

# Isfahan prepares to mark its national day

Iranica Desk

In 2005, the Islamic City Council of Isfahan designated the first day the first day of Iranian month of Azar (Nov. 22) as Isfahan National Day, a date that has since become an occasion for celebrating the city’s cultural, artistic, and historical heritage. The day also serves as a platform for examining Isfahan’s opportunities and challenges — an invitation to shared reflection and dialogue aimed at advancing sustainable development. Although never institutionalized through official channels, Isfahan National Day holds a deep and enduring place in the collective memory of the city’s residents. Its grassroots and community-driven character has ensured its continuity and popularity, particularly among cultural, academic, and intellectual circles. Chosen through strong public support, the day has long been honored independently of government directives. Instead, it has been kept alive through spontaneous civic initiatives —



Qeysarieh Gate  
● mizanonline.ir

cultural, artistic, and environmental gatherings, traditional ceremonies, storytelling tours, and even small neighborhood events, according to IRNA. The day provides an opportunity to highlight the many fac-

tors that have shaped Isfahan’s growth and reputation while also bringing attention to the challenges affecting its long-term sustainability. By presenting these varied dimensions of the city’s past and present, the

observance aims to broaden the conversation — extending from experts to officials — toward practical and thoughtful solutions. Its significance today lies less in the city’s distant history and more in the contemporary

civic engagement of its citizens. This year, as in years past, a series of events is scheduled across the city from Nov. 22–28 to mark Isfahan National Day and the Week of Isfahan Appreciation. The Isfahan Day Conference, a longstanding centerpiece of the celebrations, will be held on the evening of Nov. 27 with the participation of NGOs active in cultural heritage, the environment, and architecture, alongside several universities. Other programs include the unveiling of the Encyclopedia of Isfahan, compiled by researchers in the cultural, historical, and social fields. The continually expanding reference work will be introduced on Nov. 26 at Isfahan Central Library. A gathering at the Isfahan University of Art will also take place during the week, hosted in the historic Tohid Khaneh building, with discussions focused on urban planning and the future of the Zayandeh Rud River. The month of Azar holds long-

standing historical significance for the city. Construction of Isfahan’s defensive wall during the reign of Rukn al-Dawla, the first Buyid ruler of northern and central Iran, began at the start of Azar. In the Safavid era, the same month marked the beginning of construction of the Qeysarieh Bazaar. This temporal and architectural continuity ultimately helped shape the city’s emblem. Atop the Qeysarieh Gate, a mosaic depicts a horse archer — half human and half horse — aiming a bow and arrow at his own tail, which takes the form of a fire-breathing dragon. Decades ago, Abbas Behesh-tian, a devoted researcher of Isfahan, was the first to propose adopting this image as the city’s symbol. The idea was later reinforced by Lotfollah Honarfar, a prominent Isfahan scholar, who recommended the motif as the defining emblem of the city. The proposal was formally realized in 2005, when the first of Azar was officially designated as Isfahan National Day.

## Preserving history to boost tourism in Hormozgan

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During a visit to the historic districts of Bandar Lengeh and Bandar Kong, Sepehr Zarei, Deputy of Hormozgan Province’s Cultural Heritage, Touris and Handicraft Organization emphasized the need for the preservation, restoration, and purposeful utilization of historical sites to boost cultural tourism. Referring to the valuable antiquity of these districts and their historical role in shaping Bandar Lengeh’s identity, Zarei said, “The historic districts of Bandar Lengeh and Bandar Kong are symbols of the history, culture, and architecture of the southern coastal communities. With proper restoration and

revitalization, they have the potential to become one of the province’s most important cultural tourism destinations.” He added that due to their maritime and commercial heritage, these districts reflect a significant part of southern Iran’s historical identity. Reviving them could enhance the national visibility of Hormozgan Province’s tourism potential. Restoration of historic houses, and the creation of eco-tourism opportunities can preserve architectural authenticity while stimulating local employment and the economy, according to chtn.ir. Zarei also inspected the ongoing restoration of a historic bazaar in cooperation with the Bandar Lengeh Municipality, noting, “Historic markets are the economic and social heart of cities. Reviving and reactivating them not only strengthens urban identity but also increases tourist flow and the vitality of historic spaces. These restorations can serve as a model for other historic cities in organizing and revitalizing old markets.”

Continuing his visit, Zarei reviewed the condition of historic houses in Bandar Lengeh and highlighted the launch of the city’s first eco-lodges as a key initiative of the Cultural Heritage Department. “Eco-lodges can serve as a bridge between past and present, offering tourists an authentic experience while simultaneously supporting the local economy,” he said.



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Talesh, a land whose name is intertwined with history, invites you to explore its unique natural beauty and pristine attractions. The name Talesh comes from the Talysh people and, according to numerous historical sources and evidence, is considered a remnant of the ancient Cadusii tribes and one of the long-time neighbors of the Gilak people. The region is bordered by Ardabil Province to the west, Astara to the north, Rudbar to the south, and the Caspian Sea and Anzali to the east, kojaro.com wrote. Talesh stretches from the Caspian Sea on one side to the Talesh Mountains — the continuation of the Alborz range — on the other. Its natural attractions draw countless tourists every year, eager to witness its stunning landscapes.

## Talesh is land of natural wonders, ancient heritage

Siah Daran Forest Park

The Talesh, with its unique geographical location, is bounded on one side by plains, towns, and the sea, and on the other by forested foothills. Among its many tourist attractions, Siah Daran stands out. Historically, Siah Daran was home to towering oak trees, whose dense canopy made it difficult for people to enter the forest. After seasonal settlers began inhabiting the area, it became known as “Siah Daran,” meaning “covered with dark trees” (primarily oak and elm). Located in the southwest of Talesh, Siah Daran has recently been developed by the Talesh municipality as a recreational and leisure destination. With roads and stairways built along parts of the hill, visitors can now enjoy a pristine and scenic area at the highest point, featuring amenities such as a restaurant, gazebos, and restrooms. A thrilling rail sled ride through the forested slopes adds to the excitement. The park’s natural wildlife, including deer and wild gazelles, also captivates many nature enthusiasts and tourists.

Do Khaleh Kuh

Do Khaleh Kuh, a highland area in Talesh, is one of the most untouched and refreshing destinations in Gilan Province. With its clean air and breathtaking landscapes, this region offers a peaceful escape from the noise and bustle of city life. The best time to visit Do Khaleh Kuh is during the first half of the year.

Subatan Cave

Subatan Cave, also known as Ganj Khaneh (Treasure House Cave), lies on the northeastern side of the lush and untouched Subatan region. To reach the cave, visitors must take a short 15-minute walk from the nearby village, ideally accompanied by a guide. The path to the cave offers scenic views of green meadows dotted with beautiful flowers and a refreshing atmosphere that captivates every traveler. The entrance to Ganj Khaneh Cave is hidden among cliffs five to 15 meters high. With its narrow opening, it is not ideal for casual nature walkers, but it does hold a strong appeal for cave explorers and adventure seekers. Locals are familiar with the cave and often recommend it as one of Subatan’s attractions — yet many believe that the cave is cursed and that entering it may result in harm. Because of this legend, few dare to venture inside. The cave was first mapped and explored in 2015.

Subatan highland

The Subatan summer highland region is located 22 kilometers from the city of Lissar and 36 kilometers from Talesh, situated at an altitude of 1,900 to 2,500 meters above sea level. The stunning natural beauty of Subatan captivates every visitor, and the presence of wooden houses adds to its charm. The access route from Talesh includes some unpaved sections, which can be challenging to traverse, especially during rainy days. The best time to visit Sub-

atan is from mid-May to mid-summer.

Seragah Lake

Seragah Lake is located about 10 kilometers from the central district of Talesh, in a village called Seragah. The lake’s water is supplied by multiple underground springs beneath its basin. It is used for fish farming and is considered private property, though visitors are allowed to explore the area with the owner’s permission. The best time to visit Seragah Lake is during spring and summer, and tourists can camp nearby or stay in traditional wooden cottages in the village.

Kargan Rud River

The perennial Kargan Rud River is the largest and most water-rich river in the western part of Gilan Province, located in Talesh. It has three main tributaries and experiences lower water levels from June to October. After flowing through the city of Talesh, the river joins the Caspian Sea near Qoruq village, about six kilometers east of the city. The river is home to various fish species, including Caspian whitefish and salmon.

Gisum Forest Park

One of the most popular attractions in Gilan Province and Talesh is Gisum Forest Park. The scenic road to Gisum, lined with towering trees, forms a picturesque forest tunnel that captures the heart of every visitor. The forest path is infused with the cool mountain breeze from the Talesh highlands, of-

fering peace and relaxation to anyone who passes through. Gisum is a rare place where the forest meets the sea. Although the best time to visit Gisum is during the first half of the year, the natural beauty of the area in autumn and winter rivals that of spring and summer. In fall, the dense forest — especially the ironwood trees — creates a dreamlike landscape of vibrant colors. In winter, a blanket of snow gives Gisum a unique and magical appearance. Located on the Rasht–Astara road, about 10 kilometers before the Asalem–Khalilabad highway, Gisum Forest Park offers numerous amenities, including parking, public restrooms, a market, restaurants, gazebos, jet skiing, paragliding, cycling, horse riding, boating, and activities for children such as trampolines and an inflatable playground.



● 8deynews.com