

Shiraz’s historic area preserves living heritage of Iranian civilization

Iranica Desk

Shiraz, the city of poetry, culture, and civilization, is widely celebrated for its Persian gardens, the mausoleums of renowned poets, and magnificent historical monuments. Yet one of the city’s defining treasures is its historic urban fabric — a remarkable ensemble of centuries-old neighborhoods, traditional houses, bazaars, mosques, alleyways, and public spaces that reflect centuries of Iranian culture, architecture, and urban life.

The inclusion of Shiraz’s historic district on Iran’s National Heritage List in July last year marked a major step toward safeguarding this valuable legacy. The designation has strengthened efforts to preserve the city’s historical identity while creating new opportunities for cultural tourism and improving living conditions in its historic neighborhoods, IRNA wrote.

Covering approximately 357 hectares, the historic district of Shiraz is among the largest and most significant historic urban areas in Iran. It encompasses traditional Persian houses, bustling bazaars, mosques,



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religious schools, Tekyehs (traditional religious gathering places), and numerous monuments of architectural and historical importance, making it one of the country’s finest examples of Iran’s urban heritage.

Walking through its narrow lanes offers visitors a glimpse into the sophistication of traditional Persian architecture. Entrance vestibules, central courtyards, turquoise pools, colorful Orsi stained-glass windows, elegant five-door reception rooms, and thoughtfully designed living spaces demonstrate a harmoni-

ous blend of beauty, comfort, and climate-responsive design. Together, these features have transformed the historic fabric into a living museum where daily life continues alongside centuries of history.

National registration has also created a stronger legal framework for protecting historic buildings and organizing conservation and restoration programs. In addition to preserving Shiraz’s architectural authenticity, the designation is expected to encourage investment, expand cultural activities, and



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stimulate tourism.

Heritage experts believe closer cooperation among government agencies, conservation specialists, and local communities can open a new chapter in the revitalization of Shiraz’s historic quarters. Providing financial assistance to owners of historic houses, facilitating restoration permits, improving urban infrastructure, and simplifying administrative procedures could further encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

In recent years, growing atten-

tion has also been given to the economic potential of the historic district. The establishment of eco-lodges, cultural houses, traditional cafés, handicrafts centers, and tourism-oriented businesses has helped preserve historic buildings while creating new opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and local economic development.

Experiences from historic cities around the world demonstrate that investment in cultural heritage is among the most sustainable paths toward long-term economic and social development.

Public participation also remains one of the most important factors in protecting the historic section. When local residents see themselves as custodians of their cultural heritage, conservation efforts become more effective and sustainable.

Public awareness, education, and community engagement can help ensure that this national treasure is preserved for future generations.

With its remarkable collection of historic monuments, authentic architecture, traditional neighborhoods, local customs, and the renowned hospitality of its residents, Shiraz possesses all the qualities needed to become one of the region’s leading destinations for cultural tourism.

Today, more than ever, cooperation among the government, municipal authorities, the private sector, and local communities offers an opportunity to transform Shiraz’s historic segment into a successful model of heritage conservation, urban revitalization, and sustainable development — one in which a proud past serves as the foundation for a brighter future and the city’s rich cultural identity is passed on to generations to come.

Bakhtiari Chogha carries heritage, identity in Aligudarz



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The traditional Chogha of Aligudarz, Lorestan Province, is more than a garment; it is a symbol of strength, identity and the cultural heritage of the region, according to a provincial cultural heritage official.

Speaking to ISNA, Sajjad Alikhani, deputy director for

handicrafts and traditional arts at Lorestan’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said the Chogha represents a “cultural genetic code” for the people of Aligudarz.

“The black and white stripes of this authentic handicraft symbolize the purity and resilience of the people of this land,” he said, adding that every knot

woven into a Chogha helps preserve the nation’s cultural identity in the foothills of the Oshtorankuh Mountains.

Alikhani said the department has secured funding under Note 15 of the national budget to provide financial assistance to handicraft artisans in Aligudarz following the difficult conditions of recent months.

He described the allocation as an important step toward creating sustainable employment and supporting the development of the traditional Chogha-weaving industry in the district.

The official also stressed the need to promote the craft as an international brand, saying expanded training programs and financial support would help introduce the centuries-old tradition to wider global audiences.

Alikhani noted that Lorestan’s handicrafts, from delicate artistic creations to the enduring

tradition of Bakhtiari Chogha weaving, reflect the inseparable link between art, livelihoods and the dignity of local families.

He said the craft has survived even the most challenging circumstances and continues to thrive through the determination and dedication of the province’s artisans.

A Chogha is a traditional long-sleeved, open-fronted robe worn as an outer garment. It is typically loose-fitting and extends to the knees or hips, providing warmth while also reflecting the cultural identity and traditional aesthetics of the Bakhtiari people.

Chogha is woven on a traditional loom. The garment is produced without a pre-made pattern, template or design; instead, its distinctive patterns and dimensions are created from the weaver’s memory and experience.

A medium-sized Chogha re-



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quires approximately one kilogram of cotton yarn and one kilogram of raw wool.

For the Bakhtiari people, the Chogha holds great cultural and emotional significance. When someone dies, tribal men traditionally remove their Chogha as a sign of grief. They also wear Choghas at weddings and perform the traditional Bakhtiari

dance while holding handkerchiefs.

The cultural importance and authenticity of Chogha weaving are also reflected in Bakhtiari oral literature, where references to the craft highlight its longstanding place in the community’s cultural heritage and the importance attached to preserving this traditional art.

Emergency restoration begins on roof of Shahrud Bazaar

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The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Shahrud, Semnan Province, has announced the signing of a contract for emergency restoration work on the roof of the city’s historic bazaar to help safeguard the valuable monument.

Seyyed Mohammad Sadeq Razavian said the current phase of the project includes repairing the brick paving on the roof, repointing mortar joints, and carrying out other essential conservation measures to prevent water penetration and minimize the risk of further damage, ISNAwrote.

He noted that the Shahrud Ba-

zaar, one of the city’s most significant Qajar-era landmarks, is registered on Iran’s National Heritage List. Preserving its authenticity and structural integrity, he said, remains a priority for the local cultural heritage office.

Razavian added that the bazaar has undergone several restoration campaigns since 2011. Major conservation work has included comprehensive roof repairs, repaving the market’s walkways with stone, upgrading and reorganizing water, electricity and gas connections for commercial units, and installing a surface water drainage system throughout the bazaar.

He said restoration efforts will

continue to strengthen the structure, improve the business environment for shopkeepers, and provide a more welcoming setting for visitors.

He added that the project will be closely supervised to ensure the long-term protection of the nationally registered monument.

The historic Shahrud Bazaar, one of the city’s most distinctive Qajar-era landmarks, stands at the heart of Shahrud. Designed to suit the region’s hot, arid climate, the covered structure features an ingenious roof system along with brick and mud-brick domes that help reduce heat and maintain a cooler interior. Much of the structure was originally built



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with sun-dried mud bricks, reflecting traditional construction techniques adapted to the desert environment.

The bazaar has five entrances and two main passageways known as the Bazaar and Anarakis corridors. Beyond its rows of shops, the complex also includes a mosque, caravanse-rai, school, water reservoir, and bathhouse, illustrating its historic role as the commercial and social heart of the city.

Covering approximately 18,000 square metres, the Shahrud Bazaar comprises two interconnected sections containing a total of around 250 shops. As one of the province’s most important historic marketplaces, it continues to serve both local merchants and visitors while preserving its architectural and cultural significance.