

Celebrating National Day of Villages to empower rural communities in Zanjan

Iranica Desk

The centralized and provincial organization of the festivals celebrating the National Day of Villages and Nomads in Zanjan Province — held from October 6 to 15 across fifteen rural and nomadic areas throughout the province — represents a purposeful and strategic initiative aimed at activating the hidden potential of rural and nomadic regions. These events directly impact two key economic sectors of the province: rural tourism and handicrafts. The festivals serve as an intelligent management instrument for achieving the province's goal of balanced development. By presenting a lively and dynamic image of rural life, these events open new doors to sustainable tourism, create direct marketplaces that bring handicrafts out of isolation, and connect them to the rural household economy. The continuation and expansion of these programs will be crucial for integrating Zanjan Province into the national tourism value chain, *chtn.ir* wrote.

The main declared objective of these festivals is to emphasize the role of villages in development and tourism. This aim is achieved through several mechanisms:

Attracting visitors to lesser-known areas: By organizing celebrations in various locations — including Su Kahriz village in Khorramdarreh as the starting point — national and provincial attention is drawn to villages with natural or historical tourism potential. This, in turn, motivates new groups of tourists to explore these areas.



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Showcasing accommodation capacities: The festivals create opportunities to introduce eco-lodges, traditional guesthouses, and the authentic lifestyle of rural communities. Such exposure can significantly increase the occupancy rates of these facilities in future tourist seasons.

Developing local infrastruc-

ture: Concentrating events in rural areas encourages local authorities to invest in improving access, sanitation, and essential facilities — infrastructure that is indispensable for the long-term sustainability of tourism. The successful development of rural tourism must rest upon three main pillars: infrastruc-



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ture and accessibility, attractions, and marketing and management. Furthermore, the revival, support, and marketing of handicrafts are of vital importance. Organizing the festival celebrating the National

Day of Villages and Nomads provides a valuable platform for the commercialization of these traditional arts. By establishing both permanent and temporary marketplaces, the products of local artisans — such as carpets, jajim (tra-

ditional woven fabric), pottery, and distinctive agricultural goods — can be sold directly without intermediaries. This approach ensures that profits return directly to the producers, thereby increasing their motivation to continue production and innovation.

Live demonstrations of handicraft production during the festivals attract younger generations to these professions and help safeguard traditional skills from extinction. Moreover, by focusing on a specific product in each festival, a unique product identity is established for every participating region.

These festivals are not merely economic events; they are powerful instruments of cultural identity and social cohesion. Holding them within the villages strengthens residents' sense of belonging to their culture and heritage while encouraging greater community participation in preserving their environment and traditions. Additionally, the revenue generated through organizing such events — including booth rentals and the sale of local food products — is reinvested into the rural economy, thereby reducing exclusive dependence on agriculture.

The celebration of the National Day of Villages and Nomads greatly enhances social vitality, as it is deeply connected to the identity and sense of belonging of local residents. This national festival provides villagers with an opportunity to proudly present their culture, traditions, and achievements, thereby reinforcing their collective self-esteem and community pride.

Gari Kouh Tower preserves legacy of southern Iran

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The city of Bastak, situated in the northwestern part of Hormozgan Province, boasts a rich history and a deep cultural heritage. It is home to a remarkable collection of historical relics, traditional architecture, and enduring structures that reflect the region's long-standing significance. Historically, Bastak lay along one of the main routes connecting southern Iran to the central and western parts of the country. Its strategic geographical location contributed to the development of a diverse array of architectural and historical structures over various periods, leaving a lasting legacy on the region's cultural landscape.

With its ancient urban fabric, castles, watchtowers, caravanserais, historic mosques, and traditional houses, Bastak stands as a valuable treasure that embodies the history and artistry of the people of southern Iran. The region's distinctive architecture, constructed using local materials such as stone, wood, and sarooj (a traditional lime-based mortar), exemplifies the ingenious ways in which humans adapted to the hot and arid climate of southern Iran, combining functionality with aesthetic sensibility, *chtn.ir* wrote.

Gari Kouh Tower, located along the Bastak-Kuhij road on the slopes of Anjirband Mountain, is a silent and solid structure that serves as a valuable monument reflecting the military architecture of southern Iran. Despite being over a century old, the tower still retains traces of its former grandeur and historical significance.

This tower is situated approximately 40 kilometers west of the city of Bastak, within the mountainous terrain of the region. Bastak itself lies in the northwestern part of Hormozgan Province at an elevation of about 400 meters above sea level. Owing to its unique geographical position, the city has long served as a key point along the routes connecting the southern ports of Iran to the central regions of the country, reinforcing its historical and strategic importance.

According to an inscription visible on the wall of the tower's second floor, the year 1329 AH is engraved on it. If this date corresponds to the period of the tower's construction, its age would exceed 110 years, placing it among the monuments of the late Qajar era. However, certain architectural features and the tower's strategic location along the Bandar Lengeh-Lar caravan route also suggest the possibility that it dates

back to the Safavid period — an era when the construction of defensive towers and military caravanserais along southern trade routes flourished. This valuable monument was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2002. Gari Kouh Tower is a three-story structure, approximately nine meters in height, built on a rectangular plan using river stones and sarooj mortar. The building is oriented along an east-west axis, and its thick lower walls — measuring up to 80 centimeters — reflect its defensive function and the remarkable structural strength designed to withstand potential threats.

The ground and middle floors feature ceilings made of local wood and tree branches, while the third floor functions as an open rooftop, enclosed by tall walls to provide an optimal vantage point for observation. Movement between the floors was facilitated by a wooden ladder positioned in the southeastern corner of the tower.

With its solid construction, strategic location, and absence of decorative elements, Gari Kouh Tower stands as a prominent example of military architecture in southern Iran. The presence of arrow slits, battlements, and a commanding view of the surround-



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ing plains indicate that the structure served a defensive and military purpose, likely intended for monitoring key communication routes and protect-

ing passing caravans. Gari Kouh Tower is not only a relic of Hormozgan Province's dynamic history along ancient trade routes but also a symbol of indigenous architectural knowledge and the skill of the region's inhabitants in adapting to the harsh, hot, and arid climate of southern Iran. It embodies both the historical significance and the architectural ingenuity of the region, making it an invaluable cultural and historical landmark.