

## In Case You Missed

World's Oldest Axe Found  
In Australia

Archaeologists revealed they have found a piece of a stone axe dated 35,500 years on sacred Aboriginal land in Australia, which makes it the oldest object of its type ever found.

The shard of stone, found in Australia's lush and remote far northern reaches in May, has marks that prove it comes from a ground-edge stone axe, Monash University's Bruno David said.

"We could see with the angled light that the rock itself has



all these marks on it from people having rubbed it in order to create the ground-edge axe," he told ABC.

"The person who was using the axe was grinding it against a sandstone surface in order to make a smoother surface."

David said the previous oldest ground-edge axes were 20,000 to 30,000 years old, and the conventional belief was that the tool first emerged in Europe when populations grew and forests flourished at the end of the last Ice Age.

"What we've got in Australia, however, is evidence of ground-edge axes going back 35,000 years," he said.

"What this all means is that we know that the conventional story that comes from Europe does not explain the origin of axes globally. So we've got to think of it in a very different way."

David said the discovery is evidence that Aboriginal Jawoyn people from Arnhem Land could have been the first to grind axes to sharpen their edges.

## Shadegan Wetland Unique, Wonderful



Shadegan Wetland in Khuzestan province is one of the 18 international wetlands registered on UNESCO's Natural Heritage List.

Located 52 km from Abadan and 105 km from Ahvaz, it is Iran's largest wetland. Linking Jarahi River to Persian Gulf waters, the wetland is considered one of the most wonderful natural attractions of the world because of its unique biodiversity, Fars News Agency reported.

In fact, the presence of fresh water and saline water in the wetland—which is regarded a rare phenomenon—has led to the diversity in the wetland's marine ecosystem. Its water supply is mainly through Karoun River.

Shadegan is home to a large number of migratory birds that arrive at the wetland from Northern Europe, Canada and Siberia every year.

The high diversity of plant and animal species in Shadegan Wetland has caused the International Supreme Council for the Environment to register it as an international protected zone.

Just like the wetland, Shadegan Protected Zone is of high economic and social importance. Its vegetation is considered the main source of feeding its wildlife population.

Although the wetland has the potential to become a tourism destination and bears many socioeconomic advantages for lo-

cal residents, different kinds of pollutants are threatening its ecosystem.

The wetland is facing a series of environmental crises largely caused by an oil spill, inflow of fertilizers and the release of sewage produced by nearby factories.

## &gt; Wetland Ranking Down

About 117 villages and three cities are located in the vicinity of the wetland. Their residents use boats to reach other villages and cities just like in Venice, Italy, which attracts thousands of visitors annually due to its unique architecture.

Human interference and rise in pollution have lowered the wetland's ranking on the UNESCO list. The wetland, which once ranked 5th on the UNESCO list, is now at 22nd place.

Jamal Zurizadeh, the head of Shadegan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, said road construction near the wetland, illegal logging and the discharge of more than 50 million cubic meters of industrial and urban waste into the wetland are threatening its ecosystem.

"Discharge of waste into the water—mainly from sugarcane factory—has increased the salinity of water and led to the death of marine animals," he said.

Zurizadeh said recently measures have been taken by envi-

ronmental experts to reduce water pollution.

"The construction of a wastewater canal measuring 100 meters in width is near completion," he said, adding that it is a drainage canal and will pump the waste produced by the sugarcane factory.

Shadegan is of high tourism potentials and development of infrastructures for converting the wetland into a tourist destination is on the agenda.

"Villages in the vicinity, including Ragbeh and Sarakheh, were provided with tourism facilities in recent years," he said.

With the expansion of tourism facilities in the region, a recreational center was established near Sarakheh Village and its green spaces were expanded.

## &gt; Rare Species

Seyyed Ahmad Mousavi-Azad, the head of Abadan's Department of Environment, said Shadegan Wetland covers an area of 400,000 hectares.

He noted that Shadegan Wetland is the province's most important tourist attraction.

"Rare animals and plant species can be found in the area," he said, adding that most of these species are indigenous and cannot be found in other places.

INTERNATIONAL TENDER  
No: 89.T/836

Security Printing and Minting Organization (SPMO) of Central Bank of I.R of Iran intends to purchase one unit of Precious Coin Blister Packaging Machine (capacity:

at least 20,000 pcs. per working shift) with the supplementary equipments and spare parts for two years, as well as its installation at the site through a public tender from eligible companies, according to the below-mentioned specifications and conditions sated in the tender documents.

## Required Documents:

- 1- Bid Bond Guarantee will be issued by participants, according to the documents received in favor of SPMO, marked as Tender Guarantee.
- 2- The bidders are requested to submit their company profile, articles of association, turnover, including list of supplied goods, client list, etc. for the last 3 years.
- 3- SPMO reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal at its sole discretion.
- 4- It should be noted that the priority for bidders is given to domestic participants in equal conditions.

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## Ancient Iranians Used Insurance

Iranians were provided with insurance coverage about 5,000 years ago and could claim compensation for damage or loss.

Fereydoun Joneydi, the author of a book titled "World's Right in Ancient Iran", was quoted as saying by Mehr News Agency that the history of insurance coverage dates back to the Kayqobad rule in Iran.

"A citizen, whose house caught fire or whose farm was damaged by drought, was paid compensation upon the order of Kayqobad," he said.

Joneydi said the evidence of an ancient insurance system can also be found in Shahnameh and Avesta.

The author noted that begging was regarded a shameful act and even a big sin in ancient Iran.

"Western researchers wrongly believed that the history of insurance coverage dates back to Achaemenid Dynasty in Iran and it is because they only studied the clay script of this period," he said.

"Interested individuals can get much information about the administration laws of pre-Achaemenid Dynasty in Iran by reading Avesta and other ancient books."

Joneydi said ancient Iranians were also provided with life insurance and their properties were protected against theft, noting that soldiers injured during wars were paid compensation as well.

"Compensation was also paid to the families of soldiers who were killed in wars," he said.

Persian Gulf States Urged  
To Save Turtles

The seven member-states of Regional Organization for the Protection of Persian Gulf Marine Environment (ROPME) were urged to save Persian Gulf turtles from extinction.

Omid Seddigi, the head of Marine Eco-Biology Office at Iran's Department of Environment, told Mehr News Agency that ROPME's member-states discussed ways of increasing protection measures in Persian Gulf during a meeting held last week in Tehran.

Seddigi said all the five species of marine turtles living along the Persian Gulf coastline are considered threatened.

He introduced green turtle as the most endangered marine species in the region.

"The species is indigenous to the Persian Gulf waters and prefer Iranian coastline for laying eggs," he said.

The official pointed out that efforts have been made to reduce dangers threatening these rare species.

Seddigi said several programs were proposed during ROPME's meeting in Tehran and the members promised to increase protection measures in marine areas.

"Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain and UAE are members of ROPME," he said, noting that they reached consensus on reviving the turtles' habitats during Tehran's meeting.

The participating countries agreed to use new methods to raise the awareness of local residents about these endangered animals.

The first agreement was signed during the recent meeting. Seddigi mentioned the artificial expansion of coastal areas as the main factor contributing to the extinction of marine animals, particularly turtles.

"All the countries are obliged to use satellites to track turtles," he said.

"Iran is the only country in the region to have conducted research on marine turtles. It also has the most comprehensive genetic data about these species," he said.

