

Lorestan Province's villages of water, harmony seek global tourism recognition

Iranica Desk

There are 11 tourism-targeted villages in the province, two of which — Bisheh and Kapar Judaki — have the potential for international tourism registration, said Ata Hassanpour, Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Lorestan Province.

He stated that three years ago, the management of Bisheh village's tourism services were handed over to the rural authorities so that local communities could directly benefit from the tourism potential of the waterfall and its surrounding natural beauty, ISNA wrote.

He noted that all financial credits allocated to the village's infrastructure are derived from this source. "In previous years, we established various facilities such as picnic platforms, connecting bridges, restrooms, a prayer room, and even an access road to improve visitor comfort and accessibility."

He added, "However, regarding the access road to the Bisheh Waterfall, due to the geological structure of the area, there have always been landslide issues. But with the road maintenance and stabilization project now underway, this recurring problem will certainly be resolved in the near future."

Hassanpour explained that the village, known as "the village without unemployment," owes this reputation to its



Bisheh Waterfall
● tourbist.com

year-round tourism potential created by the constant flow of visitors to the waterfall.

He said that another possible reason for this is the railway line passing through the village, which increases accessibility and attracts more tourists throughout the year."

He continued that the most beautiful part of the railway route — famous both in Iran and internationally for its geotourism value — is the section from Dorud toward

Khuzestan Province, distinguished by its tunnels, bridges, pristine natural attractions such as the Abgarm Waterfall, and endemic animal species like the Kaiser's newt, the blind fish, and the partridge. He emphasized that this area's breathtaking scenery and the hospitality of the local people along the railway have made it one of the most remarkable geotourism destinations in the country.

"Last year, the River and Rail

Festival was held in Bisheh village with the participation of foreign journalists residing in Iran. The village was among eight candidates nominated by Iran for registration with the World Tourism Organization, but it could not achieve the required score due to various reasons," he added.

Hassanpour said, "In terms of infrastructure, Bisheh village itself has no major problems for registration. The only issue lies in storytelling — a ritual-



Nest of storks, Kapar Judaki village
● [IRNA](http://irna.ir)



Dorud-Khuzestan railway
● tahlilbazaar.com

istic and spiritual matter that we must work on. If the people of Bisheh village cooperate and take initiative in this field, and the World Tourism Organization acknowledges it, the village will certainly achieve international registration." The official noted, "Another village in Borujerd called Kapar Judaki also stands out.

One of the aspects that this organization values is the voluntary participation of people in environmental activities. For instance, the locals build nests for storks on top of electric poles, which demonstrates their commitment to protecting nature and preserving the harmony between humans and wildlife."

Immerse in Katalekhkor Cave's timeless subterranean beauty

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Katalekhkor Cave, Zanjan Province, is a remarkable multi-layered limestone cave that shares its age with the renowned Alisadr Cave in Hamedan but distinguishes itself with its globally acclaimed transparent crystals and colorful stalactites, earning it the prestigious title of the second largest cave worldwide. This natural marvel, which formed over 120 million years ago, boasts an entrance situated at an altitude of 1,700 meters above sea level. The entry point opens into an impressive 4,000-meter-long corridor leading visitors eventually into magnificent halls adorned with crystal stalactites and massive limestone columns.

The stalactites within Katalekhkor Cave are far more than simple limestone deposits; their vibrant colors and astonishing clarity transport every visitor into dreamlike natural vistas, particularly those formations pristine of mineral impurities, shining with the brilliance of glass crystals, according to chn.ir. The cave, located in Garmab, was famously rediscovered in

the spring of 1952 by a group of notable Iranian mountaineers, although some sources suggest its discovery occurred in 1921, with an official registration following thirty years later through the dedication of Seyyed Asadollah Jamali. Of its seven layers — four unexplored and three officially mapped — tourists are currently permitted to explore only a two-kilometer path, a mere third of the entire cave system.

While Katalekhkor shares its geological age with Alisadr Cave, the purity of its limestone surpasses that of Alisadr, allowing light to permeate through the stalactites in some areas, creating ethereal scenes that appear almost unreal.

Geographically, the cave occupies a rectangular footprint of approximately 2,000 by 1,500 square meters, where experts attribute its formation to the combined effects of mechanical weathering and internal geological forces producing intersecting faults that eventually facilitated the cave's genesis under favorable conditions.

A unique feature attracting visitors to Katalekhkor Cave is



the imaginative naming of its various sections, each inspired by astonishing resemblances between limestone formations and familiar shapes. Along the visitor's route, one encounters evocatively named areas such as Panj Shir Square, Bistoun Square, Chehel Sotoun Square, Bride's Hall, Sham'e Square, and the Holy Mary Square — each evoking vivid mental imagery and imaginative worlds



● alibaba.ir

through their descriptive titles, derived from the distinctive limestone accumulations that define each area.

Katalekhkor transcends being a mere tourist destination by organizing into three distinct

sections catering to diverse interests: the recreational section featuring approximately two kilometers of publicly accessible paths; the sports section, reserved for experienced spelunkers, extending into

a four-kilometer route still awaiting full exploration; and the cultural section, a natural corridor hosting a variety of traditional ceremonies.

The optimal time to experience Katalekhkor Cave is during spring and summer when the cave's cool interior air complements the lush green surroundings, crafting an unforgettable ambiance. Visitors are advised to wear comfortable footwear, warm clothing, and carry only light backpacks for ease of travel. Access to the cave is straightforward, either by traveling from Zanjan toward Soltaniyeh and Khodabandeh-Garmab or by starting from Tehran, proceeding via the Qazvin-Zanjan freeway to Abhar and continuing toward Khodabandeh and Garmab, covering an approximate travel distance of 385 kilometers. Renowned as a natural treasure, Katalekhkor offers visitors access to around 1,250 meters of its vast interior on the first floor, although over 30 kilometers of passages have been mapped and identified. For travelers seeking extraordinary journeys and uncharted wonders, Katalekhkor in Zanjan presents an unparalleled gateway to a subterranean world where every stalactite narrates a tale spanning millions of years of geological and natural history.