

Iran, Russia ink agreement



Arts & Culture Desk

ILNA— In a significant move aimed at fostering scientific and research cooperation in the field of cultural heritage, the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism of Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Russia's renowned State Hermitage Museum.

The agreement, inked on September 2 in Russia, seeks to facilitate collaborative efforts between the two institutions in the realms of archaeology, architecture, conservation, history, and written heritage.

The MoU was signed with the goal of enhancing bilateral cooperation in a humanitarian and scholarly manner, as well as facilitating educational exchanges and sharing of expertise.

The agreement was signed by Mostafa Dehpahlavan, the president of the Iranian institute, and Mikhail Pitrovsky, the director of the State Hermitage Museum. Interdisciplinary studies, archaeology, document archives, preservation, architectural restoration, landscapes and historic gardens, linguistics, anthropology, ethnography, and tourism were identified as key areas of mutual interest, all of which will be explored under the auspices of the newly-established partnership. This collaboration promises to unlock a wealth of cultural knowledge and promote cross-cultural understanding.

Iran to hold conference on Parvin Etesami



IRNA—Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran is set to host the first international conference dedicated to the renowned contemporary poetess Parvin Etesami.

Scheduled for November 15, this significant literary gathering is a collaborative effort between Allameh Tabataba'i University and the Shahriar Foundation.

In response to overwhelming interest from authors and researchers, the deadline for paper submissions has been extended to November 6.

Born in the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz in March 1907, Parvin died in Qom, situated 140 kilometers southwest of Tehran, in April 1941. Widely hailed as the most celebrated Iranian poet of the 20th century, Etesami's poetry adheres to the classical Persian tradition in both form and substance.

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Ancient Iraj Castle to undergo restoration and preservation in Tehran

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

The Director of Shahr-e Rey's National Cultural Heritage Base has officially initiated a significant restoration and preservation project for Iraj Castle, recognized as the world's largest adobe castle.

Situated in Shahr-e Rey, in southern Tehran, this historic effort, as disclosed by Qadir Afrund in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, will encompass architectural reconstruction and rescue missions aimed at revitalizing sections of the castle that have endured substantial damage over the years.

Iraj Castle, renowned as both the largest adobe castle in the world, and one of the world's oldest ancient fortresses, has faced extensive deterioration, particularly in recent decades. As a result, urgent preservation measures are essential, with some sections of the castle having suffered such extensive damage that even experts and visitors struggle to discern architectural elements, making architectural reconstruction an imperative step, Afrund emphasized.

Elaborating on the initial phase of this operation, Afrund revealed that a budget of approximately 10 billion Iranian rials (about \$20,000) has been allocated to kick start this ambitious



undertaking. Initial preservation and conservation activities are already in progress.

According to Afrund, Iraj Castle's historical significance traces back to the Parthian and Sassanian eras, classifying it as a hill-fort city from that time, as indicated by archaeological assessments. Spanning an impressive 200 hectares, the castle's construction was a complex and resource-intensive endeavor, employing locally available natural materials to accommodate its vast size.

Breaking down the castle's dimensions, Afrund explained that it encompasses an internal area of 175 hectares, with an additional 25 hectares dedicated to towers and trenches, resulting in a total castle area of 200 hectares. The remaining sections of the castle reach a towering height of up to 15 meters. Along

the castle's perimeter, there were originally 148 semicircular towers, spaced at 30-meter intervals, though some have been lost to time.

Furthermore, Afrund noted that the castle's length extends to approximately one and a half kilometers, with a width of 1.2 kilometers. The longitudinal walls contain 36 semicircular towers, while the transverse walls feature 32 towers, all integral to the castle's defensive mechanisms. Additionally, four prominent circular towers of considerable size grace each corner of the castle, with two additional towers flanking the entrance gate, bringing the total number of towers to 148.

Afrund continued, providing insights into the castle's construction, explaining that the wall thickness measures about 20 meters, comprising an initial six meters of clay and a subsequent nine meters constructed using adobe bricks measuring 40 x 40 x 10 centimeters. A broad and deep trench encircles the castle, collectively emphasizing its vastness and grandeur.

A corridor and walkway encircle the castle's walls, commencing from the half-wall upward. This corridor once served as a secure location for guards to monitor and protect the castle. Interestingly, certain sections of this corridor and guard rooms have endured, offering

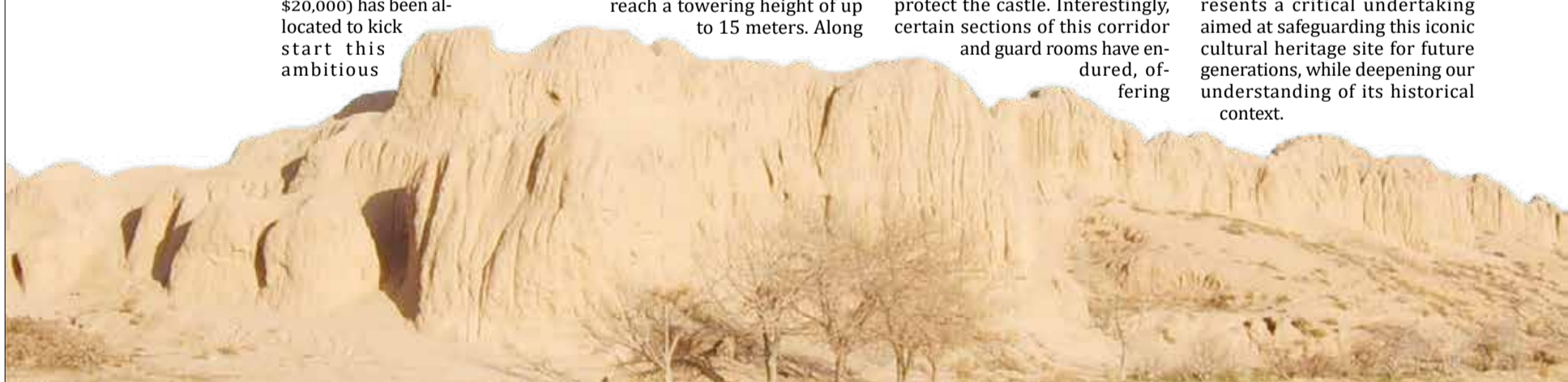
an appealing experience for modern-day visitors.

Speaking about the history of Iraj Castle, Afrund said, "The castle derives its name from Iraj, the son of Fereydu, a legendary figure in Iranian mythology, which underscores its ancient lineage." However, further archaeological and research endeavors are required to uncover the precise purpose and origins of the castle.

Afrund added, "In the Avesta, the primary collection of religious texts in Zoroastrianism, there is mention of a city or land called 'Varena,' or 'Four-point Varena,' identified as the 14th city created by Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord. Many mythologists and archaeologists posit that Iraj Castle corresponds to the 'Four-point Varena,' as referenced in the Avesta."

In conclusion, Afrund speculated that architectural structures may not have initially existed within the castle's enclosure, possibly serving as a campsite where tents were pitched. This conjecture suggests that the castle functioned as a central military command center, obviating the need for extensive architectural construction within its walls.

The restoration and preservation initiative for Iraj Castle, with its rich historical significance, represents a critical undertaking aimed at safeguarding this iconic cultural heritage site for future generations, while deepening our understanding of its historical context.



2nd IROMEDIA event showcases int'l video and NFT art

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The 2nd annual IROMEDIA event is set to be held with an array of international video and NFT (Non-Fungible Token) art, running from September 1 to 15.

Held at the TECH_FAC New Media Arts Museum in Tehran, this dynamic exhibition will feature video and video installation works from acclaimed artists hailing from Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, and Chile, alongside a compelling collection of 13 video artworks by Iranian new media artists.

The Latin American artists on the invitee list include renowned names such as Gabriela Golder, Kika Nicolau, Eder Santos, Lucas Bambozzi, Enrique Ramirez, and Usurla San Cristobal, curated by Gabriel Soucheyre. In addition, the event will showcase works from Elcio Miazaki, Ana-Paula Mathyas, Isabel Rodriguez Ramos, and Franco Paliuff as part of the collection.

Iranian artists joining the exhibition include Behnam Kamrani, Mehrnoosh Roshanaei, Shirin Abedinirad, Dorsa Basij, Melina Clade, Mohammadi Ali Famori, Sadeq Majlesi, Rosie Taheri, Babak Sepanta, Arezou Ramezani, Soheil Kheirabadi, Samira Pahlavani, Elham Kazemi, and Elmira Abolhasani.

The curatorial team for the 2nd Annual IROMEDIA event boasts an international blend of talent, featuring Gabriel Soucheyre (Permanent Co-Curator of IROMEDIA and Founder & Director of the International VIDEOFORMES Digital Arts Festival in France), Saeed Khavar Nejad (Curator and Founder of IROMEDIA Platform & Artistic Director of SAFPEM Institute), Giovanna Rombaldi (Co-Founder & Director of The Double Face/TDF in Europe and Brazil), Carola Del Pizzo, and Marta Bianchi (Directors of Exoart_Lab Society in Italy), and Monika Gille (SAFPEM

Coordinator in Europe).

This year's IROMEDIA event will also showcase NFT art from internationally renowned artists like Patrick Amadon, PHO (Photonis-dead), Joe Pease, and Ali Sabet, with all NFT works licensed by the International IROMEDIA Platform and Middle East & Europe Specified Institute of Contemporary Arts (SAFPEM). The artistic direction for the NFT department is under the guidance of Ali Sharafi, Ehsan Nasri, and PIRArt Studio in Germany.

Spanning over 2,400 square meters at the TECH-FAC Center, the 2nd Annual IROMEDIA event is made possible through the support of the DAS Foundation. TECH-FAC will serve as a specialized hub for local, regional, and international digital art and new media events.

The first opening ceremony took place on Friday, September 1, 2023 and the 2nd opening ceremony is scheduled for Friday, September 8, 2023 in the exhibition hall of TECH-FAC

