



Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri speaks to reporters on the sidelines of a visit to southwestern province of Khuzestan.Iran and Iraq have the potential to increase annual tourist exchanges to 10 million people, Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Wednesday, stressing the need for new planning and stronger cross-border infrastructure to achieve the target.Speaking upon arrival in southwestern province of Khuzestan, Salehi Amiri identified Khuzestan as a key focus of efforts to expand tourism ties between the neighboring countries, highlighting the province's potential for land travel, medical tourism and improved border infrastructure. Given existing limitations in air transport, Iran is prioritizing the development of land crossings and road travel through four border provinces – Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah and West Azarbaijan – the minister said.

Iran and Iraq aim to increase tourist exchanges to 10 million

Jameh Mosque of Fahraj: A Timeless Architectural Treasure near Yazd

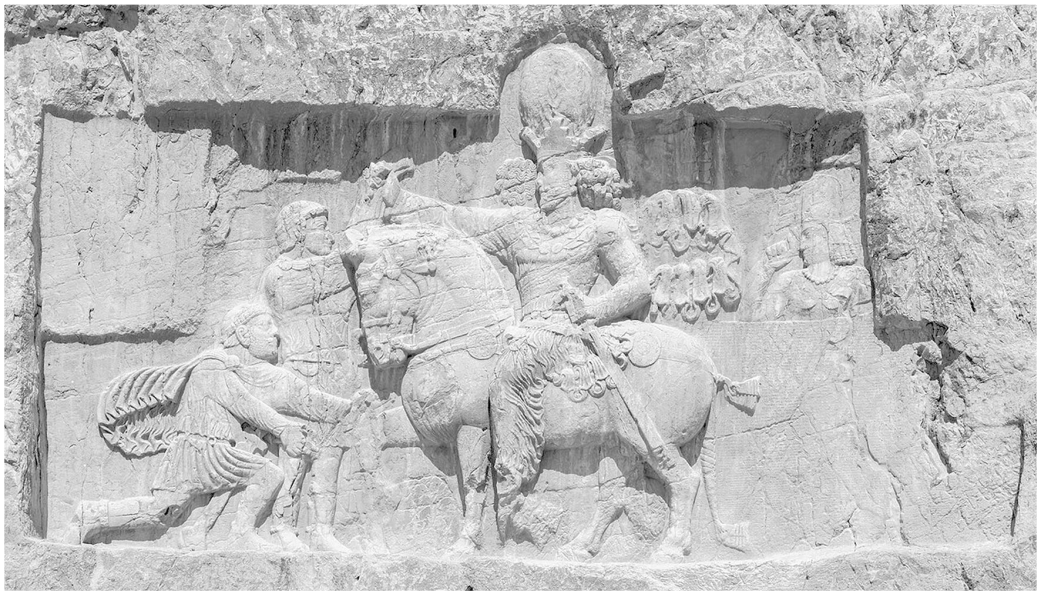
Located near the historic city of Yazd in central Iran, the Jameh Mosque of Fahraj, also known as Masjid-i Jami of Fahraj, is a remarkable destination for travelers interested in history, architecture and Iran's Islamic heritage. Distinguished by its simple earthen construction, ancient vaults and historic minaret, the mosque offers a glimpse into an important period in the evolution of Iranian religious architecture. The mosque stands in Fahraj, approximately 25 to 30 kilometers southeast of Yazd, along the historic route connecting Yazd with Baft.

the mosque demonstrates how local construction techniques were adapted to religious architecture in a challenging desert environment. Its restrained appearance, with little decorative ornamentation, distinguishes it from many of Iran's later monumental mosques. For visitors exploring Yazd and its surrounding historic settlements, the Jameh Mosque of Fahraj offers an opportunity to discover a lesser-known architectural landmark away from the region's more elaborate monuments. Its understated appearance invites closer at-



Situated in an arid landscape near the edge of the desert, the village reflects the region's long-standing adaptation to dry conditions and traditional water systems, including qanats and deep wells.The Jameh Mosque of Fahraj is widely recognized as one of the oldest surviving mosques in Iran. Historical accounts associate its construction with the early Islamic period, following the conquest of Yazd by Muslim armies in the first century AH. However, its exact construction date, original patron and earliest building history have not been conclusively established. The possibility of an earlier origin has also been raised, partly because of the region's pre-Islamic heritage and the historical practice of adapting existing sacred sites for new religious purposes.The mosque holds particular architectural significance because it preserves features associated with the transition from early post-and-lintel building systems to more developed vaulted structures. Alongside the Tarikhaneh Mosque in Damghan, Semnan province, it illustrates an important stage in the development of Iranian mosque architecture, when substantial piers increasingly replaced columns as primary structural supports. Built largely from mud bricks and sun-dried clay materials,

tention to the details of early Islamic construction, from the arrangement of its arches and piers to the geometry of its vaulted prayer hall. The mosque is particularly appealing to travelers interested in architectural history, archaeology and the cultural connections between pre-Islamic Persia and the Islamic period. Its location in Fahraj also makes it a potential stop on a journey through the villages and desert landscapes southeast of Yazd. The mosque's simplicity, however, has contributed to its receiving less public attention than some of Iran's more decorative historic buildings. Its historical importance rests precisely in the architectural innovations it preserves, features that were gradually overshadowed by later mosque designs, including the four-iwan plan that became prominent under the Seljuks. For those seeking to understand Iran beyond its celebrated tiled domes and monumental courtyards, the Jameh Mosque of Fahraj provides a compelling encounter with the foundations of the country's Islamic architectural heritage. It is a reminder that some of the most significant historic places are not necessarily the most ornate, but those that preserve traces of how architectural traditions evolved across centuries.



Restoration of Sassanid Reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam nears Completion after Three Decades

The restoration of Sassanid-era bas-reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam, one of Iran's most significant archaeological sites, is approaching completion after a conservation effort that began in the 1990s, with work continuing on a relief depicting Shapur II, a site official said. Mostafa Rakhshandehkhoo, head of the Naqsh-e Rostam complex and supervisor of its conservation and restoration workshops, told the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) that restoration work on more than eight Sassanid bas-reliefs had been pursued over several decades to preserve their historical and artistic value. The ongoing work on the relief of Shapur II represents a decisive stage in the long-running effort, bringing the restoration program close to its final phase, he said. Rakhshandehkhoo stressed that conserving historical monuments involves more than physical intervention. It requires detailed studies, expert assessments, informed decision-making and the careful application of appropriate conservation methods. "The primary objective is to preserve the authenticity of the monument, control damaging factors and create conditions that will help ensure its long-term survival," he said, according to ISNA. He added that preparing a restoration plan suited to the condition of the Shapur II relief, as well as reviewing and approving it through the relevant authorities, was particularly important. Work based on an approved plan and carried out in accordance with professional conservation standards helps ensure that interventions are appropriate to the monument's specific circumstances. The official said the experience gained over decades

at Naqsh-e Rostam demonstrated the importance of sustained conservation efforts, technical expertise and careful monitoring in protecting archaeological remains. Historical monuments are exposed to various damaging factors over time, he said, making long-term planning essential to preserving them for future generations. He added that the value of the project lay not only in bringing restoration work to an end but also in the methods used, adherence to scientific principles and responsibility toward cultural heritage. Rakhshandehkhoo added that the experience could serve as a model for other conservation projects, emphasizing that understanding the characteristics and condition of each monument and selecting suitable techniques were essential to avoiding unnecessary interventions and improving the durability of restoration work. Naqsh-e Rostam, located in Fars province near Persepolis, contains monuments from several periods of ancient Iranian history. The site is particularly notable for its Achaemenid royal rock-cut tombs and Sassanid bas-reliefs carved into the cliff face. The Sassanid Empire, which ruled Iran from 224 to 651, left an extensive artistic and archaeological legacy. The reliefs at Naqsh-e Rostam depict royal ceremonies, military victories and scenes associated with the authority of Sassanid rulers, providing important evidence for understanding the period's political history and artistic traditions. The site's proximity to Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire and a UNESCO World Heritage property, further underscores its significance within Iran's archaeological heritage.

Princess Cruises Effortlessly Curates a Dining Journey Worth Writing Home About



that's just the beginning. Whatever your palate craves, it awaits you aboard Princess Cruises. Yes, Chef! Princess takes great pride in the culinary geniuses behind the menus that keep cruisers coming back.

Some people cruise for adventure; others cruise to relax, and some set sail for exceptional cuisine. If you belong to the latter group, you're in luck. Princess Cruises has perfected the art of onboard dining with specialty and experiential restaurants, and chefs whose skills have been refined over decades. All you need to do is bring your appetite and let Princess do the rest.The Importance of Eating Well Virginia Woolf famously said, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well," a sentiment Princess Cruises wholeheartedly embraces. Food is one of life's greatest pleasures, and Princess proudly offers guests a world of flavors created by some of today's most gifted and imaginative chefs.The immersive culinary experiences onboard transport guests to the countries where these cuisines originated. Love Italian food? The craftsmanship behind every dish at Sabatini's Italian Trattoria will captivate you. Consider yourself a steak expert? Crown Grill serves exquisitely prepared, aged cuts complemented by a selection of gourmet salts. And

As an Iranian journalist visiting Tashkent, I found myself looking at the Islamic Civilization Center from two perspectives: as a visitor discovering Uzbekistan's cultural heritage and as an Iranian searching for traces of a shared civilization that has never respected today's borders. Opened in March 2026 beside the historic Khast-Imam complex, the center presents an ambitious account of Central Asia's history. Its monumental architecture draws inspiration from Uzbekistan's historic cities, including Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Tashkent, bringing their diverse traditions together in

one impressive complex. Inside, the exhibitions follow a chronological journey from ancient civilizations and pre-Islamic cultures to the scientific and artistic achievements of the Islamic Golden Age and the Timurid period. The Hall of Fame features influential scholars such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Biruni and Al-Farabi, whose contributions shaped mathematics, astronomy, philosophy and medicine. Archaeological objects, including ancient sculptures, gold ornaments and stone tools, reveal a region shaped by different peoples, languages and cultural traditions long

Iran and Uzbekistan: Where Shared History Comes Alive in Tashkent

before the emergence of Islam. For an Iranian visitor, these displays also recall the historical connections between Central Asia and the Iranian cultural world. Modern technology makes the experience particularly engaging. Digital reconstructions, interactive Silk



Road maps and artificial intelligence presentations bring historical cities and scholars closer to visitors. The installations demonstrate how trade

routes carried not only goods but also ideas, religious beliefs, scientific knowledge and artistic practices across regions.

Perspective



Iran calls for Nationwide Oral History Program across all 31 Provinces

Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts has called for a national program to record and document oral history across all 31 provinces, saying the initiative is essential to preserving the country's historical and cultural memory.



Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri made the remarks in a message issued to mark the opening of the ministry's first practical training workshop on oral history. The message was read by Gholamreza Zarifian, head of the council for oral history policy, at the workshop's opening ceremony, Mehr news agency reported. Salehi-Amiri described oral history as a means of documenting, analyzing and safeguarding a nation's collective memory, stressing the importance of systematically recording experiences, knowledge, accounts and developments related to cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts. "Future generations will build Iran's tomorrow based on recording the developments of today," he said in the message. He said expanding oral history projects to all 31 provinces was a strategic necessity for protecting Iran's historical, cultural and social heritage and developing a more complete national account of changes in the three sectors. Much of the knowledge and experience associated with these fields, he noted, has developed within local and regional communities. Failure to document such material could result in the loss of an important part of the country's historical wealth. The minister stressed that oral history should not be confined to the ministry's central administration, a handful of provinces or widely known historical accounts. Instead, he called for a nationwide program implemented in stages and tailored to the capacities and characteristics of each province. Achieving this goal would require a common scientific methodology and a coordinated national framework, allowing provinces to document their distinctive experiences and narratives while following shared research standards, the message said.Key measures would include developing national oral history guidelines, identifying research priorities, selecting significant interviewees, establishing appropriate sampling methods and using standardized interview guides.The process should also include accurate recording and transcription of interviews, verification of information, documentation of sources, expert review, and preservation of original files and the creation of standardized metadata, according to the message. Salehi-Amiri also highlighted the need to train provincial researchers and interviewers and strengthen cooperation among provincial offices, universities, research centers, professional associations and local cultural institutions. He said ethical research practices must be observed throughout the process, including obtaining informed consent from interviewees, protecting their intellectual and material rights, and establishing clear rules governing the storage, access and publication of their accounts. The proposed program should reflect Iran's historical, cultural, linguistic, social and geographical diversity, ensuring that the experiences of different social groups are represented in the national oral history collection.