

Rangooniha Mosque; an architectural marvel in Abadan



erations, a wave of migration occurred, with many individuals relocating to Abadan from various cities and countries. Among these newcomers were immigrants from India, Pakistan, and Burma (now known as Myanmar). During this period, the Rangooniha Mosque was constructed near the refinery to support Muslim immigrants from Rangoon, now called Yangon. The mosque's foundation was laid in 1912, and it took about seven years to complete, finishing in 1919. The architects responsible



Iranica Desk

Hearing the name of Abadan, a city located in Khuzestan Province, immediately conjures up associations with oil and refineries. This charming city, known for its warm-hearted residents, has a rich history intertwined with the oil industry and the impacts of Iran-Iraq war, making it a popular destination for tourists from all over Iran. One of the city's most notable attractions is the Rangooniha Mosque, which boasts a unique and striking architectural style. The mosque's design is reminiscent of Indian buildings, reflecting the cultural heritage of the Rangooniha residents who settled in Abadan, IRNA wrote.

Dating back to the 1910s, the Rangooniha Mosque's Indian aesthetic greatly appeals to visitors. Situated not far from the Arvand

River, the mosque has undergone significant restoration and reconstruction over the years. Recognizing its historical and architectural significance, the mosque was officially registered as a national heritage site in Iran on April 9, 1999. The Rangooniha Mosque was constructed with Indian architectural influences, thanks to the Rangoonis from Burma who migrated to Abadan. Despite the considerable distance between Abadan and India, the mosque stands as a testament to this cultural connection. The story behind the mosque's construction is equally fascinating and deserves to be shared.

The narrative begins with the discovery of oil in Masjed Soleyman, which necessitated the construction of a refinery. The British proposed using a refinery model from Burma, leveraging their previous collaborative experiences. Abadan was chosen for



the refinery's construction due to its strategic location alongside the Karun River, which facilitated the creation of a wharf for oil exports. Consequently, the British brought a number of engineers and Burmese workers to Abadan to tap into their expertise in the oil industry. As the refinery began op-

erations may initially appear to be plasterwork, they are actually crafted from cut cement, showcasing meticulous artistry. Additionally, mirrors — an essential element in Iranian architecture often used to embellish palaces and shrines — have been incorporated into the mosque's decoration. It appears that some

building materials, including paint, were imported from India to Iran. The mosque's structure is primarily composed of bricks, with lime mortar and clay, and encompasses a prayer hall, a main courtyard, and a minaret. In front of the building, an inscription bearing the phrase "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim" can be observed. To prevent moisture from infiltrating the foundation, two air tunnels have been constructed beneath it. One of the most beautiful features of this historic building is its mihrab. Adorned with geometric shapes and intricate floral patterns, the mihrab presents a colorful and detailed display that evokes imagery of paradise in the viewer's mind. The roof structure is particularly interesting, combining oil pipes, railway tracks, and rebar. The tracks function as second-

ary beams, while the pipes serve as the main structural elements. The roof of the mosque is designed to be highly durable and resilient. Although it sustained damage from mortar fire during the Iran-Iraq war, resulting in a 70-centimeter hole at the center and some visible cracks in the keystone of the arches, the overall structure remained largely intact and did not suffer severe damage.

Visiting the Rangooniha Mosque is not permitted throughout the entire year; its doors are only open to the public during specific times. It is advisable to contact the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Abadan to confirm the mosque's operating hours before planning your visit. Historical relics are vital parts of our heritage. It is essential to appreciate these treasures and to avoid causing any damage to them.

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Rich biodiversity of Fereydunkenar Wetland



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Fereydunkenar International Wetland is situated southeast of Fereydunkenar in Mazandaran Province. This area, like many along the Caspian Sea, is moderately elevated, reaching up to 33 meters below sea level. It is one of the richest ecosystems in northern Iran.

In 2002, the larger Fereydunkenar Dam area, spanning 5,427 hectares, was designated as an artificial wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. To date, 22 wetlands in Iran have received this designation, visitiran.ir wrote. Close to the Caspian Sea,

this region features a diverse range of natural and artificial habitats, including dams, ponds, and rice fields. Currently, over half of the wetland has been converted into rice fields, while the remaining area is water-filled during winter and reaches its maximum capacity. In summer, the wetland may

be watery or dry, with its surface often covered in vegetation.

The wetland serves as a crucial habitat for millions of rare migratory birds that travel between Iran and Russia, spending their winters here. Each year, over 100,000 migratory birds, including swans, ducks, wild

geese, and eagles, arrive. Fereydunkenar Wetland is also rich in fish diversity, with ten species identified across three families. The Department of Environment has established guard posts in the area to ensure the safety of both migratory birds and visitors. To explore the wetland, it

is advisable to wear long boots and water-resistant clothing. The best time to observe its stunning birdlife is in December.

In addition to its ecological significance, Fereydunkenar is known for its picturesque landscapes and rich cultural heritage. The nearby city of Fereydunkenar offers vis-

itors a glimpse into local traditions and lifestyles, making it an ideal destination for eco-tourism. The harmonious coexistence of agriculture and natural habitats in this region highlights the importance of sustainable practices in preserving such vital ecosystems.

• ISNA