



## Nails around Tahluj ancient skeletons puzzle archaeologists

*Tehran Times Culture Desk*

**TEHRAN** — The nails found around ancient skeletons at a newly discovered cemetery of Tahluj have puzzled the team of archaeologists working at the 3000-year-old site.

The cemetery dating back early Islamic era was discovered during the rescue excavation, which has begun at the site near the village of Mirar-Kola in northern Iran in late August.

The Tahluj site, home to several sites dating back from Iron Age to early Islamic era, will be completely submerged under water and mud when the Alborz Dam becomes operational. Tahluj is located in the Savadkuh region of Mazandaran Province.

The team has discovered ten skeletons, all belonging to children or youth. The bodies were buried with one nail beside their knees, one nail beside their left shoulders, and bunch of nails over and under their heads and feet, team director Mehdi Abedini told the Persian service of CHN on Monday.

"Nowhere else have we seen such a burial," he noted.

"The bodies were not buried in coffins due to the close proximity of the graves," Abedini said, adding, "Thus, the nails could not be from any coffin."

The nails have been intentionally located at certain spots probably for an unknown ritual ceremony, which may have been common in the region during the periods, Abedini explained.

Silver spoons, bracelets, and beads made of lapis lazuli have also been found at the graves.

"The skeletons date back to the early Islamic era, however they have been buried based on the Sassanids' burial rites," Abedini said.

The nails were left in situ to be studied by a team of anthropologists, who will travel to the site in the forthcoming days. Thus the team has not been able to determine the material used for making the nails. However, they surmise that the nails are most likely made of iron.

Some experts will also join the team to determine the gender of the skeletons.

The team has previously discovered three graves that date back to the Iron Age.

## British spy finally gives thumbs up to IRA drama

**TORONTO (Hollywood Reporter)** — After weeks of turmoil, producers of an IRA drama based on the life story of a former British spy have settled a legal fight ahead of its premiere at the Toronto Film Festival on Wednesday, and all it took was 20,000 pounds (\$35,000).

Martin McGartland, the subject of Canadian director Kari Skogland's "Fifty Dead Men Walking," said

## Iran's cinema losing viewers

*Tehran Times Art Desk*

**TEHRAN** — The decrease observed in the number of film watchers across the country indicates that Iran's cinema has lost 40m of its viewers over the past 15 years.

Based on statistics prepared last year, almost 7m of Tehran's citizens went to watch movies, and this number reached 14m across the country; indicating 14 percent decrease compared with two years ago, MNA reported.

Over the past seven years, only the year 2007 saw a slight increase in the number of viewers and the rest show a decline.

The number of viewers in the first five months of the year 2007 compared to the year 2005 shows a decrease of 700,000.

This implies that Iran's cinema is encountering a critical situation. In the year 1992, Iran's cinema had attracted 54m viewers, and the number increased up to 56m in the year 1994, but this number lessened up to 21m in the year 2002, and about 16m in 2004.

This huge decrease of viewers confirms that the cinema is losing its hopes for the future, and it gives a dire image of Iran's cinema for the coming years.

## No traction for proposal to name street after Mosaddeq

*Tehran Times Culture Desk*

**TEHRAN** — Once again, the Tehran City Council may abandon the plan to name a Tehran street after Mohammad Mosaddeq, the former prime minister who is viewed as an icon by many Iranians for his decision to nationalize the oil industry.

"The investigations carried out by the council show that Dr. Mosaddeq does not have the qualifications for being discussed in the council's Naming Committee because his views and thoughts are not acceptable to Iranian officials," committee director Masumeh Abad told the Persian service of CHN on Monday.

However, she said that a group of experts is still studying the matter.

According to Abad, such a proposal can be made by district councils, municipality districts, legal entities, and individuals.

The proposal to rename Tehran's Kaaj Street after Mosaddeq was put forward by a group of reporters in

early August.

A proposal to name a street near Tehran's Kalej Crossroad Mosaddeq Street was rejected by Tehran's first city council, which was in office from 1999 to 2003.

The latest proposal was welcomed by reformist council members Ahmad Masjed-Jamei, Masumeh Ebtekar, and Mohammad-Ali Najafi.

Najafi described himself as a supporter of the proposal, saying, "Dr. Mosaddeq is a national figure... and provided great services to the country... It is impossible to delete his name from the history of Iran."

"Dr. Mosaddeq was one of the influential figures of contemporary Iranian history," Masjed-Jamei noted.

"From one point of view, he opposed despotism when he joined (Ayatollah Seyyed Hassan) Modarres in his struggle against Reza Shah. He was also an anti-colonialist when he struggled alongside some clerics against Britain," he explained.

## Moradi Kermani nominated for 2009 Astrid Lindgren Award



*Tehran Times Culture Desk*

**TEHRAN** — Hushang Moradi Kermani is the lone Iranian author who has been nominated for the 2009 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, which is presented annually by the Swedish government.

Organizers of the program have announced the list of 153 nominees from 60 countries in different fields of children's and youths' literature for the year 2009.

Other nominees of Asian countries come from Japan, Philippines, India, China, and Thailand.

The award, which is administered by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, was established in 2002 to commemorate the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren and to promote children's and youths' literature around the world. It is the world's largest for children's and youths' literature, and the second-largest literature prize in the world.

The prize, which is five million Swedish kronor in cash, is awarded to one or more recipients including authors, illustrators, storytellers, and promoters of reading.

The 2008 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) went to the Australian author Sonya Hartnett. The 2007 ALMA was given to the Banco del Libro, a non-profit Venezuelan institute that promotes children's literature.

Mohammadreza Bairami of the Pen Society of Iran, Turan Mirhadi of the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature, and Hushang Moradi Kermani of the Children's Book Council were the three contenders for the award in 2008.

to money. On Friday, McGartland walked away from a deal proposed by the producers that offered him 10,000 pounds if he waived his rights. It is understood that McGartland agreed to end any threat of legal action after the producers doubled their offer Monday.

Securing that signature ends a long-running war of words between McGartland and the movie's



The conservative members of the council raised no objections to the proposal, although some of them declined to comment on it.

It is obvious that naming an urban locale after a national figure is not a complicated process since the Tehran City Council named a square in Rey, a Tehran suburb, after Hadi Saei after he won a gold medal in taekwondo for Iran at the Beijing Olympics.

Mohammed Mosaddeq was prime minister of Iran from 1951 to 1953.

He was previously a member of the National Front Party, a nationalist organization that aimed to end the foreign presence that had established itself in Iran following the Second World War, especially regarding the exploitation of Iran's vast oil reserves.

As result of his activities in opposition to the exploitation of Iran's oil reserves, negotiations for higher oil royalties failed on March

15, 1951 and the Iranian parliament voted to nationalize Iran's oil industry and seize control of the British-owned and operated Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

In October 1952, Mosaddeq declared that Britain was "an enemy", and cut all diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom.

Consequently, he was removed from power by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the former shah of Iran, and pro-monarchist forces in a complex plot supported by British and U.S. intelligence agencies.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Tehran's Pahlavi Street was renamed Mosaddeq Street during the provisional government period. However, it was renamed Vali-e Asr Street not long afterward.

In early 2004, the Egyptian government changed the name of a street in Cairo from Pahlavi to Mosaddeq to facilitate closer relations with Iran.

## High notes for Woody Allen's opera debut

**LOS ANGELES (AFP)** — Woody Allen, the New York movie director best known for his comedies, earned high praise Monday from music critics after his debut at the weekend as the director of a classical opera.

Allen, 73, had been wooed by famed tenor Placido Domingo, the general manager of the Los Angeles opera, to direct the romantic comedy "Gianni Schicchi," the third piece in Giacomo Puccini's "Trittico" of one-act operas.

"Allen, who described himself recently as 'not the greatest choice in the world' to direct an opera, turned out to be the greatest choice in the world for the comic conclusion to 'Trittico,'" wrote Los Angeles Times music critic, Mark Swed, calling Allen's Gianni Schicchi "a production of genius."

"Allen... manages to be both irreverent and absolutely true to the music and the spirit of the work," Swed wrote, crediting the New York wit with making "even the opera's maudlin hit tune, 'O mio babbino

caro,' hilarious."

Anthony Tommasini of the New York Times praised Allen's "Schicchi" as "a cleverly updated and inventive staging of the popular comedy."

But he faulted Allen for overdoing the "sight gags and busy-ness" in the opera and for taking a "regrettable directorial liberty" by changing Puccini's happy ending to a more sinister one with an "Italian vendetta twist".

Entertainment daily Variety mixed its praise for Allen with criticism of an element of his opera debut that had drawn a chuckle from Tommasini: Allen kicked off Gianni Schicchi with a montage of film credits using mock-Italian names.

"Truth to tell, it did not start well, with a movie screen full of sophomoric wordplay with funny Italian words -- e.g., 'impetigo' -- familiar from the Woody of old," wrote Alan Rich in Variety.

"After that, Allen did manage a properly whizzing delivery of the wonderful piece, aided by Thomas Allen (no relation) in the title role and by Santo Loquasto's set design of a cluttered Italian tenement of any and all times," said Rich.

The other two, more melodramatic operas in the Puccini trilogy -- Il Tabarro and Suor Angelica -- were directed by William Friedkin, director of "The Exorcist", who has previous experience directing opera.

Il Trittico, which opened the season for the Los Angeles opera, the fourth largest company in the United States, will run until September 26.

## Chinese ambassador visits Iran National Library

*Tehran Times Culture Desk*

**TEHRAN** — Chinese ambassador to Tehran Xie Xiaoyan paid a visit to the Iran National Library and Archive (INLA) on Tuesday.

Xie called the library a symbol of Iranian civilization and culture and also of Iranian interest in reading.

"Iran and China have a rich civilization, so I will try my best to expand the cultural ties between the two countries," he remarked during his visit with INLA director Ali-Akber Ash'ari.

Ash'ari also stressed increasing cultural activities between two countries.

He went on to say that the Chinese research center can use the sources available at Iran's National Library.

Ash'ari proposed signing a Memorandum of Understandings on cooperation between the national libraries of the two countries.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### 46-kg English Quran on display at Tehran exhibit

**TEHRAN** — The 46-kg English version of the Holy Quran is currently on display at the Astan-e Qods Razavi stand at the International Holy Quran Exhibition.

The version of Quran is donated by its translator Rahim Dowlati to the Astan-e Qods Razavi Museum.

The 16th International Holy Quran Exhibition will run until September 27 at the Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla.

#### Melal Cultural Center to host S. Korean showcase

**TEHRAN** — South Korea will hold a 4-day exhibition from September 10 at the Melal Cultural Center.

Photos of Korean attractions as well as handicrafts will be on display during the exhibition.

The venue is located in Qeitarieh Park, off Sadr Highway.

#### Imam Khomeini and Allameh Tabatabaai books published in Turkey

**TEHRAN** — The Turkey's versions of Imam Khomeini's "The Self Purification" and "Tawzih-ul-Masail" (Clarifying the Ritual Problems) and Allameh Mohammad-Hossein Tabatabaai's "Man and Society" were recently published in Turkey.

The books are translated and published by the Iran's Cultural attaché office in Ankara.

The office plans to publish other of Imam Khomeini's books and some of the Martyred Morteza Motahhari's works in near future.

#### Tehran exhibit to review English translations of Quran

**TEHRAN** — The problems of Quran translations into English will be reviewed during a session at the 16th International Holy Quran Exhibition on September 13.

Quran translators to English Fazlollah Nikaeen and Seyyed Ali Qaraii and Quran researcher Morteza Kariminia will attend the session.