



# Minister pays tribute to writers as ‘guardians of truth’ on Iran’s Pen Day

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, marked the country’s National Pen Day on Saturday, calling it a time to honor “thought, meaning, and creation.” In a formal statement released by the ministry, Salehi praised writers, poets, and intellectuals as guardians of truth and national identity, IRNA reported. Pen Day, observed on July 5 this year, is officially recognized by the Iranian government. First proposed by the Iran Pen Association and later ratified by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, the day celebrates literary

contributions across the country. The date serves as a reminder of the vital role writers play in shaping public thought and preserving Iran’s cultural memory. “The pen is not merely a tool,” Salehi wrote. “It is a trustee of truth, the vigilant conscience of society, and the expressive voice of our culture.” He described the act of writing as both sacred and civic—especially when “the ink of the pen blends with the people’s pain and hope for the future.” In a nod to current political and social dynamics, the minister commended writers who have chronicled Iran’s “national solidarity and social maturi-

ty.” He saluted those who had written about Iran and for Iran—“responsibly, courageously, and with integrity.” Salehi also paid tribute to authors who have worked quietly and faithfully, describing them as torchbearers of wisdom. “They use words not for decoration, but for explanation and truth-telling,” he wrote. His message concluded with a prayer for continued success for the nation’s cultural and media community in “defending truth and illuminating minds.” National Pen Day has grown in prominence in recent years amid increasing calls for intellectual freedom and cultural resilience in Iran’s literary circles.



## Urartian royal inscription unearthed near lake Urmia



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Iranian researchers uncovered the first hard evidence of King Rusa I of Urartu’s presence east of Lake Urmia, the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute confirmed. The discovery — a rock inscription found in Qarajalu, a remote area of East Azarbaijan province — marks a major breakthrough in Urartian studies. It’s the earliest documented proof of the king’s eastern military expansion, dating back to the reign of

Rusa I, son of Sarduri II, in the 8th century BCE (circa 714 BCE / Persian year 1287 BC). The engraved stone, embedded in a cliff near the historic fortress of Yeddi-Otaq close to the city of Ahar, was decoded and recorded using photogrammetry by Iranian archaeologists. Until now, only references to other Urartian rulers — such as Argishti I, Sarduri II, and Argishti II — had been found in this part of Iran. The new inscription reveals a different chapter. The readable section of the stone reads:

“To the powerful god, my lord. Rusa, son of Sarduri, says: I conquered this land... and built this fortress.” According to the research team — Maryam Dara from the Cultural Heritage Institute, Hossein Naseri of Bu-Ali Sina University, and archaeologist Mohammadreza Rokni — the inscription had survived both environmental wear and vandalism. Its content suggests King Rusa led a campaign through the Ahar-Chay Valley and Qaradag mountains, underscoring the region’s strategic importance

to the Urartians. “This is a landmark discovery,” the institute said in a statement, calling it the first physical confirmation of Rusa I’s activities east of the lake. The text not only documents military conquest but also references the construction of a fortress — indicating permanent control and strategic planning in the region. Experts believe the inscription will help redefine the boundaries of the Urartian kingdom’s influence in northwestern Iran.

## MUHARRAM MOURNING CEREMONIES



Mourners gather for Ashura ceremonies in northeastern city of Mashhad, Iran, on July 6, 2025, marking the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (ؑ), who was martyred in 680 AD.  
● IRNA



Mourners perform Ta'zieh, a traditional Islamic passion play commemorating Tasua, in Tajrish, northern Tehran, Iran, on July 5, 2025. The ritual honors Imam Hussein (ؑ), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (ؐ), who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala.  
● IRNA



Residents of Ardabil gather at Ali Qapu Square on Tasua, July 5, 2025, to mourn Imam Hussain's half-brother, Abbas, and express devotion to the holy household of the Prophet.  
● TASNIM



Iranians from Bushehr residing in southern city of Ahvaz take part in a traditional mourning ceremony at Imam Sajjad Mosque on the eve of Ashura, Saturday night, July 5, 2025, commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (ؑ) and his loyal companions.  
● IRNA

