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Chair of ICPI Board of Directors: Sadegh Hossein Jaberi Ansari
ICPI CEO: Ali Motaghian
Senior Editor-in-chief: Hadi Khosroshahin
Editor-in-chief: Asgar Ghahramanpour

Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 84711560
Address: 208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran
Advertising Dept. Tel/Email: +98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com
Website: www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir
Email: irandaily@icpi.ir

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Mobile library opens in memory of Minab schoolchildren

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran opened its first mobile library in Minab, a southern Iranian city, dedicating the 1,500-book collection to children who killed in a US missile strike on a school.

The Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran, killing 168 people, most of them children.

Reza Salehi-Amiri, Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts, inaugurated the library during a two-day visit to Hormozgan province, southern Iran.

The service aims to promote reading and improve access to books, especially for children and teenagers in areas without fixed libraries.

Anoushirvan Pishdar, head of Hormozgan's public libraries department, said it would serve children, teenagers and other readers.

"Two mobile libraries had previously operated in Bandar Abbas, the provincial capital," Pishdar said.

He said naming the library after the students killed at Shajareh Tayyebeh was intended to preserve their memory and link cultural activities with the values of sacrifice and remembrance.

Salehi-Amiri also visited the school, where students and teachers were killed, and met some of the victims' family members.

He viewed documents and other material about the incident and heard accounts of efforts to preserve the memory of those killed.

"Minab today is no longer just a city, but has become a symbol of unity, solidarity and national resistance," he said.

The minister also pledged government support for Minab residents. He described serving the victims' families and the wider community as an important way to honor those killed.

The mobile library combines a memorial initiative with an effort to expand access to books. Its reach will depend on how regularly it operates and how many communities without permanent libraries it can serve.



Children gather at the at the entrance of of a mobile library in Minab, southern Iran, on November 4, 2026.
IRNA

Over 150 artifacts brought back after two-year exhibition in China



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has returned 151 historical and cultural artifacts after a two-year exhibition tour of five Chinese cities, with all items transferred safely to storage under security and preservation measures, a provincial heritage official said on Tuesday.

"The collection, drawn from museums in Tehran province, arrived in Iran on November 3 after the tour's final exhibition in Lushun, northeastern China," said Ali Tolouei, head of Tehran province's cultural heritage department.

The artifacts were transferred to storage after administrative and customs procedures were completed. The operation involved the customs office at Imam Khomeini International Airport and the Tehran provincial heritage protection unit.

The deputy cultural heritage minister, museum directors and specialist staff also took part in receiving and transferring the collection.

Tolouei said the return, carried out under sensitive conditions in Iran, required careful planning and close coordination among the agencies involved.

"The mission was completed through cooperation between the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and other government bodies," he said.

He thanked Chinese partners for hosting the "Land of Affection" exhibition and praised the managers, experts and specialists who had worked on its design, organization, staging and support over the past two years.

The exhibition featured 151 artifacts from museums across Tehran province and traveled to five major cultural and historical cities in China.

It attracted considerable interest from Chinese visitors, Iran's IRNA news agency reported.

The return ends the collection's two-year tour, which brought Iranian historical and cultural objects to audiences in China.

740m saplings produced to plant 1b trees

Social Desk

Iran has produced about 740 million saplings under a four-year campaign to plant one billion trees, the head of Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization said.

Reza Aflatouni said the saplings were produced over the campaign's first three years at state-run natural resources and watershed management nurseries and by private-sector producers.

The actual number of saplings planted is estimated to be at least twice the registered figure, Aflatouni said.

"However, only plantings recorded in the organization's tree production and planting registration system, with their locations and implementing authorities identified, count as official results," he said.

Iran must produce another 250 million to 260 million saplings this year to meet its one-billion target by the end of the campaign, he said.



Mosleh Pirkhezranian/IRNA

Aflatouni acknowledged that the planting target might not be met. Still, he said planting 500 million saplings, or half the planned total, would be a significant achievement.

He also said about 1.4 million hectares had been afforested across Iran over recent decades, a figure covering national efforts beyond the current campaign.

Aflatouni said protecting water, soil and the country's ecosystems was a responsibility shared across generations. Tree planting, he added, should remain part of efforts to safeguard natural resources beyond the campaign's four-year term.

Arabian horse festival to attract tourists, investors in southern Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is seeking to turn its Arabian horse industry into a driver of tourism and regional trade, with a festival planned for February 2027 in the southwestern cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan, a local official said.

Ahmed Sharifat, head of the tourism commission at the Khorramshahr Chamber of Commerce, said the event aims to establish southwestern Khuzestan as a regional destination for horse-related tourism, IRNA reported.

"Iran has about 10,000 purebred Arabian horses, more than 6,000 of them in Khuzestan province," Sharifat said.

The province's location near Arab countries gives it opportunities to expand horse breeding, tourism and trade.

But the industry lacks standard racetracks, quarantine facilities and a legal framework for horse exports. Some Arabian horses are transferred illegally to Iraq because breeders cannot access proper export channels, Sharifat said.

He described Iraq as an important and accessible market that could generate foreign currency earnings if legal exports were facilitated.

Organizers have invited prominent Iraqi horse industry figures to attend the festival and are seeking their participation as guests and financial sponsors.

At a meeting in Khorramshahr, horse club owners, riders, breeders and officials discussed industry challenges, including sponsorship, support for clubs and the development of festival infrastructure.

An Arvand Free Zone representative outlined efforts to allocate land for an equestrian club.

The provincial agriculture department also offered to cooperate, including by exploring ways to use existing systems to facilitate the purchase and supply of horse feed.

Participants also proposed a specialist working group to address the concerns of breeders and club owners.

The head of the tourism commission at the Khorramshahr Chamber of Commerce added that the festival was intended to go beyond a one-off event and help establish permanent facilities for regular international competitions.

"Investment in racetracks and related infrastructure could create jobs, support local businesses and strengthen Khuzestan's role in regional tourism," he added.

