

# Post-war restoration planned for cultural landmarks



● IRNA

## Iranica Desk

The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts stated that the restoration of damaged structures will commence after the war, adding, 131 of our museums and historical monuments were targeted in the US-Israel aggression, and my colleagues are currently documenting the damage through images and reports."

Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri noted that reports of the damage have been sent to eight international institutions. He added that UNESCO, while condemning and recognizing these acts as crimes, is expected to dispatch experts to assess the destruction, ac-

ording to IRNA.

He stated that over 300 researchers are currently evaluating the extent of the damage and planning the restoration processes, which will begin once the conflict ends.

The minister emphasized that worldwide, in all conflicts, cultural and civilizational heritage sites are considered "red lines" and are protected under international law. Numerous conventions within the UN, The Hague, and UNESCO strictly define any attack on such centers as a crime against humanity.

Salehi-Amiri characterized the conflict as an attack by a "civilization-less" entity against a deeply civilized

nation. He recalled that last year, Iran registered the Khorramabad Valley, a 63,000-year-old site, with UNESCO.

"The head of the UNESCO panel struck the gavel three times and declared, 'Let the world know that, for the first time, we are registering a 63,000-year-old site belonging to Iran.' This reflects the grandeur of our history, a capacity unmatched by any other country."

He explained that while Iran currently has 29 World Heritage sites, another 58 are on the tentative list. "Due to annual quotas, it would normally take 58 years to register these. If UNESCO waived these time restrictions, we would become the world's

leading civilizational power. The enemy deliberately targeted this heritage because our culture is Iran's honor, identity, and greatest source of soft power."

Regarding specific losses, he reported that 61 sites were damaged in Tehran, including the Golestan Palace — a masterpiece of Qajar architecture — and 14 museums within the Sa'dabad Palace Complex. In Isfahan, 23 sites were affected, including the world-renowned Chehel Sotoun. Additionally, 12 sites in Kurdistan Province sustained damage. "The message is clear," he concluded, "having failed on the military front, the enemy has now declared war on Iran's culture and civilization."

# Kharg Island remains archaeological puzzle

## Iranica Desk

Research shows that Kharg Island emerged above sea level more than 14,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence also confirms that the island has been part of the territory of ancient Iran for about 5,000 years.

According to evidence and documents published by the National Museum of Iran, Kharg Island, one of the islands in the northern Persian Gulf, was part of the territory of the Elamite

civilization from the third millennium BCE, although historical sources mention Kharg only from the first century BCE.

A French archaeological team led by Roman Ghirshman excavated Kharg Island in 1962, during which the oldest archaeological remains discovered on the island were two graves dating to around 1,000 BCE. Archaeological reports show that during those excavations, the French team discovered two stone tombs,

known as "Do Dokhtaran (Two Daughters)," dating to around 1,000 BCE. These tombs were carved into rock, and their burial chambers, made of two fitted stone slabs, were still intact. One of the tombs was empty. The other was carefully opened, revealing the remains of about 15 skeletons, disordered within the chamber. These bones had been brought there in a tar-coated basket from another crypt. Because graves on the island could

not easily be dug into soil, local inhabitants repeatedly reused stone tombs, placing earlier bones into older tombs.

Belgian archaeologist Louis Vanden Berg said the tomb complexes on Kharg Island resemble Palmyrene architecture and show Parthian-Sassanid influences. He also noted similarities between the rock-cut crypts and inland ossuaries, including those on Bibi Shahrbanu Mountain in Rey. It appears that

in this place, the bodies of the dead were first left to animals, and after the flesh had decayed and the bones dried, the remains were placed in ossuaries.

Kharg remains an unresolved puzzle, and there are conflicting opinions about its history. For this reason, Iranian archaeologists returned to the island last autumn to address remaining questions and resolve ambiguities, but the excavations have not yet been completed.



● IRNA

# Persian Gulf Pro League: Federation weighing up resumption plans



● VARZESH3

## Sports Desk

The Iranian Football Federation is considering different scenarios for the resumption of the Persian Gulf Pro League. All domestic football action has been postponed in the country since February 28 due to the military conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition.

Esteghlal leads the Iranian top-flight table with 41 points, two points clear of Tractor and Sepahan, with Golgozar (36pts), Chadormalou (35), and Persepolis (34) in the following spots. With eight rounds of fixtures remaining and the FIFA World Cup less than 10 weeks away, the Iranian football governing body is desperate to conclude the top-tier league before the

national team's final training camp ahead of the global showpiece in June.

One likely scenario would be to continue the league in a centralized format, though the federation will face a daunting challenge to stage all remaining games in one single city. Heidar Baharvand, the head of the Iranian League Organization, said on Sunday that the federation might be forced to resume the league after the World Cup.

"Our intention is to hold all divisions of Iranian club football as soon as possible, but the Pro League matches could be postponed to after the World Cup," Baharvand said after a meeting with the representatives of all 16 top-flight clubs. "All teams favor the decision, though it means that next season

will have to be delayed by one or two months," Baharvand said.

However, the Iranian official said that the problem with this plan is that his organization will only have until May 31 to introduce the Iranian league champion and runner-up to the Asian Football Confederation for next season's continental club competitions. Meanwhile, Amir Qalenei, the head coach of the national team, is eager to see the Iranian clubs back in action before the World Cup. The Iranian boss has already lined up his domestic league players for an upcoming training camp, starting April 14 in northern Iran, to make sure they will retain their match fitness for the showpiece event.

# Asian Wrestling Championships: Iran eager to continue FS dominance

## Sports Desk

Iran will look to dominate the freestyle event at the Asian Wrestling Championships when the competition gets underway in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Friday.

Despite a hampered preparation and an exhausting road trip due to flight cancellations amid the ongoing military conflict in the region, the Iranian squad will still be the favourite to retain the team title in the Kyrgyz capital.

Head coach Pejman Dorostkar has lined up a mix of youth and experience for the showpiece, with Amirhossein Zare' spearheading the 10-man roster.

The reigning world champion will be the wrestler to



Iran's Amir-Ali Azarpira (blue), pictured against Akhmed Tazhudinov in last year's World Championships, will compete in the freestyle 97kg event at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

● UWW

beat in the 125kg weight class, having dominated the super-heavyweight category on global stage in recent years.

Two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qasempour, meanwhile, will be eager for a fresh start in 86kg, following a below-par run, by his stan-

dards, at the World Championships and the Islamic Solidarity Games last year, which saw him settle for two bronze medals.

All eyes will be on a possible meeting between Iran's Amir-Ali Azarpira and Olympic gold medalist Akhmed Tazhudinov of Bahrain in the 97kg di-

vision.

The two wrestling stars last met at the World Championships in Zagreb last September, with the Iranian prevailing 5-2 in the semifinals to make up for his first-round setback against the Russian-born wrestler at the Paris Olympics.

Joining the high-profile trio in the Iranian freestyle squad are Milad Valizadeh (57kg), Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan (61kg), Peyman Ne'mati (65kg), Sina Khalili (70kg), Amir-Mohammad Yazdani (74kg), Mahdi Yousefi (79kg), and Mohammad-Mobin Azimi (92kg).

The tournament will also serve as part of the Iranian team selection process for the World Championships and the Asian Games later in the summer.

# Noshad Alamian tops Iranians in ITTF World Rankings

## Sports Desk

Noshad Alamian remained the highest-ranked Iranian male table tennis player in the latest ITTF World Rankings, which were released on Monday. The 34-year-old Iranian retained his 99th spot in the men's ranking, with young prodigy Benyamin Farai moving up by one spot to sit 144th. Navid Shams moved up six places to stand 178th, followed by Alamian's younger

brother, Nima, who stayed 181st, and Amirhossein Hodaie (241st).

Meanwhile, Neda Shahsavari, who won two gold medals in last year's Islamic Solidarity Games, topped Iranians in the women's ranking, remaining 141st.

Shima Safari, who teamed up with Shahsavari for the doubles' gold in ISG, dropped by one spot to sit 180th, with Mahshid Ashtari in 315th place.



● ITTF