

In Case You Missed

South Korean Cuisine Festival Opens

The South Korean cuisine festival was held at Tehran's Dasht-e Behesht Complex on Tuesday.

The festival, part of a governmental program to promote Korean cuisine around the world, was organized by the South Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and the Agro-Fisheries Trade Cooperative, the Embassy of South Korea in Tehran announced, Mehr News Agency reported.

Over 250 Iranian and foreign officials were invited to the opening ceremony of the festival.

"This festival provided an opportunity to the Iranian people not only to enjoy Korean culinary artistry but also to gain an understanding of Korean culture, traditions and art," South Korean Ambassador Park Jae-hyun said.

Dasht-e Behesht Complex is located in the Evin neighborhood in northern Tehran.

Singapore Injects \$15m Into Apps

The tourism sector of Singapore is set to receive a \$15 million mobile shot in the arm.

The Singapore's government announced that it will set aside that amount to create user-friendly mobile applications that will "enhance the competitiveness" of companies in the retail, food and beverage, hotel and attractions sectors, StraitsTimes reported.

Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts Yaacob Ibrahim-- in his keynote address at the opening ceremony of the CommunicAsia conference-- who announced the move and said, "The convergence of social networking, location sharing and mobile devices has created new opportunities and challenges. Consumers are no longer just using their mobile phones for telephony or SMS, evident in the proliferation of tablets and other mobile devices over the last 12 months."

In view of the change, the government is looking for proposals from companies on innovative mobile services suitable for those industries.

According to an Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore factsheet describing the initiative, some possibilities include a wireless payment system for restaurants or a mobile food and drinks menu.

An IDA spokesman said a key consideration for the proposals is that they must be easily deployed by its user, whether it is a restaurant or hawkler stall, without requiring expensive customization work. The IDA, he added, is looking to fund at least 30 projects, which are expected to deliver their solutions within the next two years.

"The Hidden Alhambra" Unveiled

Patronats de la Alhambra, American Express, and World Monuments Fund (WMF) announced, at the Palace of Charles V at the Alhambra, an institutional partnership for the conservation of the site through a new program called "The Hidden Alhambra."

"The Hidden Alhambra" is a sustainable tourism project supported by American Express and World Monuments Fund in the form of a donation of \$200,000 through the American Express Partners in Preservation program, in collaboration with World Monuments Fund, Artdaily reported.

The support will allow for a strategic reworking of the tourist route through the complex, reducing pressure on the most trafficked areas while also giving visitors the ability to see a number of places previously closed to the general public but of significant historical value. In addition, pro-



grams will be developed for mobile electronic devices to aid in the exploration and understanding of the complex, including virtual accessibility to fragile sections of the site closed to the public.

Alfredo Garcia-Valdes, President and CEO of American Express in Spain, stated, "This donation to the design of a virtual guide named 'The Hidden Alhambra' is one of the most interesting projects related to sustainable tourism undertaken by American Express in Europe." Garcia-Valdes added that "since American Express has a long history in the tourism industry, we understand the importance of sites like the Alhambra to the community, its history and its future. It is fitting that our philanthropy helps promote projects related to sustainable tourism and historic preservation."

Bonnie Burnham, President of World Monuments Fund, stated, "Many of the major sites of the world struggle with tourism pressures--too many people wanting to visit celebrated sites. One of the strategies to offer a high-quality visitor experience and preserve the monuments is to develop alternative destinations--things that people can visit that add to their experience."

Stone-Paved Road Discovered In Chogan Pass



Following rainfalls of the past couple of years, a lengthy stone-paved road has emerged in the southern opening of Chogan (literally meaning polo) Pass, which goes directly beneath the present asphalted road of this pass. However, no moves have yet been taken to conduct research on and protect the road.

Chogan Pass is situated on the northern side of the Sassanid era city of Bishapur, which is near the present-day Bishapur in Kazeroun. The pass hosts a few historical sites such as Statue of Shapur (the largest statue of an Iranian king from the pre-Islamic period), six unique Sassanid era bas-reliefs, a historical castle and a few pre-historic caves, but archeological activities have not been carried out as it should have, reported www.chn.ir.

Shapur River crosses this pass and the Sassanid bas-reliefs are situated in the southern side of it. Chogan Pass was used by Sassanid monarchs to play polo. Three villages of Sofla, Ollia and Wosta are located in the middle of the pass and the residents have access to their villages through an asphalted road on the southern side of the mountain pass.

Underneath of this road there are remains of exquisitely carved stones, to which no reference has been made in the information registered from the pass and Bishapur. It is speculated that this stone-carved road connects the pass to Bishapur. The carved stones in this road are cubic in shape with each side measuring almost 40 cm and they have been arranged in a straight line. Local people say the stone-paved road has emerged only in the past two years and prior to that there were no traces of them in the area. In any event, neither the Bishapur Site nor Kazeroun's Cultural Heritage Directorate have conducted re-

search on this. The emerging stone-paved road stretches for a length of 30 m and then it is again buried under the ground. It is obvious that once research is done, it will

be clarified that the road is much longer than its present length. A cultural heritage activist in Kazeroun, Mohsen Abbaspour said after the stone-paved road emerged related officials were informed accordingly, but nothing has been done so far to conduct further research in this regard.



"Outside the strait and in the northeastern side of Bishapur there is a spa around which similar carved stones have emerged and it seems that they are continuation of the stone-paved road," he added.

The access road used by Chogan's villagers in the southern opening of the pass crosses this stone-paved road. This road has existed for years and is the only access road for villagers and tourists to the mountain pass.

led to the objection of many experts and admirers of cultural heritage. In case, the rural road is transformed into a transit road, it cannot and should not be doubted that the historical relics of the pass and the discovered stone-paved road would be severely damaged.

A veteran archeologist, Akbar Sarfaraz said he recently found out about the stone-paved road.

"However, nobody asked for my assistance, as I would have whole-heartedly agreed to work on this road and obtain its historical precedence and work for rescuing it. I believe that what has been discovered is not a road as not many people commuted between the pass and Bishapur and there was no need for a road. Since water was procured for the big and densely-populated city of Bishapur when it was at the peak of its glory from the pass and Shapur River, most probably the stone-paved path is linked to water supply in Bishapur," he noted.

He emphasized that historical sites of the sort have specific precincts and nobody has the right to pursue construction activities in these precincts.

"In fact, use of road construction machineries for building a (transit) road is tantamount to destruction of this historical area. Furthermore, the present Qa'emieh-Kazeroun Road, which passes through northern Bishapur with the construction of a bridge, has inflicted the worst possible damage on the precincts of this historical site. If a new road is constructed, more traffic will be imposed on the area and the destruction of historical relics will also increase," he noted.

Meanwhile, an expert of renovation of historical relics, Majdoddin Rahimi said he had previously not seen the stone-paved road, but since the police station in the



pass is built on the remnants of an ancient castle, perhaps the stone-paved road is somehow linked to continuation of ramparts of the Dokhtar Castle.

Last fall, news spread on opening the northern side of the pass for constructing a major transit road by using dynamites and heavy road building machinery, which

Tirgan Festival in Markazi Province

Director general of Markazi province's Cultural Heritage Directorate said Tirgan festival will be held on June 22, concurrent with the first anniversary of registration of the event on the national cultural heritage list.

Mohammad Hussein Farahani added the historical ceremony will be held near Imamzadeh Ahmad bin Ali in Zolfabad in Farahan, Arak.

"This year marks the first anniversary of registration of this ritual and the special symbolic ceremony of Abpashan (literally meaning sprinkling water), which is another name for this event will be commemorated. This ceremony is aimed at reviving historical identity, traditions and spiritual heritage of Farahan," he noted, Mehr News Agency reported.

The official recalled people from various parts of the province will attend the festival in which local



games, songs and cultural considerations will be introduced.

He said the ceremony marks start of wheat harvest. "In this ceremony, people pray for benefiting from the agro products they have produced. People also make wishes for rainfalls in the coming crop year," he noted.

Farahani also said Ta'zieh (passion play) will also be performed in an open area on the occasion of Tirgan.

"Since ancient times, Tirgan festival was celebrated on July 4. But, for years the ceremony has been held in a special manner in Zolfabad by combining local traditions and religious rituals such as Ta'zieh. The date for holding this annual ceremony has changed to June 22, as it marks the start of summer, a strenuous season for farmers and the longest day of the year and also beginning of wheat harvest," he said.