

Cultural commonalities, basis for development of Iran-India ties

Iranica Desk

Iran and India, as two countries with rich and ancient cultures and civilizations, have had close and friendly relations throughout history. They share a large number of commonal-

ities in various fields including language, art, culture, traditions, customs and behavioral and moral characteristics. This has helped the two countries maintain and expand bilateral relations. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, wrote in his

book "The Discovery of India": Among the many peoples and races who have come in contact with and influenced India's life and culture, the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians. The long-standing bilateral relations existed between the Persian and Indian

people even before the arrival of the Aryans in the Iranian Plateau.

The objects discovered during excavations carried out by archeologists in the two countries show that there has been a strong relationship between Indians and Iranians since ancient times.

Artifacts found in Sialk Hill of Kashan in 1930 indicate that this ancient city was the crossroads of the two civilizations. But with the rise of Islam and the development of this religion in the Indian subcontinent, the cultural connection between Iran and India became stronger.



Taj Mahal
indotoursadventures.com

Architecture

The Taj Mahal, an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the right bank of the Yamuna River in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India, is one of the world famous monuments of India, drawing a huge number of tourists from all over the world every year. The immense mausoleum was built by order of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife. Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage. Shah Jahan himself was later buried there. As it is clear, the name of this building is Persian, and it was built based on a mixture of Iranian, Indian and Islamic architectural styles. Ahmad Lahori and his brother Hamid were the Iranian architects who constructed the Taj Mahal. According to UNESCO, the

uniqueness of Taj Mahal lies in some truly remarkable innovations carried out by the horticulture planners and architects. One such planning is the placing of a tomb at one end of the quadripartite garden rather than in the exact center, which added

rich depth and perspective to the distant view of the monument.

Moreover, thanks to its specific pattern, intelligent design and long history, the Persian garden has long attracted the attention of many garden designers from across the world. The available evidence indicates that Muslim Iranian artists played an important

and influential role in garden building in Kashmir. Based on historical sources, it seems that these gardens followed a similar pattern of Persian gardens, with terraces arranged around a central water channel, lined with fountains and planted with a variety of flowers and trees that grew in abundance within the valley.



Shalimar Bagh, a Persian garden, in Jammu and Kashmir, India
cpreecnvis.nic.in



Nowruz celebration in India
india-tours.com



Nowruz celebration in India
yjc.ir

Culture

Indian culture is one of the oldest in the world; despite facing many vicissitudes, it has managed to maintain its glory throughout history. With an interesting combination of various elements including the arts, handicrafts, music, food, etc., the Indian culture has drawn the attention of many Iranian tourists. Since India is a country to which countless Iranians immigrated throughout history, not only did the Persian language develop there, but

the Iranian culture has found its way to the everyday lives of many Indians. For example, Nowruz (Iranian New Year) is among the Persian celebrations held in India. Each state of India enjoys the celebration of Nowruz for different reasons and associated beliefs, and this festival is comprised of various cultural and religious values. Most popularly celebrated in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Persian New Year is also known as Pateti.

Language and literature

Since the time of the Ghaznavids, with the conquest of India by Mahmud of Ghaznavi (998-1030 CE), relations between the two countries began to expand. Since then, Persian has become one of the important languages of the Indian subcontinent. The migration of Iranians to India gained more momentum from the 14th century CE and the influence of Persian culture and language on India reached its peak during the Timurid period (1370-1507 CE). With the rise of the Safavids to power in Iran, a flood of Iranian poets and scholars began to migrate to the Indian subcontinent to the extent that the Persian language and culture in this land became more prevalent and pop-

ular than in Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid dynasty. For centuries, Persian was a court language in India. During this period, the natives of India also showed interest in learning Persian. As a result, this language found its way to every kind of written and spoken means of communication. Many Iranian texts and books have been translated into Gujarati, Telugu and Punjabi languages. There are many stone carvings and plasters of Persian inscriptions in India. There are also many hand-written books, mostly from the time of Humayun (1508-1556 CE), a Mughal emperor. Humayun lost Mughal territories to Sher Shah Suri (the founder of the Sur Empire in India), but regained

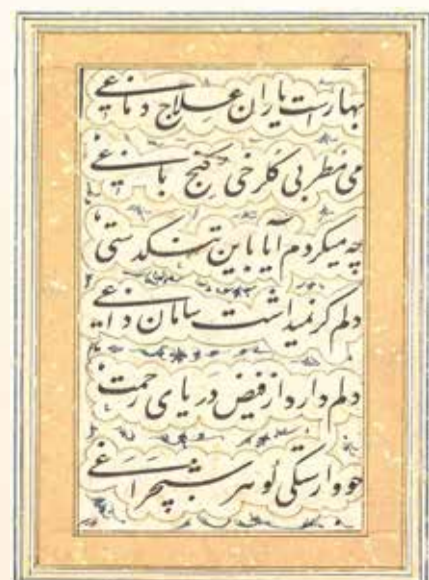
them 15 years later with the Safavids' aid. Humayun's return from Persia was accompanied by a large number of noblemen who influenced the art, architecture, language and literature of India. The kings of Adil Shahi dynasty, who ruled the Deccan region of southern India from 1489 to 1686 CE, were among the main supporters of poetry and poets. They had deep cultural relations with Iran, and this caused a large number of Persian poets, scholars and writers to gather in their capital. Thanks to the support provided by these rulers and the desirable climate of the region, a large number of people migrated from Iran to this region. Perhaps it was easier for some to go to Deccan in-



A Persian language class in India
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stead of Delhi. Today in India, there are thousands of rare books written in Persian, which is proof of the longevity of this language in India. Indo-Persian began its decline in the 1830s, when the British East

India Company stopped using it as an official language. In general, Persian reigned as an administrative language in the Indian subcontinent for several centuries until the era of British colonization.



A Persian poem produced in the Deccan, in 17th century
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