

New chapter of archaeological excavations begins at Ebrahimabad Hill in Qazvin

Iranica Desk

A new season of scientific archaeological excavations has begun at Ebrahimabad Hill in Abyek, Qazvin Province. Maryam Mahdavi, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Qazvin Province, announced that the excavations, authorized by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, are being led by Hassan Fazeli — Nashli, a prominent professor in the Archaeology Department at the University of Tehran, chtn.ir wrote. She added that Ebrahimabad Hill, a site dating back to prehistoric times, had its first excavation season last year. The main objectives of the current research include studying the development of rural settlements and architectural evolution

in the 6th millennium BCE, reconstructing the history of agriculture in Iran's central plateau based on botanical and zoological studies, and examining the ritual and spiritual life of Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities. Fazeli-Nashli, head of the excavations, revealed that recent fieldwork has uncovered valuable evidence from the Neolithic period. The site, with a history exceeding 7,500 years, was first stratified in 2006 and contains an eight-meter cultural layer. It served as a key corridor connecting the Central Zagros, Central Plateau, and northern Iran, and is among the few ancient villages in Iran where the earliest farmers lived. He noted that last year's excavations focused on ideology, rituals, beliefs, and methods of plant and animal cultivation. In the first sea-

son, a 4 by 7-meter trench was established atop the hill. This year, given the significance of the findings, the trench has been expanded to 10 by 10 meters. Fazeli-Nashli emphasized that the site is one of the most important Neolithic locations in the region. During this period, humans buried their deceased within the floors of residential houses — a hallmark cultural practice of Neolithic communities. So far, eight skeletons have been discovered within residential spaces measuring approximately 2 by 3 meters, indicating that these rooms were organized living spaces for Neolithic families. He concluded that the findings of this excavation season are extraordinary, offering a clearer picture of the lifestyle, beliefs, and social structure of Neolithic people in this region.



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Arak installs cultural elements to highlight traditional handicrafts

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In a move to showcase local handicraft capacities and beautify urban spaces, a series of cultural installations inspired by traditional arts have been designed and installed along the main streets leading to Arak's historic district, in collaboration with the municipality. Elham Simayi, deputy head of the Markazi Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization for Handicrafts, stated that

as part of joint programs between the Cultural Heritage Organization and Arak Municipality, these installations were created to promote and introduce local handicrafts. The designs, inspired by traditional art forms, have been placed along the main streets connecting to the city's historic core. She added that these installations not only create a visually appealing and culturally rich urban landscape but also showcase Arak's prominent and

traditional handicrafts, including pottery, blacksmithing, coppersmithing, traditional footwear weaving (Giveh-making), and carpet restoration. Each craft reflects a part of the city's history, artistic talent, and local creativity. Emphasizing the importance of promoting local culture through urban elements, Simayi noted that the installations help familiarize both residents and tourists with Arak's handicrafts while strengthening the city's cultural identity. She de-

scribed the initiative as a symbol of cooperation between cultural institutions and municipal management in enhancing the beauty and authenticity of Arak. Simayi concluded by expressing hope that by expanding such projects throughout the city, Arak can preserve its artistic and cultural heritage while creating inspiring spaces for citizens and visitors, and further integrate handicrafts into the fabric of everyday urban life.

Ista village resists flow of time

Iranica Desk

Among the towering peaks of Taleqan, Alborz Province, where the morning mist settles on the tree branches like a heavy blanket and the cool breeze carries the scent of damp soil through the valleys, lies a small, hidden village. As you step into this secluded place, it feels as though you've crossed a threshold into another world — one where time has turned back two centuries. The honking of car horns, the chaos of city streets, and the glare of neon lights have no meaning here. Only the sound of footsteps on cobblestones, the whisper of wind through the trees, and the murmur of a small river fill the air. Ista is a place untouched by the haste of modern life. Every movement, decision, and gesture unfolds with calm deliberation, as though every moment carries weight and every breath tells a story. The residents of this quiet settlement have chosen a life that is simple, unadorned, and deeply meaningful — a conscious return to the way their ancestors lived some 200 years ago. The name Ista itself is a recent

one. Officially, the area is not even classified as a village. Its lands were once purchased by families from Tabriz. Later, when Alborz researcher and author Hossein Askari visited the area to study the local way of life, he suggested the name "Ista," a word that perfectly captures the spirit of the place — a life that stands firm against the rush of modernity, quietly removed from the flow of time, chtn.ir wrote. Here, life follows the rhythm of nature. The villagers cook with organic ingredients, heat their homes and bake bread

using wood-fired stoves, and light their nights with lanterns instead of electricity. The moon and the sun serve as their natural clocks; each activity is planned in harmony with the rhythms of the earth. As you make your way through Ista's rocky mountain paths, traces of a different, gentler existence begin to emerge — simple but sturdy homes built with minimal technology, small gardens, and livestock roaming freely. Men and women travel on purebred Arabian horses, worth millions, across valleys and steep mountain trails.



These horses are more than transport—they are a living symbol of identity and heritage. To understand the roots of Ista's way of life, one must look to the man whose philosophy still guides it: Mirza Sadeq Tabrizi, an influential jurist of the late Qajar and early Pahlavi eras. His worldview stood in stark contrast to the modern currents of his time. Tabrizi believed that many political, social, and technological innovations were at odds with the principles of faith. He was not a recluse nor an opponent of human connection, but rather a man convinced that simplicity and self-restraint were the keys to preserving faith, peace

of mind, and family unity. After his death in 1932, Tabrizi's ideas continued to circulate in Tabriz and Qom among a small circle of followers who studied his writings in private gatherings. For decades they followed his teachings in theory — until, in 1987, a group decided to bring them fully into practice. Their first attempt took them to Tonekabon, where they lived for three years before moving on. The humid coastal climate proved unsuitable for their austere lifestyle. Eventually, in 1990, they settled in Taleqan — a choice that was anything but random. The region's natural landscape, spiritual atmo-

sphere, and cultural traditions aligned perfectly with their beliefs. In Ista, Tabrizi's philosophy shapes not only faith but also economics and social life. Money holds little meaning; transactions are often handled through intermediaries. Self-sufficiency, organic farming, and a restrained use of natural resources define their approach to living. Modern technology has barely found a foothold — tractors and cars are used only when absolutely necessary, and electricity and the Internet play no role at all in daily life. The homes, though simple, are built to last. Farming is done using handmade tools and natural soil practices. The bond between people and nature here is immediate and visible. Children learn farming and animal care from an early age, while adults live according to unwritten rules rooted in respect and tradition. In essence, the teachings of Mirza Sadeq Tabrizi light the path for Ista's people. By choosing a life far from technology and modernity, they have not merely returned to the past — they have created a living example of balance and humanity, a rare and captivating model in today's fast-moving world.



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