

Iron Age cemetery discovered in Mazandaran Province

Iranica Desk

The head of the archaeological excavation team at the historical Chasar Elit site in Marzanabad of Chalus has announced the discovery of a cemetery dating back to the Iron Age and Parthian periods during the second season of excavations at the site. According to Hossein Ne'mat, the findings from this season include valuable remains of indigenous architecture, weapons, ritual objects, jewelry, and well-preserved ancient vessels, offering new insights into the lifestyle, rituals, and cultural structures of ancient communities in western Mazandaran, IRNA wrote.

Ne'mat stated that the Chasar Elit Site, comprising three areas, is one of the most important settlement centers in western Mazandaran Province. The site was registered on Iran's National



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Heritage List in 2019 and shows evidence of continuous human habitation from the Iron Age, Parthian, and Sassanid periods, through to the Islamic and Safavid eras.

Emphasizing the region's geo-

graphical and environmental conditions, he noted that the surrounding mountainous terrain supports the hypothesis that the site was used for seasonal settlement, nomadic movement, and temporary hab-

itation, making it highly significant for anthropological and cultural archaeological studies. The excavation project began with a first season aimed at defining the boundaries of the site. The second season, carried out in 2024 with the participation of five senior archaeologists and five university students, focused on test trenches across various parts of the ancient mound. According to Ne'mat, these investigations led to the discovery of residential architectural remains constructed using local materials such as wood, rubble stone, and river stones, reflecting the inhabitants' adaptive use of the natural environment. He identified the most significant discovery of the second season as a cemetery dating to the Iron Age and Parthian period. A range of weapons — including spearheads, swords, daggers,

and javelins — were uncovered at the burial site, providing valuable information about military structures, burial practices, and social relations of ancient communities in the region.

The excavation head also reported the discovery of diverse ancient jewelry, including bracelets, necklaces, garment beads, earrings, hairpins, and rings made of bronze, iron, and silver. These artifacts are considered highly significant for the study of ancient metallurgy, craftsmanship, and cultural practices.

Among the most remarkable finds, Ne'mat highlighted a finely crafted jet seal engraved with a mountain goat, textile-related tools, and a rare Parthian rhyton decorated with the image of a horse. He noted that these objects were likely used for ritual and ceremonial purposes and could play an important role

in understanding the symbolic systems and belief structures of ancient societies in the region.

He further reported the discovery of several well-preserved historical vessels at the site, emphasizing that their condition and diversity provide valuable material for comparative studies in the archaeology of northern Iran.

Ne'mat noted that one of the long-term goals of the project is to convert the Chasar Elit site into an open-air museum or regional museum site. He added that, with the completion of boundary designation and the allocation of funding from local and national heritage authorities, further large-scale excavations and public presentation of this important historical site will become possible, particularly for the local community of Marzanabad and the wider western part of Mazandaran Province.

Darak's fishing heritage strengthens bid for global recognition

Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Zabad, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, said that fishing and maritime activities, as one of the most important traditional and deeply rooted occupations of residents of the Darak village, play a decisive role in the economic sustainability of the coastal community, adding that this indigenous capacity could become a key factor in the village's bid for global recognition.

Anvar Singleh stated that a significant portion of the livelihood of its residents is based on marine-related activities, fishing, and the sustainable use of the region's natural resources. He

noted that the local economy has therefore developed around community participation and sustainable capacities, chtn.ir wrote.

He added that Darak village, due to its unique natural attractions — including the rare convergence of the sea, desert, and palm groves — as well as the authentic lifestyle of its residents, is considered one of the prominent tourism and cultural heritage destinations in south-eastern Iran. Strengthening traditional occupations such as fishing, he said, can help preserve the local population and support balanced rural development.

Singleh further explained that one of the key criteria in the process of securing global reg-

istration for villages is economic sustainability, preservation of indigenous identity, and continuity of traditional lifestyles. Darak, he said, with its reliance on native capacities including a fishing-based economy, has the potential to gain recognition at both national and international levels.

According to Singleh, the global registration of Darak village would not only introduce the region's cultural and natural attractions to the world, but also pave the way for tourism growth, sustainable employment opportunities, and increased income for the local community, turning the village into a successful model for sustainable tourism development. For years, Darak has been

regarded as a legendary destination among experienced travelers and nature enthusiasts — a place where desert and sea converge and palm trees rise just steps away from ocean waves. Many first-time visitors find it hard to believe such a landscape exists in Iran, where shifting sand dunes reach directly to the shoreline and sunsets create a striking fusion of land and water, according to chtn.ir. The village now stands at a turning point. Inclusion in the global tourism villages list is far more than a ceremonial title; it could reshape development in southern Sistan and Baluchestan, boost tourism investment, and redefine how the region is perceived both



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nationally and internationally. Tourism experts say Darak has all the essential elements required to become a world-class destination, from its untouched natural environment

and authentic Baluchi culture to its traditional lifestyle, handicrafts, local music, and the warm hospitality of its people, where simplicity and sincerity remain deeply rooted.

Reading Room

Iranians carry history wherever they go

Iranica Desk

"Iran and Its Loneliness", written by late Iranian scholar and writer Mohammad Ali Eslami Nodoushan and published by Enteshar Publishing, explores Iran's historical roots, cultural identity, and the unique position the country occupies in the world.

According to Iran Book News Agency (IBNA), the book examines Iran from both a historical and geographical perspective, while explaining to future generations the country's distinctive civilizational path and its enduring sense of isolation among nations.

"If we cast one glance at history and another at the world," Eslami Nodoushan writes, "we see Iran as a solitary country with a destiny unlike that of others."

He argues that it is natural for today's Iranians, with even a small degree of curiosity and sensitivity toward their homeland, to ask themselves what kind of land they belong to and what place their nation has held in the world.

The author notes that such questions may not have seemed particularly urgent a century ago. However, in

today's increasingly interconnected world, where new realities have emerged and awareness has become essential to national survival, reflection on identity and history has become unavoidable.

Eslami Nodoushan emphasizes that the past, present, and future are now inseparably connected, and that the present cannot be understood without knowledge of the past. At the same time, he writes, humanity must look toward the future with vigilance and awareness.

"Modern humanity," he argues, "carries more responsibility for its own destiny than ever before." People must vote, plan, predict, and ultimately navigate their own path through uncertainty.

In earlier times, reliance on fate and divine providence eased some of humanity's burdens. Today, however, he compares modern civilization to a "second fall" from grace: once humanity tasted the forbidden fruit and became aware of good and evil, it was expelled from paradise; now, with science and technology replacing old certainties, another form of exile appears to confront humankind.

Iran's unique historical position

The book argues that to understand Iran's character and historical position, one must look into what the author describes as the "workshop of time." According to Eslami Nodoushan, Iran has long stood alone in history because its circumstances have differed fundamentally from those of other civilizations.

He explains that most regions of the world belong, to some extent, to broader civilizational groupings. Latin American countries, sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Arab Middle East, the Far East, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Indian subcontinent each share certain cultural and historical characteristics despite their differences.

"Iran, however," he writes, "appears as a distinct and solitary entity."

To explain this uniqueness, the author points first to geography, which he considers the foundation upon which Iran's history was shaped. Located at the crossroads of military conflicts and civilizational exchanges, Iran occupied a singular position in the known world before the discovery of the Americas connected

continents in new ways.

This unique geographical position, he argues, exposed Iran to both opportunities and hardships unlike those experienced by many other nations.

"We can hardly find another land," he writes, "where so many distinctive characteristics have converged at once."

One of the book's central themes is the idea that Iranians carry the weight of their history wherever they go, whether consciously or unconsciously.

"An Iranian carries a history on his shoulders wherever he goes," Eslami Nodoushan writes.

Referring to the concept of the "collective unconscious" proposed by Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung, the author argues that this historical consciousness is especially vivid among Iranians because centuries of continuous upheaval and transformation have deeply shaped the national psyche.

According to the book, Iran's geographical position has created a history marked by constant movement and challenge — a history that, in the author's words, "has never known a moment of complete rest."

