



In Case You Missed

Crackdown Against Cheetah Hunters

A crackdown has been launched on illegal hunters stalking the endangered species of Asiatic cheetah in central Iran amid rising concerns over its extinction.

Environmental activists took five hunters into custody while patrolling the cheetah conservation area, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Conservation agents and police seized the corpses of six Ovis orientalis and wild goats as well as guns from illegal hunters.



Police said trespassers have been plaguing the conservation areas around the central province of Isfahan, leading to complaints from environmental activists.

Officers have now issued a warning to hunters, many of whom are armed, that they risk arrest and prosecution.

The police say hunters had previously been arrested for possession of illegal arms and hunting in the cheetah's habitat.

Construction Project Threatening Hamedan Mound

An ancient mound believed to date back to the Parthian era is being threatened by a project for the construction of a large ground for Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha prayers in the city of Hamedan.

The mound, which is known as Tappeh Mosalla, has been used as a place for the two major Islamic prayers for decades.

Ruins of a Parthian castle on the mound were demolished about two years ago when the site was selected as the location for construction of the prayer ground, a member of Hamedan City Council, Mehrmoush Najafi-Ragheb, told the Persian service of CHN.

Archaeologists believe that the mound belonged to a range of ancient mounds known as Sang-Shir (Stone Lion) and Ecbatana (Place of Assembly), of which the latter was used by the Kassites, Medes and Achaemenids.

The mounds all are located in the urban area of the city of Hamedan.

Artifacts previously found at the mound show that the site was used for military purposes during the Parthian era.

Despite the evidence, no archeological study was carried out before the construction project was launched.

The site also witnessed an environmental tragedy, as more than 400 trees were cut down on the mound to make way for the construction project, and many more are expected to be cut when the project advances.

New Findings in China

The excavation of 93 ancient tombs at the No. 2 Ruins in Zhangduo Village under Xingtai's jurisdiction in China's Hebei province has been completed this week.

The precious relics, unearthed by an archeological team and checked by the provincial cultural bureau, throw light on the lives of ancient people over 2,000 years ago.

The purpose of this archeological activity was to ensure the smooth progress of South-North Water Transfer Project, People's Daily reported.

In early 2010, the archeological team conducted a second investigation into No. 2 Ruins, which has been renamed "Cemetery in Southern Zhangduo," at the request of the Hebei Cultural Relics Bureau and unearthed 93 ancient tombs.

Li Jun, team leader in charge of the archeological excavation, showed the cultural relics excavated from the 93 tombs to the reporter.

The relics include more than 260 pieces of earthenware such as pots, bottles and bowls, which are kept in two divided sections of a 10-square-meter room and placed in different groups according to their shapes.

"The earthenware are all from the 93 tombs and were produced between the Warring States Period and the Western Han Dynasty (over 2,000 years ago)," Li said. "The relics were unearthed from the tombs of two ancient families and thus are placed in two divided sections."

Li said 2,000 years ago in China, people thought life after death was the same as when they were alive, so they buried small utensils in tombs.

Atiq Mosque Awaits Renovation



The Grand Atiq Mosque of Shiraz, dating back to over 1,150 years, is one of the oldest mosques in Fars province.

The mosque, which was once one of the most glorious monuments of its time, is in ruins because of the negligence of officials, Mehr News Agency reported.

Also known as Adineh Mosque, the Grand Atiq Mosque of Shiraz is situated to the east of Shah Cheragh, which is another religious-historical site of the province.

vere damage following earthquakes in different eras and was repaired.

In spite of being one of the most valuable heritages of Shiraz, the neglect by officials is causing Atiq Mosque's destruction. The mosque is in dire need of attention due to the severity of damage.

Sections of its walls have been ruined while wide cracks and damage caused by humans are visible.

The mosque has a number of verandahs, of which the southern verandah has been damaged more seriously.

There are also a number of prayer halls in the mosque, one of which has two ancient pulpit and prayer niche. The passage of time and high humidity are causing the rapid destruction of the ancient pulpit, as no repair project has been planned for the mosque yet.

Graffiti are scrawled on the walls of the mosque by those who do not care about Iran's cultural heritage.

The Municipality, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department as well as the Endowment Department of Shiraz are responsible for the repair of religious-historical sites.

Although a number of renovation projects have been carried out in the mosque by these bodies, shortage of fund has scuttled them.

The current situation of the mosque is below the dignity of such an ancient place and immediate renovation is needed.

> Ancient Shiraz

Shiraz is one of the most beautiful, historical cities in the world. Farsi (Persian), the language of Ancient Fars (Persia), has become the official language of Iran.

With more than 850,000 inhabitants in southwestern Iran, Shiraz is 200 km from the Persian Gulf and 1,800 meters above sea-level.

Different people have lived in Fars province such as the Aryans, Samis and Turks, who helped shape the Iranian culture.

The first capital of Fars, some 2,500 years ago, was Pasargad. It was also the capital of Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Great. The ceremonial capital of his successor, Darius I, and his son Xerxes, was Persepolis. Today, only the ruins of these two capitals remain.



The mosque was built upon the order of Amroleith Saffari, the then ruler of Shiraz.

> First Monument

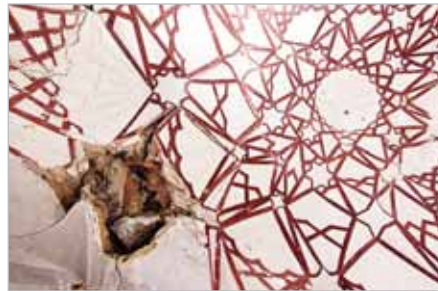
The mosque is said to be the first monument, around which Shiraz expanded and other buildings were constructed gradually.

The mosque has six doors, each of which faces a different direction. It has two doors facing east and west.

A cubic construction has been built in the middle of the mosque's courtyard, which has a height of about one meter and is surrounded by a verandah measuring 2 meters in width.

The place was used for reciting the Holy Qur'an. A number of handwritten Qur'ans attributed to Imam Ali (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), Imam Sadeq (AS) and a number of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) followers were discovered at the place.

Atiq Mosque was registered on the National Heritage List in 1921. The mosque suffered se-



Stakhr was another capital of Fars. It was established by the Sassanid rulers and lasted until Shiraz finally became the regional capital.

Shiraz is also the birthplace and resting place of classical Persian poets Hafez and Sa'di.

> Shah Cheragh

Shah Cheragh is a mausoleum in Shiraz, housing the tomb of brothers Ahmad and Mohammad, sons of Imam



Musa Al-Kazem (AS) and brothers of Imam Reza (AS). The two took refuge in the city during the Abbasid persecution of Shiite Muslims.

The tombs became celebrated pilgrimage centers in the 14th century when Queen Tash Khatoun erected a mosque and theological school in the vicinity, wrote Iranreview.org.

Shah Cheragh is Persian for "King of the Light". The site was given this name due to the nature of the discovery of the site by Ayatollah Dastgheib (the great grandfather of the contemporary Ayatollah Dastgheib). He used to see light from a distance and decided to investigate the source. He found that the light was being emitted by a grave.

The grave was excavated and a body was discovered with an armor. The body wore a ring saying "Al-Izzatu Lillah, Ahmad bin Musa", meaning "Pride of God, Ahmad son of Musa". Thus, it became known that this was the burial site of the sons of Imam Musa Al-Kazem (AS).

Safavid Cannon Barrels Discovered

Two Safavid cannon barrels, along with a metal ball, were discovered on Thursday in the southern city of Bandar Abbas during a wastewater excavation operation.

"The discovery was made on Taleqani Boulevard in an area between the old dock of the city and the Safavid era customhouse," director of Bandar Abbas Regional Electric Company, Mohyeddin Khatib, told the Persian service of Mehr News Agency.

"The first barrel was uncovered at 12 midnight on Thursday by a mechanical shovel digging at a depth of three meters and the second one, along with a metal ball, was found a few hours later," added Khatib, who is also the contractor for the regional drainage system.

Each barrel, weighing approximately 300 kg, were buried under piles of stone and mortar.

The customhouse, known by the residents as the ga-

zebo, was built by the Dutch in 1698 during the Safavid era (1502-1736).

The old dock, built in 1939, has a length of 185 meters and an average width of 4.2 meters.

Taleqani Boulevard passes between the gazebo and the old dock of the city. It is believed that in olden times, the cannons were used to protect the gazebo.

Khatib added that cultural heritage officials of Hormuzgan province had not informed the contractor about the history of the region.

Such an information probably would have been given to the provincial water and wastewater company and not to the contractor.

The newly discovered artifacts will be temporarily kept in the storehouse before being turned over to Hormuzgan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

