

A new chapter in archaeological discoveries of Fars Province

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The Director General of Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization announced the discovery of 70 historical rock carvings in the Marvdasht Plain.

Mohammad Sabet Eghlidi also mentioned that ancient hidden artifacts can be found in the cities of Marvdasht, Pasargad, and Beyza.

Regarding the latest status of archaeological excavations, he stated that recent digs have taken place in the city of Gur in Firuzabad, following the acquisition of the necessary permits. He added that a permit for excavating the Valerian Palace has also been secured, ISNA wrote.

Sabet Eghlidi described engaging in archaeological excavations as a key initiative of Fars Province's cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of protecting historical artifacts. He noted that the Sassanid and Achaemenid Land-

scape spans a vast area in the province, stressing the need for advanced protection measures.

He further stated that Fars Province has been designated as a national pilot for the smart protection of historical artifacts. Under this initiative, activities will be conducted to monitor and protect the area between Persepolis and Beyza using drones.

He also discussed the significance of Postchi Hill in Shiraz, noting that, like other locations, it requires archaeological excavations; however, it is not currently a priority. "Our focus is on excavating some other places including the Valerian Palace in the city of Gur. We also aim to shift excavation efforts towards Beyza, as we intend to alter the tourism route of Persepolis," he explained.

Sabet Eghlidi emphasized the need to utilize the province's tourism potential, highlighting that the Sang-e Siah neighborhood in Shiraz features a mosque, a synagogue, and a church, yet we

do not fully leverage this historical and tourism potential.

He announced that the process of registering the historical mosques of Fars Province for UNESCO recognition will begin, with the goal of including eight mosques in this effort: the Jaame Mosque of Neyriz, the Jaame Mosque and Stone Mosque of Darab, as well as Moshir al-Dowleh, Vakil, Nasir al-Mulk, Atiq, and the New Mosque of Shiraz.

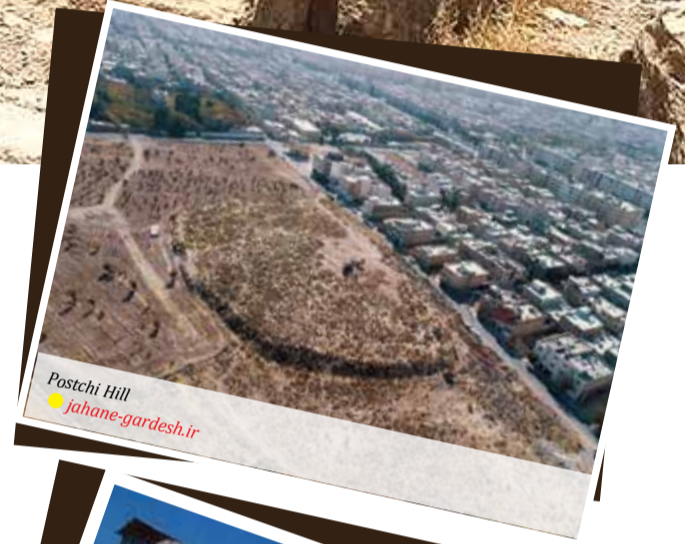
In addition, he announced Fars Province's participation in the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, taking place from February 11-18. He stated that this exhibition is the most significant tourism event in the country and becomes increasingly specialized each year. "This year, we are participating in the exhibition with several approaches. One of these focuses on tourism and the economic aspects of this type of tourism," he noted.

He added, "We aim to form a pil-

grimage tourism triangle with the cities of Mashhad and Qom, and we will vigorously pursue this initiative at the exhibition."

Furthermore, he highlighted another approach for Fars Province's presence at the exhibition, emphasizing the importance of showcasing the region's civilizational heritage: "This year, we will participate under the slogan 'Fars, the Glory of Civilization and Faith.'"

Fars Province, known as the cradle of Persian civilization, boasts a rich history that includes the ancient capitals of Persepolis and Pasargadae. Its cultural heritage is reflected in its numerous historical sites, monuments, and traditions that date back thousands of years. By promoting its archaeological sites and cultural assets, Fars aims to enhance its status as a premier destination for both domestic and international tourists, ensuring that its historical significance is preserved and celebrated for future generations.



Kolah Farangi of Shush Castle sees new life

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The restoration and revival of the *Kolah Farangi* (watchtower) at Shush Castle in Khuzestan Province have begun after 23 years since the fire that destroyed this historic structure, according to the deputy director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization in Khuzestan Province.

He stated, "Unfortunately, about 23 years ago, an electrical short circuit caused the Kolah Farangi to catch fire and be destroyed." He added, "The watchtower is

one of the most beautiful parts of Shush Castle, and its restoration has been neglected for many years."

"The materials used in building the Kolah Farangi were primarily wood, which sustained the most damage during the fire," he explained, according to IRNA.

He also noted, "The French constructed this watchtower during their time in Shush, on the north-eastern side of the castle, providing a magnificent view of the historical area and the city of Shush." Hosseini emphasized that the more than two decades since the

destruction of the Kolah Farangi had led to its being forgotten, stating, "The restoration and revival of the watchtower have commenced with secured funding, aiming to preserve the original style. This part of the castle will be operational before the Nowruz holiday.

In the late Qajar period, a French archaeological team established a presence in Iran to conduct excavations in Shush. They used materials leftover from the Apadana Palace and the Chogha Zanbil Temple, including historical bricks from the nearby acropolis,

which is a significant historical site, to construct Shush Castle.

Shush Castle features two central courtyards and three entrance doors, built over two floors. Its design resembles the Bastille Prison in France, and it includes a watchtower that offers a panoramic view of the surrounding area. Known also as the French Castle, Shush Castle is one of Khuzestan Province's most famous tourist attractions, located adjacent to the Acropolis Palace and on the Shush hill.

Most of the materials used in its construction are historical bricks

from the ancient site of Shush, made from raw clay. The castle's structure was crafted by a master craftsman from Dezful.

Shush Castle was never intended for military use; from its inception, it has served cultural and research purposes and is now the site of the UNESCO World Heritage base for Shush.

The city of Shush itself is rich in history and culture, boasting several significant attractions. The Apadana Palace, a monumental structure from the Achaemenid era, showcases intricate carvings and architecture that reflect the

grandeur of ancient Persia. The Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of the best-preserved ziggurats in the world, offering insights into the Elamite civilization.

Additionally, the Shush Museum houses a vast collection of artifacts that narrate the story of the region's rich history, making it a must-visit for history enthusiasts. The city's vibrant bazaars and local cuisine further enhance the cultural experience for visitors, making Shush not just a historical site but a lively destination for tourists.

