



## In Case You Missed

### Bosnia Rebuilds Tourism Sites

Bearing the scars of a war that lasted four years and ended in 1995, Bosnia started a process of rebuilding its cities and awakening its citizens from the tragic chapter in the country's history.

After conflict and numerous rulers, Bosnia emerged as a country marked by different cultures and religions, which remains evident even today.

The Ottoman traces in Bosnian history can be seen all over, which is an attraction for the rising number of Turkish tourists, who represent 6.6 percent of the total number of international arrivals coming into Bosnia and Herzegovina annually, Sunday's Zaman reported.

Last year, the Institute for Tourism in Zagreb conducted a study concerning the spending behavior of tourists in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It showed that 41 percent of tourists from Turkey came to Sarajevo for cultural and heritage tourism.

Sarajevo is a city rich in historically significant traits. Walking down the old street of Ferhadija and towards the newly renovated BBI center, a shopping mall in the city, there are evident remains of many different civilizations.

Starting from Bascarsija, the Sebilj and the famous Gazi Husrev Beg Mosque, the Ottoman spirit remains within the walls of these ancient structures, which are still preserved today.

Passing the cathedral and the eternal flame, Austro-Hungarian architecture and scenic beauty adorn the streets. Finally, a contemporary monument dedicated to the children who lost their lives in the Bosnian war is located in the park that hosts a fountain.

### Ancient Toolmakers Plied Craft Near Niagara Falls

An ancient campsite where people produced tools has been discovered near the Niagara Falls.

This find, combined with other archaeological discoveries in the area over the past few decades, suggests that such campsites lined the Niagara River as far back as 4,000 years ago.

So far, the team has unearthed more than 20,000 artifacts, mostly bits of rock broken off when people were creating stone tools, on the southeastern tip of Grand Island New York, about 12 miles upstream from Niagara Falls. The earliest artifacts at the site open a window on a time when people were living a nomadic lifestyle based on hunting, fishing and gathering plants.

"I would anticipate that there would have been, back in the day, these kinds of campsites all along the Niagara River on both sides and on both sides of the island," team leader, Lisa Anselmi, of Buffalo State University of New York told LiveScience.

The archaeologists found that people at the Grand Island site were making a wide variety of tools, including spear points, arrowheads and even a few stone drills.

Anselmi said that the drills "would be sharp enough to go through a piece of leather...or go through shell or some bone to create a bead."

The team also found bits of yellow and red ochre at the site. In ancient times, it was common, for religious reasons, for ochre to be applied on the skin of someone who was being buried. No evidence of burials has been found so far at the site.

Fragments of pottery dating between 2,900 and 1,500 years ago found by Anselmi and her colleagues suggest inhabitants experimented with ceramic production, using pots to collect nuts and plant remains.

### Tourists Barred From Visiting Tibet

Foreign tourists will be barred from going to Tibet until the end of July, travel agents said, the second time this year the troubled region has been closed to overseas visitors.

"At the moment, we're not admitting foreign tourists," an employee at China Travel Service in the regional capital Lhasa told AFP by phone, adding the agency had received a notice saying this would be enforced until July 26.

A worker at the Tibet Youth Travel Service agency confirmed the ban, saying it begins on Tuesday and was linked to celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of China's rule over Tibet, reportedly scheduled for July.

The official Global Times newspaper quoted the Lhasa-based manager of a travel website as saying they would not accept tourists holding foreign passports until mid-August due to "safety concerns".

The regional tourism bureau refused to comment when contacted by AFP, and a spokesman for the Tibetan government said he was unaware of the situation.

Tensions run deep in Tibet, where many Tibetans accuse the government of trying to dilute their culture, and cite concern about what they view as increasing domination by China's majority Han ethnic group.

Disquiet spilled over into violent anti-government riots in Lhasa in March 2008, which then spread to neighboring provinces with significant Tibetan populations.

In the wake of the 2008 unrest, foreign tourists were banned from travelling to the Himalayan region for more than 12 months.

In March this year, Tibet was once again closed to foreigners ahead of the third anniversary of the riots, but travel agencies said overseas visitors had been able to visit from April to June.

# Ashuradeh Island to Become Tourism Hub



Ashuradeh, located at the tip of Miyankaleh, is the only Iranian island in the Caspian Sea which, as per the proposal of Golestan's Department of Environment, will become a tourism hub. The island has unique attractions and is one of the important hubs of tourism, but its potentials have not yet been utilized effectively. It is situated 3 km from the coast of Turkmen Port and is bound to Caspian Sea in the north, Chopoq Oghli Strait in the east, Khazini water canal in the east and Gulf of Gorgan in the south.

Some historical documents state that Ashuradeh consisted of three islands two of which have been submerged by tidal waves, Mehr News Agency reported.

#### Potentials

In the third presidential trip to Golestan in October 2010, a working group for following up Ashuradeh's problems was formed. It was decided that environmental and tourism projects be carried out in accordance with environmental considerations.

Officials have emphasized that this will help generate more jobs and lead to the economic prosperity of the region.

The issue of separating Ashuradeh from Miyankaleh Biosphere Reserve in Mazandaran province has been a source of debate among the environmental officials of Golestan and Mazandaran provinces.

Sasan Alinejad, the director general of Golestan's Department of Environment, said developmental activities should be lawful and expectations should be based on capabilities and potentials.

"With regard to Ashuradeh Island, the type of tourism activity we want for this island should be determined. Ashuradeh can offer its capacities to the province, but it must be borne in mind that those who visit the country's northern provinces are not looking for a hotel and want to enjoy its pristine natural resources," he said.

Alinejad emphasized that Ashuradeh cannot be created elsewhere and it is more appropriate to maintain

and development can bring peace and calm only when social justice is heeded. If we want to prevent migration, we should create the parameters needed for development. Progress takes place within the framework of the environment," he said.

#### Topography

The total area of Ashuradeh Island is about 1,200 hectares, though only 400 hectares of it are usable.

This island was a hunting area during the Safavid era and consequently castles were built in it.

Due to the rise in the Caspian Sea water level, Ashuradeh Island separated from Miyankaleh. The island is 26 meters above the level of free waters and it has mild climatic conditions.

The island had over 1,000 residents and boasted of facilities such as police station, junior high school, shops, mosque and Husseinieh (a place for holding religious ceremonies). People of the area bred livestock, were laborers and fishermen until the flood swamped the island in 1993 and all its inhabitants abandoned it.

The flora of the island include raspberry bushes and sour pomegranate trees. Animals like jackal, fox, rabbit, fish and partridge are found on the island.

Based on the Cabinet approval, the Iranian island is expected to rival Iran's Kish Island in the north. The Cabinet has ordered that a special working group be formed to expedite the development of the island.



## Semnan Ready to Host Summer Travelers

Semnan province, which boasts of 30 exemplary tourism zones, including those of Bastam and Shahmirzad, and climatic diversity, is ready to host summer travelers.

The province also has deserts, greenery, caves, salt mines, Damghan's Tarik-Khaneh Mosque, Maladeh Building, Arg-e Semnan Gate and the water reservoir of Garmsar, each of which can be viewed as tourism attraction.

Director of Semnan's Cultural Heritage Department Hamid Yazdani said every year, over 12 million travelers pass through the province because of its location on Tehran-Mashhad Road, Mehr News Agency reported.

"One of the objectives of the department is to appeal to travelers passing by to stay in Semnan for a while. There are 20 hotels, hotel apartments and motels in Semnan,

which can accommodate tourists. The department has prepared cultural packages in the form of booklets, maps and travel guides to introduce the tourism, historical and natural attractions of the province to tourists," he said.

The official emphasized that the province has many potentials to attract tourists.

"The registration of over 1,600 historical sites of the province as national heritage indicates the importance of Semnan," he added.

Yazdani further said Shahmirzad and Mahdishahr as well as villages of Shahrud and Damghan are areas of the province with favorable climatic conditions and historical and natural attractions. These regions look forward to hosting summer tourists.

