

Restoration of Russian Castle on Ashuradeh Island kicks off

Iranica Desk

As part of efforts to develop tourism infrastructure and attract domestic and foreign investment, restoration and renovation work has begun on the historic Russian Castle on Ashuradeh Island, Golestan Province, with the aim of introducing the area as one of northern Iran's major tourism hubs. Thanks to its unique geographical position and rich natural and historical assets, Ashuradeh Island has long been considered one of the province's key tourist destinations. With the allocation of new funding and plans for investor participation, fresh prospects have emerged to transform the island into an international tourism site, chtn.ir wrote. Fereydoun Fa'ali, Director General of Golestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, outlined details of the project, stat-

ing that restoration of the Russian Castle marks the first phase of development on the island. Fa'ali said efforts are underway to complete this initial phase by the Nowruz holidays, allowing tourists to visit the island under improved conditions.

Addressing investment opportunities, he noted that the Iran Tourism Development Company has announced its readiness to introduce investors for the 22-hectare Ashuradeh Island site, describing the initiative as a significant step toward attracting both domestic and foreign investment to Golestan's tourism sector.

Fa'ali also referred to other cultural heritage projects underway in the province, noting that despite numerous challenges, the dossier for the global registration of the historic Great Wall of Gorgan has been completed and submitted.

Additionally, he announced plans to inaugurate the first

phase a rural museum during the upcoming Nowruz holidays. He further referred to the restoration of Qaleh-Jigh (Jigh Castle), adding that funding has been allocated on two occasions for the revival of the castle and parts of its surrounding historic wall.

With its pristine landscapes, rich history, and ongoing development projects, Ashuradeh Island is set to emerge as a cultural and eco-tourism hotspot, offering visitors a rare opportunity to explore northern Iran's heritage while enjoying the island's scenic beauty and growing hospitality facilities.

As restoration and development continue, Ashuradeh Island is expected to become a model for sustainable tourism in Golestan Province, combining preservation of historical sites with modern visitor facilities. Authorities envision the island not only as a destination for sightseeing but also as a hub for cultural events, eco-tourism,



and investment-driven projects, creating new opportunities for local communities while showcasing the rich heritage and natural beauty of northern Iran to the world. chtin.ir

Winter migration brings thousands of flamingos to Hormozgan shores

Iranica Desk

The deputy head of Hormozgan Province's Department of Environmental Protection said the presence of more than 2,000 flamingos along the province's coastline is a clear indicator of ecosystem health and represents a valuable opportunity for nature-based tourism development in the region. Meisam Qasemi outlined the province's unique environmental characteristics, stating that Hormozgan,

with a coastline stretching more than 2,000 kilometers, numerous coastal wetlands, and extensive mangrove forests, provides an ideal habitat for a wide range of migratory bird species, particularly the visually striking flamingos, mehrnews.com wrote. He noted that the migration of these birds begins in late November and continues through the end of winter. According to Qasemi, the availability of tidal coastal areas and food-rich wetlands allows flamin-

gos to endure the colder months while restoring their energy reserves in preparation for their spring migration. Commenting on the environmental and social impact of the flamingos' presence, Qasemi said that watching these birds during the cool morning hours in the provincial capital city of Bandar Abbas not only reflects the vitality and stability of the local ecosystem, but also contributes positively to public morale and enhances the city's appeal for tourists and nature lovers.

Providing statistical data from last year's mid-winter bird census, he added that more than 2,000 flamingos were recorded across the coastal zones and wetlands of Hormozgan Province. Of this total, at least 230 flamingos were observed along the coastline of Bandar Abbas, particularly within the areas surrounding Dolat and Velayat parks, highlighting the importance of these urban coastal spaces as seasonal wildlife habitats.



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Ancient Zarch Qanat sustains life in Iran's central plateau

Iranica Desk

Located in the heart of Iran's central plateau, Yazd Province has long struggled with chronic water scarcity. Despite the region's harsh climate and limited natural water resources, earlier generations succeeded in developing sustainable and innovative water-management systems grounded in indigenous knowledge, creativity, and a deep understanding of the natural environment. Among the most remarkable and enduring examples of this legacy is the Zarch Qanat, which stands as a testament to human ingenuity in adapting to arid conditions. For centuries, the Zarch Qanat has played a vital and continuous role in supplying drinking water, supporting agricultural activities, and shaping the development of human settlements throughout the region. Extending more than 100 kilometers in length and comprising 2,115 wells, it is recognized as the oldest and longest qanat in the world. Historical evidence indicates that the qanat has been in

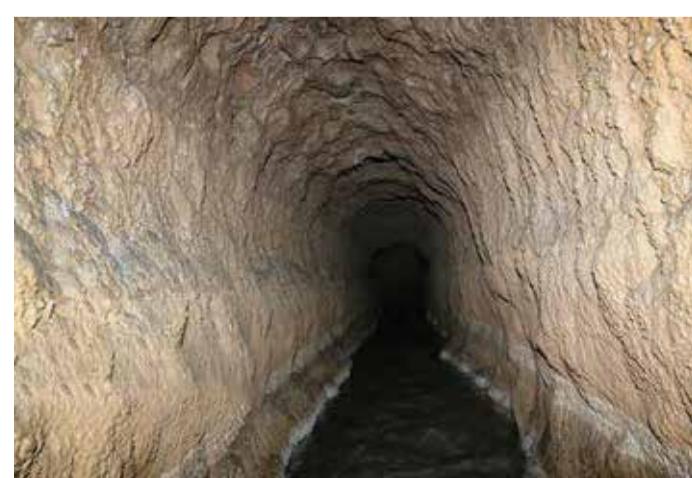
use for over 3,000 years, underscoring its exceptional durability and importance in Iran's water heritage, IRNA reported. Beyond its impressive scale, the Zarch Qanat represents a living cultural heritage rather than merely a hydraulic structure. Its extensive underground channels, numerous vertical wells, precise water-guidance techniques, and careful preservation of the land's natural

slope all point to a high level of engineering knowledge and advanced planning. These achievements were realized without modern technology, relying solely on accumulated experience, observation, and traditional calculations passed down through generations. One of the distinctive architectural features of the Zarch Qanat is its square cross-section, a characteristic that dates back

to the Zoroastrian era. Until approximately five decades ago, the qanat discharged more than 150 liters of water per second, providing a reliable source of water for surrounding communities. In recent years, however, uncontrolled drilling of deep and semi-deep wells within the qanat's water protection zone has caused a significant and alarming decline in its water flow. The outlet of the Zarch Qanat is

located in the city of Zarch and consists of three separate underground branches. At present, only the saline branch, with a total length of 72 kilometers, remains active. While the discharge rate of this branch reaches about 60 liters per second in the upper reaches of the qanat, it decreases to approximately 28 liters per second by the time the water reaches the outlet. Experts and cultural heritage

specialists believe that the Zarch Qanat holds considerable potential to be promoted as a major historical and scientific tourist attraction in Yazd Province. With its ability to attract domestic and international tourists, researchers, and enthusiasts of history, architecture, and environmental studies, proper introduction and management of the site could play an important role in developing sustainable tourism, increasing public awareness, and ensuring the long-term preservation of this valuable heritage. Yazd Province, home to numerous mosques, shrines, Husseiniyehs, important Zoroastrian pilgrimage sites, historic houses, water reservoirs, historic gardens, windcatchers, and traditional bazaars, is widely regarded as a rich treasury of Iranian art, culture, and civilization. Within this unique cultural landscape, the Zarch Qanat remains one of the province's most compelling symbols of human resilience, wisdom, and creativity in confronting the challenges of desert life.



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