

# Iran turns heritage damage into call for renewal



S'adabad Cultural-Historical Complex  
● FARS



Chehel Sotoun Palace  
● bartarinha.ir

also as a reminder that even the most emblematic spaces can be vulnerable.

What matters now is the response. Sites such as Golestan Palace, Chehel Sotoun, and others are taking on new meaning — shifting from damaged places to symbols of determination and continuity.

From a technical perspective, restoration consists of methods and specialized practices. In circumstances like these, however, it becomes something more: a cultural act in which past and present enter into dynamic exchange. Restoration here does not mean creating anew, but returning heritage to the course of continuity.

The public campaign may also yield another important outcome: stronger social capital. Cooperation among institutions, experts, and ordinary citizens can generate networks of trust and collaboration that become strategic national assets, especially at times of broader challenge.

If Iranian history is understood not simply as a sequence of events but as an ongoing process, one defining feature emerges clearly: continuity. This land has faced disruption many times, yet has repeatedly repaired those ruptures through its own internal capacities.

Today, in the face of damage to 149 historic sites, that same pattern appears to be repeating itself — with one notable difference: public awareness and participation now play a more visible role.

Ultimately, what emerges from these events is a sign of active continuity. The 149 damaged monuments may require restoration, but the stories they contain remain alive.

The public restoration drive is an effort to ensure that this current continues uninterrupted — that the unbroken thread of history extends forward, stronger than before.

At this historical moment, Iran appears to be standing on foundations laid centuries ago — foundations tested by every wound and strengthened by every act of repair.

## Iranica Desk

Sometimes silence signals a pause in history. Among towering old trees and along corridors that have long echoed with the footsteps of the past, a stillness has settled over parts of the S'adabad Cultural-Historical Complex. Broken wood, shattered glass, and doors that no longer open quietly now stand as signs of damage inflicted on places where memory had been carefully preserved for generations.

Yet Iran's history has seen such interruptions before — and each time, continuity has resumed not from a new beginning, but from the very point many believed marked an end, according to chtn.ir.

The reported damage to 149 historic sites across the country represents more than a tally of affected buildings. It marks 149 points of contact between past and present, 149 intersections of memory and identity, and 149 links in the chain of what is known as Iranian history.

Each of these structures is more than stone, brick, or timber. They embody patterns of life, systems of meaning, and tangi-



Golestan Palace  
● asriran.com

ble expressions of Iranian worldviews. Within a historic home reside not only standing walls, but also social relationships, traditions of living, and layers of cultural experience. Damage to such sites can therefore be understood as more than physical destruction. At a deeper level, it disrupts the public representation of collective memory — striking not only wood and stone, but the very possibility of telling a shared story.

What changes that equation, however, is the public response. At moments such as these, nations either remain fixed on the narrative of loss or transform it into a point of departure. In Iran, officials and citizens appear determined to pursue the latter path.

With the announcement by Minister of Cultural Heritage Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri of a public campaign to restore sites damaged during what officials referred to as the "Ramadan War,"

a shift in meaning has taken place. Damage, once a passive condition, has been recast as a catalyst for action.

The campaign amounts to a redefinition of the relationship between society and cultural heritage. Citizens themselves are being called upon to become agents of preservation — the point at which unfinished stories are placed once again on a path of continuity.

Amid broader political debate, it may be smaller and steady-

er acts that carry the greatest meaning: a hand lifting a broken brick, brushing away the dust, and returning it to its place. Such gestures amount to a historical decision — that the building should remain, that the story should continue, and that memory cannot simply be suspended.

Every brick restored affirms continuity. Though small in scale, such acts may contribute to the renewal of meaning on a national level.

Why architecture? The answer lies in its dual nature. Architecture is both structure and meaning, both space and narrative. Every historic building serves as a living document of a culture's presence through time. To damage architecture is to blur that document and cast doubt on continuity itself.

Iran's experience, however, suggests that such continuity is preserved not only in buildings, but also in the minds and daily lives of its people.

Among the damaged locations, the Sa'adabad Cultural-Historical Complex has assumed particular symbolic importance. What occurred there may be viewed not only as damage, but

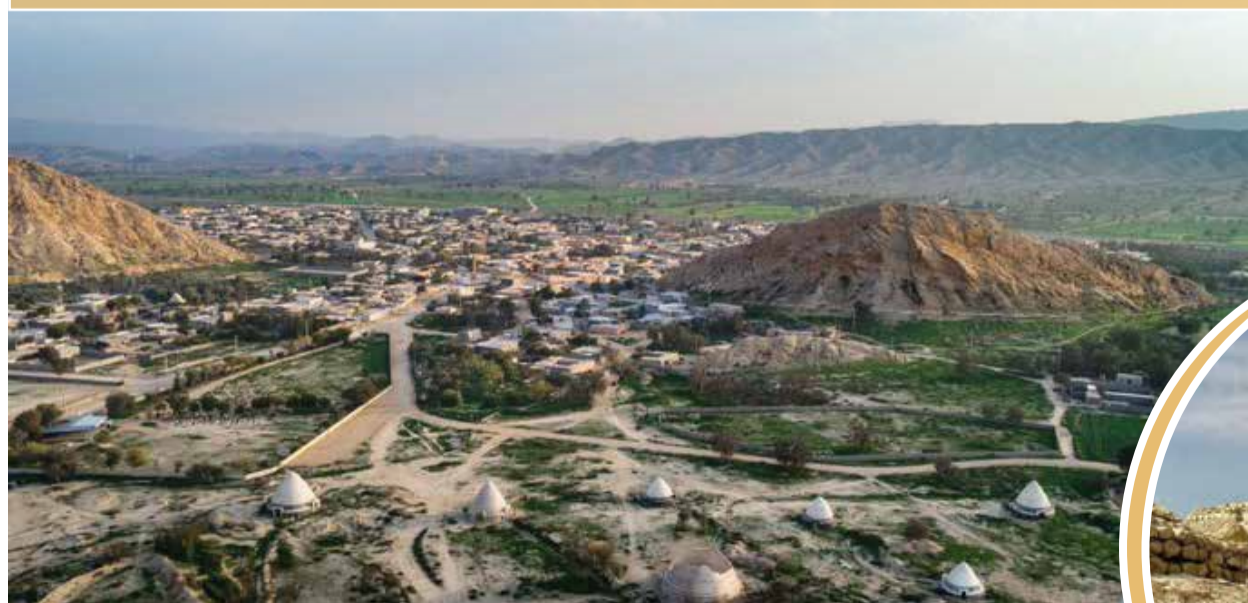
## Iranica Desk

The director-general of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Hormozgan Province has announced the start of restoration studies for the historic Kalat Behdeh Castle in Parsian, in a move aimed at protecting national heritage, reviving cultural identity and strengthening social resilience in the local community. Adel Shahrzad said the project had been defined as a national initiative following sustained efforts by civil institutions, support from local communities and backing from provincial authorities. He described it as a key step toward preserving indigenous architecture, revisiting the region's history and promoting sustainable tourism in the hinterland of the Persian Gulf.

He added that the study phase would lay the groundwork for the physical restoration of the fortress while also enabling archaeological teams and cultural heritage researchers to examine the site's untapped potential. According to Shahrzad, the process could help strengthen residents' sense of belonging and attachment to place, ultimately contributing to greater social resilience in the area, according to chtn.ir.

He also highlighted the project's economic importance, saying the restoration studies were not merely an effort to save a stone structure, but could mark the beginning of locally driven development based on heritage tourism. The initiative, he said, could

## Hormozgan begins restoration studies for Kalat Behdeh Castle



● chtn.ir

create jobs, support small businesses and help sustain the village population.

Describing Behdeh village, Shahrzad said it is one of Hormozgan's leading tourism villages and has ranked sixth nationally in official evaluations of tourism villages. He said the settlement, with its long history, contains

layers of heritage dating from the pre-Islamic era to the medieval Islamic periods, making it a living museum of civilization, livelihoods and the perseverance of communities living in the Persian Gulf hinterland.

He said Kalat Behdeh is a castle built atop a mountain of the same name in the heart of the village. The site,

whose remains are attributed to periods spanning from the Sassanid period to the Islamic era, was added to Iran's national heritage list in 2009.

According to Qajar-era historical texts and travel accounts, the castle once featured six towers, two res-

ervoirs and a deep well known as "Dilav," reflecting the engineering skill of earlier generations in providing security and managing water resources at high elevation.

Shahrzad said the wider area also contains a range of heritage assets, adding with careful implementation of restoration studies and the use of specialist expertise, officials hope Kalat Behdeh Castle and the surrounding heritage complex can become a successful model linking place-based memory, social resilience and sustainable tourism development in Hormozgan Province.



● INSTAGRAM