

Iran's ancient water system  
registered on UNESCO World Heritage List  
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Shushtar`s ancient water system of canals

Iran's ancient water system of canals, tunnels and waterfalls in Shushtar was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the UNESCO website reported on June 26, 2009.

The decision was made during the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee underway in Seville, Spain. The meeting is chaired by María Jesús San Segundo, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Spain to UNESCO and will continue inscribing sites and examining the condition of properties already listed during the coming days. The committee will remain in session until June 30, 2009.

The man-made Shushtar waterfalls are located near the Elamite capital of Susa in Khuzestan Province. Construction of the structures began during the Achaemenid era (about 550-331 BC) on one of the Gargar River's tributaries and then the system was improved by the Sassanid dynasty (224-651 CE).

This is Iran's tenth structure registered on UNESCO World Heritage List, Iran's permanent representative at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris Mohammadreza Dehshiri told the Persian Service of IRNA.

"This will help increase world attention to this ancient site, boost tourism, and raise the importance of the restoration process at the site more than before", he remarked.

The waterworks comprises bridges, dams, mills, aquifers, reservoirs, tunnels, and canals, most of which were constructed in the Sassanid period especially during the reign of Shapur I (241-272 CE).

The structures were used as an irrigation system and encouraged cultural interactions in the region. The waterfalls presented visitors with a beautiful unique landscape, enjoying results of hydraulic engineering technology rare for that point in history.

The Shushtar waterfalls are among the few ancient water systems in Iran used for irrigating the Shushtar plain. Remnants of some of the many water wheels built at the waterfalls during the Safavid era (1501-1722) still remain.

The other Iranian monuments and sites that have been registered on the World Heritage List over the years include Chogha Zanbil (Khuzestan Province, 1979), Persepolis (Fars Province, 1979), Naqsh-e Jahan Square (Isfahan Province, 1979), Takht-e Soleiman (West Azarbaijan Province, 2003), Pasargadae (Fars Province, 2004), and the city of Bam and its Cultural Landscape (Kerman Province, 2004).