

Saqqez joins Historical Cities Network of Iran

Iranica Desk

The historic city of Saqqez in Kurdistan Province has officially joined the Historical Cities Network of Iran, following a vote by members at the second session of the assembly held in Yazd. During the session, the city’s mayor submitted a formal request for membership, which was approved after careful review of Saqqez’s historical background, cultural values, and urban management programs. As one of the oldest settlements in northwestern Iran, Saqqez has now secured its place within the network of the country’s historical cities. This milestone is considered an important step toward safeguarding the city’s cultural heritage, promoting its tourism potential, and reviving its historical identity, chtn.ir wrote. The city’s Mayor Arastu Gavili emphasized the importance of understanding the identity and historical spirit of cities, stating, “As mayors, we must recognize the soul of our cities. Saqqez is one of Iran’s oldest cities, with roots stretching from the Bronze Age through the Safavid and Qajar eras. This long historical span increases our responsibility to protect cultural heritage and implement principled tourism planning.”



Ziwiye archeological site
● kojara.com

Referring to the ancient Ziwiye site, he added, “This area is not merely an archeological site; it is part of the collective memory and cultural identity of the local people. It is one of the most significant symbols of the Mannean civilization and one of Kurdistan’s most valuable historical assets.” He noted that with proper scientific and administrative attention, the site could play a key role in showcasing the history of northwestern Iran.

He also outlined urban management plans to leverage Saqqez’s membership in the National Network of Historical Cities, stating, “The main goal of the municipality is to provide the necessary infrastructure for investment, encourage public participation, and utilize support from cultural institutions. With a comprehensive plan, the city’s 46-hectare historical district will become the vibrant heart of urban tourism

and the local economy.” Gavili emphasized that protecting historic neighborhoods not only preserves the city’s identity but also fosters economic growth, creates jobs, improves quality of life, and attracts domestic and international tourists. Saqqez, the second-largest city in Kurdistan Province, is home to more than 125 nationally registered historical sites, making it one of the region’s key centers of cultural heritage.

Joining the network allows Saqqez to plan more strategically, benefit from shared experiences of other member cities, expand professional collaborations, and receive national support for heritage conservation. Cultural heritage experts believe that Saqqez’s inclusion in this national network could drive significant developments in historic district restoration, promotion of cultural assets, sustainable tourism, and identity-based urban management.

The formal accession of Saqqez to Historical Cities Network of Iran represents a major step toward identity-building, scientific urban planning, and sustainable development in a city with millennia of history, valuable archaeological sites, and a unique historical fabric. This achievement is expected to pave the way for greater recognition of the region’s rich history and culture.



Saqqez
● wikipedia.org

Restoration of Qeysarieh historical bazaar in Larestan nears completion



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The head of Larestan’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Fars Province announced that the majority of restoration work on the city’s historic Qeysarieh Bazaar has been completed, describing the project as one of the most significant initiatives for reviving Larestan’s historic fabric. Mohammad-Ebrahim Kian stated that the project aims to safeguard the historical identity of Larestan while enhancing the city’s tourism attractions. “In this phase, the damaged sections — including the Chaharsouqs (intersecting corridors), gutters, and the main structural body — have been fully restored. All work has been carried out under the direct supervision of heritage experts to preserve the architectural authenticity of the bazaar,” he said. He added that, given the favorable progress, this phase of the project is expected to be completed soon. Following this,

phasized that revitalizing such spaces plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism and attracting both domestic and international visitors. Underlining the importance of inter-agency cooperation, Kian stressed that continued collaboration between government bodies, the municipality, and the Urban Regeneration Corporation of Iran is essential for protecting Larestan’s valuable heritage and sustaining the restoration and development of the city’s historic fabric. Larestan, located in southern Fars Province with the city of



● hamsafarshim.ir

restoration of the remaining sections and rehabilitation of the surrounding façades will be undertaken. Kian also highlighted the historical and social significance of Qeysarieh Bazaar, noting that it has long been one of the most prominent elements of Larestan’s historic core, historically serving as a central hub for social interactions and economic activities. He em-

Lar as its administrative center, is bordered by Hormozgan Province to the south and east, Lamerd to the southwest, Khonj to the west, and Jahrom and Darab to the north. Renowned for its unique historical background, Larestan was historically referred to as the “State of Larestan,” a vast region encompassing cities such as Bandar-e Gambroon, Bandar Lengeh and Bastak.

Transforming Kandolus Museum into cultural hub



● toptourist.ir



● MEHR

Iranica Desk

Deep in the lush mountains of Mazandaran Province lies Kandolus village, a hidden gem where history and culture are etched into every stone and pathway. While it may appear as just another quiet northern settlement, Kandolus is home to a remarkable landmark: the Kandolus Museum, the first private rural museum in the Middle East and one of Iran’s most significant cultural destinations. The museum is the vision of Ali-Asghar Jahangiri, who conceived the project in 1981 and dedicated eight years to its creation. Driven by his lifelong love for the culture and art of his birthplace, Jahangiri gathered an extraordinary collection of historical, artistic, and cultural artifacts. Today, the museum houses over 8,000 items, from farming tools and traditional pottery to rare artworks and ancient relics, according to Mehr News Agency. Ali Kermani, the museum’s director, explained, “Jahangiri wanted to create a space where the cultural heritage of Kandolus and Mazandaran Province could be preserved and celebrated.” The

museum’s construction was a community effort, with local villagers helping transport more than six million stones from the foot of the mountain to the museum site. Visitors entering the Kandolus Museum encounter ten exhibition halls, each offering a glimpse into the lives, crafts, and history of the region. Highlights include a collection of locks dating back over 3,000 years, nearly 4,000-year-old alchemy instruments, and Elamite statues spanning 500 to 5,000 years. The museum also showcases Jahangiri’s paintings alongside works by regional artists, as well as over 8,000 poems penned by Jahangiri, many from his childhood. A photography hall captures daily life in the Qajar and early Pahlavi periods, offering a vivid portrait of local history. The museum’s strong connection to the community is reflected in the contributions of villagers, who donated many artifacts and actively participated in its construction. Over time, the Kandolus Museum has become a key cultural tourism destination. Visitors experience not only the region’s history and art but also the beauty of rural

life and Mazandaran’s pristine landscapes. The museum has revitalized local handicrafts, eco-tourism, and the village economy, demonstrating how culture can drive sustainable development. Beyond its exhibitions, the museum serves as a research center, supporting studies in anthropology, art, linguistics, and regional history. Jahangiri views it as a project to revive rural cultural memory, showing that even small villages can foster creativity and innovation. Despite challenges such as limited funding and the need for restoration, the Kandolus Museum continues to expand its reach, with plans to digitize collections and enhance research and tourism facilities. The Cultural Heritage Organization of Mazandaran Province has endorsed the museum as a model for other rural private museums across Iran. Today, Kandolus Museum stands as a symbol of passion, perseverance, and community engagement, proving that cultural heritage can thrive even in the most remote villages — linking future generations to the art, history, and soul of their ancestors.