

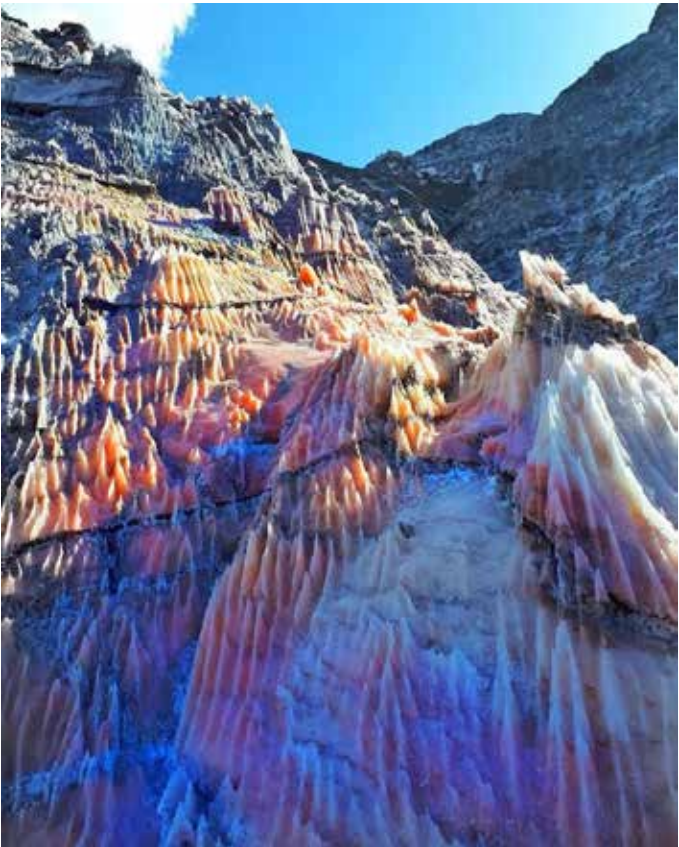
# Beckoning features of Bastak Salt Dome in Hormozgan Province



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## Iranica Desk

Along the southern section of the Zagros Mountains, about 200 salt domes have been identified so far, with 80 of them located in Hormozgan Province. The provinces of Fars and Bushehr also play a significant role in this geological phenomenon. Among the salt domes in Hormozgan, approximately 70 exhibit salt rock outcrops, creating stunning and unique views of colorful crystalline layers of salt amidst the dry and mountainous landscape of the region. One of the most notable of these formations is the Bastak Salt Dome. The Bastak Salt Dome is part of the Hormuz salt formation and derives its name from its location on the eastern side of the

Gavbast anticline. This remarkable natural feature is situated along the main road connecting Bastak to Lar, within the boundaries of Bastak. The nearest village to this dome is Fatuyeh, which lies just four kilometers away. The access route to the northern viewpoint of the dome includes approximately three and a half kilometers of hiking through pristine, untouched nature, a journey that promises an unforgettable experience for nature enthusiasts, [chtn.ir](#) wrote. Covering an area of more than seven square kilometers, this salt dome is elongated in a rectangular shape aligned with a north-south axis. The length of the dome is about five kilometers, and its width is two kilometers. The Bastak Salt Dome is

an active geological feature, with salt continuously being pushed to the surface from within the earth. The salt within this dome is visible in thick, extensive veins, creating flows resembling glaciers in the northern and southern sections. These flows, commonly referred to as salty glaciers, are considered one of the distinctive characteristics of this dome. The dome is drained by a network of seasonal water flows that are branched and dendritic. The waters from the northern part of the dome flow into the Rasoul River (also known as the Gudar River), while the waters from the southern part drain into a branch of the Mehran River. Because these rivers pass through saline lands, their waters are

also salty. In the northern part of the dome, there are two permanent saline springs with low discharge that remain active even during the driest months of the year. The rise of salt from the underlying layers has altered the structures of the surrounding rocks. The towering, hard limestone walls in the north of the dome restrict the further spread of salt, and in some areas, the movement of salt comes to a standstill. This interaction between salt and hard rock has led to erosion and the formation of diverse geological landscapes. As a result of the dissolution of salt by water, narrow and deep valleys have formed on the surface of the dome. These valleys typically emerge at the sites of

primary rock fractures and feature nearly vertical walls. The varying resistance of different parts of the dome against erosion has resulted in the creation of beautiful and occasionally fearsome cliffs. Cuts and grooves can be observed on the surface of the dome, resulting from the gradual dissolution of evaporative and gypsum rocks. In certain areas, the salts from the springs have crystallized and settled around the spring openings in cauliflower-like formations, imparting a fantastical appearance to the region's landscape. In dry and low-rainfall areas, when salty water flows from heights and evaporates along the way, the remaining salt settles on the surface, forming landscapes

resembling frost and icy rivers. This phenomenon, known as the "salt waterfall," is among the most unique natural features of the Bastak salt dome, highlighting that this dome remains active and subject to transformation. The Bastak Salt Dome stands as one of the most astonishing and lesser-known natural attractions in southern Iran. The diversity of geological structures, the stunning colors of the salt, the unique landscapes, and the relatively easy access make it an ideal destination for nature lovers, geology enthusiasts, and geo-tourists. Undoubtedly, with further promotion of this marvelous phenomenon, Bastak could emerge as one of the key hubs for geological tourism in the country.



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## Kurangun Petroglyph reveals 5,000-year-old Elamite Civilization

Kurangun is the name of an ancient petroglyph located near the city of Rostam, approximately ten kilometers northwest of Fahljan, around the village of Sehtolan, close to Nourabad Mamasani. It lies along the route from Behbahan to Shiraz, Fars Province, carved into Kurangun Mountain about 100 meters above the Fahljan River, locally referred to as Fahljun. The Kurangun Petroglyph was first discovered by Baron Max von Oppenheim, a German lawyer, diplomat, and ancient historian, in 1882. Three years later, it was studied by German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld. This petroglyph serves as a memorial to the ancient Elam civilization, dating back nearly 5,000 years, and is believed to have been commissioned by Elamite kings who ruled from the seventh to the third century BCE. The name Elam appears in cuneiform as Haltamati, meaning "the land of the gods", [visitiran.ir](#) wrote.

At the center of the Kurangun Petroglyph are two worshipping human figures, surrounded by seventy-two other small and large figures, some of which are partially eroded over time. Scholars propose that these figures represent Humban, an Elamite god, and Kiririsha, the mother of the gods. Some experts suggest that one of these figures may also be Inshushinak, the great national god of Elam. Together, these three figures may represent the deity triangle of Elam. Each figure in the Kurangun Petroglyph holds a snake in their hand and is seated on a throne made of a curled-up snake. The two deities wear horned caps, a symbol associated with divinity among the Sumerians, while worshippers on either side are depicted: women dressed in long clothing facing left and men facing right. Snakes, especially the depiction of two snakes, are common motifs in ancient Elamite art, symbolizing fertility, life, and birth.



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