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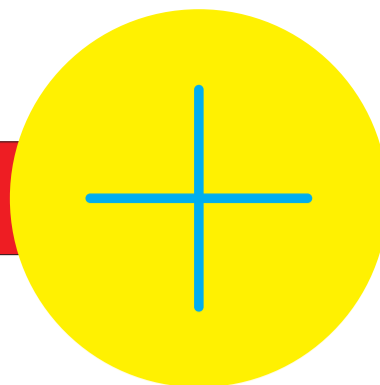
## Iran's Cultural Days kick off in Turkmenistan



Iran Cultural Days kicked off in Turkmenistan on Monday and will continue for three days. The opening ceremony took place in the Palace of Mukams of the State Cultural Center of Turkmenistan.

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# IRAN

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# Hafez, Iran's most beloved poet



Mausoleum of Hafez  
apochi.com

We know quite little about the life of Hafez, the great Iranian poet, which remains surrounded by mystery. Hafez-e Shirazi was born in Shiraz circa 1325 CE, under the Muzaffarid Dynasty. He died in Shiraz, in 1390 CE, around the age of 65. Characteristic features His name, Hafez, can have the meaning of "the memorizer"; a name that comes from the fact that, at an early age, Hafez memorized the Holy Qur'an by heart, only by listening to his father's recitations, it is said, surfiran.com wrote. Other sources state that Hafez also memorized by heart the

works of several Persian poets who preceded him: Rumi, Sa'di, Attar and Nizami. Hafez was a court poet for part of his life, benefiting from the patronage of the successive rulers of Shiraz. Hafez was a scholar who had knowledge of science, religion, language, literature, and music. But most importantly, one of the characteristic features of Hafez's life and poetry is that he was a Sufi. Sufism is a school of thought that pleads for contemplation and spiritual development to reach an awareness of God's presence. This mystical Islamic movement was a

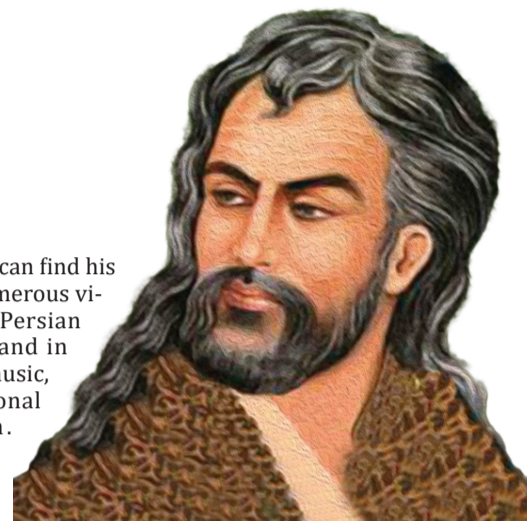
guiding principle of his life and inspired his works. Hafez in contemporary Iran Hafez's poetry has inspired poets and artists all over the world, including some of the most famous writers such as Goethe and Thoreau. Yet, his impact and legacy go well beyond literature, and Hafez truly impregnated Persian culture in a way no other has. To measure how important Hafez is to Iranians, it is as simple as stepping into any house in Iran: There is a 99.9% chance to find the Divan of Hafez there. Almost all Iranians own one or several cop-

ies of the Divan. It is almost always present, next to the Holy Qur'an, for important celebrations such as Norouz, the Iranian New Year (where it's commonly part of the Haft Sin table) and Yalda Night. To gauge Hafez's importance, you can conduct another test and ask any Iranian you meet to recite one verse from Hafez. It is unlikely that you will meet anyone unable to quote him. Indeed, many Iranians have memorized his poems, which are commonly used as proverbs. Hafez's poetry is commonly recited and heard in everyday life, under any circumstances, showing how deeply loved Hafez is by Iranians.

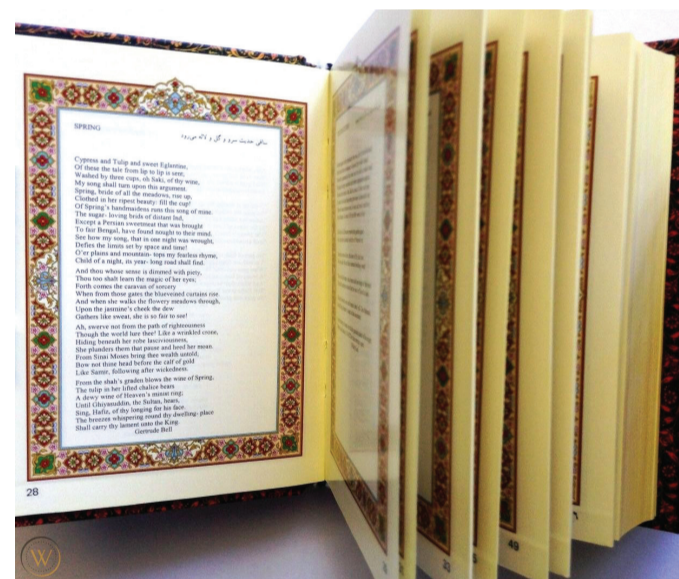
Faal-e Hafez Not only do Iranians quote Hafez, but they also attribute divinatory power to the Divan. Between tradition and real belief, many Iranians commonly practice "Faal-e Hafez," a kind of fortune-telling based on Hafez's poems. It is one of the rituals of Norouz and Yalda Night: one opens the Divan of Hafez at a random page, and reads the poem written on it. This poem is believed to predict the events that will occur in the person's life, or have something profound to say about his or her life. Hafez in Persian culture Another sign that indicates the importance of Hafez to Iranians is its constant use in all

the arts. One can find his poetry in numerous visual arts, in Persian calligraphy, and in all fields of music, from traditional to modern.

In Persian classical music, the poets Hafez and Sa'di have been the main sources of "avaz" (singing). Although Hafez is remembered every day in Iran, there is still an official national day to celebrate his work. October 12 (20 Mehr) is indeed Hafez Day



in Iran. During that day, many events of poetry reading are organized all around the country, and people, be they scholars, writers or simply admirers of his works, gather in different locations to share the power of his words.



Divan of Hafez  
worthpoint.com

## Lynx in France face extinction

Conservationists warn that a big cat population in Europe is destined to collapse unless immediate efforts are made to protect the animals. Researchers estimate

there are 120 to 150 adult lynxes in France. Tests on the animals show that the cats' genetic diversity is so low they will become locally extinct within the next

30 years unless there is urgent intervention, The Guardian reported. Historically lynxes have ranged across the expanse of Eurasia, but the elusive animals have

come under intense pressure in many countries from habitat loss, inbreeding, poaching, and traffic collisions.

In the 18th century, lynxes vanished from France entirely. After a re-introduction project in Switzerland in the 1970s some Eurasian lynxes moved across the border to France and re-established themselves in the Jura Mountains. But the population failed to reach sufficient numbers to make it stable.

Scientists at the Centre Athenas, a wildlife protection center in eastern France, collected 88 DNA samples from injured, dead, or orphaned lynxes between 2008 and 2020 and were able to analyze 78 to form a picture of the population's genetic health. To avoid distress to the animals the team did not obtain samples from



ALAMY



Chess players compete during the 19th International Caspian Cup which opened in Iran's northern city of Rasht, Gilan Province, on February 12, 2023.  
KHATEREH AHMADINEJAD/FARS