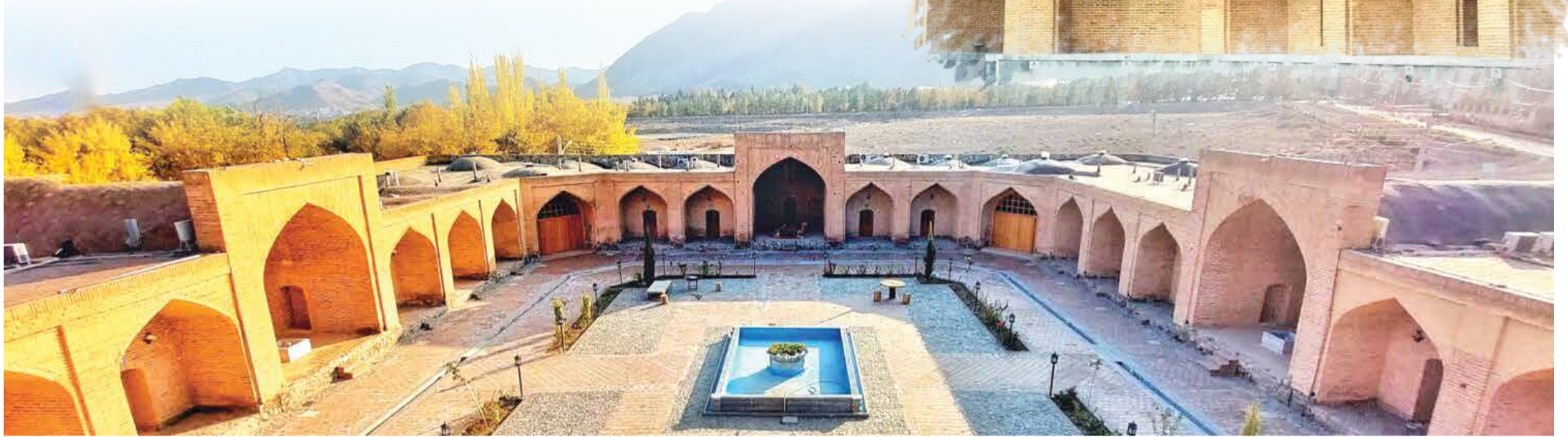


Kuhab Caravanserai, an architectural marvel in Natanz



● soroosh-travels.com

Natanz, situated in Isfahan Province, stands out as a picturesque city with diverse climate conditions: cold, mild, and desert. The central area of Natanz enjoys a mild climate, ideal for agricultural pursuits, earning it the moniker Bagh-e Shahr or City's Garden. Within this charming locale lies a treasure trove of historical sites and tourist attractions, including the renowned Kuhab Caravanserai.

This historical gem, alternatively known as Robat-e Kuhab, Kuhab Castle, Natanz Caravanserai, and Abu al Ma'ali Caravanserai, is located in Shahid Beheshti Boulevard in Natanz. Recognized for its cultural significance, Kuhab Caravanserai was officially enlisted on the Iran's National Heritage List in 1977.

Tracing its origins back to the Safavid era under the reign of Shah Abbas I, this architectural mar-

vel was commissioned by Abul Ma'ali Barz-Rudi, a trusted emir of Shah Abbas, also referred to as Agha Mir. The caravanserai's legacy is intertwined with the history of the region, reflecting the rich heritage of Natanz.

This caravanserai, boasting a spacious area of approximately 3,962 square meters, is nestled within the enchanting surroundings of a garden known as Bagh-e Haram, owing to its proximity to the shrine (haram) of Imamzadeh Shahzadeh Abdullah. Adorning the garden is a grand water fountain, adding to the serene ambiance of the place. Furthermore, overlooking this serene setting is another notable historical site, Gonbad-e Baz, perched on the Shahin Peak in the Karkas Mountain, offering a picturesque view from the caravanserai.

Within the confines of Kuhab Caravanserai are 23 rooms, four spa-

cious *ivans*, a sizable courtyard, a forecourt, and an entrance portal graced with a stone inscription. The imposing portal entrance of the caravanserai is strikingly tall, commanding attention. Adorned with intricate Thuluth script, the inscription on the entrance portal reveals details about the year

of construction and the esteemed builders behind this architectural marvel.

At the entrance, a sturdy wooden door stands guard, offering passage into the caravanserai. Surrounding this entrance are stairs that wind their way up to the roof of the caravanserai, featuring

platforms where guards could seek respite and keep watch over the surroundings.

Moreover, atop the caravanserai's roof are guard quarters, specifically designated for the stationed guards tasked with safeguarding the premises.

The north wing of Kuhab Caravanserai boasts 10 porches, positioned on either side of the entrance portal. These porches each adorned with a roof, served as additional spaces for gatherings when the main building accommodations reached capacity. Upon crossing the portal, visitors are greeted by the expansive caravanserai courtyard. At the heart of this courtyard sits a sizable fountain measuring 7x14 square meters, a vital water source essential for meeting the needs of the weary travelers and caravans passing through. Surrounding the courtyard

are extensive roofed corridors on all four sides, each adorned with *takhtgah* that lead to small booths. *Takhtgah*, serving as spacious corridors adjoining the halls, offer passage to various parts of the caravanserai. Noteworthy is the moment where, after a brief walk of 10 meters, the courtyard corridor diverges into two branches, stretching towards the left and right and granting access to the rooms situated behind the grand *ivan*.

Furthermore, a unique feature of this caravanserai is the presence of custom stone hitching posts, signaling a bygone era where horses and cattle found shelter within its walls. These stone posts, meticulously placed, served as reliable anchors for tethering horses and cattle, embodying the rich historical significance of this renowned site.



● ISNA

Harsin kilim, a legacy of handwoven excellence from Iran



● fartaknews.com

Kilims are handwoven textiles produced on looms without the use of knots. Traditionally used as floor coverings, they are prominent among the handicrafts of village and nomadic people in Iran. Harsin, located in Kermanshah Province, serves as a significant hub for kilim weaving in the country. Its handwoven products, known internationally as Harsin kilims, are renowned for their quality.

The abundance of animal husbandry in Harsin has led many men and women to take up kilim-making. The region's production of high-quality wool in Kermanshah and nearby cities ensures the use of one hundred percent natural materials, a distinct feature of Harsin kilims. There are similarities between Harsin kilims and *shiriki pich*



● ISNA

of Sirjan, suggesting a potential influence on each other over time. However, Harsin kilims are unique for being double-sided, with backgrounds typically in dark blue or red, complemented by colors such as white, green, and crimson red.

Geographically situated south of the ancient city of Kangavar, Harsin has a historical association with kilims

dating back at least two centuries, as evidenced by reliefs in surrounding archaeological sites. The intricate motifs found in Harsin kilims, stemming from memory and passed down through generations, encompass four main categories: figurative, animals, floral, and objects. These motifs, each with its local name, draw inspiration from the region's natural environment and

surroundings.

Weavers in Harsin use these inspirations to create abstract designs that are then reflected in kilims. Animal motifs feature abstract interpretations of various creatures like ducks, butterflies, cats, rabbits, jackals, scorpions, sparrows, and snakes. Today, the kilims are not only found in Harsin but also in the cities of Gilan-e Gharb,



● IRNA

Eslamabad-e Gharb, and Javanroud. The majority of kilims from Harsin are the same colour combination and design. However, the wool and dyes used are of the highest quality, and their products always have a certain sheen and depth of colour. The terracotta triple medallion is woven on a blue ground framed with a triple border. The design is a very pretty stylized swan.