

Iran's Mehregan inscribed on UNESCO intangible heritage list

The millennia-old Persian Mehregan festival, also known as feast of harvest and abundance, was inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the intangible heritage list, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman announced. Esmail Baghaei has hailed a recent decision by UNESCO to add Mehregan festival to its Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Press TV reported.

He made the remarks in an X post on Friday, two days after UNESCO named Mehregan, a celebration of the autumn harvest shared by Iran and Tajikistan, cultural heritage. "After Nowruz and Sadeh, Mehregan has been registered as the third Iranian ritual by UNESCO's

Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage," he said. "Congratulations! Mehregan ritual is a symbol of the Iranian people's kindness and tolerance, as well as an example of coordination and cooperation between Tajikistan and Iran aimed at preserving and introducing their common historical, civilizational and cultural heritage."

Baghaei also stressed the importance of reviving ties and preserving cultural commonalities between regional nations. Mehregan, rooted in Zoroastrian traditions, is held every year from October 2 to November 2 that symbolizes the end of the harvest season and the start of autumn to express gratitude to God for granting livelihood.



'The Glory of Persia' tour continues in Xinjiang



Arts & Culture Desk

Following successful showcases in Beijing and Shanghai, Iran's renowned exhibition, 'The Glory of Ancient Persia', opened in Xinjiang, China.

The exhibition, which began on December 6, features over 211 artifacts spanning more than 3,000 years of Persian history, including treasures from prominent archaeological sites across Iran.

The event, organized by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in cooperation with the Chinese government, aims to introduce the magnificence of Persian civilization to Chinese audiences and promote tourism to Iran. The collection includes artifacts from the National Museum of Iran, the Persepolis Museum, and regional museums in Rasht and Gorgan.

The exhibition is being held at the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum, also known as the Xinji-

ang Museum, in the city of Urumqi, Xinjiang Province. The museum is one of the largest in China, with over 40,000 artifacts on display.

Jebrael Nokandeh, Director of the National Museum of Iran, who attended the opening ceremony of the exhibition in Xinjiang, said, "211 historical artifacts and 5 recreated works of Iranian art and civilization, dating back to around 3,000 years ago to the Safavid era, are on display. The exhibition will run until March 3, 2025, to introduce the magnificence of Persian civilization to Chinese audiences and promote tourism to Iran.

He recalled that the exhibition had previously been held for three months at the Palace Museum in Beijing, the capital of China, and for four months at the Shanghai Museum, attracting many fans of Iranian culture, arts, and civilization.

Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, who trav-

eled to China for the opening of the exhibition, met with the head of cultural heritage of Xinjiang Province.

Darabi referred to the historical relations between Iran and China, calling them "strategic and based on peace." He noted that the Silk Road has been a symbol of peace and friendship between Iran and China throughout history.

The exhibition is a significant cultural event, marking the third stop of "The Glory of Ancient Persia" in China. The valuable historical collection of Iran was approved for temporary export by the Iranian government on December 13, 2023, based on Article 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The collection was initially approved for export for six months, and was displayed at the Palace Museum in Beijing. The permit was later extended for another six months, and the collection was sent to Shanghai for display. The collection is now being displayed in Xinjiang Province, and is expected to remain in China until the end of the year.

According to documents, China has insured the 211 historical artifacts from Iran for 114 million and 205 thousand euros. Most of the artifacts were borrowed from the National Museum of Iran. Nokandeh had previously said, "In 'The Glory of Ancient Persia', artifacts from over 60 archaeological sites across Iran, almost the entire country, are on display. Most of these artifacts were discovered through scientific excavations and archaeological research."

'Fargoon' visual arts exhibition underway in Tehran

First visual arts festival titled 'Fargoon', organized by Tehran Visual Arts Association, is being held at Iranian Art Forum's Bahar Gallery.

The exhibition, which kicked off on November 28, will run until December 9, showcasing the works of prominent painter and sculptor members of the association, the forum's official website announced.

The forum is closed on Saturdays.



The festival features an impressive lineup of 40 artists,

including Akram Afzali, Ahmad Habibi, Hossein Esmaili, Abbas Amani, Saeid Emkani, and many more.

Push to oust ...

The West, which opposes the Resistance Front in Syria, has drawn an incorrect conclusion due to a strategic miscalculation, believing the Resistance Front is weakening. Consequently, it is attempting to sever Syria's ties with the Resistance Front to prevent it from serving as a reliable safety valve for it. Turkey is pursuing Neo-Ottomanism and seeking to regain the power of the Ottoman Empire. To achieve this, it aims to play a pivotal role in regional developments. Based on its traditional rivalry with Russia and threats

from Syria and the Kurds, Turkey intends to fan the flames of crisis in Syria through cooperation with Israel and its intelligence services. The assessment of the West and its allies in the region is based on the idea that by keeping Syria at arm's length from the Resistance Front, they can create a breathing space for the Zionist regime to rebuild after the Lebanon and Gaza wars. In other words, Israel has evil plans for Syria following the cease-fire. Structural reforms in the Syrian government require the authorities to take fundamental steps. Today, there is a fragile state, which,

despite achieving relative stability in recent years, has missed a critical opportunity for territorial consensus due to the lack of suitable tools. Bashar al-Assad has lost the chance to prevent the repetition of anti-government developments. He is the best person to address these crises.

Today, there is a succession crisis in Syria. Therefore, under current circumstances, speaking about groups that can create territorial consensus in Syria is shrouded in uncertainty and the Western and Turkish factions lack the capacity to achieve this.

A demotivated army

By Ata Bahrami
Syria affairs expert

OPINION

The armed groups that have been in control of the Syrian city of Idlib in recent years took advantage of one of the Syrian army's mistakes. The army neglected Idlib completely during this time, allowing the militants to launch attacks on Aleppo. In this period, the militants managed to mobilize between 100,000 to 200,000 fighters in Idlib and received substantial logistical support from Turkey and Israel. As a result, these groups were able to capture Aleppo in a matter of days, achieving a stunning victory.

Unfortunately, the Syrian army did not put up a good fight in Aleppo, and if they had mounted a stronger defense, it would have been impossible for things to unfold this way. The Syrian army's retreat was largely due to two major factors: firstly, there were widespread disruptions to communication between army units, and secondly, Syria's state infrastructure had been severely worn down after years of war. When a Syrian government employee earns a mere \$30 to \$40 per month, it is clear that they lack the resilience to withstand pressure, and the enemy can easily buy off many of the government's forces, which is exactly what happened. A number of Syr-

ian soldiers readily handed over their posts to the enemy. When a Syrian colonel is paid just \$50 a month, or a general earns only \$280 — equivalent to the salary of an average employee in Iran — it is unrealistic to expect miracles. Meanwhile, the enemy is splurging \$10,000 to recruit fighters. Some Arab states, Turkey, and Israel have all spent enormous sums of money in Syria.

The developments in Syria are, in a way, a continuation of the war the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. Israel failed to achieve its objectives in Gaza, and the cease-fire in Lebanon added to its setbacks, prompting them to turn their attention to Syria.