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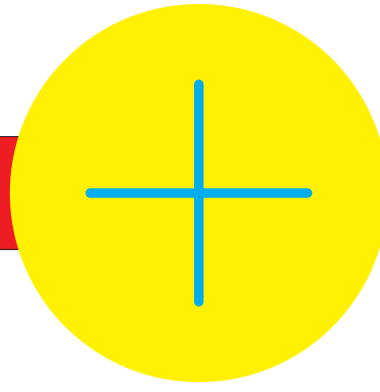
4-day week boosts employee wellbeing



Sixty-one organizations in the UK committed to a 20 percent reduction in working hours for all staff, with no fall in wages, for a six-month period starting in June 2022. The vast majority of companies also retained full-time productivity targets.

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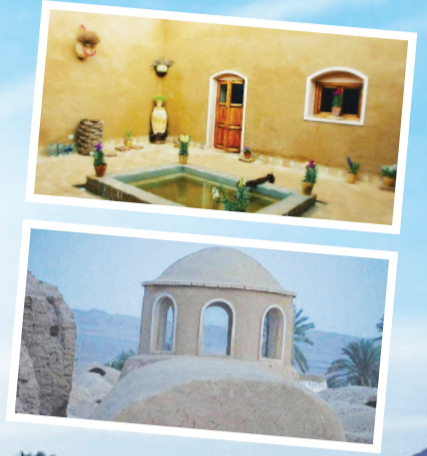
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Esfahak village attracting desert lovers



When it comes to visiting the deserts of Iran, what first comes to mind is their hot weather; however, the special geographical features of Esfahak village, located 38 kilometers from Tabas in South Khorasan Province, have caused this amazing place to have cooler weather compared with other cities and villages surrounding it. Situated in an abandoned and historical district, the village is one of the most exotic desert attractions in Iran, packtoiran.com reported. Esfahak village is a popular destination for tourists and desert lovers.

History
Esfahak, a 400-year-old village, is located in the heart of palm trees. A big part of the beautiful village was destroyed by an earthquake in Tabas in September 1978. The surviving locals and residents abandoned their villages after the disaster and migrated to neighboring cities. But in recent years, some locals decided to revive their old home village. They have managed to turn the village into a tourist destination, with amazing attractions. The rural houses which were destroyed and abandoned 45 years ago are renovated and la-

beled as eco-lodges to be used for tourists and visitors traveling to this amazing spot. In this village, no one smokes hookah or cigarettes, no food is served in plastic dishes, and there are separate trash bins for sorting waste. Visitors must take off their shoes when entering rooms. The village shines by the light of lanterns in the night, and walking through its cobblestone alleys is a wonderful experience that feels like traveling back in time.

Architecture
Made of mud and brick, houses were built based on the desert

architectural pattern. Buildings are located close to each other in order to provide their residents with more safety against robbery, give them shadow during hot summer days, and keep houses warmer during the winter.

Locals
In recent years, tourism-based activities like running small eco-lodges and providing transfer services have become a main source of income for the residents of Esfahak village. Apart from that, having access to rich water resources such as wells and qanats for centuries, and a

climate cooler than that of the neighboring villages and towns have helped improve agriculture and animal husbandry in the village. The most important agricultural products of Esfahak village are saffron and dates, which are harvested in very large amounts.

Things to do
One of the most significant attractions of Iran's deserts is the surreally beautiful and starry night sky: Esfahak village is no exception and offers the most wonderful night sky. One of the best things that you can do in Esfahak village is to explore the

night sky and enjoy astronomy at the observatory of the village, which is a circular brick building and is open every day from sunset to midnight. Since Esfahak village is characterized by its old districts, walking through their historical alleys and exploring the architecture of the desert is an activity that shouldn't be missed. The Jaame (Grand) Mosque of Esfahak is a small yet atmospheric building with a simple mud brick dome, and the historical bathhouse is an amazing building where you can experience a bath the way Iranians did many years ago.

UNESCO chief in Iraq to visit cultural sites

The head of the UN cultural agency on Monday started a three-day visit to Iraq where many priceless cultural treasures have been damaged or destroyed during decades of conflict. UNESCO chief Audrey Azoulay is visiting reconstruction projects and meet top officials including Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani and President Abdel Latif Rachid. In recent years, there have been several damages on Iraq's many Mesopotamian, Islamic and Christian treasures including six UNESCO World Heritage sites, AFP wrote. "This visit is dedicated to reconstruction in Iraq," said a spokesman for the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization which funds several projects in Iraq. Iraq's antiquities have been extensively looted, often by organized crime groups, since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein. The national museum in Baghdad, which displayed many ancient relics, was not spared

during the invasion when many treasures were stolen. More damage was done during the brutal rise of the Daesh terrorist group a decade later and the battle to dislodge it which devastated large areas in the northern city of Mosul. UNESCO will examine how to help Iraq maintain its ancient heritage and put the spotlight back on its culture, the agency's spokesman told AFP. Azoulay on Monday toured Iraq's national museum and

the historic centre of Baghdad, including the famed Al-Mutanabi streets, home to generations of booksellers. Iraq saw the rise and fall of pre-Islamic civilisations, including Babylon in ancient Mesopotamia — often dubbed the cradle of civilisation, where writing first flourished. UNESCO has also declared natural heritage sites in Iraq, including the southern marshlands fed by the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers.

The vast wetlands have also been put at severe risk, including by draining under Saddam's regime and by climate change and upstream dam construction. Azoulay will on Tuesday visit Mosul where UNESCO funds major reconstruction projects. On Wednesday she will head to Arbil, capital of the autonomous region of Kurdistan and home to an ancient citadel that is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Japan will 'disappear' without action on births: PM's Aide

Japan will cease to exist if it can't slow a fall in its birth rate that threatens to wreck the social safety net and economy, according to an adviser to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

"If we go on like this, the country will disappear," Masako Mori said in an interview in Tokyo after Japan announced on Feb. 28 the number of babies born last year slumped to a record low, Bloomberg reported. "It's the people who have to live through the process of disappearance who will face enormous harm. It's a terrible disease that will afflict those children," she added. Last year, about twice as many people died as were born in Japan, with fewer than 800,000 births



and about 1.58 million deaths. An alarmed Kishida has vowed to double spending on children and families in a bid to control the slide, which is progressing even faster than forecast. The population has fallen to 124.6 million from a peak of just over 128 million reached in 2008, and the pace of decline is increasing. Meanwhile the proportion of people 65 or over rose to more than 29% last year. While South Korea has a lower fertility rate, Japan's population is shrinking faster.