardboard by Hossein Pezeshknia, making it the oldest piece to be auctioned during this edition. Additionally, two 'Untitled' works by the late Sohrab Sepehri fetched a combined total of 33 billion Iranian rials, while another 'Untitled' piece by Koorosh Shishegaran achieved an impressive

17 billion rials (\$340,000).

Another masterpiece, a calligraphy painting titled 'Andam' by Hossein Zenderoudi, reached the impressive price of 13 billion rials (\$224,000).

The auction was skillfully conducted by Hossein Pakdel, who kept the excitement alive with his auctioneering expertise. The atmosphere was charged with anticipation as enthusiastic bidders competed for the most coveted works in this impressive art collection. The 16th auction in Tehran sold \$2.44 million with 120 works. The success of the 17th Tehran Auction not only



solidifies its position as a premier platform for promoting Iranian art but also serves as a testament to the enduring appeal of Modern and Contemporary Iranian art on the global stage. With its unwavering com-

mitment to fostering the country's artistic legacy, Tehran Auction continues to support and elevate Iranian artists, contributing to their recognition and success in the international art community.

Swedish works banned in Iranian festivals over Qur'an burning



Arts & Culture Desk

The head of the Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) announced in response to the desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden that, henceforth, Swedish film productions will not be accepted in various Iranian festivals. Mohammad Khazaei pointed out that Islamophobia and offensive behaviors towards the beliefs of Muslims are suspicious actions by some Western communities, Mehr news agency reported. He added that certain communities in the West are al-

ways attempting to conceal their colonial attitudes behind the mask of "freedom of expression" by belittling, undermining, and provoking antagonism towards the values of other religions, especially Islam. He emphasized that the ugly phenomenon of Islamophobia and Western hostility towards Islam has once again surfaced, regretfully noting that instead of engaging in dialogue for better understanding and sharing religious commonalities, the West has always resorted to destructive, threatening, isolating, antagonizing actions, and

promoting religious hatred. This flawed approach has led to the unfortunate reaction of honorable and freedom-seeking Muslims worldwide. The head of COI also highlighted "the presence of global Zionism's manipulative hands in such incidents, stating that such actions and behavior cannot be assessed as isolated acts of global Zionism but should be considered as part of the premeditated puzzle designed by Zionists to incite religious wars." Khazaei denounced Sweden's hostile and illogical approach, which disregards

diplomacy and international law. He stated that while condemning such behaviors, the COI will abstain from accepting products from Sweden in various Iranian festivals until the Swedish government changes its approach. He stressed that this decision is the quickest response to demonstrate solidarity with the global community against such desecrations. Our priority is undoubtedly focused on producing cultural works and elucidating the rational aspects of religion, taking into account the rich Islamic heritage and the teachings

of the Prophet's Household (Ahl al-Bayt) to engage in discussions and dialogues with religions, even with those who show disrespect. This response will be conveyed through the production of content in all realms of cinema, including feature films, shorts, documentaries, and animations. Khazaei concluded that the desecration of the Holy Qur'an is not a mere political event, but rather an insult to every Muslim worldwide. It is imperative that the artistic and cinematic community of Iran and the world react strongly against such an act.

Gelkari, an old tradition revived in Ramsar



An overview of Javaherdeh village
● karnaval.ir

Iranica Desk

The old traditions and customs of each region have roots in its culture and identity, the preservation of which would lead to the development and maintenance of social cohesion.

A large number of traditional rituals and ceremonies have been prevalent in the northern province of Mazandaran, showing the cultural values and beliefs of its local people. Thus, extensive measures have been carried out in past years to prevent these traditional rituals from fading away.

Javaherdeh village, a popular resort with a pleasant climate, is located 25 kilometers from the center of Ramsar. A number of historically valuable cemeteries and monuments are in the village, one of which is Adineh Mosque, dating back 800 years. The mosque, which has been frequently subjected to natural disasters throughout history,

and was once destroyed by fire, was rebuilt again in the past years. Like other old buildings of this village, this mosque was made of wood and mud with no columns.

The building of the old mosque is beautiful and unique in such a way that many tourists travel to the region to visit this monument.

Gelkari (mud-making) is a traditional and religious ritual, attended by thousands of people from Mazandaran and Gilan provinces, which was held in Javaherdeh village in ancient times.

According to historical documents, which are available in Mazandaran Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, the ritual dates back 5,000 years.

On the day of the ceremony, local villagers and livestock breeders milked their animals and prepared a mud mixture of milk and soil.

All people, including men and women, young and old, participated in the ceremony to spread the prepared mud on the wall of the mosque, to clean the mosque of any impurity.

This rite was not held for many years, but efforts made by the villagers and related officials caused it to revive again.

Director General of Mazandaran Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, Sadeq Barzegar, told IRNA that the ritual was held in Adineh Mosque this year, after a 45-year hiatus, thanks to attempts made by the members of the village's rural management department in cooperation with the locals.

He added that revival of the old rituals and customs would have a positive impact on regional tourism.

He noted that *gelkari* has roots in the religious beliefs of the people who have lived in Javaherdeh village through-

out history, pointing out that re-creation of the ritual would help preserve the interior and exterior surface of the old rural houses and mosques.

Due to this geographical feature and its cool and pleasant weather, no wonder that Javaherdeh is a perfect destination in the summer.

When visiting Javaherdeh, it is not only the village that is worth seeing but also the route. The dreamy scenery of clouds and mountains covered with trees will make you speechless. Just like fairy tales, you have to pass all these adventures and a tortuous road to get to the destination.

The first thing you will notice once you enter the village road from Ramsar is its green forests and hills. By the time you reach Javaherdeh, these trees will gradually be replaced by green meadows full of flowers.

Have you brought your camera with you? Happy shooting!



Adineh Mosque
● karnaval.ir



Gelkari
● IRNA

Development of Sassanid art

Looking at Sassanid art as a whole, one reaches the conclusion that it began with a fairly limited range of themes strictly stratified according to genre, as an art that was, so to speak, "conceptual", or at any rate subject to an absolutely specific interpretation, and "imperial", an instrument for political propaganda. In late Sassanid art, however, genres blend; complex religious symbolism chang-

es into benedictory symbolism; the symbolic banquet, battles and hunting scenes become ordinary tales of hunting exploits, many feasts and chivalry.

The further art develops, the more all these initial, symbolic scenes and compositions become either illustrations or mere ornamentation.

One could go so far as to say that towards the end of the

Sassanid Period the illustrative and ornamental themes played the main role in art, although, of course, the propagandist themes of the "imperial style" also survived until the very end of the period, especially in official works of art (rock reliefs, palace decorations, coins and gems).

In discussing the illustrative aspect of late Sassanid art one cannot avoid mentioning Sassanid literature.

About a hundred titles of various religious, literary and scientific works of this time are known from different sources. A few dozen books of various kinds have reached us, mostly via translations

into Arabic and later also into Persian, a hundred or more years after the fall of the Sassanid state, or even in revised versions of a comparatively late date. It is difficult to distinguish between their various accretions from different periods, to make any sense of the blending of various styles and genres. In the course of translation from Middle Persian a sort of compendium was usually produced. In official manifestos of the kings and rock inscriptions (3rd century) mention is made of official state records, statutes and codices produced under each king.

This is also reported by much later foreign sources relating the history of the Sassanids. Probably it was these official state-records that were reported by the Arab historian al-Mas'udi, who in 915 CE saw a manuscript in Istakhr which contained the his-

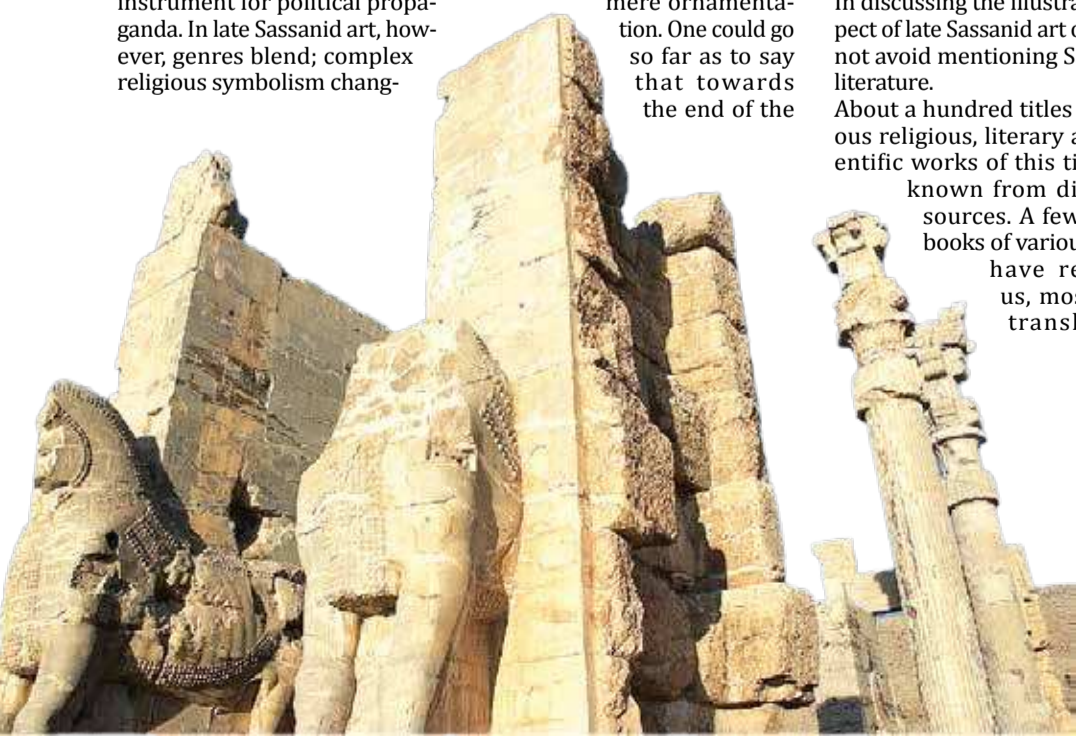
tory of the Sassanids – all twenty-seven kings who had ruled, as the manuscript stated, for 433 years, one month and seventeen days.

All these kings were portrayed in the manuscript. Another medieval historian, Hamza Isfahani, saw just such a manuscript (or perhaps the very same one). He left a description of the portraits of "kings and courtiers, famous guardians of the fire, all priests and others noted among the Persians".

These illustrations were typical official portraits. The crown was precisely depicted, the kings stood or sat on their throne. The manuscript was translated from the original into Arabic for the Caliph Hisham. It was completed in 731 CE and this is probably the earliest record of the translation of Middle Persian works. A few compendiums of the 10th-12th centuries preserve

fragments of similar translations and they confirm that in terms of their content such books were records of state affairs, arranged not by year but by separate reigns. Around the 4th century comes the first reliable report of literary works being among such records, and of their being collected into specific anthologies, their abundant subject-matter relating as a rule to distant antiquity. We know in particular of one such story, Rast-sukhan (The Truthful Word).

The story has not survived, but apparently it contained the legendary history of the founder of the Sassanid state – Ardashir, the son of Bapak – and was similar to the Book of the Deeds of Ardashir, known in a late Sassanid version (4th century). It is possible that both these works were combined into one text in the 6th century.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of chapter entitled, "Persian Art: From Antiquity to the 19th Century", from a book entitled, "Persian Art, The Lost Treasures", written by Vladimir Lukonin and Anatoli Ivanov, published by Parkstone International. The photo was taken from the book.

Asian Karate Senior Championship: Iranians scoop four medals on Day 2



L-R: Behnam Dehqanzadeh (gold), Atousa Golshadnejad (gold) and Bahman Asgari (silver) were among the Iranian medalists on the first two days of the Asian Karate Senior Championship in Melaka, Malaysia. **ikfir**

Sports Desk

The second day of the Asian Karate Senior Championship saw Iranians collect four medals – including a kumite silver for Bahman Asgari – in Melaka, Malaysia, to take the country's medal count to nine. Four-time world gold medalist Asgari, who missed out on the Tokyo Olympics due to a positive doping test, beat Sultan al-Zahrani of Saudi Arabia for a place in the men's -75kg final, before a 3-2 setback against Kazakhstan's Nurkanat Azhikanov brought him a seventh Asian medal. Earlier in the day, Tokyo Olympic champion Sajjad Ganjzadeh's run also came to a rather under-par finish with a men's kumite +84kg bronze.

Stepping into the competition on the back of a remarkable 11 Asian medals, Ganjzadeh eased to successive victories over participants from Macau and Indonesia but came short against Saudi karateka Tareg Hamed, whom the Iranian beat for the Olympic gold. Ganjzadeh still managed to get back to winning ways in the repechage bouts and defeated Emirati Sulaiman al-Mulla 5-0 for a joint-third place alongside Abily Toltoy of Kazakhstan. Hamed, meanwhile, went on to beat Japan's Daiki Ando in the final. Sara Bahmanyar and Fatemeh Sa'adati also won two women's kumite bronzes for Iran. Bahmanyar stood on the third podium alongside

Hawraa al-Ajmi of the UAE in the -50kg event, with Sa'adati finishing her run with a -55kg bronze. Saturday's medals came after a glittering first day in Melaka for the Iranian karatekas, who bagged a couple of kumite gold medals plus three bronzes. Atousa Golshadnejad clinched a first women's gold for the country at the event. The Iranian girl defeated opponents from Jordan, Kazakhstan, and China before beating Sarah al-Ameri of the United Arab Emirates 3-0 in the -61kg final. Behnam Dehqanzadeh was the Iranian gold medalist in the men's kumite contests on Day 1 – thanks to a thrilling 7-4 victory over Jordanian Omar Shaqrah in the

-55kg weigh class. Two-time world champion Amir Mehdizadeh had to settle for a joint third-spot finish in the men's -67kg event. The Iranian, who also has double Asian golds under his belt, bounced back from third-round defeat against Kazakhstan's Didar Amiral to beat Palestinian Mahmoud Daifallah (2-0) and Mohammad al-Otaibi of Kuwait (3-2) and share the third podium with Hong Kong's Cheng Hui Pan. Jordan's Abdelrahman al-Masatfa – a bronze medalist at the Tokyo Olympics – came out victorious against Amiral for the ultimate prize. The individual kata events saw Iranians finish their campaigns with two bronzes.

Fatemeh Sadeqi scored 41.6 points against Filipino Sakura Alforte's 41.2 to grab a third Asian kata bronze of her career. Hong Kong's Grace Lau came out on top against Japanese Kiyomi Shimizu in the final, with Liya Koshkarbayeva of Kazakhstan taking the other bronze medal of the category. Meanwhile, Abolfazl Shahrjerdi – a 2018 world bronze winner – registered 40.7 points in the third-place contest, with the Chinese Taipei's Chen Chao-Ching on 40.0, to take his tally at the Asian Championship to five medals – including double silvers. Kakeru Nishiyama of Japan beat Kuwait's Mohammad Bader for the gold, while South Korean Park Hee-jun also won a bronze.

Messi scores late winner in Inter Miami debut



Inter Miami's Lionel Messi scores in a win against Cruz Azul in Fort Lauderdale, FL, US, on July 21, 2023. **MARCO BELLO/REUTERS**

REUTERS – Lionel Messi made a rousing debut for Major League Soccer's Inter Miami as he scored a stoppage-time winner to beat Liga MX's Cruz Azul 2-1 on Friday in their Leagues Cup opener in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Messi drew a foul about 25 yards from goal in the dying seconds and stepped up to deliver what everyone came to see as his free kick sailed into the top left corner and sent the crowd into delirium.

After the goal, Messi ran toward the right corner of the field with his arms spread wide and then headed to the sidelines on the other side where he shared a hug with his family.

"I knew I had to score, it was the last play of the game and I had to score so we didn't go to penalties," Messi said on the broadcast through a translator.

"It was very important for us to get this win because it's a new tournament and it's going to give us confidence moving forward."

With four-times NBA champion LeBron James, tennis great Serena Williams and reality television star Kim Kardashian among those in the sold-out crowd, Messi entered the game as a second-half substitute to a rousing ovation with Miami ahead 1-0.

Messi was introduced as "the world's number 10" when he came into the game in the 54th minute, slipped the captain's armband on his left arm and sent the crowd into a frenzy whenever he touched the ball.

"As soon as I saw the free kick given I thought this is the way it's meant to end," said Inter Miami co-owner David Beckham. "It's so exciting tonight for our fans. All of these people that have come down here to see Leo just step on the pitch, let alone just do what he's done."

"It's a dream come true for everybody in this stadium and everybody around this country to see Leo step into the MLS and perform and I don't have many words for that."

PSG put Mbappé up for sale after pre-season tour omission

THE GUARDIAN – Paris Saint-Germain have put Kylian Mbappé up for sale after leaving the France forward out of their squad for the pre-season tour of Japan. Last month, Mbappé informed PSG that he would not take up the option of a one-year contract extension next summer but underlined his intention to remain in the French capital and leave on a free transfer. However, PSG will now listen to offers for the 24-year-old after the president Nasser Al-Khelaifi insisted Mbappé must sign a contract extension or leave the club he joined from Monaco in 2018 for £166m. PSG are understood to feel betrayed as they believe Mbappé has already agreed a free transfer with Real Madrid. Mbappé has yet to respond

to Al-Khelaifi and will now be excluded from manager Luis Enrique's squad that is due to travel to Japan for a pre-season tour. "My position is very clear. I don't want to repeat it all the time. If Kylian wants to stay, we want him to stay. But he needs to sign a new contract," Al-Khelaifi said earlier this month. "We don't want to lose the best player in the world on a free. That's impossible. He had said that he would never leave on a free. It's not my fault that he's changed his mind now. We don't want to lose the best player in the world for free. That's very clear." Despite his contract situation, Mbappé would still demand an astronomical fee that only a handful of sides could afford. But the news will still interest every elite club in Europe,

particularly in the Premier League. Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea have all been linked in the past, although Madrid appears his most likely destination. Mbappé has long been admired by Madrid's president, Florentino Pérez, and even after the shock renewal of his PSG contract last year – a deal that was said to include a salary of £20m after tax and a signing bonus in excess of £100m – the striker spoke openly about the idea of joining Madrid and called Pérez personally last year to explain his decision to stay. "I have lots of respect for [Pérez] and for Real Madrid," Mbappé said in May 2022. "They wanted to do a lot to make me happy. So I thank them for that. I'd also like to thank Real fans. I hope they'll understand



GETTY IMAGES

the fact I've chosen to stay [at PSG]. Mbappé did play for PSG in a friendly against Le Havre on Friday, scoring the second goal in a 2-0 victory. His 16-year-old brother

Ethan is included in the touring squad along with star names like Neymar, whose future has also been the subject of speculation. PSG will play matches against Cristiano Ronal-

do's Al Nassr and Cerezo Osaka in Osaka next week before taking on Internazionale in Tokyo on 1 August and South Korean side Jeonbuk Motors two days later.

NEWS IN BRIEF

G20 ministers fail to agree on fossil fuels roadmap

AFP – Energy ministers from the group of 20 nations meeting in India Saturday failed to agree on a roadmap to phase down the use of fossil fuels in the global energy mix. A final statement after the meeting did not even mention coal, a major contributor to global warming.

The failure to reach agreement in Goa comes despite G7 leaders agreeing in Hiroshima in May to “accelerate the phase-out of unabated fossil fuels” and with global temperatures hitting record highs, triggering floods, storms, and heatwaves.

IEA: Oil demand projections depend on China's growth

REUTERS – The International Energy Agency (IEA) will revise its global oil demand growth projections based on the economic growth prospects of China and some other countries, its executive director Fatih Barol said on Saturday.

He reiterated the IEA's view that oil markets are expected to tighten in the second half of the year.

ECB steps up scrutiny by asking banks to provide liquidity data

CNBC – The European Central Bank (ECB) has stepped up the scrutiny as it will ask the banks to provide liquidity data in a bid to ward off any risks of a financial crisis in the future.

“We decided to send banks, starting in September, a request for information on a weekly basis, in order to have more recent data to allow us to better monitor liquidity developments,” said Andrea Enria, the ECB supervisory chief.

Iran exporting packaging paper to Europe, Asia

Economic Desk

A member of the Paper, Cardboard and Cellulose Products Importers Association of Iran announced that the country produces more than 1.6 million tons of packaging paper per annum.

Talking to ISNA on Saturday, Reza Omid said the domestic needs of packaging paper at 850,000 tons per year, as the country exports more than 65,000 tons of the product to Europe, Asia, and the Persian Gulf littoral states.

He stated that the annual consumption of paper and cardboard in Iran is about 1.9 million tons, as about 1.2 million tons are imported to the country annually.

“At present, 120 plants are operating in the field of

paper production across the country, as their most important problem is the supply of raw materials,” Omid said.

He added: “In the field of printing and writing paper, the country's annual need is about 250,000 tons, of which about 50,000 tons are produced domestically.”

Omid noted that 120,000 tons of sanitary paper are consumed in the country every year, but the domestic production in this field is more than 200,000 tons.

The weight of cardboard production in Iran stands at 250,000 tons, of which 110,000 tons are for domestic need and the remaining are exported, he said, noting that the annual production of tissue in Iran hits 175,000 tons as the figure for tissue



consumption of Iran is 160,000 tons.

According to statistics, per capita consumption of all

types of paper in Iran is 22 kg, in Europe 55 kg and in US 160 kg.

Omid also announced that

the Sixth International Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products & Related Machinery will

be held during July 23-26 in Tehran, with the participation of tens of domestic and foreign companies.

● IRNA

Tajikistan keen on enhancing trade ties with Iran: TPOI

The deputy head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) hailed Tajikistan's keenness to expand trade and economic relations with Iran, saying that boosting trade exchanges with other countries is the main plan adopted by the organization.

Mehdi Zeyghami made the remarks on Saturday in a meeting with Tajikistan's Ambassador to Tehran Nizomiddin Zohidi, Tasnim news agency reported.

During the meeting, the two sides explored avenues for enhancing bilateral ties in the fields of trade and economy, broadening trade coop-



eration, and organizing a trade forum concurrent

with the upcoming visit of Iranian President Ebrahim

Raeisi to the Republic of Tajikistan.

Stating that reciprocal visit of by the presidents of the two countries indicate the serious determination of high-ranking officials of the two countries to develop mutual ties, Zeyghami proposed that the trade forum be held in the presence of the presidents of the two countries.

The TPOI deputy head pointed out that Iran and Tajikistan enjoy high potential to broaden bilateral ties in all fields, especially in the fields of trade and economy.

Iran's commercial envoy will be dispatched to Tajikistan by the end of the current Iranian year (March

19, 2024) for boosting bilateral cooperation, Zeyghami underlined.

Participation of Iranian companies in Tajikistan international fairs and admission of trade delegations of the two countries are among the main programs adopted at the organization in line with boosting trade exchanges, he continued.

Zeyghami also pointed to the high capability of Iran's technical-engineering companies and called for the cooperation of Tajikistan for the active presence of Iranian firms in implementing important projects in Tajikistan.

Ample opportunities in Africa for Iran: Businessman

Economy Desk

The head of the Iran-Africa Chamber of Commerce on Saturday urged the government to facilitate the private sector's involvement in projects in Africa.

Massoud Brahman said leading Iranian companies have already established a strong presence in Africa, showcasing excellent technical performance and even competing with American and European counterparts.

“As a result, there is a growing demand for Iran's investment to expand its presence in the region,” the businessman added, according to ISNA.

He said Iranian businesspeople abroad are ready to undertake projects in Africa immediately and capitalize on opportunities for the country's benefit if the government helps them.

Brahman highlighted that the Iranian Chamber of Commerce receives numerous requests from African countries, seeking Iran's participation in their economic landscape, especially in the mining sector. Elaborating on the historical context, he



● REUTERS

mentioned that Iranians have a 900-year history of trade in Africa and have not only engaged in commerce but also successfully transferred technical and engineering expertise across various sectors on the continent.

Furthermore, he pointed out that Iran has significant prospects for trans-territorial farming in East Africa, with accessible resources like water, ports, and transportation offering strong economic justifications for Iranian involvement.

Exhibition of Iranian, Afghan products underway in Herat

A joint exhibition of products made in Iran and Afghanistan is underway in Afghanistan's western city of Herat.

Over 20 major Iranian and Afghan producers are showcasing their products and services in 22 booths during the four-day exhibition which started on Friday, Fars news agency reported.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by officials from both sides, including the organizer of the exhibition Ali Khaksar, Iran's Consul General in Herat, Mohammad Sediqifar, and Deputy Head of Herat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ahmad Saeed Sideqi.

Speaking to the press in the opening ceremony, Khaksar said the economics of Iran and Afghanistan are



complementary and, in this regard, Iran seeks to set up production lines in Afghanistan to jointly produce the commodities needed by the Afghan market.

As reported, household appliances, foodstuffs, steel, and petrochemical products are some of the commodity groups being showcased in this exhibition.

Introducing the Iranian industrialists to their Afghan counterparts can be an effective way to develop trade exchanges between the two countries, Ahmad Saeed Sideqi said on the sidelines of the exhibition.

Sediqifar, for his part, said the expansion of trade between Iran and Afghanistan benefits the two countries.

Hur al-Azim wetland might dry up completely: *Official*

Social Desk

The deputy of the natural environment of the Khuzestan Department of the Environment, Adel Mola, pointed out the potential drying up of the Hur al-Azim wetland, a critical ecosystem in the southwestern province.

Mola revealed that the lagoon currently holds only about 40 percent of its water capacity. The combination of high air temperatures and increased evaporation rates threatens to further deplete the lagoon's water levels, according to ISNA.

"For several years, the water rights of Hur al-Azim have been largely ignored, except during floods, or they have been significantly less than the amount allocated for the wetland," Mola said.

Despite recent water releases, the official expressed concern that the water is not reaching the environment. He cited uncontrolled water harvesting upstream for agriculture as a major issue, and called for stricter regulation of farmers and agricultural lands upstream. Mola also criticized the reporting of water inflow into the lagoon, arguing that the figures do not accurately reflect the reality. He pointed out that the water entering the wetland is largely the result of upstream paddy fields or water lost from farmers.



● IRNA



● ISNA



"One, two or three cubic meters of water is not sufficient for the lagoon. The lagoon needs a strong wave of water to be revived to some extent," he said.

He also highlighted the ongoing legal efforts to secure the water rights of the lagoon, but warned that the process is time-consuming and has not yet yielded any preventative measures to

avert the crisis.

"In the first quarter of this year, only 0.4 percent of the water rights of the Hur al-Azim wetland reached it. In this critical situation, at least 20 to 30 percent of the water rights of the Hur al-Azim wetland should have been delivered," Mola stated.

The deputy warned that the current condition of the lagoon is critical, with the decreasing water level

posing a serious risk of fires and fish deaths. He suggested that local fishermen might be allowed to catch the remaining fish to prevent a total loss due to dehydration.

Mola also raised concerns about the potential for the wetland to dry up completely, which could lead to the land becoming a dust center, encroachment and occupation of the dry parts of the wetland, fire,

air pollution, and other dangers to the living.

In the face of these challenges, Mola emphasized the need for continuous monitoring to prevent the occupation of the wetland lands.

"This work is being done, but if the process is prolonged, there will definitely be people who want to occupy the lands," he concluded.

Extreme heat is killing Italian workers



● SHUTTERSTOCK

Stefano Olmastroni, a cleaner, had been tidying shelves in a supermarket selling farm produce in Florence shortly before he died on 13 July, when Italy was in the midst of an anticyclone called Cerberus that pushed temperatures beyond 40C.

Earlier in the day, the 61-year-old told relatives that he was struggling to work in the heat and was feeling sluggish. He was looking forward to resting on his day off the day after, The Guardian reported.

Olmastroni, who had heart problems, finished his shift at 3 p.m. and was later found slumped in the changing room.

"When they found him, the temperature in the changing room was 39C," said his niece, Sara Nderc Olmastroni.

"He died before they could take him to the hospital." Her uncle had been working in the supermarket's greenhouse area, where there was no air-conditioning.

"The temperature was really high and he was a person who had heart problems – a heart attack could have happened at any time but for sure, the heat didn't help," she added. "It was a horrible way to die – at work, and alone."

Olmastroni is one of five people in Italy whose death over the past week is believed to have been provoked by the extreme heat as a more intense anticyclone, Caronte, broke a temperature record in Rome and nudged the mercury to almost 47C in Sicily. The true death toll is likely to be far greater.

All, apart from a 44-year-old road worker who died after collapsing while preparing fresh markings on a street in Milan and whose family is still awaiting the results of an autopsy, had heart-related health issues.

They include Ciro Adinolfi, 75, originally from Afragola near Naples, who died in front of his son, also a labourer, while operating a crane on the construction site of an Amazon warehouse in Jesi, in the central Marche region, and Gabriele Lucido, 64, from Salerno in the south, who was found dead in his lodgings after finishing his shift at a construction site in Brescia for TAV, the Italy-France high speed rail project.

'My whole being is drenched in love of Ahl al-Bayt'



By Mahdieh Qazvinian
Staff writer

In ta'zieh, the clothes of the enemies of Imam Hossein, such as Shemr and Yazid, must be of suitable colors. Specifically, their qaba, waist shawl, trousers, and the brim of their helmet should be red. Green, white, brown, yellow, blue, and black colors are used for the qaba, trousers, and waist shawls of Imam Hossein and Hazrat-e Ali Akbar, while Hazrat-e Qasem's clothes are either green or blue. Hazrat-e Zeinab's and the children wear white or blue. In ta'zieh, Imam Hossein and his family

always don a qaba on their bodies, a robe on their shoulders, and a turban.

Abbas Nikfallah, a 42-year-old ta'zieh artist with 15 years of experience, strangely, has never been exposed to a ta'zieh in his childhood. Now a renowned performer, he recalls, "I was first introduced to ta'zieh through a friend from Talian."

He remembers that the first ta'zieh he saw moved him a lot.

"On the day of Tasu'a in Baraghan's main hosseiniyeh, I watched the ta'zieh of the martyrdom of Hazrat-e Abbas, and the conversation between Shemr and Hazrat-e Abbas had a profound impact on me. It was then that I visualized myself reciting ta'zieh to a large crowd mourning Imam Hossein."

Nikfallah's performances are not just about the art, but also about the messages they convey. He believes that ta'zieh is ripe with messages, with some being obvious and others hid-

den, only to be understood through the performance. "These messages often revolve around love, unity, and the cohesion of family and social relationships," he explains.

When asked about the impact of ta'zieh on his personal life, Nikfallah responds, "Ta'zieh has a direct effect on my behavior and all recitations. This art is religious and heavenly, it comes from the heart of Islam, and so the reciter is always careful about his behavior and actions."

Nikfallah's talent has taken him beyond Iran's borders, with performances in Armenia's Blue Mosque of Yerevan and Sundukyan State Academic Theatre. He recalls the charm of the trip, noting how the audience was initially drawn to the theatrical aspect of ta'zieh, but after understanding the process, they were deeply moved.

In light of the global recognition, Nikfallah emphasizes the importance of preserving Iranian rituals and



traditions, particularly the art of ta'zieh.

"During the Qajar era, ta'zieh performances were held every day in the famous hosseiniyeh of Tehran. This art was brought to life in the best way possible during that period," he says, adding after a pause, "Unfortunately, many people view this art from in light of its sadness, while it can cover a wide range of emotions in different subjects."

Nikfallah's passion for ta'zieh is deeply rooted in his love for Ahl al-Bayt.

"The friendship and love of Ahl al-Bayt is mixed with my mother's milk in my being. When I love Imam Hussain, my words will influence the hearts of the friends of Ahl al-Bayt, attracting a noble audience and lovers of them."

As for the future, Nikfallah has a wish for the world of art.

"I wish ta'zieh, with its artistic, religious and ritual scope, could become a university majors so that lovers of this art can learn it in an academic way."

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#Quran_is_our_soul

Muslims express their outrage to the desecration of their holy book in Sweden and Denmark.



A Lebanese toddler, wearing the headband and waving the flag of Hezbollah, holds aloft a copy of the Qur'an in Beirut, Lebanon, on July 21, 2023.
● IBRAHIM AMRO/AFP

A copy of the Qur'an is held high in the sky in Tehran, Iran, on July 21, 2023.
● NASER JAFARI/TASNIM



An anti-Muslim group member burns a copy of the Holy Qur'an in front of Iraq's Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Friday, July 21, 2023.
● TWITTER



An Iranian man firmly presses his copy of the Holy Qur'an to his chest in a demonstration held in Rasht, Iran, on July 21, 2023.
● MOHAMMAD RANJBAR/TASNIM



Iranian lawmakers pay respect to the holy book of Muslims on July 22, 2023, in protest against the state-authorized burnings of the Qur'an in Sweden.
● HAMED MALEKPOUR/TASNIM



In retaliation to the second state-authorized burning of the Qur'an in Stockholm, Muslims set fire to the Swedish flag in Tehran, Iran, on July 21, 2023.
● NASER JAFARI/TASNIM



Muslims outraged by the recent desecration of the Qur'an gather in Isfahan, Iran, on July 21, 2023, holding copies of the Qur'an and pictures of Iran's leader.
● IMNA



An Iranian woman puts a flower within her copy of the Qur'an in a Friday rally in front of the Swedish Embassy in Tehran, Iran.
● MEGHDAD MADADI/TASNIM



Lebanese Muslims participate in a demonstration to condemn the desecration of the Qur'an in Sweden, in Beirut, Lebanon, on July 21, 2023.
● EMILIE MADI/REUTERS



Youths hold up copies of the Qur'an, Islam's holy book, during the weekly Friday prayers at the Grand Mosque of Kufa, Iraq, on July 21, 2023.
● QASSEM AL-KAABI/AFP