

Local games to enhance social bonds, tourism



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Throughout various corners of Iran, there exist games deeply rooted in ancient traditions, intricately woven into the culture and daily lives of the people. These games are far more than mere pastimes; they represent an essential part of collective identity and cultural heritage. Traditional and local games have historically not only shaped the leisure activities of previous generations but also played a crucial role in the development of physical, intellectual, and social skills. Characterized by simple rules and minimal equipment, these games create opportunities for social interaction, teamwork, physical coordination, and even the cultivation of strategic thinking among players, ISNA wrote. In earlier times, such activities were embraced by all age groups and served as important venues for fostering social bonds. However, in today's rapidly changing world — marked by technological advance-

ments, shifts in lifestyle, and a growing preference for digital entertainment — many of these traditional games face the threat of fading into obscurity. This decline is not only a cultural loss but also diminishes untapped opportunities for tourism and economic growth. Viewing local games through a tourism lens presents two key objectives: firstly, the protection and revitalization of cultural heritage; and secondly, attracting both domestic and international tourists by offering them a unique, immersive experience of indigenous life. Globally, the integration of traditional sports and local games into tourism initiatives has emerged as a successful approach to sustainable development. Such activities do not merely allow tourists to observe local culture from a distance — they invite them to live it, touch it, and engage with it on a personal level. These authentic experiences foster meaningful cultural exchanges, create lasting memories, and simulta-



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neously generate sustainable revenue streams for local communities. In this context, Fa'ezeh Asadian Ardakani, a faculty member in the Faculty of Economics, Management, and Accounting at Yazd University, conducted a comprehensive study to examine the role of local games in advancing tourism and preserving indigenous culture. This research centers on

Yazd Province, where local games, though lesser-known, remain a cherished and integral component of the region's cultural identity. The study delves into the educational, psychological, social, and historical dimensions of these games, tracing their evolution over time. Moreover, it includes a comparative analysis between Yazd's indigenous games and

similar traditional games found in other cultures, aiming to further elucidate their significance within the realms of cultural identity and intangible heritage. Findings from this research reveal that local games, beyond their cultural appeal, serve as valuable vehicles for transmitting indigenous knowledge to future generations. Revitaliz-

ing these games within the framework of tourism-related events can create new employment opportunities and stimulate economic growth. Additionally, such activities provide a meaningful platform to enhance cultural interactions between tourists and local communities, thereby reinforcing social cohesion. One of the study's key insights highlights the critical importance of thoughtful planning and policymaking to organize festivals and cultural events centered on local games. These events have the potential to capture tourists' interest and simultaneously convey deep cultural values alongside entertainment. Given the potent potential of Yazd's local games, several practical initiatives can be pursued: organizing seasonal festivals, designing specialized tourism packages that combine participation in games with visits to historical and cultural sites, establishing museums dedicated to local games alongside educational

centers for learning and practicing them, and even leveraging digital media and platforms to introduce these traditions to a global audience. The broader significance of these findings lies in demonstrating that local games are far more than relics of the past or simple amusements. They represent powerful cultural and economic tools that can contribute directly to sustainable development efforts. By bridging the past and present, these games attract tourism and help shape a vibrant and dynamic future for local communities. It is also noteworthy that the scholarly article based on this research has been published in the journal Folk Culture and Literature, affiliated with Tarbiat Modares University. Beyond its academic value, this publication can serve as an important catalyst for drawing greater attention from policymakers, cultural authorities, and tourism stakeholders toward the often-overlooked potential of local games.

Qom's Mulla Sadra House catapulting visitors to history

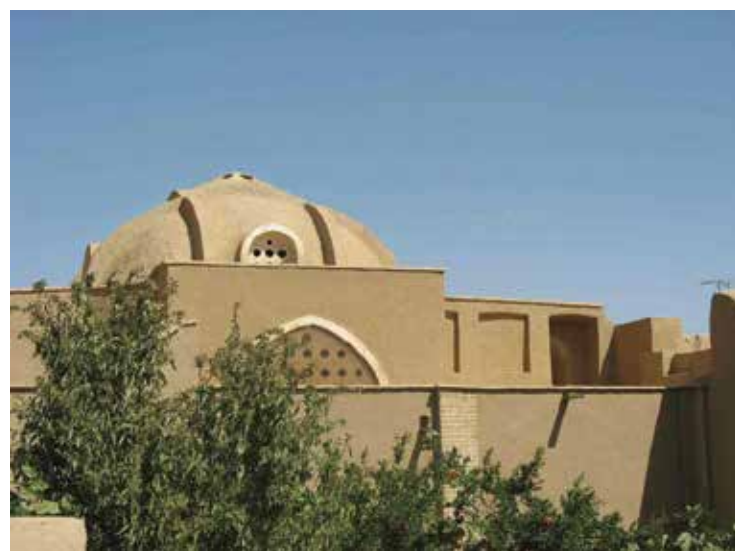
Mulla Sadra House, in Qom Province, is a historical building where Sadr-ol Din Muhammad Shirazi, titled Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin and known as Mulla Sadra, lived for fifteen years. He was born in 1572 during the Safavid dynasty. This Iranian philosopher decided to move to Kahak near Qom to stay away from the Safavid court in Isfahan. Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin built the Khan School in Shiraz, after which, following the request of Allhverdi Khan Undiladze, the general and commander-in-chief of the Safavid army and ruler of Fars province, he returned to this city. The plan of Mulla Sadra House is in the form of a Chalipa or cross. The four Takhtgahs surrounding the structure have rooms built in two stories. Takhtgahs are notable promi-



nent spaces or rooms (likely elevated or important seating areas), arranged around the cross-shaped plan of the house. There are eight rooms, of which only two remain today. Above the dome of

this house, colorful glasses have been implanted to allow sunlight to pass into the rooms, creating a spectacular view. The materials used in Mulla Sadra House are raw cob brick, mortar of clay, and

wooden pillars. The bricks measure twenty by twenty centimeters. The walls have been covered with a layer of black clay, and decorations in the form of plaster stucco can be seen. On the eastern side of the



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house, a rich qanat exists that supplied water for watering the trees in the garden. Today, Mulla Sadra House is located in the farthest eastern part of Kahak, in Chall Hamam alley. It is

registered as a national heritage site of Iran and was restored in 2008. The house is positioned in the rural region south of Qom. Kahak is a land of mountains, gardens, and water springs, which

results in its moderate weather and fertile fields. Today, Kahak has turned into a city located thirty kilometers from Qom and one of the biggest city of this province. Kahak has a rich history dating back several centuries as a strategic rural settlement due to its fertile lands and proximity to important trade routes. Over time, it developed from a small village into a thriving town, historically known for its agricultural productivity and natural resources. Its position near mountains and water springs made it an attractive place for settlement and cultivation, playing a vital role in the region's cultural and economic history. The transformation of Kahak into a city reflects its continued growth and importance within Qom Province.