

# Torang Cave in Kerman Province achieves national heritage status



## Iranica Desk

The Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicraft Organization of Kerman Province has announced the registration of five new natural sites on Iran's National Heritage List, one of which is Torang Cave in Baft. Located in the southwest of the city of Kerman, this cave is known for its unique natural beauty, characterized by its long pathways, limestone formations, and flowing water, which have earned it a special reputation within the province.

Situated near Torang village and a mountain of the same name, the entrance path to the cave winds through a mountainous area adorned with almond, pistachio, and wild fig trees. Although Torang Cave may not be as widely recognized as other famous caves in Iran, it stands out as the longest and most significant cave in Kerman Province, distinguished by its breathtaking landscapes and remarkable geological features. In fact, this cave holds the title of the highest cave in the province and boasts a stunning pool, making it one

of the most picturesque caves in the country.

The initial path to the cave is accessible and does not require any special skills; with a bit of hiking motivation, visitors can reach it. However, the entrance to the cave presents a challenging and rugged terrain that necessitates both daring spirit and mountaineering equipment. Upon entering the cave, those with the necessary climbing gear can explore its expansive interior. Without proper equipment, however, one may find themselves enveloped in abso-

lute darkness, navigating a labyrinth of winding passages that can be disorienting. This limestone cave features multiple chambers and corridors, showcasing a mesmerizing collection of stalactites, rock columns, and formations created from carbonate deposits. Within the depths of the cave lies a unique water pool, a sight that is hard to believe until witnessed firsthand. This pool is located at the end of one passage, and the route to reach it from other chambers is relatively easier. This accessibility makes this

area popular among locals and novice mountaineers. At the end of the stalactite hall, two openings lead to water-filled chambers. By traversing the opposite hall—known as Anahita Hall, the most significant section of the cave and a symbol of fertility and righteousness in ancient Iranian culture—we arrive at these chambers. Anahita Hall consists of three parts: the dry area that descends to the edge of the water with a depth of five meters, the left side containing a water-filled ravine known as Anahita Gorge, and the

right hall from which the Anahita River flows, entering the left passage. Inside the cave, the tranquil flow of water creates a serene atmosphere, allowing only the reflection of light off a smooth, transparent surface to reveal our presence. Now nationally registered, this beautiful cave is highly recommended for nature lovers and tourists alike. It is hoped that improvements in access and services will receive greater attention from local management.

● IRNA

# Gonbad-e Baz, a testament to history and architecture in Natanz

## Iranica Desk

Natanz, a picturesque city in Isfahan Province, is nestled in the foothills of the Karkas Mountain. Renowned for its rich historical heritage, Natanz is home to several captivating monuments, one of which is the Gonbad-e Baz, also known as the Hawk Dome. This remarkable

structure was inscribed on Iran's national heritage list in 1967 due to its distinctive architectural features.

Visitors can access Gonbad-e Baz via two routes: the main trail and an alternative path. The main trail, located to the north, is steep and only a short distance from Natanz. However, this route is relatively distant from the mountain peak, requiring a walk of about 1,200 meters to reach the dome. Unfortunately, it does not provide an extensive view of Natanz.

In contrast, the alternative route mean-

ders through the Qadamgah foothills, offering a more gentle ascent of approximately 900 meters while affording a panoramic view of Natanz.

The Gonbad-e Baz dates back to the Safavid era during the reign of Shah Abbas I, who faced significant challenges in constructing this building atop the Karkas Mountains. After the Islamic Revolution, restoration efforts began but were hampered by economic difficulties and the transportation of construction materials. Eventually, the restoration of Gonbad-e Baz was successfully completed in 2001.

A fascinating legend surrounds the dome's name, "Gonbad-e Baz," which translates to "Hawk Dome." It is said that Shah Abbas Safavid often hunted in the regions of Isfahan and Kashan, using birds of prey like hawks. Among these, he favored the hawk species. In 1593, during a journey from Isfahan to Qazvin, one of his hawks died. In memory of this beloved bird, Shah Abbas commissioned the dome to honor it and inter its remains within.

## Architectural features

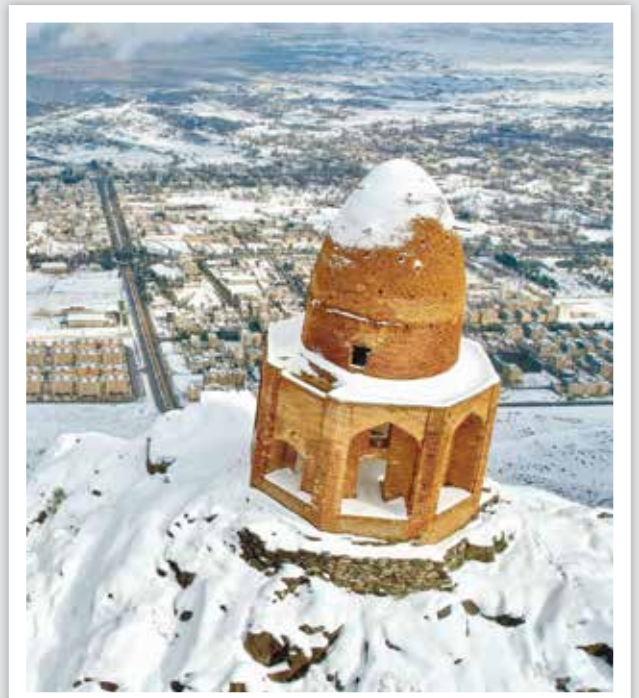
The Karkas Mountain, where the dome is situated, rises about 3,895 meters above sea level. The dome's foundation is constructed from local rubble stones, forming a circular base approximately 10 meters in

diameter and three meters high. The dome itself is octagonal, built with bricks and mortar. Each side of the octagon measures three meters, with a base diameter of 1.8 meters. Gonbad-e Baz is designed with eight portals, each measuring 100cm by 80cm, and extending 180cm in height. Above each door, there are vents that are 90cm high, leading to an external ivan (porch). The ivan dimensions are approximately two meters long, one meter wide, and three meters high, with brick flooring.

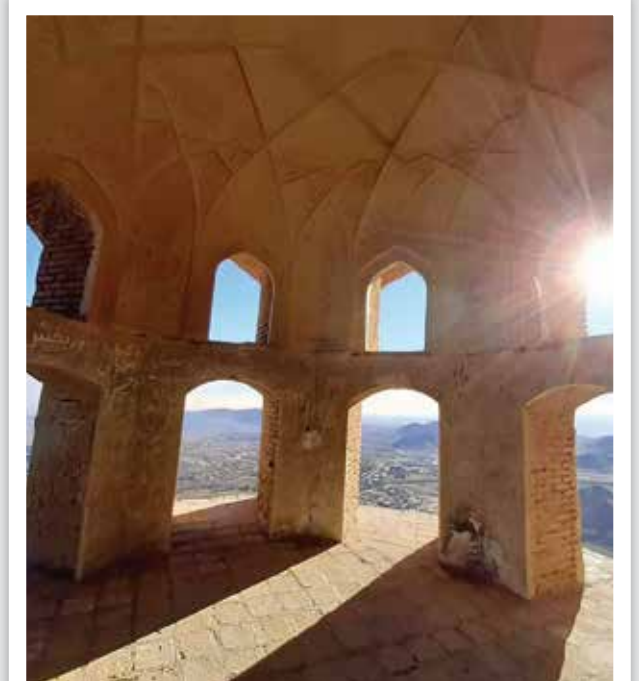
In the northwest corner of the structure, there is a dedicated portal with a staircase featuring 11 spiral steps, along with another staircase within one of the dome's pillars that connects the lower levels to the ivan above.

Remarkably, the Gonbad-e Baz is highly resistant to earthquakes. Despite numerous seismic events over the years, the dome has remained remarkably intact.

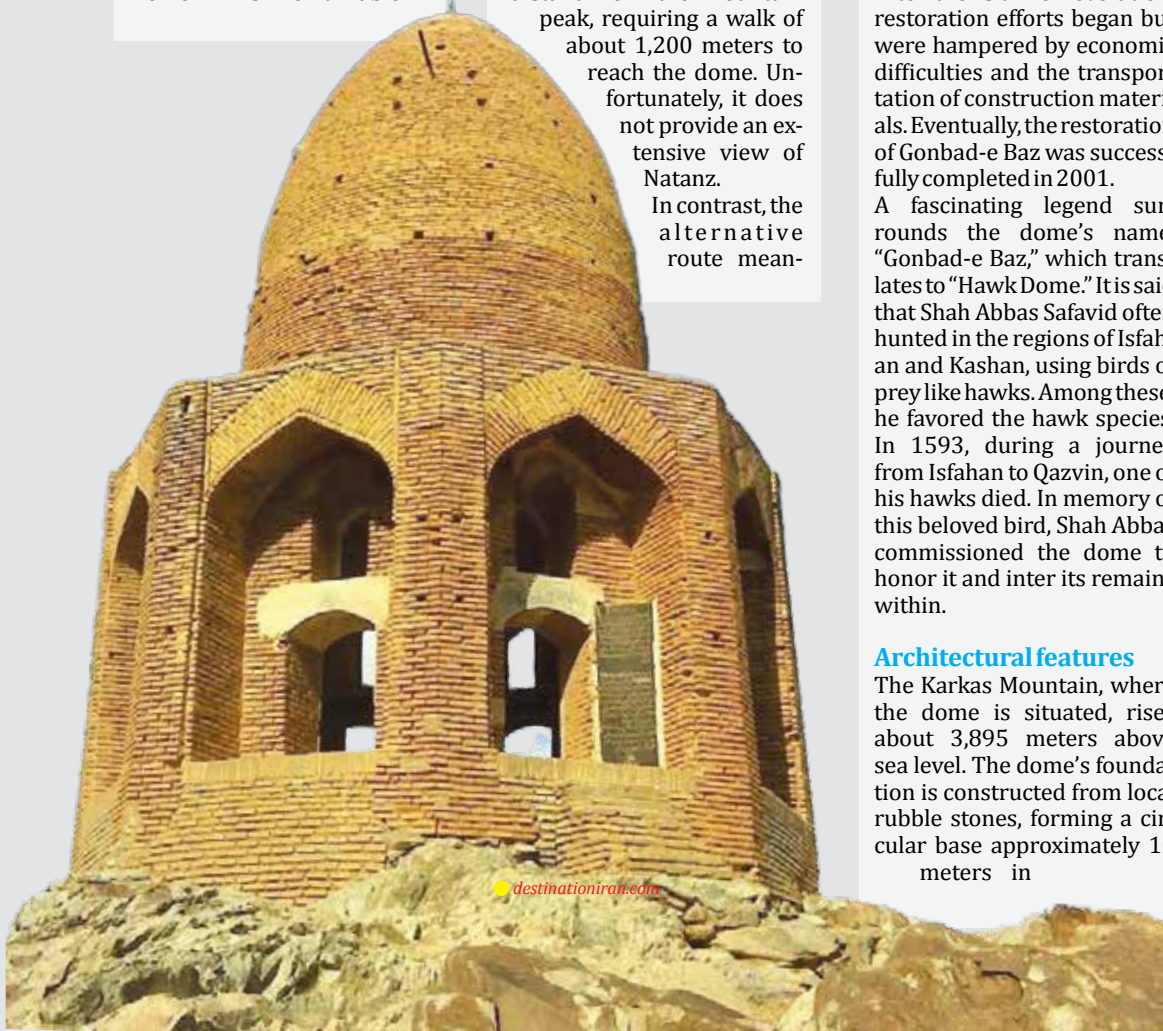
Constructing the Gonbad-e Baz on the rugged terrain of the mountain presented significant challenges. Today, this dome stands as one of Natanz's most striking tourist attractions. As one enters the city, the Gonbad-e Baz is the first structure that captures the eye, drawing visitors with its unique architectural beauty. To experience this landmark up close, a hike along the trail is a must.



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