



Akhangan Tower, the mysterious monument of Mashhad's heritage

Iranica Desk

The city of Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi Province, is home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims, attracting millions of tourists each year.

In addition to the shrine, there are several historical attractions in and around Mashhad, one of which is the Akhangan Tower. This historical tomb dates back to the 14th century CE, and after six centuries, identity of those resting within remains uncertain for brevity.

Akhangan Tower is recognized as one of the key sightseeing spots in Mashhad. It is located approximately 22 kilometers from the city center, about 10 kilometers east of Tabaran in Tus, and near a village of the same name.

The tower serves as the burial site of an individual whose identity is unknown, captivating the minds of tourists and visitors like a puzzle. The site is listed as an attraction of Khorasan Razavi Province on Iran's National Heritage List.

Some believe that the feminine motifs observed on the tower may indicate the identity of the deceased; they speculate that the buried individual is Gouhar Taj, the sister of Gouharshad, the wife

of Shah Rukh, the ruler of the Timurid Empire—a theory that the Cultural Heritage Organization also considers plausible. Meanwhile, another group attributes the tomb to an Indian girl who was a follower of Imam Reza (PBUH) and passed away during her pilgrimage. Others suggest that this structure may serve as a collective tomb for important and distinguished individuals. However, the validity of these theories remains unproven.

As mentioned earlier, this structure is estimated to be over 550 years old. The architect who designed this ancient brick monument created a tomb-like tower that reaches a height of more than 17 meters. The builders constructed it on a circular platform with eight semi-hexagons.

The circular exterior of the mausoleum is beautifully adorned with eight semi-columns.

The Akhangan Tower features a cylindrical column that stands nearly 14 meters tall. This historic structure is constructed from brick and is artistically embellished with tiles in shades of lapis lazuli and turquoise, cut into various shapes, including rectangles and polygons.

The tile decorations also incorporate

diverse and intricate designs. Within this beautiful and grand tower, three entrance doors are visible. Inside, there is a tombstone measuring 110 centimeters in length, 50 centimeters in width, and 40 centimeters in height, inscribed with text in Thuluth and Naskh calligraphy. A notable aspect of the architecture is the interior space, which is devoid of any motifs or decorations, while the exterior—from the walls to the semi-columns—is beautifully adorned with tiles.



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Enigmatic wonders of Chameli Wetland in Takab

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Nestled in the heart of Iran lies a natural wonder that has intrigued scientists and visitors alike for centuries — Chameli Wetland of Takab. Located in Takab, West Azarbaijan Province, this phenomenon defies conventional explanation and offers a glimpse into the mysterious workings of nature. Initially appearing as an ordinary field of grass, Chameli reveals its enigmatic nature upon closer inspection, with the grass seemingly moving as if possessed by a mind of its own.

The moving grass of Chameli Wetland has spurred numerous theories among researchers. Some attribute it to electromagnetic fields, while others suggest underground water currents as the cause. Despite the various hypotheses, no definitive explanation has been agreed upon, adding to the allure of this natural wonder. Takab itself is renowned for its diverse geological formations, situated in the western part of Iran, boasting landscapes ranging from rocky mountains to fertile plains. The unique geological composition of the region contributes to its biodiversity, supporting various flora and fauna.

Environmental significance

Beyond its geological curiosity, Chameli Wetland plays a crucial role in the local ecosystem.



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The moving grass phenomenon supports a rich biodiversity, attracting numerous species of insects and birds. Its conservation is therefore vital to maintaining the delicate balance of the region's ecosystem.

Indigenous perspectives

For the indigenous people of Takab, Chameli holds deep cultural significance. Legends and folklore abound regarding the origins of the moving grass, with tales passed down through gen-

erations. These stories not only enrich the cultural tapestry of the region but also underscore the profound connection between nature and the community.

Archaeological insights

Archaeological excavations near Chameli Wetland have unearthed artifacts dating back centuries, shedding light on ancient civilizations that once thrived in the area. The presence of these artifacts further empha-

sizes the historical importance of the region and its enduring appeal to historians and archaeologists alike.

Best times to visit

To witness the mesmerizing spectacle of the moving grass, plan your visit during the spring or early summer when the flora is in full bloom. The moderate climate during these seasons enhances the experience, allowing visitors to explore the area comfortably.

Wildlife encounters

Chameli Wetland is not just about the moving grass; it's also a haven for wildlife enthusiasts. Keep an eye out for rare bird species and small mammals that inhabit the area. Birdwatching and nature photography opportunities abound, making it a paradise for eco-tourists.

Local cuisine

While exploring Chameli Wetland, indulge in the local cuisine and hospitality. Traditional dish-

es prepared with locally sourced ingredients offer a taste of authentic Iranian flavors. Engaging with local communities also provides insights into their customs and way of life.

Conservation challenges

Despite its natural beauty, Chameli Wetland faces threats from human activities and climate change. Efforts are underway to protect this fragile ecosystem and promote sustainable tourism practices. Conservation initiatives aim to preserve the moving grass phenomenon for future generations to cherish.

Sustainable development opportunities

Balancing conservation with development is key to the future of Chameli Wetland. Sustainable tourism initiatives not only benefit the local economy but also raise awareness about the importance of environmental stewardship. By supporting responsible tourism practices, visitors can contribute to the long-term preservation of this natural wonder.

Chameli Wetland stands as a testament to the wonders of nature and the resilience of ecosystems in the face of change. Its moving grass phenomenon continues to captivate and inspire, inviting visitors to explore its mysteries and appreciate its beauty. Whether you're a scientist, a historian, or simply a nature enthusiast, Chameli Wetland offers a journey of discovery like no other.