

Provinces shield world heritage sites from war damage

Iranica Desk

Following the onset of the US-Israel conflict against Iran and aimed at protecting cultural and historical assets during crisis conditions, cultural heritage authorities in Kermanshah, West Azarbaijan, and South Khorasan provinces have announced the implementation of extensive protective measures. In this regard, Kiumars Azami, Director General of Kermanshah Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, announced that exquisite historical artifacts from the province's museums have been transferred to se-

cure vaults for enhanced safety. Highlighting the continuous monitoring of historical sites by experts in recent days, he emphasized that, fortunately, no damage has been sustained by the museums thus far, according to chtn.ir.

During these inspections, the historical Moaven-al-Molk Tekyeh which houses several provincial museums, was subject to specialized oversight. Simultaneously in the northwest, Morteza Safari, the Director General of West Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization reported the commencement of installing the

"Blue Shield" emblem at museums and World Heritage sites across the province.

Stating that this emblem is deployed to protect historical monuments in crisis situations, he said, "This initiative has been implemented at the province's global heritage sites and will be progressively operationalized at other historical locations."

Safari, referring to the significance of the 1,876 nationally registered and prominent sites such as Takht-e Soleyman, Qara Klisa, Hassanlu Hill in the province warned that the destruction of cultural heritage constitutes an irreparable loss to the history of both Iran and

the world.

In the east, the Director General of South Khorasan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization announced the relocation of valuable artifacts from the Birjand Archaeology Museum and the Akbariyeh Garden World Heritage Site to secure repositories following the onset of the US-Zionist imposed war.

He defined the objective of this move as the primary mission of museums — the protection and preservation of historical legacies — and added that the "Blue Shield" emblem has been installed at the province's historical sites.



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Strategic fortification for Persian civilizational assets

Iranica Desk

Jalil Golshan, a distinguished figure in Iran's cultural heritage, former head of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism (RICHT), and a current member of the Strategic Council of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, has shared his expertise on the urgent necessity of protecting historical monuments during times of crisis.

Golshan, who managed the National Museum of Iran during the height of the eight-year Iran-Iraq War (1982-1987), spoke to ISNA regarding the emergency measures required to safeguard the nation's civilizational legacy amid current regional tensions and the onset of conflict involving the United States and Israel against Iran.

"The historical assets in our possession are generally divided into two categories: movable and immovable properties," Golshan explained. "During wartime, there is practically very little that can be done for immovable sites, as they cannot be relocated. The only effective action in this regard is the creation and strengthening of international deterrent laws to strictly prohibit countries from damaging or destroying such structures."

Regarding movable artifacts, the archaeologist noted that conditions are significantly different. "Items held in museums must be transferred to secure centers as soon as a potential threat is perceived. During the Iraq-Iran war, secure vaults were constructed in several Iranian cities. Unfortunately, the process of building these repositories



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was not sustained. Now, with the current strikes against Iran, we face a situation where some regions lack any secure facilities to house their artifacts."

He emphasized that after experiencing multiple conflicts since the victory of the Islamic

Revolution, it is essential for the state to establish a clear policy and build standardized, secure locations for historical objects during crises.

When asked about the role of international organizations, Golshan clarified that their con-

tribution is primarily technical rather than financial. "Nations with specific expertise can assist us. For instance, Japan, due to its experience with earthquakes, has valuable knowledge in protecting movable heritage. They can provide expert consultation to help us create standardized repositories that meet necessary environmental and technical requirements."

On the subject of public involvement, Golshan stated that citizens have limited options regarding large monuments during bombings or missile strikes. However, he suggested localized measures, "In some mosques or historical buildings containing valuable stucco mihrabs or delicate artworks, sandbags can be stacked in front of them to absorb the pressure of a potential explosion. Beyond

this, the public's best hope lies in the enforcement of international deterrent laws."

Furthermore, he proposed that the government should not only secure state-owned artifacts but also create a mechanism where citizens can temporarily entrust their private historical valuables to the state for safekeeping during a crisis, to be returned once stability is restored.

Addressing the social and historical risks of war — including concerns over separatism or social polarization — Golshan highlighted Iran's long-standing national identity. "The reality is that Iran has always been a land of ethnic diversity, home to Baluchs, Turkmens, Kurds, Turks, Lors, and many others. Despite this diversity, these groups have lived together for centuries as one nation, in peace and harmony."

Iranian women's team targeted by propaganda warfare at Asian Cup

Sports Desk

Iran's women's national football team became the focal point of a political and media storm during the AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia, as foreign governments and outlets amplified claims that the players faced execution upon returning home, Fars News Agency reported.

The controversy began after the Iranian players chose not to sing the national anthem before its opening match against the South Korea. Social media accounts in Persian quickly circulated rumors that the players would be punished for this act. The rumor was then echoed by the London-based broadcaster Iran International and amplified by several English-language media outlets citing uncertain sources.

U.S. President Donald Trump, took advantage of the situation, urging Australian authorities, through social media posts, not to let Iranian players return home, claiming they would face severe punishment. Trump made the allegations less than 10 days after American missiles struck an elementary school in Minab, southern Iran, killing over 170 students. Israeli journalist Barak Rav-



Iranian players observe a military salute during the national anthem before a game at the 2026 AFC Women's Asia Cup in Gold Coast, Australia.

● AFC

id of Axios had previously stated that Mossad uses media as a strategic tool — a claim that observers found newly relevant amid this coordinated campaign. This was not the first time an Iranian team abstained from singing the national anthem at an international event; in none of the previous cases were athletes accused of treason or sentenced upon their return. Iranian officials denied all the allegations, with the vice president, attorney general, minister of sports, and the Football Federation chief each releasing statements welcoming the athletes and emphasizing that no punitive measures awaited them. Subsequently, the team sang the anthem and performed military salutes in their second

and third matches. Despite reassurances, the rumor persisted. Trump issued two additional posts urging Australia to grant asylum to Iranian players. Reports from Iranian media suggested that Australian police separated several players in their hotel under the guise of doping tests and facilitated their departure. Farideh Shojaei of the Iranian Football Federation described witnessing players leaving discreetly through the hotel parking lot.

Anti-government activists and supporters of the Pahlavi monarchy reportedly attempted to block the team's bus route to the Gold Coast airport, while police allegedly failed to intervene. At the airport, further attempts were made by

Australian and American political representatives to pressure players to seek asylum, offering housing, salaries, and lifetime insurance. Iranian sources claim that most athletes refused to sign asylum documents. Ultimately, six players and one technical staff member applied for asylum, with Australia's Home Affairs Minister approving five requests. Late Tuesday, the remaining team members departed Sydney for Malaysia, then Turkey, on their way back to Iran.

What started as a sports event evolved into a politically charged episode exposing how global tensions spill onto the playing field, with media narratives shaping public perception far beyond the match results.

Asani seeking Esteghlal departure amid war: Report

Sports Desk

Albanian winger Jasir Asani is desperate to terminate his contact with Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal, Varzesh3 reported, citing several South Korean media outlets.

Following recent reports about Moroccan Munir El Haddadi's request to part ways with the Tehran Blues, Korean sources claim Asani has also expressed interest in returning to the K-League due to the ongoing instability caused by U.S. and Israeli actions targeting Iranian territory, which have led to the suspension of football competitions in the country.

South Korea's Inter Football reported that Asani, who joined Esteghlal last year from Guangzhou FC, has returned to his homeland and is already in contact with several Korean clubs. Other outlets echoed these claims, calling the potential move "exciting," yet pointed out two major obstacles: the player remains under contract with Esteghlal, and financial considerations may complicate any transfer since most K-League teams have completed their signings and Asani is expected to

seek a high salary. Another Korean outlet stated that Asani's representatives have even reached out to Lee Jong-hyo, the head coach of Suwon Samsung, though foreign-player quota limits make such a move highly unlikely at the moment.

Asani, 28, has been one of Esteghlal's standout performers this season. After joining the Tehran club for around €1 million, he racked up 13 goals and four assists in 29 matches, establishing himself among the most prolific players in the Iranian top

flight. His attacking contribution and consistency have earned praise from fans and analysts alike.

If the reports of a possible departure prove accurate, Esteghlal could face a significant setback in its domestic league and cup campaigns, losing one of its most influential offensive options. Neither the player nor the club has yet commented officially, but the coming days are expected to reveal whether Asani will indeed pursue a return to the Korean club football or continue his spell in Tehran.



● VARZESH3