

Ancient inscription with Persian found in Sri Lanka



MEHR – A trilingual inscription in Persian, Chinese, and Tamil, believed to date back to around a century ago, was discovered in Sri Lanka. The inscription, which was prepared in China in 1409, offers a unique glimpse into historical connections in the region.

According to information obtained from Morteza Rezvanfar, an academic staff member of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, the inscription was identified in Sri Lanka in 1911. It was commissioned by a Chinese Muslim commodore named Zheng He and was installed in a Buddhist temple.

Zheng He, a prominent figure in Chinese history, is known for his vast fleet of 217 ships and 28,000 sailors. He made four voyages to the Persian Gulf and has left a historical imprint on Iranian records. His expeditions were monumental. He even visited the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz.

Highlighting the cultural and historical significance of this inscription for both Sri Lanka and China, Rezvanfar noted that several Persian words from the inscription were deciphered nearly 90 years ago by Gholam Yazdani, an archaeology director at the University of Hyderabad in India.

Over 1,800 int'l entries to compete in Cinéma Vérité

IRNA – The 17th Iran International Documentary Film Festival, also known as Cinéma Vérité, received a total of 1,839 works from 113 different countries for the International Section.

This year's International Section showcases a diverse array of documentary works, with 70 percent of the submissions falling under the short documentary category. The remaining entries are divided into long documentaries, at 22.6 percent, and medium-length documentaries, at 6.8 percent.

A total of 811 female directors and 1,028 male directors have submitted films for consideration in this film competition. The variety of voices and perspectives reflects the festival's commitment to inclusivity and diversity in the realm of documentary filmmaking. The 17th edition of the event will be held under the auspice of Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam. It provides a platform for filmmakers to share their unique stories and visions, promoting the art of documentary filmmaking on the global stage.

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Iranian, int'l artists exhibit 30 posters on Gaza

Arts & Culture Desk

In response to the brutal attacks by the occupying Zionist regime and the horrific crimes committed against the oppressed people of Gaza, a display of 30 selected posters created by Iranian and international artists will be showcased at the University of Tehran and the Eshraq Cultural Center.

According to reports by the Tasnim news agency, this exhibition sheds light on cur-

rent events and aims to raise awareness and promote solidarity with the people of Gaza.

The poster exhibition, titled 'The World of the Future, the World of Palestine,' will begin on October 29 and will be open to the public until November 5.

It provides a platform for artists to use their talents to address and respond to the ongoing crisis in Gaza, contributing to the global dialogue on this critical issue.



Envoy: Tunisians admire Iran as land of 'rich civilization, culture'

Hadi Ajili, Iran's cultural attaché in Tunisia, emphasized the enduring historical significance of Iran in the minds of the Tunisian elite and the potential for enhanced cultural relations and cooperation between the two nations.

In an interview with IRNA, Ajili discussed the diverse perceptions of Iran within Tunisian society, particularly among academics and artists.

He stated that Tunisian elites, primarily

university professors specializing in Islamic civilization and history, have a solid knowledge of Iran's culture and history. These individuals recognize Iran's historical contributions to civilization and maintain a positive view of the country. Ajili also highlighted that in the Tunisian perspective, there is no historical differentiation when considering Iran; the country is perceived as a unified entity from ancient times to the present. For instance, when Tunisians reference the greatness of Iranian civilization, they do not attribute it to a specific historical period, but rather consider it part of the broader Persian culture.

Regarding the promotion of the Persian language, Ajili explained that, in the past, Persian language classes were presented by the Iranian Embassy in Tunisia. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these classes were temporarily suspended. Nevertheless, efforts are underway to revive these language classes, with the involvement of proficient instructors from Iran and Tunisia.

When it comes to fostering tourism be-

tween the two nations, Ajili described ongoing initiatives, including collaboration with Tunisian travel agencies.

He mentioned that 23 Tunisian tourists were recently sent to Iran, and the Iran Cultural Center provides information and resources to these agencies to facilitate tourist travel. Moreover, cultural influencers in Tunisia have been invited to visit Iran and promote the country through social media and other platforms.

In the field of cinema, Ajili noted that Iranian films have been screened in Tunisian theaters, and Iran has been a special guest at the Tunisian short film festival. Additionally, the Iran Cultural Center has facilitated the exchange of Tunisian and Iranian artists, fostering collaboration in the field of cinema. Tunisians have expressed admiration for Iranian cinema, recognizing its global significance.

Looking ahead, the Iran Cultural Center aims to continue promoting Iranian cinema and explore opportunities for the further development of cultural exchanges between Iran and Tunisia.



Syed Ali Shah Geelani; A life dedicated to Kashmir

By Shehnaz Nawaz
 Researcher at Pakistan's MOIB

OPINION

Syed Ali Shah Geelani was a symbol of Kashmir's resistance. Geelani spearheaded Kashmir's movement for the right to self-determination and was a staunch proponent of merging the Indian-controlled Kashmir with Pakistan. As soon as the news of his death began to make the rounds in the disputed Himalayan region, authorities blocked internet access and deployed hundreds of troops in the main city of Srinagar to prevent a mass funeral procession or protests against Indian rule.

India had reasons to be apprehensive obviously. For decades, Geelani was the symbol of popular resistance for the Kashmiris who either wanted to carve an independent country out of the Himalayan territory or merge with neighboring Pakistan. He headed the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), an umbrella group

of various Kashmiri political and religious groups formed in 1993 to spearhead a movement for the region's right to self-determination. One of the core principles of Geelani's political ideology was the right to self-determination. He firmly believed that the Kashmiri people should have the right to decide their own destiny through a free and fair plebiscite. Geelani's advocacy for self-determination aligned with international norms and the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, which call for a plebiscite to determine the future of the region.

Throughout his life, Geelani was an ardent critic of the Indian rule in Kashmir. He consistently opposed what he viewed as the Indian government's oppressive policies and military presence in the region. His unwavering stance made him a symbol of resistance against what he and many Kashmiris saw as an occupation. Geelani was a vocal advocate for human rights in Kashmir. He brought attention to the alleged human rights abuses, including

extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture, carried out by Indian security forces in the region. His efforts to shed light on these issues earned him respect from human rights organizations and activists worldwide.

Despite his staunch opposition to Indian rule, Geelani consistently advocated for non-violence and peaceful resistance. He believed in the power of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the Kashmir issue. Throughout his career, he called for meaningful negotiations between India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri leadership to find a peaceful and just solution to the conflict.

Geelani's dedication to the Kashmiri cause did not go unnoticed on the global stage. He received international recognition for his efforts to highlight the plight of the Kashmiri people. His speeches and writings have resonated with audiences worldwide, garnering support for the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination.

Geelani's path was fraught with challenges and personal sacrific-

es. He faced numerous periods of house arrest and detention by the Indian authorities. Despite these hardships, he remained steadfast in his commitment to the Kashmiri people's cause, inspiring many with his resilience.

Geelani's life and struggle were defined by his unwavering commitment to the rights and self-determination of the Kashmiri people. His advocacy for non-violence, human rights, and peaceful resistance earned him respect both within Kashmir and on the global stage. As the world continues to grapple with the complex Kashmir issue, Geelani remains a symbol of hope and determination for the Kashmiri people and their quest for self-determination.

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