

Ancient neolithic settlement discovered in Dehdasht

Iranica Desk

A 7,000-year-old prehistoric village has been discovered at the heart of the ancient city of Belad-e Shapur in Dehdasht, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, according to Zabi-hollah Masoudinia, the head of the archaeological excavation team. He noted that no archaeological research had previously been carried out in this ancient city, adding that this project marks the first scientific investigation in the area. Following the issuance of excavation permits, several exploratory trenches were opened across different parts of the city, Mehr News Agency reported. Masoudinia explained that the upper layers revealed remains from the Middle and Late Islamic periods, but once those were removed, archaeologists

encountered an extraordinary discovery: deep prehistoric layers. Initial studies indicate that these layers belong to the 5th millennium BCE. The findings show that this part of historic Dehdasht once hosted a village dating to the late Neolithic and early Chalcolithic periods — an occupation previously unknown to researchers. Masoudinia emphasized that the discovery could be highly significant and may greatly elevate the historical value of Dehdasht. He added that architectural remains from the later Islamic centuries are visible on the surface of the site. Archaeologists created a small excavation unit to remove these layers and examine deeper architectural phases dating to the Safavid and possibly Seljuk periods. During this process, they uncovered

pottery fragments and cultural materials from the 6th and 5th millennia BCE. He also pointed to another noteworthy find: fragments of heat-treated stones, which provide evidence of a unique prehistoric technique for warming liquids. The method involved heating stones in a fire and then placing them into containers filled with water or milk. Masoudinia stressed that the test trenches indicate the cultural and historical roots of Dehdasht extend at least to the late 6th and early 5th millennia BCE. Referring to aerial photographs from 1956, he noted that the images showed a prehistoric mound near the Dehdasht caravanserai, which was later destroyed by urban development. Nevertheless, archaeologists have now recovered evidence from that same Neolithic village.



● sobhezagros.ir

He added that the excavations have helped researchers better identify the boundaries and original structure of the his-

torical site, revealing that many of today's streets, houses, and alleyways were built directly atop the ancient mound. The

team also identified remnants of old qanats used for water transfer in the northern part of the city.

Restoration efforts transform Bardsir into tourism destination



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The Director of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Kerman Province has announced the commencement of restoration work on historical buildings in Bardsir, following the allocation of the necessary funding. Morteza Nikroo stated that the restoration and organization of the historic Bahador-al-Molk House in Bardsir, as well as the historic bathhouse in the Lalezar district of the city, are currently underway using provincial budget allocations, according to chtn.ir. He explained that the ongoing restoration operations at this stage include hand excavation, repairs with mud-brick, restoration and maintenance of rooftop brickwork, structural reinforcement, and grouting — all key components of the efforts to revive Bardsir's historic sites. Emphasizing that the restoration and preservation of the province's historical buildings remain a top priority for the Organization, Nikroo noted that paying careful attention to the valuable architectural textures and heritage of the city not only plays a critical role in safeguarding Bardsir's cultural and historical identity but also lays the groundwork for sustainable tourism development. This approach creates new opportunities to introduce and showcase the city's unique capacities to both domestic

and international visitors. He concluded by highlighting that with the continuation of restoration efforts, strengthened public participation, and close cooperation among government agencies, Bardsir can be transformed into one of the province's key cultural tourism destinations. "We will continue to pursue this path with hope, careful planning, and a specialized approach," he said. Bardsir is a city whose historical sources trace its origins back to the Sassanid era. It is located 65 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Kerman and boasts a long and rich civilizational history. Even after the advent of Islam, Bardsir remained a city of considerable significance, a fact confirmed by the surviving monuments from subsequent Islamic dynasties. The city is situated in a valley oriented from northwest to southeast. Bardsir is bordered to the north by the counties of Kerman and Rafsanjan, to the east by Kerman and Jiroft, to the south by Baft and Sirjan, and to the west by Sirjan and Rafsanjan counties. Historically, Bardsir served as an important area for grazing and hunting. The primary occupation of Bardsir's residents has traditionally been agriculture. Today, however, the city has also developed into an industrial center, hosting numerous factories, including those producing rosewater and copper.

Revived Shir Chaharsouq Cistern emerges as cultural landmark again

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Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Torbat Heydaryeh, Ali Mohammadi, announced that the restoration of the historic Shir Chaharsouq Cistern has not only drawn tourists but also transformed the site into a pivotal center for educating students about the artistry, ingenuity, and traditional water management techniques of Iran. The project has created substantial opportunities in both cultural tourism and educational programs. Speaking to ISNA, Mohammadi detailed the history of the cistern's construction and its recent restoration. "Recognized as one of the largest cisterns in Khorasan Razavi Province, Shir Chaharsouq was originally built in the late Safavid era and remained in active use by locals until the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution. Its location was particularly significant, positioned at the main crossroads of the old city — Chaharsouq — surrounded by numerous public-benefit structures, many of which were constructed by the city's founder, Es'haq Khan Qara'ei." Mohammadi continued, "The cistern maintained its primary function until the city's modern piped water network was introduced, after which it gradually fell into neglect. Unauthorized construction and alterations over the years further compromised the structure. Shops were built atop the cistern, sewage pipes

were routed through it, and parts of the reservoir were filled with debris and soil, leaving the site nearly in ruins." "After extensive research and the collection of historical documentation, it became evident that the cistern could still be restored. With the cooperation of the judiciary, illegal occupants were removed, and the process of debris clearance and structural cleanup began. A partnership with the private sector then facilitated plans to transform the cistern into a cultural and tourism hub," Mohammadi said. Describing the restoration process, he noted, "From the removal of encroachments to the completion of repairs, the project took roughly two years. During this time, critical sections — including the Pashir (inlet), reservoir, windcatchers, and staircases — were carefully repaired and re-mortared, and accumulated debris was removed. The greatest challenge was the absence of intact windcatchers, which are essential for ventilating the cistern and had been destroyed during prior construction. With municipal support, new windcatchers were installed along the street frontage, both to ensure proper airflow and to serve as a symbolic visual reminder of this historic landmark for pedestrians." Mohammadi added that another significant challenge was the presence of nine shops atop the cistern, whose water and sewage lines had caused serious structural damage. "This remains one of the main concerns for restorers, and com-

prehensive measures are underway to resolve it. Additionally, the construction of a clinic above the Pashir and surrounding areas has posed further obstacles to proper preservation." Highlighting the cistern's distinctive features compared to similar projects in the province, Mohammadi said, "Its location at the heart of the historic city adds immense cultural and identity value. Moreover, its expansive size, five main interior columns, and domed roof with intricate brickwork decoration distinguish it architecturally from many other cisterns in the region." He emphasized the project's role in preserving Torbat Heydaryeh's historical and cultural identity. "Since its reopening, numerous long-time residents have visited the site, recalling memories of the past and recognizing the cistern as a vital part of the city's heritage. While the city has multiple historic bathhouses and mosques, it lacked a functional cistern. The restoration of Shir Chaharsouq has filled a critical gap in showcasing the city's public-benefit heritage." "Today, Shir Chaharsouq not only attracts tourists but also functions as an important educational site, giving students hands-on insight into Iran's traditional water management techniques, engineering ingenuity, and creative approaches to resource management. It presents significant potential for cultural tourism and learning initiatives," he concluded.



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