

Gender distribution in births shows 52% boys born in nine months



Social Desk

IRNA – Iran's Civil Status Registration Organization revealed that 52% of newborns in the country this year are boys, marking a slight increase in the birth of male infants during the nine-month period from March 21 to December 21.

According to the data from the organization and the National Population Monitoring Center, out of the total births during this period, 51.8% were boys, while 48.2% were girls.

The organization reported a total of 798,550 registered births in the country from the beginning of the Iranian calendar year (March 21) until December 21. Tehran Province had the highest record of births, with 99,633 newborns, while Semnan Province recorded the lowest with 5,201.

The report also detailed that out of the total births, 36.4% were firstborns, 38.9% were second-born, 17.6% were third-born, 5.1% were fourth-born, and 2% were fifth-born.

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Qand-e Parsi stamp unveiled to promote Persian

Culture Ministry committed to preserving Persian language: *Esmaeili*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili unveiled the Qand-e Parsi stamp during a ceremony on January 22 at Tehran's Rudaki Hall, recognizing the unparalleled role of the renowned poet Ferdowsi in promoting the Persian language.

Speaking at the event, Esmaeili emphasized the ministry's commitment to preserve and promote the Persian language. He highlighted the significance of the Persian language as a key factor in shaping the identity of a powerful Iranian government and nation.

Esmaeili praised the cultural heritage left by Persian literary figures such as Ferdowsi, Saadi, and Hafez, expressing hope that Iranians would remain faithful guardians of this valuable legacy, IRNA reported.

The first national Qand-e Parsi conference was attended by cultural figures, artists, media representatives, and Persian-speaking ambassadors.

Esmaeili acknowledged the challenges but noted with pride that

despite difficulties, the younger generation easily reads classical Persian literature such as Saadi's 'Bustan' (The Orchard) and 'Golestan' (The Rose Garden), showcasing an impressive linguistic continuity even after nearly 800 years passed from the publication.

The minister stressed the responsibility to honor the contributions of Persian literary figures in calligraphy and linguistic structures.

He criticized the incorrect use of diacritical marks in Persian scripts and condemned the brevity and broken form of words in online spaces.

Esmaeili expressed gratitude to those defending the Persian language, especially highlighting the efforts of colleagues at Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), urging against the use of foreign words by senior officials. Addressing historical places, Esmaeili pointed out instances where city names were written in non-Persian script, emphasizing the importance of using Persian names alongside English for cities but denouncing the exclusive use of foreign words.



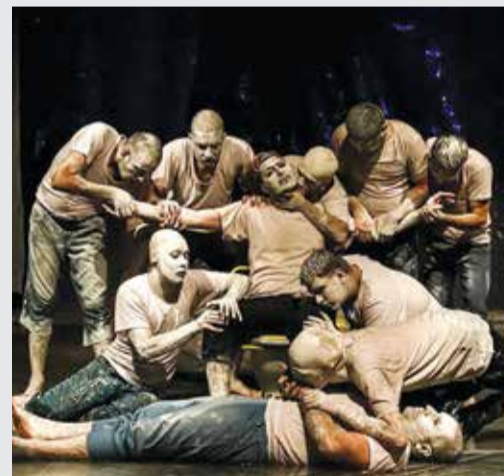
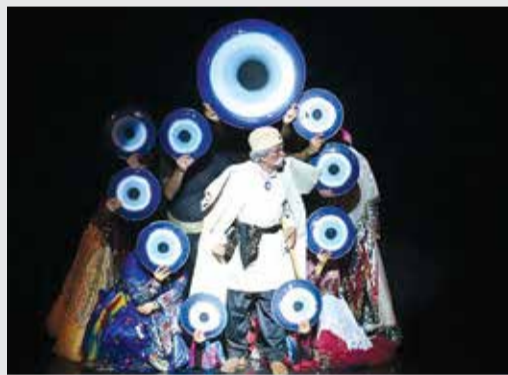
Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili (R), unveils Qand-e Parsi stamp during a ceremony at Tehran's Rudaki Hall on January 22, 2024, marking the role of renowned poet Ferdowsi in promoting the Persian language. ● IRNA

The first Qand-e Parsi Awards ceremony, organized by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, celebrated creative achievements in advertising,

social responsibility, cultural advertising, and various media, with winners honored at Tehran's Rudaki Hall on May 12. Commemorating Ferdowsi and

Persian Language Day on May 15, the event highlighted the ongoing commitment to preserving and enhancing the rich cultural heritage of the Persian language.

FADJR INTERNATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL IN PHOTOS



The 42nd Fadjr International Theater Festival kicked off in Tehran on January 21, 2024, and will be running until February 1, 2024. The festival's stage shows are being held at various venues, including Vahdat Hall, City Theater Complex, Sangelaj Theater, Hafez Hall, Art Hall, Mehrab Theater Complex, and Iranshahr Hall. ● IRNA

Winning images from 2023 Travel Photographer of the Year contest reveal world's beauty and tragedy



Tuscan hills shrouded in mist

Mist rising from the Tuscan hills, a tiny fish staring at the neck of a glass bottle, and a pangolin tucked contentedly under the chin of her carer are among the winning entries from the 2023 Travel Photographer of the Year competition. Shot all around the globe, the images illuminate both the beauty and tragedy that arise when humans interact with the natural world, CNN reported. Judges crowned Slovenian photographer Andreja Ravnak the overall winner for her depictions of dream-

like European landscapes, after considering more than 20,000 images submitted by photographers from more than 150 countries. Ravnak, an architect by trade, acknowledged the "complex task" faced by the judges and thanked them in a statement for recognizing her work. "I've seen many excellent and creative photos in this year's TPOTY final and it's such a great honour to find my work recognized," she said. "Congratulations to all the winners; together, we are enthusiastically documenting this wonderful world, and perhaps this is a small con-

tribution, a reminder to preserve its wonder for future generations." Other winners included Athanasios Maloukos in the "People and Cultures" category for his photos of shamans performing rituals to connect with spirits in Siberia; Martin Broen in the "Nature, Wildlife & Conservation" category with his photo series of the Mobula ray migration in Mexico; and Armand Sarlangue for his images of Iceland's roiling landscapes in the "Landscape and Environment" category. Meanwhile, 14-year-old Cadan Shepard Choi won the

Young Travel Photographer of the Year award for her black-and-white series of photos depicting the Navajo people of Chinle, Arizona herding sheep, shearing them and then weaving with the wool. Her fellow American, Lilly Zhang, 17, won the 15-18-year-old category with her ethereal images of a Pennsylvania lake, and the wildlife drawn to it, in the early morning light. All the winning photos can be viewed online, or at an exhibition held at the NEC in Birmingham, UK from March 16-19 and at Xposure in Sharjah, the UAE.