

In Case You Missed

Replicas of Ottoman Apparel Displayed

Replicas of clothing worn by women during the Ottoman era were displayed in Turkey's southeastern province of Adana on Sunday during the International Women's Day (March 8).

Through painstaking work by veteran teachers and students at Adana Girls Technical Education Institute, replicas have been created of 300 pieces of clothing worn by Ottoman women from both villages and cities in their homes, bazaars, palace and during marriage ceremonies, Today's Zaman wrote.

Ikbal Kalin, director of the institute, said pieces displayed in the exhibition are not just ordinary products, but artifacts reflecting the 'soul' of the Ottoman era.

Speaking to Anatolia news agency, Kalin stated that some of the articles of clothing took months to create, underlining that they devoted great attention to putting together the collection. "In the Ottoman era, women had a different style in which dark green, red and yellow were dominant. In spite of the prevalence of western-style clothing, many women have always admired the clothes of women in Ottoman times, as these clothes reflect Turkey's cultural heritage," said Kalin.

Thailand Offering Tourists Insurance

The Tourism Authority of Thailand is offering insurance coverage worth \$10,000 to anyone harmed as a result of riots and demonstrations.

Officials revealed that the incentive package is an attempt to encourage tourism growth despite political instabilities that are currently afflicting the kingdom, Pattaya Daily News wrote.

Thailand Government Spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn revealed, "The measures are to support the tourism industry. The situation has been recovering but the businesses still need help."

The country has been plagued by political unrest since 2006,



when a military coup organized by the People's Alliance for Democracy ousted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Subsequent rallies and protests have been ongoing over the last four years by pro-Thaksin supporters the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship.

The latest rally, scheduled for March 14 is expected to bring upwards of 1 million supporters to a front in Bangkok.

Tourism is Thailand's primary source of revenue and has steadily been in decline over the last few years as a result of the political situation and the global economic recession. Free insurance coverage, along with various other stimulus measures, was recently extended by the Thai government after the Bangkok airport seizure in 2008 left thousands of tourists stranded.

London Set for Electric Vehicle Charging Network

Tourists will soon be able to take in London attractions in electric vehicles, after the capital's Mayor Boris Johnson announced new charging network plans.

The ambitious proposals will see 7,500 charge points installed across the city by 2013, enabling tourists to visit attractions such as London Zoo and Chislehurst Caves in an environmentally-friendly vehicle, London Press wrote.

Around 1,600 will be installed over the next 12 months as part of the £17 million project, which means travelers booking their holidays for this year could benefit.

Johnson said, "We will now be able to significantly speed up our existing plans for an unprecedented introduction of electric vehicle infrastructure, sealing London's status as the electric capital of Europe."

Charging points will be provided by a consortium led by Transport for London, which includes Sainsbury's, Tesco, Siemens and Nissan.

The announcement follows the unveiling of the new fleet of three-carriage trains across the Docklands Light railroad network, which will boost capacity for tourists travelling between London attractions on the service.

4m Tourists to Visit Golestan



Close to four million tourists would visit Golestan province during Norouz holidays starting March 21.

Fereydoon Fa'ali, director general of Golestan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, said the provincial traveling facilities taskforce, headed by the governor general, has been formed.

The taskforce handles information dissemination, planning, accommodation, health, transportation and security affairs, CHTN reported.

Announcing the publication of a tourist guidebook and a CD for introducing Golestan's tourist potentials, Fa'ali said exhibits would be organized across the province to display the local handicrafts and souvenirs.

"The department has received close to 80 billion rials in provincial credits since 2005 and 90 billion rials in na-

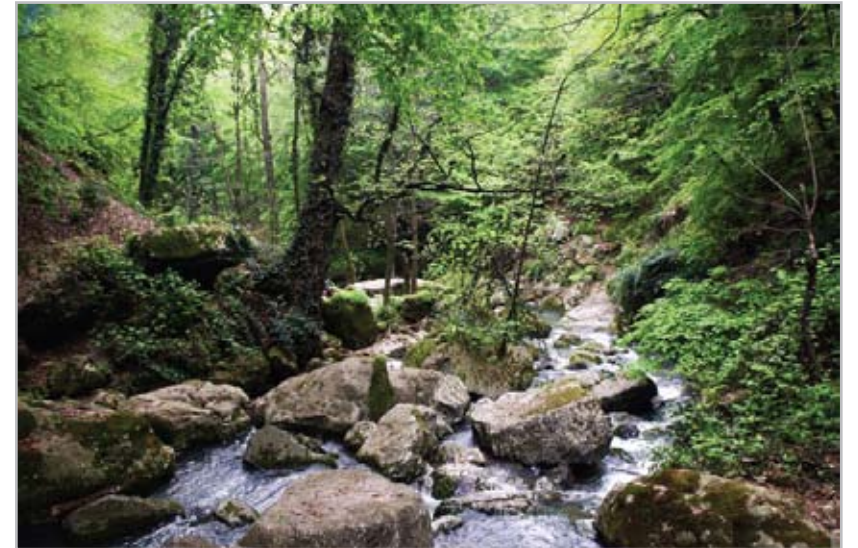
tional funds during 2008-9," he said.

He added that launching recreational and accommodation camps, constructing museums, accommodations centers and hotels, and renovating monuments are among other measures taken across the province.

Fa'ali pointed out that all ratifications approved during the first and second visits of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his Cabinet members to Golestan province have been implemented.

"We have seen a significant growth in credits allocated for the renovation of cultural heritage and monuments of the province," he said.

"About 150 hectares of historical textures are located in the city of Gorgan. And 20 billion rials have been earmarked for renovating historical buildings and Tekyeh



(places where religious rituals are held).

Fa'ali said 5.8 billion rials have been earmarked for renovating and establishing new museums across the province, including wildlife and anthropology museums in Aliabad Katoul and Gorgan Palace Museum.

"Seven new museums would be inaugurated in the near future," he said.

Also, Aqa Mohammadkhani Palace in Gorgan will be converted into a museum after it is renovated in the next Iranian year (starting March 21).

Golestan province is located on the southeastern shore of Caspian Sea. It has a moderate and humid climate.

The northern province is known for its handmade carpets and rugs. Jajim, a kind of coarse carpet is a specialty of this province.

Lichens Invade Persepolis

Bas-reliefs and surfaces of stones at Persepolis are increasingly being damaged by the growth of lichens.

The bas-reliefs of lotuses and Achaemenid soldiers are the main targets of the multinucleate organisms, the Persian service of Mehr News Agency reported on Monday.

Lichens grow slowly on bas-reliefs, but can cause a catastrophe at Persepolis.

"The lichens damage the stone structures physically and chemically," a microbiologist of Tehran's Al-Zahra University, Parisa Mohammadi, said.

"In the physical form, the lichen's root penetrates into a stone structure and breaks up the surface by the mechanical pressure it applies. The chemical destruction of stones by lichens is more complicated. They exude acidic synthetics, which decay the surface of the stones."

The Winged Man of Pasargadae stone bas-relief is currently suffering from damage caused by lichens and fungus.

In 2005, experts had said the Winged Man should be

transferred to a museum to protect it from damaged. However, nothing has been done to save this valuable relic.

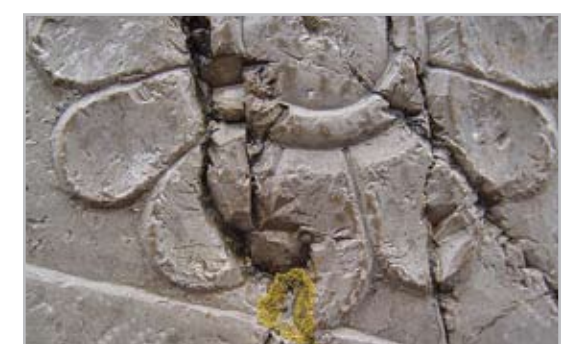
A report published in late February said the wooden covers made in 2006 to protect the stone stairways of Persepolis have also damaged the Achaemenid site.

The wooden covers trap moisture underneath, creating ideal conditions for the growth of various types of fungus, lichens and plants.

Lack of planning for the removal of garbage dumped by visitors at the site has also accelerated the growth of such organisms.

Researchers say they can only stunt lichen's growth, as there is no way to completely remove it from stone surfaces.

Once known as the richest city under the sun, Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire, which was the greatest power in ancient times. It was established as the most magnificent of the four Achaemenid capitals--Susa, Ecbatana, Persepolis and Babylon--which were founded to help Achaemenid kings efficiently administer their vast empire.



Persepolis was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979. It was also one of the 80 treasures featured in a 2005 BBC series.

Remains of City Near Choghazanbil

Recent archeological excavations in the perimeter of the ancient site of Choghazanbil Ziggurat in Khuzestan province led to the discovery of the remains of a residential city with industrial sections.

Announcing the above, director of Choghazanbil cultural heritage site, Mohammad Hassan Talebian, told CHTN that archeologists have found a residential city in the southern part of Choghazanbil Ziggurat, which refute the claims of Roman Girshman, a French archeologist.

With 300 papers and 20 books to his credit, Girshman (1895-1979) was one of the most prolific and respected experts on ancient Iran. However, he never



talked of a city in his writings.

"The recent excavation was launched in the area

with the aim of designing and organizing a discharge system for surface waters," Talebian said.

"We needed to study the old water system before designing the new ones since excavating ancient sites without adequate information is very harmful and may cause damage," Talebian pointed out that Choghazanbil Ziggurat was located within an ancient city called 'Doraventash'.

"Doraventash dates back to the mid-Ilamid era and was established by Ontash Napirisha, an Ilamid king who favored the construction of ziggurats," he said.

Choghazanbil Ziggurat dates back to over 3,400 years.

Handicraft Exports Fetch \$135m

Handicrafts worth over \$135 million have been exported during March 21, 2009-Jan. 20, reported Traditional Arts and Handicrafts Department of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO).

The exported handmade goods include inlaid work, hand-painted textiles, kilim, traditional ornaments, furniture and wooden items.

Based on data released by Iran's Customs Administration, the exported items weighed 935 tons, CHTN reported.

The report said handicrafts earned \$27.6 million in forex revenues for the country in the past Iranian year (ended March 2009).

The value of handicraft exports witnessed a 390-percent rise in terms of value and a 14-percent reduction in terms of weight compared with the figures of last year.

Furniture and wooden items (662 tons) accounted for the highest volume of handicraft exports in terms of weight during March 21, 2009-Jan. 20. They fetched over \$3 million during the period.

Earlier, Ahmad Balan, a senior official of ICHHTO, said the Iranian government plans to increase the handicraft sector's share of gross domestic product to 6 percent from the current 3 percent.

"About 5.2 million people work in 250 handicraft fields," he said.

Experts say the beauty of manmade goods produced in Iran and accessibility of raw materials are among the sector's attractions.

The appetite of European and American collectors for Iranian handicrafts is also another factor.

Inlaid work, kilim and carpets constitute the largest component of handicraft exports from Iran.

Meymand Village Awaits Global Registration

A comprehensive report about the historical village of Meymand has been prepared by experts and will be submitted to UNESCO in the next Iranian year (starting March 21).

Announcing this, the head of Meymand's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, Kiarash Eqtesadi, told CHTN that the report contains information about the village, including its history, plans and restoration works carried out during recent years.

Eqtesadi noted that Meymand is the only historical village in the world whose residents have retained their traditional way of living over thousands of years.

"The village dates back to 3,000 years," he said.

"One can clearly feel the close human interaction with nature as it was in the 2nd millennium BC, while walking through the village."

The official said nomads of the region annually migrate four times.

"The nomads travel to a different place with regard to the geo-climatic conditions, architecture and type of food," he said, adding that these types of migration are only seen in Meymand and nowhere else in the world.

Meymand is a very ancient village in the province of Kerman, Iran. Its population is about 150 people. The local language contains many words from the ancient Sassanid and Pahlavi languages.

In 2005, the village won the UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri International Prize (about \$20,000).