

Zanjan's museums preserve centuries of history, culture

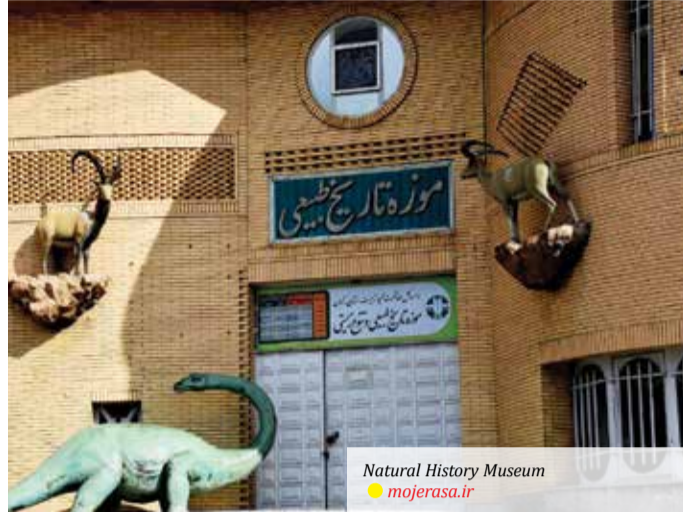
Iranica Desk

Zanjan Province is home to 12 museums spanning various fields, serving as valuable repositories of the region's rich cultural and historical heritage. Officials say preserving and maintaining these treasures requires greater attention and support.

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), operating under UNESCO, designated May 18 as International Museum Day during its 12th General Assembly held in Moscow in 1977. Since then, museums around the world have marked the occasion annually by discussing key issues facing the sector, while museum experts and the public engage in dialogue about the challenges confronting these institutions. Special ceremonies are also held at several renowned museums worldwide, according to IRNA.

International Museum Day provides an opportunity to strengthen global scientific and cultural cooperation among museums through coordinated international initiatives and joint programs aimed at promoting cultural understanding.

A museum is defined as a place for collecting, preserving, studying, and exhibiting cultural or natural heritage for the purposes of education, research, appreciation, and



Natural History Museum
● mojerasa.ir

public enjoyment.

Today, museums are widely recognized as institutions that showcase the history, civilization, culture, and hidden stories of nations spanning thousands of years.

Speaking to IRNA, Mohammadreza Mohammadpour, Deputy Head of Zanjan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, highlighted the importance of museums in society.

"Museums play a unique and enduring role in human societies through the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage," he said.

"Museums are among the few institutions safeguarding the legacy of past generations. Ev-

ery historical object, though silent, tells countless stories and serves as an authentic document of art, culture, and history."

Referring to International Museum Day and Cultural Heritage Week, observed in Iran from May 18 to May 24, Mohammadpour stressed the need for a large museum complex in Zanjan featuring sections dedicated to archaeology, anthropology, contemporary arts, and traditional occupations.

"The province lacks such a specialized facility, and the issue has long been neglected at the national level due to funding shortages and other constraints," he said.

According to Mohammadpour,



Rakshshouykhaneh Anthropology Museum
● IRNA

the large number of archaeological and anthropological artifacts stored in provincial repositories demonstrates the need for a major museum meeting international standards.

He added that the current site displaying unique artifacts such as the Salt Men is a historic house lacking the facilities and standards of a modern museum. Addressing the impact of museums on tourism, Mohammadpour said cooperation among historical sites, museums, hotels, and travel agencies strengthens tourism networks and increases visitor numbers. "Museums work closely with tourism agencies to attract visitors and pay special attention to tourism development," he said.

He explained that the strategic location of a museum enhances the image of a region and supports the growth of tourism and leisure industries.

Research on sustainable tourism development has highlighted the importance of heritage attractions, historical monuments, and museums, he added, noting that stronger museum marketing strategies can significantly contribute to broader tourism promotion.

Mohammadpour emphasized that museums reflect the culture and lifestyle of local communities while illustrating the diversity of human societies.

"Regional museums introduce the culture and heritage of local residents and promote tourism

by highlighting indigenous and regional characteristics," he said. He warned that shortcomings in this sector could undermine efforts to introduce local culture, customs, and traditions.

Mohammadpour said Zanjan currently has 12 active museums, including the Natural History Museum, Rakshshouykhaneh Anthropology Museum, Martyrs Museum, Archaeology and Salt Men Museum, Abhar Archaeology Museum, Soltanieh World Heritage Site Museum, Botanical Garden Museum of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Handicrafts Museum, Postal Museum, History and Culture Museum, Mehraneh Museum, and the Sacred Defense Museum.

He added that several additional museums are under development, including the Health Museum, Carpet Museum of Qoltuq village, Water Museum, and Zanjan University Museum, which are expected to open within the next year in cooperation with relevant organizations.

Mohammadpour also announced that 30 cultural and educational programs will be held during Cultural Heritage Week.

"These programs are designed to introduce, protect, and promote the province's rich cultural and historical heritage while honoring those active in this field," he said.

Branding; a key to tourism development in Semnan Province

Iranica Desk

The deputy head of Semnan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization has emphasized the need to develop the tourism industry by focusing more on branding across various sectors, including handicrafts.

Samaneh Soltani, speaking to ISNA, referred to the upcoming national gathering of eco-lodge operators in Qaleh Bala village of Shahrud, describing it as an opportunity. She noted that Qaleh Bala, a designated tourism target village, is a well-known name in the tourism sector both nationally and province-wide. Soltani identified branding, marketing, and market development as serious needs for

the trade sector, particularly in handicrafts. "Unfortunately, these areas have received insufficient attention in our country, which has caused economic difficulties for those involved in this field. However, in recent years, significant steps have been taken that could help revive these industries nationwide," she said.

Highlighting the high tourism capacity of the picturesque village of Qaleh Bala, Soltani discussed the process of its global registration. "Having this village listed among internationally targeted tourism destinations can greatly enhance its recognition," she added.

She referred to efforts made to support the village's global registration as one of eight villages

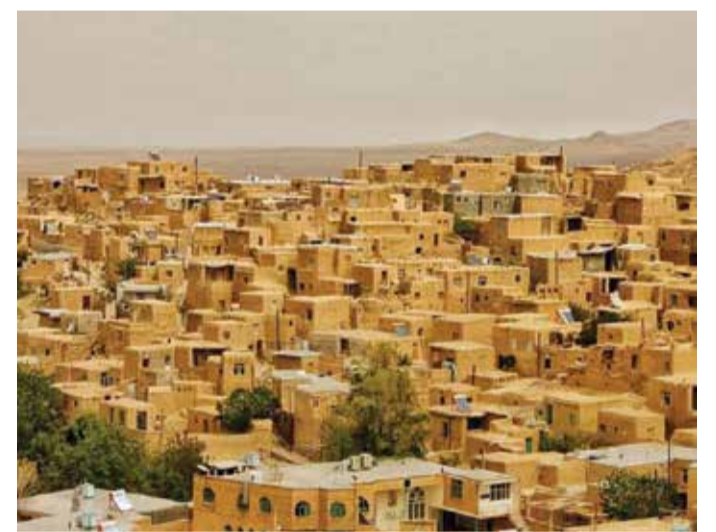
nominated by Iran. "To develop tourism in the province, we need branding — both in handicrafts and in cultural heritage and tourism sectors," she stated. Soltani described cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts as three interconnected circles, noting that growth in any of these sectors can further develop this lucrative industry in the province.

She also noted that holding handicraft exhibitions is a key policy of the department year-round. Over the past year, 52 handicraft exhibitions have been organized by her office in various parts of the province and country.

Soltani announced plans to establish a handicraft house in the village, which is on the

verge of global registration. "Fortunately, the people of this village have long paid special attention to various tourism sectors, including handicrafts. Some local accommodations and eco-lodges have historically made efforts in this area, as life in this region has always been intertwined with handicrafts," she explained. She also reported that a handicraft exhibition will be held on the sidelines of the national eco-lodge operators' gathering in Qaleh Bala. "Showcasing local products and handicrafts from the region at this exhibition can help further introduce and promote the village," she added.

Soltani assessed the holding of such exhibitions as effective in



● IRNA

improving the tourism economy and emphasized that the prod-

ucts displayed should match consumer tastes and needs.

UNESCO-listed Akbariyeh Garden hosts traditional food festival



● chntn.ir

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The Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of South Khorasan Province announced the holding of an Iranian Food Festival in conjunction with Cultural Heritage Week and International Museum Day. Seyyed Ahmad Barabadi said the cultural and tourism event was organized to preserve intangible cultural heritage, showcase local potential and strengthen the role of women in safeguarding authentic Iranian traditions. The festival was held on Monday at the

UNESCO-listed Akbariyeh Garden and Mansion in Birjand, according to chntn.ir.

Barabadi noted that the participation of female artists and exhibitors from Birjand showcased the close connection between Iranian culture, art, and culinary traditions in one of the province's most valuable historical sites. He added that 50 pavilions were set up during the festival, where participants displayed a wide range of traditional and local dishes, homemade pastries, desserts, and handicrafts for visitors and judges. The scenic atmosphere of Akbariyeh, combined with the

aroma of traditional cuisine, created a memorable experience for attendees.

Referring to the diversity of the exhibits, Barabadi said the festival featured dishes from different parts of Iran, particularly traditional foods from Birjand and several northern cities. Although some fast-food items were also presented, the majority of the offerings consisted of traditional and local cuisine.

He emphasized that a variety of local soups and traditional Birjandi breads were among the festival's highlights and attracted considerable attention from visitors. Local sweets and pastries

were also warmly welcomed. Barabadi further explained that the festival included a competitive section in which three judges evaluated entries in the categories of food, pastries, and local bread. One winner from each category was selected and honored.

He stressed that such festivals not only help introduce the province's intangible cultural heritage and tourism potential, but also provide a valuable opportunity to showcase women's capabilities and promote authentic Iranian culture at the historical and internationally recognized sites of South Khorasan Province.