

91st Death Anniversary of Aref Qazvini Marked

TEHRAN – Monday marked the 91st anniversary of the death of poet and musician Mirza Abolqassem Aref Qazvini.

Aref was born in Qazvin, where he studied Persian language and grammar and also some music.

About 1898 he went to Tehran, where thanks to the “beauty of his voice,” he was introduced to some of the capital’s leading men, including Mirza Ali Asghar Khan Amin al-Soltan, Atabak-e Azam.

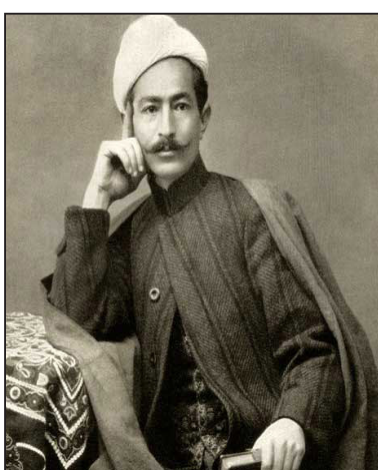
Later he came to the attention of Moaffar-al-din Shah, who had him enrolled in the ranks of the royal valets, but he found this distasteful and finally managed to obtain release.

Aref “devoted his art to the people” and used poetry as an effective means of expressing political ideas and stirring emotions.

A whole-hearted supporter of the constitutionalists, he left Iran for Turkey with other militants in 1916 and stayed at Istanbul for some time.

His most important and impressive works are his *tasnīfāt* (song lyrics), which he composed in response to political events of the day and sang to large and enthusiastic audiences.

He owed his fame mainly



to the mood of the time and the revolutionary content of his poems. His autobiography and some letters are preserved.

His melodies always carried a central theme of social and political concepts. He composed songs, which played a major role in guiding society and familiarizing people with their social rights. This is the main reason why after 70 years Qazvini’s songs are still relevant, alive and still performed by musicians.

“The melodies composed by Aref were heard everywhere. He was the only one who composed the poetry and the song himself and performed the melody as well,” said late musician Ruhollah Khaleqi about Aref Qazvini.

Aref Qazvini died on January 21, 1933 in Hamadan. He was buried in the courtyard of the Ebn Sina mausoleum. His poetry and songs are collected in his *divan*.

Resistance Festival to Screen Films Across World

TEHRAN – The 18th International Resistance Film Festival will screen its selected works in various countries worldwide, head of the festival’s International Committee Israfil Kaliji said.

According to the public relations office of the festival, a meeting of the festival’s International Committee was held on Monday at the House of Reformers in Qom.

The meeting, chaired by Kaliji and attended by Zahra Babanijad, head of the festival secretariat, Masoumeh Afrasiabi, head of the festival’s regional desk in Qom, and other committee members focused on global engagement strategies for the festival.

Kaliji emphasized the role of international artists in the festival. “Artists have a crucial role in conveying the important concept of resistance and defending the oppressed, particularly the people of Palestine and other vulnerable groups worldwide.

“Through the International Committee, we aim to leverage the potential of open-minded artists globally, using the language of art to communicate the message of resistance against oppression and crime, as well as the pursuit of lasting peace,” he said.

Kaliji said the widespread support for the initiative is an evidence of its success.

He further stressed the importance of international screenings, saying they can foster solidarity among freedom-loving nations in support of



the resistance front.

Babanijad also outlined future plans and announced the creation of an international network of committed artists.

“This network will serve as a platform for experience exchange, joint productions, and the long-term promotion of the culture of resistance,” she said.

Afrasiabi spoke about the significance of cultural diplomacy in countering the soft war waged by adversaries.

“Screening resistance films internationally not only raises public awareness but also strengthens the cultural front of the Islamic Revolution. International artists can effectively convey the message of resistance to global audiences through the universal language of art,” she said.

The session concluded with expert discussions among the festival’s international desk representatives about facilitating artist participation, media engagement, and strategies for the international screening of selected works.

Indian City Builds Pontoon Bridges Inspired by Persian Tech

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) -- Inspired by a 2,500-year-old Persian technique, pontoon bridges are serving as a vital link between the Sangam and the 4,000-hectare ‘akhada’ areas, connecting 25 vibrant sectors at the Maha Kumbh.

More than 1,000 people worked at least 10 hours a day for over a year to construct pontoons for 30 bridges, claimed to be the largest such project till date.

Over 2,200 black floating iron capsules, weighing five tonnes

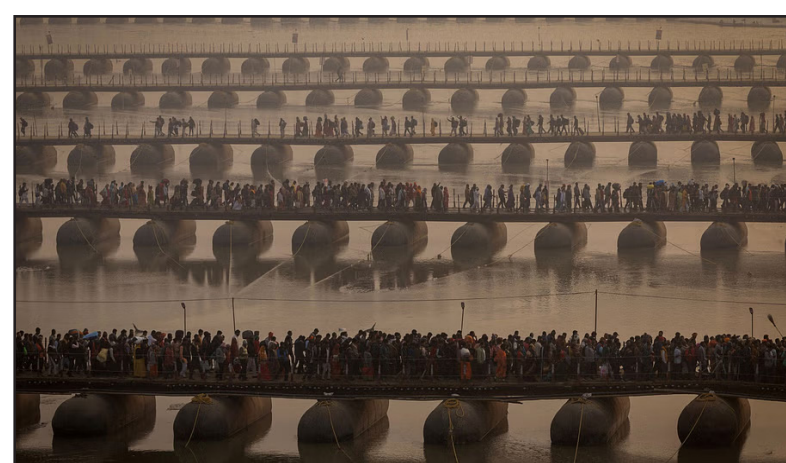
each, have been used to construct the bridges for facilitating the movement of vehicles, pilgrims, and workers at the world’s largest cultural-cum-spiritual event.

Each bridge, being called a floating marvel, can withstand up to five tonnes.

The bridges are serving as vital links between the Sangam and the akhada areas, said Mahakumbh Nagar Additional District Magistrate Vivek Chaturvedi.

“The bridges are an integral part of the Maha Kumbh, offering a low-maintenance solution for the vast crowds. However, their operation requires constant monitoring, ensuring the safety and the smooth movement of devotees round-the-clock. We have CCTV cameras on each bridge and the footage is constantly monitored through the Integrated Command and Control Centre,” he told PTI.

“Each bridge underwent sev-



eral tests before being deemed fit for use. They are designed in such a way that they can handle the passage of a large number of people simultaneously,” he added.

The pontoon bridges were first used in 480 BC by Persian king Xerxes I during his invasion of Greece. These bridges were also used by the Zhou dynasty in China during the 11th century BC.

In India, the first pipa bridge was built in October 1874 over the Hooghly river between Howrah and Kolkata.

Designed by British engineer Sir Bradford Leslie, the bridge was supported by wooden pontoons.

Damaged by a cyclone, it was eventually dismantled in 1943. The Rabindra Setu, famously known as the Howrah Bridge, was constructed in its place.

Mystery Mounds Reveal History of Water on Mars

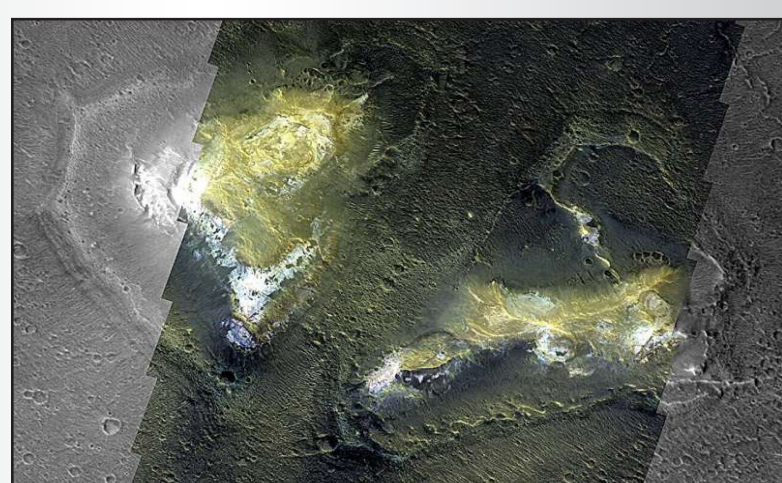
LONDON (Natural History Museum) -- Thousands of mounds and hills in Mars’ barren northern plains are full of clay minerals, providing evidence that the rocks here were once soaked with water, a new study reveals.

These mounds are all that is left of a landscape, roughly the size of the UK, that has been almost entirely eroded away.

A researcher at London’s Natural History Museum, Dr. Joe McNeil, with collaborators at The Open University, used high-resolution images and compositional data captured by orbiters to understand the geology of the mounds. The findings are published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*.

The team discovered that the mounds, which are up to half a kilometer tall, are the remnants of ancient highlands which retreated by hundreds of kilometers after erosion wore away the terrain billions of years ago. These actions played a key role in shaping the Martian landscape which divides the planet’s low-lying northern hemisphere from its higher southern hemisphere.

The mounds are made of layered deposits containing clay minerals, formed through water interacting with rock over millions of years. These clay layers are sandwiched between older, non-clay layers



below and younger, non-clay layers above, marking distinct geological events in Mars’ history.

Dr. McNeil said, “These mounds are incredibly exciting because they preserve the complete history of water in this region within accessible, continuous rocky outcrops. They are a prime location for future missions aimed at uncovering whether Mars ever had an ocean and whether life could have existed there.”

The study also reveals that the mounds are geologically linked to the nearby plains of Oxia Planum, which the European Space Agency’s Rosalind Franklin rover is set to launch in 2028 looking for signs of past and present life. By piecing together Mars’ ancient past, scientists are uncovering

the story of a planet that may have once been capable of supporting life.

“Mars is a model for what the early Earth might have looked like, as its lack of plate tectonics means that much of its ancient geology is still in place,” Joe continues. “As more missions visit the red planet, the more we’ll be able to dig into our own planet’s history to work out how life began.”

As part of the NHM’s mission to transform the science of natural history, our research is focused on providing solutions from and for nature. This study is part of our Planetary Origins and Evolution research theme which explores the origins and systems underpinning the evolution of the Earth, its moon and planetary systems.

Picture of the Day



After snowfall in Eskandan village in Osku, northwest Iran.

Photo by IRNA