



Iranian film wins award

At its 43rd international experience, Iranian drama 'Paper Dreams' won the Best Film Award at the Black Hat Film Festival in Budapest, Hungary. Directed by Ali Atshani, the film tells the story of a young man who has been out of public view because of his being an albino.

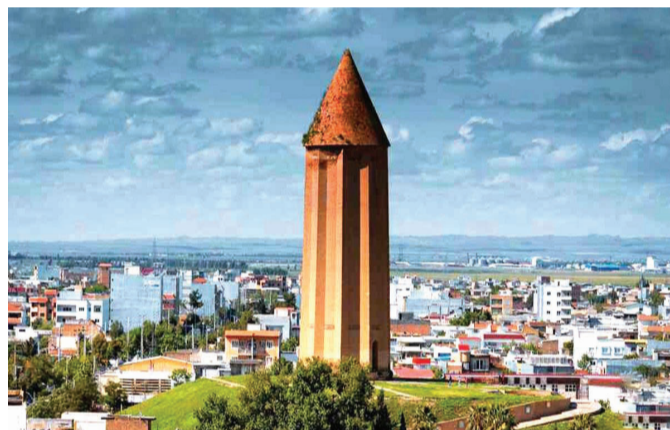
Golestan Province's top tourist attractions



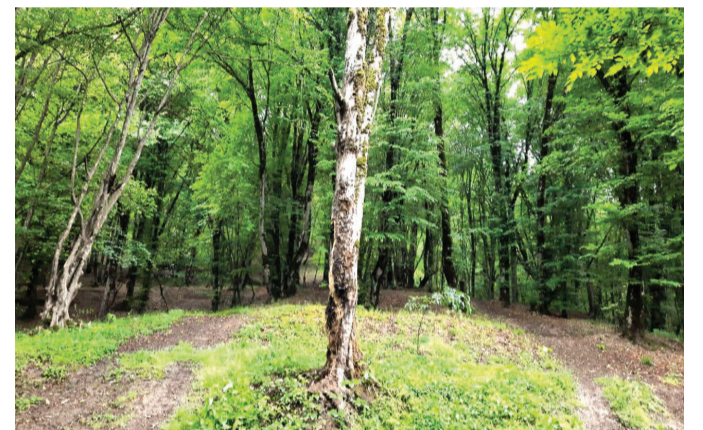
Ashouradeh Island
blog.rahhal.com



Kaboudwal waterfall
visitiran.ir



Gonbad-e Kavous
ito.org



Naharkhoran
rokhna.net

Iranica Desk

Golestan Province is among Iran's major tourist destinations in view of its natural attractions and numerous historical sites.

The province is located in the country's northeast, south of the Caspian Sea, and Gorgan is its capital.

Golestan has a mild, humid climate, known as "the moderate Caspian climate" in general. It has three distinct climates: moderate, mountainous, and semi-arid. More than 20 tribes peacefully coexist in the province.

Dense forests, springs, waterfalls and wetlands are among the tourist attractions of the province.

Kaboudwal waterfall

Kaboudwal waterfall is located near the city of Ali Abad-e-Katul, less than one hour from Gorgan. Every spring, new lush moss covers the entire waterfall.

One of the most enjoyable things to do while visiting Kaboudwal waterfall is to walk along the path that leads to it. Kaboudwal Road is a five-kilometer road, surrounded by forests. Walking in the dense forests and the cobblestone paths are other recreations you can experience in this area.

Naharkhoran

Naharkhoran Forest Park is situated in southern Gorgan. It is part of the extensive and ancient Hyrcanian Forest, which is over one million years old. Naharkhoran has served as a campsite since ancient times so that pilgrims to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Shia Imam, can rest and eat lunch on their way to Mashhad. 'Nahar' means lunch; 'naharkhoran' means lunch eaters.

Ziarat village

Ziarat village is near Naharkhoran and

hosts the mausoleum of Imamzadeh Abdollah. The village ranks among Iran's top 20 exemplary rural destinations, and is also home to the province's only spa, which is said to have therapeutic effects.

Golestan National Park

Golestan National Park is a natural zone registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is also the largest park of its kind in Iran and home to about one-eighth of the plant species, one-third of birds and 50 percent of mammals.

World's tallest tower

Gonbad-e Kavous in Golestan Province is home to the world's tallest brick tower named 'Gonbad-e Qabus'. It was built more than 1,000 years ago and is atop a 15-meter hill. The tower itself stands 55 meters in height.

Caspian Sea island

Visitors interested in going to the Caspian Sea's only Iranian island must travel to Bandar-e Torkaman in Golestan Province and pedal boat to reach Ashouradeh Island.

Ashouradeh Island is a site for bird-watching, which attracts many ecotourists, particularly during the autumn. Visitors to Bandar-e Torkaman also get the opportunity to purchase the best quality and most attractive handicrafts at the cheapest prices at Doshanbeh Bazaar, a temporary bazaar set up every Monday.

Golestan's highest point

The protected area of Jahan-Nama, a pristine natural area with plenty of plants and animal species, has the highest elevation in the province, 1,700 meters above sea-level. Visitors can rest there in wooden cottages and enjoy the tranquility of nature.

Historical monuments

The cities of Gorgan and Gomishan have the highest number of historical sites in Golestan Province, which include Aqa Mohammad Khan Palace, Amir Latifi Mansion, Taqavi Mansion and School, Baqeries' Mansion and Emadiyeh School.

The Grand Mosque of Gorgan, which has a unique design and dates back to the Seljuk era, is also among historical sites of the province. Gorgan is also home to Imamzadeh Noor, a holy shrine and tomb of the brother of the eighth Shia Imam, famous for its unique tile work. It was built during the reign of the Teymourid kings. Gomishan, with its two-storey wooden houses, scattered across rural areas and built according to the Russian architectural style, is another attraction in the province. The houses were built during the Qajar Era and are worth visiting.

Iran's oldest Islamic inscription discovered

Arts & Culture Desk

EXCLUSIVE

Darreh Gazeh is a strange valley holding the oldest Islamic inscription discovered in Iran. Ahmed bin Rostam wrote on a half-black stone about 1,240 years ago in Kufic script. The words on the first and second lines are "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate". From the third line on, the writer professed the unity of God and the apostleship of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The engraving is not, of course, the oldest one discovered from the Islamic period. The oldest one, which is about

60 years older than this one, is kept in Russia's Dagestan. Darreh Gazeh, in Yazd Province, is surrounded by beautiful gardens. It is located near Turan posht and Dehshir, and was once the access road from Fars to Khorasan Province. Aside from the 1,240-year-old inscription, there are several others, one of which was written around 90 years later. It was decorated with two verses (88 and 89) of the Ash-Shura chapter of the Holy Qur'an. Another discovered inscription bears a poem written in Persian, which is an important historical document. Due to the fact that the inscription was written before the publi-

cation of the poetry collection of the Persian poet and mystic Awhad al-Din Kermani, the engraving can be an authentic source for the precise words of the poet. Darreh Gazeh is full of inscriptions from the Islamic Period, most of which are covered with Qur'anic verses, though some are broken, or the written patterns have faded. On some others, you can find motifs of shepherds, goats and pastures. Unlike many ancient inscriptions, some of them are written in neat handwriting. It is crystal clear that for many years several travelers had passed through this route. Researchers believe that one

of these passengers was the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims, Imam Reza (PBUH), who was on his way to Khorasan. The presence of a resort in Turan posht supports this hypothesis. Several inscriptions were once kept at this resort; however, they are now kept in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington D.C. This small valley houses a significant part of the Islamic inscriptions of Iran. It is possible that even the stones that are broken or fallen might have included some inscriptions. Thus, archaeological excavations can add to the treasure trove of Islamic inscriptions in Iran.

