



Iran to host Caspian International Film Festival

The Caspian International Film Festival will be held in Iran in the near future, said Iranian Minister of Culture Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili. He added that the film festival is to be held as part of recent cultural agreements between Iran and Russia.

Little girl with big ambitions:

'I wish to become a world champion'



By Mahdiah Ghazvinian
Staff writer

Mahdiah Nikjoo, a young girl with a calm and pleasant demeanor, began her taekwondo journey at the tender age of four. Under the watchful eye of her father and coach in the Hakimiyeh neighborhood of Tehran, she quickly excelled. By the age of eight, she had outperformed her peers in the Iranian Taekwondo Federation exam, becoming the youngest participant to receive a black belt. This achievement marked her as the youngest female taekwondo practitioner in the coun-

try to do so, an impressive record in its own right. Mahdiah, born in 2014, is a shy, quiet, and beaming girl. When she first entered the editorial office of Iran Daily, she looked around in awe. As she sat down for the interview, she offered small smiles and kept her head down, indicating her shyness. The interview seemed to be a bit challenging for her, so we turned to her parents instead. We asked her father, Hossein Nikjoo, why he chose taekwondo for his daughter. He explained that he was once a professional athlete in this martial art, but had to leave due to a medical issue. However, he always dreamed of

enrolling his child in the sport. From the moment Mahdiah was born, he had an ambitious plan for her. He started taking her to the gym at the age of four, with the goal of her earning a black belt by the age of eight. Mahdiah's mother, carrying a strong sense of motherly love with her, shared that while it was initially challenging to get her daughter to the gym and through training sessions, Mahdiah now loves the sport. She even trains at home on days when she doesn't have gym sessions. The young athlete is determined to become a champion in the national competition scheduled for next summer.

Despite her young age, Mahdiah faced the challenges of attending classes and performing rigorous exercises. With her father's encouragement, she successfully earned her red belt in taekwondo at the age of seven. This achievement was even more remarkable considering the clubs were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making sports training more difficult than ever. Hossein recalls the early days of the pandemic when his daughter practiced at home and sometimes in the neighborhood park. When the club reopened, training resumed under emergency conditions, with



athletes required to train with masks. This was par-

ticularly challenging for the children, who had to exert more effort while wearing masks.

Interestingly, at the age of four, Mahdiah had not yet started school and had not learned to read and write in her native language of Farsi, and yet, she had to learn Korean, the language of taekwondo. Her father wrote the Korean words she needed to learn on the wall of her room so she could practice daily.

When asked about her aspirations, the shy and quiet girl looks at her father and says, "I wish to become a world champion."

We turned to her father and asked, "Are you ready for this journey? Don't you worry about your daughter getting hurt?"

He firmly answers, "No, in recent years, girls' interest in martial arts has increased. However, some families consider this

sport violent and unsuitable for girls."

Her father went on to inform us that although martial arts are based on the principles of self-defense, respect, and the defense of peace and friendship, some people may have misconceptions. A martial arts student always begins with defensive moves, not with attacking ones. At each stage of taekwondo, the student learns important values such as discipline, respect, humility, patience, tolerance, endurance, and an indomitable spirit.

"Furthermore, among combat sports, taekwondo is the only discipline accepted in the Olympics. It provides comprehensive protective equipment from head to toe, and currently, blows are controlled with sensors placed on the athletes' helmets and clothing." "There is no need to worry," he said with a smile of confidence on his lips.

Yazd Province, the green desert of Iran

Iranica Desk

The central province of Yazd is associated with a dry climate and burning heat, but this is not the whole story.

A land with various climates, Yazd Province draws a large number of visitors every year. This is because at a distance of less than 20 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Yazd, you will reach the green gardens of Taft, and by traveling a few kilometers towards Shirkouh Mountain, you will get into a completely different weather. It is a surprising phenomenon that cannot easily be ignored, according to IRNA.

The difference in temperature of various cities in Yazd Province, which sometimes reaches 15°C, has led to the creation of amazing resorts in this region.

Due to the drought that hit the region as well as the implementation of mining projects and the production of steel and iron, the resorts are no lon-



An overview of Taft
IRNA

ger as green as in the past; nevertheless, they still serve as refreshing places for the locals to escape from the summer heat. The most important geographical feature of the province is Shirkouh Mountain, with an elevation of 4,075 meters. At a very short distance, both hot and cold temperatures can be experienced there. As one of the highest mountains of central Iran, Shirkouh lies in the south-

west of Yazd Province. Qanat, known also as kariz, is the main source of fresh water supply in the province. For instance, Zarch Qanat, dating back 3,000 years, with the length of 100km, provides water to a large number of agricultural fields. The starting point of this qanat is in Fahraj village, northeast of Yazd. The qanat runs at a depth of 30-40m beneath the city of Yazd. Then it reaches

Zarch, where the water is used for irrigation in the lower lands of the city of Yazd. Moreover, sunlight is found in abundance across Yazd Province.

Taft

Taft, located among mountains, is a city with a pleasant climate. The abundance of pomegranate gardens has helped create beautiful landscapes in and around the city.

Sadri Garden

Sadri Garden, dating back 400 years, hosts the tallest wind catchers of Taft. The amazing architecture of the two monuments built in the middle of the garden dazzle the eyes. About 40 years ago, the garden was renovated. A lovely pool, with an area of 500 square meters, renders it like a true Persian garden. But here is the best part, inside this pool there are more than 75 fountains that fill the space with the soothing sound of water purring. At the end of the garden, you can also find a watermill.

Saeb burial site should be renovated



MORTEZA SALEHI/TASNIM NEWS AGENCY

Iranica Desk

Mohammad Ali ibn Mirza Abdul Rahim Tabrizi, known as Saeb Tabrizi, is a 17th century Iranian poet. He is regarded as one of the greatest masters of a form of classical Arabic and Persian lyric poetry characterized by rhymed couplets known as ghazal. Saeb was a poet from the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz, who traveled to Isfahan where he passed away. His mausoleum is located in his own private garden, called "Tekyeh Garden," on Saeb Street in Isfahan. The building, which was built in 1967, is home to a collection of Saeb's poems, containing

around 120,000 couplets. His burial site was registered on the National Heritage List in 1980. Unfortunately, the tomb of the famous poet is now exposed to damage due to lack of proper protection and care.

Mostafa Hadavi, a contemporary poet, told ISNA that the renovation operations of his tomb began in 1966. He added that the burial site is now in dire need of renovation. He also touched upon Saeb's skills, adding that Saeb could be called the "hero" of single-couplet poems, which are very complex but rich in content.

Mehdi Najjar A'arabi, an author, also said the decorations of Saeb's tomb

are inspired by the architecture of the Safavid era. He added that Saeb's tombstone is one of the most exquisite in Isfahan. A'arabi warned that the tombstone is in danger of destruction due to lack of care.

Isfahan Mayor Ali Qassemzadeh talked about the necessity of taking care of the poet's tomb. He said Isfahan's Municipality is seeking to turn Saeb's burial site into a tourism and cultural center. The mayor said enclosing the burial site will help prevent the destruction of the tomb.

Qassemzadeh said Saeb is among Isfahan's assets whose tomb should be protected.