



the foreign individuals.

Based on this, Zafiroplous, in collaboration with the University of Karaj's College of Agriculture, hired graduates in the field of agriculture and selected an area near Galugah, in Mazandaran Province, called Tir Taash for tobacco research activities. This center continues to operate as the largest tobacco research center in the Middle East. Zafiroplous dedicated 42 years to the cultivation and production of tobacco in Iran, training numerous experts who are all regarded as prominent professors in this field. Sheybani pointed out that after the Islamic Revolution, it was decided that the foreign experts leave Iran, but all subsequent CEOs prevented Zafiroplous from leaving and stated that as long as his physical ability allowed, the tobacco industry needed his services. Finally, in 1980, he was diagnosed with cancer and was forced to leave Iran with his wife, but he passed away after a year. Documents that he wrote from abroad to Iranian banks to claim his wages are now available in the museum and are considered among the first documents in the Latinized Persian language in Iran.

#### Tobacco monopoly

Sheybani pointed to a picture of a man, in a corner of the museum, wearing a Qajari hat, forcefully inserting a large cigarette pack into his mouth. She explained that this act symbolized a protest against Reza Khan's decision to monopolize tobacco production by the government. Reza Khan had ordered the closure of private commercial workshops and brought cigarette production under government control. The image represented a protest against the closure of private workshops and the resulting unemployment of workers. However, the tobacco company later decided to hire workers from these private workshops.

She added that even later, for many years, when someone retired, their offspring would be employed in their place. However, it has been seven or eight years since the monopoly was lifted. Before that, anyone who wanted to work in tobacco production had to operate under the company's license, affix the company hologram on their

products, and pay revenue for the hologram. This revenue helped the company provide social services to its personnel and others.

#### Social responsibilities

The museum's director emphasized the company's social responsibility towards citizens and said that there is almost no province where the tobacco company has not built a school, university, hospital, or clinic. Currently, Toton Karan Hospital in Rasht, which was built in the early 1970s, is considered one of the largest hospitals in Gilan. The company, especially in the northern regions of the country where there are many tea plantations, has established many welfare, educational, and medical facilities.

From the very beginning of its establishment, the Iran Tobacco Company has felt a responsibility to provide social services to citizens. In the early days of its establishment, as the company was built in a location outside the city and surrounded by villages and agricultural fields near Qazvin Gate, the company acquired a coal projector and showed films to the staff and people in the area on certain days of the week. This coal projector is still available, but due to its large size, it has not been transferred to the museum yet.

She said, "In line with its social responsibilities, the company established a sports club named Dokhiani in the early days of its operation, and its teams excelled in various fields. The club introduced numerous pioneers, champions, and well-known figures to the country's sports scene, including the world champion wrestler Gholamreza Takhti. The tobacco company also possesses one of the oldest Zurkhaneh (traditional Iranian gymnasiums) in the country. It houses a historic metal bell that has been stolen twice but was recovered on both occasions."

"Currently, the Tobacco Museum is open to the public on Sundays and Tuesdays. With permission from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, ITC has devised a plan to expand the museum. While the museum currently operates within the company premises, we plan to allocate a two-story building next to the company for this purpose," she concluded.



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