

Exhibit of Orientalist art to open in Malaysia

More than 100 paintings of Orientalist art are set to go on display at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) in Kuala Lumpur, the largest-ever exhibition – outside Europe and the United States – of paintings and artifacts that capture the essence of the Orient in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibition, which runs from June 3 to Oct 15, include renowned works by some of the most celebrated painters of the era, including Jean-Leon Gerome, Eugene Delacroix, John Frederick Lewis and the remarkable but rarely seen Ottoman polymath Osman Hamdi Bey.

Iran launches effort to save endangered Caspian barbel

Social Desk

The Shahid Ansari Bony Fish Genetic Reserve Center in Rasht, Iran, has initiated a groundbreaking project focused on the artificial reproduction of the economically valuable Caspian barbel fish, commonly known as Yellowfin. The center aims to acquire essential biotechniques to ensure successful propagation of the endangered species, which faces environmental challenges and the looming threat of extinction.

Danial Gorouhi, the head of the center, provided insights into the project's background. Previous attempts by student projects in the late 1990s and early 2000s to boost the population of the Caspian barbel fish did not yield significant biotechnological advancements, necessitating a new approach. In response, Gorouhi said, the Gilan Fisheries spearheaded an important



initiative, forming an academic taskforce to develop the desired biotechniques crucial for preserving the species over the next one to three years. As part of this initiative,

ten breeding Yellowfin fish have already been relocated to the reserve center this year. To further aid genetic restoration, the organization encourages public participation

by sending captured fish to the center, he said. Gorouhi emphasized the immense potential of the Yellowfin fish as a commercially cultivated species in the aquaculture industry. Their wide distribution across Iran, from the northeast to the northwest, underscores their adaptability and resilience, making them economically valuable and commercially viable. Gorouhi also highlighted a disconcerting decline in the population of Yellow-

fin fish. Previously, thousands of these fish would migrate to the Sefid-rud River and were caught by fishermen. However, their numbers have drastically decreased in recent years. In the past year alone, fishermen managed to capture only 10 spawners in the Sefid-rud River, indicating a worrying trend that could lead to the species' extinction in Gilan Province's water resources, one of its primary habitats. To combat this imminent threat, Gorouhi stressed the urgent need for public involvement in production, reproduction, and restoration efforts to achieve successful biotechniques and safeguard the Caspian barbel fish. Gorouhi emphasized that the primary objective is to align with Iran's fisheries policy and employ all available means to artificially reproduce and rescue this valuable species from the brink of extinction.

Malayer, manifestation of Iran's rich art and architecture



Noushijan Hill
visitrain.ir



Malayer's Mini World Complex
ISNA

Iranica Desk

The city of Malayer in western Hamedan Province is a manifestation of Iran's rich art and architecture, and is known as the city of the Medes. The Medes were ancient Persian people who mostly inhabited an area known as Media between western and northern Iran, and spoke the Median language. Around the 11th century B.C., they occupied the mountainous region of northwestern Iran and the northeastern and eastern region of Mesopotamia, located in Hamedan (Ecbatana).

turned into a tourist hub in western Iran. It is considered a miniature park, which displays scores of national and international historical monuments such as the Hafez Tomb, Persepolis, Eiffel Tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the Great Wall of China. These monuments are built on a small scale and make it possible to travel to different parts of the world in a very short period of time, or, as some say, tourists can travel around the world in 80 minutes by visiting this theme park. Malayer's Mini World Park is also known as the Park of Nations.



A grape garden in Malayer
IRNA

According to IRNA, 360 historical monuments and works have been identified in Malayer. More than 240 of them have been registered on the country's National Heritage List.

Noushijan Hill is located 15km northwest of Malayer. There are ancient temples and a castle on top of that hill. The historic site is estimated to be nearly 3,000 years old.

The 40-meter high castle or fortress has several rooms, a reception hall full of columns, impenetrable walls, and a secret tunnel. There are also two temples there; a western temple and a central temple.

Archaeologists have carried out extensive excavations at this ancient site. Their research indicates that Noushijan Hill was inhabited in the era of the Medes, the Achaemenid era, and the Sassanid period. Silver coins have also been found at this site by archaeologists—the earliest examples of coins in human civilization.

Malayer theme park

Malayer's Mini World Complex is a theme park which attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and has

Dozens of other miniature versions of major historical monuments are being designed and constructed in the complex. The Municipality of Malayer says efforts are underway to complete the construction of the tourist site.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami toured Malayer's Mini World in late December, calling it an exemplary theme park on a world scale.

"The theme park, entertainment, and tourism complex in Malayer can undoubtedly be a very good model for other countries," Zarghami said during his visit.

Malayer also has a reputation for rug weaving and wood carving. Many people in the city are involved in the production of wooden handicrafts and traditional furniture. Artisans use the wood of beech, walnut and plane trees to make different products such as traditional, classic, steel and sofa furniture. Other products are dining tables, desks, all kinds of chairs, beds and decorative woodwork.

Malayer is also famous in Iran as a hub of grape cultivation.

forms remains elusive, it is highly probable that elaborate rituals took place upon them.

Furthermore, a grand staircase has been uncovered, serving as a guide leading towards the central courtyard. Its presence reinforces the hypothesis that the entire site may have served as a sanctuary approximately 2,000 years ago.

Archaeologists have identified more than three distinct archaeological periods within this location. However, these family tombs can be attributed to the Elamite civilization, which emerged following the Elamites' defeat by the Assyrians. The Elamites sought refuge in the mountains, giving rise to this period and its burial practices.

Extensive artifact dispersion has been observed, occupying vast hectares of land, necessitating stringent protection measures. Archaeologists have taken precautions to ensure the preservation of the unearthed artifacts.

Nevertheless, ongoing attention and research efforts are required to maintain these protective measures. Unfortunately, the site has been neglected due to various factors, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the non-renewal of the Iran-Italy agreement, and, most significantly, insufficient funding.

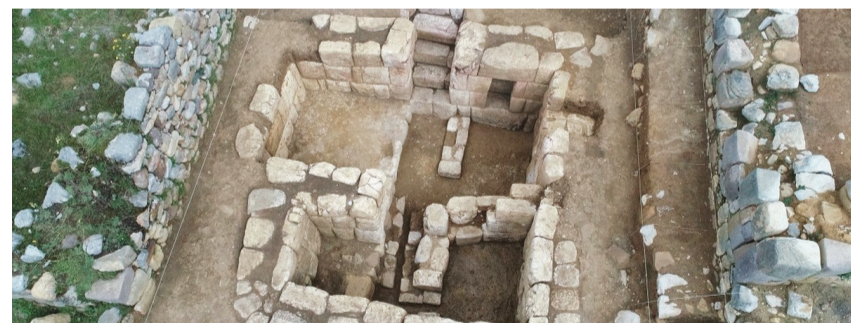
Ancient stone family tombs discovered in Khuzestan

Arts & Culture Desk

In the vicinity of Izeh, Khuzestan Province, lies the ancient site of Kalchenar, where a remarkable discovery has been made by archaeologists. Several stone family tombs, belonging to the Elymais period, have recently been unearthed, shedding light on a bygone era that dates back over 2,000 years. This period coincided with the Parthian era in Iran, adding to the historical significance of the findings.

The story of this excavation traces back to 1935, when the Bakhtiari tribes, responding to Reza Shah's call, gathered in the region known as Shami. During the construction of their houses, an extraordinary object emerged from the ground—a statue depicting a Parthian or Shami man. This statue gained international acclaim and now resides in the Museum of Ancient Iran. At the time, renowned explorer Aurel Stein, who was hosted by influential ruler Malmir, conducted a week-long excavation in the vicinity of the statue with the assistance of local workers.

Now, after many years, a joint team comprising Iranian and Italian researchers, led by Ja'far Mehrkian and Vittorio Messina, has returned to Kalchenar, not far from the initial discovery site of the Shami man.



The results of their recent excavations have been nothing short of astonishing. They have unearthed more than five stone family tombs of varying sizes, with one particularly large tomb that has almost been completely revealed. The largest tomb, believed to hold a multitude of buried bodies, features an imposing stone door weighing over one ton. The door, mounted on hinges, resembles modern doors with four frames. The ceiling of this tomb, crafted with intricately carved stones, boasts a vaulted design, while the four supporting columns are also made of ornate stonework. Curiously, the tomb was found already open – a highly unusual occurrence. This suggests that the tomb may have been looted in ancient times. However, in recent decades,

it has also suffered from vandalism, with the ceiling destroyed in an attempt to access its contents. During the settlement planning of the Bakhtiari tribes, the stones from these tombs were repurposed for constructing their houses, creating disruptions that hindered the access to the skeletons interred around 2,000 years ago. Only two skulls were found, one of which was discovered near the entrance, reinforcing the likelihood that the tomb was filled with bodies. Moreover, a child's skeleton was found outside the large tomb, indicating that this particular tomb did not serve as a new burial site. Instead, it appears that over 2,000 years ago, they resorted to using a stone niche to lay the child to rest. Adjacent to the child's body and the stone

door, a large cone-shaped cylinder was uncovered, whose purpose remains unknown to archaeologists. In addition to the prominently visible largest tomb, the other tombs were underground and were repeatedly opened and closed for subsequent burials. Their ceilings, constructed with sizable carved stone slabs, exhibited vaulted designs. These tombs were found either empty or with scattered skeletal remains outside. Nonetheless, they offer valuable insights into burial practices and rituals from over two millennia ago. Among the significant findings are platforms discovered alongside the family tombs, likely used for ceremonial purposes during burials. While the exact nature of these plat-