

Minab showcases blend of history, agriculture, natural attractions



Hazareh Castle
● IRNA



Panjshanbe Bazaar
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Azini Wetland
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Minab, located in eastern parts of Hormozgan Province, lies along the Minab River and has long been regarded as one of the most important settlement and agricultural centers in southern Iran due to its fertile lands. Some researchers trace the city's history back to the Sassanid era and even earlier periods. The city of Minab recently came under widespread public attention in Iran and around the world following a devastating military attack by the US and Israel on an elementary school in the city. The strike, which resulted in the martyrdom and injuries of innocent schoolchildren, was widely condemned and sparked profound grief and outrage among the public. The tragedy highlighted the devastating human cost of vi-

olence against civilians, particularly children, and drew significant media coverage both domestically and internationally. In the wake of this heartbreaking event and the increased attention it generated, the following text provides an overview of the city and its historical and cultural significance. Its tropical climate, vast palm groves, mango orchards, and proximity to the Sea of Oman have given Minab a distinct identity, turning it into one of the key tourism destinations in eastern Hormozgan, IRNA wrote. Among the city's historical landmarks, the Hazareh Castle (also known as Bibi Minu Castle) is the most prominent surviving heritage structure. Located in the city center, the fortress is considered the only major historical monument remaining from Minab's past. Local narratives attribute its con-

struction to two sisters, Bibi Minu and Bibi Nazanin. Some sources estimate the castle's age at more than 1,000 years, noting that it served defensive and administrative functions in different historical periods. Built primarily from mudbrick and clay, the structure once featured a surrounding moat. Although parts of the castle have been damaged over time, it remains one of Minab's key historical symbols and offers insight into the region's architectural traditions. One of Minab's most significant cultural attractions is its weekly Thursday Market (Panjshanbe Bazaar). With a long history, the market draws vendors and buyers from across Hormozgan and neighboring provinces. It features handicrafts, local clothing, agricultural products, southern spices, dates, citrus fruits, and hand-

made textiles produced by local women. The vibrant atmosphere and traditional attire of Minabi women create a distinctive cultural experience for visitors. The Thursday Market is more than a trading hub; it functions as a living exhibition of southern Iran's cultural traditions and social life. Among Minab's natural attractions, the Azini Wetland, located near Sirik on the shores of the Sea of Oman, stands out as a protected ecosystem. It serves as a habitat for migratory birds and aquatic species. During cooler seasons, numerous bird species migrate to the wetland for wintering, making it a popular destination for birdwatching and nature tourism. The area's calm environment, coastal waterways, and vegetation have made it one of eastern Hormozgan's most attractive ec-

otourism sites. Another important natural site is the Tiab Wetland, which features interconnected waterways that support diverse plant and animal life. Boat tours through the mangroves — where trees grow in saline water — offer visitors a unique experience. The wetland also plays a crucial role in maintaining regional biodiversity. In recent years, Minab Hilltop (Bam-e Minab) has also gained popularity among tourists. The elevated site provides panoramic views of the city, palm groves, and surrounding plains. Watching sunrise or sunset from this vantage point is considered one of the highlights of visiting Minab, and the area is frequently used by photographers capturing landscapes and urban scenery. The Minab River has been a key

factor in the city's formation and development. The availability of freshwater in a hot and arid region has made agriculture possible and established Minab as one of southern Iran's major farming hubs. The Esteqlal Dam (Minab Dam), built on the river, not only supplies water to the region but has also become a tourist attraction. Its reservoir and surrounding landscape provide a recreational space for families and visitors. Minab is also known for its extensive agricultural landscape. The city is one of Iran's key producers of dates, citrus fruits, and especially mangoes. Its vast orchards and palm groves present a contrasting image of lush greenery in southern Iran. During harvest seasons, tourists can observe traditional farming practices and experience fresh tropical fruits directly from local farms.

Isfahan looks beyond daylight to revitalize tourism

Iranica Desk

In recent years, night tourism has emerged in many of the world's major tourist destinations as a strategy to encourage longer stays, distribute urban activity more evenly throughout the day, and create new employment opportunities. For Isfahan — one of Iran's most important tourism hubs — this trend could provide a significant opportunity to redefine parts of urban life after sunset. Experts believe that in historic cities, night should not simply represent a period of closure and inactivity, but rather an opportunity for a different experience of urban spaces, cultural programs, service businesses, and deeper interaction between residents and visitors. Achieving this vision, however, requires investment in infrastructure, public safety, transportation, and the activation of urban services during late-night hours, according to IRNA. With its exceptional historical heritage, iconic public spaces, traditional bazaars, cultural routes, and diverse capacities in food, arts, and handicrafts, Isfahan has the potential to benefit from night tourism if supported by proper planning and policies. Such development could not only strengthen the local economy but also bring renewed social vitality to the city after sunset. Speaking to IRNA, the Deputy Director of Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization for Tourism Affairs, emphasized the importance of using the poten-



tial of the night economy in the metropolitan area. "Turning the night into an economic opportunity can be an effective solution to economic stagnation, unemployment, and social fatigue," said Davoud Abian. He explained that the night economy is not merely an economic issue but also a tool for creating equal opportunities and reducing social isolation. "Many people, including students, artists, young mothers, and retirees, cannot participate in conventional working hours due to daily responsibilities or physical limitations. The night economy can provide these groups with opportunities for employment and meaningful activity," he said. Abian added that a silent and dark city can contribute to feelings of loneliness and social isolation, especially among elderly people and teenagers. "By contrast, a lively city at night creates spaces for meeting, conversation, and cultural

exchange — factors that contribute to social well-being," he said. Questioning why Isfahan has not fully used this potential, Abian pointed to several obstacles preventing the growth of the night economy. "The first challenge is the dominance of the traditional 'nine-to-five' mindset, a legacy of the industrial era that divides life into daytime work and nighttime sleep. Modern post-industrial societies, however, have moved beyond these boundaries," he said. He identified the lack of infrastructure as another major barrier, including inadequate public transportation at night, insufficient street lighting, and limited welfare and security services during late hours. "The third obstacle is fear of disorder," Abian said. "Public gatherings at night are often associated with social problems, while global experience shows that active night cities can actually become safer due to greater



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public presence and collective oversight in urban spaces." He argued that Isfahan could become a successful example of a 24-hour city in Iran. "The cost of changing the mindset from 'Why should we work at night?' to 'Why should we not turn the night into capital?' is far lower than the cost of economic stagnation, unemployment, and social exhaustion caused by cities that become inactive after dark," he said. Abian expressed hope that cooperation between urban authorities and other institutions would allow Isfahan to experience the true dynamism of a 24-hour city. The governor of Isfahan also highlighted the importance of cooperation between executive bodies, law enforcement agencies, and trade organizations to expand night tourism. Mehdi Jamali-Nejad told IRNA that provincial management's approach toward night tourism has changed. "Fortunately, in joint meetings

with representatives of the police, the Chamber of Guilds, and the Chamber of Commerce, strong coordination has emerged. We aim to move beyond traditional perspectives and create a more vibrant atmosphere in the province," he said. He explained that the goal is to provide the necessary conditions for domestic and international tourists to benefit from Isfahan's nighttime attractions, while also helping tourism businesses recover from recent economic difficulties caused by periods of instability and declining revenues. "The priority is cooperation among responsible institutions, including security authorities, tourism organizations, and cultural bodies, so that — while respecting regulations — suitable conditions can be created for nighttime activities," Jamali-Nejad said. He added that careful planning should ensure visitors experience the beauty and enjoyment of their journey while tourism

businesses are able to present their products and services effectively. "We intend to create a safe and dynamic environment through coordination among all relevant institutions, allowing tourism to regain momentum and helping compensate for previous losses," he said. The Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Isfahan Province also emphasized that the city's environmental and climatic conditions are highly suitable for night tourism and announced readiness to support nighttime businesses. Amir Karamzadeh said that night tourism is already unofficially active in Isfahan. "Due to favorable weather conditions and high-quality green spaces, many citizens already spend time in parks and public areas until after midnight. The missing link is the lack of service infrastructure to meet this demand," he said. He added that turning this existing activity into a sustainable economic model requires cooperation with trade organizations and security authorities to extend the operating hours of tourism and service centers. "We need to provide 24-hour services for tourists and citizens in line with major cities around the world," Karamzadeh said. He invited tourism and service businesses across the province to apply for permits that would allow nighttime operations, saying the department is prepared to simplify procedures and provide legal support for such activities.