

UNESCO experts to visit Siraf for world heritage evaluation

Iranica Desk

UNESCO experts are scheduled to visit Bushehr Province in September and October this year to evaluate the historic port of Siraf for possible inscription on the World Heritage List, the director general of Bushehr Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said.

Nasrollah Ebrahimi said that the nomination dossier of Siraf has already been selected as Iran's official candidate for 2026, adding that the assessment will proceed despite ongoing wartime conditions, ISNA wrote.

He highlighted Bushehr's significant potential in maritime and coastal tourism, noting that multiple projects are currently underway. These include tourism development on Harku Island, restoration of the traditional Lenj (Ship)

Graveyard, construction of a marine aquarium, expansion of recreational piers, and the development of hotels and tourism complexes in cities such as Asaluyeh, Deylam, Ab Pakhsh, Bushehr, and Delvar. He further stated that new tourism initiatives have begun across the province, including the issuance of the first preliminary permit for a five-star hotel in Deylam — an important step toward strengthening tourism infrastructure in northern Bushehr.

Ebrahimi described the submission of Siraf's dossier to UNESCO last February as the province's most significant recent cultural heritage achievement. Competing with other candidates such as Tous, Siraf was ultimately selected to represent Iran for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2026.

Despite challenges posed by the war, he noted that



● booking.ir

preparatory measures — such as infrastructure improvements and the installation of signage — are ongoing, with UNESCO's official evaluation expected in early autumn.

On research activities, Ebrahimi reported that more than ten archaeolog-

ical programs have been conducted in recent years, including studies along the Persian Gulf coastline, excavations in Siraf, surveys of prehistoric sites in Dayyer, and boundary assessments for several historical locations.

He also pointed to the

organization of scientific events such as the National Conference on the History and Culture of the Persian Gulf, specialized archaeology meetings, and World Museum Day programs.

Regarding restoration efforts, more than 40 restoration workshops are

currently active across the province. In Bushehr's historic district, projects such as the paving the passageway of Sheikh Sa'doun Mosque and the Fadak clinic have been completed.

Ebrahimi announced that the Shahid Raisali Delvari Museum has been fully equipped and is ready for inauguration. Restoration work has also been completed on several historic structures, including the Dalaki Caravanserai, Moshir al-Molk Caravanserai, and more than 20 other valuable heritage sites.

He added that 34 elements of intangible cultural heritage from Bushehr were registered nationally last year, bringing the total number of registered heritage items in the province to over 450.

In terms of museum development, several institutions — including Jam

Museum, Siraf Museum, Printing Science Museum, and the Iranian Museum — are currently under construction or nearing completion. Additionally, a private ethnographic museum has been established in Chah Mobarak.

Ebrahimi also noted that, under Iran's Seventh Development Plan, a number of historic buildings—including Golshan Mansion, Najafi Mansion, Azin Mansion, Haj Rais Mansion, Moshir al-Molk Caravanserai, and the Siraf Nasouri Castle — have been handed over to the private sector.

Highlighting achievements in handicrafts, he said that 126 provincial works have received the National Seal of Excellence, while three have earned international recognition. Last year alone, 230 individuals were trained in the sector, and 219 handicraft licenses were issued.

Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari sees tourism as key driver



Kuhrang
● utravv.com

Iranica Desk

The tourism sector in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province represents a major opportunity for accelerating development, a senior tourism official at the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said.

Hadi Qasemi said the province's natural, historical, artistic, and social tourism capacities can be effectively used to generate jobs, reduce unemployment, and boost economic growth, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that close cooperation between the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization and the Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Shahrekord plays an important role in advancing development objectives.

Qasemi noted that the chamber's tourism and related businesses commission has, over the past three years, served as a strong support arm for the provin-

cial tourism authority and has actively contributed to the sector's development efforts, which he described as commendable.

He also stressed that improving marketing, promotion, and branding of tourism sub-sectors in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari remains a priority through continued cooperation with the Chamber's tourism commission and related business sectors.

Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province is widely recognized for its rich natural attractions, particularly its rivers, waterfalls, and highland landscapes. Among the most popular destinations is the Zayandeh Rud river source area, which offers scenic views and recreational opportunities.

The province is also home to the city of Kuhrang, known for its pristine springs, cool climate, and alpine scenery. The waterfalls and surrounding valleys of the region attract large numbers of domestic tourists, especially during spring and summer.

Iran's endangered languages face rising risks in times of crisis

Iranica Desk

In conditions of natural disasters, armed conflict, and insecurity, the protection of intangible linguistic heritage becomes increasingly critical, as local language varieties are among the most vulnerable elements of cultural heritage. Population displacement, forced migration, generational disruption, and the weakening of local communication networks place these languages at serious risk of gradual erosion, loss of vitality, or complete disappearance.

In a note published by chtn.ir, Faryar Akhlaqi, a faculty member of the Linguistics Research Institute at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, emphasized that in such circumstances dialectology is not merely an academic discipline, but also a practical instrument for cultural preservation and for safeguarding the collective memory of local communities. According to her, systematic documentation of vocabulary, oral narratives, pronunciation systems, local expressions, and indigenous linguistic knowledge can play a decisive role in preventing the disappearance of a significant portion of Iran's cultural diversity, while also enabling its transmission to future generations.

The Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism has long played a strategic role in preserving Iran's linguistic diversity. Its activities include field research on Iranian language varieties — particularly endangered ones — the implementation of the national Linguistic Atlas of Iran project, the development of audio and written archives, the training of local researchers, and the application of digital technologies for the recording, storage, and preservation of linguistic data. Beyond their linguistic significance, the scientific study of

Iranian languages and dialects contributes to a deeper understanding of local identities, cultural histories, and patterns of social interaction.

In crisis situations, experts stress that the formulation of emergency protection plans for linguistic data is essential. Secure backup systems for audio and written archives, as well as the continuation of linguistic research within protected and controlled environments, can help prevent irreversible damage to the country's linguistic heritage and ensure its long-term preservation.



● pgnews.ir

The Linguistic Atlas of Iran, which represents the outcome of thousands of hours of fieldwork and more than 27,000 recorded linguistic interviews conducted in villages across the country, is considered one of Iran's most significant scientific and cultural assets. This unique collection not only documents the extraordinary diversity of languages and dialects across Iran, but also preserves elements of historical memory, local identity, and indigenous knowledge systems of various communities.

Many of these language varieties are now experiencing rapid change, structural weakening, or even extinction. As such, the data recorded in the atlas constitute an irreplaceable historical document of Iran's vast linguistic

diversity, serving both present and future generations. It also provides a reliable foundation for research in linguistics, anthropology, cultural history, and social sciences.

Protecting this collection is, in effect, equivalent to safeguarding Iran's intangible cultural heritage and preserving voices, expressions, and narratives that may otherwise disappear with the decline of their respective languages.

To ensure the protection of these data, a range of scientific and technical measures is required. These include the full digitiza-

tion of audio archives — some

of which are still preserved on cassette tapes — as well as written documents; the creation of multiple secure backups in geographically separate locations; the use of stable and long-term digital storage systems; and the periodic updating of file formats to prevent digital degradation and data loss over time.

In addition, detailed metadata must be systematically compiled and digitized. This includes information such as recording time, geographical location, speaker characteristics, village-level socio-cultural data, and livelihood patterns of local populations — much of which was originally collected during fieldwork in paper-based formats. Proper structuring and

digital organization of this metadata is essential to ensure efficient retrieval, accessibility, and scholarly use of the data.

Furthermore, the establishment of a national linguistic archive with tiered access for researchers, the training of specialized personnel for data management and preservation, and the development of standardized protection protocols for crisis conditions — such as war, natural disasters, or infrastructural breakdowns — are considered essential measures.

In addition, the selective publication of data in printed form, as well as the preparation of linguistic atlas volumes for provinces whose datasets have been completed, can play an important role in both preserving this heritage and strengthening the connection between local communities and their native languages. Such initiatives also facilitate scholarly access to these valuable resources.

Over the past two years, the Department of Linguistics, Inscriptions and Texts has prioritized the safeguarding of existing linguistic datasets and has actively worked toward creating conditions for their publication. In the first phase, with a focus on Semnan Province — whose linguistic atlas was compiled in 2019 — the documented vocabulary from all settlements in the province (where 28 language varieties are recorded according to the Linguistic Atlas of Iran) was extracted from the atlas archive and prepared for publication through two dedicated research projects.

In the subsequent phase, currently underway, the department has focused on typological analysis and the publication of all recorded sentences from the language varieties of villages in Semnan Province, also through two additional research projects aimed at further structuring and disseminating the data.