

New archaeological discovery reported near Lama Cemetery in SW

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A member of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism's academic staff has announced the possible identification of a new ancient burial site near the historic cemetery of Lama village in Dena, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, while stressing the need for urgent rescue excavations.

During a visit to the historic Lama Cemetery, archaeologist Ahmad Azadi reviewed the history of archaeological investigations in the area and highlighted the importance of accelerating rescue excavations at the newly identified location, chtn.ir wrote. Azadi said archaeological research in Lama dates back to the late 1990s, when construction of the Yasuj-Isfahan Road led to the accidental discovery of several ancient graves after a bulldozer struck burial remains. Following reports from local residents, road construction was halted, and a team of archaeologists led by Hassan Rezvani carried out six months of rescue excavations at the site.



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During the first excavation season, more than 60 ancient graves were uncovered, demonstrating Lama's considerable archaeological importance and its value for understanding ancient burial practices, Azadi said.

A second excavation season, also directed by Rezvani in the mid-2000s, investigated additional graves and resulted in the publication of the scientific findings from both excavation seasons. The results were released in a final excavation report together with a comprehensive catalogue of the site's archaeological discoveries, providing valuable documentation for future research and heritage conservation. The third and most recent excavation season was directed

by Mohammad Javad Jafari. Alongside the excavation of additional graves, archaeologists discovered a seal engraved with the image of an ostrich, a find that Azadi said could provide important insights into the cultural, artistic, and symbolic traditions of past communities in the region.

Azadi also referred to a recent development in Lama village, saying that about three months ago a bulldozer apparently uncovered another ancient grave while road construction was



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underway at a location some distance from the previously excavated cemetery. According to Azadi, the grave closely resembles those previously excavated at Lama, raising the possibility that another an-

cient cemetery exists in the area. Following reports from local residents, work at the site was suspended, and heritage authorities are now expected to initiate rescue excavations to determine the archaeological significance of the discovery.

Azadi stressed that the experience at Lama once again demonstrates the necessity of conducting archaeological assessments before implementing development projects in historically significant areas. He warned that neglecting cultural heritage considerations during infrastructure works could result in the irreversible loss of valuable historical and cultural resources.

With three excavation seasons, dozens of ancient burials, and significant archaeological discoveries already documented, the Lama Cemetery has become one of the most important archaeological sites in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. The possible discovery of a new burial ground nearby could open a new chapter in archaeological research in Dena.

Fair trade is key to sustainable growth of handicrafts market

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Iran's handicrafts market today needs development more than ever — a development capable of increasing the sector's contribution to the national economy, improving the livelihoods of thousands of artists and craftspeople, and strengthening the position of Iranian handicrafts in global markets. However, one fundamental question has received less attention: Does every form of growth and increase in sales necessarily represent real development in the handicrafts sector? Or does development only gain meaning when it is built on the principles of fair trade, public trust, and respect for the rights of all participants in the handicrafts market?

Hojjatullah Moradkhani, a handicraft researcher and university professor, wrote in a note published by Mehr News Agency that, in recent years, discussions about expanding the handicrafts market have largely focused on increasing sales, expanding distribution channels, entering new markets, and using modern marketing methods. Undoubtedly, all these measures are necessary for the development of Iranian handicrafts. Yet, if the fundamental principles of fair trade are ignored, the final outcome may be nothing more than unsustainable, unbalanced, and fragile growth.

Unlike industrial products, handicrafts are based on trust, authenticity, cultural identity, and a fair relationship among producers, sellers, and consumers. Principles such as transparency, fair pricing, protection of artists' rights, healthy competition, social responsibility, and commitment to quality and authenticity not only strengthen public confidence but also increase the cultural and economic added value of these products.

On the other hand, moving away from these principles can weaken social capital, reduce market credibility, harm craftspeople's livelihoods, and ultimately diminish the competitiveness of Iranian handicrafts in domestic and international markets. From this perspective, fair trade is not merely an ethical gesture or a symbolic framework; it is a strategic necessity for preserving the sustainability, reputation, and future of Iran's handicrafts economy.



● wikipedia.org

The principles of fair trade, widely recognized internationally by organizations such as the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), generally include: creating economic opportunities for producers and disadvantaged groups; transparency and accountability in management and business activities; fair and ethical trading practices; payment of fair prices to producers; prohibition of forced labor and child labor, along with non-discrimination; gender equality and freedom to form trade associations; providing safe and suitable working conditions; empowering producers and developing their capacities; promoting fair trade and raising consumer awareness; and respecting the environment and sustainability principles in production and trade. These ten principles now form

the foundation of many fair trade policies and standards worldwide in fields such as handicrafts, agriculture, textiles, and indigenous products. Based on these principles, successful international projects such as Ten Thousand Villages have operated since 1946 and have played a significant role in the sustainable development of rural handicrafts sales in developing countries. However, one of the main weaknesses in Iran's handicrafts poli-



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cymaking is that development is often measured through quantitative indicators. Increasing the number of shops, export growth, a rise in the number of exhibitions, or higher sales volumes are undoubtedly important, but none of these factors alone represent sustainable development in handicrafts. The development of this ancient Iranian art industry will become sustainable only when the quality of economic relationships improves — meaning that producers, sellers, and consumers all feel they are part of a fair and transparent system. Ignoring fair trade principles in this cycle first damages public trust. Whenever consumers become uncertain about the authenticity of a product, its quality, its price, or the honesty of advertising, the social capital of the market declines. This loss

of trust usually does not remain limited to one product or one economic actor. Consumers often extend negative experiences to the entire market, affecting the reputation of many responsible producers as well.

Such damage, if it occurs, can have harmful consequences for Iran's handicrafts ecosystem. Similar concerns have emerged in recent years in some art auctions, where uncertainty caused by insufficient transparency has led domestic and foreign enthu-



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siasts and investors to approach Iran's art markets with greater caution.

At the same time, fair trade is not limited to consumer rights. As mentioned, this approach also emphasizes preserving the dignity and rights of producers. Many handicraft artists work in rural areas and small towns, and a significant portion of their income depends on various intermediaries. The more transparent and fair the value chain becomes, the greater the share of added value that reaches producers themselves, increasing motivation to preserve traditional skills and transfer them to future generations.

It should also be remembered that Iranian handicrafts compete in global markets not only through technical quality, but also through their cultural narratives and ethical credibil-

ity. Today, consumers in many countries seek products that are produced through responsible, fair, and sustainable processes. Therefore, adherence to fair trade principles is no longer a luxury or symbolic choice; it has become an important factor in international competitiveness. In this regard, protecting consumer rights is also of great importance. Consumers should be able to purchase high-quality products at fair prices, rather than discovering after a pur-



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chase that, due to insufficient market supervision, they have paid far more than the actual value of a handicraft item. Such cases have occurred in various forms in recent years.

At the same time, producers must also be able to present their works under fair conditions and should not be pressured by intermediaries or marketers to reduce prices unfairly. Unfortunately, this issue has become more visible in some network-based sales models in Iran's handicrafts sector in recent years, creating negative effects on the market. Considering global developments, it appears that the concept of development in Iran's handicrafts policymaking needs to be redefined. Development in this field means creating a market in which trust, transparency, fairness, and quality are consid-

ered as important as economic indicators.

If these elements are ignored, market growth — even if impressive in the short term — will eventually lead to declining public confidence and reduced credibility for Iranian handicrafts. In this regard, the lack of continuous supervision by relevant authorities can further disrupt the handicrafts ecosystem. Simply creating extensive sales networks by non-governmental groups and using their statistics without properly monitoring and verifying the mechanisms behind these activities may cause, in the medium and long term, sometimes irreversible damage to Iran's handicrafts sector.

Sustainable growth in the handicrafts market does not come from directives or administrative orders; rather, it depends on commitment to and implementation of fair trade principles. Market trust cannot be created through advertising campaigns or regulations alone. It is built through repeated responsible actions and maintained through continuous adherence to fair trade values.

Ultimately, the future of Iranian handicrafts will not be determined solely by production levels, the number of shops, or export volumes. It will be shaped by the quality of trust between producers, markets, and consumers.

Any policy, program, or business model that strengthens this trust moves toward sustainable development, while any approach that sidelines fair trade principles — even if it appears successful in the short term — risks endangering the greatest asset of this sector in the long run: credibility and public confidence.

True development of handicrafts begins when fairness is not merely a slogan, but the foundation of market governance.