

Excavations Begin to Define Site Boundaries of Persepolis



TEHRAN -- Archaeological excavations have commenced within the core zone of Persepolis, the iconic Achaemenid ceremonial complex, with the objective of accurately delineating the extent and boundaries of its numerous historical assets.

The initiative aims to strengthen conservation efforts and enhance heritage management of the UNESCO-listed site.

According to Muhammad Javad Jafari, head of the Persepolis World Heritage Site, the excavations began in mid-September 2025 and focus on the expansive first-degree buffer zone surrounding the monumental ruins.

The zone encompasses over 6,000 hectares and includes nearly 110 identified archaeological sites, among which 70 are officially registered as national heritage monuments. These sites feature a diverse array of cultural remains—from prehistoric settlements and burial grounds to ancient caves, mines, and other invaluable relics spanning multiple historical periods.

Jafari emphasized the critical role of these field investigations in providing precise data to safeguard the heritage area. “Defining the exact limits of each archaeological feature allows us to better protect these treasures while facilitating the sustainable development of tourism infrastructure,” he explained.

Currently, three key excavation projects are underway: Tal Rubahi, directed by Fazlollah Habibi; Chah Jangal, overseen by Ahmad Ali Asadi; and Tal Gavdari, led by Abuzar Tavakkol. Funded through the Persepolis World Heritage Site’s study grants and authorized by Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, the projects represent a coordinated scientific effort to document and manage the site’s extensive cultural landscape.

Highlighting the broader significance of this work, Jafari noted, “Focused archaeological research is foundational to any effective conservation strategy. It ensures that development plans accommodate the preservation of Persepolis’ unique historical values, enabling both heritage protection and visitor engagement.”

He also pointed to the importance of protecting monuments located within the secondary and tertiary buffer zones—sites such as Bakun Tal A and B, Tal Shgha, Tal Jari, and Tal Mushaki—which remain vital components of the wider cultural heritage linked to Persepolis.

Jafari called for stable and sufficient funding to support ongoing and future research. “Past experience underscores the necessity of sustained financial commitment. Only through consistent, adequate investment can we safeguard these invaluable archaeological resources for generations to come.”

‘Shahin: True Promise’ Launches, Echoing Iran’s Retaliatory Strikes



TEHRAN -- Iranian game studio Sefid Designers is back with an exciting new installment in their acclaimed air combat series, Shahin.

Titled “Shahin: True Promise”, this latest release promises a gripping blend of story-driven missions and daily challenges centered on the highly charged “Operation True Promise” — a narrative deeply rooted in regional wars involving Iran and Israel.

Building on over a decade of experience in interactive digital content, Sefid Designers have carved out a strong reputation both domestically and internationally. Their original Shahin, launched in 2017, attracted over four million Iranian players thanks to its immersive flight simulation mechanics, diverse mission design, and compelling narrative, earning it accolades including “Best Game of the Year” and recognition as a standout knowledge-based title.

“Shahin: True Promise” serves as a standalone mid-version between the original and the upcoming Shahin 2. While it revisits and expands upon the storyline from the original game, it also introduces a fresh campaign spotlighting the “True

Promise” military operation. Players can expect a range of story modes, daily missions, and progression systems with ranks reflecting military advancement — all designed to offer a culturally resonant gaming experience.

One of the game’s unique features is its built-in digital encyclopedia, which educates players on Iran’s defense capabilities and commemorates fallen commanders and martyrs of the war. The game’s online components also support competitive leagues and multiplayer battles, enhancing replayability and community engagement.

From a technical standpoint, the developers have upgraded their game engine and 3D graphics, alongside integrating AI-driven flight simulation that draws on real-world data. Online connectivity leverages Iran’s native Qased infrastructure, ensuring smooth and secure network play.

This latest chapter in the Shahin saga aims to fill a niche for domestic gamers seeking alternatives to Western franchises like Ace Combat and Modern Warplanes, while also targeting international markets in the MENA and CIS regions.

History Revisited: Did Khosrow II Really Tear Prophet’s Letter?

TEHRAN -- The story of Iran’s first encounters with Islam and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) is complex, nuanced, and often colored by later historical narratives.

Saeed Tavousi Masrou, a historian and scholar of Islamic studies at Allameh Tabataba’i University, challenges some popular legends—most notably the widely circulated tale that the Sassanian king Khosrow II (Khosrow Parviz) tore up the Prophet’s letter. Tavousi stresses that this claim lacks reliable sources and is mainly found in accounts by the Ghassanids, an Arab tribe hostile to Iran.

Instead, the historical record suggests a more measured response. Upon receiving the letter—sent in the sixth year after Hijra—Khosrow tasked Yazdegerd’s governor of Yemen, Bazan, to investigate the Prophet and his message. Bazan’s subsequent visit to Medina coincided with the death of Khosrow II, news that impressed upon him the prophetic insight attributed to Muhammad, ultimately leading Bazan and the Persian community in Yemen (known as Abna al-Furs) to embrace Islam.



This gradual process of Islamization in Iran, where Zoroastrianism had deep roots, spanned centuries—contradicting simplistic narratives of swift conversion. The foundation was laid further during the caliphate of Umar and Ali ibn Abi Talib, especially with figures like Salman al-Farsi appointed as governor of the former Sassanian capital, Ctesiphon. Through such figures and political developments, Iranians came to know the Prophet, often through the lens of justice and governance under Ali (AS).

Parallel to these historical encounters was the evolution of Persian literature dedicated to the Prophet’s life, or sira. While Arabic remained the primary language for early Islamic historiography, Persian works gradually emerged from the sixth century AH onward. One of the earliest extant Persian texts touching on the Prophet’s life is Tarikh-e Bal’ami, a Persian adaptation of Tabari’s history, covering the Prophet’s mission alongside broader historical events.

By the seventh and eighth centuries

AH, more focused sira works appeared, such as translations of Ibn Ishaq’s Sira Rasul Allah and Sharaf al-Nabi by Abu Sa’id Khargushi, translated in 559 AH. These texts were foundational in introducing Persian-speaking audiences to the Prophet’s biography. The tradition continued with later historical compilations—Zayn al-Akhbar by Gardizi, Majmal al-Tawarikh by Ibn Shadi Hamadanī—and culminated in the rich corpus of Persian literature that blends history, theology, and poetry.

Significantly, Persian mi’raj (ascension) narratives and poetry by luminaries such as Nizami Ganjavi, Attar, and Jami further embed the Prophet’s spiritual journey in Persian cultural memory, reflecting a deep veneration transcending mere biography.

These Persian texts and narratives played a crucial role in shaping how Iranian and broader Persianate societies understood and connected with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him)—not simply as a historical figure but as a spiritual and cultural symbol, whose life and virtues were woven into the fabric of Persian identity and literature.

Iran’s Calligraphic Innovation: Celebrating 25 Years of Moalla

TEHRAN -- Tehran’s Aseman Cultural Complex hosted a landmark event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Moalla script, an innovative calligraphic style created by esteemed Iranian artist Hamid Ajami.

The occasion featured the opening of the exhibition “Illumination on Earth”, attracting leading figures in contemporary calligraphy and cultural scholarship.

Moalla, conceived in the mid-1990s, represents a distinctive fusion of traditional Persian calligraphy with deeply personal spiritual expression. Ajami’s script is celebrated not only for its visual elegance but also for its ability to embody the artist’s devotion and connection to the sacred.

Over the course of the event, artists and academics revisited the evolution of Moalla, highlighting its unique contribution to the heritage of Islamic calligraphy.

Calligrapher and researcher Masoud Naseri reflected on the enduring relevance of Moalla, praising its balance between formal innovation and aesthetic grace. Naseri emphasized that the script is much more than an artistic experiment; it is a living dialogue between history, faith, and modernity.

Nayyer Tahouri, professor of Iranian art history, contextualized Moalla within the rich lineage of Persian calligraphy, drawing parallels with classical forms such as Nastaliq and Kufic. She noted Moalla’s particular suitability

for sacred inscriptions and short devotional texts, underscoring its role as a contemporary bridge between visual form and spiritual meaning.

The event also featured a heartfelt speech from Ajami, who shared candid reflections on the script’s creation, revealing how personal hardship and spiritual inspiration shaped his work. Despite initial skepticism from parts of the traditional calligraphy community, Ajami’s perseverance has positioned Moalla as a significant and respected mode of artistic expression.

The “Illumination on Earth” exhibition provides a rare opportunity to explore Moalla’s intricate forms and conceptual depth.



It stands as a testament to the vitality of Iranian calligraphy and its ongoing capacity to evolve and resonate in today’s cultural landscape.

Ghorbani’s ‘Iranam’ Tour Goes to Final Stretch in Tehran

TEHRAN -- Alireza Ghorbani, one of Iran’s most celebrated vocalists, is set to close out the summer leg of his widely acclaimed “Iranam” tour with three consecutive nights at Tehran’s iconic Azadi Stadium.

The shows, scheduled for September 17-19, mark the final performances of the tour in Iran’s capital this year, extending the run to an impressive 17 nights.

Tickets for the newly announced dates go on sale Saturday at 6 PM local time. Fans are advised to purchase tickets exclusively through the official platform, IranTick (irantic.com), or via the Tobank app (tobank.ir), as tickets from unofficial sources may lead to financial loss.

Following the Tehran performances, Ghorbani will take “Iranam” international, kicking off the overseas leg in Istanbul at the prestigious Harbiye Cemil Topuzlu Concert Hall on September 22. The move marks a significant step for the tour, aiming to reach broader audiences with its rich fusion of Persian classical poetry and contemporary compositions.

The “Iranam” tour features a curated selection of poems by literary giants such as Rumi, Amir Khusrow, Vafiq Lahuri, Houshang Ebtehaj, Ahmad Shamloo, and more, all brought to life under the artistic direction

of Hessam Naseri. Composers Hessam Naseri, Alireza Afkari, and Mahyar Alizadeh contribute to the lush, evocative arrangements that have resonated deeply with audiences.

Setlists include fan favorites like “Nist Sho,” “Boye Gisu,”

“Ham Gonah,” “Ham Ghafas,” “Khial Khosh,” “Mara Be-bakhsh,” “Sheyda,” “Hanooz Es-hghe To (Mahur),” “Shushtari,” “Mast Eshgh,” “Arghavan,” “Bi Gonah,” “Dar Zolf To Avizam,” “Pol,” and “Parvaz Ghoo-ha.”

The tour originally launched in

June 2023 with 13 nights at the outdoor venue of Azadi Complex, drawing crowds exceeding 8,000 per show. Despite an unexpected 12-day pause due to the June war, the tour’s momentum never wavered, with fans eagerly anticipating its return to Tehran stages.

Picture of the Day



The cemetery in Baghliq village in Raz and Jargalan County in Iran’s North Khorasan province stands out for its unique graves marked by simple wooden planks inscribed with the names and details of the deceased, creating a landscape that resembles a garden of tree trunks.

Photo by IRNA