

## Moroccan Wins Kazakhstan's Qur'an Competition



ASTANA (Dispatches) – A Moroccan has claimed the top award of the first edition of Kazakhstan international Qur'an competition.

The first edition of the Kazakhstan international Qur'an competition concluded with a representative from Morocco taking home the prestigious top award. The closing ceremony, which took place at the Astana Grand Mosque in the capital city of Astana, marked the end of the two-day event.

The Qur'an memorization competition witnessed the participation of 30 memorizers from various countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., Egypt, Turkey, Russia, Kuwait, and Guinea.

The top six winners of the competition were announced as follows:

- Ilyas Hajri from Morocco secured first place and was awarded \$20,000.
- Turpal-Ali Sadykov from Chechnya claimed second place and received a cash prize of \$15,000.
- Malek Abdullah Albadin from Libya and Saad Salim

from Algeria both secured the third place, each receiving \$7,000.

- Abdurahman Faraj Hafiz Baragi from Egypt secured fourth place and was awarded a cash prize of \$5,000.

- Muhammad Adib bin Ahmed Razani from Malaysia secured fifth place, receiving a cash prize of \$3,000.

The event was organized by the Religious Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan to commemorate Republic Day, a significant national holiday.

The judging panel was comprised of eminent Qur'an experts, including Hafiz Othman Shahin from Turkey, Mahir Farnawi from Egypt, Jahangir Nematov from Uzbekistan, Abdullah al-Hashimi from the United Arab Emirates, and Yarsin Amir from Kazakhstan. They evaluated the participants' performances and determined the winners of the competition.

The Kazakhstan international Qur'an contest provided a platform for participants to showcase their memorization skills and deep understanding of the Qur'an.

# Pakistan, Iran to Make Film on Allama Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (IRNA) – Minister of Culture of Pakistan Jamal Shah has praised the dynamism of Iran's cinema industry and said that Iran and Pakistan have taken serious steps to produce joint films, including one about Allama Muhammad Iqbal, known as Iqbal Lahori.

In an exclusive interview with IRNA, Jamal Shah announced the Pakistani government's determination to develop cultural and artistic ties with Iran.

Referring to the recent meeting with his Iranian counterpart on the sidelines of the meeting of the Ministers of Culture of Islamic countries in Doha, he added that his country and the Ministry of Culture of Pakistan are ready to host the Iranian film festival.

He said that Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Muhammad Mehdi Ismaili and Director of the Cinema Organization of Iran Muhammad Khazaei have been invited to visit Islamabad to attend this festival.

A number of Iranian officials including directors and filmmakers are scheduled to at-



Minister of Culture of Pakistan Jamal Shah talking to an IRNA reporter in Islamabad.

tend this festival in Islamabad, the minister of culture of Pakistan added, as saying that both sides can exchange experiences, and negotiate to finalize the joint production of "the Iqbal Lahori" film.

He termed Iqbal Lahori as an important

cultural and common heritage of Pakistan and Iran.

Shah also announced his country's readiness to provide the necessary facilities for the development of other joint cultural art productions and films.

## Mirtahmasb Wins Best Actor Award From Tokyo Festival

TEHRAN -- Iranian actor Yasna Mirtahmasb has won the Best Male Actor Award at the 36th Tokyo International Film Festival.

Mirtahmasb won the prestigious prize for playing a part in the movie "Roxana" made by Iranian director, Parviz Shahbazi, which was screened internationally for the first time at the event.

"No innocent child must be killed in a war; please stop the war," said Mirtahmasb after receiving the award.

"There is no difference between Muslims, Jews and Christians. The worst thing that could happen in life is war," he said.

The 36th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) was held from October 23 to November 1.



Iranian actor Yasna Mirtahmasb speaks after receiving the award for Best Actor for "Roxana" during the closing ceremony of the 36th Tokyo International Film Festival on Nov. 1, 2023 in Tokyo.

## AI Inroads: Dystopian Idea of World Without Work



LONDON (Guardian) -- Oscar Wilde thought hard work "the refuge" of those with nothing better to do while he envisaged a society of "cultivated leisure" as machines performed the necessary and unpleasant tasks.

Karl Marx's dream was of state-regulated general production that allowed liberated workers to "hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner" without the drudgery of being tied to one job.

The 19th-century socialist activist William Morris advocated for more pleasurable work, believing that once the profit motive of the factory had been abolished, less necessary labor would lead to a four-hour day.

So Elon Musk's suggestion to Rishi Sunak that society could reach a point where "no job is needed" and "you can do a job if you want a job ... but the AI will do everything" revives a debate on the issue of how we work that has long been discussed.

Yet a world without work, experts question, may be more dystopian than utopian.

"This is an old, old story that never actually happens," said Tom Hodgkinson, co-founder of the Idler magazine, which for three decades has been a platform to examine issues surrounding work and leisure.

"There was a poem in ancient Greece saying, 'Isn't it wonderful that we have invented the watermill so that we no longer have to grind our corn? The women can sit around doing nothing all day from now on.' It's that kind of recurrent idea.

"People like Bertrand Russell were talking about this in the 30s. What would we do without work? One view is people wouldn't know what to do because people are more or less slavish. That they would just sit around watching daytime TV or porn all day."

In fact, given more free time, such as on furlough during Covid, "they start living better", Hodgkinson said. "They are starting neighborhood groups, doing more gardening, doing up the house, spending more time with family, doing creative things, playing music, writing poetry, all the

things that are part of what I would call a good life."

Despite that, he said, studies had shown that paid work was beneficial for mental health, for status and identity.

"I think we need to do some sort of work. We should be moving towards a shorter working week, and more leisure-filled society," Hodgkinson said, adding that a radical overhaul of our economic and education models would be needed to eliminate work on the scale that Musk predicted.

One significant body of research in 2019, led by Brendan Burchell, professor in social sciences and a former president of Magdalene College, Cambridge, established that eight hours of paid employment a week was optimal in terms of benefit in mental health, and that no extra benefit was subsequently accrued.

Setting aside the "awful jobs that really screw you up", Burchell said, "your average job is good for you" in terms of social interaction, working collectively, giving structure and sense of identity.

A world without work "is a terrible idea of what society would look like for all sorts of reasons, as well as people's mental health", he said.

The labor market, as a way of distributing money around the economy, would have to be transformed, as would the education system, "to teach people how to fill their days, by writing poetry or going fishing or whatever, instead of going to the factory or the office", Burchell continued.

Shifting to shorter working hours was shown to have "massive benefits for people", said Burchell, but he added: "If we move to a society

where lots of people are completely excluded from the labor market, then I get very worried that's going to be a very dystopian future."

In his book Making Light Work: An End to Toil in the 21st Century, David Spencer, professor of economics at the University of Leeds, also makes the case for less work, but not its elimination. "It would leave us bereft potentially of things that we value in work," he said, citing communal en-

terprise, personal relationships and the development of skillsets.

So in essence, we would be a poorer, sadder, less skilled society. "Yes, there will be some loss through loss of work," Spencer said. "I realize not all work is good. So we ought to automate drudgery, seek to use AI to reduce the pain of work, and therefore leave work which is good."

He draws from Morris, who talked about bringing joy to work. "Skillful

work is good work and it has a role in the creation of a better society," said Spencer. "We ought to use technology to create less and better work. In that sense, the future can be really positive.

This was, he added, the future imagined by "Oscar Wilde, William Morris, and a lot of utopian positive thinking, where technology makes work lighter. It's not eliminating work – it's bringing light to work."

## Picture of the Day



The 4th Equestrian Martial Arts Competition under the name of "Silk Road" Cup was held in Alborz province with the participation of 16 competitors from Iran, Qatar and China.