

Iran, Iraq sign deal for scientific cooperation

Arts & Culture Desk

A significant agreement aimed at enhancing scientific collaboration between Iran and Iraq was officially signed on Sunday, coinciding with the inaugural day of Iran-Iraq Science Week. The agreement was endorsed by Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei Saraf and his Iraqi counterpart, Naem al-Aboudi. The signing ceremony took place in the Iraqi city of Karbala, with both ministers emphasizing the importance of this initiative for fostering educational ties, ISNA reported. The agreement was signed by Omid Rezaeifar, head of the Center for International Studies and Cooperation (CISS) of the

Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and Haidar Abdul Zaid, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education in Iraq. Simaei Saraf arrived in Iraq on Wednesday evening to attend the second Iran-Iraq Science Week event. He was welcomed by Mohammad Kazem Al-Sadeq, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Baghdad.

Key components of the plan include strengthening joint scholarship programs for undergraduate and graduate studies, particularly under the initiative titled "Study in Iraq." The agreement also outlines the organization of training workshops for faculty and students, encouragement of collaborative scientific guidance, and provi-



Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei Saraf (L) and Iraq's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Naem al-Aboudi (R) oversee the signing ceremony of a plan aimed at boosting bilateral scientific cooperation on January 19, 2025.

● ISNA

sions for the exchange of university professors to conduct joint research and deliver lectures in their respective fields. In his remarks at the ceremony, Simaei Saraf expressed that the Iran-Iraq Science Week represents "an excellent opportunity for planning and a significant step towards deepening the long-term scientific cooperation" between the two nations. He highlighted the shared re-



ligion, language, and civilizational heritage as a robust foundation for enhancing bilateral relations. "This occasion provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on the shared history, rich scientific heritage, and

limitless potential for collaboration between the two great nations of Iran and Iraq," he stated. The agreement also includes plans for the development of a joint science and technology

park in Iraq, which will be managed by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, further solidifying the commitment of both countries to advancing their scientific endeavors.

Resistance film festival to promote solidarity, cultural diplomacy



Arts & Culture Desk

The 18th Resistance International Film Festival is set to expand its reach by screening selected works in various countries worldwide, Israfil Kaliji, the head of the festival's international committee, made the announcement during a recent meeting held in Qom. Kaliji emphasized the essential role of international artists in conveying messages of resistance and advocacy for the oppressed, particularly highlighting the plight of the Palestinian

people. "Artists have a crucial role in conveying the important concept of resistance and defending the oppressed," he stated.

He added that the festival aims to utilize the talents of open-minded artists globally to communicate a powerful message against oppression and for lasting peace, resistanceiff.com reported.

The festival's international screenings are viewed as a means to foster solidarity among nations that support the resistance front, according to Kaliji. "These screenings can amplify our collective voice," he asserted.

Zahra Babanejad, head of the festival secretariat, shared plans to establish an international network of committed artists. "This network will facilitate experience exchange, joint productions, and the long-term

promotion of the culture of resistance," she explained.

Masoumeh Afrasiabi, head of the festival's regional desk in Qom, discussed the importance of cultural diplomacy in countering adversarial narratives. She noted, "Screening resistance films internationally raises public awareness and strengthens the cultural front of the Islamic Revolution. International artists possess the ability to effectively convey the message of resistance through the universal language of art." The meeting concluded with discussions among committee members on enhancing artist participation, engaging the media, and outlining strategies for the international screening of selected works. The festival aims to not only entertain but also educate and inspire global audiences on the themes of resistance and solidarity.

Rabab rooted in eastern Iran: *Official*

Arts & Culture Desk

The globally recognized musical instrument Rabab/Rubab has deep historical roots in eastern Iran, particularly in Sistan and Baluchestan and among the Baluch people, the Director General for the Registration of Cultural Heritage and Preservation of Intangible and Natural Heritage at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage announced.

In a press conference on Sunday, Alireza Izadi stated, for the first time, the National Council for the Registration of Intangible Heritage will convene, hosted by the Cultural Heritage Department of Sistan and Baluchestan in Chabahar."

He expressed appreciation for the efforts of those involved in the department, IRNA reported.

Izadi noted that a primary reason for holding this council in Sistan and Baluchestan is to celebrate and unveil the global registration plaque for the traditional crafting and playing techniques of the Rabab. This element of intangible heritage was inscribed on the global list during a meeting in Paraguay earlier this year.

He emphasized the Rabab's significant historical and cultural value in eastern Iran, stating, "Due to its closeness to neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan, and shared playing and crafting techniques, the global registration file



for the Rabab was developed in collaboration with Afghanistan."

After approximately three years of expert evaluations, it was ultimately recognized as a valuable artistic and cultural element representing Iran and registered as a joint file in Paraguay. Izadi concluded by highlighting the importance of safeguarding the Rabab, expressing hope that the recognition of such cultural elements would not only enhance the country's international image but also boost the tourism industry. "We aim to further introduce this culturally rich region and its ancient music to the world," he added.

Iran reports increase in birth rates across 15 provinces: *Lawmaker*

Social Desk

The birth rate in Iran has seen a notable increase in 15 provinces, according to Amir Hossein Bankipour, vice president of the Parliament's Cultural Committee.

He attributed this rise to the implementation of the Family

Support and Youth Population Law, which has successfully halted a previous downward trend in national birth rates. "In the past, the birth rate was declining annually, but with the use of this law, we managed to stop that decline last year," Bankipour stated at the fifth "Young

Iran" conference focused on promoting the youth population law.

According to him, the law has already had significant effects on Iran's birth rates. Births of third children increased by 9%, fourth children by 28%, and fifth children and above by 51% over the past two years.

This comes despite a decrease of 400,000 mothers in the 25 to 40 age group during the same period. "We have seen that the number of mothers exiting this age group is 400,000 fewer than those entering it," he said, attributing the demographic shift to family planning policies implemented 30 years

ago. Despite economic pressures, Bankipour emphasized that the youth population law has managed to stabilize the population curve.

He remarked, "With only 50% of its implementation, the law has prevented the population curve from falling and increased the rates of third, fourth, and fifth child births." He further called for a shift from one or two-child families to larger families, stating, "This is the exact policy targeted by the youth population law, which has yielded positive results."

The law also aims to improve perceptions of mothers over 35, who are increasingly en-

couraged to bear more children. Notably, the birth rate for women in this age group has risen by 15%, particularly among those aged 35 to 45. Bankipour noted that the gap between marriage and the birth of the first child has decreased from over six years to four years.

Bankipour also addressed the issue of unnecessary sterilizations, stating that such procedures will only be allowed if medically justified. He noted that the distribution of free contraceptive supplies has ceased under the new policies, aimed at controlling resource use and preventing misuse. While acknowledging some

criticisms of the new family support policies, Bankipour assured that essential items remain available in public centers, although no longer provided for free. He reiterated that aligning these policies with demographic goals is crucial to prevent past planning inconsistencies.

In terms of childbirth practices, the new policies promote natural births and aim to mitigate the unnecessary rise in cesarean sections, which officials argue conflicts with population health objectives. "Specialists are now required to encourage natural childbirth unless medically necessary," he emphasized. He concluded by addressing



the anxieties mothers face regarding childbirth and raising children.

He mentioned that concerns about natural birth and the possibility of disabilities in children create stress for many mothers. To mitigate these concerns, policies such as educational leave for student mothers and financial scholarships for children up to 25 years of age are being introduced.

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General Tender for Tire Valves
Saipa Wheel Manufacturing Company intends to purchase Tire Valves. Interested companies are requested to offer their quote based on the specifications mentioned in the attached files on: www.kswco.com. Please receive the tender form and send your PI to commercial2@kswco.com by Jan 24 2025.
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