

# Iranian leopards enjoy favorable condition in northern forests



## Social Desk

The presence of Iranian leopards in the forests of the northern county of Savadkuh, Mazandaran Province, has been captured by environmental ranger Ali Akbar Imani's camera trap images. The video is currently being shared on social media, while wildlife officials interpret it as an indication of favorable living conditions for these leopards in natural areas within the province, IRNA reported. The Iranian leopard, scientifically known as *Panthera pardus tulliana* and commonly referred to as Persian Leopard, is one of the largest subspecies native to West Asia. Considered the world's largest leopard species,

the Iranian leopard has a wide habitat throughout Iran. Estimates suggest a population ranging from 500 to 800 individuals observed in various provinces including Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, Semnan, Fars, Yazd, and Sistan and Baluchestan.

The forests of Iran's northern part serve as a significant habitat for Iranian leopards. More than a hundred individuals have been identified through collar tagging according to environmental reports. Mazandaran's Department of the Environment announced that approximately 24 percent of its area falls under one of four specified environmental zones managed by their department –

national parks, national natural monuments, wildlife refuges, and protected areas. Mazandaran boasts several notable sites such as Shahdezh and Paband national parks, along with Miankaleh Wildlife Sanctuary and Wetland, as well as Semeskandeh, Dasht-e Naz, Do Dangeh, Chahar Dangeh, and Fereydunkenar wildlife refuge areas.

According to the director of Mazandaran Wildlife Department, leopards tend to be scattered across most protected areas within the province where they find suitable environments for habitation.

As nocturnal creatures often roaming forests and pastures during nighttime, Iranian leop-

ards are frequently captured on camera trap images set up to monitor animals and detect any violations by hunters. These photographs are also shared online.

Kuros Rabiei, the head of Mazandaran Wildlife Department, highlighted the presence of camera traps in protected areas like Kiasar, Savadkuh, Amol, and Central Alborz.

"This system not only aids in monitoring animal species and protecting the environment, but also helps track hunting violations," he said.

Rabiei expressed optimism about the future prospects for leopard conservation within Mazandaran Province due to numerous leopard sightings recorded

through camera traps. "The relatively good living conditions observed suggests that leopards thrive there," he added. The improved awareness among forest communities has played a significant role in creating a favorable environment for leopards. In recent years, environmental experts and rangers have provided valuable information regarding their behavior to local ranchers. Consequently, conflicts between humans and leopards have been reduced as ranchers gain better understanding.

"Non-governmental organizations devoted to wildlife preservation along with media efforts in reporting on leopard conservation contribute significantly towards op-

timizing their habitat," the official stated.

He pointed out that spring marks the time when leopards give birth to multiple cubs.

"Providing a secure environment with minimal conflict is crucial during this period," he said.

Considering the simultaneous presence of livestock alongside these wild animals' habitats during birthing season necessitates vigilance from ranchers to ensure safety and comfort for both domesticated livestock and leopards alike.



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## Social Desk

A young disabled teenager achieved an impressive 25th rank in this year's national university entrance exam in humanities, despite his severe disability. Despite being unable to move any of his body parts, Esmail Nasrollahi, an 18-year-old, dedicated 10 to 12 hours a day to studying and managed to achieve this remarkable success, Tasnim reported.

Although he has already earned numerous medals of honor in chess, he has now attained an even greater accomplishment by securing a top rank in humanities' university entrance exam. Esmail's achievement is a testament to his dedication and perseverance as he spent long hours immersed in reading and studying throughout the day.

Speaking about her son's accomplishments, Esmail's mother shared that she al-

## Disabled Iranian teen ranks top in university entrance exam

ways provided him with motivation and support, proudly referring to her son as an "elite." Regarding Esmail's physical condition, his mother explained that they observed abnormalities since he was nine months old when it became apparent that he couldn't crawl on all fours. Doctors diagnosed him with a rare disease.

Describing her son's study routine, she mentioned that Esmail studies while lying

down since he is unable to

turn pages. He devotes himself for approximately 10 to 12 hours each day. The young man expressed his aspiration for higher education by stating his desire to pursue philosophy at Tehran University. He dreams of becoming a writer of philosophical stories.

Due to his physical challenges, he has requested authorities at Tehran University to provide non-attendance classes specifically tailored for his condition.

## One wolf revives an entire forest ecosystem



GETTY IMAGES

In 1997, a lone wolf crossed an ice bridge that briefly connected Canada with the remote Isle Royale, which lies off the coast of Michigan in Lake Superior and is renowned for its rich biodiversity.

His arrival revived the flagging fortunes of the wider wolf population, which had been hit by disease and inbreeding, and triggered cascading effects that improved the health of the overall forest ecosystem, a study in Science Advances showed Wednesday, according to AFP. The first wolves arrived on the island in the late 1940s, and their main prey is moose – giving rise to the longest running study of a predator-prey system anywhere in the world.

But by the 1980s, the wolves were in trouble due to the arrival of canine parvovirus which drove their numbers down from a high of 50 to around 12.

Though the disease eventually disappeared, the population didn't recover right away. The reason was severe inbreeding, which caused lower reproductive success, as well as poorer health outcomes such as spinal deformities of the kind often seen in purebred dogs.

Enter the immigrant, identified as "M93" by scientists, but affectionately nicknamed "The Old Gray Guy." M93 was unrelated to the existing population, and also had the advantage of being unusually large – a big benefit when defending turf from rivals or taking down 800 pound ungulates.

He quickly became the breeding male in one of the island's three wolf packs and went on to sire 34 pups, greatly improving the genetic health of the population and the kill rate of its prey.

Moose are voracious herbivores, consuming up to 14 kilograms of vegetation a day. By reducing their numbers, the wolves helped bring the forest back into balance, which was most notable in the effects on balsam fir – the species commonly used as Christmas trees.

## Contract for the construction of Iran's largest Ferris wheel was signed in Bandar Abbas

Iran Daily – The contract to build the country's largest Ferris wheel in Bandar Abbas was signed between the mayor of Bandar Abbas and the CEO of Salgi Industrial Engineering Group.

At the meeting to sign the contract for Bandar Abbas amusement park, which was held in the presence of the head of the Islamic Council of Bandar Abbas, Mossayeb Nazari and other members of the council, Mayor of Bandar Abbas Mehdi Nobani said, "Today, we have gathered together to fulfill the 43-year-long wish of the people of Bandar Abbas, to take a big step forward and sign the contract for the



Bandar Abbas amusement park."

"The amusement park will be constructed by Salgi Industrial Engineering Group, with the experience of constructing 23 large amusement parks in major cities of the country such as Tehran, Tabriz,

Yazd, etc.," he added.

The mayor of Bandar Abbas said, "Iran's largest Ferris wheel with a height of 82 meters and 28 cabins, each with a capacity of eight persons will be built in 24 months."

Nobani said, "Currently, Iran's biggest Ferris wheel is the one built in Bushehr, which is 72 meters long, and the Bandar Abbas Ferris wheel will be significantly bigger than that."

Stating that each round of the new Ferris wheel takes 25 to 30 minutes, he said, "This Ferris wheel will be built in Dolat and Ghadir parks on a two-hectare land."