

## Registration for Qur'an Contest in Iran Concludes



TEHRAN — Registration for this year's edition of the Iranian National Holy Qur'an Competition concluded on Saturday.

The process of organizing the 48th edition of contest had gotten underway in late April with the publication of the call for registration.

The competition will be held in two sections for men and women, according to the organization.

They will each compete in two age groups of 12 to 18 years and above 18.

Qur'an recitation, Tarteel, memorization (at four levels), prayer recitation, Adhan (call to prayers), Qur'anic teachings, Nahj-ul-Balagha and Sa-

hifeh Sajjadiyeh are among the categories of the contest.

The National Holy Qur'an Competition of the Islamic Republic of Iran, organized by the Awqaf and Charity Affairs Organization, is the largest Qur'anic contest in Iran, attracting participants from across the country to compete in various categories.

The annual competition, regarded as the most prestigious Qur'anic events in Iran, aims to promote Islamic values, foster Qur'anic literacy, and celebrate exceptional talent.

The top winners will represent Iran in international Qur'an competitions across the world.

# Tajikistan, Iran Agree to Enhance Cultural Ties

DUSHANBE (Dispatches) -- Iran and Tajikistan enjoy the most excellent political relations and aim to strengthen cultural, economic, and tourism ties, First Vice President Muhammad-Reza Aref has said here.

Aref, here to attend the International Conference on Glaciers Preservation, made these remarks on a visit to the National Museum of Tajikistan on Friday.

Speaking to reporters, he



First Vice President Muhammad-Reza Aref, center, visits the National Museum of Tajikistan.

said that Iranians are familiar with many of the museum's exhibits because they have similar objects in their museums, which reflects the cultural commonalities between the two nations.

Upon arriving in Tehran, Aref told said that Tajikistan has a special place in Iran's foreign policy and Tehran's strategy is to expand relations with Dushanbe across all sectors.

## Delegates From 7 Countries Attend Iran's Nano Meeting

TEHRAN -- High-ranking delegations from various countries have gathered in Tehran for a specialized meeting to explore Iran's advancements in nanotechnology, particularly its application in the health sector.

The meeting was attended by delegates from Venezuela, Cuba, Russia, Serbia, Honduras, China, and Vietnam, according to a news release by the Iranian Vice-Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-based Economy.

Emad Ahmadvand, secretary of the Nano and Micro Technologies Inno-

vation Council (INIC), highlighted Iran's progress in nanotechnology, saying that the number of scientific publications has increased while knowledge-based companies have boosted their presence in nano products market, among others.

Muhammad Mehdi Seifi, the health and medical business development manager at the INIC attended the meeting as well. He elaborated on nanotech application in diagnostics, treatment, and public health, as well as Iran's position among the countries leading in that regard.

## Khuzestan's Cultural Treasures Are as Rich as its Natural Resources

TEHRAN -- Known for its vast oil reserves as well as the central role it played during the imposed war in the 1980s, Iran's strategic southwestern province of Khuzestan is often reduced to a geopolitical or economic narrative.

Yet beneath this surface lies a vibrant, multiethnic cultural landscape that has profoundly shaped the country's modern literature, cinema, and music, Press TV reported.

Its proximity to both land and water borders has offered Khuzestan a unique opportunity to cultivate broader cultural connections.

These geo-cultural dynamics have also allowed the border province to draw from and contribute to the artistic and cultural richness of neighboring countries.

Khuzestan's literature encompasses a rich spectrum of voices and perspectives. Writers from the province often reflect the social, historical, and emotional realities shaped by war, identity, and urban life.

Ahmad Mahmoud, hailing from Ahvaz, the provincial capital, is widely regarded as one of Iran's foremost realist novelists

His seminal work, The Neighbors, offers a vivid portrayal of life in southern cities, focusing on the struggles of the working class and the political turbulence of mid-20th-century Iran.

Also hailing from Ahvaz, Mostafa Mastoor brings a philosophical and psychological depth to his works of fiction. His characters frequently seek spiritual meaning and emotional clarity amidst the disarray of modern life.

Zoya Pirzad, born in Abadan, a port city in Khuzestan also known for its oil refineries, is celebrated for her subtle, minimalist prose.

Her stories — often centered on women and family life — gently unravel the quiet tensions of middle-class existence and shed light on the Armenian-Iranian experience.

Ahmad Dehqan, from Dezful, writes with precision and emotional resonance about the trauma of war. His novel Journey to Heading 270 Degrees, based on his own experiences as a teenage soldier, offers a stark, realistic view of wartime bitterness.

Gheysar Aminpour, a poet from Gotvand, emerged as a leading voice in the post-revolution "Sacred Defense" literature movement. His poetry — lyrical yet socially engaged — blends classical forms with contemporary themes.

Farhad Hassanzadeh, from Abadan, has authored numerous works for children and young adults. His stories,



An aerial view from Ahvaz, the provincial capital of Khuzestan.

marked by emotional sincerity, often explore themes of war, migration, and resilience through the lens of adolescence.

Historically, Khuzestan has also been home to several classical literary figures. Abu Nuwas, born in the region, was one of the great Arabic poets of the Abbasid era, renowned for his bold and unconventional style.

Sahl ibn Harun, also from Ahvaz, was a respected writer and thinker in the early Islamic period. Abu al-Ala Shushtari, from Shushtar, contributed to the region's literary heritage with works composed in both Persian and Arabic.

Khuzestan has played a vital role in shaping the landscape of Iranian cinema.

Filmmakers from this region often turn to visual storytelling to explore themes such as war, poverty, family, and identity, drawing deeply from the cultural and emotional texture of the south.

Nasser Taghvai, a pioneering figure of Iran's New Wave cinema, hails from Abadan.

His widely acclaimed film Captain Khorshid — a southern adaptation of Hemingway's To Have and Have Not — is celebrated for its rich sense of place and compelling characters.

Fellow Abadani filmmaker Amir Naderi earned international recognition with The Runner, a powerful depiction of a boy navigating survival in a war-torn port city. The film is widely praised for its raw realism and emotional resonance.

Rouhollah Hejazi's films delve into themes of grief, silence, and familial tension, often reflecting the unspoken emotional burdens carried by younger generations.

Mehrdad Khoshbakht, another film-

maker from the region, explores the psychological aftermath of war and displacement, drawing on Khuzestan's landscape and collective memory.

His last film, Palayeshgah, warmly received at the 41st Fajr Film Festival, pays homage to the 110-year-old Abadan refinery and the resilience of its workers, who stood firm in the face of war imposed on Iran by the West-backed Baathist regime in Iraq.

Manouchehr Muhammadi, also from Abadan, has significantly shaped Iranian cinema as both a producer and cultural policymaker. His behind-the-scenes influence has supported the development of many socially engaged films.

Sirous Moghaddam, with roots in Khuzestan, has directed several popular television series, including the very popular Paytakht.

Known for its humor and realism, the show captures the everyday struggles and enduring values of contemporary Iranian life.

Khuzestan's music scene is a rich tapestry woven from its ethnic diversity and profound sense of heritage.

The province's sonic landscape spans traditional Arab and Persian melodies, classical arrangements, and modern compositions — each echoing the layered identity of the region.

Nozhat Amiri, from Ahvaz, shattered gender norms as the first woman to lead an orchestra in Iran.

Her pioneering role in classical music and her advocacy for women in the arts have made her an inspirational figure in the cultural landscape..

Muhammad Kazem Mousavi, also from Ahvaz, is a celebrated performer of the Arab maqam tradition, preserving a vocal style steeped in emotion and spiritual depth.

From Abadan, Muammad Shahabi

## Royan Congress Extends Deadline for Abstract Submissions



TEHRAN — The 26th International Royan Congress has extended its abstract submission deadline to June 5 to facilitate broader participation from researchers and experts in reproductive biomedicine and stem cell science.

The deadline extension was announced by the public relations and international affairs office of the Royan Institute.

According to the statement, the extension applies to the 26th International Royan Twin Congress, which focuses on Reproductive Biomedicine and Stem Cell Biology and Technology.

The Executive Secretary of the International Royan Congress said the decision was made “in response to numerous requests from the scientific community and to ensure inclusive participation.”

“This congress serves as a premier platform for disseminating groundbreaking research in advanced Reproductive Technologies, Stem Cell Sciences, Biotech, and Regenerative Biomedicine,” he added.

He further noted that the Royan Congress is “recognized as one of the region's most authoritative scientific gatherings,” and plays a key role in fostering international scientific collaborations.

This year's congress will feature leading researchers and academic figures in biomedical biotechnology.

Key highlights include forums for presenting innovative research, opportunities for global networking, and discussions on the translational applications of emerging biotechnologies.

## Picture of the Day



The Fandoqlu prairies located 30 kilometers from Ardabil are an extension of the Hyrcanian forests. Photo by IRNA