

# Qeshm Island ushers in new tourism future through music

Iranica Desk

Music tourism, as a new, creative, and interdisciplinary concept, offers a promising solution to increase employment, generate income, and attract both domestic and international tourists to Qeshm Island. This initiative can make a significant contribution to the sustainable development of cultural and artistic tourism in the region, said the Head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization.

Azadeh Abedinzadeh told IRNA that music tourism is one of the sub-branches of cultural and artistic tourism, in which tourists travel to specific destinations motivated by the desire to experience, listen to, or participate in musical events and rituals. She emphasized that Qeshm Island is a shining gem of Iranian culture due to its ritual and traditional music. With its rich musical heritage, the island serves as a center for intercultural exchange and a stage for both large and small groups of traditional Iranian musicians.

“This untapped potential, which had remained dormant for decades, has now transformed into an economic asset within the field of artistic tourism through the identification of talented artists in the Qeshm Boom Festival, the organization of the Oud Music Festival, and the introduction of the Oud to fellow Iranians,”

Abedinzadeh explained. She noted that Qeshm Island — as one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse regions in southern Iran — possesses rich musical capacities that cater to a wide range of tastes and interests. The island, she added, has the potential to become one of the main destinations for music tourism. Proper and effective promotion of this unique attraction, alongside Qeshm’s other natural and cultural treasures, can help boost tourism while improving the livelihoods and income of coastal residents.

Abedinzadeh said that among the island’s diverse musical traditions, the fishing and maritime music of Qeshm holds a special place. These melodies, which



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narrate stories of life, hardship, and love at sea, follow rhythms that echo the waves of the ocean.

They are living memories of the experiences of captains, helmsmen, and sailors who once sang

to ease the pain of separation from home or to celebrate the joy of a bountiful catch. These songs and chants have long been interwoven into every aspect of coastal life on the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf.

She emphasized that traditional music is an inseparable part of the ancient and authentic identity of the Iranian people and the local communities of Qeshm Island. Today, many of the island’s

rural areas remain vibrant spaces where the rhythms and melodies of traditional music continue to live and thrive.

Abedinzadeh further explained that Qeshm’s native and traditional music has the potential to create a truly unique experience for both domestic and international tourists — especially for those seeking an authentic cultural experience. She added that the design and organization of

the Kavan Festival is one of the new opportunities that can open a dynamic new market for music tourism on the island.

She stressed that this music and art festival can serve as a powerful starting point for the growth of music-based tourism and act as an innovative catalyst for promoting tourism in Qeshm. This approach not only helps attract visitors but also plays an important role in preserving and revitalizing the region’s intangible cultural heritage, while strengthening the cultural economy of local communities.

She also pointed out that this form of tourism can create employment and economic opportunities for local musicians, traditional instrument makers, event organizers, handicraft producers, and related industries. Developing an annual calendar of musical events in Qeshm — aimed at engaging audiences and tourists interested in this art form — could serve as an effective strategy for increasing employment and income on this culturally rich island.

The Kavan Festival, featuring artists and music groups from southern Iran, is being held on Qeshm Island from October 12 to 24. The event celebrates the island’s rich musical and ritual heritage and invites lovers of southern Iranian music and culture to experience an immersive journey through performances, handicrafts, and traditional arts.

## Unearthing five millennia of civilization in Shahr-e Sukhteh



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Shahr-e Sukhteh (Burnt City) stands as one of the most distinguished archaeological sites in Iran, representing one of the earliest known urban communities in the history of human civilization. Over recent decades, extensive archaeological research has unveiled new insights into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the Shahr-e Sukhteh region, according to an archaeologist and researcher from Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Mohammadreza Jafari highlighted that a defining characteristic of Shahr-e Sukhteh is the presence of enduring peace among its inhabitants, coupled with a notable absence of mili-

taristic evidence. This suggests a societal culture deeply rooted in cooperation and peaceful coexistence, within a community distinguished by cultural diversity and broad-ranging interactions. Furthermore, the discovery of numerous industrial and commercial artifacts serves as compelling evidence of the advanced technological capabilities and sophisticated technical knowledge possessed by the people of that era, chn. ir wrote.

He stressed that through the dedicated efforts of the Cultural Heritage Organization and academic researchers, the preservation of this invaluable heritage site is being continually reinforced. The integration of advanced modern technolo-

gies plays a crucial role in both the conservation efforts and in promoting a better global understanding and appreciation of Shahr-e Sukhteh. Equally important is the education and awareness-building among younger generations, which serves as a foundational element for the ongoing continuation of these preservation initiatives.

Hossein Sarhadi, the director of the Shahr-e Sukhteh World Heritage Site, added the site stands as one of the most significant archaeological locations dating back to the third millennium BCE, with an estimated age of approximately 5,000 years. He further explained that the burned city, spanning an area of 270 hectares, was among

the largest cultural regions extending from Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) all the way to the Indus Valley in India. Strategically positioned at the heart of a vital communication corridor, it connected ancient civilizations across both east to west and north to south directions, spanning the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. The role of Shahr-e Sukhteh in shaping and advancing Iranian culture and civilization has been both exceptionally prominent and fundamental throughout history.

The role of Shahr-e Sukhteh in shaping and advancing Iranian culture and civilization extends far beyond its geographic boundaries, serving as a critical bridge linking diverse cultural traditions and technological innovations across the ancient Near East and South Asia. Its strategic location fostered an environment of constant interaction among peoples, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, religious beliefs, artistic styles, and scientific knowledge. This dynamic interchange contributed significantly to the emergence of complex societal structures and cultural developments both within the Iranian plateau and in neighboring regions.

Excavations have uncovered evidence of sophisticated water management systems, including canals and reservoirs, which reveal advanced understanding of hydraulic engineering and agricultural practices. These innovations not only supported the city’s large population but also reflect early efforts in en-



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vironmental adaptation and resource management. Moreover, the artistic achievements found at Shahr-e Sukhteh — ranging from intricate pottery and jewelry to early forms of writing and symbolic representations — provide valuable insights into the symbolic and intellectual life of its people. The discovery of the world’s oldest known artificial eyeball at the site also highlights the advanced medical knowledge and craftsmanship present in this ancient society.

Today, Shahr-e Sukhteh is an invaluable asset for archaeologists, historians, and cultural

scholars seeking to reconstruct the trajectory of early urban civilization. Ongoing excavations and research continue to reveal new facets of daily life, economic networks, and social organization that challenge and enrich our understanding of prehistoric human societies. The preservation and promotion of Burned City contribute not only to national pride and cultural identity in Iran but also to the global narrative of human history, emphasizing the interconnectedness of early civilizations and the shared heritage of humanity.