

# Neglected treasury in Qarchak holds 7,000 years of history

## Iranica Desk

Few could have imagined that a site once regarded as little more than a dumping ground would one day emerge as a valuable historical treasure. The ancient Fardis Hill, located in the city of Qarchak in Tehran Province, has revealed evidence of human settlement dating back nearly 7,000 years, with later traces of Iron Age civilization.

Researchers have uncovered numerous traces of Iron Age civilization, including pottery kilns and a potter's wheel featuring a cylinder fashioned from animal horns. According to Mehr News Agency, these discoveries have provided archaeologists studying Iran's central plateau with valuable new insights into the daily lives and technological practices of the people who inhabited the region thousands of years ago.

Despite the site's historical significance, preservation efforts carried out during the 2000s

remained limited to temporary research and excavation activities. Majid Zhalehnia, head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Qarchak, said the site had been selected for excavation by the Cultural Heritage Research Institute, with the latest excavation season conducted in 2007. Artifacts discovered during the excavations were later transferred to the National Museum of Iran.

According to Zhalehnia, archaeologists had proposed converting the hill into an open-air historical museum. However, the project required substantial funding, preliminary studies, and the resolution of land ownership issues in the surrounding area.

"Efforts to secure funding and establish the site museum unfortunately did not succeed," he said. "Financial limitations and the presence of privately owned land around the hill prevented any serious implementation of the original plan."

Zhalehnia added that the hill has

now been left without adequate protection. Natural erosion and seasonal rainfall have caused parts of the site to collapse, while unauthorized construction activities in nearby areas continue to threaten the ancient remains. He noted that the historical artifacts and structures currently receive no permanent or systematic protection.

Fardis Hill stands as a symbol of Iran's ancient civilization and highlights the urgent need to preserve the country's cultural heritage. Experts believe the site could become an important destination for researchers, tourists, and history enthusiasts alike. However, without sufficient financial resources, conservation planning, and effective land management, such ambitions are unlikely to be realized.

Zhalehnia warned that unless serious measures are taken to preserve and restore the site, this valuable piece of cultural heritage could be lost forever.



● IRNA

## Rare fish owl observed in Pamemar village



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A birdwatcher and wildlife photographer has said that the fish owl is a rare and significant species which, if provided with adequate security and food resources, could remain in the region permanently and successfully reproduce — a development he described as an indicator of the overall health and effective protection of the Pamemar ecosystem.

Sirus Rashno, a birdwatcher and wildlife photographer, told chn.ir that a birdwatching program was recently held in the ecotourism village of Pamemar in Khuzestan Province. He said the area, with its

unique natural features, rich biodiversity, and views over Dez Lake, is one of the most suitable locations in Khuzestan for the development of nature-based tourism and birdwatching.

Rashno noted that he, along with a group of birdwatchers, nature guides, and environmental experts, visited the scenic tourism village of Pamemar in Dezful. The main purpose of the visit, he explained, was to highlight the region's natural and cultural potential in tourism, handicrafts, and the identification of distinctive bird species.

He added that during the program, the fish owl — con-

sidered one of Iran's most valuable bird species — was observed alongside other birds such as swallows, stilts, and buzzards. In addition, wild goats and ibex were spotted in the surrounding highlands, indicating the ecological vitality of the region.

Emphasizing the importance of the fish owl sighting, Rashno said the species is particularly significant and can establish a permanent presence in the area and reproduce. He described this as a clear sign of the health and sufficient protection of the Pamemar ecosystem.

He further noted that Pamemar's geographical location, its overlook of the Dez

Dam reservoir, and its position within a protected area have made it especially attractive to birdwatchers, enabling valuable records of rare species.

Commenting on the role of birdwatching in nature conservation, the wildlife photographer said it is not only a method of documenting and introducing species, but also an educational and cultural activity that raises awareness among local communities about the importance of biodiversity conservation. Over time, he added, this process encourages villagers to see themselves as stakeholders in protecting the region's natural heritage and wildlife.

## Yazdi coffee; a ritual drink brewed in tradition, faith

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In the historic fabric of Yazd, where many ancient rituals and traditions remain an active part of daily life, coffee is far more than an ordinary beverage. Yazdi coffee is considered an integral element of the city's social and religious culture — a tradition that holds a special place in various ceremonies, particularly mourning rituals and traditional gatherings. Beyond hospitality, it functions as a form of collective cultural practice, often symbolizing respect, participation, and solidarity.

The tradition of coffee serving is most visible in the old districts of Yazd, such as Fahadan, Shah Abu'l-Qasem, and Chaharmenar, as well as in historic Husseiniyehs and Tekyehs across the city. During the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, especially in mourning ceremonies held to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions, the preparation and distribution of coffee form part of the hospitality arrangements. Those responsible for preparing it are usually experienced practitioners, and in some

ceremonies, the process follows specific rituals and is carried out collectively.

Yazdi coffee differs from common types of coffee both in taste and preparation. It is typically made with a blend of coffee, cardamom, rock candy (nabat), and sometimes aromatic spices, resulting in a sweet and spicy flavor profile. Cardamom is one of its defining ingredients, and its aroma plays a central role in shaping the identity of the drink. The coffee is usually prepared in large pots and then served in small cups to guests. The preparation method is also

distinctive and forms an essential part of its cultural identity. Ground coffee is boiled in a large volume of water over heat and left to simmer for several hours. Ingredients such as cardamom, rosewater, rock candy, and sometimes cinnamon are added to enhance its flavor and aroma. The long brewing time — often four to six hours — results in a thick, sweet, and highly aromatic beverage.

Based on historical records and oral accounts in Yazd, Yazdi coffee dates back to the Qajar era. Researchers believe it gradually entered the city's culinary cul-

ture through trade connections between southern Iran and the countries of the Persian Gulf, eventually adapting to local tastes and traditions. Over time, it evolved from an imported drink into an essential part of Yazd's social and religious rituals, to the extent that it is now closely associated with mourning ceremonies and religious occasions.

This tradition extends beyond drinking coffee; it encompasses a broader network of social relations and communal practices. In many gatherings, serving coffee creates opportunities for con-

versation, social interaction, and collective participation, contributing to the overall atmosphere of the event. In this sense, Yazdi coffee represents a clear example of the intersection between food, ritual, and social culture.

In recent years, attention to food-related traditions as part of intangible cultural heritage has increased, and practices associated with traditional coffee preparation and serving have been recognized as elements worthy of documentation and preservation. This highlights how even everyday customs can form part of a community's cul-

tural memory and local identity. Today, Yazdi coffee is no longer limited to religious and ritual contexts. It has also become a popular local souvenir and a recognizable culinary product of the city. It is widely available in souvenir shops and traditional herbal stores across Yazd and has gained attention from tourists in recent years. It is also served in many cafés, traditional teahouses, and roadside shops around the city, either freshly prepared or packaged. Its presence in public spaces shows that this tradition has adapted to contemporary life and the tourism industry while maintaining its ritual significance.

Despite the spread of modern coffee consumption habits and changing urban lifestyles, the tradition of Yazdi coffee continues in certain neighborhoods and religious ceremonies. Its persistence reflects the continuity of a local cultural practice that has maintained its place over time and remains an important part of Yazd's social life. Consequently, the "method of preparing Yazdi coffee" was registered on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2019.



● kojaro.com