



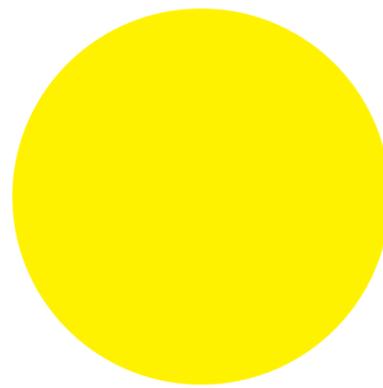
Iran, Malaysia sign MoU to boost agro cooperation

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Over 1.4 m foreign tourists arrive in Iran in three months

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Iran Daily



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Vol. 7347 • Monday, July 24, 2023 • Mordad 2, 1402 • Muharram 6, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages



Israeli judicial crisis flares

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An aerial view shows protesters attending a march in Tel Aviv on July 22, 2023, part of a multi-day march to protest the Israeli cabinet's judicial overhaul bill ahead of a vote in the parliament.

Iran among major exporters of grapes, raisins in world

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer



Iran is one of the largest producers and exporters of grapes and raisins in the world, an Iranian lawmaker says.

In an interview with Iran Daily, Rajab Rahmani, the representative of the city of Takestan in Iran's Parliament, said that the country is the third largest exporter of raisins in the world, after the United States and Turkey.

According to the Agriculture Organization of Qazvin Province, the UK, Germany and Russia are the main destinations of Iran's raisin exports, he said.

Rahmani noted that grape orchards account for most of the orchards in Qazvin Province, which ranks second in the country in terms of grape production and cultivation area, and first in terms of raisin production and exports. The Iranian lawmaker said a major part of the grapes produced in the country is turned to raisins and exported to other countries. He noted that most of the province's grapes is produced in Takestan.

The city has 25,626 hectares of vineyards, which accounts for 75% of the province's vineyards, and 11.2% of the country's vineyards.

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Air Force begins military drills in central Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) launched large-scale drills in the country's central province of Isfahan on Sunday, with the participation of a whole range of military aircraft.



IRNA

The drills, codenamed Fadaeeyan-e Harim-e Velayat 11 (Devotees of Velayat Airspace 11), are to send the message of "friendship, peace, calm and security" to the region, Air Force Commander Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi said on Sunday, according to Tasnim news agency.

The commander said the forces will employ 92 aircraft in the military exercise, including various fighter jets, interceptor aircraft, bombers, and unmanned aerial vehicles. The Air Force units will carry out a broad range of operations, such as reconnaissance and aerial imaging, detonation of air and ground targets, electronic warfare, civil defense tactics, and testing of new systems, he said.

The commander noted that the Air Force units will also exercise diverse combat tactics and standoff attack operations with drones to destroy targets with pinpoint accuracy.

Iran's Armed Forces hold routine military exercises throughout the year.

Iranian officials have repeatedly underscored that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations.

Enjoy cool weather of highlands in Khuzestan Province during summer



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Iran wins men's kumite gold, finishes third at Asian Karate Championship



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'Ashura is a sweeping tableau of all qualities'



EXCLUSIVE

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Upgraded
Shahed-149
Gaza drone
unveiled

● PANA

IRNA – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) unveiled an upgraded version of the domestically-made Shahed-149 Gaza drone in the central city of Kashan on Sunday.

The drone has reportedly been equipped with a new landing gear system and a hardpoint.

Shahed-149 Gaza, manufactured by Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industries Corporation, was unveiled in May 2021. It is an advanced high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned combat aircraft, capable of flying for over 35 hours and covering 7,000 kilometers on a single mission.

Qatar to
facilitate talks
with West

● mfa.gov.ir

ISNA – Minister of State at Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mohamed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh al-Khulaifi arrived in Tehran on Sunday to meet with Iranian senior officials including Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. The purpose of this visit is to negotiate bilateral relations, reduce tensions between Iran and the West in the region, and facilitate dialogue to advance negotiations on lifting sanctions and removing obstacles in the way of the issue of prisoner exchanges between Iran and the United States.

Serbian
speaker:
Improved ties to
boost security

IRNA – Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia Vladimir Orlic said the better economic cooperation between Iran and Serbia, the greater security and stability would be brought about to the Balkans and the Middle East.

The visiting Orlic made the remarks at a joint press briefing held in Tehran on Sunday with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, referring to the oil industry and petrochemicals as fields to be used to further bilateral relations.

Iran mulling over 'non-diplomatic'
ways to restore Hirmand water rights: **MP**

Locals hit by drought collect water from tankers in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran.

● IRNA

International Desk

An Iranian lawmaker says Iran is studying "non-diplomatic" ways to restore its right to its water share from the Hirmand River

(known as Helmand River in Afghanistan), which the Taliban government in Afghanistan is currently not allowing to be fulfilled.

Fadahosseini Maleki, who represents the southeast-

ern city of Zahedan in the Iranian Parliament, said on Sunday that a committee of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has assumed the responsibility, IFP reported.

Maleki, who sits on the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said among the options being studied were closing the Afghanistan Embassy in Tehran, or reducing political, trade, and economic relations through the Chabahar port in the southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province. The Taliban have been refusing to allow Iran's share of water from Hirmand to stream into the country. This has caused a drought in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan, which has in turn sparked a national debate in the country.

The lawmaker described the situation as "the gradual death of Sistan and Baluchestan Province," pointing out that the villages there are being deserted one after another.

Iran's Space Agency said recently that images obtained from Iranian satellites show that the Afghan government is preventing water from reaching the Iranian side of the border by building numerous dams and diverting the flow of the water.

Earlier this year, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi

"warned" the Taliban to open the gates into Iran. To the dismay of Iranians and their lawmakers, Maleki noted, nothing tangible has happened since the warning was issued.

"The Parliament's National Security Committee had a meeting with the foreign minister two days ago where some members complained about the undermining positions taken by Iran's ambassador to Afghanistan and some others in the government," he added.

The legislator warned against appeasing the Taliban government too much as Iran has already met their every demand.

Maleki, however, emphasized that he does not believe that the Taliban is under the influence of certain non-Afghans present in Afghanistan.

"The Taliban has always stressed that the Americans and the British are trying to cause friction between the two Muslim countries of Iran and Afghanistan in any way possible. They were unable to achieve their dreams before, but they are progressing now."

Report: Tehran may join five-nation
group on Lebanon

Officials from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the US, and France held a second meeting to discuss the ongoing political and economic crises in Lebanon on July 17, 2023.

● SPA

A source close to a senior leader participating in the five-nation group on the Lebanese presidential file said that the group might expand to resemble the famous 5+1 format after Iran joins it in a certain manner.

"There have been communications aimed at achieving this goal," the source told the Lebanese ad-Diyar newspaper in remarks published Sunday. Representatives from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, the US, and France have held two meetings thus far to discuss the urgent need for Lebanon's leadership to hold the much-delayed presidential elections and implement vital economic reforms.

Another informed source claimed that the French presidential envoy for Lebanon Jean-Yves Le Drian will arrive in Beirut on Tuesday and will amend the roadmap he had launched on his first visit.

"He will not raise the idea of holding a dialogue table, but he will stress Paris' readiness to work for helping Lebanon and aiding the Lebanese exit the current crisis and elect a president," the source added. "Political circles believe that the crisis will likely protract, in the absence of serious solution indications," the daily said.

Terrorists kill four police officers
in SE Iran

National Desk

Four police officers of the Khash-Taftan Traffic Police Station in the Iranian southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan were martyred in a terrorist attack.

Sistan and Baluchestan Police Information Center made the announcement on Sunday, saying that four police officers were patrolling when they were attacked by terrorists.

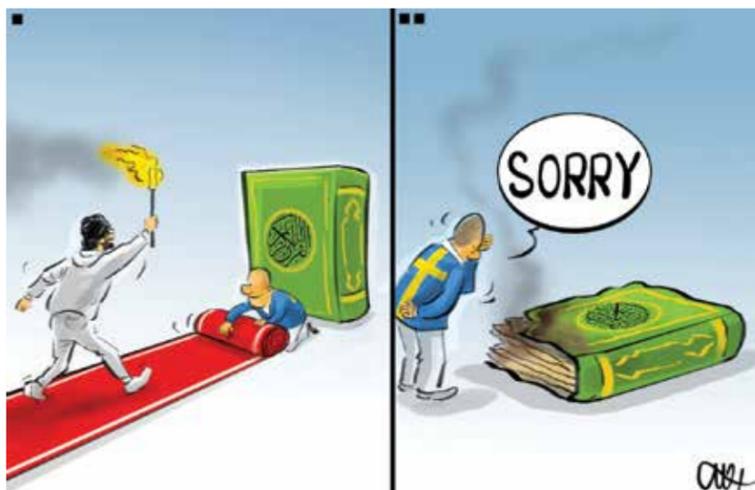
The report says that the officers were on a routine mission on a road linking Khash and Taftan towns some 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) southeast of the capital, Tehran. The perpetrators and their motives were not immediately clear, but a judicial order has been issued to arrest the perpetrators, Tasnim news agency reported. The province, which borders Pakistan, has witnessed several terror attacks targeting both civilians and security forces over the past years.



● TASNIM



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran among major ...

He added that 304,000 tons of grapes are produced in this city every year, of which nearly 70% to 80% are turned into raisins. Rahmani referred to the province as one of the most important provinces in the fields of agriculture and industry. In spite of the fact that the province makes up only one-hundredth of the country's land, five percent of the mineral and production facilities are located in this province, he said. The parliamentarian also

pointed to the problems facing agricultural productions, saying that damage inflicted by frost and pests as well as water shortage have negatively affected production in the province. Currently, 194 villages and 14 cities in the province are facing severe shortage of agricultural and drinking water. However, he said that several plans have been proposed in Parliament to settle the problem, said Rahmani.

He said that three dams have been built so far while three more are under construction in the

province to supply drinking and agricultural water to the people and farmers. He also said that Parliament has approved a law to reform the horticulture system.

Rahmani said that Qazvin Province ranks among the country's top provinces in terms of agricultural production, which also produces vegetables, especially tomatoes, potatoes and onions.

Given its geographical location, the province meets the needs of most of the country's cities in the field of agricultural products.

Israeli judicial crisis flares



People take part in a demonstration against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cabinet's judicial overhaul, in Tel Aviv, on July 22, 2023.

● CORINNA KERN/REUTERS

International Desk

Israel is embroiled in its most serious domestic political crisis in decades as the planned overhaul of the Supreme Court Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet is debated in parliament. The prime minister was in hospital after being fitted with a pacemaker on Sunday, as tens of thousands of people converged on Al-Quds (Jerusalem) to protest the planned overhaul of the Supreme Court. The 73-year-old leader was rushed to Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv on Saturday after a heart monitor implanted a week earlier in what was described as a dehydration episode detected a "temporary arrhythmia", Reuters quoted as his doctors saying. Netanyahu had been expected to vote in parliament today on a key element of his highly contested judicial overhaul, which has ignited months of nationwide protests and concern abroad over Israel's democratic health. Lawmakers on Sunday began debating the bill, which would limit the court's ability to void decisions made by the cabinet and ministers it deems "unreasonable". The result of today's vote could come as soon as that evening. The crisis has spread to the military, with hundreds of volunteer army reservists threatening not to show up for service if the cabinet continues with the plans, and former military and security chiefs warning that national security was at risk. Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi wrote in an open letter that "dangerous cracks" are formed when political disputes seep into the military, and he called on all reservists to report for service.

Yemen not to transfer oil revenues to Saudis



Sana'a has rejected a proposal by Riyadh to transfer oil and gas revenues to the Saudi National Bank in return for the kingdom to pay public sector wages in Yemen. Mahdi al-Mashat, the head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council, held the United States responsible for the hurdles created by Saudi Arabia in paying salaries of civil servants in the areas controlled by the Ansarullah movement, Press TV quoted Yemen's al-Masirah television network as reporting on Sunday. "What the Saudis want is to loot our oil wealth, transfer it to the Saudi National Bank, and give charity money to our employees, something that is dismissed," he said. "We will try to pay the salaries in the future and we will win them back from the enemy." Mashat also urged Washington not to make enemies among more than 10 million Yemeni public sector workers by preventing the payment of their wages. Earlier, Riyadh proposed to pay the salaries of Yemeni civil servants for one year in Saudi Riyals in exchange for the extension of a ceasefire and the resumption of Yemeni oil exports. Yemen, however, wants to restore control over its own resources, saying the country's oil revenues are enough to pay the salaries of all public sector workers. Saudi Arabia launched a devastating war on Yemen in March 2015. It also imposed the most severe siege on Yemen, weakening the country's economy. Riyadh sought to crush Ansarullah and reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, but it failed to do achieve its objective.

Head of Yemen's Supreme Political Council Mahdi al-Mashat

● GETTY IMAGES

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin to discuss security with Lukashenko

AFP - Russian President Vladimir Putin will discuss security in eastern Europe with his Belarus counterpart and ally Alexander Lukashenko in their first face-to-face talks since Minsk helped end a Wagner mutiny in Russia. He said Sunday that his talks with Lukashenko will last two days after they met for the first time since Minsk helped end a mutiny by Wagner fighters last month. "I changed some of my plans," Putin said as he met Lukashenko at Saint Petersburg's Konstantinsky Palace.

Flood toll in Afghanistan jumps to 26

AFP - The death toll from overnight flash floods caused by torrential rain in central Afghanistan has risen to 26, with more than 40 people missing, officials said Sunday. Shafiullah Rahimi, spokesman for the State Ministry for Disaster Management, said a total of 31 people had been killed nationwide in floods since Friday and extensive damage had been caused to property and farmland.

Italy holds summit aimed at stanching flows of illegal migration

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni on Sunday called for new, more equal relationships between Europe and migrants' countries of origin and transit as she convened a summit of some 20 nations, EU officials and international organizations aimed at stanching flows of illegal migration. The one-day conference was a Meloni initiative that aims to make Italy a leader in resolving issues impacting Mediterranean nations.

Chief among them is migration, as Italy sustains hundreds of new arrivals daily on Europe's southern border, but also energy as Europe looks to Africa and the Middle East to permanently replace Russian supplies, AP reported. Human rights groups see the meeting, which includes nations from both northern and sub-Saharan Africa as well as the Middle East, as creating a future roadmap, and worry it will amount to anti-migrant policies that put the onus on Africa to keep Africans out of Europe. Meloni told the opening meeting that Western arrogance had likely stood in the way of solutions to the migrant issue. She proposed four main prongs for future cooperation: Fighting criminal or-

ganizations trafficking migrants, better managing flows of migrants, supporting refugees and helping countries of origin. "The West too often has given the impression of being more interested in giving lessons rather than lending a hand," Meloni said. "It is probably this diffidence that has made it difficult to make progress on solutions." She said if flows were better managed there would be more room for legal migration. "In an era where so much attention is given to the right to migrate, we are not paying sufficient attention to the right to not be forced to emigrate, to not be forced to flee their own homes, to not be forced to abandon their land and leave family members in search of a new life."

The conference came against the backdrop of migrants being pushed back from Tunisia into Libya, where they are stuck in the desert. Pope Francis, in his traditional Sunday blessing, called on leaders in Europe and Africa to find a solution to the thousands of people who are blocked at borders in North Africa. The Rome summit came a week after one of the key participants, Tunisian President Kais Saied, signed a memorandum of understanding for a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in a meeting that included Meloni and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Financial details weren't released, but the EU has held out the promise of nearly 1 billion euros (\$1.1b) to help restart Tunisia's hobbled

economy, and 100m euros (\$111m) for border control as well as search and rescue missions at sea and repatriating immigrants without residence permits. Migrants pay traffickers thousands to make the perilous journey across Africa's deserts. Many report suffering torture and other abuse along the way. And hundreds drown each year at sea trying to reach Italy in fragile boats. More than 1,900 migrants have died or gone missing and are presumed missing in the Mediterranean so far this year, bringing the total of dead and missing since 2014 to 27,675, according to the International Organization for Migration. A further 483 are dead or missing in Africa this year.

The Israeli fall



By Mostafa Mosleh-zadeh
Iran's ex-envoy in Jordan

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Recent developments in Israel indicate the emergence of a phenomenon known as the "Israeli fall," which appears to be progressing toward a "winter phase." The situation suggests that a return to a "spring" is unlikely. Israel, an entity with numerous aspirations, has experienced its own downfall

after more than 70 years, primarily due to a series of internal divisions and a complex interplay of regional and international factors. While internal divisions have been present in Israel since it came to existence, they have now deepened to an extent that reconciliation seems improbable. Among the most significant divides is the religious schism between ultra-Orthodox Jews and secular Jews. The chasm between these two groups has grown so wide that coexistence has become nearly impossible.

Another critical fault line is of a political nature, separating Zionist Jews from anti-Zionist Jews. The latter frequently protest against the Israeli political system, both within Israel and overseas in Europe and America. Additionally, racial disparities exist in Israel, primarily between individuals of European and non-European descent. Those of European descent wield the majority of political, economic, and military power, while non-European Jews are often regarded as second-class citizens, further exacerbating the

divide between them. Income inequality between the rich and the poor, like in many other societies, also contributes to the social rift. Moreover, Israel's political landscape has witnessed the emergence of another divide in recent years - the party gap. In the past, the Labor Party and the Likud Party, representing the left and right wings respectively, dominated the political scene. However, their influence has diminished over time, giving way to a multi-party system. This shift has resulted in coalition governments that

have proven fragile, unable to complete their terms in office due to a lack of a strong majority. In the midst of this situation, Benjamin Netanyahu emerged as a potential savior in the last election. However, his tenure has been marred by significant corruption allegations within the judicial system. In order to survive politically, Netanyahu must find a way to sidestep these cases and remove them from the agenda. Failure to do so could spell political demise not only for him but also for many of his cabinet ministers.

Consequently, Netanyahu is pushing for a judicial reform bill and seeking to exert control over the judicial system to avert the looming crisis. However, the convergence of this major problem with the deepening internal divisions has created a challenging situation for both Netanyahu's cabinet and the entire Israeli regime. Numerous former officials, particularly military and security personnel, have voiced warnings that Israel's entire political system is now at risk. Protests against Netanyahu's policies have reached

an unprecedented scale, duration, and intensity. With limited options and a lack of winning cards in the political deck, Israel finds itself on the precipice of falling further or, as previously mentioned, already in the throes of its fall. This crisis extends beyond Netanyahu and his cabinet; it is a crisis for Israel itself. The cumulative impact of various divisions has transformed the once-promised land, created for Jewish immigrants after World War I, into a troubling and turbulent reality - sheer hell on earth.

Enjoy cool weather of highlands in Khuzestan Province during summer



Shimbar Plain
visitiran.ir



Dez River
aparat.com



Susan Plain
safarzon.com

Iranica Desk

Excruciating heat, humidity and lack of water are just some of the words that can be used to describe the weather of the southern province of Khuzestan Province during the summer. But it is not the whole truth about this land.

It would be interesting to know that just when people in Ahvaz or Khorramshahr hardly tolerate the summer heat during the days, those who live in the eastern and northeastern highlands of the province not only do not feel any need to use cooling devices, but on some nights they have to turn on their heaters.

Shimbar Plain

Shimbar Plain, with a very pleasant climate, is located at the border of the three provinces of Khuzestan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. The plain which is a pristine area with bubbling springs, flowing waterfalls and lush forests at-

tract a huge number of tourists in all seasons of the year.

One of the main routes that help you escape the heat of Khuzestan Province and reach Shimbar Plain passes through Masjed Soleyman. Although this city has hot weather in the summer, passing through it towards Shahr-e Kord, the capital of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, you would also encounter the vast oak forests on the slopes of Zagros Mountains.

Shimbar Plain, also known as Shirin Bahar, located near Andika County, extends in an area of 50,000 hectares.

Several springs, a roaring river and a forest covered with oak and almond trees, wild shrubs, various types of mushrooms and citrus plants, grapes, berries, pomegranates are just a part of what you can see in this mesmerizing environment.

In the past, various species of bears, wolves,

hyenas, boar and hunting birds, such as eagles and vultures, lived in the Shimbar Plain. But unfortunately, illegal hunting has created many problems for the animals of the area.

The road linking Masjed Soleyman to Shahr-e Kord has been used as a migration route by the Haft Lang nomads of southwestern Iran.

The people of Shimbar and its surrounding areas are Bakhtiari people who have been engaged in livestock breeding and farming for centuries. In addition to the pleasant nature, there are some historical attractions in this plain, too. Tang-e Botan, with twelve inscriptions, are on the hillside of Dela Mountain. These inscriptions date back to the Parthian period.

Susan Plain

Another route through which you can reach a mountainous area and enjoy its cool weather is the main road linking

Khuzestan and Isfahan provinces.

This route, through which one of the main branches of Dez River passes, starts from the city of Izeh, at the foot of the Zagros Mountains.

Susan Plain, 35 kilometers from northwestern Izeh, is one of the main tourism destinations of Khuzestan Province.

The flow of the Karun River in the area as well as the bubbling springs, green hills, and various plant species such as pomegranate trees, oaks, chamomiles, daffodils and anemones, along with its valuable historical sites, have turned the area into a tourist gem.

Izeh is a historical town east of Khuzestan Province. The vast majority of its population are from the Bakhtiari tribe, which is one of the biggest in Iran.

Izeh has temperate weather in the spring and summer, although in the winter it is usually the coldest city in Khuzestan Province.

Afghan Legacy in literature

The insertion of 'literary return' as a conceptual category in literary history writing has not only served to reassert the centrality of Iran for the development of Persian poetry. It has also been particularly effective in obscuring the complex dynamics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Persian literary culture outside of Iran too. For as much as 'literary return' creates an Iranian national imaginary by returning to the styles of the classical masters, it also willfully forgets trends in literary culture occurring elsewhere. This is largely achieved by associating the nineteenth-century, non-Iranian Persianate world with stagnation resulting from the supposed dominance of the 'Indian Style'. In relegating the non-Iranian Persianate world to

one mired in stagnation, an Iranian-centric Persian literary history is absolved from exploring manifestations in Persian literary culture occurring outside of Iran itself. The state of Persian literary culture in nineteenth-century Afghanistan fulfils the clichéd expectation of a country located at the intersection of West, Central and South Asia, a heritage as much coloured by the richness of indigenous dynasties and courtly traditions as it is by interactions with outsiders. The historical development of Persian literary culture in Afghanistan has been Persianate in the fullest sense, accumulated over time as a result of Afghanistan's proximity to some of the most notable events and places in the region: Mahmud of Ghazna's foray into South

Asia, the resplendent court of Husayn Bayqara (1470-1506 CE) at Herat, incursions undertaken by the Safavids and Mughals, proximity to Samarqand and Bukhara and the oral traditions of Khorasan. In the eighteenth century, following what is considered the founding of the modern state of Afghanistan by Ahmad Shah Durrani (1747-72 CE), Persian literary activity displayed coherence in its output due to both the state's patronage and preference for a particular style. This is as much true for the state's rise under Ahmad Shah and his progeny as it is for poetic practice under the rule of 'Abd al-Rahman Khan (1880-1901) and later with the state-sponsored poetic activities of Mahmud Tarzi (died 1933). While not the only fac-

tor affecting trends in Persian literary culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Afghanistan, the impact of the state on Persian poetic practice was nonetheless a crucial factor. Nowhere is this better suggested than in the state's efforts to raise the poetry of the South Asian poet 'Abd al-Qadir Bidil to the highest realms. The promotion of the poetry of Bidil by the Afghan state, as well as the overall high regard in which the poet's oeuvre continues to be held, has preoccupied literary historians. This preoccupation has prevented the assessment of other literary trends in Afghanistan that run counter to the impression of a country solely dedicated to the promotion and use of the 'Indian Style', of which Bidil is seen as the apogee.



Miniature painting of tomb of 'Abd al-Qadir Bidil

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter, 'Persian Literary Historiography of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', from a book entitled, 'Remapping Persian Literary History, 1700-1900', written by Kevin L. Schwartz, published by Edinburgh University Press.

Iran wins men's kumite gold, finishes third at Asian Karate Championship



Sports Desk

Iranian men's kumite team won the gold medal at the Asian Karate Championship as the country stood third at the 19th edition of the competitions in Melaka, Malaysia.

On Sunday, the Iranian five-man side, which had won the Asian gold on four occasions since 2017, made a quick work of Kazakhstan in the final showdown as Saleh Abazari, Mahmoud Ne'mati, and Mehdi Ashouri came out on top against their opponents to seal a 3-0 victory – taking the country's medal count for the day to three.

A 2-0 defeat against Vietnam saw Iran take the women's team kumite silver, while in the men's team kata, the Iranian trio of Abolfazl Shahrjerdi, Ali Zand, and Milad Farazmehr won a bronze medal – scoring 40.6 points to beat China, which fin-

ished on 39.3.

This was a second bronze medal at the competitions for Shahrjerdi, who came out victorious against the Chinese Taipei's Chen Chao-Ching to share the third podium of the individual kata event with South Korean Park Hee-jun.

Kazakhstan stood atop the medals table with three golds, four silvers, and four silvers. Japan and Iran also won three golds apiece, but the Japanese piped the Iranians to the runner-up spot after grabbing three silvers against Iran's two.

The final day results came after Iranians had bagged nine medals – including double kumite golds – earlier in the individual contests in Melaka.

Atousa Golshadnejad – a member of the silver-winning kumite team – defeated opponents from Jordan, Kazakhstan, and China and then beat Sarah al-

Ameri of the United Arab Emirates 3-0 for the ultimate prize of the women's -61kg weight class. Behnam Dehqanzadeh, meanwhile, was the only Iranian gold medalist in the men's kumite contests – thanks to a thrilling 7-4 victory over Jordanian Omar Shaqrah in the -55kg final.

There were however rather disappointing campaigns for two high-profile Iranian men, Bahman Asgari and Sajjad Ganjzadeh.

Four-time world gold medalist Asgari, who missed out on the Tokyo Olympics due to a positive doping test, beat Sultan al-Zahrani of Saudi Arabia for a place in the men's -75kg final, before a 3-2 setback against Kazakhstan's Nurkanat Azhikanov brought him a seventh Asian medal.

Tokyo Olympic champion Ganjzadeh eased to successive victories over participants from



Iran's kumite team won a fifth gold medal in six years at the 2023 Asian Karate Championship in Melaka, Malaysia.

ikfir

Macau and Indonesia but came short against Saudi karateka Tareg Hamedi, whom the Iranian beat for the Olympic gold.

Ganjzadeh still managed to get back to winning ways in the repechage bouts and defeated Emirati Sulaiman al-Mulla 5-0 for a joint-third place alongside Abylay Toltay of Kazakhstan in the +84kg event – a 12th Asian medal for the Iranian.

Two-time world champion Amir Mehdizadeh also had to settle for a joint-third-spot finish in the men's -67kg event.

The Iranian, who has double Asian golds under his belt, bounced back from a third-round defeat to beat Palestinian Mahmoud Daifallah (2-0) and Mohammad al-Otaibi of Kuwait (3-2) for the bronze.

Elsewhere, Sara Bahmanyar (-50kg) and Fatemeh Sa'adati (-55kg) won two women's kumite bronzes for the country, while Fatemeh Sadeqi took a third Asian kata bronze of her career.

Meanwhile, the second edition of the Asian Para Karate Championship took place in Melaka, where Iran was crowned the champion, courtesy of five medals.

Ma'soumeh Eiji, Rahim Golmohammadi, Abolfazl Chehreh-Qani, and Farzad Safavi collected four gold medals, with Hafez Hafezikia taking a bronze, as Iran beat Kazakhstan to the title.

Kazakhstan scooped two golds and silvers apiece, while Saudi Arabia finished third with one gold, three silvers and five bronze medals.

Iran names 18-man squad for Asian volleyball title defense



volleyball.ir

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Behrouz Ataei announced an 18-man squad for the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, starting August 19 in the northwestern Iranian city of Urmia.

The four-time champion will begin its quest for a third successive crown with a game against Hong Kong on Aug. 20 in Pool A – also featuring Iraq.

The members of the team will report for a training camp in Tehran on Tuesday.

The good news for the Iranian fans is the return of prolific outside hitter and skipper Milad Ebadipour, who missed the country's recently-finished campaign at the Volleyball Nations League for family reasons. Opposite spiker Saber Kazemi has also received a call-up by Ataei but Morteza Sharifi and Ali Hajipour will be ruled out of the event after being injured during the final week of the VNL preliminary round in Anaheim, California.

Pouria Hossein Khanzadeh and Mobin Nasri were also rewarded

with a place in the seniors' team after inspiring the country's under-21 side to a second world title last week in Bahrain.

Having endured a disappointing VNL run, which saw the Asian powerhouse suffer 10 defeats in 12 outings to finish third from bottom in the 16-team table, Ataei's men will be looking for a bit of consolation on home soil before heading to Rio de Janeiro in late September for the Paris 2024 Olympics qualification event, where Iran will be taking on Germany, Ukraine, Qatar, the Czech Republic, Italy, Brazil, and Cuba.

The following is the full Iranian squad for the Asian Championship: Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi; Milad Ebadipour; Mehdi Jelveh; Amir-Reza Sarlak; Mohammad Valizadeh; Pouria Hossein Khanzadeh; Meysam Salehi; Shahrouz Homayounfarmanesh; Amirhossein Esfandiar; Mobin Nasri; Amin Esmaeilnejad; Bardia Sa'adat; Saber Kazemi; Mohammadreza Hazratpour; Arman Salehi; Mohammad-Taher Vadi; Ali Ramezani; Javad Karimi.

Russian tennis player Zvonareva blocked from entering Poland



REUTERS – Russian tennis player Vera Zvonareva was blocked from entering Poland for reasons of state security and public safety, the Polish Interior Ministry said on Saturday.

The 38-year-old, a bronze medallist at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, was on the list of players of the BNP Paribas Warsaw Open tournament starting today.

"The Border Guard prevented a Russian tennis player from entering Poland. Vera Zvonareva, using a visa issued

by France, tried to get into our country on a flight from Belgrade to Warsaw," the ministry said in a statement.

Zvonareva, who landed in Poland on Friday, is on a list of people considered undesirable there, the ministry said. "After arriving from Serbia, the tennis player stayed in the transit zone of Warsaw Chopin Airport and today after 1200 she flew to Podgorica."

The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) on Saturday said it was aware of the situation. "The safety and well-being

of all players is a top priority of the WTA," it said in a statement.

"Vera has departed Poland and we will be evaluating the issue further with the event." Poland has become one of Ukraine's staunchest allies since Russia invaded the country in 2022, and it has been refusing entry to people who support the actions of Russia and Belarus.

The tournament organisers did not immediately reply to an emailed request for comment.

PSG criticised by French footballers' union after leaving Mbappe behind

BBC – Paris St-Germain have been accused of "moral harassment" after leaving Kylian Mbappe out of their pre-season tour of Asia, and the French footballers' union said it could take legal action.

PSG's all-time leading goalscorer has told the club he will not extend his contract, which has 12 months left.

The club want to sell Mbappe, 24, now to get a fee but the France international plans to stay until the end of his deal.

The forward cost PSG £165.7m following his 2017 move from Monaco.

After Mbappe was left out of the PSG squad going to Japan and South Korea, a National Union of Professional Footballers statement said: "These players must enjoy the same working conditions as the rest of the professional workforce."

"The UNFP feels it would be useful to remind managers that putting pressure on an employee – via the deterioration of their working conditions, for example – to force them to leave or accept what the employer wants constitutes moral harassment, which French law firmly condemns."

"The UNFP reserves the right to take civil and criminal action against any club that behaves in this way."



AFP

Mbappe has been a key player for PSG for six years, scoring 212 goals in 260 games, and winning or sharing the past five Ligue 1 Golden Boots.

He helped France win the 2018 World Cup and scored a hat-trick in the 2022 final defeat by Argentina. He had been widely expected to join Real Madrid for free at the end of his last deal in 2022, but surprised nearly everyone by signing a new two-year deal at PSG.

After deciding he will not extend that deal any more, PSG believe he cannot remain part of their playing group.

Chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi has said it is "impossible" that Mbappe will be allowed to leave for free in

2024.

Former Barcelona boss Luis Enrique replaced Christophe Galtier as manager of the Ligue 1 champions this summer.

Meanwhile, Saudi club Al-Hilal, who lost the Lionel Messi sweepstakes to MLS's Inter Miami, has reportedly offered Mbappe a €400 million contract (around \$445.3 million) and would pay a €200 million fee (around \$222.5 million) to PSG, per French journalist Fabrice Hawkins. PSG will reportedly accept this deal if Mbappe doesn't agree to a contract extension by July 31, per Hawkins.

Al-Hilal is also reportedly willing to let Mbappe leave for Real Madrid in 2024.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran, Doha weigh plans to broaden trade ties



TASNIM - Officials from Iran and Qatar discussed ways to promote cooperation between the two states in various fields, particularly economic and trade relations. Assistant Foreign Minister of Qatar for Regional Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulaziz al-Khulaifi discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues in his meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian in Tehran on Sunday.

Int'l paper expo kicks off in Tehran



IRNA - The Sixth Tehran International Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products, and Related Machinery kicked off in Tehran. The event, which started on Sunday, is underway in the fields of self-sufficiency in production, exports, marketing, machinery, industries, and equipment. At present, 120 plants are operating in the field of paper production across the country, as their most important problem is the supply of raw materials.

UK rejects call to regulate crypto trading as gambling



REUTERS - A UK government spokesperson rejected a parliamentary committee's recommendation to regulate crypto-currency trading as a form of gambling. The rejection came in response to the House of Commons Treasury Committee's report on the regulation of crypto-assets trading. "Unbacked crypto-assets have no intrinsic value, and their price volatility exposes consumers to the potential for substantial gains or losses, while serving no useful social purpose," the committee concluded.

Iran, Malaysia sign MoU to boost agro cooperation

Economic Desk

Iran and Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral cooperation in agriculture, especially in the field of research and education. The MoU was signed in a ceremony attended by Iran's Deputy Agriculture Minister Mojtaba Khayyam-Nekuei and Malaysian Minister of Agriculture and Food Security Mohamad Sabu, IRNA reported. Establishing a joint research station for tropical fruits, providing joint research opportunities in the fields of water management, fisheries, horticulture, irrigation, and plant conservation, as well as holding short-term courses and joint training workshops are among the most important areas covered in the cooperation

document. Speaking on the sidelines of the ceremony, Khayyam-Nekuei said Malaysia needs many types of fruits including apples, kiwis, oranges and tangerines as our country enjoys the potentials to export these products to Malaysia. "Malaysia has good experiences in the halal sector, and we decided to have very close cooperation in this field," the Iranian official noted. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Sabu said his country should use Iran's experience and technology in various fields, especially the cultivation of rice with less water, along with the poultry breeding and caviar production. "In the framework of the signed agreement, we should develop trade relations including agricultural products," the Malaysian minister added.



IRNA

Bartering deals to effectively lower impact of sanctions: **Official**

The chairman of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce said bartering deals are a solution for weakening the impact of sanctions and developing Iran's economic relations with other countries of the world. Bartering is a trade mechanism that can affect the development of Iran's trade relations with other countries, and this issue can play a leading role in weakening the impact of

sanctions imposed by the US government against Iran, Hadi Tizhoush Taban stated, according to Tasnim news agency. In the bartering system, suitable grounds are provided for the two sides to exchange products and services reciprocally with no need for currency transfer, he highlighted. Bartering trade with other countries can cover a part of Iran's foreign exchange, and this can be very effective in weakening

the impact of US sanctions imposed against the country, Tizhoush Taban added. He emphasized that bartering is an operational solution for doing business with countries that are facing a shortage of currency resources and noted that this method is used at a time of crisis, especially in an economic recession, high inflation rate, and/or when the national currency is depreciated.

Iran ranks third in oil, second in gas reserves: **OPEC**

Iran has the third largest proven oil reserves across the world, new figures by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) show. According to the data, Iran is in possession of a total of 208,600 billion barrels of oil, which remained unchanged between 2019 and 2022, Press TV reported. The figure stood at 155,600 billion barrels in 2018, but it surged by 53 billion barrels the following year. Venezuela and Saudi Arabia had the world's first and second largest proven oil reserves in 2022, with 303,221 and 267,192 billion barrels, respectively, according to OPEC figures. OPEC's proven oil reserves reached 1,243,523 billion barrels in 2022, rising by 0.1 percent when compared to the previous year. The world's total oil

reserves also stood at 1,564.441 billion barrels at the end of 2022, showing a 1.1 percent increase compared to 2021. According to the latest report by OPEC, Iran has the second-largest proven gas reserves in the world as its reserves in 2022 was equal to 33.98 trillion cubic meters. Russia ranks first in the world with 47.75 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, the OPEC Data indicated also showing that Qatar ranks third with a total gas proven gas reserves of 23.83 trillion cubic meters. The total gas reserves of the world in 2022 have reached 210.063 trillion cubic meters with an increase of 2.4 percent compared to the previous year. US (16.396 trillion cubic meters), Turkmenistan (13.95 trillion cubic meters), Saudi Arabia (9.514 trillion cubic meters), the UAE (8.210 trillion

cubic meters), Nigeria (5.913 trillion cubic meters), Venezuela (5.511 trillion cubic meters) and Algeria (4.504 trillion cubic meters) stood at the fourth to tenth ranks. Iran is a founding member of OPEC, an organization enabling the cooperation of leading oil-producing countries in order to collectively influence the global oil market and maximize profits. The country is banned from international oil trade because of US sanctions, but its oil export revenues jumped by 67 percent, to \$42.6 billion in 2022. It is currently producing some 3.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and more than one billion cubic meters per day of natural gas. Iran has some 10 active oil refineries and 21 natural gas refineries, while it also counts on massive hard currency revenues from its petrochemicals sector.

Iran's domestic wheat purchases top 7m tons: **GTC**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Government Trading Corporation (GTC) of Iran said that wheat purchases from domestic farmers has reached 7.297 million tons since purchases began in late April. Saeid Rad said on Sunday that wheat purchases have exceeded the entire purchases of the crop in the April-July period

last year, when the GTC bought 7.2 million tons of wheat under its guaranteed purchase plan, IRNA reported. Rad noted that the value of the wheat purchased this year has exceeded \$2 billion. He said that GTC's domestic wheat purchases have increased by 27 percent year-on-year in April-July, 2023.



SUBJECT: Tender Notice Extension

Extend the International Tender No: 1402

SAIPA AZIN COMPANY, the major automotive manufacturer of seat parts in Islamic Republic of Iran intends to purchase the following items:

Item	Commodity	Quantity
1	Isocyanate	1600T
2	Polyol	2400T

In this regard all capable and qualified suppliers and manufacturing companies are invited to participate in this Tender. Qualified companies may collect Tender Documents from saipa azin co. with the following address:
No. 12, Golestanak Blvd, 14th km of Shahid Lashgari Road, P.O.BOX: 13865-346 Tehran - Iran
Tel: +98 (0)44922228 / Fax: +98 (0)21 44922207
Website: www.saipa-azin.com/tender
E-Mail: info@saipa-azin.com

Tender Closing Date: August 03rd, 2023

Priorities: 1- Being manufacturer or major supplier
2- Having experience in similar project.

Saipa azin reserves the right to accept or reject any of proposals to this Invitation to tender without further obligations.

Call for coordinated measures to save Anzali Wetland

Social Desk

Iran's vice president and head of the Department of the Environment (DoE) Ali Salajegheh has underscored the urgency of implementing a comprehensive watershed management plan to preserve the Anzali Wetland. He stressed the need to harness all national, international, and private sector resources to achieve this goal.

In a meeting of the Anzali Wetland task force, attended by the governor of Gilan, Salajegheh highlighted the national significance of the project, according to IRNA.

"The Anzali Wetland naturally drains an area exceeding 370,000 hectares, and its preservation requires a comprehensive watershed management approach that could serve as a model for the country," head of DoE stated.

Salajegheh emphasized that the primary responsibility for the preservation of the wetland lies with the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization. He outlined a two-year timeline for the completion of watershed management operations in the Anzali Wetland and called for a detailed schedule for all planned operations.

"The comprehensive watershed management plan," Salajegheh



IRNA

noted, "would halt sediment inflow into the wetland, thereby eliminating dredging costs."

He also called for the use of knowledge-based companies to address water hyacinth growth. The vice president insisted that the wetland's boundaries should be finalized by the end of the week and called for a ban on the use of fertilizers and poisons

in the watershed. He suggested that the Ministry of Agriculture provide alternatives to users.

Two important steps to save the wetland

Gilan Governor Asadollah Abbasi also spoke at the meeting, outlining the current state of the Anzali Wetland and the steps taken towards its restoration.

He emphasized the need for unity among the institutions responsible for the wetland's restoration, citing inconsistency as a major issue.

Abbasi identified the implementation of watershed management and pollution removal operations as two crucial steps toward saving the Anzali Wetland. He criti-

cized the lack of action to address pollution from the Rasht Industrial Town, but noted progress in the Mehr Housing treatment plant project and the wastewater management of hospitals.

Abbasi also announced the assignment of the Rasht water treatment plant construction project to an experienced con-

tractor and discussed measures taken to combat water hyacinth in the Anzali lagoon. He highlighted the threat of fire in the region and called for increased precautions.

Representatives from the task force's member organizations also presented reports on their actions and plans to save the Anzali Wetland.

Health tourism revenue could equal 0.5m barrels of crude oil: Official

Social Desk

A member of Iran's Supreme Medical Council said Tuesday that the country could increase revenue from health tourism to the equivalent of about 500,000 barrels of crude oil per day by better utilizing existing capacities in its health care system.

The official, Dr. Dabbagh, said Iran currently receives a maximum of 1.2 million health tourists annually. He estimated that if each visitor spent an average of \$2,000 on medical treatment in Iran, "plus around the same amount on travel and accommodations," the total revenue would be close to \$5 billion,

ISNA reported.

By making better use of the 150,000 hospital beds that are currently only around 70 percent occupied, Dabbagh said revenue could easily grow to at least \$18 billion, or the equivalent of 500,000 barrels of oil daily, without oil extraction costs.

"In recent years Iran has worked to expand health tourism but has not done enough," Dabbagh said. He pointed to India attracting many health tourists from Islamic nations despite cultural differences. He said sanctions, although having some effects, have not prevented tourists from coming to Iran

and, with better planning, the country could significantly draw revenue from health tourism.

Dabbagh said Iran needs a more coordinated effort between its Health Ministry, tourism officials, hospitals and others to attract patients, care for them and send them home. He suggested opening an insurance agency to gain the trust of overseas patients.

The Medical Council official said there is no documented record of how much profit intermediaries make from health tourism in Iran, but he believes an "important share goes to brokers rather than to the country," due to the lack of a proper mechanism.



Dabbagh also said Iran could attract more medical tourists through online advertising and

promotion and by emphasizing its quality care and lower costs compared to other countries.

'Ashura is a sweeping tableau of all qualities'



By Mahdieh Qazvinian
Staff writer

A sweet-spoken and lovable boy with a drum hanging around his neck and a mourning shawl draped around his shoulders walks around his father and grandfather. He sometimes plays the drum and recites ta'zieh with childlike gestures. It's as if this family's very flesh and blood is intermingled with ta'zieh.

The boy sits on his father's lap. Mojtaba Heidari caresses his son and slowly sings poems of Ali Asghar's lullaby in his ear. Mojtaba Heidari, the last child of Reza Heidari, a master performer of ta'zieh, was born in 1981. He is an employee of Tafresh University and holds a third degree badge

in culture and art in the field of ta'zieh. He is married with two children – a daughter and a son. His daughter Yasamin also plays the roles of Sakineh and Roqayyeh (Imam Hossein's daughter) alongside her father, Mojtaba.

Heidari has been interested in ta'zieh for thirty-five years and entered the field through his father.

"The first ta'zieh I remember seeing as a child was that of 'Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shohada', and I cried silently in a corner over his oppression. In general, ta'zieh, which is a form of our national and religious theater, is very impactful because seeing has a much greater effect than just hearing. Every age and level of literacy and insight will have its own perception."

Mojtaba describes the memory of his first performance. "I

was a five-year-old boy who could not even read or write. In a hosseiniyeh in Tafresh, I met an enthusiastic crowd that had gathered there hours before the start of ta'zieh. I had memorized the copy of ta'zieh with my grandfather, Mohammad-Taqi Heidari, and my father, Reza Heidari."

Mojtaba tells us about the background of ta'zieh in the city of Tafresh.

"According to research, the history of ta'zieh in Tafresh and in our family goes back about 200 years. We are the seventh generation of ta'zieh performers in the Heidari family, and even my two-and-a-half-year-old son, Mohammadreza, already has a soft spot for ta'zieh, and God willing, he will continue this art."

Mojtaba believes that ta'zieh has important messages for its

audience. "The messages are precisely those of Ashura and Karbala – martyrdom, love, self-sacrifice, forgiveness, and giving it all in the way of God, refusing to succumb to oppression and oppressors, among many others. In my opinion, the event of Ashura, which transpired in half a day, is a sweeping tableau of all qualities, good and evil, at their highest level. Ashura is a shortcut university for anyone seeking any goal or field – anyone can find whatever they are looking for in this story."

Mojtaba continues, "Preserving Iranian religion and traditions builds our national and cultural identity, and in my opinion, ta'zieh is our most important national theater and religious ritual, which was registered by UNESCO in 2010. We should be able to continue ta'zieh in the



same traditional and authentic style without allowing it to be distorted. We should not introduce innovations into ta'zieh." Mojtaba enjoys epic and martial roles, wearing armor and going to war in ta'zieh. According to the audience, he performs these roles exceptionally well.

Over 7,000 entries received for TISFF



ILNA - The deadline for submissions to the International Section of the 40th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF) recently closed with an impressive record of 7,216 international entries received, making it the highest number of submissions in the festival's history.

The festival holds significant prominence as one of the accredited festivals by the Academy Awards. The winning film from this festival is nominated for the Oscars, which has garnered substantial attention from filmmakers worldwide.

It is noteworthy that this remarkable achievement in the International Section of the festival comes as Iranian filmmakers will have time until August 1 to register their works and compete for participation in the national section of the festival (Iranian Cinema).

The 40th edition of the event, under the auspice of Mehdi Azarpendar, will take place from October 19 to October 24 in Tehran.

Iran, Tajikistan make joint musical work for Muharram



ISNA - In a cross-border collaboration, renowned Tajikistani singer and musician, Davlatmand Kholov, joined forces with veteran eulogist, Sadeq Ahangaran, to create a special musical composition for the mourning days of Muharram.

The collaborative piece, titled 'Hussainiya-e Del,' features heartfelt lyrics penned by Alireza Qazveh. Davlatmand, a master of local music in southern Tajikistan, renowned for his expertise in "Folk" music, has previously collaborated with Ahangaran on other projects.

The new musical creation is among the latest productions of the Center for Poetry, Music, and Anthem of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). As part of their Muharram and Ashura commemorations, the center has produced a total of 30 pieces, which will be broadcasted on radio and television networks.

These recent productions include six visually engaging pieces, accompanied by 24 acapella audio pieces, all dedicated to honoring the solemnity of Muharram and its significance in both Iran and Tajikistan.

License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)
Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
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ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5
Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
Website: www.irandaily.ir
 newspaper.irandaily.ir
 irandaily@icpi.ir
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Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of Shahid Mottahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran



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Over 1.4 m foreign tourists arrive in Iran in three months

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran welcomed 1,410,822 foreign tourists during the first three months of the current Iranian year, which ended on June 21. This figure marks a remarkable 43-percent surge compared to the same period last year.

The influx of tourists underscores Iran's growing appeal as a favored travel destination, attracting visitors from diverse corners of the world. The Domestic Tourism Development Office, in particular, emphasized the vital role played by various tourism-related activities conducted by each department, including the organization of tourism events. Iran's array of tourism events has emerged as a key driver in attracting foreign tourists, making a significant contribution to the overall growth of the sector. Every year, a wide array of tourism events, featuring cultural, recreational, agricultural, religious, and historical themes, are hosted at local, provincial, regional, national, and international levels across the country.

Notably, during the month of Ordibehesht (April/May) in the current year, a total of 90 tourism events were held, with Isfahan Province leading the charge, hosting 10 of these events, followed by Semnan, Mazandaran, and Fars provinces. In a bid to harness the



potential of tourism events and bolster the tourism market, the Domestic Tourism Development Office has embarked on an ambitious three-year process to design and develop a comprehensive

tourism events calendar. The tourism sector has also witnessed significant investment, with the approval of 32 major investment projects, amounting to over 72 billion tomans (\$1.44

million) during the current Iranian year. These investments, totaling \$226 million, have demonstrated a notable interest in tourism and hotel complexes, particularly in provinces such as

Qazvin and Mazandaran. Furthermore, a total of 35 travel and tourism companies were recognized and rewarded for their commendable contributions to various international markets.

Iran's thriving tourism industry continues to blossom, attracting global attention and positioning the country as a prominent player in the world of travel and leisure.

Iran, Portugal to expand cooperation in education, culture

In a bid to strengthen bilateral ties, Iran and Portugal are set to expand cooperation in various domains, including language, education, culture, sports, youth, tourism, and mass media. The Iranian Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, announced that the cooperation bill encompassing these areas has been formally submitted to the Parliament for consideration.

Underscoring the significance of this milestone agreement, Hosseini emphasized that both nations are eager to promote mutual understanding and collaboration in fields crucial to cultural exchange and development. The bill, once approved, will not

only foster joint efforts in language education and cultural awareness but will also facilitate the study and appreciation of Iranian studies and Portuguese language and culture in their respective countries, Mehr News Agency wrote. One of the most remarkable features of the agreement is the establishment of an infrastructure for a global computer network, aiming to enhance the teaching and learning of each other's languages, thus encouraging intercultural dialogue. Moreover, the cooperation bill allows for the smooth re-export and re-import of materials and equipment related to cultural and scientific activities for non-commercial purposes, bolstering further academic and artistic inter-

actions between the two nations. "This pioneering agreement is a groundbreaking achievement, as it marks the first of its kind between Iran and a Western European country," Hosseini stated. He further expressed hopes that this landmark agreement could serve as a foundational document, setting a positive precedent for future relations between Iran and other European countries. The proposed cooperation bill signifies a significant step forward in the cultural and educational partnership between Iran and Portugal, fostering mutual appreciation and understanding that will undoubtedly strengthen ties between the two nations in the years to come.

Dutch masterpiece on show in UK for first time

A "dazzling" rare Dutch masterpiece that has always been held in private collections has gone on public display for the first time in its history. 'Banquet Still Life' by Jan Davidsz. de Heem will be on show at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge for the next two years.

The importance of the painting was underlined by a temporary export bar placed on the work by the government last year when it came up for sale, uncleaned, for the first time in two centuries, valued at £6.1m. An export bar gives time for a public gallery or institution to try to raise funds to buy the work, the Guardian reported. At the time, Stephen Parkinson, the arts minister, said: "This captivating painting is magnif-



icent not just in size but also in its exquisite detail. De Heem's enormous talent is evident in this rare piece." In the event, it was sold privately. The painting has since been cleaned for the first time by Martin Wyld, former head of conservation at the National Gallery. It has now been lent to the Fitzwilliam so it can be seen by the public. De Heem was one of the most important still-life painters of the 17th century. 'Banquet Still Life'

is rare within his body of work because of its monumental size; he typically painted smaller works. The artist completed four paintings on this scale between 1640 and 1643. Together they established De Heem as the pre-eminent still-life painter of the Dutch Golden Age and exemplified an emerging style of painting known as pronkstilleven, featuring ornate displays of sumptuous food and luxurious objects.