



Iran hails Tajikistan's push to revive traditional Persian script

Arts & Culture Desk

The head of Iran's Academy of Persian Language and Literature commended Tajik President Emomali Rahmon after he ordered the introduction of a school course aimed at teaching students the traditional Persian script and classical texts, according to a statement released by the academy. Under Rahmon's directive, Tajikistan's Ministry of Education will begin teaching a course titled "Alphabet and Texts of the Ancestors" in schools to strengthen students' knowledge of the Persian language and its traditional writing system, the academy said. In a letter addressed to Rahmon, Academy President Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel welcomed the move, describing it as an important step toward reinforcing Tajikistan's national identity and

one that would be warmly received in Iran. According to the academy, Haddad Adel said the decision would complement previous initiatives under Rahmon's leadership to promote the Persian language and literature, including the publication of the book "Language of the Nation" and efforts to encourage the reading of the "Shahnameh". He said teaching the traditional Persian alphabet would help younger generations in Tajikistan connect more closely with their cultural and literary heritage, arguing that the script is an essential component of the Persian language. "Script is the written visage of a language, and teaching the ancestral alphabet in Tajikistan can be seen as a blessed step toward 'unveiling' and 'revealing the face' of the beautiful bride that is the Persian language in

Tajikistan," he said. "Undoubtedly, acquainting the capable children of Tajikistan with, and enabling them to master, the script of their ancestors will have a deep and enduring effect on consolidating the national identity of the great and dignified people of Tajikistan." Haddad Adel also congratulated Rahmon on behalf of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature and the Sa'adi Foundation, expressing hope that the initiative would strengthen national identity in Tajikistan. Tajikistan, where the Tajik language is closely related to Persian, currently uses a Cyrillic-based alphabet adopted during the Soviet era. Efforts to promote knowledge of the traditional Persian script have been part of broader discussions on the country's linguistic and cultural heritage.



Emomali Rahmon



Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel

Ancient 3,500-year-old Bronze Age relics unearthed in northern Iran

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Archaeologists excavating an ancient mound in northern Iran have uncovered architectural remains dating back about 3,500 years, along with evidence from later historical and Islamic periods and signs of an extended break in human settlement caused by environmental changes, the head of the Iranian excavation team said on Saturday. Mojtaba Safari, director of the second excavation season at the Qaleh Ben archaeological site in Khoshrudpey, near the city of Babol, said the latest findings include structures from the Late Bronze Age, as well as artifacts from the Iron Age, Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic periods. "The excavation has revealed architectural remains from the Late Bronze Age, together with evidence from historical and Islamic eras and indications of a settlement hiatus linked to environmental transformations," Safari told reporters. The Qaleh Ben mound, which is listed on Iran's National Heritage Register, originally covered a larger area but was partially damaged during road construction in 2011. About three hectares (7.4 acres) of the site remain, with the first archaeological excavation conducted



in 2018. Safari said the second excavation season was launched to expand field investigations, identify architectural features, reconstruct the livelihoods of the site's inhabitants and establish a more complete sequence of occupation. According to preliminary findings, the upper layers of the site date to the Islamic period and include Qajar-era architectural remains, including parts of water supply and drainage systems. Archaeologists also recovered Islamic-era pottery, particularly from the early and middle Islamic centuries, along with metal and glass artifacts. Lower layers contained evidence from historical periods, including burials, although Safari said some graves had previously been damaged by illegal excavations. Pottery from the Iron Age, Parthian and Sasanian periods, as well as metal objects, was also uncovered. At a depth of about 2 meters (6.5

feet), researchers identified a layer of fine-grained silt containing numerous freshwater snail remains but no cultural material. Preliminary analysis suggests the deposit was formed after a meandering river channel was gradually cut off, creating an oxbow lake and interrupting human occupation at the site. At approximately 3 meters below the surface, archaeologists uncovered Late Bronze Age cultural layers containing architectural features, including a doorway threshold, hearth-related spaces and collapsed mudbrick remains. Stone grinding tools, mortars and distinctive Late Bronze Age pottery were among the principal discoveries. Safari said the long-term project is also intended to assess the site's potential to be developed into an open-air museum. He said its location, the extent of the surviving archaeological remains and the richness of its cultural deposits could support future cultural tourism and heritage conservation initiatives. The excavation is being carried out as a joint project between the University of Mazandaran and the Mazandaran Provincial office of Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, with support from local authorities in Babol and Khoshrudpey.

Eight Iranian villages vying for UN-backed global tourism recognition

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Eight Iranian villages are competing for inclusion in the UN Tourism organization's list of the world's Best Tourism Villages, as the country seeks to build on last year's record performance, a senior tourism official said. Iran secured places for three villages on the list in 2025, one of its strongest showings to date, placing it among the countries with the highest number of internationally recognized tourism villages, according to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Mustafa Fatemi, director general for domestic tourism development, said the success of this year's nominations would depend not only on cultural and tourism assets but also on infrastructure, sustainability and international conditions. "The evaluation criteria of UN Tourism remain unchanged," Fatemi told ILNA. "However, security is an important indicator in assessing tourism destinations. As tensions decline and wartime conditions come to an end, Iran's standing on this



indicator can improve." The official said other challenges, including sanctions that affect international banking services and access to global online platforms, would continue to weigh on some assessment criteria until they are resolved. Fatemi cautioned against expecting a repeat of last year's outcome, describing the simultaneous recognition of three Iranian villages as an exceptional achievement. "Only a limited number of villages can meet all of UN Tourism's criteria, and others will need to gradually reach the required standards," he said. The eight nominated villages are still addressing shortcomings identified during the application process, with final verification by UN Tourism expected in September.

Fatemi said sustainability remained the most important criterion in the evaluation process, encompassing economic, social and environmental performance. Villages must also demonstrate distinctive local identity and innovation to stand out from international competitors. Tourism infrastructure, including accommodation, visitor facilities and local tourism value chains, also plays a key role in the assessment, he said, citing previously recognized Iranian villages that benefited from well-developed hospitality services. Recognition by UN Tourism can boost the international profile of rural destinations, attracting visitors and investment while supporting local economic development and cultural preservation, tourism officials say.

Chinese translation of Nizami's 'Khamasa' unveiled in Beijing



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A complete Chinese translation of the Khamasa (quintet), the best-known work of 12th-century Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi, was unveiled at the Beijing International Book Fair on Sunday, marking the first time the entire five-volume literary masterpiece

has been published in Chinese. The collection, published by Tianjin Publishing House, was unveiled during Iran Cultural Day at the 32nd Beijing International Book Fair after the release of the final two volumes, Haft Peykar and Layli and Majnun. Earlier translations of Khosrow and Shirin, Makhzan al-Asrar, Sharafnameh and Iqbalnameh had already been completed. The project was coordinated by the Iranian Cultural Center in China, which described the publication as an important milestone in promoting classical Persian literature among Chinese readers. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian had presented a signed set of the Khamasa to Chinese President Xi Jinping, while another copy was donated to the Department of Persian Language and Literature at Peking

University, according to Iran's Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations. Speaking at the launch ceremony, Iranian Ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said the translation would deepen literary and academic exchanges between the two countries. He noted that China features prominently in Nizami's poetry through references to its rulers, luxury goods, artistic traditions and legendary settings, reflecting the historical ties between the two civilizations. Iran's cultural counselor in China, Nematollah Iranzadeh, said the translation forms part of a bilateral agreement to translate and publish 100 classical books from Iran and China over a decade. Under the arrangement, works are translated in their country of origin and published by estab-

lished publishers in the partner country. Iranzadeh said the first phase of the initiative has already produced several Persian-language titles in Chinese translation, while additional works by authors including Rumi and other scholars of Iranian philosophy, culture and history are being prepared for publication. Chinese-language works are also being translated into Persian under the same program. Chinese publishers used the event to announce new translations of contemporary Iranian literature. Chen Xiaomei, editor-in-chief of the Tree of Life Culture Promotion Center, said children's author Farhad Hassanzadeh's novel 'Call Me Beautiful' will be published in Chinese in 2026. She also announced plans to publish 'Mother's Guest' by Iranian author Houshang Moradi

Kermani, whose earlier work 'The Teacher, the Cracked Jar' has sold more than 70,000 copies in China. Zhang Yunfeng, deputy general manager of Tianjin Publishing and Media Group, described Nizami as one of the defining figures of Persian literature, saying his Khamasa marked the emergence of Persian romantic narrative poetry by combining philosophy, ethics and romance. The complete translation was produced by a team led by Professor Mu Hongyan and Associate Professor Liu Yingjun, scholars of Persian literature at Chinese universities. The launch ceremony also featured lectures by Chinese and Iranian academics on literary and cultural exchanges between the two countries, underscoring growing interest in Persian studies in China.