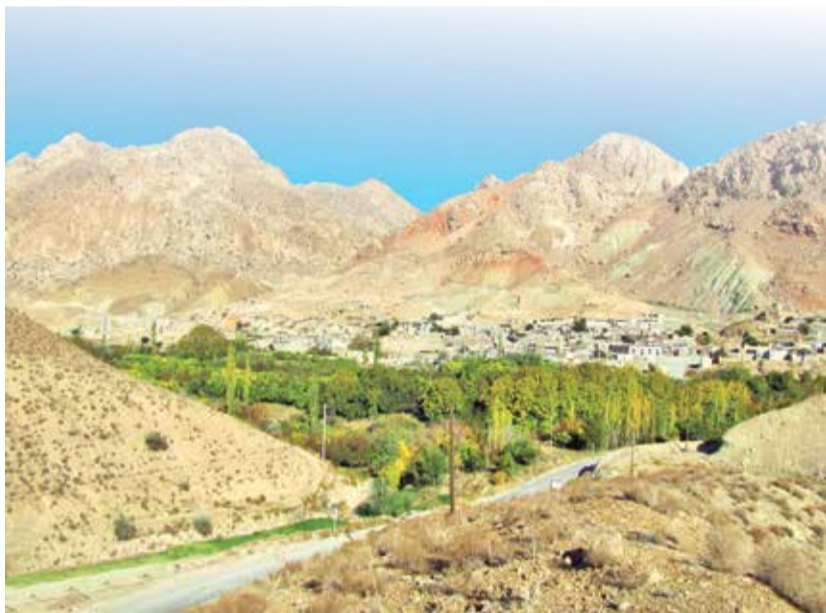


Efforts underway to develop tourism sector of South Khorasan Province



Tabas Geopark
tabasgeopark.com

Iranica Desk

The eastern province of South Khorasan, with 1,014 nationally and five

internationally registered sites, can be chosen as a destination by many tourists in all seasons of the year. However, despite having a significant

number of attractions, the tourism potentials of the province have not been introduced properly.

With a diverse climate, numerous natural landscapes, historical monuments, and traditional rituals and customs, the province is situated in a strategic geographical location. But lack of a suitable infrastructure in road, rail and air transportation has caused them to remain unknown across the country and the world, IRNA wrote.

More than 2,000 historically valuable sites have been recognized in South Khorasan Province, 1,014 of which have been inscribed on Iran's National Heritage List. Last year, Tabas, as the third Iranian geopark, received the positive vote of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council. This caused the number of globally registered sites of the province to reach five.

Ehsan Dorostkar, an expert from South Khorasan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization, told IRNA that spring and the early months of autumn are the best times to travel to the region.

"In other seasons, a limited number of people arrive in this province, and only

a number of passengers pass through some cities such as Tabas, Ferdous and Nehbandan to go to other provinces," he said.

"However, adopting new strategies would help us encourage them to stay longer in this province."

He continued that a number of plans have been devised to help realize the target, and thanks to the efforts taken by the provincial officials, the National Barberry Festival was held in the province in October of 2022.

"We prepared a number of travel packages before the festival and sent them to the province's tourism agency. This helped increase the arrival of tourists to the province," Dorostkar noted.

He noted that some fruitful steps were taken in the field of tourism marketing last year, for example, a number of multilingual video clips were prepared to be distributed in target countries.

Foreign tourists are looking for the world's highest and hottest spots, etc. Tabas Geopark and Lut Desert, the globally registered natural sites of the province, have the required conditions to draw tourists with special interests.

Lut Desert has recently been recorded as the hottest place on Earth, with temperatures reaching up to 73.5°C.

He noted that unique handicrafts produced in the province are categorized among the outstanding tourist attractions of South Khorasan Province.

Dorostkar said that efforts should be made to introduce the traditional rituals and customs of the province in the best possible manner.

Referring to the significant role played by the municipalities in the development of the tourism sector, he said this will help preserve the cultural heritage of the province and generate sustainable income resources for the local people.

"Local communities of the province should be prepared culturally to host tourists; this would pave the way for them to benefit from the tourism industry," he concluded.

South Khorasan produces more than 60 percent of the world's saffron. Other products of the province include barberry and jujube. Planting saffron, using old traditional methods, has been common in this province since ancient times.

Language competition and the rise of Urdu

The increasing relevance of Urdu has been identified as one the main reason for Persian's outright decline during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The rise of Urdu impacted literary culture, poetic expression and patronage practices associated with Persian, marginalising its social and literary value in certain venues and implementing it in others. The often linear presentation of the growth of Urdu in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century South Asia, however, favours the displacement of Persian as abrupt and complete, giving the impression that Persian literary culture declined and disappeared without a trace remaining. Such a view wishes to see the complex interplay between multiple languages in a shared literary environment as necessarily arcing towards the replacement of one by the other. It is a conception modelled on the romantic view of nationalism where monolingualism is an established feature of the modern nation-state.

As Francesca Orsini, an Italian

scholar of South Asian literature, reminds us, careful attention must be paid to the particular configurations of multilingual practices and uses among different groups, places and genres in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, rather than that we fall into the trap of generalisations, such as the phenomenon of vernacularisation or a theory of language substitution. The relationship between the register of Urdu and Persian literary tradition was indeed messy.

The origin and rise of Urdu, the circumstances and places where it developed and the genealogy of the name itself remain the subject of much controversy and debate. Contrary to the linear narrative of its development, as nationalist and colonial constructions posit, the emergence of Urdu is the outgrowth of a long series of overlapping and cross-cutting histories. Urdu's emergence and use as a literary language can be related to far-flung phenomena spread across South Asia in the medieval and early modern periods, such as debates over its literary acceptability

and new modes of patronage. Urdu's rise to prominence can best be seen as the cumulative impact of these many disparate factors, occurring in fits and starts in both the Subcontinent's north and south over several hundred years. Urdu's emergence is as much the result of Sufis in early fifteenth-century Gujarat using proto-Urdu to reach a wider audience, and the dual linguistic pattern of Persian and Dakhani under operation at various courts, as it is the outcome of debates among poets and literati concerning its merits as a replacement for Persian in later centuries.

In the early eighteenth century, Rekhta – a mixture of Persian and Hindustani literary verse and a direct literary ancestor of Urdu – experienced its 'first great flowering', to borrow the words of Ralph Russell, a British scholar of Urdu literature. At this time, the language began to blossom as a court language, and later, more prominently, it began to blossom as a language of poetic expression. Over the next two centuries, political developments, sociological processes and community desires all coalesced to initiate a

greater utilisation of the Urdu vernacular as a growing medium of expression. Its emergence challenged Persian in certain settings, but remained coexistent with it elsewhere.

The break-up of the Mughal empire was a defining moment in this regard. The rise of various successor states in the wake of the empire's disintegration, along with new patronage opportunities at the court level and throughout society, had far-reaching impacts on Persian literary practice.

A shift, however, had already been under way with regard to Urdu and Persian at the Mughal court. Beginning around the reign of Shah 'Alam II (1759-1806 CE), Rekhta (slowly coming to call itself 'Urdu') came to be used in the court of the Mughals. While Persian remained in place as the official language, the gentry in Delhi became less inclined to utilise it in their writings.

They increasingly viewed Persian as a language most readily associated with the royal patronage practices of a strained imperial centre.



An Urdu book: "The History of the Urdu Language"
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