



Ancient human life unearthed in western Iran

Social Desk

Archaeologists in western Iran have uncovered compelling evidence of human settlement dating back 80,000 years in Qamari Cave, near the city of Khorramabad. The findings, which span from the Middle Paleolithic to the Chalcolithic period, may bolster efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for the site, Rokna news agency reported. The excavation, led by Fereidoun Biglari—head of the Paleolithic Department at National Museum of Iran—revealed a sequence of cultural layers that offer rare insight into the lives of prehistoric humans, including Neanderthals. According to Biglari, the cave was chosen for study based on recommendations from ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which identified the Khorramabad Valley as a priority area lacking sufficient archaeological data. The first phase of excavation, conducted between February and April 2024, was authorized by Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism. It was carried out in collaboration with Sonia Shidrang from Shahid Beheshti Uni-

versity and a team of experts including archaeozoologist Hossein Davoudi, and archaeologists Ali Saki, Masoud Akbari, and Atefeh Younesi. Among the most significant discoveries were remains from the Middle Paleolithic period, including stone tools, animal bones, and charcoal fragments. These artifacts shed light on the behaviors and environmental adaptability of Neanderthals in the Zagros Mountains. "The presence of wild goat and deer bones suggests these species were hunted," Biglari added. The tools, primarily crafted from regional flint, illustrate early humans' skill in utilizing local resources. Later strata revealed remnants from the Chalcolithic era, including stone-lined hearths, decorated and plain pottery, and the bones of domesticated animals such as sheep and goats. Initial analyses suggest similarities with ceramic traditions of ancient Khuzestan. These findings point to a community engaged in herding and limited agriculture, with livestock forming the backbone of their economy. Caves and natural shelters, like Qamari, often served as dwellings or animal enclosures for these groups, according to



Biglari. He emphasized that human presence in Iran may trace back as far as 700,000 to 1 million years, with earlier evidence found in Khorasan's Kashafrud Basin and caves such as Darband Rashi and

Qaleh Kord. Despite these groundbreaking findings, Iranian archaeologists face persistent challenges. "We lack interdisciplinary specialists like geoarchaeologists, and facilities for radiocarbon dating," Biglari

said. Restrictions on exporting samples further complicate research. He called for investment in domestic laboratories, especially for carbon-14 dating, which would enable more precise analysis of ancient remains.

Iran's membership on UN tourism board extended Isfahan named host for 2025 regional summit

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has retained its seat on the Executive Council of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) for another four-year term and will host the organization's next major regional meeting in 2025, officials confirmed following a key summit in Indonesia. Speaking at the 60th meeting of the UNWTO Regional Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Jakarta, Iran's Deputy Minister of Tourism Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said the Islamic Republic will continue to represent South Asia on the top policy-making body for global tourism,

alongside India. The reappointment comes after months of diplomatic engagement aimed at securing Iran's position within the council, which plays a critical role in shaping international tourism strategy and cooperation. "This is a significant gain that reinforces Iran's active presence in global tourism policymaking," Mohseni-Bandpey said. He emphasized that the tourism sector is "highly sensitive to international cooperation" and stressed the importance of real-time data and collaboration for effective planning. Iran has held a seat on the council for the past decade. According to officials,

this continuity reflects years of targeted outreach by the country's foreign tourism marketing and development office. Council membership provides access to expert consultation, specialized training, and advanced statistical modeling through Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA), all of which are vital for national planning. In addition to its ongoing involvement in the UNWTO's Silk Road initiative, Iran has also received institutional support for the launch of an international center for tourism research and development, to be established in collaboration with the organization. In a further win for Iranian tourism

diplomacy, the UNWTO announced that the central city of Isfahan will host the 38th session of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific in 2025. The decision was endorsed by a majority of over 30 member states attending the Jakarta meetings. Iran's delegation, led by Mohseni-Bandpey, formally presented Isfahan's candidacy, highlighting the city's historical significance and tourism potential. A promotional video showcasing Isfahan's cultural and architectural heritage was also screened. "This is a milestone in Iran's tourism diplomacy," Mohseni-Bandpey said following the vote. "Hosting high-pro-



file international events is a strategic priority for strengthening Iran's global tourism standing." The UNWTO, headquartered in Madrid, is the United Nations' specialized agency for tourism, tasked with promoting sustainable, inclusive, and accessible tourism worldwide.


Iran's 13th-century academic complex faces collapse amid funding shortage

Arts & Culture Desk

Rab'-e Rashidi, once hailed as the world's largest medieval academic complex, is now teetering on the brink of collapse due to years of neglect, environmental damage, and a critical lack of funding, Iranian officials and preservationists warn, according to ILNA. Built over 700 years ago in Tabriz, northwest Iran, Rab'-e Rashidi was commissioned by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din. At its peak, it hosted students from across Asia and the Persian Gulf, offering instruction in seven languages. Experts have likened its historical significance to that of a "university town," a precursor to modern academic cities. But the sprawling site, battered by earthquakes, floods, and unauthorized construction, is now at risk of vanishing entirely. Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization says it needs roughly \$1.1 million to safeguard the site's core area—funds that are currently unavailable. "This is not just about preservation," said one official. "Rab'-e Rashidi is a national asset with untapped diplomatic potential." Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in his early days in office underscored the importance of cultural heritage, calling it the country's "greatest diplomatic resource." During a

museum event earlier this year, he singled out Rab'-e Rashidi as a prime example of Iran's scientific and architectural legacy. Despite its historic status and registration as a national heritage site, Rabe Rashidi remains largely unknown, even within Iran. Experts say poor public outreach and limited research funding have left the site in the shadows. Mehrdad Azimi, head of East Azarbaijan's Restoration Association, noted that "documentation and restoration are essential," but stressed that "proper identification and introduction" of the site must also become a strategic priority. Excavation efforts have resumed after delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A new agreement signed last year between Iran's Cultural Heritage Department and the Islamic Art University of Tabriz has relaunched archaeological studies, marking the fourth official research phase. A fifth round is being planned, pending final permits. Vahid Navadad, Deputy Director of East Azerbaijan's Cultural Heritage Department, confirmed that studies will continue under a five-year framework, but warned that major challenges remain. Chief among them is securing legal control over the surrounding land, part of which has been overtaken by urban development.

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0040003

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

| Items | Material Description | Quantity |
|-------|---|-----------|
| 04 | ROCK BITS 8-1/6 IN., JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES, 2 MOTOR TYOE, HIGH RPM, MIN RPM: 250 | 30NO&30ST |

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 33,942/95 EURO or 15,858,859,544 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL. NOTE: Based on enactment notified by Nisoc's Tender committee, foreign companies must submit a Bid Bond Guarantee amounting to aforementioned (paragraph 2)Euro amount. Otherwise, their quotations will not be considered.

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