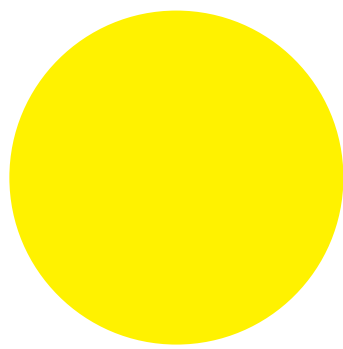




ICT minister touts WTDC-25 as opportunity for digital cooperation
Iran, Azerbaijan plan to ink MoU in digital sector

3 >



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

FM urges IAEA to maintain neutrality amid West's anti-Iran efforts

2 >

Cooperation in BRICS, SCO gives momentum to Iran-Russia ties: **Veep**

2 >



Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (6th L) and his delegation meet with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin (5th R) in Moscow, Russia on November 17, 2025.
fypresident.ir

Birth of first Iranian library of criminal sciences

A hall that revivifies history, delineates future in University of Tehran

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

4-5 >



Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games:

Iran claims wushu, taekwondo success; closes gap on Uzbekistan

6 >



New chapter of archaeological excavations begins at Ebrahimabad Hill in Qazvin

7 >



Tehran to host first Nowruz tourism ministers' forum in March 2026

8 >



Membership gains in Shanghai Pact; qualitative, medium-term

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



Iran has now been a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) for two years, a move it celebrated, alongside joining BRICS,

as part of a more balanced foreign-policy approach meant to help the country push back against Western dominance. Since joining, Tehran has signed several memoranda of cooperation during SCO economic meetings, particularly in the areas of trade, joint investment, banking collaboration and infrastructure development. The question, however, is how tangible these outcomes have been. The 24th meeting of SCO prime ministers, currently being hosted by Russia and attended by Iran's Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, has brought these issues back into the spotlight. In an interview with Iran Daily, international relations expert Mohsen Farkhani

said Iran's gains from SCO membership are more qualitative and medium-term than immediate and measurable, but they nonetheless provide an important tool for diversifying the country's foreign relations.

IRAN DAILY: Over the two years since Iran became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, what concrete and measurable achievements has the country secured in the political, commercial and security spheres?

FARKHANI: From a realist perspective in international relations, Iran's SCO membership can be seen as a strategy for balancing power and creating a diplomatic shield, one that helps ward off the Western-engineered sanctions regime by tying Iran more closely to multilateral coalitions with China, Russia and other member states. Since accession in July 2023, this membership has delivered measurable results across political, commercial and security domains. Although these gains are primarily qualitative and medium-term rather than immediate or numerical, they still serve as an instrument for broadening

Iran's external partnerships. Politically, SCO membership has enabled Iran to expand its diplomatic reach in Eurasia. For instance, at the SCO summit in Tianjin in September 2025, more than 20 MoUs were signed, highlighting Iran's potential role as a bridge between East and West. This has given Tehran greater diplomatic room to maneuver when dealing with regional crises such as tensions in the Middle East. Through the SCO, Iran has also strengthened its access to what could be described as a "soft hegemony" platform, gaining international legitimacy during conflicts, such as the condemnation of US and Israeli attacks on Iran in June 2025. Commercially, Iran's trade with SCO members, particularly in transit and energy, rose from \$651 billion in 2021 to more than \$750 billion in 2024. Key achievements include the development of transit corridors, such as the China-Iran-Russia rail link, and a 20% increase in goods transiting through Iran. Built on mutual interests, these ties will expand Iran's access to Central and South Asian markets and support its broader strategy of a resilient, non-dollar-based economy.

In the security domain, SCO membership has enabled Iran to play a more active role in regional stability, including proposing a regional hub for counter-narcotics efforts. In addition, a security cooperation agreement with Russia last year and joint military drills have strengthened Iran's defensive capabilities, acting as a counterweight to Western threats.

To what extent has SCO membership increased Iran's resilience to US and European sanctions?

Iran's resilience can be explained through what might be termed a "hedging strategy," which avoids binding the country to a single bloc and instead emphasizes diversified partnerships. As part of the broader framework of resistance economy and an eastward orientation, SCO membership has contributed, though partially, to Iran's ability to withstand sanctions. Amid escalating secondary US sanctions and nuclear-related tensions, the SCO has helped Iran reduce its reliance on the dollar and open up alternative trade channels, including expanded transactions with Russia.

Page 8 >

Cooperation in BRICS, SCO gives momentum to Iran-Russia ties: *Veep*

International Desk

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Monday that Iran-Russia cooperation through international organizations such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) could give "greater momentum" to relations between Tehran and Moscow. Aref made the remarks during a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Moscow. Heading a high-level Iranian delegation, the senior official arrived in the Russian capital on Monday to take part in the 24th meeting of SCO prime ministers and hold talks with other participants on the sidelines of the event. The organization comprises Iran, Russia, Belarus, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Referring to the membership and cooperation of Tehran and Moscow in regional and international organizations such as BRICS, the SCO, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Aref said, "These organizations possess extraordinary capacities, and cooperation between the two countries within this framework can give greater momentum to bilateral relations." He pointed to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed between the two countries, saying that, "This document serves as a guide for advancing bilateral relations to the highest level." Back in January, Iranian and Russian presidents signed the long-awaited strategic partnership agreement to further expand cooperation. The 20-year agreement covers economic, transportation, energy, health, tourism and agricultural areas, in addition to



Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin (L) greets Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref before a meeting in Moscow, Russia, on November 17, 2025. fvpresident.ir

Tehran-Moscow cooperation to deal with common challenges, reduce the consequences of natural disasters, combat organized crimes, fight terrorism, and make joint investments. Aref also called for the removal of barriers facing the implementation of the agreements reached between the two sides during the Joint Economic Commission earlier this year. The Russian official, for his part, said that Moscow seeks to strengthen relations with Tehran based on principles of good neighborliness. Referring to the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the EEU, he said the implemen-



tation of the deal created opportunities to expand trade.

Mishustin further described the North-South Transport Corridor as a strategic route for the Eurasia region.

dor as a strategic route for the Eurasia region.

Iran ranks second globally in cord blood stem-cell banking

Iran has secured the world's second-highest ranking in cord blood stem-cell storage despite sweeping sanctions and infrastructure constraints, the CEO of the Royan Stem Cell Technology Co. (RSCTC) said on Monday. Morteza Zarrabi told a press briefing in the northwestern city of Qazvin that the Royan cord-blood bank had boosted its global standing based on the volume of stored samples and the scope of its international commercial activities, an achievement made "in the face of severe sanctions" against Iran, IRNA reported. He said Iran was among the three leading Middle Eastern countries in the field, alongside the UAE and Saudi Arabia, adding that the country "had the upper hand" on many indicators. Zarrabi highlighted key infrastructure gains,



including the domestic manufacture of six liquid-nitrogen storage tanks, which ensured national self-sufficiency in preserving stem cells. He added that the strategic solution "steal starch" used for stem-cell separation had also been localized with the help of knowledge-based firms, eliminating dependence on imports. "Over the past decade, Iran has chalked up 20 major advances in regenerative medicine, including establishing stem-cell banks, storing umbilical cord tissue,

dental pulp and amniotic membrane, performing therapeutic transplants, conducting trials for autism, arthritis and MS, and launching the country's first birth-product refinery," he said. The RSCTC is a semi-state knowledge-based firm founded in 2005 and headquartered in Tehran, with 41 active branches nationwide. It is affiliated with the Royan Institute and specializes in collecting, processing and storing umbilical cord stem cells from newborns. "Stem-cell applications for treating severe con-

ditions — including blood cancers, thalassemia, immune deficiencies, childhood cerebral palsy, cardiac disease, arthritis and congenital anemia — are rapidly expanding," Zarrabi said. He added the RSCTC had stored 250,000 private cord-blood samples and held 5,100 public samples, which would play a crucial role in patient treatment. "So far, 40 hematology patients and 60 neurological patients have been treated with cord-blood stem cells, with successful outcomes reported." Looking ahead to the company's third decade, Zarrabi said the center aimed to pursue targeted use of stem cells and expand international connectivity so that personalized genetic analysis using gene-editing techniques could be brought into routine practice.

FM urges IAEA to maintain neutrality amid West's anti-Iran efforts



Abbas Araghchi



Sergei Lavrov

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday called on the UN nuclear agency to uphold its technical mandate, avoid political approaches, and resist pressure from the US and its European allies as they were expected to introduce a resolution against the Islamic Republic. During a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Araghchi said Iran had always pursued a "constructive and responsible" approach in its engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The phone call came ahead of an IAEA Board of Governors meeting, where the US and the European troika — Britain, France, and Germany — plan to put forward a resolution to criticize Iran over its "lack of cooperation" with the agency. The upcoming meeting is scheduled to take place from November 19 to 21 in Vienna. Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi warned

on Sunday that Iran would do a "fundamental review" of its engagement with the UN nuclear watchdog if the 35-member Board of Governors adopted a new resolution. "These countries, instead of being held accountable for their silence and inaction regarding the US and Israeli attacks on Iran [in June], now want to impose further pressure on Iran," Gharibabadi said, adding the reason was that they failed to achieve what they sought through the snapback mechanism. He expressed hope that the Western countries would "act rationally" and drop their bid at the IAEA meeting. Following the June attacks by Israel and the United States on Iranian nuclear sites, Iran suspended its cooperation with the UN watchdog as per a law passed by Parliament. Tensions escalated as Iranian officials said the IAEA had effectively provided cover for the strikes by declaring the country in violation of its non-proliferation obligations shortly before the bombardment and then failing to condemn the aggression.

Rainfall causes floods in parts of Iran

Rainfall caused floods in parts of western Iran on Monday, after months of drought led to the worst water crisis in decades and pushed authorities to begin cloud seeding over the weekend. The country's meteorological organization issued a warning for flooding in six western provinces for Monday and said that 18 out of Iran's 31 provinces were expected to receive rain. Rainfall levels across Iran are 85% below average, depleting reservoirs and causing taps to run dry including in parts of the capital, Tehran. Illegal well drilling and inefficient agricultural practices have contributed to the crisis, which authorities say has also been intensified by climate change. Prolonged and extreme dry condi-



tions increase the risk of flash floods as droughts decrease the soil's ability to absorb water. Iranian media shared videos of mild floods occurring in some towns of western provinces such as Ilam and Kurdistan. On Saturday, Iran carried out its first cloud seeding this year above the watershed of Lake Urmia, in Iran's northwest and further north from the areas where flooding was reported, according to the Young

Journalists Club (YJC). Cloud-seeding is a process in which chemicals are released into clouds to increase rainfall in an environment where water scarcity is a concern. However, the technique can only be applied when environmental conditions improve and can only be used as a stopgap solution. "In addition to cloud seeding's heavy cost, the amount of rainfall it produces is nowhere near what is needed to solve our water crisis," Sahar Tajbakhsh, head of Iran's Meteorological Organization, told state TV on Sunday. YJC's report added that conditions are not yet present for cloud seeding in Tehran, which officials said may soon be uninhabitable if the drought gripping the country continues.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



ICT minister touts WTDC-25 as opportunity for digital cooperation

Iran, Azerbaijan plan to ink MoU in digital sector



Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Sattar Hashemi (front), attends the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) in Azerbaijan's Baku on November 17, 2025.
● IRNA

ed conference, saying in a report by IRNA that the summit will be a platform for playing the role of technology diplomacy, knowledge exchange, development of technological cooperation and acceleration of national projects of the government. Hashemi also stressed that a variety of issues such as the development of fiber optic network, the expansion of technical cooperation between countries that have a common approach with Iran, as well as discussions about fifth-generation mobile technology will be discussed. Touching on the natural coexistence between the fifth generation of communications and artificial intelligence technologies,

Iran's ICT minister emphasized the importance of Iran's technical interactions with other countries in this field.

"Today, artificial intelligence is one of the serious issues in the policy of different countries, and Iran is also pursuing its programs in this framework with international participation," he said.

The minister described the meeting as part of the government's "technology diplomacy" approach, which he said is one of the axes underlined by President Masoud Pezeshkian and can accelerate the path of technology development in the country.

WTDC-25, which is centered on "a global, meaningful and cost-effective connection for an inclusive and sustainable digital future," is one of the most important meetings of communication and information technology policy in the world.

The opening ceremony of the international event began on Monday morning in Baku with representatives of over 150 countries,

including 40 ministers of communications, vice presidents and senior officials of various countries. Speaking to Trend News Agency, an Azerbaijani news agency focusing on current affairs in the Caucasus region and Central Asia, Hashemi said on Monday that Iran and Azerbaijan are preparing to sign a memorandum on cooperation in the digital sphere.

The ICT minister noted that efforts are underway to formalize digital collaboration between Tehran and Baku, saying, "We are committed to progressing in this direction."

Hashemi also acknowledged Azerbaijan's remarkable achievements in the realm of information and communication technologies in recent years.

"The rate of development is exceptionally high, and we believe this creates promising prospects for the people. Azerbaijan is our friendly country. Our cultural affinity and shared values serve to further strengthen our cooperation," he added.

Economy Desk

Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Sattar Hashemi, described the World

Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) in Azerbaijan's Baku as an opportunity for strategic dialogue and international coordination in the field of

digital infrastructure. Hashemi underscored the importance of the presence of an Iranian delegation alongside more than 150 countries at the Baku-host-

Steel production chain exports up 27% in seven months: ISPA



● IRNA

Economy Desk

Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) said in a report published on Monday that the export value of the country's steel production chain had registered a 27-percent growth in the seven months of the Iranian calendar year (starting March 21). The report said the volume of the country's iron

and steel exports has increased by 34 percent and the total volume of exports of the entire steel industry chain has increased by 43 percent. "The export value of the country's iron and steel chain products in the seven months of this year has grown by 27 percent to more than four billion and 600 million dollars," ISPA said. "The upward trend of

exports in the raw materials of the steel chain continues, so that the volume of iron ore concentrate exports has grown by 82% compared to the previous seven months of last year, which has caused concern for steelmakers because the concentrate is the raw material of steel factories, and increasing its exports in the form of raw sales makes the supply of raw materials difficult."

The report pointed to the continuation of a downward trend in the volume of exports of long steel sections as an important issue, saying that rebar exports, which account for a major share of more than 85 percent of the export tonnage of long steel sections last year, have decreased by 18 percent.

ISPA also said the export value of all types of steel sheets has increased almost threefold and has reached more than \$408 million.

Iran can be Europe's gateway via China's railway route: Minister

Economy Desk

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd announced on Monday that Iran can serve as a gateway to Europe after initial negotiations and discussions were made regarding the rail connection from China to Europe via the Sarakhs-Cheshmeh Soraya electric train.

Sadeq Malvajerd was quoted by IRNA as making the announcement to reporters on the sidelines of the 2nd China-Europe Railway Express Cooperation Forum in Xi'an, the capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

"Given the geopolitical and strategic position of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region, the reports presented and the meetings held in this forum will certainly be impactful," she said.

"Considering the freight source in China, Iran can serve as a gateway to Europe and in this regard, initial negotiations for launching an electric train on the Sarakhs to Cheshmeh Soraya route have also been conducted."

Pointing to the bilateral and multilateral meetings and visits to China's rail capacities on the sidelines of the summit, Sadeq Malvajerd added, "The important issue is that the rail structure in many countries has led to their



Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd
● Tasnim

development, and in our country, given the existing capacities both on the North-South route and the East-West transit route, the development of railway lines can certainly lead to the country's progress and development."

The minister of roads and urban development underlined that besides the route and rail, rolling stock is also very important, and there are shortages in the rolling stock sector, especially in locomotives, which must be addressed. Sadeq Malvajerd expressed optimism that given the visits and discussions having taken place both in the field of railway line construction and rolling stock

supply, effective steps can be taken to regulate the country's rail structure.

State media reports said in the first eight months of the Iranian calendar year (starting March 21), a total of more than 1,850,000 tons of various goods were exported by rail, which shows a growth of 550,000 tons, or 40%, compared to the same period last year.

The 2nd China-Europe Railway Express Cooperation Forum will be held on Tuesday in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, with officials from countries along the route, as well as companies and railway stakeholders, in attendance.

Iran's kiwi conquers Indian, Eurasian markets

Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Plant Protection Organization announced on Monday that the export of the country's agricultural products, especially kiwi, has captured the Indian and Eurasian markets.

Maryam Jalili-Moqaddam said at a specialized phytosanitary meeting in the northern city of Sari, Mazandaran Province, that the import of agricultural pesticides is completely under the supervision of her organization,



and the agricultural products of the province, especially kiwi, are easily exported to international markets, including India and Eurasian countries, due to compliance with traceability require-

ments and pollutant monitoring. Stressing that the import of agricultural pesticides is completely under the aegis of the Plant Protection Organization, Jalili-Moqaddam added, "A clear example is the increase in exports of Mazandaran's kiwi to India."

According to the official, the restrictions on the export of Mazandaran's agricultural products such as kiwi and citrus have been removed, and kiwi is easily exported to Eurasian countries, India, and China.

Direct Tehran-Kuala Lumpur flights resumed

Economy Desk

The Iranian Embassy in Malaysia said on Monday that direct air travel between Tehran and Kuala Lumpur had officially resumed after a three-year hiatus.

According to a statement from the Iranian Embassy in Malaysia, Iran Airtour has reinstated its direct Tehran-Kuala Lumpur route with one weekly flight.

The statement underlined that the flight began on November 16. Officials expect the number of flights to increase in the coming months as demand grows. "It is expected that with the increase in the number of



weekly flights in the coming months, tourism between the two countries will grow and flourish, and the Malaysian people will get acquainted more with Iran," the statement said.

Birth of first Iranian library of criminal sciences

A hall that revivifies history, delineates future in University of Tehran

By Soheila Nouri
Reporter

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

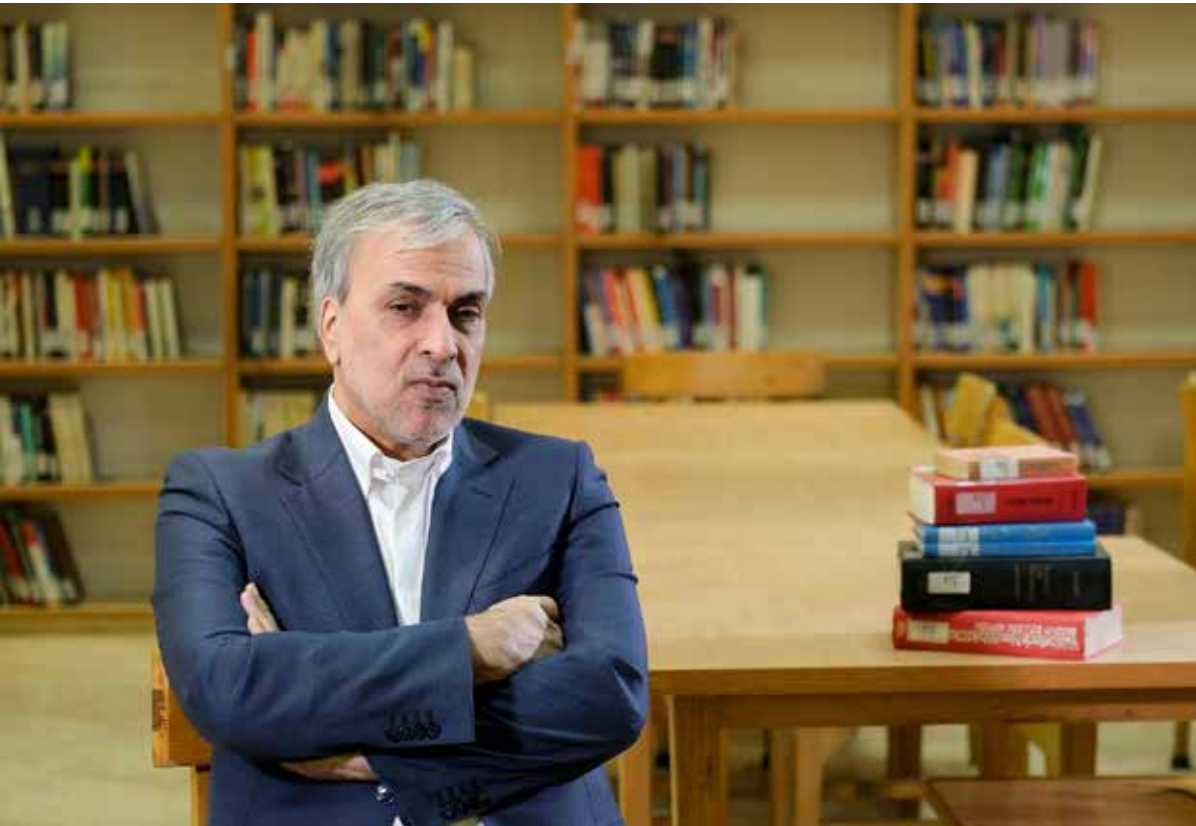
This is the University of Tehran; the “mother university of Iran”. Within the autumnal midday silence of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, traversing the corridor that terminates in the specialized Hall of Criminal Sciences engenders the sensation of entering an alternative realm; a realm in which history, law, and the narrative of a century of scholarly exertion stand adjacent to one another. The scent of antiquated papers has intermingled with the fragrance of newly bound volumes, and the gentle radiance of the sun rests upon books, some of which possess a longevity of more than 80 years and some of which are still warm from their recent emergence from the press.

Amidst all of this, a serene yet energetic face pursues the trace of every single book with meticulousness and ardor: Dr. Abbas Shiri. One whose name is now inscribed beside the first “Specialized Library of Criminal Sciences of Iran,” and it is no exaggeration if this Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran is designated the reviver of a segment of the legal history of Iran.

The construction of this library was not merely the addition of a hall and several shelves to the faculty; it constituted an endeavor to respond to an ancient void and an aspiration that had taken shape in the minds of successive generations of professors for perhaps more than half a century: the creation of a locus in which the criminal sciences of Iran could inhale anew, where the young researcher could attain direct access to foundational sources, and where the authentic visage of Iranian criminal law could be properly manifested.

The Hall of Criminal Sciences of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences is the abode of more than 5,000 titles of books and nearly 800 volumes of theses; a singular assemblage whose absence students and researchers of law had felt for many years. Many of these sources will never be reprinted again; some belong to the decades of the 1330s and 1340s in the Persian calendar (1951–1960 and 1961–1970 Gregorian), and others constitute precious inheritances which, had they been surrendered to misfortune, would perhaps bear no name today.

Yet what distinguishes this hall from an ordinary library is not solely the number of books but the stories that have nestled upon its shelves. Each bears a sign of the history of Iranian law, the trajectory of the University of Tehran, and the generations that shaped criminal law within this land. For this reason, when Dr. Abbas Shiri, associate professor of Criminal Law and Criminology at the University of Tehran, paces through it with serenity, it is as though the pages of history turn within his mind. He is not only the director of the project but the custodian of the juridical memory of Iran, and the narrative before us is an overview of the behind-the-scenes chronicle of the birth of one of the most significant scholarly centers of Iran.



Dr. Abbas Shiri sitting inside his newest addition to the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran: the Specialized Library of Criminal Sciences
● REZA MOATTARIAN/IRAN DAILY

A library that turned a dream into reality

The shelves contain thousands of titles in Persian, French, and Arabic. Further away, hundreds of theses, some possessing an antiquity of 60 to 80 years, seem to have resuscitated a portion of the history of science within the Faculty of Law. Indubitably, the creation of such a space emanated from a void. In response to the question of where he first perceived the absence of such a library, Dr. Shiri returns to many years ago, to the year 1984, the time of Iran's Cultural Revolution and the re-

opening of the universities; a period in which there were few books and few libraries, and, of course, minimal budgets allocated to universities. Nevertheless, he, who was then a student at Shahid Beheshti University, would go to the small university library and derive maximal benefit from the limited works available.

Recalling those days, his eyes smile as he says, “The library of our university possessed perhaps half the magnitude of this library. One or two cop-

ies of certain books existed in that diminutive library, and sometimes I would surreptitiously separate the sections of the books that I required from there and place them in my bag. What I am recounting pertains to 40 years ago. With considerable tribulation, I carried the pages to a gentleman who has now probably passed away — may he rest in peace. He clandestinely produced copies of them for me, and afterwards I returned to the library and restored the pages to

their original place. Mrs. Alemi, the librarian, always told me that she did not understand the reason, but whenever I entered the library, our books became ragged and fragmented, and I possessed no response except that due to the intensity with which I read them, they became thus. In truth, during our years of study, there existed no significant books, nor were the libraries particularly adequate; yet, praise be to God, at present Shahid Beheshti University possesses an excellent general

library, and we, in the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran, have created a specialized library that compensates for all those deficiencies.”

Now, within the specialized Hall of Criminal Sciences, it is as though a portion of the history and historical works of Iran is preserved. For this reason, the exclusive coin of the first and most comprehensive library of criminal sciences of Iran has been minted in the name of the University of Tehran.



The Hall of Criminal Sciences of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences is the abode of more than 5,000 titles of books and nearly 800 volumes of theses; a singular assemblage whose absence students and researchers of law had felt for many years. Many of these sources will never be reprinted again; some belong to the decades of the 1330s and 1340s in the Persian calendar (1951–1960 and 1961–1970 Gregorian), and others constitute precious inheritances which, had they been surrendered to misfortune, would perhaps bear no name today.

A criminological hall beyond a library

The Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran, as one of the most ancient institutions of higher education in the country — established decades prior to the University of Tehran itself, the “mother university of Iran” — lacked this specialized

library; the Information Hall and Library of Criminal Sciences, which was inaugurated less than a month ago (on November 3, 2024) in the presence of eminent professors of Iran's criminological sciences, and will indubitably constitute a momentous step toward

the advancement and dissemination of criminal law, criminology, and the stature of the Iranian legal and judicial system. We inquire of him what factors, or indeed what factors, fortified the conception of establishing this library, and the present condition of

society forms the most consequential segment of his response: “I am persuaded that one of the voids that presently exists in the educational system of our country — and likewise one of the causes of our failure in confronting the phenomenon of crimes, social harms, and economic offenses — is the absence of an autonomous educational and research institution. In a dispersed manner, groups in each faculty are engaged in this endeavor, yet no coherent center exists for this crucial matter, whereas in major nations of the world, university-based and research-based criminological centers exist that analyze the phenomenon of crimes and social harms. By this very rationale, the first step was undertaken so that the path toward eliminating this deficiency might be rendered traversable.”

Through the efforts of Dr. Abbas Shiri several years ago, apart from the principal field of Criminal Law and Criminology, the discipline of Juvenile and Adolescent Criminal Law (for which we likewise lacked specialized personnel) was established at the master's level in this faculty, and until now, it has admitted seven or eight series of students. As he himself states, he has also prepared the

doctoral curriculum for Juvenile and Adolescent Criminal Law because now, after these years and having attained intellectual profundity with respect to scientific substance, the university may initiate the doctoral level of this discipline as well.

He has likewise formulated a curriculum for another discipline entitled “Criminology,” its final stages concluded, and it stands on the threshold of promulgation by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology. Moreover, the development of other modern disciplines in the domain of criminological sciences — such as an independent discipline under the title of Criminology, International Criminal Law, and Criminal Justice — and the admission of students at the master's level in these disciplines have been placed upon the agenda, and he hopes that beginning the semester after the next (September 2026), applicants to these fields will also be admitted.



The photo shows the newly inaugurated Specialized Library of Criminal Sciences at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran.
● REZA MOATTARIAN/IRAN DAILY

A Step toward defending rights of Iranians in world



What appears significant amid the programmatic endeavors of Dr. Abbas Shiri is his effort to create a new academic discipline under the title "International Criminal Law"

The recent imposed 12-day war constitutes the nearest and most palpable circumstance elucidating this exigency. He likewise affirms this crucial matter and adds, "In this very 12-day war, we became cognizant of the importance of the existence of this academic discipline; the Leader likewise indicated that negligence has occurred in the legal domain, and this itself enabled us, with greater audacity and fortitude, to articulate that in

the realm of international criminal law, we have exhibited considerable negligence, and we have not properly defended the rights of our country and our people (from the criminal-law perspective) in international forums, and we have not been able to utilize the capacities that exist in international institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) or the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, and so forth."

Revisiting past to construct future

Adjacent to this library, an independent room containing several computers links students to the great libraries of the world. The digital segment of this hall has furnished access to thousands of volumes of books, articles, academic periodicals, and specialized collections. In this separate section, students become connected to an immense repository of digital resources. Internet speed and accessibility are in the process of enhancement, and the objective is that they may, without restriction and without onerous costs, gain access to global resources. Within the past few days, even the country-wide ban on accessing YouTube has been lifted at this university because the officials believe that YouTube constitutes a scientific dissemination platform rather than a moral impediment.

Prospect of future

According to the statements of Dr. Shiri, the possibility of benefiting from this novel environment is not restricted solely to students of the University of Tehran; practitioners in the criminological domain outside the University of Tehran may likewise utilize the resources of this hall and library. Yet considering that criminological sciences constitute a branch of the humanities, social sciences, and psychology — and that as we proceed further, the configuration of crimes in the country transforms due to cyber offenses — one must observe whether this primary academic resource will provide substantive material for the extensive spectrum of contemporary social harms that generally elude temporal constraints.

Dr. Shiri identifies the reason for dividing the criminological library into two segments, physical and digital, in these very modern offenses and asserts: "The reality is that paper remains behind the pace of transformations. In any case, transformations occur and research is conducted, but before it can be transferred onto paper, many years may elapse. The digital information hall, which is connected through computers to reputable libraries of the world, fulfills precisely this necessity. Students and researchers thus possess access to the most current global information, meaning that if an event transpires today, on this very day — through the virtual domain — they will obtain access to its manifold dimensions."

He provides an elucidation for greater clarity and offers a tangible and delineated instance by referring to the homicide of the late Amirhossein Khaleqi, and to occurrences that arise in everyday life and in a continuous manner, constituting in some sense the contemporary subjects of criminological sciences — similar to matters raised in cases concerning figures such as Kolsoum Akbari, Tataloo, Elaheh Hosseinneshad, Pejman Jamshidi, or even offenses pertaining to artificial intelligence. Irrespective of any adjudicative perspective on these cases, these cases are posited as matters that engage students, researchers, and the public. If they desire to compose a thesis or article concerning these hot-topic subjects, before the written information reaches the library, more than a year may pass, whereas through this digital information environment, one may attain novel and scientific analyses — or even peruse analyses produced by professors — and consequently, in the near future, conceive substantive theses centered upon these very subjects.

On this basis, I ask Dr. Shiri to also touch upon whether one can reasonably expect that this nascent library might, one day, serve as an authoritative reference for the judicial bodies of the nation and a key to unraveling contemporary crimes. His response, imbued with palpable enthusiasm, is even more compelling: "We have prepared a series of memoranda of understanding, some of which have been signed with the Judiciary, the Ministry of Interior, the Presidency, and the Police as one of the parties, while several others are on the verge of ratification."

Imprint of history upon library shelves

In the brief interval since the library's inauguration, the positive reception has been so overwhelming that the deans of Shiraz and Yazd universities have expressed their willingness to emulate this scholarly resource. During Dr. Shiri's recent visits to these institutions, arrangements have been made to dedicate spaces specifically for specialized halls of criminology, with the provision of books entrusted to Dr. Shiri. He, who harbors aspirations to establish similar specialized halls in several of the country's premier universities, has revealed that nearly 6,000 volumes exceeding the faculty's immediate requirements are at his disposal; these books are intended for universities establishing specialized criminology libraries. Since they are donations and do not constitute university property, there exists no impediment to this allocation.

The Criminology Library of the University of Tehran is not merely a collection of books; it is a reflection of a history to be celebrated and a future to be meticulously constructed. It represents an endeavor to bridge the illustrious legacy of legal order in Iran with the complex exigencies of the contemporary era. Here is a locus where history is perused to script the future. Within this assemblage lie volumes of unparalleled historical and intellectual value. One of the most striking aspects of this hall is the linguistic and chronological diversity of its holdings. These texts range from the earliest codifications of Iran's criminal laws, dating to 1929, to works documenting the Iranian government's accession to the Geneva Protocol in the same year. Substantial tomes in French testify to the presence of professors proficient in that language at the university, evincing that Iranian



The glass display cases of the first Law Museum of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Tehran protect the invaluable legal artifacts of the faculty and the country.
● REZA MOATTARIAN/IRAN DAILY

legal scholarship breathed through the Francophone intellectual milieu for decades. Complementing these are collections of Islamic jurisprudence in Arabic, bearing witness to the longstanding symbiosis between Iranian law and Sharia. In response to my inquiry regarding this remarkable linguistic diversity and the profusion of French volumes, Dr. Abbas Shiri elucidates, "In the past, the majority of the faculty in law and criminology, such as the late Dr. Katouzian, the late Dr. Mohammad Jafar Jafari Langaroudi, the late Seyed Hassan Emami, and many others, were either graduates of French institutions or proficient in French. Furthermore, a portion of these French texts was donated by Dr. Najafi, who was likewise proficient in the language." A number of the thousands of volumes housed within this library are unique, meaning they will never be reprinted;

many are donations from eminent scholars and constitute a segment of Iran's academic identity. Dr. Shiri observes: "These books, published over 80 years ago, I collected to demonstrate that Iran has possessed a legislative system for over a century, whereas many other nations' histories of sovereignty extend only 40, 50, or 60 years, or in the case of the United States, at most 250 years. Yet we, 115 years ago, had a constitutional system; a parliament existed, bicameral governance was operational, and laws over a century old were codified." Naturally, many of these works remain current and indispensable for contemporary research. Thousands more will soon be added to these shelves, ensuring that the library's holdings will reach no fewer than 10,000 volumes. The older theses housed here, however, constitute a remarkable universe unto themselves. As

Dr. Shiri leafs through each, he appears a time traveler; for a fleeting moment, his imagination soars back to the 1340s and 1350s. Each thesis invites detailed commentary, and he responds with meticulous patience to every inquiry. These theses, some 60 to 80 years old, form a vital component of the library's treasures. Dr. Shiri describes them as a "journey through time": "While these theses may no longer be scientifically current, they are historical. They reveal the preoccupations of our professors half a century ago. The narrative is such that many scholars, upon discovering this library and its resources, approached me, offering access to theses in criminology defended over the decades by their predecessors. They inquired whether these would be of use to me, and I, believing a portion of our history is embedded within these pages, welcomed these proposals.

Naturally, the content may have aged — such as research on theft conducted 50 years ago, which may no longer be citable — but it remains part of our history. The day foreign scholars visit this university, they will witness the field research undertaken by Iran's eminent professors over more than half a century of academic activity within a lawful nation." I inquire about the unveiling of the Cyrus Cylinder at UNESCO and the connection he perceives between his most recent initiative and Iran's civilizational heritage. With pride, he invokes Iran's legislative history, emphasizing: "By reference to the advanced laws of the Sassanian era and the edicts of Sassanian and Achaemenid kings — such as prohibitions on polluting water, felling trees, or harming animals — I assert that Iran's historical depth far exceeds the oft-repeated 2,500-year narrative. Everything that modern humanity esteems, we practiced thousands of years ago. Hence, it is erroneous to claim that Iran possesses a 2,500-year heritage; in reality, our legacy spans seven millennia. We take pride in the laws and decrees that, when Cyrus entered the lands he conquered, he acknowledged and decreed that every individual in those territories is free to adhere to their religion, language, and vocation. I regard this land as more illustrious than commonly perceived; we possess unique characteristics: we have never practiced idolatry. We are the only people who have always been monotheistic and God-fearing. Our society has upheld monogamy. We have never had slavery in Iran, whereas a country like the United States abolished slavery only in 1955 and commemorates individuals such as the martyred Abraham Lincoln for that act."

Birth of Iran's first law museum

In the neglected corners of the faculty courtyard, precious books and theses were heaped, destined for the trash. The value of these works could only be discerned by one enamored with their nation's history, capable of salvaging them from academic refuse and presenting them within the glass display cases of the first Law Museum of the faculty. Abbas Shiri's profound attachment to Iran and its past has rendered him a skilled connoisseur of value, reviving the significance and quality of materials that many consider historical waste. He has restored rare and invaluable theses, defended decades ago within this very faculty at the doctoral level, believing that, had these works existed elsewhere, they would have commanded millions of dollars. With his characteristic tone, he regrets that items such as a cigarette stub once smoked by Queen Elizabeth or her last slipper are preserved for display, while a scholarly work over 60 years old was nearly lost to university waste. Fortunately, Dr. Shiri

intervened in time and has so far organized nearly 30 percent of these works, dedicating polished glass tables to their exhibition. His intention is to restore every remaining volume in a similar fashion, granting enthusiasts of this valuable historical heritage the honor of viewing them. I ask him whence this spirit and motivation arise. With calm pride, he replies: "Perhaps contemporary society may not appreciate it, but I am a traditionalist, and the history of Iran and the history of law are paramount to me." As he speaks proudly of Iran's ancient history, he stands beside the first glass table of the Law Museum, presenting the voluminous thesis of Jahangir Amuzegar, penned in 1940. This museum was established with the financial support of Dr. Abbas Mosallanejad and shaped by Dr. Abbas Shiri, wherein one of the most poignant yet luminous narratives has taken form. Several glass vitrines are arranged together to ensure

that a portion of Iran's scientific history is preserved. From a distance, he follows the second glass vitrine. His eyes gleam with exhilaration. He quickens his pace and gestures to the first edition of the Law Faculty Library's ledger from 1934, an index recorded in French. Emphasizing its meticulous detail, he remarks: "Observe! Written in French and in a seamless style. Our library staff in 1934 were so proficient in French that they recorded the information with remarkable precision and clarity." Perusing Iran's past is akin to glimpsing the future. Dr. Abbas Shiri draws inspiration from this illustrious past, tirelessly striving to reveal the civilized visage of Iran. This valuable collection also houses approximately 150 to 200 volumes of Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh's works, signed by him and donated to the university, placed in a dedicated section. Across the museum, the thesis of one of Iran's most distinguished constitutional law professors, Dr. Seyed Abolfazl Ghazi

Shariatpanahi, is displayed with utmost respect. After receiving his Federal Doctorate in Public Law from a French university and a certificate from the French National School of Administration, he returned to Iran and, in 1970, was officially appointed associate professor at the University of Tehran Law Faculty, passing away in the 1990s due to cancer. Along the display cases are works by Dr. Saadzadeh Afshar, writings of the late Iraj Afshar — the former head of the Central Library of the University of Tehran who had also bequeathed endowments to the university — theses by Dr. Mo'tameni Tabatabai on Iranian constitutional and administrative law, Dr. Fereydoun Adamiyat's 1942 thesis, the late Dr. Langaroudi's thesis under the guidance of Professor Mahmoud Shahabi, and finally, the thesis of the late Martyr Beheshti, who was himself a student at this faculty. To properly organize the remaining invaluable and recently restored theses, at least 30 additional glass vitrines are



Works signed and donated by Iran's former prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh
● REZA MOATTARIAN/IRAN DAILY

required, so that, like the thesis of the late Dr. Nasser Katouzian — the father of Iranian legal science, defended in 1952 under the supervision of the late Ayatollah Sanglaji — they may embellish this museum. Here, through scholarly diligence and integrity, a portion of Iran's forgotten scientific heritage has been revived; a treasury that, if preserved, will present future generations with a clearer and more precise depiction of the history of Iranian law.

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games:

Iran claims wushu, taekwondo success; closes gap on Uzbekistan



L-R: Wushu contestants Amirhossein Hemmati, Sara Shafiei, Erfan Moharrami, and Soheila Mansourian, and taekwondo practitioner Ali-Asghar Alimoradian won five gold medals for Iran on Day 9 at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Sports Desk

The ninth day of the Islamic Solidarity Games proved to be Iran's most productive yet, yielding a remarkable 10 medals – including five golds – across wushu and taekwondo, as the country closed the gap on second-placed Uzbekistan in the overall standings in Riyadh. Having bagged 42 medals over the first eight days, Iran added five golds, three silvers, and two bronzes on Sunday to draw level with Uzbekistan on 16 golds, though still trailing by four fewer silvers (15). Iranians dominated in wushu,

capturing four gold medals across six sanda classes. Farbod Taleshi, meanwhile, settled for silver in the men's -85kg division on his senior international debut after a final defeat to Egypt's Alhussein Wahdan. In the women's -70kg category, an untimely leg injury on the eve of the Games ultimately cost Shahrbanoo Mansourian dearly in the semifinal against Egypt's Mennatallah Aly, with the six-time world champion finishing with a consolation bronze. Mansourian's younger sister, Soheila, however, finished on a high note by defeating Egypt's Habiba Abouomar in the -60kg

final, adding ISG gold to the world title she claimed in September. The other women's final featuring Iranian and Egyptian contestants saw Sara Shafiei beat Shahd Abdelsadek for the ultimate prize in the -56kg category. In the men's competition, Amirhossein Hemmati emerged victorious against Youssif Hamoda – also from Egypt – in the -60kg final, while reigning world champion Erfan Moharrami captured the gold medal in the -70kg class, thanks to a final victory over Kyrgyzstan's Abror Khakimov. In taekwondo, the Iranians

picked up where they left off on the opening day, with all four contestants medaling in their respective events. Ali-Asghar Alimoradian spearheaded Iran's haul on Sunday, rallying past 2021 Asian champion Mohsen Rezaei of Afghanistan (0-1, 15-0, 6-3) in the men's -60kg final. Amirreza Sadeqian overcame high-profile Jordanian Saleh Elsharabaty – a silver medalist at the Tokyo Olympics – to reach the men's -82kg final, only to suffer a straight-round defeat (6-2, 9-8) against Morocco's Haitam Zarhouthi and settle for silver. A win over Ozoda Sobirjonova

would have seen Yalda Valinejad propel Iran past Uzbekistan in the medals table, but the Iranian suffered a narrow 2-1 defeat (9-4, 7-8, 8-7) in a thrilling women's -70kg showdown. "Taekwondo is a sport of moments and narrow margins. In the last 10 seconds, I took a kick to the face and lost the match," Valinejad said after the final setback. Regarding her emotions after the loss, Valinejad said: "I came here for the gold medal and was determined to win it. Losing the match in the final 10 seconds was devastating – it still hurts – but that's part of the game, and I've learned

from this experience." Rozhan Goodarzi, meanwhile, ensured the young Iranian women's squad stayed on course for a clean sweep of medals, bouncing back from a semifinal loss to world silver medalist Elif Sude Akgül of Türkiye to beat Uzbekistan's Laylo Khasanova 2-0 (2-0, 8-2) for the -51kg bronze. Elsewhere, the Iranian men's handball team recovered from a first-day defeat against Qatar to rout the Maldives 57-14 in Group A. Saber Heidari and Arman Rahmani led Iran's scoring chart with 12 goals apiece, with Milad Qalandari adding 10.

Iran, Poland share spoils in futsal friendly ahead of Women's World Cup

Sports Desk

Iran and Poland, two of the teams set to compete at the upcoming FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, played to a 1-1 draw in a friendly ahead of the inaugural tournament in the Philippines. Maral Torkaman, the top scorer at May's Asian Cup with six goals, was on target for Shahrzad Mozaffar's side at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig on Sunday.

"Poland finished in the top four in the European qualifiers and possess a cohesive, physically robust, and well-organized squad, having begun their World Cup preparations months ago. They had played Canada in a warm-up match before today's game and were already in a competitive rhythm," Mozaffar said of the European opponent. "Their high technical and physical quality provided us with exactly the

kind of test we needed before our World Cup opener, and I'm glad that we made the most of every second of the game," added the Iranian coach, who replaced Forouzan Soleimani after a mediocre Asian Cup campaign in which the two-time champion settled for a third-place finish.

"The players were a bit fatigued, which was normal given the jet lag and the intense training sessions they've had in recent months. They still fought with all their might and worked hard to execute the tactics precisely. This game and Monday's match against New Zealand are a crucial part of our preparation for the World Cup," said Mozaffar, who gave game time to every member of the squad.

Iran is drawn in Group D of the World Cup alongside Brazil, Italy, and Panama. The Iranian girls will get their campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion Brazil – the top team in the latest FIFA World Ranking – on Sunday, before taking on Panama three days later. Mozaffar's team will hope to be in contention for a top-two finish in the group and a place in the round of 16, when it squares off against world No. 7 Italy on November 29.



FFIRI

AFC Women's Champions League: Bam Khatoon beaten by East Bengal in Group B opener

Sports Desk

Iranian champion Bam Khatoon got off to a losing start at the AFC Women's Champions League, suffering a 3-1 setback against India's East Bengal in Group B in Wuhan, China, on Monday.

East Bengal hit the ground running and took the lead four minutes into the game after two blocked attempts by Fazila Ikwaput saw the ball fall kindly to Shilky Hemam, who struck a low shot into the bottom-right corner from just outside the box.

The early strike set the tone for the remainder of the half, as the Indian side dictated the tempo, limiting Khatoon – a quarterfinalist in the previous edition – to long-range efforts, with Sara Didar and Fatemeh Geraeili both trying their luck. The Indian side doubled its advantage in the 32nd minute following a slick buildup in which Amnah Nababi threaded a perfectly timed through ball to Ikwaput, who showed good control before slotting past Raha Yazdani.

Playing without integral winger Negin Zandi, who is out with an ACL injury, Khatoon was given a lifeline in first-half stoppage time after Jyoti Chouhan was



AFC

penalized for handball in the box, allowing Mona Hamoudi to reduce the deficit from the spot. Khatoon desperately pushed forward for an equalizer after the break, with Fatemeh Pasandideh and Geraeili coming close. However, East Bengal turned up the intensity in the closing stages, and any hope of a Khatoon fightback was extinguished in the 87th minute when Resty Nanziri launched

a spectacular long-range effort that curled over Yazdani before settling into the back of the net to seal the win. Khatoon will be back in action against Uzbekistan's Nasaf on Thursday, before taking on defending champion Wuhan Jiangda on Sunday. The top two teams in the group table will progress to the quarterfinals, with the third-placed team hoping to advance as one of the two best third-placed sides across the three groups.

New chapter of archaeological excavations begins at Ebrahimabad Hill in Qazvin

Iranica Desk

A new season of scientific archaeological excavations has begun at Ebrahimabad Hill in Abyek, Qazvin Province. Maryam Mahdavi, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Qazvin Province, announced that the excavations, authorized by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, are being led by Hassan Fazeli — Nashli, a prominent professor in the Archaeology Department at the University of Tehran, chtn.ir wrote. She added that Ebrahimabad Hill, a site dating back to prehistoric times, had its first excavation season last year. The main objectives of the current research include studying the development of rural settlements and architectural evolution

in the 6th millennium BCE, reconstructing the history of agriculture in Iran's central plateau based on botanical and zoological studies, and examining the ritual and spiritual life of Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities. Fazeli-Nashli, head of the excavations, revealed that recent fieldwork has uncovered valuable evidence from the Neolithic period. The site, with a history exceeding 7,500 years, was first stratified in 2006 and contains an eight-meter cultural layer. It served as a key corridor connecting the Central Zagros, Central Plateau, and northern Iran, and is among the few ancient villages in Iran where the earliest farmers lived. He noted that last year's excavations focused on ideology, rituals, beliefs, and methods of plant and animal cultivation. In the first sea-

son, a 4 by 7-meter trench was established atop the hill. This year, given the significance of the findings, the trench has been expanded to 10 by 10 meters. Fazeli-Nashli emphasized that the site is one of the most important Neolithic locations in the region. During this period, humans buried their deceased within the floors of residential houses — a hallmark cultural practice of Neolithic communities. So far, eight skeletons have been discovered within residential spaces measuring approximately 2 by 3 meters, indicating that these rooms were organized living spaces for Neolithic families. He concluded that the findings of this excavation season are extraordinary, offering a clearer picture of the lifestyle, beliefs, and social structure of Neolithic people in this region.



● ilna.ir



● chtn.ir

Arak installs cultural elements to highlight traditional handicrafts

Iranica Desk

In a move to showcase local handicraft capacities and beautify urban spaces, a series of cultural installations inspired by traditional arts have been designed and installed along the main streets leading to Arak's historic district, in collaboration with the municipality. Elham Simayi, deputy head of the Markazi Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization for Handicrafts, stated that

as part of joint programs between the Cultural Heritage Organization and Arak Municipality, these installations were created to promote and introduce local handicrafts. The designs, inspired by traditional art forms, have been placed along the main streets connecting to the city's historic core. She added that these installations not only create a visually appealing and culturally rich urban landscape but also showcase Arak's prominent and

traditional handicrafts, including pottery, blacksmithing, coppersmithing, traditional footwear weaving (Giveh-making), and carpet restoration. Each craft reflects a part of the city's history, artistic talent, and local creativity. Emphasizing the importance of promoting local culture through urban elements, Simayi noted that the installations help familiarize both residents and tourists with Arak's handicrafts while strengthening the city's cultural identity. She de-

scribed the initiative as a symbol of cooperation between cultural institutions and municipal management in enhancing the beauty and authenticity of Arak. Simayi concluded by expressing hope that by expanding such projects throughout the city, Arak can preserve its artistic and cultural heritage while creating inspiring spaces for citizens and visitors, and further integrate handicrafts into the fabric of everyday urban life.

Ista village resists flow of time

Iranica Desk

Among the towering peaks of Taleqan, Alborz Province, where the morning mist settles on the tree branches like a heavy blanket and the cool breeze carries the scent of damp soil through the valleys, lies a small, hidden village. As you step into this secluded place, it feels as though you've crossed a threshold into another world — one where time has turned back two centuries. The honking of car horns, the chaos of city streets, and the glare of neon lights have no meaning here. Only the sound of footsteps on cobblestones, the whisper of wind through the trees, and the murmur of a small river fill the air. Ista is a place untouched by the haste of modern life. Every movement, decision, and gesture unfolds with calm deliberation, as though every moment carries weight and every breath tells a story. The residents of this quiet settlement have chosen a life that is simple, unadorned, and deeply meaningful — a conscious return to the way their ancestors lived some 200 years ago. The name Ista itself is a recent

one. Officially, the area is not even classified as a village. Its lands were once purchased by families from Tabriz. Later, when Alborz researcher and author Hossein Askari visited the area to study the local way of life, he suggested the name "Ista," a word that perfectly captures the spirit of the place — a life that stands firm against the rush of modernity, quietly removed from the flow of time, chtn.ir wrote. Here, life follows the rhythm of nature. The villagers cook with organic ingredients, heat their homes and bake bread

using wood-fired stoves, and light their nights with lanterns instead of electricity. The moon and the sun serve as their natural clocks; each activity is planned in harmony with the rhythms of the earth. As you make your way through Ista's rocky mountain paths, traces of a different, gentler existence begin to emerge — simple but sturdy homes built with minimal technology, small gardens, and livestock roaming freely. Men and women travel on purebred Arabian horses, worth millions, across valleys and steep mountain trails.



These horses are more than transport—they are a living symbol of identity and heritage. To understand the roots of Ista's way of life, one must look to the man whose philosophy still guides it: Mirza Sadeq Tabrizi, an influential jurist of the late Qajar and early Pahlavi eras. His worldview stood in stark contrast to the modern currents of his time. Tabrizi believed that many political, social, and technological innovations were at odds with the principles of faith. He was not a recluse nor an opponent of human connection, but rather a man convinced that simplicity and self-restraint were the keys to preserving faith, peace

of mind, and family unity. After his death in 1932, Tabrizi's ideas continued to circulate in Tabriz and Qom among a small circle of followers who studied his writings in private gatherings. For decades they followed his teachings in theory — until, in 1987, a group decided to bring them fully into practice. Their first attempt took them to Tonekabon, where they lived for three years before moving on. The humid coastal climate proved unsuitable for their austere lifestyle. Eventually, in 1990, they settled in Taleqan — a choice that was anything but random. The region's natural landscape, spiritual atmo-

sphere, and cultural traditions aligned perfectly with their beliefs. In Ista, Tabrizi's philosophy shapes not only faith but also economics and social life. Money holds little meaning; transactions are often handled through intermediaries. Self-sufficiency, organic farming, and a restrained use of natural resources define their approach to living. Modern technology has barely found a foothold — tractors and cars are used only when absolutely necessary, and electricity and the Internet play no role at all in daily life. The homes, though simple, are built to last. Farming is done using handmade tools and natural soil practices. The bond between people and nature here is immediate and visible. Children learn farming and animal care from an early age, while adults live according to unwritten rules rooted in respect and tradition. In essence, the teachings of Mirza Sadeq Tabrizi light the path for Ista's people. By choosing a life far from technology and modernity, they have not merely returned to the past — they have created a living example of balance and humanity, a rare and captivating model in today's fast-moving world.



● alibaba.ir



Tehran to host first Nowruz tourism ministers' forum in March 2026

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Monday that Tehran will stage the first-ever forum of tourism ministers from Nowruz-celebrating nations during the 2026 festivities in late March.

Salehi-Amiri told the gathering that Tehran aims to use the forum to push Nowruz into a "recognized global brand" for cultural tourism and to open a new chapter in regional cooperation, ILNA reported.

He called the ancient spring festival a "shared heritage" that binds countries from the eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia and argued that Iran, as its historic center, should "drive the

agenda" for joint tourism projects.

The minister said the event will run ministerial talks alongside expert panels, training workshops and curated visits to flagship archaeological sites. Delegations will tour the Achaemenid complexes at Persepolis and Pasargadae to take stock of what he described as Iran's "hard evidence" of cultural depth.

He expects the trip to anchor discussions on sustainable regional tourism routes and collective stewardship of intangible heritage.

Salehi-Amiri noted that the government has already formed an inter-agency steering group with the foreign ministry and the national culture organization to handle logistics, content and protocol.

He said the conference's three-pronged brief will focus on strengthening cultural diplomacy, stitching together regional tourism corridors and setting up joint conservation initiatives.

Nowruz, observed around March 20–21, is registered on UNESCO's intangible heritage list and is celebrated widely across Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and parts of the Caucasus.

Tehran hopes that formal ministerial engagement during the holiday will lift the profile of Nowruz-linked tourism packages and give Iran a stronger hand in shaping cross-border cultural policy. Salehi-Amiri said the ministry will finalize invitations and the detailed schedule in the coming weeks, adding



that Tehran intends to "systematize" Nowruz tourism in the region and pitch it as a stable revenue stream for participating states.

50 Iranian producers to showcase 400 products at Baghdad children's fair



Press conference for the fourth Baghdad International Children's Fair held in Tehran on November 17, 2025.
● ILNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will bring more than 50 producers and roughly 400 products to the fourth International Festival for Iraqi Children in Baghdad, running from November 19 to December 9, officials said Monday.

The pavilion, spanning about 500 square meters, will highlight toys, stationery, animation, and other youth-focused cultural products.

Saeed Hosseini, a leading figure in Iran's children's cultural industries, said the domestic market can no longer absorb

the growing output of Iranian creative industries, which have seen a decade of rapid expansion in animation, toys, and educational products.

"To maintain momentum, we must expand into foreign markets," he said, pointing to Iraq as a top target due to its young population, cultural affinity, and logistical proximity.

Hosseini noted that Iran has been actively building export channels over the past two years, including trade offices, market research, and participation in previous editions of the Baghdad fair.

"The fair lets us test Iraqi children's tastes and refine our approach to the market," he

said. Last year, Iran mounted its first fully coordinated pavilion, bringing over 50 manufacturers together; this year's presentation is set to be even larger.

The pavilion will also feature 14 selected start-ups from Karestan Baharestan, a Tehran-based creative hub supporting more than 150 teams in education, cultural, and tech-focused projects for children and adolescents. The initiative aims to showcase the full spectrum of Iran's youth-oriented creative output and create lasting export opportunities.

Iraqi distributors, investors, and schools are expected to attend, providing Iranian producers with direct feedback and networking opportunities. Hosseini described the event as a key step toward embedding Iranian cultural products in the regional market.

Iranian filmmaker wins top sci-fi short award in Bolivia



Arts & Culture Desk

Mohammad-Reza Setarehsheenas, a Gilan-based filmmaker, won the Best Science Fiction Short Film award at Bolivia's Black Cat Award International Film Festival in La Paz from November 11–15 for his short film 'Sayeh's Dream,' which he wrote, directed, shot, edited, and produced.

In its maiden international appearance, the piece, standing out among more than 4,000 entries, won praise for its evocative portrayal of nocturnal street lights, the beauty and otherworldliness of their glow, and the dreamlike streaks they leave in the dark, IRNA reported.

The Black Cat festival is known for its human-rights and child-focused mission, inviting filmmakers to interpret daily life through a socially conscious lens.

Setarehsheenas said he hoped the film would spur audiences to pause and reflect on "how ordinary lights can feel magical, almost alive ... like silent, moving dreams."

Iran submits 51 species protection proposals ahead of CITES COP20 in Samarkand

Social Desk

Iran has filed 51 formal proposals to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) ahead of the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP20), set to take place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from November 24 to December 5, the country's Department of Environment said.

In a move that underscores Tehran's rising diplomatic activism on biodiversity, the proposals range from mammal and bird protections to plant listings. The swift expansion of Iran's conservation agenda comes amid growing global con-

cern over illegal wildlife trade and biodiversity loss, IRNA reported.

Hamid Zahrabi, a deputy director of the Department of Environment, told IRNA that the COP20 meeting is the convention's highest decision-making body, responsible for setting rules on financial, technical and administrative matters. He added that Iran's delegation would include around 50 specialists, a number some countries only reach for side-committee sessions.

Zahrabi said Tehran has already held several technical and diplomatic meetings, including a session at the foreign ministry, to marshal

support for its proposals.

The 51 proposals submitted by Iran include: 14 on mammals, 4 on birds, 8 on reptiles, 1 amphibian, 7 on sharks and rays, 1 freshwater eel, 2 sea cucumbers, 1 arachnid, 1 mollusk, and 12 on plants, Zahrabi said.

Many of the species under discussion have overlapping ranges with Iran, meaning any change in their international protection status could directly affect Iranian conservation policy.

Zahrabi argued that the COP20 meeting offers Iran a rare opportunity to "exchange knowledge, present its own conservation successes, and seek collabora-

tion."

He emphasized that many of the proposals were technical, not political, and required backing from other states. He said Tehran would be working hard to build regional and international coalitions to support its goals.

CITES, established in 1975, divides species into three appendices depending on their risk level, making trade either illegal, strictly regulated, or permitted under certain conditions. Iran's move suggests it is pushing for a more proactive role at the convention, potentially reshaping how its biodiversity resources are managed and traded.

Membership gains in ...

Since SCO member states collectively account for 40% of the world's population, access to these markets has made Western sanctions harder to carry through, even though banking sanctions and intra-SCO competition still impose limits on how far this resilience can go.

In your view, how much can Iran rely on the actual implementation of SCO documents and memoranda?

Given that the SCO was formed along the lines of global standards rooted in liberal institutionalism, Iran can expect a moderate level of implementation. The success of these memoranda depends heavily on reciprocal commitments from member states, their

conflicts of interest in dealings with the West and their administrative capacity. It is essential to view the SCO primarily as a framework rather than a strict enforcement mechanism, which distinguishes it from more institutionalized bodies such as the European Union.

How has SCO membership affected the East-West balance in Iran's foreign policy? Can it be described as a full pivot to the East?

SCO membership has shifted Iran's foreign-policy balance toward an east-leaning orientation, though not in the form of a full pivot. It fits more accurately within a hedging strategy based on power balancing and calibrated diplomacy. Iran's membership has brought about a mild strategic

shift, what could be described as "East-prioritized", but the need for diverse international relations means Tehran has kept the door to dialogue with the West open.

Given Western hostility and the growing influence of BRICS and the SCO, the balance has tilted more heavily toward the East, helping Iran break out of isolation without becoming wholly dependent. As a result, Iran has positioned itself as a bridge between East and West, maintaining European channels while deepening ties with China and Russia, thereby pushing back against Western hegemony. This membership allows Iran to avoid falling into a binary geopolitical trap and to benefit from a more nuanced recalibration of its strategic posture.