

Thailand Seeks Iran Help in Preserving Qur'an Manuscripts



TEHRAN -- Thailand has expressed interest in benefiting from Iran's expertise in preserving and restoring historic Qur'an manuscripts, as part of growing cultural and religious cooperation between the two nations.

A high-level Thai cultural and religious delegation has expressed strong interest in expanding cooperation with Iran in the field of Qur'anic manuscript restoration and preservation, during an official visit to the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) here.

The meeting on Tuesday brought together officials from ICRO with representatives from Thailand, including senior figures from the Thai Qur'an Museum and cultural organizations.

Opening the session, Mostafa Hussein Neishaburi, head of the International Qur'an and Propagation Center of ICRO, welcomed the delegation and emphasized the central role of the Quran in shaping ethical and spiritual values.

"The Qur'an is a cultural common language among Muslims worldwide. It is a book that promotes friendship and compassion," he said.

He underlined Iran's achievements in various Qur'anic fields, including the restoration of ancient Qur'anic manuscripts.

"These accomplishments are visible in Tehran, Mashhad, and Qom," Hussein added.

He noted that the Islamic Republic is ready to share its experience with Thai partners in areas such as digital archiving and artistic calligraphy.

Highlighting Iran's scholarly contributions, Hussein mentioned Tafsir al-Mizan by Allameh Tabataba'i and

Tafsir Tasnim by Ayatollah Javadi Amoli as significant works in Qur'anic interpretation.

The Thai delegation was led by Chakrapong Apimahatham, head of the Command Center for Cultural Relations Development in Southern Thailand. He described the Qur'an as a unifying element across the Muslim world.

"We came to Iran because we have repeatedly heard about the achievements of the Iranian people in Qur'anic fields," he stated.

Apimahatham delivered greetings from the Thai King and Prime Minister and spoke about the work of the Thai Qur'an Museum, which houses manuscripts dating from 100 to over 1,000 years old. These texts have been discovered in various regions of Thailand and are now undergoing restoration.

"We have trained 46 museum staff in manuscript preservation techniques, and we aim to make these works publicly accessible," he noted.

He also highlighted that the museum includes Qur'an education programs and is supported by the Thai Ministry of Culture. A key goal of the current visit, he said, is to learn from Iran's methods in both restoring and digitizing ancient Qur'anic texts.

Muhammad Amin Heisameh, director of the Thai Heritage Museum and Qur'an Education Center, expressed readiness for closer collaboration with Iranian Qur'anic institutions.

"We've seen Iranian reciters excel in international Qur'an competitions. We welcome the opportunity to benefit from their knowledge and experience," he said.

Iran, Egypt to Initiate Direct Tourism Exchanges

TEHRAN -- Iran and Egypt are poised to initiate direct tourism exchanges, marking a new step towards revitalizing bilateral relations after decades of limited engagement, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri said.

Salehi Amiri emphasized that the exchange of tourists between the two nations would commence in the near future, following productive discussions with Egypt's tourism authorities.

The initiative is part of a broader strategy to strengthen cultural diplomacy and foster mutual understanding between the Iranian and Egyptian peoples.

The forthcoming tourism exchange program is expected to include collaborative efforts between Iranian and Egyptian tourism agencies, aiming to facilitate travel arrangements and promote each country's cultural attractions.



Additionally, the initiative seeks to leverage digital platforms and media to showcase the diverse tourism offerings of both nations.

The minister also emphasized the cul-

tural and historical affinities between Iran and Egypt, noting that both nations possess UNESCO World Heritage Sites and rich civilizational legacies that can attract tourists.

How Persian Silverware Reached Guangzhou 2,000 Years Ago

BEIJING (CGTN) -- In the 1980s, archaeologists discovered the untouched tomb of Zhao Mo, the second ruler of China's Nanyue Kingdom in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province.

Among its treasures, a Persian-styled silver box adorned with floral motifs stands out, alongside African ivory and Red Sea frankincense.

These artifacts confirm Guangzhou's role as a



"global trade hub" over 2,000 years ago, linking ancient China to Persia

and other regions. Zhao Mo's tomb reshapes historical under-

standing, positioning the Nanyue people as early "global shoppers" who bridged Eastern and Western civilizations.

Today, Guangzhou's modern skyline echoes its ancient harbor's legacy, maintaining its role as a gateway between worlds for over two millennia.

The silver box, silent yet eloquent, embodies connection across deserts, seas and centuries.

5,000-Year-Old Loaf Recreated in Turkey



Employees at the Halk Ekmek bakery mix and cut dough for Kulluoba bread, recreating a 5,000-year-old loaf.

ESKISEHIR (AFP) -- In the early Bronze Age, a piece of bread was buried beneath the threshold of a newly built house in what is today central Türkiye.

Now, more than 5,000 years later, archaeologists have unearthed it, and helped a local bakery to recreate the recipe — with customers lining up to buy it.

Round and flat like a pancake, 12 centimeters (five inches) in diameter, the bread was discovered during excavations at Kulluoba, a site near the central Anatolian city of Eskişehir.

"This is the oldest baked bread to have come to light during an excavation, and it has largely been able to preserve its shape," said Murat Turkteki, archaeologist and director of the excavation.

"Bread is a rare find during an excavation. Usually, you only find crumbs," he told AFP. "But here, it

was preserved because it had been burnt and buried," he said.

The bread was charred and buried under the entrance of a dwelling built around 3,300 BC.

A piece had been torn off, before the bread was burnt, then buried when the house was built.

"It makes us think of a ritual of abundance," Turkteki said.

Unearthed in September 2024, the charred bread has been on display at the Eskişehir Archaeological Museum since Wednesday.

"We were very moved by this discovery. Talking to our excavation director, I wondered if we could reproduce this bread," said the city's mayor, Ayse Unluce.

Analyzes showed that the bread was made with coarsely ground emmer flour, an ancient variety of wheat, and lentil seeds, with the leaf of an as yet undetermined plant used as yeast.

Ancient emmer seeds no longer exist in Türkiye.

To get as close as possible to the original recipe, the municipality, after analyzing the ancient bread, decided to use Kavlilca wheat, a variety that is close to ancient emmer, as well as bulgur and lentils.

At the Halk Ekmek bakery (meaning "People's Bread" in Turkish), promoted by the municipality to offer low-cost bread, employees have been shaping 300 loaves of Kulluoba by hand every day.

"The combination of ancestral wheat flour, lentils and bulgur results in a rich, satiating, low-gluten, preservative-free bread," said Serap Guler, the bakery's manager.

The first Kulluoba loaves, marketed as 300-gram (11-ounce) cakes that cost 50 Turkish lira (around \$1.28), sold out within hours.

"I rushed because I was afraid there wouldn't be any left. I'm curious about the taste of this ancient bread," said customer Suzan Kuru.

In the absence of written traces, the civilization of Kulluoba remains largely mysterious.

In the Bronze Age, the Hattians, an Anatolian people who preceded the Hittites, lived in the Eskişehir region.

"Kulluoba was a medium-sized urban agglomeration engaged in commercial activities, crafts, agriculture and mining. There was clearly a certain family and social

order," said archaeologist Deniz Sari.

The rediscovery of the bread has sparked interest in the cultivation of ancient wheats better adapted to drought.

Once rich in water sources, the province of Eskişehir is today suffering from drought.

"We're facing a climate crisis,

but we're still growing corn and sunflowers, which require a lot of water," said Unluce, the local mayor.

"Our ancestors are teaching us a lesson. Like them, we should be moving toward less thirsty crops," she added.

The mayor wants to revive the cultivation of Kavlilca wheat in

the region, which is resistant to drought and disease.

"We need strong policies on this subject. Cultivating ancient wheat will be a symbolic step in this direction," she said.

"These lands have preserved this bread for 5,000 years and given us this gift. We have a duty to protect this heritage and pass it on."

Picture of the Day

The Bakhtiari wedding celebration is one of the most beautiful and joyful in Iran.

Photo by IRNA