



Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MFA DIGEST

CENTRE FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY



Colorful sky of Maranjab Desert, Isfahan, Iran

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MFA NEWSLETTER

Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi met with Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Muhammad al-Khulaifi.



Maysaa Alghribawy the newly-appointed head of the World Food Program (WFP) Office in Iran met with Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi at the start of her mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran to present her credentials.



UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg met with Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi.





MFA NEWSLETTER

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and his Croatian counterpart Gordan Grlić Radman spoke on the phone over bilateral ties between Tehran and Zagreb.



Seyyed Abbas Araghchi, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Maris Sangiampongsa, Foreign Minister of Thailand, discussed and exchanged views on bilateral relations during a telephone call.





Iran's Nature

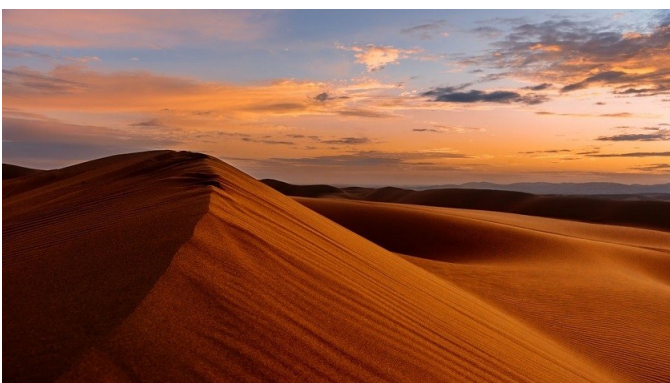
Iranian Deserts



Iran's deserts have beautiful and untouched attractions, These deserts are extremely beautiful, quiet, mysterious and dignified.

Deserts are among the world's most dramatically seductive natural habitats. In Iran's deserts, spotted diverse animal life can be spotted, including insects and wild animals with a rich variety of spectacular desert landforms.

The desert, Sahara, Kavir or Kalout are scientifically different, and their differentiations depend on altitude, annual precipitation, the type of vegetation, amount of salt present in the soil and natural formations. In Iran, there are all types of deserts whose sand dunes, salt rivers, salt lakes, desert plants, birds and wildlife, attract thousands of tourists depending on the regional and climatic conditions.



Geographical features of Iran's deserts

Iranian deserts are one of the most beautiful and varied deserts in the world. There are 2 large and separate desert systems and in many ways quite different from each other.



Dasht-e Kavir desert also known as the central desert (Kavir-e Markazi) is in north- central part of Iran with 800 km in length and 500 km in width, a total surface area of about 77,600 km².

Dasht-e Lut desert (Kavir-e Lut) is the other desert system located in the southeast of the country with 480 km length and 320 km width registered on the list of UNESCO heritage sites in 2016.

One can still find people who live a relatively traditional life with extremely modest facilities, making their living mostly off the land. Some even have no electricity, but they like it and is a personal choice. This is becoming an increasingly rare phenomenon in the world.





Iran's Nature



Among the significant plant species of this region Alhagi, Acantholimon, Atraphaxis, Haloxylon, Tamarisk are mentionable. Various animal species such as gazelles, Pseudocerastes, Cheetahs, Rueppell's foxes, Caracals, Sand cats, Persian Onager and Golden Eagles can be seen in this desert area.; However; the major part of Dasht-e Kavir is devoid of plant life and the ground is low, causing dreadful swamps after small amounts of rainfall. As a result, crossing the desert without prior research and thorough study of the wet season isn't recommended.



Dasht e Kavir or the Central desert

Dasht-e Kavir, 300km long and 400 km wide, is the largest desert located on the Iranian plateau. Some of the most important parts of this desert include; dangerous swamps found in the southern and central parts, the areas covered by sand dunes, areas covered by clay and Himalayan black salt and the areas devoid of plant life.

In addition, craters resembling volcanic craters can be seen in the central parts of the desert, created as a result of rapid evaporation and low density of the soil. The lowest spot of Dasht-e Kavir is the northern part with 650 m of altitude above sea level and the highest spot, 838 m, is located north of Namak Lake and Biaybanak village.



Dasht-e Lut (The Lut Desert):

is the second largest desert of Iran with an area of 95800 sq km, and is located between the provinces of Khorasan, Kerman, and Yazd and is considered one of the driest and warmest deserts of the world. The length of this desert, from northwest to southeast, is about 700 km, and its width varies between 50 to 150 km. The Lut Desert can be divided into Northern Lut and Southern Lut.





Iran's Nature



The Northern Lut starts near Tabas and connects to the Dasht-e Kavir through a strait in the south of Rabat Khan. The Southern Lut, on the other hand, ends at the foothills of Sistan and Baluchestan in the east and the mountain range of Jabal Bazar, Plover, and Jopar in Kerman Province.

Mesr Desert

The Mesr Desert named because of a simple and lovely village with the same name. This area is located in Isfahan Province, 55 km from Khor city and near the village of Garmeh. In addition to the sandy hills and Ramps, which are the main attractions of the desert. Other attractions of nature and tourism can be mentioned, such as Abbasid throne, palms and canebrake of the Mesr Village.



Marnjab Desert

Maranjab desert is one of the most popular desert attractions in Iran and Isfahan province. It is just a short distance from Tehran and is located near Aran and Bidgol. The attractions of nature and tourism include sandy hills and Ramps, Abbasid caravanserai and the wandering island. Also It has also been one of the astronomy site in Iran.



Deserts as tourist attractions

The deserts of Iran encompass all that is needed in adventure desert tours in an intact and beautiful nature. These deserts have been interestingly formed of diverse and colorful forms.

From the barren desert to the golden sand dunes, the pleasure of walking along sand dunes meeting local people and experiencing desert tours by visiting Iran is un forgettable.



Society & Culture

FAJR THEATER FESTIVAL WELCOMES INTL. SUBMISSIONS



The 43rd edition of Fajr International Theater Festival (FITF) has received submissions from 46 countries around the world, the organizers have announced.

A total of 231 works from 46 countries including Russia, Norway, Sweden, Canada, and several African countries applied to participate in this year's event, Mojgan Vakili, the director of the international section of the festival said during a press conference held in Tehran.

However, the international section of the event will be held as a non-competitive segment. "The decision to host the international section non-competitively was made by the festival organizers," she added.

She shared that 20 works have been prioritized for final selection, culminating in six stage performances and one online presentation.

Furthermore, 15 international instructors applied to conduct workshops at the festival, representing countries such as Canada, France, Africa, Tunisia, and India, she mentioned.

After evaluating the quality of the proposed topics, a workshop titled "Exploring Contemporary Theater," featuring an instructor from India, will be held over three days during the festival, she added.

SIX IRANIAN FILMS TO PARTICIPATE IN INDIA'S THIRD EYE ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Six feature films from Iran will take part in the 21st Third Eye Asian Film Festival, slated for January 10 to 16 in Mumbai, India.

Five of the Iranian films will be screened in the Asian Spectrum section and one movie is set to be shown in the Asian Masters section, Honaronline reported.

The Iranian participants in the Asian Spectrum section include "In the Arms of the Tree" directed by Babak Khajehpasha, "Sima's Unfinished Narration" by Alireza Samadi, "Hook" by Hossein Rigi, and "Captain" by Mohammad Hamzei.

Asian Film Foundation has taken the initiative to create adequate awareness and appreciation of Asian cinema. Third Eye Asian Film Festival is a major event organized by the Asian Film Foundation to showcase Asian cinema and honor the artists who devote their lives to cinema.

The festival seeks to show globally- appreciated Asian films to the audience of Mumbai and other cities of Maharashtra. The first edition of the festival was held in 2002.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IRAN RANKS SECOND IN 3D PRINTING PUBLICATIONS AMONG ISLAMIC NATIONS



According to a report released by the Web of Science database, with 606 publications on three-dimensional printing over a span of ten years, Iran ranks second among Islamic nations.

The report has included data from 2014 to 2023. The country's global ranking in 3D printing publications is 22, IRNA reported.

3D printing refers to the process of creating three-dimensional objects layer by layer. Each layer is placed one after another.

According to the report, three-dimensional printing and additive manufacturing publications in Iran experienced notable growth from 2010 to 2023.

University of Tehran (with 83 documents), Amirkabir University of Technology (with 83 documents), Tarbiat Modarres University (with 40 documents), and Tehran University of Medical Sciences (with 37 documents) had the highest number of publications.

Turkey (with 779 documents), and Malaysia (with 543 documents) rank first and third, respectively.

Iran, with 65 documents, ranks first among Islamic countries in four-dimensional (4D) printing, the country ranks 11 globally.

The country ranks second in publications related to the fifth generation of the industry (Industry 5.0) with 1,625 documents. Turkey (with 1,817 documents) and Malaysia (with 1,611 documents) rank first and third, respectively.

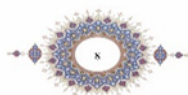
TEHRAN, DUSHANBE FOSTER CO-OP IN AGRICULTURAL BIOTECH, MOLECULAR GENETICS

Iranian and Tajik officials have agreed to boost scientific collaboration in different fields, including agricultural biotechnology and molecular genetics.

During a visit to Tajikistan, Javad Mohammadi, the head of the National Institute of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (NIGEB), held a meeting with Tajik health officials.

During the meeting, the two sides explored avenues for the expansion of scientific relations, particularly in biotechnology, and discussed ways to implement the previously signed agreements, IRNA reported. "Screening for Down's syndrome, Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), and Phenylketonuria (PKU) as well as manufacturing pharmaceutical products and diagnostic kits are among the main focus of the collaboration," Mohammadi noted.

It also involves developing joint projects on agricultural biotechnology and molecular genetics, exchanging professors and post-graduate students to further promote cooperation between the two countries, the official added.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

BOLIVIA, VENEZUELA SEEK TO FURTHER SCI-TECH TIES WITH IRAN



Delegations from Bolivia and Venezuela have paid a visit to Iran house of innovation and technology (iHiT) to explore avenues for boosting scientific and technological cooperation with Iran.

The Bolivian delegation, led by defense minister, Edmundo Novello, and the Venezuelan delegation, headed by member of the National Assembly, Francisco Alejandro Torrealba Ojeda, held a joint meeting with Hossein Roozbeh, the head of the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology.

The Bolivian official, lauding Iran's significant progress in various fields of science and technology, said that "enhancing scientific ties will be beneficial not only to our countries but also the region and even the world. We appreciate Iran's readiness to develop scientific and technological relations with different countries. These collaborations will contribute to expertise exchange, economic growth, and improved quality of life in the two countries."

For his part, the Venezuelan official commended Iran as one of the leading countries in technology, saying, "Iran is a role model for us and we hope to benefit from Iran's experience and technical knowledge.

Scientific and technological cooperation can help strengthen the industrial and scientific infrastructure of the countries and lay the basis for further growth and progress in the economic and social sectors."

Roozbeh also announced Iran's willingness to further scientific, and technological cooperation with its partners, including Bolivia and Venezuela.

BELGRADE INTERESTED IN ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL TIES WITH TEHRAN

Serbian Ambassador to Tehran, Damir Kovacevic, has announced his country's willingness to foster scientific, research, and educational collaborations with Iran.

"Serbia is ready to deepen bilateral relations with Iran. The country grants scholarships to a large number of Iranian students, and offers sabbatical leaves to them," the ambassador added.

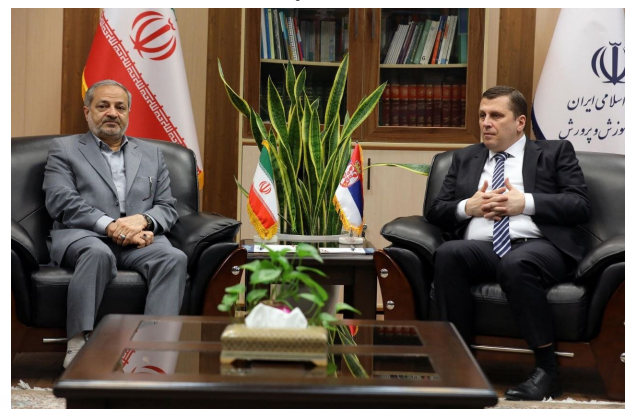
He made the remarks in a meeting with Education Minister Alireza Kazemi in Tehran, IRNA reported.

On the other hand, "Iran's ministry of education manages two teacher training universities. I think there are opportunities for cooperation and we welcome any new and innovative ideas in this field," Kovacevic further noted.

The official went on to say that presently educational textbooks in the country feature European luminaries. However, enhancing collaborations can help include Iranian luminaries in textbooks, as well. Kazemi, for his part, said Iran and Serbia already have bilateral relations in political, cultural, educational, and economic fields.

Highlighting the significance of exchanging knowledge and experiences, Kazemi proposed the expansion of the ties in vocational education, special education, and teaching literacy. The official asked for developing educational infrastructure and making use of Iranians teachers' skills in Serbia.

He also invited the Serbian minister of education to pay a visit to Iran to share expertise in the education sector and become familiar with the research and scientific achievements of the country.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IRANIAN RESEARCHERS CREATE OXYGEN-RELEASING MICRONEEDLE PATCH



Iranian researchers have developed a biodegradable microneedle patch that releases oxygen, which can help treat chronic wounds by alleviating low oxygen conditions.

Iran Press/ Iran news: When the human body is injured, the skin repair process is metabolically active, requiring oxygen for the physiological processes associated with wound healing. In the case of chronic wounds, hypoxia (low oxygen conditions) can occur, delaying the healing process.

Research has shown that microneedle patches can improve the wound healing process. According to Sahab News, citing Mehr News Agency, a group of Iranian researchers have developed microneedle patches based on biodegradable gelatin methacrylate that are mechanically strong and capable of penetrating tissue. These patches release oxygen upon exposure to the body's interstitial fluid and wound secretions.

In this research, the oxygen release rate and biocompatibility of the microneedle patches were evaluated and optimized using different combinations. Laboratory (in-vitro) tests demonstrated that the optimized patches could release oxygen at a therapeutic level, significantly improving the survival rate of hypoxic cells in chronic wounds by aligning them with cells in a normal oxygen environment.

Experiments on animals (in-vivo) also showed that the oxygen-releasing microneedle patches did not cause any harm or disruption to the healing process in severely wounded lab mice.

NEW TAJIK PERSIAN CULTURE RESEARCH INSTITUTE LAUNCHED IN DUSHANBE

The Tajik Persian Culture Research Institute was inaugurated in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on Wednesday in a ceremony attended by the Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, the Minister of Culture of Tajikistan Matlubakhon Sattoriyon and a number of Iranian and Tajik cultural and literary figures.

Speaking at the ceremony, Salehi-Amiri stated that the Persian language serves as a fundamental pillar of the cultural identity for both nations, CHTN reported.

"Today is a blessed day for the two nations of Iran and Tajikistan. The Persian language is one of the most important elements of the cultural identity of these two nations, which Ferdowsi, as the symbol of this sweet language, has preserved."

"In today's world, violence and conflicts have imposed heavy costs on nations, but what remains enduring is the cultural and linguistic bond between Iran and Tajikistan," he added.

"The Persian language is the language of mysticism, ethics, symbols, and rich poetry that has stood firm against historical invasions," he noted.

Salehi-Amiri emphasized that the opening of this research institute could herald a new chapter in the cultural relations between Iran and Tajikistan. He mentioned that the first project of this center would focus on researching the linguistic roots and dialects of Persian and Tajik.



IRANIAN COOKIES: QURABIYA



The decorative qurabiyas are Iranian shortbread cookies made with ground blanched almonds, egg whites, sugar, and a small amount of flour. The batter is piped into circular shapes, and the cookies are then baked until crispy. Before they are put in the oven, qurabiyas are usually decorated with chopped pistachios, which provide a nice decorative contrast to the pale dough.

It is believed that they have originated in the Iranian city of Tabriz, located in the eastern part of the country, where they can be found in almost every traditional bakery. Most commonly, tourists buy them as convenient Tabriz souvenirs. These soft and chewy sweet biscuits have an immensely important place in the Iranian culture, especially during wedding ceremonies.

Ingredients: grams of almonds, grams sugar, egg whites, vanilla, Almonds and pistachios as needed



TRADE & ECONOMY

IRAN, UZBEKISTAN COMMITTED TO EXPANDING REGIONAL TRANSPORT, TRANSIT COOPERATION

TEHRAN, ASTANA TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC TIES WITH NEW INITIATIVES



The Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Tehran Fariddin Nasriev met with Ali Akbar Safaei, Iran's deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development and head of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), to discuss strengthening bilateral and regional transport and transit collaboration.

The meeting emphasized facilitating trade between the two nations, the PMO portal reported. As reported, discussions focused on streamlining multimodal transportation between Iran and Uzbekistan via Iranian ports in the country's northern and southern regions.

The PMO expressed readiness to swiftly address issues faced by Uzbek traders and businesses along regional corridors passing through Iran. The two sides also discussed organizing reciprocal trade delegations, including visits by Uzbek technical representatives, traders, and transport companies to explore Iran's port capacities for enhanced transit options within the framework of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

Mahmoud Najafi Arab, head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Ontalap Onalbayev, Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, met at the chamber to discuss ways to expand trade relations between the two countries.

During the meeting, the Kazakh ambassador announced that a trade delegation led by Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade would soon visit Tehran.

A memorandum of cooperation was also signed between Tehran's Chamber of Commerce and the Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Chamber of Commerce on the sidelines of the meeting.

The discussions highlighted the Iranian Parliament's approval of the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Both sides viewed the agreement as a historic economic opportunity to initiate broader economic and trade collaborations between Iran and Kazakhstan.



TRADE & ECONOMY

IRAN, TURKEY SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT ON LIVESTOCK, AQUATIC FEED



Majid Movahed Ghaderi, a board member of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Iran and Turkey's private sectors to enhance trade cooperation in the livestock, poultry, and aquatic feed industry.

The MOU was signed during the eighth Strategic Agricultural Committee meeting held in Ankara, with the presence of Alireza Nouri Qezeljeh, Iran's Minister of Agriculture, and İbrahim Yumaklı, Turkey's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.

According to Ghaderi, the agreement emphasizes joint investment opportunities, mutual marketing development, and information exchange on feed safety, livestock nutrition, and sustainable practices. He highlighted Turkey's significant demand for aquatic feed and raw materials, presenting an opportunity for Iranian producers.

Ghaderi stressed the potential for collaboration, noting that Turkey exports over 700 agricultural products to 200 countries and has valuable experience in agricultural trade.

A NEW CORRIDOR TO BE OPENED SOON AT PAKISTAN-IRAN BORDER

A new border corridor has been announced at Panjgur to promote trade and facilitate movement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

According to sources of the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives of Pakistan, the corridor will facilitate legitimate trade activities between the two countries, discourage the smuggling of goods, and will also provide employment and business opportunities to the people living along the border of the both countries.

The new trade route in the Kohak Chidagi area will boost business activities in the Panjgur area of Balochistan and the Collectorate of Customs in Gwadar has been directed to take necessary steps in the Kohak Chidagi area of the Panjgur border crossing point to ensure immediate development of the required infrastructure in the area.

Earlier in December, Pakistan and Iran inaugurated the Gabd-Ramadan border crossing to increase trade and people-to-people exchanges.





SPORTS

IRANIAN ICE CLIMBER WINS WORLD CUP



Mohammad-Reza Safdarian won the gold medal in the speed category of the Ice Climbing World Cup in South Korea and became the world champion.

Iran Press/Asia: During the Ice Climbing World Cup competitions that began today in Cheongsong, South Korea, and in the speed category of the competition, Mohammad Reza Safdarian won the championship title in the speed category.

In the same section of the competition, Mohsen Beheshti, another Iranian representative, came in third place after the representative of Mongolia and above the ice climber from the host country.

Beheshti came in third place in the classification stage and in competition with his Korean opponent, he managed to record the best time in the speed category of the competition by recording a time of 12 seconds and 76 hundredths of a second.

The Ice Climbing World Cup will continue on Sunday with the semi-final matches of the lead stage. Mohammad Reza Safdarian and Shabnam Asadi are the Iranian representatives in this section of the competition.

The Ice Climbing World Cup continues in South Korea until January 14. The Iranian national team participated in this competition with three athletes.

SARDAR AZMOUN NAMED AMONG TOP 20 INTERNATIONAL GOAL SCORERS BY IFFHS

Iranian football star Sardar Azmoun has been recognized as one of the top 20 international goal scorers in the world by the International Federation of Football History & Statistics (IFFHS). The federation's latest 2024 rankings showcase Azmoun's impressive achievements on both the club and national stages.

According to the IFFHS report, Morocco's Sofiane Rahimi, who plays for Al Ain, topped the list with an astounding 20 goals, followed by his compatriot Ayoub El Kaabi of Olympiacos FC in second place.

The rankings evaluate players' scoring performances across international football, including matches for national teams and continental or intercontinental club competitions.

Azmoun, with a total of 12 goals—five scored in club tournaments and seven in matches for Iran's national team—secured the 15th spot in this prestigious list.

Iranian football continues to make its mark internationally, as Mehdi Taremi, another prominent striker, also featured in the rankings. Taremi, who scored 10 goals—nine in national team matches and one at the club level—was ranked 25th.





DISCOVER IRAN IN PICTURES

EYE-HATCHING BEAUTY OF IRAN'S BERIS BEACH

Beris is a village located in 60 km east of Chabahar in Sistan-Baluchestan Province. Beris port and fishing harbor with a height of 10 meters above sea level is a place for catching all kinds of fish and king prawns.

The best time to check out Beris is between November and April. If you go in summer, it's really hot, and you can't stay on the beach for long. And guess what? The sunsets at Beris are super cool. They're so good that you should take pictures for your Instagram. So, if you want to see a nice beach that not many people know about and has awesome sunsets, Beris Beach is where you should go. It's like a special place that's ready for you to find.

