



جسر سي وسه - إصفهان  
Si-O-Seh Bridge - Esfahan

## Exclusive Interview with leading Iranian Architect

# Farhood Dalejani

## Public Relations Manager of the Municipality of Esfahan

By Geyath Jawad Tomah

### **Q: How would you describe the current tourist trends and activities in the city of Esfahan?**

A: The main activity, which we have set out since 1990, is the project of affiliating, or twinning, Esfahan with other cities that are historically, socially, culturally and / or technologically similar. So far, Esfahan has been affiliated with four international organisations and ten international cities: Shiyān in China, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Florence in Italy, St Petersburg in Russia, Barcelona in Spain, Freiburg in Germany, Yerevan in Armenia, Yash in Rumania, Havana in Cuba, and Kuwait City, Kuwait.

These cities were selected since they share common elements. For instance, the Chinese city of Shiyān is as old as Esfahan and also contains many remarkable monuments.

In terms of affiliation, one can also include exchanging university students, as well as handicraft and music fairs. It is intended that twinning will allow interaction between the peoples of each city to look positively towards such acquaintance in a variety of different sectors. It also acts as a tool that

will provide each population with invaluable information about the other. Comparisons might be as varied and novel as textiles, types of food eaten in public and private, beliefs and other general information relevant to Esfahan.

When we say we are attempting to cooperate with tourists we mean that these mutual visits reflect our cultures and beliefs to the other party.

On the other side, in order to extend this activity we try to decrease travel costs to attract more tourists. It is also proposed that the visitor can reside with an Esfahani family for one week to get a feeling for the day-to-day life and traditions of Esfahanis, and vice versa. There is also a project of affiliation with 15 other cities, including Istanbul, Lyons, Alexandria, Kyoto, Oxford, Athens, Jeddah, Seoul, Munich and Kiev.

There are, in addition, plans to expand on information relating to Esfahan via the internet (see [www.isfahan.org.ir](http://www.isfahan.org.ir), for instance) which is an experimental project that it is hoped will be accomplished within two months. CDs on Esfahan will also be available in three audio

and video languages: Arabic, English and Persian, each demonstrated by a native speaker from the respective language. There is also an attempt to establish cheap bed-and-breakfast accommodation for foreign visitors. And there is in the offing a plan to set up a huge commercial shopping centre, 48 metres high, from the top of which the tourist can overlook the city.

The Garden of Nations is another project to be set up within the environs of Najavan Garden in the west of Esfahan wherein each city of affiliation can plant a piece of its own. In Freiburg, there is now a garden similar to Chahar Bagh and a piece of garden there named "Esfahan".

### **Q: What are the proposed projects to develop the city?**

A: The main difficulties that we face are the shortage of hotels, although the Abbasi hotel is one of the more outstanding in Iran because of its exceptional architecture. However, investment in this respect is welcomed and all facilities will be given in the hope that investors would react positively.

There is also a plan that involves setting up a railway and underground metro system. This has been initiated over the last ten years, but the work has commenced only recently. The aim is to facilitate traffic and decrease congestion on the roads.

There is a plan to extend the airport also, transforming it into an international airport that will take some of the pressure off Tehran.

**Q: What are the most important tourist landmarks one should visit? And what are the main handicrafts?**

A: There are hundreds of archaeological Islamic landmarks in Esfahan, such as the grand old markets like the Qaysariyyeh Bazaar, and so on. Tourists can visit these bazaars to view the city's traditional crafts, including carpets, rings, miniatures, ornamented copperware, pottery, Qashani, silvercrafts, and so on. ■

**Interview with Seyed Moyesseri,  
Director of Tourism in the City of Esfahan**

**Q: Do non-Muslim tourists visit Esfahan?**

A: People from all over the world visit Esfahan, including from America, and there are many non-Muslim tourists who come here. One of the advantages of this city is that all religions and races live peacefully. Even so, to extend tourist activities there are currently about 40 new projects aiming to develop the city.

**Q: How many tourists visit Esfahan a year?**

A: The figure is not fixed and is increasing. However, during the current year the figure has reached 200,000 tourists, three times more than last year.

**Q: What is the reason for this increase in your view?**

A: It is because we have introduced more facilities and the tourists' own good impressions, as well as cheaper expenses as compared with other countries.

**Q: What about the charges of hotels?**

A: Of course, the hotels differ in their charges. However, they are in line with international rates, or perhaps lower than that.

**Q: Which hotels are visited most by individual and group tourists?**

A: Abbasi, Ali Qapu, Kawsar International, Sadaf, Saveet, Perouzi, as well as others.



محلات (بکاکرن) حول میدان الإمام أو نقش جهان - اصفهان  
Shops were added around the Imam  
Square or Naghsh-e Jahan - Esfahan