

International legacy of Doulab Cemetery in Tehran



Iranica Desk

Doulab Cemetery is one of the remarkable sights in Tehran, situated in an old neighborhood of the capital. This cemetery serves as the resting place for notable non-Iranian individuals who once lived in Iran. Specifically, Doulab Cemetery is the old Armenian graveyard, where the graves of Armenian Christians are located. It contains the graves of 409 soldiers and 528 civilians. Officially established in 1936, it has not seen any burials for many years, IRNA wrote.

The cemetery is managed by France, Italy, and Poland, and it houses the graves of both famous and unknown individuals. A wooden gate opens onto a picturesque garden, and most of the graves are old, with the nationality of the deceased indicated by a flag. Among them are many unknown French individuals, including Simon Sardari, born in Montpellier, and Louis Capdor,

born in Gard, who passed away in 1966.

The gravestones in the cemetery are marked with crosses and belong to individuals from Russia, Poland, France, Italy, and Iranian Christians. They feature engravings of crosses, black-and-white photographs, and images of a sorrowful lady or the weeping Mary. Old tree branches cast shadows over some of the graves. The memorials of unknown soldiers from Russia, the tombs of French counts, Georgian princes, physicians of the Qajar and Pahlavi courts, and the mass graves of Poles who perished during World War II on their way back to their homeland can be found here, along with many notable figures from other countries, making this cemetery quite intriguing.

Doulab Cemetery is also known by various names, including the Polish Cemetery, Akbarabad Cemetery, Soleimaniyeh Cemetery, Orthodox Cemetery, Catho-



lic Cemetery, and Assyrian Cemetery. The history of Doulab Cemetery reveals that the first gathering of Armenians in Tehran occurred on the outskirts of the city's southern wall, specifically in the southern area of the Tehran Bazaar. The oldest church in Tehran, known as the Church of Sorp Georges, is locat-

ed in the Qavam al-Dowleh Bazaar. This church, which still stands today, was built in the late Qajar era and served as a symbol of the Armenian community at that time. The first Armenian cemetery was also established in that area but was later destroyed and became part of Tehran's residential

landscape. Subsequently, two new cemeteries were established: one in the Vank neighborhood, which became the new gathering place for Armenians, and another in eastern Tehran, in 1936.

Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar brought several Armenian war prisoners back to Iran from Georgia

and the Caucasus in 1795, directing them to settle in Tehran. He also relocated several other families from Karabakh to Iran. The Vank Cemetery later faced excessive destruction due to urban development, leading to the transfer of some of its valuable stones to Doulab Cemetery. The ownership of the Armenian cemetery belonged to the French government and was purchased by the embassies of France, Italy, and the representative of the Roman Catholic Churches in Iran. The Polish section was acquired by the Polish embassy in Iran in 1943. Spanning over 75,000 square meters, this cemetery consists of six distinct sections: the Armenian Apostolic Church, Eastern Orthodox (Russians, Georgians, and Greeks), Roman Catholics, Armenian Catholics, Assyrians, and Poles. Approximately 44,000 square meters belong to Armenians, 14,200 square meters to Catholics, 3,700 square meters to Orthodox Christians, and the remain-

der to Chaldean Assyrians. Notably, about 50% of the Catholic section is dedicated to Poles, while the rest includes graves of French, Italian, English, Czech, German, and other nationals. The largest part of the cemetery is the gravesite of 260 Polish exiles who perished during World War II, while the most haunting area contains the graves of 26 Italian miners who worked in Iran from 1936 to 1943. The architecture of their burial sites is such that upon entering this section, visitors are surrounded by standing figures of the deceased. The largest mausoleum belongs to Dr. Cloquet, the physician of Mohammad Shah Qajar. The Polish section of the cemetery is particularly notable, featuring two stone symbols adorned with representations of an eagle and a cross. These symbols bear an inscription in Polish, French, and Persian: "The cemetery of Polish exiles who fell asleep here on their return to their homeland."

Avaj where stunning landscapes meet thriving tourism

Avaj, a charming city located in Qazvin Province, Iran, boasts an impressive suspension bridge that stands out as a remarkable engineering feat. Stretching 170 meters across a picturesque valley and overlooking the spectacular Shah Darreh Waterfall, this bridge is the second-largest suspension bridge in Iran.

With a width of one and a half meters and an elevation of 105 meters above the ground, it is designed to support a remarkable weight capacity of over 200 tons, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for visitors.

The Avaj Suspension Bridge is more than just a structural marvel; it is a key component of a broader tourism development plan initiated by the Avaj municipality. This initiative



aims to enhance the region's appeal to tourists and to create a sustainable economic framework grounded in tourism. By improving access to the stunning natural landscapes and attractions in the area, the

bridge plays a crucial role in transforming the local economy and providing new opportunities for residents. Nestled to the west of the city, the Shah Darreh Waterfall is a breathtaking natural attrac-



tion characterized by its dramatic descent through steep rocky cliffs. Visitors seeking to experience the beauty of the waterfall can take advantage of the convenient staircase that leads them to the top, where

they can relish the refreshing atmosphere and mesmerizing views that define the region's mountainous climate. In addition to the natural wonders, Avaj provides an array of tourism infrastructure that en-

hances the visitor experience. Travelers can find a variety of restaurants that offer local cuisine, along with accommodation options to suit different preferences. These facilities ensure that visitors can comfortably explore the area and fully immerse themselves in the natural beauty and cultural richness that Avaj and Qazvin Province have to offer.

Overall, the combination of the Avaj Suspension Bridge, the stunning Shah Darreh Waterfall, and the supportive tourism infrastructure highlights Avaj's potential as a burgeoning travel destination in Iran. This development not only promises to attract more visitors but also to enrich the lives of the local community through economic growth and cultural exchange.