Scholars Examine Role of Shia Movements in Rise of Safavid Dynasty



TEHRAN -- **The establishment of the Safavid state in Iran was not a sudden political development or simply the result of one dynasty's ambitions, but the culmination of centuries of political, social and religious transformations, historians said at a book review session in Tehran.**

The remarks were made during the unveiling and review of Political and Religious Backgrounds to the Establishment of the First Shia State in Iran, authored by Amir Timour Rafiei and published by Soroush Publications. The event was held at the National Library and Archives of Iran, bringing together historians, researchers and academics.

Mohsen Alviri and Javad Heravi reviewed the book, examining its historical arguments, research methodology and contribution to understanding the emergence of the Safavid dynasty.

Alviri emphasized the importance of critical academic discussion and said the book's title needed greater precision, particularly in defining the concept of the first Shia state. He noted that several Shia governments, including the Alavids of Tabaristan, the Buyids and the Sarbadars, had existed in Iran before the Safavids.

He suggested that distinguishing between Twelver Shiism, local governments and a unified national state would help clarify the book's central argument.

Alviri also questioned whether some of the historical developments discussed in the book were sufficiently connected to the emergence of the Safavid state. He called for stronger chapter conclusions, a comprehensive final analysis and a more extensive review of previous scholarship.

He further highlighted the importance of religious institutions, seminaries, Shia literature and shrines in spreading Shia beliefs beyond scholarly circles and among wider sections of society before the Safavid period.

Heravi, meanwhile, defended the book's title and overall structure, saying that a distinction should be made between local Shia governments and a state capable of unifying a large part of Iran under a common political and religious identity.

He described the Safavid state as a turning point in Iranian history, noting that earlier Shia governments differed from it in geographical reach and political organization.

Heravi praised the book's use of historical sources, including more

(Continued on Page 7)

Week of Wisdom and Philosophy Opens to Honor Allameh Tabatabaei

TEHRAN -- **Iran marked Allameh Seyyed Muhammad Hussein Tabatabaei Day on Sunday, commemorating the influential philosopher, Qur'anic scholar and author of Tafsir al-Mizan, whose intellectual legacy continues to shape Islamic philosophy and Qur'anic studies.**

The annual observance falls on Aban 24 in the Iranian calendar, marking the anniversary of Tabatabaei's passing in 1981 in Qom.

This year's commemoration also opened the country's first Week of Wisdom and Philosophy, scheduled to run from November 15 to 21, bringing together academic, religious and cultural institutions to introduce his intellectual contributions to wider audiences.

Born in 1902 in the village of Shadabad near Tabriz, Allameh Tabatabaei pursued his early religious education in Iran before travelling to Najaf, Iraq, where he studied jurisprudence, philosophy, Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic



mysticism.

His education brought him into contact with prominent scholars, including Grand Ayatollah Mirza Na'ini and philosopher and mystic Seyyed Ali Qazi Tabatabaei, whose teachings profoundly influenced his intellectual and spiritual development.

After returning to Iran in 1935, he initially settled in Tabriz before moving to Qom in 1946, where he became one of the most influential teachers of Islamic philosophy and Qur'anic interpretation.

His most celebrated achievement was Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, a comprehensive 20-volume Qur'anic commentary that became a major reference in contemporary Islamic scholarship. Its distinctive approach interprets Qur'anic passages through other passages, while incorporating philosophical, theological, historical and social discussions.

Tabatabaei also produced influential philosophical works, including Usul-e Falsafeh va Ravesh-e Realism (The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), Bidayat al-Hikmah and Nihayat al-Hikmah. These publications helped establish structured approaches to teaching Islamic philosophy in religious seminaries and academic circles.

This year's commemorations are organized around the theme of rationality and spirituality, which organizers describe as two essential dimensions of contemporary intellectual and social life.

Muhammad Bagher Khorasani, executive director of the Supreme Council of Islamic Wisdom, said nearly 100 programs with confirmed subjects, speakers and schedules had been proposed, with organizers hoping to expand the number beyond 150.

(Continued on Page 7)

Major Cultural Festivals Invite Musicians, Poets and Photographers



TEHRAN -- **Iran has announced calls for submissions to three cultural events: the 42nd Fajr International Music Festival, the 21st Fajr International Poetry Festival, and the second Kheir Iran Photography Festival, with opportunities for musicians, poets, researchers and photographers.**

The 42nd Fajr International Music Festival, directed by Arash Amini, will take place from February 1 to 7, 2027, with applications open until December 11, 2026.

According to the Iran Music Association, the festival will feature five sections: the main competition, orchestras and music groups from conservatories and universities, Fajr Music Video, Avaz-e Mihan (Voice of the Homeland), and a special section titled In Praise of Water.

The event aims to showcase outstanding Iranian musical works, support creative production, encourage young talent, enrich audiences' musical appreciation and expand international artistic and cultural exchanges. Applications and submissions are available through the festival's official website, fajrmusicfestival.com.

The 21st Fajr International Poetry Festival has also invited submissions, continuing an event established in 2006 to promote Persian poetry and strengthen cultural connections among Persian-speaking communities worldwide.

Its main competition covers three

(Continued on Page 7)

Persian Studies Mark 50 Years in South Korea as Classes Resume in Serbia





TEHRAN -- **Universities in South Korea and Serbia have hosted cultural and educational initiatives highlighting Persian language, literature and Iranian civilization, with one marking five decades of Persian studies at a South Korean institution and another restoring Persian language classes at a Serbian university after a decade-long break.**

At Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) in South Korea, a cultural week was held from November 9 to 13 to mark the 50th anniversary of Persian language instruction and Iranian studies at the university.

The event brought together Iranian Ambassador Ahmad Erfanian, university officials, professors, students and alumni for a series of academic, literary and cultural activities.

Erfanian praised the university's faculty and students for their efforts to teach and promote Persian in South Korea, emphasizing the language's importance in introducing Iran's literary and cultural heritage.

The program featured a Persian-language speech contest, meetings with graduates, a translation competition and a gathering of alumni of the university's Department of Persian and Iranian Studies. Students delivered speeches in Persian about their motivations for learning the language and their interest in Iranian culture and literature.

Meetings with graduates working in media organizations and financial institutions also provided students with opportunities to learn about professional prospects associated with Persian language studies.

The closing ceremony took place on November 13 at the Korea Press Center, attended by Erfanian, university officials, academics, students and graduates.

The Iranian ambassador highlighted the role of language education and cultural studies in promoting mutual understanding and strengthening relations between the Iranian and South Korean peoples.

Representatives of the university's Department of Persian and Iranian Studies, its alumni association, the Korea-Iran Council and South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also addressed the gathering. A video message from South Korean Ambassador to Iran Kim Junpyo was screened.

Three students were honored for their contributions to translation. An exhibition of Iranian handicrafts and programs introducing Iranian culture and cuisine were also organized.

Established in 1976, HUFS's Persian language and Iranian studies program has contributed to training specialists and expanding knowledge of Iran's language, literature and culture in South Korea over the past five decades.

In Serbia, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Novi Sad has resumed Persian language instruction after a decade-long suspension, with 14 learners enrolling in the new course.

The program was relaunched in cooperation with Iran's cultural representation in Serbia and the Saadi Foundation. Its opening session was attended by Muhammad Hussein Naeimi, Iran's cultural counsellor in Serbia and representative of the Saadi Foundation, and Amir Ali Nataj, the course instructor.

Participants watched a video in Serbian introducing Iran's culture and civilization, the history and characteristics of Persian, and linguistic similarities between Persian and Serbian. Former Persian language students at the University of Belgrade also shared their experiences.

Naeimi welcomed the resumption of classes, emphasizing the

(Continued on Page 7)

Picture of the Day



A couple harvest cotton in Maneh County, North Khorasan Province, where more than 4,500 hectares are cultivated with the crop, making it the province's largest cotton-producing area.

Photo by ISNA