

# Pezeshkian brings home 1,100 Achaemenid tablets from US

President Masoud Pezeshkian returned to Tehran from New York after participating in the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, bringing with him 1,100 historical clay tablets from the Achaemenid era. The tablets were repatriated following intensive consultations of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Iranian Vice President for Legal Affairs Majid Ansari with the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago (CEAS), Press TV reported. The Achaemenid tablets dating to the sixth century BC are among the most important works of Iranian art and history. They contain vital insights into road resource management, social relations, basic necessities of life, wages, and the economy of Achaemenid society. The tablets constitute records of "the rituals and the way of life of our ancestors," said Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ali Darabi. The tablets, inscribed in cuneiform, Elamite, and Aramaic languages, provide a unique window into the world of one of the most powerful empires in history. They are mainly about the management of natural resources, roads, social relations, basic necessities of life, wages and the economy of the Achaemenid society during the rule of Darius I, commonly

known as Darius the Great. The Achaemenid Empire was the largest of the empires of the ancient Near East and extended from the Balkans and Egypt to India and Central Asia. This is the sixth batch of Achaemenid-era artifacts returned to Iran, with a total of 6,868 artifacts recovered so far. The fifth batch, which included 3,506 artifacts, was returned to Iran last year, Darabi said. The artifacts, which include ancient clay tablets and inscriptions, will be transferred to the National Museum of Iran and will undergo a 72-hour quarantine before being examined by a team of experts, Darabi said. The artifacts had previously been studied by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, but Iranian experts will re-examine them to verify their authenticity. "The American side undertook to return the rest within a set timeframe," Darabi said. The clay tablets, numbering about 30,000, were discovered by archeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago in the 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. About 90 years ago, they were transferred to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago on a three-year loan. However, the US has repeatedly resorted to excuses to put off repatriating the tablets to Iran,

according to officials. In 2006, a US federal court ruling sought to seize and auction the invaluable collection of ancient clay tablets. However, an appeals court later overturned the ruling, and in 2018, the US Supreme Court affirmed the subsequent ruling that the collection cannot be taken away. Several batches of the tablets and related fragments have been delivered to Iran in recent years, but thousands of parts are still held in the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Last year, late President Ebrahim Raisi brought home 3,500 tablets from the US after attending the UN General Assembly. Iran says the tablets are part of its culture and history and belong to the people of Iran, and that all of the loaned articles must be delivered to the Iranian government intact. "The United States postpones this every time under a pretext, while the Americans themselves acknowledge that these tablets came to the United States on loan but were not fully returned," Iran's then ambassador to the UN Majid Takht-Ravanchi said in January 2022. According to the Oriental Institute, the tablets illustrated the "support of the king and court, deployment of workers, practice of religion, the development of seal art, the interplay of languages, and more."



## Iran, Georgia discuss tourism, archaeology cooperation



Iranian and Georgian officials met in Tbilisi to discuss ways to boost cooperation in tourism, archaeology, and cultural heritage. Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, met with First Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia and Economy Minister Levan Davitashvili, on Friday to explore areas of cooperation between the two countries, ILNA wrote. Salehi Amiri, who was in Tbilisi to attend the World Tourism Day ceremony at the invitation of the UN World Tourism Organization, emphasized the importance of cultural and historical ties between Iran and Georgia. The meeting was attended by around 40 tourism officials from UN member states. He highlighted the new government's approach to opening up new horizons in relations with neighboring countries. The Iranian minister pointed to his country's expertise in restoring ancient monuments, handicrafts, and health tourism, and expressed Iran's readiness to share knowledge and experience with Georgia in these areas. Davitashvili, in turn, thanked Iran for its support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. He expressed his country's willingness to expand cooperation in tourism, cultural heritage, and health tourism.

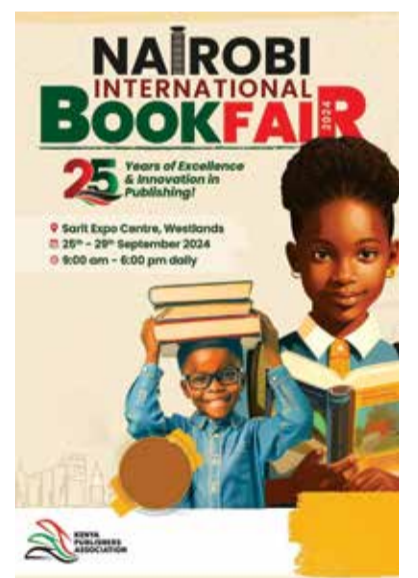
## Iranian books on display at Nairobi Int'l Book Fair

### Arts & Culture Desk

The 25th Nairobi International Book Fair is underway, with representatives from Iran's publishing industry. The five-day book fair, which kicked off on September 25, has attracted hundreds of publishers from Kenya and several foreign countries, including Iran, Turkey, Egypt, and India. The event is being held at the Sarit Centre, one of the largest shopping malls in Nairobi, covering an area of over 1,500 square meters, IRNA reported. Iran's Cultural Attaché to Kenya Ghorban Ali Pourmarjan, representing the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, has set up a booth at the fair, showcasing over 300 titles in various fields, including literature, religion, art, tourism, and children's books. The booth is providing information on the Tehran International Book Fair, the publishing industry in Iran, and the country's translation and publications schemes. In his opening remarks, Iranian Am-

bassador to Kenya, Ali Gholampour, emphasized the importance of books in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. "Books are the foundation of a nation's culture and a symbol of its civilization," he said. "Reading books increases concentration, awareness, and critical thinking in society, and it is the primary link between a nation's history and its people." Gholampour noted that despite economic pressures, many governments support their publishing industries, and Iran is no exception. "Iran has a thriving publishing industry, with over 8,000 publishers and an annual production of 70,000 book titles," he said. "We recently held the 35th Tehran International Book Fair, which attracted over 3,000 domestic publishers and hundreds of foreign participants, with over 5 million visitors and sales of over \$5 million." The ambassador expressed hope that the Nairobi book fair would be a catalyst for cooperation between Iranian and Kenyan publishers, particularly in

the areas of children's literature, fiction, poetry, and technology. He also announced that a memorandum of understanding had been signed between the Tehran and Nairobi book fairs, aimed at promoting cooperation and exchange between publishers, authors, and illustrators from both countries. Gholampour also highlighted the potential for cultural exchange between Iran and Kenya, saying that the Iranian market is eager to receive books on literature, culture, history, and other subjects from Kenya, both in print and digital formats. He invited Kenyan writers and publishers to participate in Iran's Top and Grant schemes, which support the publication of hundreds of titles abroad each year. The envoy concluded by emphasizing the importance of cultural exchange in promoting understanding and cooperation between nations. "The persistence and continuity of relations between nations depend on their fa-



miliarity with each other's culture and social norms, which can be achieved through books, films, illustrations, and art," he said.

## A major admission...

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who was also in New York, said in an interview with IRNA, "The request to enter into dialogue and negotiations is now the dominant theme in our talks with European countries." On the other hand, Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who is set to visit Tehran in less than a month to meet with the Iranian president, said the return to an agreed framework could be on the basis of the JCPOA but "it will have to be much, much stronger." The outcome of these various stances highlights one crucial point: the necessity of talks that takes

place within a logical, respectful, and non-exploitative framework. As has now been proven to Trump, deviating from the diplomatic path and resorting to costly and disrespectful measures and excessive demands not only fails to address Western concerns but also leads to Iran's natural reactions and the intensification of its nuclear activities. As Araghchi has pointed out, "The path of sanctions has taken Iran's nuclear program from 20 IR-1 centrifuges to thousands of advanced IR-6 centrifuges." Grossi has also emphasized the need to update the nuclear deal, citing Iran's technical nuclear advancements. In any case, past experiences are a reminder to all parties involved. Sanctions have undoubtedly

had detrimental effects on Iran's economy, but they have not addressed the concerns of the US and Europeans as expected. The election of a new president in Iran, with a slogan of engagement and a primary goal of lifting sanctions, presents an opportunity for Western countries to engage in talks with Tehran, share their concerns, and listen to Iran's concerns as well. Now that the policy of maximum pressure and sweeping sanctions has proven ineffective, it would be wise for Western parties to give more credibility and speed to diplomacy. Addressing concerns and ensuring mutual interests could provide a real framework for resuming negotiations between Iran and the West.