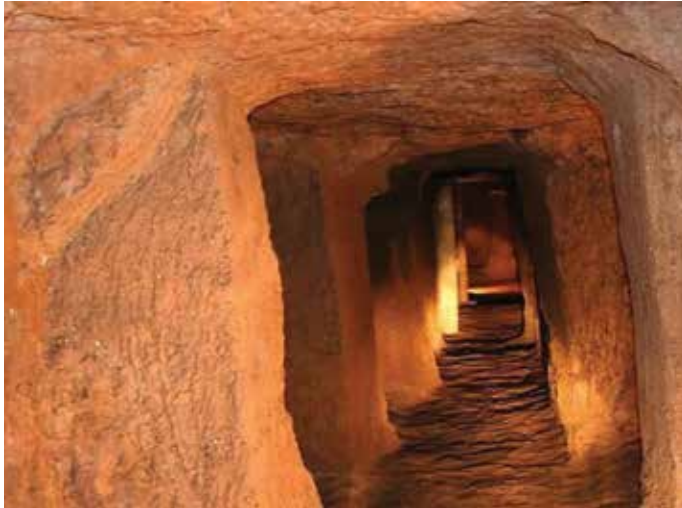


Abarkuh; a historical gem with secrets beneath its surface



Iranica Desk

The governor of Abarkuh, a city in Yazd Province, recently announced the discovery of an underground city located beneath five houses in the city's historical area. He explained that, based on old aerial photographs and the investigations conducted, it appears that people in the past built their homes and important structures on rocky substrates. In an interview with IRNA, Hosseini Hatami elaborated that the spaces between these rocky formations were transformed into gardens by earlier inhabitants. They also created pathways beneath these sections to facilitate easier access, enhance security, manage water transfer, and support their daily activities. Hatami further noted that the presence of small stone chambers in the historical houses of Abarkuh, which are situated beneath the rocky substrate, suggests that these chambers had specific utilities in the past. Consequently, studies and research on this topic have commenced, leading to the discovery of a sub-

terranean settlement. He highlighted that there is significant potential for discovering more examples of this underground complex in other neighborhoods and possibly throughout the entire historic area of Abarkuh. Ongoing research has already uncovered a beautiful waterway made of carved stones. Hatami mentioned that the stones used in the construction of this waterway are similar to those found in the Qajar-era buildings in the region. He emphasized that, due to the importance of this discovery, the archaeological project is still in progress. Additionally, Hatami explained that the ancient inhabitants of Abarkuh constructed steps in the houses along these tunnels while excavating water transfer pathways, which facilitated access. This arrangement allowed them to manage and control the water flow while also utilizing the qanat water for their own needs. He noted that the flow of water through these hallways, located beneath the rocky substrate of

the city, created a cool and serene environment during the hot seasons. This characteristic likely contributed to the gradual addition of large halls with alcoves around them to the underground complex, providing the desert inhabitants of Abarkuh with rest areas and possibly even residences during the scorching summer days. Hatami added, "It is said that another purpose of this subterranean complex was as a hideout or refuge during times of war or foreign invasions." According to Hatami, investigations indicate that approximately 60 hectares of the total 170 hectares of the historic fabric of Abarkuh are dedicated to these channels. He emphasized that following the drying up of some qanats, numerous constructions were made throughout the city, with their sewage systems routed through these hidden pathways. Unfortunately, this has made it impossible to reopen the entire system, and currently, only a portion has been excavated. To date, 400 historical sites have

been identified in Abarkuh, with 147 of these registered on Iran's National Heritage List. This includes 129 immovable properties and 12 intangible assets. Abarkuh is divided into two districts and includes the towns of Abarkuh and Mehrdasht. It consists of four rural districts and 35 villages, with a population of approximately 60,000 people. The county is located 140 kilometers southwest of Yazd.

About Abarkuh

Abarkuh is known for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, reflecting a blend of ancient Persian architecture and desert landscapes. The city features several notable landmarks, including the ancient Abarkuh Cypress, which is estimated to be over 4,000 years old, making it one of the oldest living trees in the world. This cypress is not only a symbol of resilience but also a testament to the region's long-standing connection to nature. The city is characterized by its traditional adobe houses, nar-



row alleys, and vibrant bazaars, which offer visitors a glimpse into the daily lives of its residents. Abarkuh's strategic location along ancient trade routes has historically made it a hub for commerce and cultural exchange. In addition to its historical sites, Abarkuh is surrounded by stunning natural landscapes, including the nearby mountains and desert areas, which attract tour-

ists and nature enthusiasts. The region's climate, marked by hot summers and mild winters, contributes to its agricultural activities, particularly the cultivation of date palms and various fruits. Overall, Abarkuh stands as a remarkable example of Iran's rich history and cultural diversity, making it a fascinating destination for those interested in exploring the heritage of this ancient land.

Preserving nature and heritage in Jamshidiyeh Park of Tehran

Jamshidiyeh Park, also known as the Stone Garden, is located in Tehran at the end of Shahid Bahonar Street (Niavaran) and spans approximately 10 hectares. The park features four entrances, with the first at an elevation of 1,820 meters above sea level and the highest at 2,100 meters. Construc-

tion of the park began in 1977. Jamshidiyeh Park is bordered by Kolakchal Mountain to the north, Dolat Garden to the south, Jamshidiyeh Street to the east, and Kolakchal Road to the west. Nestled in the foothills of the Alborz Mountains, it lies in the northern outskirts of Tehran, within

the western corner of Jamshidiyeh's water channel, surrounded by a hidden mountain. The park was built on the site of an old private garden which was later handed over to the government for public use and transformed into a mountainous park while retaining its original name.

Jamshidiyeh Park features a unique landscape with rocky formations, cascading waterfalls, and lush greenery, making it a popular recreational area for locals and visitors seeking a peaceful escape from the city's hustle and bustle. The park was designed to preserve the structure of the old garden, aligning

with the area's geology and the surrounding natural rocky landscape, while maintaining the essence of traditional Iranian gardens. Notable features include a lake, an adjacent waterfall, and stone fountains that create a special ambiance. The park's design adheres to the principles of garden aesthetics, reflecting the

spirit of Iranian gardens in a contemporary manner. Upon entering, visitors can appreciate the inscriptions on the black metal gates, which blend elements of Persian calligraphy with modern graphic art. A significant draw of Jamshidiyeh Park is its proximity to the main route leading to Kalakchal Shel-

ter, a popular starting point for mountaineers aiming to conquer the peak. The park also offers amenities such as an amphitheater, a restaurant, and parking facilities. While spring and summer are ideal for exploring the park due to favorable weather, its accessibility ensures enjoyment throughout the year.

