



# IRAN

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## Iran visual artist Kashian dies at 81

Prominent Iranian visual artist, renowned for his ability in painting and calligraphy, died at the age of 81. He was hospitalized for over a month due to a stroke. After completing his high school education, he went on to successfully graduate from the Iranian Calligraphers Association in 1976. Notably, he had the privilege of being a student under the guidance of Mahmoud Farshchian, one of Iran's greatest miniature painters. His remarkable talent was acknowledged at the inaugural International Biennale Exhibition of Algeria, where he was awarded the prestigious silver medal for his captivating paintings.

### Iranica Desk

The Lut Desert, widely referred to as Dasht-e Lut, is among unique tourist attractions of Kerman Province. It lures a large number of foreign and domestic visitors every year. Travelers enjoy spending the night under the dark and starry skies of the desert surrounded by its deep silence. Lut is also home to shifting sands, salt plains, meteorite fields, and rocky terrain, which offers tourists breathtaking vistas and unparalleled serenity of the intact nature and wilderness.

Lut Desert is divided into the northern, central and southern sections. There are several kaluts in the central part that extend to its western side. Kaluts are high sand dunes created by wind erosion, the height of some of which is more than 155 meters. Gandum Beryan region, which means roasted grain, is located in the north of Shahdad Desert, west of Lut Desert. It is the hottest place not only in Iran, but on Earth. Temperatures there can exceed 70°C in the shade, which make it even hotter than 'Death Valley' in California.

### Off-roading in Lut Desert

Despite high temperatures, driving off-road vehicles provides an enjoyable and memorable experience in Lut Desert.

One of the off-roaders told IRNA that those who want to drive a vehicle in the desert must have equipment such as GPS. The off-roader also urged drivers to have enough gas and spare parts before starting their journey to the desert.

Although off-roading provides an exhilarating experience, it can damage the desert in the form of noise pollution, erosion, liquid chemical pollution, brush fires and particulate matter emissions. All of this damage can be mitigated or eliminated with proper care. The head of the Public Relations Office of Kerman's Department of Environment said the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization issues permits for driving off-road vehicles in the desert.

Hojatollah Moradi added that experts of the ministry should monitor the issuance of such permits. He said in many areas of Lut Desert there are no vegetation and animals



## Improper off-roading could harm flora and fauna in Lut Desert

due to high salinity and high temperatures. The official, however, said that animals live and plants grow in some other regions of the desert.

"Tamarisk trees grow in the desert, which is important in terms of vegetation. There are animal species in some parts of the desert, such as sand foxes, all kinds of insects, tarantulas and white birds. Therefore, off-roading should be banned in areas that flora and fauna are

available," he said. Moein Afzali, the director of the UNESCO-registered Lut Desert, also weighed in on the significance of monitoring permits for driving off-road vehicles. "Only tourist groups with GPS-equipped cars are allowed to travel deep into the desert. Tourists must also pass geotourism training courses," he said. "We have defined routes for off-road vehicles in the depths of Lut. Off-roaders can drive in these routes

and return from the same routes. In this way minimal damage is inflicted on the desert," the official added. He said some off-roaders who drive deep inside the desert damage the vegetation and put the lives of the flora and fauna at grave risk. Afzali suggested that all off-road vehicles be controlled at the entry points of the cities that lead to Lut Desert. He noted that the first phase of the proposal has been implemented. He also called on tourists

to take their garbage back to their cities. The presence of tourists has led to an increase in the amount of garbage in Lut Desert as some travelers leave waste assuming that it will be absorbed by nature. Leaving garbage distorts the view of the desert and leads to dire consequences that appear over time. Lut Desert is located between the provinces of Kerman, Sistan and Baluchestan and South Kho-

rasan. It has numerous entrances, thus one can enter this magnificent area from all three neighboring provinces. However, most of the unique natural phenomena of the desert are within the geographical boundaries of Kerman Province. A number of historic and prehistoric sites as well as cemeteries dating back to the Copper Age, ancient castles and old qanats are in the area, showing that the desert is thousands of years old.

## Record-breaking emissions: Time running out for climate action



• GETTY IMAGES

Greenhouse gas emissions have reached a record high, with annual emissions equivalent to 54 billion tons of carbon dioxide. Since the late 1800s, human activity has caused surface temperatures to rise by 1.14 °C, with an unprecedented increase of over 0.2 °C per decade. Maximum land surface temperatures, which are most relevant to the heat people experience and wildfire risks, are rising twice as fast. The remaining carbon budget for a 1.5 °C temperature increase – the amount of carbon dioxide that can still be emitted while maintaining a 50% chance of limiting the temperature rise to 1.5 °C – is now only around 250 billion tons. At current emission levels, this budget will be depleted in less than six years. These findings come from a new report, a collaboration between 49 scientists from around the world, which tracks recent changes in emissions, temperatures, and energy

flows in the Earth system. The data can inform climate action by indicating how quickly emissions must be reduced to meet international temperature goals. This report is the first in a series of annual reports that will monitor the Earth's warming. The initiative, called Indicators of Global Climate Change, will track human-induced warming year by year for the first time by monitoring emissions of greenhouse gases and particulate pollution, as well as their warming or cooling influences on surface temperature changes. The methodology used in this initiative is based on the comprehensive assessments conducted by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). While IPCC assessments are trusted by governments and climate policy negotiators as reliable sources of information, they are published approximately eight years apart.

## Contemporary Iranian literature in dire need of national myths

### Arts & Culture Desk

The presence of myths in literature is a phenomenon that transcends time and geography, as evidenced by literary works from the most remote tribes to the most advanced countries. These works provide valuable insights into the culture, spirituality, psychology, and social characteristics of a nation throughout a historical period. However, despite the significance of myths in literature, many contemporary writers and poets have largely abandoned their use for various reasons. This abandonment has resulted in significant damage to Iran's literary works. The allure and endurance of these works have decreased, while their form and content have become increasingly similar. It is clear that the absence of myths in contemporary literature has led to a reduction in its appeal and impact. Consequently, it is crucial to recognize the importance of incorporating myths into literary works, both to enhance their aesthetic qualities and to preserve

Iran's cultural heritage. By doing so, lasting literary works can be created that reflect the essence of a society and transcend time. Abolqasem Esmailpour, a distinguished scholar in mythology, translation, writing, and ancient languages at Shahid Beheshti University, believes that a noticeable shift toward realism, that took place in the advent of the 20th century, resulted in myths gradually evanescent from Iranian literature. The following is Esmailpour's thoughts that he has shared with an Iranian daily on the need to bring back national myths to contemporary literature:

It is undeniable that a return to national myths is vital, and it falls upon poets, writers, and critics to draw public attention and encourage fellow artists to engage with this significant issue. Nevertheless, one obstacle hindering the use of myths in contemporary Iranian literature is the limited history of Iranian mythology when compared to other nations. Although Iran boasts several thousand-

year-old myths, the science of mythology in the country only dates back to 1971, which explains the relative unfamiliarity of writers and poets with it, resulting in numerous challenges. The art of myth-making deserves more attention than the mere re-narration of ancient myths. While mythology involves re-telling old tales, myth-making requires the creation and adaptation of modern myths that reflect the current social landscape and enrich literature accordingly. To embark on myth-making, certain prerequisites must be met; firstly, poets and writers must delve into the study of myth collections and gain a comprehensive understanding of the symbology, decoding, and storytelling aspects inherent in myths. Secondly, they must familiarize themselves with the utilization of myths, specifically by drawing upon the roots of a myth and contemporizing it to generate fresh and pertinent mythical narratives. This method has been successfully employed by renowned contemporary authors around the world, who have crafted



new characters that resonate with the mindset of 21st-century individuals. One of the critical drawbacks of literature is its inability to globalize. Iranian literature, by nature, remains deeply rooted in local culture and traditions. Incorporating national myths into literary works serves to further bolster cultural identity and imbue a sense of individuality. By utilizing myths within their works, writers and poets are able to leave an indelible mark on readers across the globe, with distinctive Iranian characteristics shining through. Failing to incorporate myths runs the risk of falling into the trap of repetition, leading to monotonous literary works lacking in nuance or depth. The use of myths in Iranian poetry can be traced back to the era of Ferdowsi (940-1019) and beyond. In addition to penning epic poetry, Ferdowsi is also recognized as a great myth-making

poet, having made significant contributions to this genre. Among contemporary Iranian poets, Sohrab Sepehri stands out as one who skillfully incorporates mythical elements into his works. His poems, including 'Behind the Seas,' have been translated by Spanish poet, writer, and translator Clara Janés, creating a stir across Europe. Through rich symbolism and allusions to various myths, Sepehri paints a vivid picture of a mythical city conjured from his own imagination. While contemporary Iranian literature has made some strides in employing myths, our relatively late start in mythology has impeded the creation of significant works based on myths to the extent seen in other countries. Nonetheless, there is much potential for Iranian writers and poets to tap into their cultural heritage, drawing inspiration from national myths to enrich their literary works.