

Dehloran’s landmarks, natural heritage sites attract tourists



Bat Cave
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Hot springs
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Tar spring
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Iranica Desk

The natural history of Dehloran in Ilam Province contains a collection of remarkable artifacts that are very ancient and rare, attracting many tourists, a prehistorical archaeologist said. Habibollah Mahmoudian told ISNA that Dehloran is located in the southeastern part of the province, 228 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Ilam. It borders Abadan to the north, Andimeshk in Khuzestan Province to the east, Khuzestan Province and parts of Iraq to the south, and the eastern regions of Iraq to the west. It has an area of 6,816 square kilometers.

The city comprises four districts — Sarab-e Meymeh, Zarrinabad, Markazi, and Mousian — and eight rural districts. The remains of historical and archaeological artifacts and collection of ancient objects discovered there indicate the area’s antiquity across different historical periods.

Climate and natural environment

Dehloran features a semi-arid climate with hot summers and mild winters. During the summer months, temperatures can rise significantly, often exceeding 40°C, making it one of the hotter regions in the province. Winters are relatively mild, with

temperatures sometimes dropping below freezing at night but remaining moderate during the day. The region’s climate creates a unique environment that influences its flora and fauna, with drought-resistant plants and species adapted to harsh conditions. The surrounding landscape is characterized by rocky hills, plains, and mountain slopes, including the prominent Siahkuh Mountain. The natural environment is rich in mineral springs, caves, and other geological formations, making it an area of great interest for nature lovers and researchers alike. The region’s dry climate and rugged terrain have historically shaped its

human settlements and archaeological significance.

Bat Cave

Mahmoudian said Bat (Kho-fash) Cave is located three kilometers northeast of Dehloran, on the slopes overlooking the valley and the famous hot spring of Dehloran. It measures 255 meters in length, 30 meters in width, and 50 meters in height. Due to the presence of millions of bats, it is known as the Bat Cave. The bats in this cave differ from those in other caves because these bats have tails. The Bat Cave of Dehloran contains numerous stalactites and stalagmites, which indicate geological and tectonic transforma-

tions over time.

Hot springs

This archaeologist stated that Dehloran’s hot springs are among the natural phenomena of Dehloran. They are situated in the northeastern part of the city, on the slopes of Siahkuh near the Bat Cave. Due to their significance, they are registered as a national natural site. Like other mineral springs, these hot springs have therapeutic properties and antifungal effects. Scientific investigations show that Dehloran’s hot springs are fossil springs created by geological activities and energy sources in the region. Mahmoudian added that

the hot springs, whose main source of emergence is underground, are among the rarest natural phenomena in the province and the country. They provide warm, sulfur-rich water to visitors for healing and treatment of various diseases. With a temperature of about 50°C, these hot springs are hygienic and equipped with mud pools, making them highly significant for therapeutic purposes.

Tar springs

The tar springs of Dehloran are among Iran’s natural phenomena in this region. They are situated northeast of the city, on the slopes of Siahkuh. Mahmoudian ex-

plained, “The tar springs, along with water, surge from the ground and form a natural black basin at the source, flowing along a short course. This natural site has been registered on the National List of Natural Heritage Sites. In ancient times, the natural tar from this area was used for waterproofing rooftops.” Historical sources mention a city in the region where the rooftops of the houses were coated with tar. The remains of ancient cities in the Dehloran and Mousian areas, including the prehistoric mounds of Mousian, due to their proximity to the tar spring, may potentially be remnants of the same city.

Haj Aqa Ali House; icon of traditional Iranian architecture

At a distance of six kilometers from Rafsanjan in Kerman Province, there exist remarkable brick houses that are not only among the largest in the world but also stand out for their exquisite beauty. One such magnificent structure is the Haj Aqa Ali House, also known as Zaeemullah Rafsanjani. Covering an area of 12,000 square meters, this historic residence comprises 86 rooms, which have been organized into four main sections: the pool house, the royal wing, and the autumn and winter chambers.

History

Haj Agha Ali was one of the most prominent merchants of his era, and he constructed this impressive house in 1937. The complex is celebrated as one of the finest examples of Qajar architecture, showcasing refined craftsmanship and architectural principles. Notably, the house reflects traditional Iranian architectural techniques, thoughtfully adapted to meet the climatic and regional conditions of its environment. Built in a region characterized by intense heat and arid conditions, the house features very high walls to prevent sand from blowing inside, and its entrance gate is both grand

and imposing, underscoring its significance.

Who was Haj Aqa Ali?

Haj Aqa Ali was a renowned merchant and influential figure in Rafsanjan during the Qajar period. He was later known honorifically as Amin al-Tojjar, meaning “Trustee of Merchants,” and his children carried the surname Aminian. His trading activities spanned across countries such as China and India, and among the local people of Rafsanjan and Kerman, it was common to find porcelain bowls and plates inscribed with the number 110, representing the Abjad numerals for Ali, persioplanet.com wrote. Despite amassing significant wealth — owning herds of thousands of sheep and extensive farms — Haj Aqa Ali lived a life



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marked by simplicity and philanthropy. He was a generous benefactor who funded numerous public works, including bazaars, mosques, caravanserais, water reservoirs, baths, and Hosseiniyehs in both

Kerman and Rafsanjan. There are various local stories and legends about his life. Some recount that he was a man of humble beginnings who rose to wealth through remarkable transformation, while others

believe he accumulated his fortune through diligent effort and enterprise.

Architecture

The Haj Agha Ali House, once referred to as the “Waqf House,” is recognized

as one of the largest covered brick buildings in the world. It was constructed in 1937 by architects from Yazd and Rafsanjan. The house rests on a foundation covering 4,000 square meters and was built on a plot of land totaling 8,000 square meters. The construction process took approximately 14 years to complete. The complex consists of four main sections: Royal, autumn, winter, and basin areas. It includes a total of 110 rooms, arranged across entrances with three, five, or seven doors, as well as various closets. The boundary around the house is secured by high walls that reach 10 meters in height. The Haj Aqa Ali House functions as a mansion designed for all four seasons, with specialized sections tailored for different times of the year. Below are descriptions of some of its most significant parts:

Royal or spring porch: Located in the southern part of the house, this porch is one of the most distinctive areas of the mansion. Adorned with exquisite decorations and plasterwork, it was reserved exclusively for formal gatherings and business affairs. Its aesthetic appeal and detailed craftsmanship highlight its importance.

Howzkhaneh (pool house):

This is a large, two-story hall crowned with a sizable dome. It is the largest covered space within the house. On the second floor, there are two halls positioned to the north and south, along with several rooms. The central feature is a rectangular basin, historically connected via aqueducts to basins in the adjacent yards, providing a continuous water supply. The interior of the pool house’s hall is beautifully plastered and decorated with Islamic embossed designs, enhancing its elegant atmosphere.

Autumn and winter halls:

Situated in the western and northern parts of the complex, these halls are more modest and less elaborately decorated than the royal and pool house sections. They were intended to serve as comfortable spaces during colder months.

Kolah Farangi Mansion:

This section was primarily used during summer. On hot days, warm air enters through seven doors and interacts with nearby water fountains, creating a refreshing breeze that cools the entire building. The Kolah Farangi Mansion is also renowned for its beautiful and intricate mosaic or decorative tilework, adding to the mansion’s stunning visual appeal.

