



Ancient Sasanian tombstone inscription found in southern Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

A tombstone carved in Middle Persian, or Pahlavi script, has been unearthed in Iran's southern province of Fars, an independent researcher told ISNA. The inscription, dating back to the late Sasanian Empire, was discovered in a small cave near the city of Abadeh, said historian and linguist Abolhassan Atabaki. Working under the guidance of archaeologist Arash Nemiranian and with the help of local tour guide Babak Parsajam, Atabaki identified what he called a "hidden" relic. "It had been deliberately tucked away from sight," he said, referring to the

stone's concealed location and difficult access. Initial field analysis suggests the site was overlooked for centuries. The tombstone contains a command for the construction of a Dakhmak—a rock-cut burial site used during Zoroastrian funerary practices. Such tombs, typically made of stacked stones, are rarely found with inscriptions. According to Atabaki, the find changes that. "Until now, we hadn't identified a stone burial with an inscription," he noted. The artifact is believed to predate other known Pahlavi inscriptions in the region, including those at Kalat-e Bahman and the Gabr Fortress. It was written in Pahlavi Book script, a formal writing

style used in late antiquity. The slab is now under review by Fars province's cultural heritage department for possible registration as a national monument. A full reading of the text is expected to appear in an upcoming academic journal. "This is more than just a stone," Parsajam said. "It reshapes the historic identity of Abadeh." The Abadeh region, known as the northern gateway to Fars, has been inhabited since the first millennium BCE. Historically, it served as a key stop for caravans moving between Iran's northern and southern regions. Experts believe the new find offers fresh insight into local burial customs



and script usage during the twilight of the Sasanian era, which ended with the Arab conquest of Persia in the 7th century CE.

Iran touts safety, hospitality as it targets 15mn tourists by 2029



Arts & Culture Desk

Tour operators can help reshape the world's perception of Iran by showing its "beauty, safe-

ty and hospitality," a senior tourism official said on Tuesday, urging stronger global ties through cultural travel. Speaking at a business-to-business (B2B) tourism event at the International Tour Operators Forum in Tehran, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, called on international tour operators to present a "true and real" image of Iran, IRNA reported.

The gathering came as Iran continues its post-pandemic push to revive the tourism sector and meet its ambitious target of attracting 15 million foreign tourists annually by 2029. "Tourism is a tool for peace," Mohseni Bandpey said. "It brings nations together, encouraging mutual understanding and direct connection." According to official figures, Iran welcomed 7.4 million foreign visitors in 2023. The deputy minister said the country is aiming to more than double that figure within four years, backed by nearly 2,500 tourism infrastructure projects — including the construction of 500 hotels. Iran boasts some of the richest cultural and natural offerings in the region. With 54 sites on the UNESCO World Heritage list — 28 tangible and

26 intangible — it ranks among the world's top 10 countries in terms of tourism assets. Mohseni Bandpey also pointed to improving logistics. Over 30 international airlines operate in the country, and around 3,000 eco-lodges have opened in picturesque villages and remote regions. "Creative tourism" is at the heart of Iran's strategy, he said, emphasizing the human desire to connect. He expressed hope that meetings like Tuesday's would "lead to bilateral agreements" between countries and tour professionals. The official opened the event by extending sympathy to the families of those killed in a recent incident at Bandar Imam in Hormozgan Province and offered warm greetings to visitors who had "traveled to magnificent Iran."

Iranian photographer returns as official lensman for French Avignon Festival

Iranian photographer Vahid Amanpour was named the official photographer for the 79th edition of the Festival d'Avignon (Avignon Festival) in France, organizers confirmed Tuesday. The annual festival — one of the most performing arts gatherings in Europe — runs from July 5 to 26 in southern France. Now in his third consecutive year in the role, Amanpour is expected to capture some of the most intimate and striking moments of the event, Mehr News Agency reported. Based in France, Amanpour works with the Opéra National de Paris and is affiliated with the Hans Lucas photography agency. His images have gained wide recognition across the

European performing arts scene. In 2023, he received a top award at the 17th edition of Serbia's Theater Photography Festival, a nod to his "deep visual storytelling." "It's a great honor," Amanpour said in a brief statement, calling the assignment both "demanding" and "deeply rewarding." Founded in 1947, the Festival d'Avignon is a hallmark of avant-garde theater and draws thousands of visitors and artists from around the world each summer. It is known for blending classical repertoire with bold contemporary works, often performed in historic venues like the Palais des Papes.



Ali Rahbari's 'Persian Concerto' set for encore in St. Petersburg



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian composer and conductor Ali Rahbari will take the podium once again in Russia this June, as his Persian Concerto returns to the Mariinsky Opera House in St. Petersburg. The 36-minute composition, which blends Persian classical motifs with Western symphonic structure, was first performed at the historic venue on March 21. The debut received what organizers called an "outstanding" reception, prompting a second performance now scheduled for June 19, IRNA reported. The work features two Iranian tar soloists, Aydin Ollanasab and Mahsa Kharra-tian, accompanied by the Mariinsky Symphony Orchestra. The piece is divided into three movements — Keresh-meh, Raqs-e-Looti, and Sarmast — and draws on traditional Persian modes and

rhythms. The final section takes inspiration from Camel Bell, a well-known piece by the late master Abolhasan Saba. Rahbari, who has led major orchestras across Europe and Asia, is a permanent conductor at the Mariinsky Opera. The upcoming concert will mark his 22nd performance in that role. Tickets, as with many of his previous appearances, have nearly sold out weeks in advance. In a statement, the composer described the concerto as a "dialogue between East and West," highlighting the role of the tar — a traditional Persian string instrument — in bridging cultural soundscapes. The Mariinsky Theatre, founded in 1783, is one of Russia's most institutions. In St. Petersburg's crowded classical music scene, where dozens of concerts take place nightly, Rahbari's programs continue to stand out.



AUCTION SJSCO. D140401

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 50,000 MT DIRECT REDUCTED IRON (DRI) with the possibility of the contract amount increasing by up to 25% upon mutual agreement of both parties, under FCA delivery terms at the Sirjan Jahan Steel Company warehouse (Cross of Gol Gohar Mining & Industrial Co. Shiraz Road 50Km, Sirjan, IRAN).

We invite interested bidders to obtain tender documents by sending an email sales@sjSCO.ir. All documentation will be provided electronically.

All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, May 12, 2025**.

For further inquiries, please contact us at:

Tel: +2186084642

SIRJAN JAHAN STEEL COMPLEX