

ISCARSAH to cooperate with Natanz to restore monuments



NGO, conducts assessments and researches historical artifacts to ensure the precision of restoration efforts. During their visit, two representatives from Turkey and Mehrdad Hejazi, the vice president of ISCARSAH, inspected the Sasanian Fire Temple, the Jameh Mosque, and the Shrine of Sheikh Abdolsamad. The chief of Natanz's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department highlighted ISCARSAH's involvement in devising a plan for the restoration and construction of the dome of the Sasanian Fire Temple. Yazdanmehr also noted that ISCARSAH will conduct research on the Sheikh Abdolsamad Mosque, while the Jameh Mosque of Natanz, adorned with Kufic script inscriptions on brick, awaits ISCARSAH's proposal for its preservation. The collaboration between ISCARSAH and Natanz authorities signifies a concerted effort to safeguard and revitalize the rich cultural heritage of the region, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

Arts & Culture Desk

An international group specializing in the restoration of historical buildings, ISCARSAH, joined hands with local cultural heritage authorities in Natanz, Iran.

Hossein Yazdanmehr, the chief of Natanz's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, said that ISCARSAH visited the historical sites of the county on Thursday night and agreed to collaborate

with the local heritage authorities in the restoration of several monuments, IRNA wrote. Yazdanmehr further explained that ISCARSAH, operating under the auspices of UNESCO as an active



Tehran cherry blossoms festival draws 8,000 tourists

A total of 8,000 tourists attended the Kan cherry festival, marking a 50% growth compared to last year, the district governor of Tehran's Kan area announced. Morteza Mohammadnejad, during the third Kan cherry festival held in the four villages of Sangan, said, "We witnessed the presence of 8,000 tourists at this festival, indicating a 50% growth compared to last year," ILNA wrote. He highlighted the potential of the villages in the Kan district and added, "These potentials have led to the organization of four festivals throughout the year, including the cherry festival in April-May, the

black mulberry festival in late summer, the persimmon festival in late autumn, and the seasonal festival attended by various ethnic groups." He emphasized the importance of holding these festivals to support rural productions and promote organic products, stating, "These festivals in Kan district aim to boost tourism, introduce the region's villages, products, and mountainous capabilities, diversify rural productions, increase public participation in promoting a healthy lifestyle, strengthen family bonds, protect the environment and promote recycling, preserve natural resources, enhance social

activities, and promote universal sports throughout the year." Mohammadnejad added, "Alongside these exquisite products, three ancient sites, including a 4,000-year-old plantain tree, a historical waterfall, and a 250-year-old historical caravanserai, are among the other attractions that attract eager tourists to this beautiful mountainous region." The Kan cherry festival not only celebrates the cultural richness of the region but also serves as a platform for economic growth and sustainable tourism, drawing visitors to experience the beauty and heritage of Kan's villages.

Pedaling through time: Tehran's age-old bicycle repair shop keeps tradition rolling



By Sadeq Dehqan
 Staff writer

In the heart of Tehran's historic Shapour neighborhood, settled along Zafar al-Dawla Street (near Shapour Square (Vahdat Square)), lies Hassan Hatef's bicycle repair shop, a relic of a bygone era. At 56, Hassan reflects on nearly a century of family tradition, recounting tales of resilience amidst changing times. If you've ever strolled around the Shapour neighborhood, part of Tehran's historic fabric, you've likely come across its ancient alleys and passages, resonating with names of prominent figures of the past like Mostofi Lane, Vazir Daftar Lane, Qavam al-Dawla Bazaar, and Moti al-Dawla Alley, among others. Zafar al-Dawla Street takes its name from a dynasty that became part of the Qajar administration. Fat'hollah Khan Zafar al-Dawla was one of its descendants, a high-ranking military commander during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, who, despite the government's ceasefire order, confronted and immobilized British forces.

The Hatef family, residents of the Shapour neighborhood and Zafar al-Dawla Street, has a long-standing connection with this area. Hassan and his father spent nearly 90 years working as bicycle makers in this very room. Reflecting on the neighborhood's past, Hassan says, "Don't judge Shapour solely as a lower-middle-class neighborhood; historically, it was among the elite neighborhoods of the capital. Notable figures from the Qajar and Pahlavi eras resided here. The intersection of Vahdat Square, or Shapour as it was known, used to be a significant city square, adjacent to Tehran's main bazaar, attracting merchants and dignitaries." "My father was born here in 1924, and this has been our family shop since then. He bought the shop's goodwill from his father. All the wooden shelves you see inside were made by my grandfather around 1936. Before owning the shop, my father worked as an apprentice under the auspice of a master here. After returning from military service, he became a master himself and took over the shop," he adds. Describing the shop's structure,

Hassan explains, "This room is part of a large ancient building, once considered a caravanserai and later converted into a garage. One of Tehran's oldest theaters operated here, and remnants of its stage and stairs remain inside the garage. In fact, this shop was part of that building; initially, it served as a tobacco warehouse before being transformed into rooms and shops." Regarding the evolution of his business, Hassan mentions, "In the past, bicycles were crucial means of transportation, driv-



ing demand for bicycle repairs. However, people's circumstances were different; not everyone could afford a new bicycle, so my father rented bicycles by the hour. He used to say that back then, tubes for all bicycle sizes weren't available; mostly, tubes for old 28-inch bicycles were in the market, and he would cut and fit them for smaller bicycles using various tricks." Asked about his entry into the family business, Hassan says, "It wasn't a matter of choice; I've been working alongside my father since childhood because he was alone. After my military service, I continued his path. Now, after 40 to 50 years in the bicycle business, my physical abilities have diminished, but I continue due to necessity. Years of sitting and standing repairing tires have worn me out; I suffer from arthritis in my knees and back and have hand pain." Regarding his income, he remarks, "It was decent once, but not anymore. People now prefer fancy stores and tend to replace rather than repair items immediately. It's more about replacement than repair. Even bicycle riding isn't as popular among children anymore. Par-



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ents buy electric cars for them as they grow older. Previously, adults also used bicycles for daily commuting. Those who have shifted to repairing new motorbikes have good earnings, but as a bicycle repairman, I struggle to make ends meet. Occasionally, I repair old Honda motorcycles, but I avoid new ones." Pointing to a wooden box beside him, Hassan says, "This box is filled to the brim with old magazines from before the revolution and the past years. Some of them have decayed. During the big flood of 1988 in Tajrish, water flooded all along Valiasr Street and its surroundings. The floodwater seeped into our shop, leaving half a

meter of mud and silt on the floor. At that time, the Iran-Iraq War hadn't ended, and I was on the southern and western fronts. When I returned, I found that half of the magazines had been destroyed by the flood. I disposed of them, but some still remain in the box." Asking about the future of his shop and his profession, he says, "It's unclear how many more years I can continue. I've tried to involve my son in the business several times, but he showed no interest. For now, I'll keep working as long as I can, and I won't alter the appearance of the shop, which is a legacy from my father and grandfather, until I see what the future holds."