

Unveiling the wonders of ancient Ahvaz



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The first season of excavations focused on stratigraphy and the study of the ancient city of Ahvaz — specifically the Asieh Abad archaeological site — is currently underway with the permission of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and the support of Khuzestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization.

According to Habib Emadi, head of the archaeological team at the site, the Asieh Abad Hill is a natural prominence characterized by alternating layers of clay and sand. The site has an irregular geometric shape and covers approximately 5.2 hectares in district 7 of Ahvaz, ISNA wrote.

Emadi noted that several factors influence the location of Asieh Abad as part of the ancient city. In addition to natural and geomorphological conditions, cultural factors play a significant role. These include the quality of interactions with nearby centers such as Shush and Shushtar to the north, Arjan and Ramhormoz to the east, and Baghdad and Basra to the west, all of which have undeniably impacted the geographical positioning of this site.

Emadi stated that the main objectives pursued in the archaeological studies of Asieh Abad include scientific and precise stratigraphy of the hill to provide an accurate chronology and identify the sequence of settlements that formed there.

The studies also focus on examining

pottery traditions and changes in pottery patterns based on fragments obtained from the preserved cultural layers, as well as the relative and absolute dating of the cultural layers and architectural spaces uncovered during the stratigraphic excavation.

Emadi mentioned that although excavations and studies in the cities of Khuzestan Province have provided valuable information about the pottery and architectural traditions of the region during the Sassanid and Islamic periods, understanding the nature and function of the Asieh Abad site will clarify many ambiguities regarding settlement patterns, architecture, and historical processes in ancient Ahvaz. Past surface surveys have revealed that Asieh Abad contains a significant collec-

tion of cultural materials from the early Islamic centuries.

The archaeologist stated that, given the urban development plans, most existing sites in cities are severely exposed to destruction and flattening. He added that Asieh Abad has unfortunately suffered significant and irreparable damage due to its location within the urban fabric. Construction and urban development interventions in the vicinity of the site have caused a large portion of this archaeological area to be sacrificed for the expansion of Ahvaz's urban structure.

The archaeological program planned for the study of the Asieh Abad site will provide a structured model regarding the morphological and structural characteristics of ancient pottery

from Ahvaz.

Emadi added that the expansion of illegal excavations, along with construction and urban planning in the heart of Ahvaz and natural erosive factors, has raised concerns that the what buried within Asieh Abad could soon be destroyed, leading to the loss of a treasure trove of historical and archaeological knowledge about ancient Ahvaz.

This danger can be significantly mitigated by designating the boundaries of the site and implementing protective guidelines for its preservation. It is evident that documenting and stratifying the remnants of cultural materials at this site will enable the recording of a chapter of the history of this land and facilitate the continuation of studies for future generations.

Izeh is emerging as a global center for kilim weaving



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The city of Izeh in Khuzestan Province possesses significant potential to be recognized as a global city for kilim-weaving, thanks to its numerous capabilities.

Abbas Rahimi, a researcher specializing in handicrafts, noted in an interview with ISNA that during the evaluation of Izeh's qualifications for designation as a national city of kilim-weaving, it became evident that the existing infrastructure simply needs to be organized for the city to gain global recognition.

Rahimi emphasized the variety of kilim-weaving workshops scattered throughout Izeh, asserting that the city has greater potential than Dezful, which has already achieved recognition as a World City of Kapu-Weaving. He pointed out that Izeh is home to 12 kilim-weaving training centers and 12 kilim cooperatives, while Dezful has only one *kapu*-weaving training center and perhaps two or three *kapu*-weaving cooperatives. This comparison highlights Izeh's extensive capabilities

in this area.

Furthermore, the handicraft researcher remarked that the kilims produced in Izeh are not only beautiful but also highly functional. He emphasized that promoting Izeh as a global city of kilims could provide a significant opportunity for the city's growth and advancement. Rahimi reiterated the strong potential of Izeh in the realm of kilim-weaving and underscored the importance of overcoming barriers hindering the global registration of its kilims.

He also suggested that the involvement of evaluators from the World Crafts Council in Izeh, as they visit cooperatives, markets, and kilims weaving training centers, could be crucial in initiating the process of attaining global recognition for the city's kilims.

In the local dialect, *kapu* refers to any spherical object, but as a craft, it pertains to hand-woven, basket-like spherical items that may also include lids. *Kapu* are skillfully crafted by the talented hands of women, utilizing materials that are naturally sourced from Khuzestan Province.

On the other hand, a kilim is a type of woven handicraft characterized by a smooth and lint-free surface created from warp and weft threads. Unlike Persian carpets, kilims do not have long piles.

The quality of a kilim often correlates with the fineness of the thread used; consequently, high-quality sheep's wool is preferred for weaving these textiles. The wool utilized in kilim production is known for its flexibility, high durability, and excellent dyeability. This artistic craft is predominantly undertaken by women residing in rural and nomadic areas of Iran.