

Daily News

6th issue, August 14, 2003

Workshop on

Combinatorics, Linear Algebra and Graph Coloring

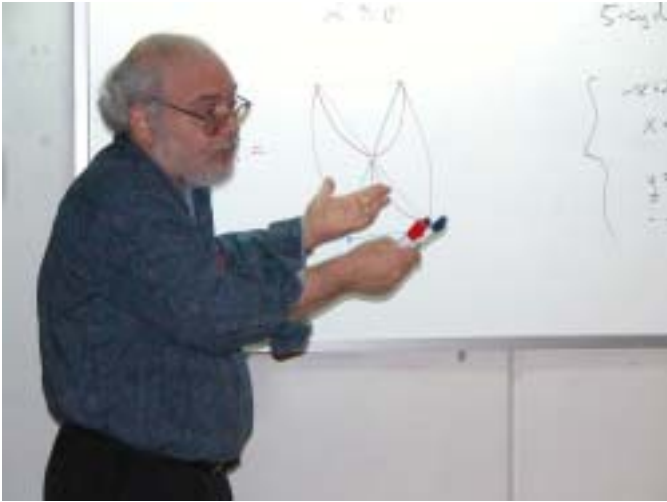


- ∞ **The proceedings of the workshop will appear as a special issue of *Discrete Mathematics*. All the papers will be fully refereed. Deadlines and directions for authors will be emailed to the participants after the conference. If you were a presenter make sure that we have your correct email and address on file.**



- ∞ **On Tuesday a copy of the book *Orthogonal Arrays: Theory and Applications*(Springer), by A.S. Hedayat, Neil J.A. Sloane, and John Stufken was raffled among students participating in the Workshop. The lucky winner was Mr. Masoud Khosravani Moghadam from Amir Kabir University. The book was donated by Professor Hedayat.**
- ∞ **Rick Wilson has a collection of 170 flutes and Peter Cameron plays the guitar and sings.**
- ∞ **The prize for Mr. Arash Noorghorbani will be a book signed by our key note speakers.**





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Isfahan

Location: Isfahan Province, 415 kms S of Tehran, 480 kms north of Shiraz

The vast province of Isfahan, is located almost in the centre of Iran between Tehran and Fars. Although it is mostly arid, there are several high mountains (Mount. Karkas at 3899m) and rivers such as the Zayandeh Rud 1 that dominate its landscape. A large population lives in the numerous oases that mark the old caravan routes, which linked not only the northwest and southwest of Iran, but crossed the mountain cols to the south, towards Shiraz and the ports on the Persian Gulf.

On approaching the city of Isfahan, leaving behind the great deserts bounded by the mountain chains that enclose the Iranian plateau, one comes upon a wide basin at the bottom of which sleeps the historical city. The most striking thing, at first site, is the contrast between the endless expanse of rock and sand behind, and the huge oasis that lies ahead, with its big trees bearing lush, verdant foliage. Only the bulbous domes of the Mosques show above the canopy of vegetation glowing turquoise-green in the sunshine. The cool blue tiles of Isfahan's Islamic buildings, and the cities majestic bridges, contrast perfectly with the hot dry Iranian countryside around it.

The main monuments of Isfahan are essentially the work of one man; Shah Abbas I (more commonly known as Shah Abbas the Great), who made the town his capital in 1598, and had it rebuilt with large avenues, magnificent gardens and a royal palace. Shah Abbas chose Isfahan as his capital, prompted by the fear for the safety of the old capitals, Tabriz and Qazvin, which were considered too close to the Ottoman Empire.

During his reign, Isfahan was opened up to the outside world with the presence of a number of foreigners at the Safavid court - English and Dutch merchants, European artists, and diplomats hoping to secure alliances against the common Ottoman enemy - and became one of the most glorious cities of its time. The famous half rhyme "Isfahan nesf-eh jahan" (Isfahan is half the world) was coined in 16th century to express the city's grandeur.

However, its period of glory lasted, for little more than 100 years. An invasion by the Afghans in the 18th Century, hastened the decline and the capital was subsequently transferred to Shiraz and then to Tehran.

Isfahan's main monuments are centred around the following areas; the Imam Square (or Royal Square), the Friday Mosque, and the bridges on the Zayandeh Rud. The centre of Isfahan during the [Seljuk](#) period was the Friday Mosque. Today, the mosque is like a patchwork of history with a winter hall that is probably [Timurid](#); minarets built by the "[Black Sheep](#)" tribe and the interior decorated by the [Safavids](#). In 1598, Shah Abbas decided to shift this centre to the present day Imam Square - according to some, in order to annoy a rich merchant who was reluctant to part with his property.



"Aerial view of Imam Square"

This Square is one of the largest in the world (500m x 160m) and was the symbolic centre of the Safavid Dynasty and its Empire. It was used for holding festivals, markets and games of polo. The original goal posts from Shah Abbas' polo grounds are still in place today at the far ends of the square.

The square is surrounded on all four sides by long walls with the Imam Mosque in the south, the Mosque of Sheikh Lotfollah in the east, the Ali Qapu Palace in the west and the entrance of the great Bazaar in the north. It is a very popular spot on summer evenings when the Isfahanis settle down on carpets and bring out their picnics and samovars. Isfahan's majestic buildings and bridges, elegant gardens, attractive bazaars and teahouses, entrance the visitor into wanting to spend as much time as possible in its relaxing atmosphere.

A few sites from Isfahan:

Imam Mosque

At the end of the Imam Square is one of the most stunning buildings in Iran, the Imam Mosque. Two turquoise minarets flank the huge gateway (27m high). Behind it and slightly to the right is the main dome (52m high) of the prayer hall. It was built over a period of 26 years and was eventually completed in 1638. In Shah Abbas' impatience to see it finished, he attempted to hurry up the work by adopting a new method of glazed tile work, known as haft rangi (of seven colours). As a result, some sections are decorated with the new style and some with the old and these ornate tiles take on a different hue according to the light conditions.

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

This small mosque was built during Shah Abbas' time and dedicated to his father in law, Sheikh Lotfollah. The pale tiles on the dome change colour from cream to pink, depending on the light conditions; and the mosque is unusual because it has no minaret or courtyard. The mosque was once called the Women's Mosque, because there is apparently a tunnel between this mosque and the Ali Qapu Palace, allowing women from the old dynasties to attend prayers without being seen in public.

Ali Qapu Palace

This palace was built in the 18th century as a functioning seat of government, and included a huge pavilion from where the Safavid rulers could watch the activities in the square below. Unfortunately the Palace today is devoid of any furniture, and many of the Murals have been destroyed.

Bazaar Qaisarieh

On the north side of the Imam Square lies the Bazaar Qaisarieh (Great Bazaar). The gateway to the bazaar, built in the reign of Shah Abbas is decorated with the town's astrological sign, Sagittarius. The bazaar covers an enormous area with shops that sell almost every imaginable item, as well as mosques, tea-houses, and banks. Like most Iranian bazaars, it is loosely divided into several interconnecting corridors, each specialising in a particular trade or product.

Chehel Sotun (Forty Columns)

The Chehel Sotun palace was built as a reception hall by Shah Abbas II in 1647. It is set in the old royal park between the Ali Qapu Palace and the Chahar Bagh Avenue. The name means "The Forty Columns" and though there are only twenty columns of cypress wood, their reflections in the adjacent pool provide the other twenty.

There is also a small museum inside the building. Six Friezes are painted on the upper part of the inside walls representing Safavid court life and their military exploits. Beneath these great scenes are smaller paintings, closer in style and subject matter to Persian miniature. Covered in plaster during the Qajar period, they have recently been carefully restored. All around the room are a series of Safavid objects including carpets, armour, porcelain and coins.

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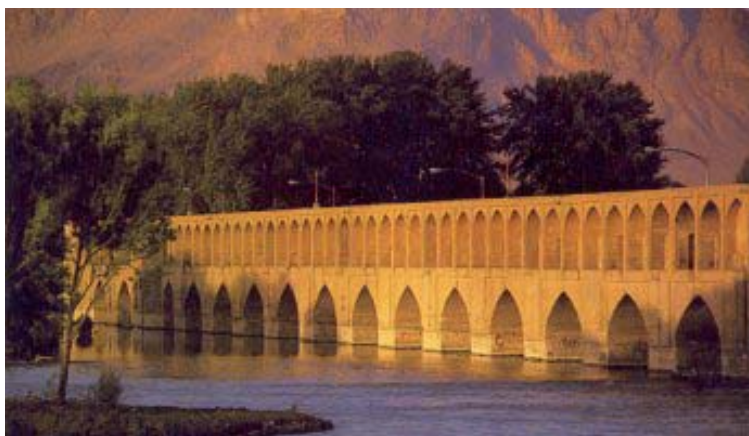


پیشگامان ریاضیات
پیشگامان شیمی

The Bridges of Isfahan

The Zayandeh Rud (river) starts in the Zagros Mountains, flows from west to east through the heart of Isfahan, and dries up in the Kavir desert.

The bridges over the river include some of the nicest architecture in Isfahan. The oldest bridge is the "Pol-e Shahrestan" which was probably built in the 12th century during the Seljuk period. Further upstream is the "Pol-e Khaju" which was built by Shah Abbas II in 1650. It is 123 metres long with 24 arches, and it also serves as a sluice gate.



Si-o-se-pol or "Allah-verdi Khan Bridge",
built in 1632 by Shah Abbas on the Zayandeh Rud (river), Isfahan

The next bridge is the "Pol-e Jubi". It was originally built as an aqueduct to supply the palace gardens on the north bank of the river. Further upstream again is the "Si-o-Se Pol" or bridge of 32 arches. Build during the rule of Shah Abbas the Great, it linked Isfahan with the Armenian suburb of Jolfa. It is by far the longest bridge in Isfahan at 295m.



