

Abu Musa set to host cruise ship under new tourism plan



● MEHR

Iranica Desk

The governor of Abu Musa, Hormozgan Province, announced plans to establish a maritime route for a leisure cruise vessel to the island, describing

the move as an effective step toward revitalizing maritime tourism and promoting economic development on Abu Musa and other strategic islands.

Speaking to IRNA, Ahmad Bana-

fi said that following months of joint meetings with the private sector, the necessary agreements have been reached to deploy a cruise ship aimed at developing maritime tourism in the Persian Gulf, with a focus

procedures and the issuance of required permits are currently underway, noting that the vessel's first trial voyage is expected to take place before March 21, sailing from Bushehr to Abu Musa and Kish.

Banafi said that following the trial voyage, planning will be finalized to schedule at least one weekly trip to Abu Musa. He emphasized that developing tourism on the island and its surrounding islands is a key priority for local officials and is being pursued with determination.

Referring to the ship's technical and hospitality capabilities, the governor said the vessel is equipped with hotel-style accommodations and standard passenger services, enabling it to play an important role in showcasing Abu Musa's natural attractions and expanding maritime tourism in the region.

stern, giving it a special roll-on/roll-off cargo-passenger function. This allows freight trucks to drive onto the vessel under their own power at the departure port and disembark the same way at the destination.

According to Banafi, the vessel is 145 meters long and powered by four engines with a combined output of 27,560 kilowatts, enabling a cruising speed of 24 knots.

Highlighting its passenger capacity, he said the ship can carry up to 1,700 passengers across five different classes, ranging from economy seating using shared public spaces to luxury cabins with direct sea views. In total, 250 cabins with more than 581 beds are distributed across multiple decks and categorized according to service level and location.

He added that the ship's second and third decks are designed to accommodate up to 700 passenger vehicles, a capacity expected to significantly facilitate maritime transport and strengthen trade and tourism exchanges involving Abu Musa.

The city of Abu Musa comprises five inhabited islands and one uninhabited island, with Abu Musa Island serving as the administrative center. The island is located approximately 220 kilometers from Bandar Abbas, the capital of Hormozgan Province.



● IRNA

on Abu Musa, IRNA wrote.

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He noted that the ship is fitted with two ramps at the bow and

Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari prepares to host Nowruz travelers

Iranica Desk

More than 800 tourist attractions, including 108 natural sites, 674 cultural and historical attractions, eight man-made landmarks, 12 nationally designated tourism target villages, 15 government-approved exemplary tourism area are ready to welcome Nowruz (Iranian New Year) travelers to Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, widely known as the "Roof of Iran."

Hadi Qasemi Nafchi, deputy head of the province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said all accommodation facilities under the supervision of the organization — including hotels, apartment hotels, guesthouses, licensed private lodgings, eco-lodges and other units — have been fully prepared to host Nowruz travelers, according to chtn.ir.

He added that during the Nowruz holidays, priority accommodation will be given to licensed facilities operating under the supervision of the provincial cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts Organization.

Qasemi said the organization is making every effort to ensure pleasant and memorable experiences for visitors during the holiday period.

Referring to the province's natural assets, he noted that the oak forests of the Zagros region — particularly those in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari — rank among the area's most significant tourist attractions. He stressed that the forests are a valuable asset, especially for tourism, and require effective measures for protection and expansion.

Qasemi further emphasized that tourism development plays a key role in job creation, reducing unemployment, stimulating economic growth and improving local livelihoods.



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Riab blends ancient wisdom with modern desert technologies

Iranica Desk

Gonabad, located in the arid climate of Khorasan Razavi Province, has long been defined as a resilient and dynamic historical landscape — one whose 5,000-year-old civilization is attested not only by oral history, but also by written records and monumental structures.

In the current era, the prevailing management approach is based on the principle of transforming valuable tangible and intangible heritage from a purely historical collection into a driving force for sustainable development. This modern perspective in Gonabad's urban management, particularly in the historic area of Riab village, has created a rare convergence between ancient heritage and forward-looking technological planning. Situated on the edge of the desert and shaped atop millennia of civilization, Riab is today emerging as a model for integrating intelligent desert architecture with living cultural heritage. Its adobe structures, windcatchers, and complex qanat systems are not only core elements of the region's historical identity, but also serve as inspiration for modern technologies in energy management, climate adaptation, and water resource optimization, according to ISNA.

Today, Riab has become a forum for dialogue between a wise past and a technology-driven future — a settlement rooted in soil and wind, yet oriented toward the horizon ahead. Continued research efforts, cultural investment, and the empowerment of the local community can help realize the vision of transforming Riab into a national symbol of intelligent Iranian desert architecture and a shining example of heritage-innovation integration, where thousands of years of desert living inform new ways of life in the 21st century.



● kojara.com

Sheltered by the grandeur of the Qasabeh Qanat, Riab village represents an outstanding example of Iran's desert settlements, displaying unique capacities that extend beyond purely historical value. The village stands as a living treasury of the intelligent integration of architecture with climate, the continuity of social rituals, and a traditional agricultural system. Head of Riab's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department described Riab not merely as a historical site, but as a practical model for sustainable living in arid regions. He noted that while archaeological evidence points to a much older origin, written records estimate the village's age at more than 1,000 years.

In an interview with ISNA, Hamidreza Mahmoudi said what makes Riab unique is the preservation of its functional continuity: traditional agriculture remains active, resource-sharing customs — such as water allocation — are still practiced in their original form, and the village's social structure has not experienced disruption. He added that Riab, which was officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 2008, is currently among the country's final eight villages under review for

nomination as a World Tourism village. This candidacy requires presenting a complete picture of life within a historical context — something Riab has fully achieved. Referring to Riab's proximity to the Qasabeh Qanat, Mahmoudi said the village's local qanat network, with more than 20 kilometers of underground channels, constitutes a significant water



heritage in its own right. This system has been the village's lifeline throughout history and remains its central attraction today. He also noted that Riab has been a pioneer in local tourism, having hosted the province's first ecotourism. This successful experience demonstrated the region's strong potential for attracting private investment in ecotourism, although further progress requires government support in infrastructure development.

Mahmoudi emphasized that Riab's true value lies in its architecture that is deeply intertwined with environmental physics. The village's traditional houses are not merely shelters, but passive heating and cooling systems that function based on wind flow and temperature differentials.

He explained that the houses are intelligently oriented to capture prevailing winds and channel them through a network of ducts connected to underground cellars. Windcatchers linked to pool rooms (Howzkhaneh) cool and humidify the air before distributing it throughout the interior spaces. In addition, sabats — roofed, shaded passageways — were designed in the alleys to facilitate pedestrian movement during hot summer days. Each house features a private central courtyard that acts as a microclimate, playing a key role in temperature regulation.

Mahmoudi added that the village's defensive section was also systematically organized, reflecting strong social order in the past. Riab contains two concentric fortresses, each with its own towers and ramparts. These structures served not only to defend against invaders, but also to store essential supplies, including grain reserves and equipment needed for prolonged defense.

The village also features a massive defensive moat, approximately six meters wide and four meters deep, excavated around the main fortress structures. In times of emergency, the moat was filled with qanat water, creating a natural defensive barrier.

Mahmoudi concluded that in addition to its residential fabric, Riab is home to numerous attractions, including a historic congregational mosque, several traditional water reservoirs — some of which are still in use — a shrine attributed to Abu Mansur, and an old village school. Together, these elements form a rich collection of religious and educational heritage, presenting a complete picture of an authentic desert community that now stands on the threshold of global recognition.