

Iranica Desk

The Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Ilam Province announced that the export of the province's handicrafts to Arab countries along the Persian Gulf has entered a new and promising stage. Farzad Sharifi underscored the importance of gaining access to international markets, stating that the export of indigenous products not only helps introduce and promote the capabilities of Ilam's artisans, but also paves the way for sustainable economic and cultural development across the province, according to chtn.ir.

He added that the production and export of 200 items of various mat-weaving handicrafts by Abadan-based artisan, Parvaneh Darvishi, to the United Arab Emirates represents a valuable and inspiring achievement. According to Sharifi, this initiative clearly demonstrates that authentic handicrafts from Ilam possess the capacity to compete successfully in reputable regional markets.

Sharifi noted that the success of this female artisan serves as an inspiring model for other producers throughout the province and could mark the beginning of a new chapter in strengthening the regional and international presence of Ilam's handicrafts.

Referring to the notable capabilities of artisans in Abadan, he said that

this export consignment conveys a clear message: the quality, authenticity, and creativity of Ilam's artists are capable of shining at the international level and securing a sustainable share in foreign markets. Sharifi continued by emphasizing that Ilam's handicrafts represent far more than cultural products; they constitute an important economic opportunity, a pathway for empowering women, and a driving force for boosting local economies. He stressed that supporting artisans who are active in the fields of production and export remains one of the top priorities of the provincial cultural heritage administration.

He further emphasized that, by strengthening support infrastructure and facilitating production, packaging, and export processes, the expansion of Ilam's handicrafts presence in markets across the Persian Gulf region is being pursued with determination and strategic planning.

Ilam Province is widely known for its diverse range of traditional handicrafts, including mat weaving, kilim and jajim weaving, traditional embroidery, woodcraft, and leather products. Deeply rooted in the province's cultural heritage and local lifestyles, these handicrafts reflect Ilam's rich history and play an increasingly important role in preserving traditional skills while creating sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

Ilam handicrafts gain ground in regional export markets



● IRNA

Initial restoration of historic cistern in Kohanabad completed



● chtn.ir

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The first phase of restoration of an ancient cistern in the town of Kohanabad, located in Aradan of Semnan Province, has been successfully completed, according to the head of the Aradan Office of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Amir Soleimanifard explained that the restoration operations on the cistern were carried out within the framework of the first phase through a formal memorandum of understanding signed with the Kohanabad Municipality. He noted that the project involved joint participation in the provision of construction materials and was implemented under the close supervision of specialists and experts from the Aradan Office of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, chtn.ir wrote.

Emphasizing the importance of preserving and revitalizing public historical structures, Soleimanifard added that water cisterns are among the most important traditional structures used for water supply and storage in the desert regions of Semnan Province. He stated that the restoration and protection of such structures not only help safeguard their historical, cultural, and architectural values, but also play an effective role in strengthening urban identity and promoting cultural tourism across the desert areas of the province. He further pointed out that the cistern is regarded as one of the prominent monuments dating back to the Qajar period and has been officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List as one of the region's most valuable

and significant historical sites. The official concluded by saying that, in line with existing plans and restoration schedules, the second phase of the project—focusing on the organization, stabilization, and repair of the cistern's floor and interior spaces—will begin in the near future. This next phase aims to enable the historic structure to once again regain its appropriate and distinguished place within the urban fabric and cultural landscape of Kohanabad. Kohanabad, recognized as one of the historic settlements of Semnan Province, is home to numerous cultural and architectural landmarks that reflect the region's rich historical heritage and its long-standing adaptation to life and water management in a harsh desert environment.

Fars Province tops heritage list yet tourism growth falls short

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Fars Province ranks first in Iran for the number of cultural heritage sites registered on the National Heritage List, with these assets spread across the province's vast geography. Despite providing a strong foundation for tourism development and economic growth, this invaluable historical treasure has yet to be fully utilized. Nearly 10 percent of Iran's nationally registered cultural heritage — more than 3,200 historical and cultural sites — is located in Fars. Provincial cultural heritage officials say that many additional movable and immovable antiquities from pre- and post-Islamic periods have been identified, studied, and are currently awaiting registration, according to IRNA. Fars stands at the crossroads of three major civilizations — the Achaemenid, Sassanid and Islamic eras — and in some cities, the number of nationally registered sites rivals the total heritage listings of entire provinces elsewhere in the country. Seven cities in Fars are home to World Heritage Sites dating back to the Achaemenid, Sassanid, and Safavid periods, while other archaeological assets in the province have the potential to be nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status in the future. Despite this remarkable legacy, officials, experts, and tourism activists agree that Fars's heritage has not been adequately introduced or effectively

leveraged to boost sustainable tourism and economic development. Deputy Governor of Fars Province Masoud Goudarzi has noted that although the province boasts extensive tourism, cultural heritage, and handicraft capacities, its economic returns fall short of expectations. "Statistics show that Fars Province leads the country in heritage and tourism attractions, yet it does not rank well in economic output," he said. "This indicates structural problems that must be identified and resolved, because attractions should generate tangible economic value." Goudarzi stressed that specialists must examine existing challenges, pointing to a lack of consensus and insufficient expertise in the tourism sector as possible obstacles. He also emphasized the need to remove barriers to tourism development and expand infrastructure, including hotel construction. Referring to damage sustained by some historical sites — such as the 500-year-old Lar Bazaar — he warned that cultural heritage tourism is a specialized field and that non-expert intervention can lead to irreversible harm. Public awareness of Fars' heritage remains limited, even within the province itself. While a handful of iconic landmarks are widely recognized, more than 3,000 nationally registered sites remain largely unknown — not only across the country, but among local residents as well.

Experts believe that proper introduction and promotion of Fars' national heritage could stimulate domestic travel and attract international tourists, serving as a powerful driver of tourism growth. Given that renowned cultural and World Heritage sites already make Fars a major tourist destination, showcasing lesser-known attractions could significantly extend visitor stays.

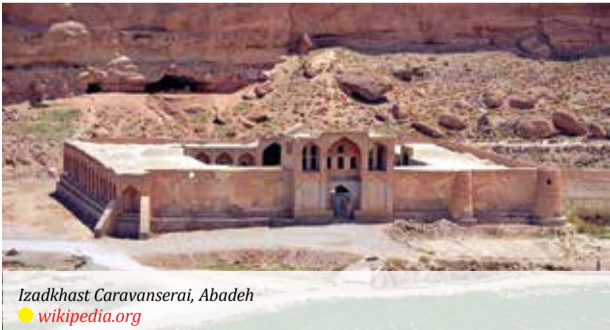


Ancient city of Bishapur, Kazerun
● alibaba.ir

Shiraz Governor Seyyed Alaeddin Karamati described this level of anonymity as unacceptable in the modern era, noting that even within Iran, understanding of the country's cultural depth often remains superficial. He stressed that Iran's ancient civilization should not be obscured and that future generations must be raised with a deep sense of knowledge and affection for their homeland. Such awareness, he said, fosters a sense

of belonging and encourages travel to national heritage sites — an effect already evident in visitor numbers at landmarks such as Hafezieh, Persepolis, Sa'dieh, and Pasargadae. The academic community is seen as a key player in heritage conservation, restoration, and knowledge-based tourism policymaking, as well as in bridging gaps between these fields. As a major univer-

skilled researchers can provide strong support for scientific and research initiatives. Khaledian cited successful examples of university-heritage collaboration, including academic research conducted at the ancient Qasr-e Abu Nasr complex in Shiraz with university funding — an initiative he described as a model of trust in academic institutions with



Izadkhast Caravanserai, Abadeh
● wikipedia.org

sity city, Shiraz hosts a strong pool of experts in history, archaeology, conservation, and tourism management, particularly at Shiraz University and Shiraz University of Arts. Sattar Khaledian, chancellor of Shiraz University of Arts, emphasized that universities are not rivals but can work together through scientific synergy and targeted engagement in historical fields. He noted that Fars Province has significant archaeological capacity and that

valuable results. Highlighting the province's positive approach to inter-university cooperation, he said such collaboration could pave the way for deeper academic involvement in heritage sites and studies. He reaffirmed his university's readiness to work with cultural heritage authorities in Fars Province, stressing that universities and research centers are well equipped to help address many of the challenges facing the sector.