

## In Case You Missed

## Carcass of Giant Shark Found in Khormoussa

The carcass of a giant whale shark has been washed ashore on the coast of Persian Gulf, as the waterway's ecosystem is threatened by rising pollution.

Mohammad Baqer Nabavi, an official of the Department of Environment, said there was no sign of wounds on the animal's body, which means it died naturally. PressTV reported.

The carcass, which is about 10 meters (33 ft.) in length,



was found on the shores of Khormoussa region in southern Iran.

Nabavi warned, however, that the threatened species is often the victim of illegal hunting.

Whale sharks, the largest living fish species, feed mainly on plankton, microscopic plants and animals.

In two similar incidents in late September, the carcasses of two giant whales washed ashore on Iran's Persian Gulf coasts.

Critics blame the government's inadequate measures for the rising pollution in the Persian Gulf.

Oil leakage caused by damaged pipelines, dumping of sewage into the waters and the uncontrolled growth of red algae are major factors threatening the Persian Gulf's ecosystem.

## China Primitive Settlements Excavated

Large settlement sites of a late primitive society were excavated recently after nearly seven months of archeological excavations in Luoyang, a historical city in central China.

The initially explored ruins covered an area of more than 2,900 square meters in a plot of land 300 meters long and 200 meters wide, Peoples Daily Online Reported.

More than 100 stone knives, stone sickles, ceramic vessels and bone arrowheads dating from the late Longshan Culture were excavated.

Longshan Culture was a post-Neolithic culture in China that had the distinctive feature of high skills in pottery making, including the use of pottery wheels. It was based around the central and lower Yellow River and dated from about 3,000 BC to 2,000 BC.

## Mixed Reaction Over Saudi Visa Decision

Saudi Arabia's decision to stop granting tourist visas may be justified. It does not encompass everyone and may not affect the industry as badly as thought.

It is common for Saudi Arabia to withdraw the tourist visa after the Hajj season to ensure visitors do not stay indefinitely in the country.

"This is the main reason and it also has to do with capacity in the holy cities during the peak season and the countries' Hajj quotas. The holy cities are under severe capacity pressure and the 'stay behind' phenomenon is a real issue," Sven Gade, director and head of PKF, told Gulf News.



He added that it was important to keep in mind that the visa ban applies to Persian Gulf expatriates only and does not affect business travel visas.

Earlier reports showed that the tourism industry opposed the decision of Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities to stop issuing tourist visas.

Saudi Arabia's inbound tourism has assisted job creation and rise in revenues in the sector. There seems to be little reason why hotels would suffer losses from the tourist visa withdrawal, considering the ban on tourist visas is reportedly to last until February 2011.

# Obeid Zakani

## Satirist Par Excellence

Najameddin Obeid Zakani was a Persian poet and satirist of 14th century from the city of Qazvin. He studied in Shiraz under the best masters of his day, but eventually moved back to his native city.

He, however, preferred Shiraz to Qazvin, as he was a poet in Shah Abu Es'haq's court where young Hafez was also present. Historicaliran.blogspot.com reported. Zakani is one of the most remarkable poets, satirists and social critics whose works did not receive the attention it deserved.

### > Oeuvre

The poet's work is largely satirical and focused on political issues. He was a remarkable social critic who looked upon the extravagant indulgence and corruption around him with the censorious eyes of a juvenile and portrayed it with the wit of Voltaire and the grotesqueness of Rabelais.

He used scathing stories and sardonic maxims to paint a world full of deceit, greed, lust, sycophancy and perversion, where old values and virtues were scorned and extremes of wealth and poverty, violence and bloodshed were the order of the day.

Zakani wrote Risaleh Delgosha (Treatise of Joy), Akhlaq Al-Ashraf (Ethics of the Aristocracy) and the famous humorous fable Moosh va Gorbek (Mouse and Cat), which was a political satire. His non-satirical, serious verses are also very well written, in league with the other great works of Persian literature.

### > Formative Years

While pursuing his studies in Shiraz, Zakani became one of the most accomplished men of letters and learning

of his time, acquiring complete proficiency in compiling books and treatises. He subsequently returned to Qazvin, where he had the honor of being appointed judge and began to teach a number of students.

To express his denunciation of the corrupt morals of the time, he composed the treatise known as Akhlaq Al-Ashraf, which was not intended as mere ribaldry but as a satire containing serious reflections and wise warnings.

Or, in order to depict the stupidity and ignorance of the leading dignitaries of Qazvin, he included in his Risaleh Delgosha many anecdotes that carry lessons for people of discernment.

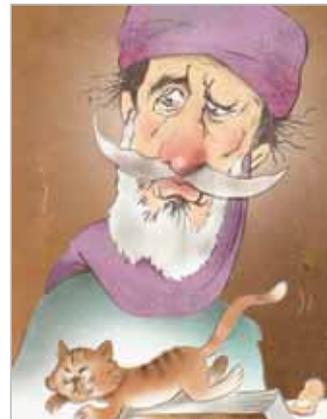
He wrote Moosh va Gorbek around 1370, in which he highlighted the moral dilemma of the suppressed who feel powerless. The mice who fight against the domination of the cats don't simply fail because of their weakness, smallness or fear; they lose because of the cats brutality.

### > Gaining King's Favor

Zakani composed a treatise Ilm-i-Ma'ni-o-Bayan (The Science of Meaning and Expression) which he desired to present to the king. Courtiers, however, told him that the king had no need for such rubbish. Then he composed a fine panegyric, which he desired to recite, but they informed him that His Majesty did not like to be mocked with lies or exaggerations.

Himself a kind of poet-jester, he resented being kept waiting because the king was busy with his real jester and wondered whether the king's attention or favor could be gained through jesting and ribaldry.

Zakani began to recklessly utter the most unabashed



sayings and the most unseemly jests, for which he received innumerable gifts, which none dared to present to the king. Thus, a serious writer, moralist and panegyrist was compelled by circumstances to become a ribald satirist.

A majority of both the originals and the translations of his raunchy poetry either omitted the naughty words with coy little dashes to indicate the omission, which the knowledgeable reader will have to guess by inference.

# Claremont Exhibits Persian Rugs

Claremont Rug Company announced the acquisition of an 85-piece collection of rare 19th century art-level Oriental rugs assembled and held by a single family over four generations.

Entitled "The Heartland Treasury of Antique Art Carpets," the collection will be available for viewing on the company's website (www.claremontrug.com) on Thursday and at its premises (6087 Claremont Avenue) on Saturday, Art-daily reported.

Assembled by two generations of an industrialist family between the 1930s and 1970s, the collection contains a wide gamut of connoisseur-level pieces from the major weaving centers and renowned tribal groups created during "The Second Golden Age of Persian Weaving" (circa 1800-1890).

"This august assemblage includes a number of one-of-a-kind, art-level specimens so unique that no published examples can be found, while others are sterling renderings of important, age-old styles," said Jan David Winitz, president and founder of Claremont Rug Company.

He explained that the collection is unique in that the vast majority of pieces are in the 3x5 to 6x9 size range.

"These are the sizes that collectors relish and have become so difficult to obtain in the best examples. The great majority of the rugs have been maintained in astonishing condition," he said.

Room-size and oversize carpets are also included.

Winitz said it is a stroke of great fortune for rug aficionados that these pieces of such great age and awe-inspiring beauty have come to us, as pieces of such magnitude have become virtually impossible to find through traditional sources.

Primarily assembled by a father and son who were manufacturing magnates in the early and mid-20th century, the collection was kept intact by the third generation.

A daughter from the fourth generation from which Claremont purchased the rugs said, "We wanted to keep the collection together, but we found it difficult to divide the pieces fairly."

The seller also said, "I remember as kids we would regularly watch Grandpa rustle through his chests of rugs, choose a rug and open it. He was more apt to pick up a rug book in the morning than he was to read the newspaper. And grandmother was continually having the rugs changed throughout the house."

According to the family, the collection had been displayed on the walls or draped over tables, as well as on floors of the family's four homes. They were also stored in rug chests and vaults.

In the early 20th century, the great grandfather began to seriously collect

oriental rugs after being a guest at the Vanderbilt Mansion in Hyde Park, N.Y. Some of the most rare carpets are the approximately 25 pieces that he bought during a three-month art-buying trip to the Near East in the 1950s.

A brochure for the collection has been published and the collection will be displayed the company, with an extensive sampling on its high-resolution website.

Based on the sale of the Intercontinental Collection this past spring, Winitz expects significant interest from international buyers.



"The Intercontinental event virtually sold out (180 rugs) in less than five months," he said. "We had expected that it would take 12 months or more. And more than half the sales was completed via the Internet."

"The interest and enthusiasm for art-level rugs has been building rapidly over the past several years," said Winitz, who opened Claremont in 1980.

Art publications are beginning to understand the majesty of rugs; financial publications have picked up on the dramatically increasing valuations, and art connoisseurs have responded by adding great rugs to their collections on the rare occasions when pieces of this magnitude become available.

# Russia to Expand Cultural Ties

Iran and Russia on Monday called for expansion of cultural ties.

In the meeting between Mehdi Mostafavi, the head of Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, and Russian Culture Minister Alexander Avdeev in Moscow, the two sides highlighted cultural commonalities between the two countries and called for expansion of cooperation in different fields, IRIB reported.

The Iranian official said expansion of cultural cooperation with Russia is



on the organization's agenda.

Referring to the upcoming visit of Russian culture minister to Iran,



Mostafavi said the two sides will sign cooperation documents in the fields of safeguarding museums and monu-

ments, and training human resources.

The Russian minister said expansion of cultural cooperation with Iran is very important for Russia and using Iran's experiences for preserving the country's cultural heritage is more important for Russia.

"During my visit to Iran, we will decide to hold Iranian culture days in Russia and vice versa, and the two sides will become familiar with management of museums and cultural and ancient sites," Avdeev said.