

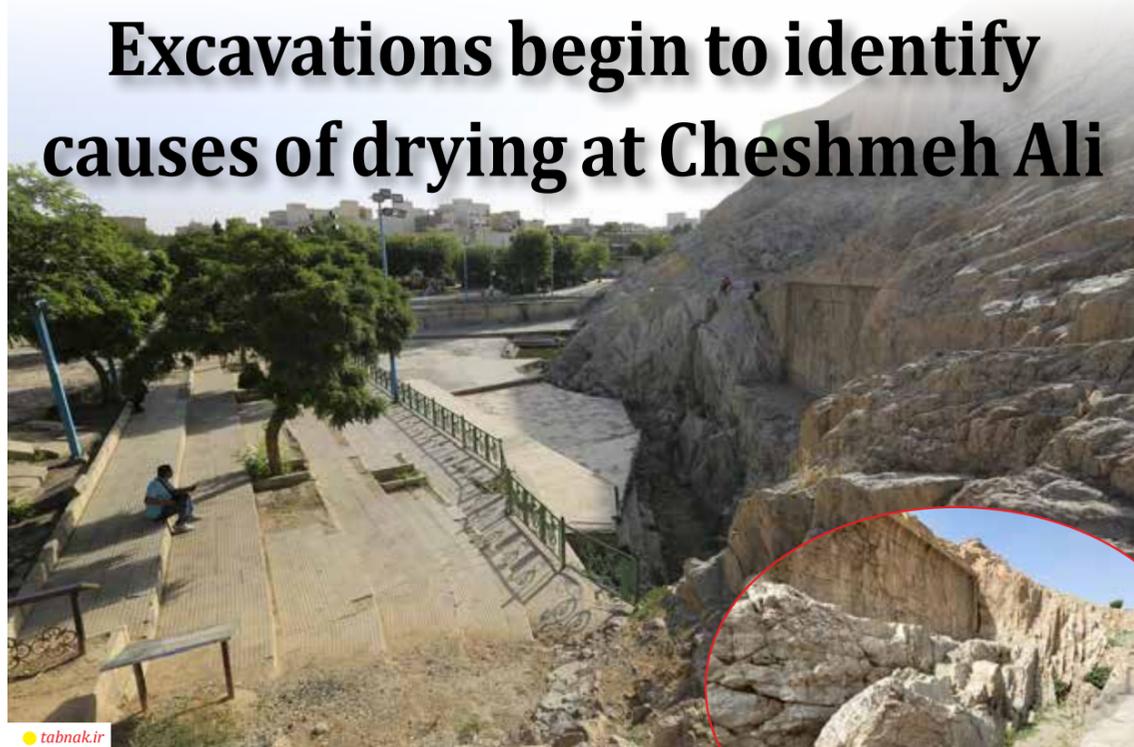
## Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Shahr-e Rey, Tehran Province, announced the start of excavation operations aimed at identifying the water source and assessing the condition of the waterbed of Cheshmeh Ali, in order to determine the factors behind the drying up of this historic site and to propose restoration solutions.

According to ISNA, Mohsen Sa'adati stated that, as part of efforts to identify the water source and catchment area of Cheshmeh Ali, excavation work in the vicinity of the spring has begun by the Tehran Metro Company under an order from the Shahr-e Rey Prosecutor's Office, ISNA wrote.

In addition to examining the condition of the waterbed, these excavations are intended to identify the spring's water source and catchment basin, determine the factors contributing to its drying up, and present practical, operational solutions for its revival.

He added that the drying of Cheshmeh Ali's waterbed in Shahr-e Rey, as one of the city's most significant cultural heritage concerns, has consistently remained on the agenda until a positive outcome is achieved. Necessary follow-ups will continue in cooperation with relevant agencies to ensure that the conditions required for restoring this valuable historical site are put in place. "Cheshmeh Ali," located on the slopes



of Bibi Shahrbanu Mountain on the outskirts of Shahr-e Rey, is one of the region's most important natural and historical landmarks. Over millennia, it has played a vital role in water supply, daily life, and the formation of early set-

tlements in this part of the Central Iranian Plateau. Archaeological studies indicate that habitation and use of this spring date back to the Neolithic period, with some research estimating the age of civilization in its surrounding

human populations and has had a significant influence on the formation of past communities.

In recent decades, the spring's water flow — once known for its relatively consistent discharge — has declined noticeably. The first signs of a substantial decrease emerged in the early 2010s, and in 2017 the water flow was temporarily cut off. Although some return of water was observed afterward, for approximately the past three years the spring's bed has been completely dry. This situation is regarded by experts and cultural heritage activists as both an environmental and cultural crisis.

Experts identify two main factors behind the spring's complete drying: the alteration and blockage of natural water channels as a result of construction projects and metro excavations, and the decline in groundwater levels caused by drought and excessive extraction of water resources.

Some analyses point to the tunneling of Tehran Metro Line 6 and the construction of its stations as having affected the spring's water discharge, although some officials involved in development projects consider reduced rainfall to be the primary cause.

Alongside these debates, local residents and those involved in the cultural affairs have repeatedly warned about the abandonment of the spring's bed and the threats posed by urban development to its survival and potential restoration.

## Anbaran kilim weaving draws national support, global attention

## Iranica Desk

Kilim weaving in the city of Anbaran boasts a long history and strong economic vitality, with many local families engaged in the craft. Seasonal and permanent handicrafts exhibitions have become a major attraction for tourists and travelers from across Ardabil Province and beyond.

As the nimble hands of Anbaran's weavers scatter colors across looms and knot wefts into evocative patterns, the city seems infused with the scent of amber and incense. Each kilim revives layers of memory and imagination, reflecting a rich cultural heritage passed down through generations, according to IRNA.

During a recent visit to Anbaran's permanent handicrafts exhibition — designated Iran's national kilim city — Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, praised local women for producing works worthy of global markets. He said the pieces on display represent a striking example of internationally appealing art created by women of the region.

Earlier, Maryam Jalali, deputy minister for handicrafts, said during a visit to Anbaran's exhibition in Namin that the dossier for Anbaran's global registration as a craft city has been completed. She stressed that further growth of the craft depends on completing the production-to-sales chain.

Jalali said Anbaran, as a national handicrafts city, is not merely a producer of kilims but a generator of culture and art for Iran. She added that global recognition would significantly enhance the craft's visibility and mar-

ket reach, noting that while Anbaran is strong in production, it must also strengthen sales and marketing.

Also visiting the exhibition, Ahad Biouteh, a member of the Cultural Commission of the Parliament, said women kilim weavers in Anbaran play a vital role in shaping Iran's cultural identity and deserve greater support. He noted that the city lies in Iran's northwestern border region and emphasized the importance of backing local artisans.

Biouteh said Ardabil's economy is fundamentally rooted in tourism and handicrafts, adding that low wages and weak marketing remain key challenges. He called for targeted government-led initiatives to organize the handicrafts market, stressing that producers should not be burdened with sales concerns. He urged the relevant ministry to introduce incentive packages for handicrafts and tourism investment in Anbaran to support regional development.



Meanwhile, Jalil Jabbari, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and



Handicrafts Organization of Ardabil Province, announced plans to revive Anbaran's handicrafts building and establish a secretariat for the national kilim city. He said artisans in Anbaran and Namin require stronger support and that efforts are underway to facilitate their activities.

Jabbari added that the directorate will use all available opportunities to improve working conditions for artisans and has

the authenticity of Anbaran handwoven rugs.

Experts say Anbaran kilims rank among Ardabil Province's most distinctive handwoven products, known for their reliance on local traditions, authentic materials and unique designs. Made from high-quality wool sourced from local sheep and dyed with natural pigments such as madder, walnut husk and , the kilims are valued for their durability, softness and colorfastness. Produced using a flat-weaving technique with dense warp and weft, Anbaran handwoven rugs are renowned for their strength and long lifespan in everyday use. The combination of natural materials, tight weaving and geometric, mentally composed patterns has made them among the region's most authentic and distinctive handwoven textiles.

With the anticipated global registration of Anbaran as a national kilim city, the town is expected to attract international attention, accelerating development in handicrafts and urban growth while strengthening its place in the cultural history and identity of the region.

## Chabahar emerges as premier tourism destination

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The deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchestan Province and governor of Chabahar said the region's rare diversity of natural attractions, the pristine Makoran Coast, and its rich local culture have turned Chabahar into one of the standout tourism destinations in the country's southeast. Alireza Noora noted that beyond its economic and commercial significance, Chabahar enjoys valuable cultural and social capacities that can play a major role in the development of the travel industry.

He added that the hospitality, honesty, and solidarity of Chabahar's people represent a major social asset, making travel to the county a distinctive and memorable experience for both domestic and international visitors, according to chn.ir. Emphasizing the region's ecotourism potential, Noora said the scenic Makoran coastline, miniature mountains, wetlands, unique natural landscapes, and the mild climate during the colder seasons have positioned Chabahar as a year-round destination.

He stressed that expanding accommodation facilities, improving access roads, and promoting indigenous capacities at national and international levels are among the measures that could increase Chabahar's share of Iran's travel

industry.

According to Noora, tourism growth not only creates sustainable employment but also strengthens the local economy, supports handicrafts, and helps better introduce the region's authentic culture, paving the way for balanced development across the county.

He further noted that the historic Tis village, located within the Chabahar Free Zone, hosts 33 natural, historical, and sightseeing attractions and welcomes domestic and foreign tourists, particularly during the Nowruz (Iranian New Year) holidays. He also highlighted that the Makoran coastline stretching from Chabahar to Gwatar and Konarak is among the country's richest natural and human landscapes for marine, natural, and cultural tourism. Owing to its unique geomorphology, biodiversity, coral reefs, fisheries, diving potential, and striking coastal scenery, the area has long attracted researchers and tourists alike.

Noora concluded that key initiatives undertaken include organizing high-traffic tourist sites, supporting eco-lodges, developing service infrastructure along attraction routes, establishing handicrafts exhibitions, promoting local artists, issuing permits for new tourism projects, and cooperating with the private sector to build tourism piers.

