

Revival of Sassanid corridor to transform Kermanshah tourism

Iranica Desk

The governor general of Kermanshah Province has stressed the region's rich historical and cultural heritage, saying that the revival of the historic Sassanid corridor stretching from Anahita to Mahidasht and Qasr-e Shirin could boost tourism, stimulate economic growth, create jobs and increase local incomes. Manouchehr Habibi said Kermanshah boasts exceptional potential in cultural heritage and tourism, ranging from Hawraman, the Temple of Anahita and the UNESCO-listed Bisotun complex to the historic Sasanian corridor and Qasr-e Shirin, IRNA wrote. He noted that the province's wide variety of historical sites and tourist attractions is sufficient to keep visitors engaged for at least two days, adding that this potential should be utilized more extensively to support tourism development and the provincial economy. Referring to the Sassanid historical corridor, Habibi

said the route from Anahita through Mahidasht to Qasr-e Shirin is one of Kermanshah's most important historical and tourism assets and has attracted the attention of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Reviving the Sassanid corridor, he added, could play a major role in attracting tourists and stimulating the provincial economy. Proper planning and the development of the necessary infrastructure are needed to maximize the benefits of this potential. The governor general described tourism as one of the key drivers of employment and economic growth in Kermanshah, stressing that spending on cultural heritage and tourism should not be viewed as an expense but as an investment in job creation and higher incomes for local residents. He explained that increased activity at sites such as the UNESCO-listed Bisotun complex and the Temple of Anahita would benefit not only the cul-



● IRNA

tural heritage sector but also dozens, and even hundreds, of people working in related fields, including drivers, service providers, accommodation operators, retailers and other tourism-related businesses. Habibi also referred to the impact that war-related conditions and other developments have periodically had on the tourism

sector. Despite these challenges, he said Kermanshah's historical and tourism assets remain intact, and appropriate planning is needed to make greater use of them and restore momentum to the province's tourism industry. He also emphasized the need to strengthen the protection of historical sites and monuments, say-

ing that the province must provide the necessary facilities and personnel to safeguard its valuable cultural heritage. He warned that illegal excavations and other threats facing archaeological sites have made stronger protection measures increasingly necessary, stressing the need to reinforce the provincial Cultural Heritage

Protection Unit.

Given Kermanshah's prominent position in the fields of history and tourism, he said the need to strengthen the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit in the province is even greater than in many other parts of the country. He called for the government, the Provincial Security Council, the governor's office and other relevant authorities to support the sector. Habibi said he was prepared to raise the issue of strengthening cultural heritage protection at a meeting of the Provincial Security Council. He added that a proposal had been made for the commander of the national Cultural Heritage Protection Unit to attend the meeting and brief council members on the sector's capabilities, requirements and challenges.

He said the participation of judicial, law-enforcement and other relevant authorities in the council would provide an opportunity to highlight the importance of protecting cultural heritage and facilitate more

effective decisions in this area.

The governor general also called for the preservation, rehabilitation and, where necessary, clearance of historical urban areas and archaeological sites across the province. He stressed that such efforts should be guided by careful planning tailored to the specific circumstances of each site, while taking into account social considerations and other relevant factors.

Habibi stressed that the Kermanshah provincial administration would support cultural heritage and tourism programs aimed at strengthening infrastructure, protecting historical sites and making greater economic use of the province's tourism potential.

Kermanshah is home to 4,200 nationally registered heritage sites, three UNESCO World Heritage sites and dozens of other tourist attractions that have yet to be formally registered, underscoring the province's significant potential for tourism development.

Zanjan steps up efforts to develop agritourism



● chtr.ir

Iranica Desk

Zanjan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization has placed the development of agritourism on its agenda as a key driver of rural economic growth, sustainable employment and the use of local resources.

Abolfazl Ajali, head of the organization's Tourism Services Supervision and Evaluation Office, said Zanjan's exceptional capacity for producing agricultural and horticultural products provides a suitable platform for attracting tourists interested in

experiencing rural life and nature-based tourism.

He said seasonal festivals, including those dedicated to black mulberries, pomegranates, Damask roses, grapes and figs, serve as showcases for local capabilities. Organized under the guidance of the provincial organization and with the participation of local communities, the festivals play an important role in promoting local products and highlighting the cultural identity of rural areas.

"Our strategy for developing garden tourism is to facilitate

links between tourism-sector operators and agricultural producers," Ajali said. "During the harvest season, orchards can be turned into tourist destinations, with specialized tours operating in these areas."

He added that the model not only helps promote the province's agricultural and food brands but also provides opportunities for marketing handicrafts and offering eco-tourism accommodation and services, directly contributing to the livelihoods of rural communities.

Ajali also pointed to the province's recent achievements in religious tourism, saying that during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, Zanjan host-

ed large numbers of domestic and foreign tourists drawn by its prominent religious mourning rituals.

"This demonstrated the strong capacity of the province's tourism infrastructure," he said.

"The current plan is to combine Zanjan's religious tourism potential with its agricultural attractions in order to complete the province's tourism value chain."

Ajali said the ultimate goal is to introduce high-potential villages as national and global tourism target villages, adding that a tourism-based economy could help encourage reverse migration and support infrastructure development in rural areas across the province.

Reading Room

Qasemzadeh; a veteran voice in Iran's media

Iranica Desk

Abolqasem Qasemzadeh, a veteran journalist, writer and media figure whose career spanned several decades, died in Tehran on August 6, at the age of 77 after suffering a cardiac condition, on the eve of Iran's National Journalists' Day. Hossein Jaber Ansari, managing director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and chairman of the board of the Iran Cultural and Press Institute, expressed his condolences on Qasemzadeh's death, describing him as a "dear friend and brother." In his message, Jaber Ansari recalled meeting Qasemzadeh years ago, during the tenure of Martyr Seyyed Kamal Kharrazi as foreign minister, when Qasemzadeh was

among the minister's advisers and close associates. He also recalled meeting him in recent years at the Ettelaat Institute. In describing Qasemzadeh's professional and personal standing, Jaber Ansari wrote that he had spent many years working at two major Iranian cultural and media institutions — the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and the Ettelaat Institute and newspaper — serving Iran, its culture, society and politics away from controversy and publicity. He described Qasemzadeh as a wise and knowledgeable man, rich in memories and reflections worth hearing and contemplating.

"It is as clear to me as daylight that his place among his family, friends and many admirers will always remain empty and impossible to fill."

Qasemzadeh was a journalist and writer who spent a significant part of his professional life in the media and, over several decades, combined his work in journalism with involvement in media management and political affairs. His name was particularly associated with IRIB and Ettelaat newspaper. He served as head of IRIB's international broadcasting division in the 1980s and as deputy head of the organization. He was also associated with the War Publicity Council during the Iran-Iraq War. His experience in the media, combined with his engagement with political and international affairs, helped establish Qasemzadeh as a veteran journalist and writer specializing in political and foreign-policy issues. Never-

theless, a significant part of his professional career was closely tied to Ettelaat, where he wrote for many years and continued his journalistic work until the final years of his life.

His writings were largely analytical and interpretive, seeking to examine political developments within a broader regional and international context. His articles and commentaries can therefore be regarded as part of Ettelaat's written legacy and as a valuable record of the way political developments were viewed and analyzed in the Iranian press over recent decades.

In addition to his work at Ettelaat, Qasemzadeh was involved in research and academic circles concerned with foreign policy and strategic

affairs. His name has also been cited as a member of the Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center.

Throughout his career, Qasemzadeh worked with and maintained professional relationships with cultural, media and political figures at various stages. His career brought together experience in official media, media management and journalism, placing him at the intersection of media, culture and politics in Iran over several decades.

Qasemzadeh's death at the age of 77 marked the end of the career of a journalist who spent several decades in Iran's media sphere — from media responsibilities and his experience during the Iran-Iraq War to many years at Ettelaat and his coverage and analysis



Abolqasem Qasemzadeh

knew him.

With the death of Qasemzadeh, Iran's media community has lost one of its veteran journalists — a journalist who devoted much of his professional life to writing, analyzing and chronicling political and social developments, and whose name became intertwined with several decades of Iran's media history, particularly that of Ettelaat newspaper.