

## Some 110 Companies to Attend Tehran Paper Expo



TEHRAN – As many as 110 companies from Iran, India, China and Indonesia will participate at the 6th Tehran International Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products and Related Machinery to be held from July 23 to 27 in Tehran.

Reza Omid, head of the 6th Tehran International Exhibition of Paper, Cardboard, Cellulose Products and Related Machinery said: “Eight companies from India, China and Indonesia will present their latest achievements in the exhibition.”

“Based on the coordination made, business delegations from the

UAE, Lebanon, Turkey and Russia will attend the event as well to get acquainted with new technologies in the field of paper and cellulose,” Omid stated.

“An assortment of innovative and knowledge-based companies of paper and cellulose will establish their stands at the exhibition this year and display their innovative works in this sector,” he added.

Omid said the opening ceremony of the exhibition would be held at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground on Sunday with a group of cultural and industrial officials in attendance.

## Zoroastrians: Active Members of Iranian Society



YAZD (Dispatches) -- The fragrant holy fire, kept in a large bronze goblet, “has been burning for more than 1,500 years”, said Simin, a tour guide welcoming visitors to the Zoroastrian fire temple in Iran’s central Yazd province.

Zoroastrianism dates back some 3,500 years. Founded by the prophet Zarathustra, it was the predominant religion of the ancient Persian empire, until the rise of Islam with the Arab conquests of the seventh century.

Today, the Zoroastrian community is estimated at around 200,000 people who live mainly in Iran and India, AFP reported.

They venerate fire as a supreme form of purity.

Alongside water, air and earth, the elements must not be contaminated by human activity, according to their faith.

Only Zoroastrian priests are allowed in the Yazd sanctum, covering their faces to prevent vapor and breath from contaminating the sacred fire, as they take turns during the day to keep the flame burning.

The fire “can never die out”, said the tour guide.

Visitors can only observe the rituals from behind tinted glass.

In Iran, Zoroastrian leaders say the community nowadays counts about 50,000 members. The latest national census, conducted in 2016, put their number at 24,000.

“Our religion still occupies a place in the history of the world, and it will continue to exist”, said Bahram Demehri, a 76-year-old faithful from Yazd.

“The essence of Zoroastrianism, like other religions, is based on monotheism, prophecy, belief in the afterlife and benevolence,” he told AFP.

Zoroastrians believe that “good thoughts, good words, good deeds”

are the key to happiness and spirituality.

Founded by the prophet Zarathustra, Zoroastrianism was the predominant religion of the ancient Persian empire, until the rise of Islam with the Arab conquests of the seventh century.

A messiah called Saoshyant will one day return and save the world by fighting wrongs, they believe.

Their teachings are embodied in Faravahar, an ancient symbol of a man emerging from a winged disc while holding a ring, which is carved on the pediments of ancient Persian temples.

“Joy is essential in the practice of our religion,” Simin, the tour guide, noted, mentioning multiple religious celebrations.

One of those festivals, Nowruz, marks the new Persian year and is celebrated to this day by Iran’s overwhelmingly Shia Muslim majority.

Tehran recognizes Zoroastrians as a religious minority, granting them freedom of worship and representation in parliament, which also reserves seats for other minorities including Armenians, Assyrians and Jews.

For Zoroastrians like Demehri, “the laws protect us”, he said.

“Zoroastrians are active members of Iranian society,” and include “university professors and government employees”, Demehri added.

Zoroastrian priests have sought to open centers abroad, including in California in the United States, where a sizeable diaspora community lives.

Demehri noted efforts to “modernize the rites” and simplify them for younger generations.

“It is difficult to ask young people who love pizza to eat our traditional tasteless bread during celebrations,” he said.

# Swedish Films Excluded From Iranian Festivals

TEHRAN -- In reaction to the desecration of the Holy Qur’an, Swedish movies will not be accepted for screening at Iranian film festivals, head of the Iranian Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs says.

“We have decided to refrain from featuring or accepting Swedish films in various film festivals in Iran,” Muhammad Khazayee told an International Cinema Council meeting.

“Islamophobia and attacks on the beliefs of Muslims are suspicious behaviors exhibited by certain Western security and intellectual movements. Western movements have always sought to conceal their colonialist tendencies behind the mask of ‘freedom of expression’ by belittling, destroying, and discriminating against the values of other religions, especially Islam,” he said.

“Unfortunately, the ugly act of Islamophobia in the



Iranian women protest in Mashhad to condemn the desecration of the Holy Qur’an in Sweden.

West has been repeated once again. Instead of engaging in dialogue to better understand religious commonalities and proximity of divine religions, the West has consistently fueled destruction, threats, iso-

lation, religious animosity, and hatred,” Khazayee added.

“This is a misguided strategy that has led to the reactions by passionate, honorable, and freedom-loving Muslims worldwide.”

The recent desecration of the Qur’an in Sweden has resulted in widespread condemnation and calls for respect and tolerance from various religious and cultural organizations globally.

## Portugal, Iran Prepare Cultural Cooperation Bill

TEHRAN -- The Iranian vice president for parliamentary affairs said the Iran-Portugal cooperation bill in the fields of culture, language, education, sports, youth, tourism and mass media has been submitted to the parliament.

Referring to the importance of the bill, Muham-

mad Hussein said the two sides will encourage and expand bilateral ties in the fields of language, education, culture, sports, youth, tourism and mass media.

The bill will also call for the study and promotion of the language and culture of the other party, especially Iranian studies and

Portuguese language and culture, in their respective countries, he added.

“Furthermore, the two sides will facilitate the re-export and re-import of materials and equipment for non-commercial purposes related to cultural and scientific activities as envisaged in this agree-

ment.”

Hussein said the agreement is the first of its kind to be signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and a Western European country, that can be used as a basic document in regulating Iran’s relations with other European countries.

## Russian Festival Awards Iranian Feature Film

TEHRAN -- Iranian feature ‘Between the Cliffs’ has grabbed awards at the Russian Within the Family Film Festival.

Written and directed by Mokhtar Abdollahi, the film won two awards at the children cinema section of the 2023 edition of the event.

The best film and best actor awards was dedicated to the movie and its actors Andia Yahyapour and Hamidreza Gheibi.

‘Between the Cliffs’ tells the story of Ebrahim and his little sister Ilma, who tend their cattle in the mountains when their parents go to town on an errand. In a rock crevice, honeybees buzz and Ebrahim climbs for their nest. Easier said than done – with an injured foot, Ebrahim gets stuck on a ledge. Now it’s up to Ilma to manage on her own.

Andia Yahyapour, Maryam Alahmad and Esmaeel Moradi comprise the cast members of the flick.

The film has been produced by the Documenta-

ry and Experimental Film Center in Iran.

The Russian festival, dedicated to screening films with the main idea of chastity, love and loyalty in family relationships, were held on July 8-11.



## Picture of the Day



Ayatollah Hassan Saneyi, a member of the Expediency Council, was laid to rest in Qom after a funeral was held with the participation of people and seminary students.