

South Khorasan Province's journey to thriving tourism



Akbarieh Garden, Birjand
● ealiya.com



A barberry farm in South Khorasan Province
● apochi.com



Date harvest festival of Tabas
● iribnews.ir



Baladeh Qanat, Ferdows
● alibaba.ir

Iranica Desk

Heritage sites and tourism routes have a crucial role in attracting both domestic and international tourists, making them vital for the development of the tourism industry.

A destination can truly stand out and thrive when it offers distinctive and unforgettable experiences, with the responsibility falling on well-planned tourist events. By combining events with tourism development, we can create captivating attractions and, through effective planning, marketing, and execution, establish them as important strategies for fair and consistent distribution of tourism benefits across various regions and timeframes in the country, IRNA wrote.

By collaborating with local communities, organizing tourism events not only creates social excitement but also increases social participation in various programs. It provides a platform for reviving arts, traditions, and customs, introducing them to new generations, and serves as

an effective means of attracting tourists, especially to rural and pristine areas while promoting targeted regions.

The diverse festivals registered in the national tourism event calendar in South Khorasan Province are a promising sign of increasing tourist influx and the thriving of this industry. Tourism events serve as a wonderful opportunity for people to explore and embrace the diverse cultures of various regions. In this regard, South Khorasan Province has made a significant mark, with 11 of its events registered on the national tourism calendar. This remarkable achievement highlights the province's substantial contribution to tourism sector.

The promotion of cultural and heritage events across various fields has greatly contributed to the flourishing tourism in South Khorasan Province. A recent noteworthy example is the highly successful second National Barberry Festival, which took place from October 21st to October 26th this year. It is worth mentioning that

alongside this festival, an exciting farm tourism event was introduced as one of the captivating side programs.

The signing of seven memoranda of understanding (MoUs) between the public and private sectors aims to help promote the position of South Khorasan Province's barberry crop, which holds the first rank in its production in the country, and to complete the value-added chain.

Director General of South Khorasan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization Hadi Shahverdi announced recently that the Date Harvest Festival of Tabas has been added to the tourism calendar. Following the registration of this event, dedicated efforts are being made to meticulously plan specialized tours for the Date Harvest Festival in Tabas, ensuring that attendees have an engaging and immersive experience. This thoughtful planning aims to not only introduce and showcase the festival but also to highlight another captivating attraction of the

province.

He mentioned that four other cultural and tourism events are currently being registered.

He noted that one of the effective measures in the realm of tourism development in the province, aimed at attracting tourists, is organizing national and provincial events. Currently, event registration has been initiated at the provincial level, with plans for national registration to follow. This initiative holds great potential for enhancing tourism and increasing the number of visitors to the region.

"Approximately 100 events have been identified that have the potential to be registered on the list of cultural heritage. We are working on refining them and increasing the number of tourism events in the province," he said.

He added that tourists who want to travel to different provinces often consider what events and festivals are happening in that province during their trip.

He said that tourism agencies are important to those who plan, and when tourists travel to a province,

it's important for them to know what events they will encounter. Therefore, the higher the quality of these events, the more attractive it is for tourists and it will lead to attracting more tourists in the coming years and months.

"As an initial step, we have designated autumn as the main tourism season for South Khorasan Province. This is due to the fact that this season has the potential to attract the largest number of tourists to visit the agricultural, mining, historical, and natural sites of the province."

He added that presently, the tourism infrastructure of the province is well-equipped and capable of meeting the needs of travelers. In the event of any deficiencies, a streamlined permit process has been established to address them promptly.

"Moreover, we take pride in our ability to provide ample accommodations for tourists in the urban areas throughout the province," he said.

Shahverdi said the thirteenth government has taken positive steps

in the area of road improvement, and it is necessary to expand the road network in the province to ensure the safety of tourists. Additionally, given the vast expanse of South Khorasan Province, there is a need to increase infrastructure such as health care services, accommodation facilities, and rest areas. Plans are already in progress to address these needs.

He noted that the failure to introduce the capacities of the province has resulted in South Khorasan hosting fewer tourists compared to other parts of the country.

Deputy Governor of South Khorasan Province for Coordinating Affairs Javad Ashrafi said that South Khorasan is an enchanting region that is yet to be fully discovered, despite its exceptional agricultural produce and captivating tourist attractions.

He added that this area boasts some of the most pristine deserts, springs, and mountains, as well as numerous recreational and tourist spots. However, it remains relatively unknown and underappreciated.

Modern Tehran is a creation of the Nasereddin Shah, who in 1870-1872 expanded and rebuilt the city after the manner in which Paris was rebuilt under Napoleon III. Tehran now has the shape of an octagon, and is more than fifteen versts in circumference, with twelve gates; the fortifications are built on the pattern of those in Paris from before the Franco-Prussian War, but are not equipped with cannon, and in general are totally useless for defense of the city.

Some of the gates represent monumental constructions; inside, avenues have been conducted through the city, squares have been laid out, and several beautiful buildings have been added.

However much remains to be done for the welfare of the city, Nasereddin Shah has by and large successfully solved the problem of reconstructing Tehran on a European model without adversely affecting its special Oriental charm.

Like other large cities of Iran, Tehran has its religious sanctuary: The mausoleum of Shah 'Abd al-'Azim, a fifth generation descendant of Imam Hassan (PBUH), who fled to Rey from the caliph Mutavakkil and died here in 861.

The modern structure above his tomb was built, as is shown by an inscription on the frontal, by Nasereddin Shah, and is considered a sanctuary, bast, where a Muslim enjoys the right of asylum; the right is out-

wardly symbolized by a string stretched in front of the building. The mausoleum lies nine versts from Tehran, with which it is linked by a railway, so far the only one in Iran.

Interplay of Aryan and Mesopotamian cultures in Rey

In the course of their westward migration, the Aryans entered in Rey into which the Assyrian armies occasionally penetrated and which thus could come under a certain influence from Mesopotamian civilization.

The Assyrians under King Esarhaddon (681-668 BCE) reached Alborz and Damavand, but these campaigns had the character of incursions and did not prevent the Medes from creating a strong kingdom at a time that coincided with the reign of the following Assyrian king, Ashshurbanipal (668-626 BCE). They seized the opportunity for this at a moment when the Assyrians were busy elsewhere, especially in Khuzestan.

This unification of small clan units into one political organism was achieved by the Medes in the area where Hamadan is located, that is, next to the mountain chains that separate Iran from Mesopotamia. Here was the "land of Dayaukku," the center of activity of that real or mythical founder of the Median empire.

Transformation of Tehran



The above is a lightly edited version of chapter entitled 'Rey and Hamedan,' from a book entitled, 'An Historical Geography of Iran,' written by W. Barthold and published by Princeton University Press, Princeton.