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Iran motion picture wins awards

The Iranian motion picture titled 'World War III', helmed by director Houman Seyed, garnered two prestigious accolades at the first edition of the Da Nang Asian Film Festival in Vietnam. The event, hosted by the Vietnam Film Development Association (VFDA), presented 'World War III' with the Special Jury Prize and bestowed the Best Actor Award upon Mohsen Tanabandeh. The festival, held from May 9 to 13, was jointly organized by the VFDA, Da Nang City People's Committee, and other pertinent agencies.

How awareness can turn poachers to wildlife lovers

Social Desk

The head of the Savadkuh Environment Department, Ebrahim Fallahi, has reported that 13 skilled hunters in Kaseliyan, a village near Savadkuh in Iran's northern Mazandaran Province, have put down their rifles and are now supporting wildlife protection efforts.

Ali Safaei, one of these hunters explained that his interest in hunting predates to his childhood, when he would poach partridge, roe deer, and pheasant as a means of earning a living. However, in 2013, something happened that caused him to reconsider his career path. Although he did not elaborate on the specifics of this incident, he stated that he had fallen into hunting so deeply that he would be gone for several days at a time and that his entire livelihood depended on killing animals. Safaei, now 41 years old and the father of two girls, sold each pheasant for 100,000 toman (around \$30) to make ends meet. In the end, he decided to become a wildlife advocate because of his love for animals and his desire to protect them.

This shift in attitude is part of a larger trend of increased public engage-



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ment in discussions about animal conservation in Savadkuh.

The impulsive participation of people in these discussions is seen as a positive development by Fallahi. While it remains to be seen whether these changes will lead to concrete improvements in animal conservation efforts in the region, the decision of Safaei and his fellow hunters to abandon poaching in favor of animal protection is a hopeful sign.

No to game meat

Safaei also expounded how his young daughter's questioning of his hunting

practices prompted him to reconsider his career path and become an advocate for wildlife protection.

"She posed the question of why I would hunt these blameless creatures. Despite her tender age, her words had an odd impact on me, and I ruminated for several days," the hunter-turned-ranger said.

He explained how his daughter's refusal to eat game meat led him to reflect on the morality of hunting and the impact it was having on the local pheasant population. He ultimately decided to stop hunting for two years, and this period of abstinence

eventually led him to become an environmentalist and wildlife advocate.

His decision caught the attention of Mostafa Arab, the then head of the Savadkuh Environment Department, who offered him a monthly income in exchange for giving up hunting permanently. Safaei accepted the offer and was provided with environmental protection gear and was placed in charge of 18 villages in his locality. Although he no longer receives compensation for his conservation efforts, Safaei and his colleagues have established a fund and continue to work to protect

wildlife in the region.

He expressed gratitude for the fortuitous shift in his life trajectory and was pleased that he no longer hunts defenseless animals. His story also highlights the importance of financial support and institutional recognition in enabling individuals to pursue conservation efforts as a career.

Raising awareness works

Fakhroddin Ahmadi, one of the 13 skilled hunters who have pledged to protect wildlife in Kaseliyan village, shared his transformational journey as well. For him, hunting was a family affair,

and he had also hunted deer, goats, and other animals for years. However, his perception changed when he was approached by a nature tour company to act as a guide.

He became aware of the beauty of nature and realized the importance of preserving it. Later, Ahmadi joined a campaign called "No to Hunting".

Ahmadi's previous job did not provide him with enough income, but a change in his attitude towards nature altered his course of action. He started working in forestry and environmental protection, then shifted to a self-employed business, and is currently involved in manufacturing wooden structures. Since then, he has lost his interest in hunting.

He admits that his initial mindset was not inclined towards nature preservation or wildlife protection. He used to poach indiscriminately. However, a change in awareness stirred within him, which led to him spearheading the Kaseliyan village environmentalist campaign. The campaign involved advertising and educational initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the local populace about the importance of protecting wildlife and nature. Cameras were installed to monitor animal species and improve protection measures. The status quo is much better now and people have become more cognizant, cooperating instinctively in the noble act of conserving the nature.

Minister: Efforts done to repatriate smuggled Sassanid bas-relief



Arts & Culture Desk

Ezzatollah Zarghami, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, highlighted the significant efforts undertaken by the ministry to repatriate the smuggled Sassanid bas-relief, along with others, back to the country.

The incident came to light in early April when reports emerged of a bas-relief being smuggled to the United Kingdom, which was subsequently discovered by British authorities.

Seyyed Mahdi Hosseini Matin, Iran's chargé d'affaires in Britain, announced that the rock relief, known internationally as the 'Sassanid Soldier' and recognized by Iranian archaeologists, will soon be handed over to Iranian officials in London for repatriation to Tehran.

On April 2, Director General of Museums and Historical-Cultural Property Morteza Adibzadeh, disclosed that the case regarding the discovery and seizure of the historical relief at London Airport dates back to 2016.

Its authenticity has been verified, and the process of returning it to Iran has been initiated. St. John Simpson, an archaeologist from the British Museum, confirmed that the smuggled statue will be delivered to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London in May, thus facilitating its return to its rightful home. He further remarked that only about 30 of these petroglyphs have been identified worldwide, with the majority originating from Iran's Fars Province.

Recognizing the astonishing history and civilization of Iran, Simpson praised the close collaboration between the national museums of Iran and Britain. He expressed hope that more Iranian antiquities would be showcased in London in the future.

Iranica Desk

Hegmataneh, also known as Ecbatana, is a symbol of the rich history, culture and civilization of ancient Iran. A glance at historical developments of Iran brings the grandeur and immense value of this archaeological site to light.

Hegmataneh Complex is located on a vast hill in the western city of Hamedan, which has also been called Hegmataneh Hill. Hamedan is the provincial capital of Hamedan Province.

Hegmataneh dates back to the reign of the first Iranian kings, the Medes. Archaeologists have discovered palaces, mansions, and other historical monuments there which are related to the Median and Achaemenid periods. A Greek historian has said the Medes used Hegmataneh as a royal complex of mansions and palaces in approximately 800 B.C.

Global registration

The incumbent Iranian government has placed

Obstacles to global registration of Hegmataneh must be removed



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plans on the agenda to include Hegmataneh, which was once one of the greatest ancient cities in the world, on UNESCO's World Heritage List. Hegmataneh has been registered on the country's National Heritage List.

The head of Management and Planning Organization of Hamedan Province said that during last year's trip of President

Ebrahim Raeisi to Hamedan, the government approved a proposal to organize Hegmataneh Hill, according to IRNA.

Tooraj Alvanian said the government approved nearly \$3 million for a project in this regard, around \$900,000 of which has been allocated.

The dossier to have the ancient site registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List was submitted earlier

this year.

Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ali Darabi has said the file that was submitted to UNESCO includes the ancient site of Hegmataneh, Hamedan's historical bazaar, the mausoleum of Bu-Ali Sina (Avicenna), and some historical streets.

Alireza Qassemi, the provincial governor of

tourists and bringing economic prosperity to the city.

Overcoming hurdles

The director general of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Hamedan Province has also called for banning cars from passing through the ancient Hegmataneh site.

Mohsen Massoumzadeh said that coordination and synergy between responsible bodies of the province and cooperation of people from all walks of life are essential to help remove obstacles to the registration of Hegmataneh on the UNESCO list.

The global recognition of Hegmataneh will definitely have a positive impact on Hamedan's economic, cultural and tourism sectors, he said. The mayor of Hamedan said the global registration of Hegmataneh is among the priorities of the municipality. Massoud Hosseini said the municipality has plans to allocate over \$1 million in this regard.

Hamedan has also said the ancient site could be registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List this summer.

The head of Hegmataneh National Heritage Site said preparations should be made before UNESCO officials travel to Hamedan for the inclusion of the ancient site.

Mohammad Mansoorian said cars should be banned from plying the streets in Hegmataneh. He said the fruit and vegetable market and bakeries should also be relocated.

The official called for attracting foreign tourists to help develop Hamedan's economy. He said foreign tourists can directly affect people's livelihood.

Qassemi said efforts made to have Hegmataneh registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List are aimed at luring foreign