



Researchers have identified and documented the remains of an abandoned village believed to date back to the Safavid era in the Dasht-e Barn forest area of Kazerun county, Fars province, southwestern Iran. The village, named Royin, had been deserted for years and was not mentioned in any of the accessible databases reviewed by researchers, according to Mohsen Abbaspour, a cultural heritage researcher and activist. Speaking to ISNA, Abbaspour said the discovery emerged from a year-long research project examining historical settlements in the oak forests of Dasht-e Barn, which lie within the Arjan-Parishan Biosphere Reserve. Researchers identified the village's name by studying inscriptions on gravestones in two historic cemeteries and collecting ethnographic information from neighboring villages. Some inscriptions included the name Royini as part of the names of people buried there.

Forgotten Safavid-era Village Discovered in Southern Iran

This Mediter-ranean Village Was Named France's Favorite



Bormes-les-Mimosas, a picturesque village in southern France, was named “France’s Favorite Village” in July. With its colorful medieval streets, lush gardens, beautiful beaches, and sweeping Mediterranean views, it is one of the country’s most scenic destinations. Located just a 40-minute drive from Saint-Tropez, the village offers a peaceful atmosphere, hiking trails, sandy beaches, and a variety of local restaurants. It is also the starting point of La Route du Mimosa, an approximately 80-mile scenic drive that comes alive with golden mimosa blossoms during winter. Top attractions include the historic Fort de Brégançon, Parc Gonzalez, and the hiking

trails of the Massif des Maures. The nearby Île de Porquerolles is another highlight, known for its walking trails, beautiful beaches, and opportunities for outdoor adventures. The best time to see the mimosa blossoms is generally between January and March. Visitors during this season can enjoy flower festivals, botanical gardens, and locally made products featuring the fragrant flower. With its Mediterranean scenery, rich history, regional cuisine, and relaxed village charm, Bormes-les-Mimosas are an appealing destination for travelers seeking a quieter, more authentic experience in the south of France.

With its quiet rural surroundings, historical railway station and proximity to protected natural areas, Jajarm has the potential to attract travelers seeking an affordable alternative to Iran’s busier tourist destinations. But poor railway facilities, limited train tickets and a shortage of visitor services remain major obstacles to turning that potential into a thriving tourism destination. Situated about 165 kilometers from Bojnurd, the capital of North Khorasan province in northeastern Iran, Jajarm offers opportunities to experience rural life and a slower pace of travel without the costs often associated with more developed tourist centers. One of the area’s distinctive landmarks is Jajarm railway station, a historical building that has served as the province’s only active passenger rail connection to Iran’s national railway network. The station, whose origins date to 1930 according to its glazed brick tiles, was inscribed on Iran’s national industrial heritage list in 2019. Built during the early Pahlavi period, the approximately 33-by-15.9-meter structure features a stone facade and turquoise tilework. It once formed part of a larger railway workers’ complex, of which only the station’s administrative building and a water reservoir remain. Beyond its architectural significance, the station could play a greater role in connecting visitors with the region’s rural communities and natural attractions. The nearby Railway Station Village, which takes its name from the railway facility, has experienced decades of population decline. Its population has fallen from around 800 people two to three decades ago to about 230 resi-

dents in 70 households, according to local figures. Many former railway workers and their families moved to cities such as Jajarm, Shahrud and Semnan after retirement, while some residents continue to travel between the village and larger urban centers. Local efforts to develop tourism have recently offered a measure of hope for the settlement. In August 2025, the Fanoos Kavir Abrisham ecotourism lodge opened after receiving its operating permit. It was de-

Jajarm Offers budget-friendly Rural Escape, but Rail Links Need Improvement



scribed as the second licensed ecotourism accommodation in Jajarm county and has created direct employment opportunities for some villagers. Local initiatives to train residents and encourage small-scale tourism businesses have also helped stimulate interest in returning to the village. The lodge is intended to accommodate visitors arriving by train and those exploring the surrounding region. The village’s location near Touran National Park and the Miandasht Protected Area, known as a habitat of the endangered Asiatic cheetah, also provides opportunities for nature-based tourism. For travelers on a limited budget, such accommodation and locally run tourism services could provide a way to explore a less-visited part of northeastern Iran while supporting rural livelihoods. However, the availability of affordable accommodation alone is not enough to make the area an accessible destination. For now, Jajarm remains an option for travelers willing to venture beyond established tourist routes, particularly those interested in rural experiences and a quieter atmosphere. Its historic station and surrounding natural assets provide a foundation for tourism development, but limited transport capacity and deteriorating infrastructure continue to stand between that promise and a more accessible destination. With better rail services and modest investment in local facilities, Jajarm could become a practical, budget-conscious gateway to North Khorasan. Without them, the province risks missing an opportunity to turn its railway connection and rural character into lasting economic benefits for its communities.

This Faroe Islands Lake Appears to Float Above the Atlantic

By most standards around the world, a 1.31-square-mile lake may not seem like a big deal. But not only is Lake Sørvágsvatn the largest in the Faroe Islands, it also makes visitors question their perspective—quite literally—because of an optical illusion that makes the body of water appear to “float” above the ocean. Located on Vágar, one of the 18 islands that make up the archipelago between Iceland and Scotland, the lake sits relatively calmly among the rolling green hills that lead to dramatic rock formations. But catch the angle just right, and you’ll immediately understand why the site has been dubbed “the lake above the ocean.” That nickname is pretty spot-on, as the lake’s waters do flow out to the Atlantic Ocean. What’s so mind-boggling is the way the viewpoint comes together to make it appear as though Lake Sørvágsvatn, also known as Leitisvatn, is hovering above the sea. Much like Firefall in Yosemite, where the sunlight reflects through the Horsetail Waterfall and makes it look like it’s flaming, or Bolivia’s Salar de Uyuni salt flats, where the sheets of white confuse the perspectives of distance and size, the Faroe Islands’ own visual trickery is simply all about angles and sightlines. At the end of the lake is a 98.4-foot-high

waterfall called Bøsdalafossur, which runs over the edge into the Atlantic Ocean, almost like nature’s version of an infinity pool. Adding to the drama is the sea stack, Geituskoradrangur, which can also be seen from the same side as the falls. The hike out to the viewpoint is an easy trail—it takes roughly 45 minutes to an hour to reach Trælanipa mountain. Note

that a hiking fee is required at the booth near the trailhead at the main gate. While walking along the pathways will make you feel completely enveloped by the great outdoors, the site is also pretty close to the island’s necessities. You’ll find it just a five-minute drive from Vágar Airport, with a trailhead adjacent to the village of Miðvágur.



Iran Issues Post-war Tourism Recovery and Competitiveness Strategy

Iran’s tourism ministry has issued a strategic and operational plan to revive the country’s tourism industry during the transition and post-war periods, with a focus on rebuilding its international tourism brand, improving competitiveness and coordinating recovery measures nationwide. Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, deputy tourism minister, said the document had been approved by the minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts and sent to provincial departments for implementation, according to a report published by the ministry and carried by IRNA. The plan aims to establish a common framework for decision-making, prioritize practical measures and coordinate tourism recovery efforts at national and provincial levels. It also seeks to move beyond simply restoring conditions that existed before the crisis by redefining Iran’s competitive advantages and aligning its tourism offerings with emerging global trends. The document identifies three priority tourism product groups: nature-based tourism, ecotourism and community-based tourism; health tourism, including medical services, wellness and mental and psychological recovery; and cultural and historical tourism. According to the deputy minister, these sectors could help strengthen Iran’s position in international tour-

ism markets by drawing on the country’s geographical diversity, cultural heritage and specialized services. He said the strategy was designed not only to set priorities and outline a long-term vision but also to establish mechanisms for implementing, monitoring and evaluating recovery measures. Mohseni-Bandpey said regular monitoring would help identify implementation obstacles, enable timely adjustments and provide a clearer assessment of progress toward the strategy’s objectives. He stressed that successful tourism recovery would depend on linking strategic policymaking with practical implementation, institutional coordination and continuous evaluation. Consistent implementation, he said, could help strengthen the country’s competitive position, rebuild its tourism brand and support a more sustainable industry aligned with global developments. The strategy comes as Iran’s tourism industry faces severe disruption following the outbreak of war on Feb. 28, when the United States and Israel launched strikes against Iran. The conflict prompted widespread airspace closures and flight suspensions across the region, disrupting international travel and undermining visitor confidence.

Perspective



Air France Bets on Caviar to Lure Luxury Flyers

Air France is betting big on luxury to keep wealthy travellers spending with lavish servings of caviar and champagne in first-class cabins as soaring fuel costs and disrupted travel patterns squeeze airlines worldwide. The campaign seems to have paid off, with the Paris-based carrier saying that premium bookings and revenue have grown this



year despite industry-wide higher fares. With generous helpings of caviar and champagne, Air France’s costly bet on luxury appears to be paying off, helping the Paris-based carrier weather the fallout from the Iran war, Chief Executive Ben Smith told Reuters on Friday. Airlines worldwide, including parent Air France-KLM, are grappling with soaring jet fuel bills and disrupted travel patterns caused by the nearly seven-month-old Iran war, which has forced some to cut capacity and rein in spending. Air France, meanwhile, is riding things out. The airline has tapped into the buzz created by the “Emily in Paris” TV show and tourists’ enduring fascination with the French capital’s fashion, food and hotel scene. It has doubled down on premium offerings, upgrading onboard menus with luxury-branded products and investing heavily in its most lucrative cabins. “All the luxury brands are based in Paris. We have more Michelin-starred restaurants than anywhere in the world in Paris,” Smith said on the sidelines of a London awards show where Air France won best first-class cabin. “So it is a very specific city. Not only is it gorgeous as a cultural location, but as a luxury city.” Europe’s three largest airline groups, including British Airways owner IAG and Lufthansa, have all unveiled redesigned first-class cabins in recent years as they chase growing demand for premium travel, particularly from affluent US passengers. Smith said Air France’s wealthiest customers have not been put off by higher prices. Some former private jet users are even switching to first class, he said, seeking to avoid the scrutiny attached to the higher emissions associated with private flights.