

Iranica Desk

Persian windmills set for joint UNESCO bid

Director general of Iran's Historical Monuments Registration Office explained latest status of "Persian windmills" UNESCO dossier and said it will be submitted jointly with Afghanistan. The potential UNESCO World Heritage registration of Iran's windmills (Asbads) — among the country's most significant technological and indigenous heritage assets — has been under discussion in recent years. These unique structures, shaped by monsoon winds, are found especially in eastern Iran. The dossier's preparation began with a collection of windmills in Khaf, particularly Neshtifan in South Khorasan Province, and has involved technical surveys, documentation, and the delineation of boundaries and buffer zones. Cultural heritage officials have emphasized that the dossier is being pursued as a serial nomination with the participation of several provinces.



The process has faced complexities, including the multi-provincial distribution of the windmills and the need

for coordination among various sites, which has made

preparation time-consuming. Additionally, published reports

cite funding and restoration as major challenges.

Although the UNESCO nomination dossier for Iran's windmills has seen progress in documentation and compilation in recent years, it remains incomplete.

Alireza Izadi, Director General of the Historical Monuments Registration Office, told ISNA that, "From a climatic perspective, the windmills are important because one of Iran's natural challenges relates to climate issues. Therefore, the World Heritage registration of this architectural and functional structure is highly significant." "The dossier is at a stage where, after years of expert work, it is now nearing a conclusion. Work on the windmills began six or seven years ago when I was in the registration office, and various teams have put in great effort. The dossier was nearly ready, but since it was on the Tentative List, we decided to finalize and submit it as soon as possible."

Regarding the geographical scope of these structures in Iran and the joint registration with Afghanistan, Izadi explained, "The windmills are mainly located in Razavi Kho-

rasan, South Khorasan, and Sistan and Baluchestan provinces, and there are also examples in Afghanistan. From the outset, our approach to this dossier has been a joint one between the two countries, so that both could be involved and the impact could be broadened. Naturally, such cooperation also has positive effects on regional and even security relations. As we saw with the Nowruz dossier, coordination among countries strengthened friendship and ties—and just last year, Mongolia was added to Nowruz." Izadi added, "The same perspective applies to the windmills: these functional architectural structures, rooted in the Iranian civilization sphere, are also seen in Afghanistan." He said, "The dossier was submitted to UNESCO. They raised questions. We sent answers. They then posed more specialized questions regarding data and documentation. We are now preparing the facts and supplementary answers and will send them soon. I hope that an evaluator will be dispatched next year and the final review process will be completed."

● wikipedia.org



Stepping back 40,000 years at Iran's Tamtaman Cave

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Tamtaman Cave, a 40,000-year-old remnant of early human habitation in West Azarbaijan Province, is regarded as one of the first human settlements in northwestern Iran. Every year, the cave hosts tourists and travelers, taking them into the depths of history and connecting them with the past.

According to IRNA, Tamtaman holds the secrets of early human life within its depths and tells countless stories of our ancient ancestors. To reach the cave, one must navigate the alleys of Urmia and head toward Nazlu village. After traveling 20 kilometers, visitors arrive at Tamtaman village, which cradles one of the oldest human settlements in its embrace. Upon entering the cave, visitors feel as though they have traveled back thousands of years. The ceiling and walls seem to speak. The further one goes, the closer they come to 40,000

years ago. The whispers of secrets hidden within the cave reach the ear, inviting visitors to listen, to understand, and to hear what early humans have to say. Visitors gaze at the walls, the ceiling, and the floor, hoping to find traces of that ancient history.

Ashes left behind by shepherds from yesterday and today — and, according to experts, from thousands of years ago — are visible. Nevertheless, a sense of curiosity and the thrill of seeing the place draws visitors further into the cave. There, one can see how early humans carved the rocks inside the cave to create comfort or perhaps to store their hunted prey. Stepping outside and standing before the cave, visitors feel as if they are on the balcony of an elegant building. The beautiful view below the cave — the green plain, the vineyards and orchards, and above all, the flowing and walls seem to speak. The further one goes, the closer they come to 40,000

the beauty. Such a landscape reveals another truth to travelers, tourists, and sightseers: the dynamic thinking of early humans. They acted with keen insight for survival and hunting, choosing a lush location with



● IRNA

abundant water and fruit orchards. They went hunting during the day and settled here at night. The more one gazes at this site, and the more one enters and exits the cave, the more one wishes to travel into the depths of history

— to reach the time when early humans knew nothing of modern life, to understand how they lived, and to discover how they passed their days.

This is history and a relic — a relic of early humans that must be preserved. It must be protected and recorded for future generations, serving as a host for tourists who seek natural attractions.

Throughout the year, nature lovers and tourists repeatedly choose this historical site, spending hours visiting the cave. The scenery and beauty of this ancient cave leave them astonished and deep in thought.

According to archaeologists, this cave is one of the oldest human settlements in northwestern Iran. Scientific studies of the cave were first conducted by Carleton Stevens Coon, an American anthropologist, in 1949. That year, he began test excavations on the cave floor, collecting stone tools, microblades, flakes, and animal bones — including those of cattle, sheep, goats, gazelles, wild horses, zebras, various birds, turtles, and fox-

Over thousands of years, Tamtaman Cave has been used by shepherds, serving as a shelter for their sheep during spring rains and winter cold, as well as a cool and pleasant retreat during hot summers. As a result, a thick layer of animal dung has buried all the artifacts beneath it.

According to an anthropologist from the West Azarbaijan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, Tamtaman Cave is located in a village of the same name. The name is Kurdish and means "misty." Issa Aziznejad added that the misty nature of the village gives it a special charm and lends Tamtaman Cave an even more distinctive beauty.

A researcher and anthropologist with the department also stated that the cave, as a tourism asset, is welcomed every year by tourists and those interested in history and nature. To maintain cleanliness in the area, environmental enthusiasts and non-governmental organizations clean the surrounding areas during certain times of the year.

The department has previously installed signage and, to protect the Tamtaman Cave complex, has designated a protected zone around the site, which includes Urartian-era castles and Safavid tombs.

He noted that the cave measures 35.30 meters in length and 16.90 meters in width. Inside the cave, there are two chambers. The chamber on the right is four meters deep and 5.5 meters wide, while the longer chamber on the left is 28 meters deep and has an average width of 5 meters.

Tamtaman Cave, located 20 kilometers from Urmia, was registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2005.

Over 10,000 tourists visit Malayer's crocodile farm

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The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Malayer in Hamedan Province has announced that 10,233 tourists have visited one of the city's tourist attractions, the Gourab Agricultural Tourism Garden, also known as the Crocodile Farm.

Ebrahim Jalili said that this complex is considered one of the most popular and highly frequented destinations in Malayer, both at the regional and national levels, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that the Crocodile Farm ranks as the top ticketed attraction in the city during the Nowruz holidays. Despite wartime conditions, it has experienced approximately 10 percent growth in tourist numbers compared to the same period last year.

Jalili further noted that the Samen Underground Complex, with 1,700 visitors, and the Nushijan historical site, with 750 visitors, rank next in line.

Regarding the crocodile farm, Jalili explained that the complex is a beautiful, unique, and distinctive site in the tourism and economic sectors. It is one of the largest breeding centers in the country for this reptile — one that appears calm but is fearsome.

He clarified that since the summer of 2019, the crocodile breeding complex in Malayer has been open to tourists. Many enthusiasts visit the site on a daily basis. Currently, 11 crocodiles, each measuring over three meters in length, are kept at the facility. He stated that there are five agricultural tourism farms in Malayer, adding that with proper training and support from officials, the future of agricultural tourism in the city looks promising.

He noted that the Crocodile Farm is located seven kilometers from Malayer on the road to Arak, near Gourab village.



● farsnews.ir