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Foreign students to attend int'l cultural training course in Iran

The second cultural training course for international students of universities and higher education centers across the country will begin with the participation of 500 students from more than 15 nationalities hosted by Iran University of Science and Technology.

Iranian bas-relief unveiled in Tehran

Arts & Culture Desk

The ancient Iranian bas-relief carving, believed to be over two millennia old, which was illicitly taken out of the country almost seven years ago, was repatriated to its country and unveiled at the National Museum of Iran on Monday. During the ceremony, Jebrael Nokandeh, the director of the National Museum of Iran, said that the bas-relief belongs to the Sassanian era, and is made of limestone.

Iran's Deputy Tourism Minister Ali Darabi said that according to the 1970 convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously pursuing the repatriation of historical objects, and in the recent meeting with China, the cooperation of member states was proposed, and the extensive effort of international countries to return historical objects was raised.

He noted that a total of 30 historical works were returned to the country with the cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran's Judiciary, Iran's Culture and Relations Organization, and Interpol; and today the Sassanian bas-relief, which is one of these important works, is on display at the museum. According to Darabi, previously, brick carvings

were returned to Iran from France, and all these works will be exhibited in the near future.

Darabi added, "We have 30 Sassanian bas-reliefs in Iran; this relief was brought to the United Arab Emirates during the war and then received at the London airport, and since it was damaged during transportation, it was restored and displayed in the British Museum for three months. These important antiquities had to be quarantined, and 12 experts had the mission to verify the authenticity of the pieces."

Director General of Museums and Historical-Cultural Property of Iran Morteza Adibzadeh also confirmed the historical authenticity of this work and said that it is very likely that this relief was taken from southern Iran. Adibzadeh added that according to preliminary studies, the stone of this relief is made of limestone and Sasanid signs can be seen on it. It is highly likely that this relief is from southern Fars Province, although research is still ongoing and we hope to find the exact location of this petroglyph.

Repatriation of antiquities is one of the inherent duties of the Tourism Ministry, and cases related to repatriation are followed up with seriousness, he noted.

Adibzadeh added, "If we have database resources, we can do this by taking a sample from the back of this stone in order to conduct interdisciplinary tests and elemental analysis."

"Since the work was broken and in bad condition, we have requested the preliminary reports, based on which we will publish research results and reports," he concluded.

The chargé d'affaires of the Iranian Embassy in London announced that the ancient Iranian bas-relief carving was successfully delivered to the Iranian Embassy in London on June 24.

Approximately seven years ago, authorities apprehended the coveted 2,000-year-old Iranian carving during a smuggling attempt at a British airport.

Estimated at a staggering value of over £30 million (\$37 million), this remarkable artifact holds great historical and cultural significance for Iran.

Dr. St. John Simpson, a senior curator and archaeologist in the British Museum's department of the Middle East, said, "We almost never come across a case of something being cut out of the 'living rock.' That's a level of brutality that surpasses anything. 'You've even got felt-tip marks on the back before



they've used an angle grinder to slice diagonally behind it and across the top. It was then packed in an incredibly bad manner, in a small, almost unpadded crate held together with nails.

"If it had been a state-of-the-art art-handling type crate, that would have attracted a different sort of attention because it required all sorts of paperwork." He has identified it as a unique rock relief

sculpture dating to the period of the Sassanian Empire, 224-651 AD.

"It belongs to a period when Iran was the center of a powerful empire stretching from Syria to the Caucasus and Central Asia, and with its capital at Ctesiphon, south of present-day Baghdad," he said. "The Sasanians were powerful rivals of Rome and famous today for their fine silverware and cut glass."

Kerman Province: A tourism heaven in the heart of the desert

Iranica Desk

Kerman Province, a four-season land, with deserts, mountains, forests, rivers and a variety of other historical and natural sites, is highly attractive for a large number of tourists throughout the year. The name Kerman Province is associated with heat, aridity and desert; however, there are places in this region where the resident have to use heaters and wear warm clothes in the hot season of the year.

Imagine that you are driving on a desert road with a temperature of over 40°C, and suddenly you come across a green land with a pleasant climate, a river full of water, a forest and numerous springs. This is what you can see in several parts of Kerman Province at distances of less than 100km from each other, according to IRNA.

lous architecture of its stone houses is another tourism attraction.

Bab Zangi village is located near the city of Rayen, hosting Rayen Citadel, the second largest adobe structure in the world, after the spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Site, Arg-e Bam.

Ordikan village, in which a 12m-tall waterfall with the same name is flowing, is known as a beautiful resort, situated 2km from east of Bab Zangi village. The waterfall is fed by snow melting on Hezar Mountain, with an elevation of 4,501m. The beautiful landscapes of the area have helped make it a desirable destination for people to spend leisure time as well as a subject for professional photography.

Due to its unique architectural feature, Meymand village, extending in an area of



Jazmurian lagoon
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For example, moving from Kerman to Bam, if you change your direction towards Jiroft, at an intersection called Darzin, you will encounter such a scene at less than 20 kilometers away. Lush gardens, bubbling springs, and roaring rivers can all be seen up close. Dehbeke and Jebalbarez villages are among those in this region that lies on the southern mountains of Kerman Province.

Moreover, just when you can't put your hand out of the car window in Jiroft because of the heat, less than 20 kilometers away, in Delfard Resort, you will be amazed with its pleasant climate, beautiful roaring river, and green trees. The rivers originating from the mountains in the area are the main resources of Halil Roud (River), supplying water to the Jazmurian lagoon; however, due to excessive construction of dams, the rivers have gradually dried up in the last two decades.

Bab Zangi village of Kerman Province, with an elevation of 3,025m, is the highest village in the country. Thus, although this village, in which 10 households live, is located in the heart of the desert, it is blessed with a good and pleasant weather. The fabu-

420 sq. km., was registered on UNESCO's World Heritage List. The village, located 38km from Shahr-e Babak, is one of the most important and largest hand-carved villages of Iran.

Entering Kerman Province from Yazd Province, you can choose one of two separate routes, starting from Anar. If you move towards the south, the Javazam village, with numerous almond gardens will be on your way. From there you can also go to Dehaj village, hosting the country's largest cave, with a length of 60 meters, and a width of 80 meters. The city of Sirjan, with its specific wind towers, is another attraction on this route.

And if you choose another route linking to Rafsanjan, the green pistachio gardens in the heart of the desert will fascinate you. The provincial capital city of Kerman, with countless historical and cultural attractions, is also known as a tourist magnet of the province.

The city of Jupar, with a beautiful waterfall, Shazdeh Mahan Garden, Palvar Mountain, with an elevation of 4,200 meters, Shahdad Desert and Arg-e Bam are among the tourism spots to be put on your must-see list.

Iran's portfolio of vaccines growing

Social Desk

The head of the Food and Drug Administration of Iran announced that the country is on the verge of producing and introducing pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines into the market.

The official also stated that some vaccines, including HPV and influenza, have been successfully manufactured within the country, IRNA reported.

Heydar Mohammadi disclosed during a meeting with the Iraqi Minister of Health that six vaccine production platforms have been established in Iran. Moreover, the country boasts 180 factories focused on the production of final drugs, along with 65 factories dedicated to the manufacturing of raw and effective

ingredients essential for drug production. The drug distribution system seamlessly connects 14,000 pharmacies nationwide through 62 distribution companies.

Highlighting the significant value of Iran's pharmaceutical market, which exceeded \$3 billion last year, Mohammadi revealed that the pharmaceutical sector's imports in Iran costs \$2 billion. Remarkably, a staggering 99 percent of the required drugs in the country are domestically produced.

Mohammadi emphasized the feasibility of transferring technology for drug and medical equipment manufacturing from Iranian producers to Iraq. He sought the Iraqi Minister of Health's cooperation in selling drugs registered in Iran, provided



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they are not domestically produced in Iraq or there is insufficient production to meet market demand. The proposal urged these drugs to be registered in Iraq accordingly.

Furthermore, Mohammadi clarified that one of the strengths of Iran's pharmaceutical industry lies in its capacity to manufacture necessary equipment within the country. In the field

of medical equipment, domestic manufacturers supply 40 percent of the market, a purposeful and strategic approach that encompasses the production, supply, and even export of essential items such as electroshock devices, ventilators, hemodialysis machines, accelerators, and more.

Drawing attention to Iran's position as a no-

table producer of high-tech drugs globally, Mohammadi highlighted the scarcity of producers in this specific domain. With respect to such medicines, Iran ranks among the top 10 countries capable of manufacturing them, including biosimilars and biotech medicines.

Concluding his remarks, the head of the Food and Drug Administration unveiled plans for the launch of Iran's second blood refinery this year. He noted the successful inauguration of the first blood factor production refinery in the previous year. Additionally, he proudly acknowledged notable achievements in cell and tissue therapy, further underscoring Iran's progress in the field of medical advancements.