

# Lorestan's historic legacy sets national records

## Iranica Desk

The Director-General of Lorestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization has highlighted the province's significant role in Iran's cultural heritage landscape, saying that Lorestan was the country's leading province in the registration of national heritage sites until 2010 and continues to rank among Iran's top provinces in terms of heritage listings, archaeological areas, and heritage coverage. Ata Hassanpour told ISNA that Lorestan held the country's top position in national heritage

registrations until 2010, with nearly 2,000 sites listed in Iran's national heritage records. He added that the province still holds the record for the highest number of heritage registrations in a single year, noting that in 2006, Lorestan succeeded in registering 1,000 sites on the national heritage list. The official said that Lorestan currently ranks second in Iran after Fars Province, with around 2,700 registered national heritage sites. He explained that the change in ranking was due to the introduction of quotas for heritage registrations, with provinces that were previously

leaders receiving fewer quotas, while other provinces were given more opportunities to catch up. Hassanpour emphasized Lorestan's exceptional cultural heritage status, stating that the province ranks first in Iran in terms of the number of registered sites, with about 2,700 entries. He also said Lorestan leads the country in heritage area coverage, with a total area of approximately 28,000 square kilometers, and is also the national record-holder for archaeological sites. He noted that three major cultural heritage sites are active in



the province: the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle site, Borujerd's Historic Fabric site, and the National Historic Bridges site. According to Hassanpour, Lorestan serves as the headquarters for Iran's historic bridge network, with around 100 an-

cient bridges. He explained that the province's numerous rivers, including the Zal, Seymareh, Sezar, and Kashkan, along with its mountainous terrain, made bridge construction essential throughout history. He added that bridge-build-

ing in Lorestan dates back to ancient periods, including the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras, and continued into the Islamic period. He described the region as a national leader in bridge architecture and construction.

## Silk Festival to be held in Torbat-e Heydarieh



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The Governor of Torbat-e Heydarieh, Khorasan Razavi Province announced that a Silk Festival will be held on June 11 in the town of Bayg, coinciding with the silkworm breeding and silk production season, as part of efforts to register the silk event on Iran's national tourism calendar.

Mojtaba Shojaei said the festival will feature a range of programs, including a specialized silk tour, visits to the silkworm breeding department, tours of silk-reeling workshops, a handicrafts exhibition, and a ceremony honoring veterans and pioneers of the silk-reeling industry.

He emphasized that all available resources will be mobilized to ensure the festival is held successfully, allowing the city's social assets and unique capacities to be properly introduced and recognized, according to chtn.ir. Shojaei noted that Torbat-e Heydarieh, which produces more than 80 percent of Iran's silk, is known as the country's silk capital and the "land of white gold." He added that the festival will also support efforts to revive the Silk Road route, noting that Torbat-e Heydarieh is a member of the International Tourism Alliance of Silk Road Cities (ITASRC).

He continued that Torbat-e Heydarieh is the only region where the silk tradition remains alive through the operation of more than 300 traditional silk-reeling workshops.

The official added that Torbat-e Heydarieh has historically been located along a branch of the Silk Road, with the existence of 13 caravanserais and traditional inns across the county serving as evidence of this heritage.

He also noted that Bayg and the Besk village have been nationally registered by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts as the country's only national silk-reeling town and village, respectively.

## Untapped potential of Zanjan's protected areas

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Today, tourism — particularly nature-based tourism, or ecotourism — plays a vital role in the economies of many countries. Unlike mass tourism, which often requires heavy investment in large-scale infrastructure such as luxury hotels, extensive road networks, and major transportation systems, ecotourism focuses on direct, affordable, and responsible experiences in natural environments. Ecotourists are travelers who explore beautiful, diverse, and peaceful landscapes with limited facilities while respecting the environment. Countries with rich biodiversity have often been more successful in attracting these visitors and generating foreign revenue. Iran, due to its unique geographical location and wide range of climates, has significant potential to become an important ecotourism destination. However, achieving this goal requires accurate identification of natural resources, careful planning, sustainable management, and increased public awareness, according to chtn.ir.

The development of ecotourism not only creates employment and economic opportunities but also strengthens visitors' sense of responsibility toward nature conservation. In essence, ecotourism represents a thoughtful and environmentally friendly approach to the use of natural resources, where conservation and development advance together.

Tourism in protected areas is one of the most important forms of sustainable engagement with nature. It aims to introduce people to environmental values, promote a culture of conservation, and generate income for local communities. When properly managed, this form of tourism can support biodiversity protection while creating

opportunities for social and economic development around protected areas.

Protected areas, with their natural landscapes, valuable plant and animal species, and unique ecosystems, have considerable potential to attract visitors. One of the key factors behind successful tourism development in these areas is the participation of local communities. When local residents benefit from tourism, they have stronger motivation to protect their surrounding environment.



Anguran Protected Area  
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Tourism in protected areas can only succeed when it is built on conservation, education, community participation, and scientific management. Under such conditions, nature is preserved while responsible and sustainable tourism opportunities are created. The development of ecotourism in Zanjan Province, supported by its diverse climates and rich ecosystems, represents a major opportunity for sustainable economic growth. With approximately 19 percent of its territory, under national protection, Zanjan has significant potential to attract both domestic and international nature travelers.

Transforming these resources from "strict protection" into "responsible and sustainable use" could create meaningful employment opportunities and generate tourism revenue. Integrated management of protected areas such as Anguran and Sorkhabad,

along with restricted hunting zones, provides a foundation for responsible tourism development.

The expansion of low-impact, environmentally compatible infrastructure — without damaging sensitive ecosystems — is essential for success in this field. Cooperation between local communities and government institutions is also necessary to raise awareness and encourage environmental responsibility.

As a green alternative to environmentally harm-

ful activities, ecotourism has the potential to transform local economies and position Zanjan as a major tourism destination in western Iran. With long-term planning and targeted investment, the province's natural assets can become a sustainable source of prosperity for local communities.

Covering an area of approximately 22,164 square kilometers, Zanjan Province holds a special place on Iran's natural map due to its climatic diversity, significant elevation changes, and variety of plant and animal species.

Situated within Iran's mountainous belt and benefiting from diverse ecosystems, Zanjan is considered one of the country's important regions in terms of natural resources and biodiversity. Developing ecotourism in the province requires accurate identification, documentation, and sustainable management of these resources.

## Anguran Protected Area

The Anguran Protected Area is a remarkable destination for wildlife enthusiasts, nature photographers, and adventure travelers. Located at the intersection of Zanjan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, and Kurdistan provinces, Anguran offers visitors a combination of impressive mountain landscapes and rich biodiversity.

The area covers approximately 125,000 hectares, including 90,000 hectares of protected land and 35,000 hectares designated as a wildlife refuge.

With around 171 plant species, including shrubs, trees, and herbaceous plants, Anguran becomes a spectacular landscape of wildflowers during spring, attracting nature lovers and botanical enthusiasts. The area is home to valu-

able wildlife species, including Armenian mouflon, wild goats, brown bears, wolves, foxes, jackals, and lynxes. The best opportunities for wildlife observation are usually during early morning or evening hours, accompanied by experienced guides and within designated safe areas.

Anguran is also an attractive destination for birdwatching. Migratory birds such as black storks, flamingos, swans, and pelicans have made the region a popular destination for bird photographers.

The Sorkhabad Protected Area is another major ecotourism destination in Zanjan Province. Due to its easier access and proximity to major cities, it plays an important role in the development of regional tourism. Located in the southwestern part of Taram and northwest of Zanjan, Sorkhabad's strategic location makes it more accessible for travelers and nature enthusiasts. The protected area covers approximately 120,000 hectares.

Situated along the southern slopes of the Zagros Mountains and near the Qezel Ozan River, Sorkhabad benefits from a moderate mountainous climate that supports rich biodiversity.



Sorkhabad Protected Area  
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The area is also rich in birdlife, including birds of prey such as golden eagles, black eagles, and owls.

With its diverse ecosystems, protected landscapes, and unique wildlife, Zanjan has the potential to become a leading destination for sustainable ecotourism in Iran — where conservation and economic development can progress together.