



## Qur'anic exhibitions

Iran's Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) plans to hold 10 qur'anic exhibitions in 10 countries. South Africa, Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Iraq and Oman are among the countries which are planned to host the exhibition. A senior ICRO official made the comments on the sidelines of the 30th International Qur'an Exhibition that was held in Tehran from April 1st to April 15th.

## Ramadan tradition of saarkhani on the wane



### Art & Culture Desk

#### EXCLUSIVE

Although some customs and traditions slide into oblivion after a period of time, efforts are required to preserve and pass them down to future generations. One ritual tied to the religious beliefs of Iranian people is saarkhani. Although practiced very little, it is still alive. In the modern era, people rely on the alarm features on their mobile phones and the tradition of saarkhani is getting disappeared. However, some areas continue to hold this religious tradition. Among these areas are the moun-

tainous parts of Mazandaran and Gilan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Kashan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, and many other Iranian cities and provinces. Saarkhani is the common ritual of welcoming the holy month of Ramadan and is held in various forms and names throughout Iranian cities. During the month of Ramadan, almost one hour before the morning call to prayer, a sweet-voiced person called saarkhan performs special poems and supplications on the rooftops and through the interwoven alleys of cities, inviting people to be prepared for the pre-dawn meal before fasting. Sometimes in local areas, they

knock on doors to wake people up for doing their pre-fasting ceremonies. In various Iranian cities, saarkhani is accompanied by playing a musical instrument such as dotar. In Kurdistan and Kermanshah provinces, the tradition is performed with playing tanbur (long-necked string instrument) or daf (frame drum). In some other areas, only instruments are played and no one sings; this tradition is called saharinavazi. Wind instruments such as the baglam and sorna (an ancient Iranian woodwind instrument) are used to this end. In some other areas, negharezani (playing the timpani) was highly popular; said the Islamic arts and

music researcher, Mojtaba Qeytaqi. The tradition of saarkhani is commonly accompanied with praying as well as singing religious and mystic couplets and quatrains. Houshang Javid, a researcher on religious music, said that in the past, in some regions of Iran where religious beliefs were stronger, people considered waking people up at dawn as meritorious. The roots of saarkhani go back to the pre-Islamic era, when it was practiced at the court. The king was the first person to wake up and sung to wake the servants up, while keeping his own prestige. After the advent of Islam, this court

custom became popular because of the month of Ramadan and was used to wake the people up to prepare for a fasting day. The songs for saarkhani were not rhymed in the beginning, Javid said, adding that the phrases like "God is the greatest," "There is no deity but God" were used. From the second century of hijra (journey of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina), poets began to write poetry for saarkhani. Several Iranian poets including Rumi, Hafez, Khaqani and Nizami have written poems which could be read for performing the religious tradition of saarkhani.

## A journey to Tehran Book Garden

This chaotic beating heart of Iran, Tehran has always been a surprising story for its residents and visitors alike. The Iranian capital offers modern facilities and amusements to entice every taste. One of the landmarks that tempt many people in Tehran is Iran's largest book store and science-fun complex, the Tehran Book Garden.

tion, the educational and fun areas are created for children and adolescents. These parts are composed of a unique playhouse for children under six, and a technologically advanced theme park named Robokids, which is designed for children up to fourteen years of age. A complex called Fekrbazia Land is built according



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## Visit shopping malls and amazing natural sites of Baneh

### Iranica Desk

Kurdistan Province is located in the western part of Iran, bordering Iraq, and each of its ten cities has its own features. Baneh is a city located on the slope of the Zagros Mountains, 20km from the country's border with Iraq.

Siranband border crossing in Baneh has helped make the city not only a trade center, but also a tourist destination in the province, IRNA wrote.

A huge number of people travel to Baneh anytime in the year, especially during holidays, to visit its numerous shopping centers and enjoy the untapped natural beauties of the region.

A large number of hotel and guesthouses have been established in the city to provide services to tourists. Over 100 shopping centers are operating in the city, of which Khedri Mall is the oldest. Various types of home appliances, as well as cosmetic and hygienic prod-



An overview of Baneh  
khabarfoori.com



A shopping mall in Baneh  
billt.com



Surin Plain  
tishineh.com



Arbaba Mountain  
tishineh.com

ucts, are sold in the center. Behesht, Pasargad, Ebrahimi, Golestan, Shafei, Maad, Khosravi, Kandis and Khayyam are the names of some other shopping malls in Baneh. The shops offer quality

goods at affordable prices. The city of Baneh is divided into four districts, each of which has its own attractions. Surin Plain is located in the Nanour district of Baneh, next to a village with the

same name. With its dense forests and appropriate vegetation cover, the plain is known as one of the main resorts of the region, attracting a large number of residents and tourists. The Holy Qur'an manu-

script of Haft Tash Village, located in Nanoor district, dates back to over 350 years. This valuable and old book was restored in 2010.

Mount Arbaba, with an elevation of 2,000 meters, located near the city of Baneh, is a beautiful tourist spot hosting many residents of the city and travelers throughout the year.

Various welfare and recreational facilities have been established in Dokanan and Pirmorad forest parks, situated next to each other on the slope of Mount Arbaba. In addition to its numerous shopping centers and natural attractions, Baneh has several pilgrimage centers, including the tomb of Pirmorad, a Muslim who lived in the region in the early Islamic period. Baneh Dam Lake, located 10 kilometers from the city, has a pleasant nature and beautiful vegetation. It is one of the best places to spend one's leisure time when the weather is good.

If you are travelling to Iran with family and children, visit the Tehran Book Garden by spending some hours in the large colorful book stores, or experiencing the children's interactive robotic amusement park. Perhaps rest in its cozy section, eating a delightful snack, sandwich or juice in the hustle and bustle of Tehran, tasteiran.net wrote.

In the greatest book, scientific and cultural entertainment garden, you can visit four wonderful sections. In the science section, children and adolescents can benefit from two equipped science gardens specialized for different age groups. In the art section, you can visit an outdoor amphitheater, a cinema complex containing ten modern halls with buffets, a cultural center for theater and music shows, and an Eastern art handicrafts shop. In the entertainment sec-

tion, the educational and fun areas are created for children and adolescents. These parts are composed of a unique playhouse for children under six, and a technologically advanced theme park named Robokids, which is designed for children up to fourteen years of age. A complex called Fekrbazia Land is built according

to the theory of Multiple Intelligences of Howard Gardner, to help you understand children's instinctive skills. Last but not least, it is the largest book store in Iran, with its two blocks of adult, children's and adolescents' departments. This section is a big book land that offers more than hundreds of thousands of unique book titles and so many educational, amusement and cultural products, brain teasers and stationery items. The book collection incorporates a very large collection from European classics to Iranian literature.

In order to describe the Tehran Book Garden, it would be better to categorize visitors as bibliophiles and those who come to spend time and have fun. Tehran's residents choose this place to discover books, amusements, leisure, food and work in a different environment.