Shiraz represents Iran at int'l historic cities conference in Himeji

Iranica Desk

The 20th World Conference of the League of Historical Cities (LHC), held under the theme "Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Heritage for a Sustainable and Resilient Future," took place in Himeji, Japan, from November 10 to 12, 2026, with representatives from 24 cities across 12 countries in attendance.

Shiraz Deputy Mayor Arash Farajzadeh said Shiraz Municipality was the only representative of Iran at the international event, owing to its membership on the League's Board of Directors. He added that the municipality also raised issues and restrictions affecting the participation of other Iranian cities in the network's meetings and activities, according to ISNA.

Despite a considerable number of Iranian cities and metropolises being members of the League of Historical Cities, sanctions-related restrictions prevented other Iranian cities from attending this year's conference, leaving Shiraz as the country's sole representative.

Farajzadeh said that during the Board of Directors meeting, as well as discussions held on the sidelines of the conference with the League's secretary-general and board members, several challenges and restrictions affecting the participation of Iranian cities in the international network were raised. Participants also exchanged views on ways to facilitate their involvement in future programs.

Referring to the main themes of the conference, Farajzadeh said historical and cultural heritage was not merely a legacy of the past, but an integral part of cities' living identities and an important resource for shaping a sustainable future. He stressed that protecting such heritage while making responsible use of it required a balanced, forward-looking approach.

He added that the conference addressed a range of issues, including safeguarding cultural heritage against natural hazards, the impacts of climate change and social transformations, strengthening the resilience of historic cities, and reconciling heritage conservation with sustainable development.



The photo shows an aerial view of Shiraz, southern Iran.
mrestate.ir

The deputy mayor said historic cities needed greater cooperation to preserve their cultural values and pass them on to future generations. Exchanges of experience among cities, he noted, could help identify effective solutions to shared challenges and strengthen efforts to protect historical heritage.

Meanwhile, Hashem Mazaherizadeh, head of Shiraz Municipality's Department of International Relations, outlined the conference program, noting that representatives from 24 cities in 12 countries had participated.

Among the cities represented were Nara and Kyoto in Japan, Xi'an in China, Gyeongju and Andong in South Korea, Florence in Italy, Phoenix in the United States, Konya and Bursa in Turkey, and Wellington in New Zealand.

He said the program included keynote speeches, specialized panel discussions, a mayors' meeting, an experts' meeting and activities focusing on young people. These sessions provided opportunities to examine different cities' experiences in preserving and promoting historical heritage, addressing the challenges of managing historic cities, and expanding international cooperation.

Commenting on the League's Board of Directors meeting, Mazaherizadeh said its agenda included applications for membership from new cities, amendments to the organization's charter, the review and approval of financial statements, a report by the secretary-general on the League's activities, and preparations for future events.

During the meeting, one city from Kosovo and two from South Korea were admitted as new members, bringing the League's total membership to 140 cities. Amendments to the charter were also approved, the financial statements endorsed, and the secretary-general presented a report on the organization's performance.

Mazaherizadeh highlighted the importance of cities' participation in international networks, saying such events not only offer opportunities to exchange experience with other historic cities but also enable participants to take part in management and decision-making processes and pursue areas of mutual cooperation.

He added that these interactions could help showcase Shiraz's historical and cultural potential and strengthen the city's international ties.

The League of Historical Cities was established in 1994 in Kyoto, Japan. Shiraz Municipality joined the organization in 2014 and currently holds a seat on its Board of Directors.

Tehran home to more than 200 private museums

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Tehran is home to more than 200 private museums, in addition to dozens of museums run by the municipality and other institutions, the head of Tehran's Tourism Headquarters has announced, stressing the need to embrace modern technologies to make museum collections more accessible and attract visitors.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of the 8th National Museum Conference to be held Nov. 18-19 in Tehran, Amir Qasemi said experience had shown that museums which made more effective use of emerging technologies had succeeded in attracting larger audiences, according to ISNA.

He described the conference, which focuses on scientific and research-based approaches to heritage and tourism, as an opportunity to organize and highlight the potential of museums and other cultural institutions across the country.

Referring to a visit to the Iranian National Science and Technology Museum, Qasemi said the museum offers visitors the opportunity to interact with scientific phenomena.

He said such interactive experiences were particularly valuable for children, school pupils and university students, regardless of whether their fields of study were directly related to science and technology.

Visitors, he added, can explore and experience phenomena they may have heard about for years or encountered in everyday life but never had the opportunity to see or understand firsthand.

Highlighting Tehran's extensive museum resources, Qasemi said the municipal network alone includes more than 60 museums. Other institutions, including banks, also operate museums, while more than 200 private museums are active across the capital.

He described the themes selected for the eighth edition of the National Museum Conference, as well as the papers to be presented, as significant, expressing hope that the discussions would help bring about meaningful changes in the museum sector and museum management.

Qasemi also referred to the preparation of a national policy document providing an overarching framework for museums, saying the document had been finalized and was awaiting official notification.

According to the official, the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution had spent more than a year working on the document, holding a series of meetings before completing it.

He said such a framework had long been needed to guide the management of museums and protect the most important cultural assets of cities. Once implemented, it would establish a common framework for the activities of various institutions and organizations, rather than applying solely to municipalities.

Qasemi further highlighted the importance of registering museum objects in the Comprehensive Heritage System, known as JAME.

He acknowledged that the process had faced resistance and practical difficulties, noting that the issue had been under discussion since 2002. However, he said Tehran Municipality had now made following up on the registration process one of its priorities.

He stressed that registration should not be treated merely as an administrative obligation. Instead, the system should make registered objects accessible and help introduce them to the public, thereby promoting museums and encouraging people to visit them.

The tourism official also called for wider use of modern technologies, including two-dimensional, three-dimensional and four-dimensional tools, to present museum collections.

Such technologies, he said, should not be employed simply to fulfil formal requirements. Experience had demonstrated that the more effectively museums adopted new technologies, the more successful they were in attracting visitors.



Iranian National Science and Technology Museum
karnaval.ir

Khorasan Razavi's traditional sheep-milking ritual gains national recognition



tasnimnews.ir

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The traditional Shirdooshan (sheep-milking) ritual in Soleymani village, Firuzeh, Khorasan Razavi Province, has been officially registered in Iran's National Tourism Events Calendar. A plaque commemorating the registration was unveiled at a ceremony.

Hojatoleslam Hamed Mirzakhan, Friday prayer leader of Firuzeh, speaking at the unveiling ceremony held at the county's Friday prayer complex, described the Shirdooshan ritual as more than an agricultural tradition, calling it a valuable symbol of goodwill and altruism.

He said the nearly 200-year-old custom reflects a spirit of religious devotion and charity, as the first milk collected during the spring milking season is distributed among people in need.

Mirzakhan described the registration of the event as a strategic opportunity to introduce Firuzeh's cultural potential and help turn the town into a destination for rural and religious tourism.

Jalil Seddiqi, head of Firuzeh's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the Shirdooshan ritual in Soleymani village was the town's second cultural and tourism event to be included in the national tourism calendar, thanks to the efforts of local organizers and heritage custodians.

According to Tasnim, at the beginning of each year, villagers dedicate the first milk obtained from their sheep to Imam Hussein (PBUH). The offering is made with prayers for good health, the hastening of the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (PBUH), and the well-being of their families and the entire village community.

Women in the village carry out the milking, after which all the collected milk is taken to the village mosque and heated until it boils. Each family contributing milk also brings some rice to the mosque. The villagers then work together to prepare Shir Berenj (rice pudding), which is distributed among the community.

The tradition has been passed down through generations and continues to be observed by the villagers.

With the registration of the Shirdooshan ritual, it has become Firuzeh's second cultural and tourism event to be included in Iran's national tourism calendar. The first was the religious gathering known as the Hassaniyoun congregation in Kafki village.