

# Fragile splendor of Daryasar Plain at risk

Iranica Desk

Daryasar Plain in Tonekabon, Mazandaran Province, located at an altitude of over 2,000 meters above sea level and becoming one of tourists' favorite destinations in May with the blossoming of yellow chamomile flowers, is facing a water shortage phenomenon this year. A significant part of the middle river has dried up, and many springs in the plain are experiencing a sharp decrease in water output. These changes clearly indicate the negative impacts of climate change and consecutive droughts in the region.

On the other hand, the increasing number of tourists in spring, especially during holidays, has put great pressure on the plain's infrastructure and environment. The lack of adequate facilities to manage tourist populations, including parking lots, restrooms, and access paths, has caused garbage accumulation and destruction of the area's vegetation cover. This situation not only diminishes the beauty of the plain but also poses a serious threat to its sensitive ecosystem.

Some environmental activists, tour guides, and nature enthusiasts have come to help by forming a group to clean up the plain, and from time to time, they collect rubbish and clean the area. However, these actions are temporary, Mehr News Agency reported.

Daryasar Plain lacks integrated management and a designated authority. This has led to the absence of necessary coordination for sustainable development and environmental protection of the area. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate infrastructure such as accommodations, safe access roads, and sanitary services affects tourists' experience and prevents optimal utilization of the tourism potential of the plain.



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In this plain, two brothers named Ali and Mostafa Talikani act as the area's wardens and settle in their cabin during busy times. Along with livestock farming and producing dairy products, they watch over the area. These individuals put in considerable effort for the area but are dissatisfied with many tourists not respecting the environment, saying that they face an overwhelming flood of irresponsible tourists. They either have to compensate for

the damage caused by these visitors, clean up their rubbish, or attend to the problems they encounter. These two brothers stay and live in this area for several months of the year; however, preserving the beauty and ecosystem of Daryasar Plain requires comprehensive planning and integrated management. The development of tourism infrastructure in accordance with environmental principles, education and cultural aware-

ness among tourists, and co-operation between various organizations can help preserve this area. Additionally, focusing on environmental issues and sustainable development could lead to economic prosperity in the region and create employment for local residents. Mohammad Ali Jari, a nature guide in western part of Mazandaran Province, told Mehr News Agency, "This plain experiences a large crowd in spring, especially in May and early June,

which generates a lot of garbage. Some tourists here are trained nature travelers, and when they leave the plain, they take their garbage with them. But our problem is with ordinary tourists who litter and do not respect the environment, and we witness all kinds of behavior from them." He said, "Every year, friends who frequently pass through this path or are herders collect the trash left by these people and take it down with them.

But all these activities happen spontaneously, and there is no proper management in the area. Whereas this place should be managed like Qaleh Rudkhan." Jari suggests organizing the entrance routes to the plain. He believes tourists can be sent to the area accompanied by a guide. On the other hand, the area has difficult passages that not everyone can cross, so the presence of a guide is necessary. Also, setting designated times for entering and leaving the plain is helpful because it takes about an hour and a half to ascend and reach the plain. Some people arrive too late and face difficulties returning, which burdens the local residents.

In mid-May this year, Hadi Mansourkiaei, head of Tonekabon's Department of Environment, emphasized obtaining permits from the environmental agency for presence in Daryasar Plain, saying, "Tourist presence continued until mid-June in Daryasar Plain. However, considering the wildlife breeding season, overnight stays and presence of tourists in the area were prohibited. Daryasar Plain cannot handle a large volume of tourists, and paying attention to this is influential in protecting this exemplary area."

The beauty of Daryasar Plain is indescribable, especially when its flowers bloom, presenting tourists with a yellow, red, and green plain under a blue sky. But among this beauty, some people start fires and leave them without properly extinguishing them, along with garbage.

If such behaviors increase and if locals, wardens, dedicated nature travelers, and experienced guides are not present, Daryasar Plain will face an environmental disaster, and then we will regret introducing one of the most beautiful plains of Iran to tourists or depriving it of its beauty.

## Falak-ol-Aflak Archaeology Museum displaying trace of 100,000 years of life

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More than 100,000 years of human habitation have been put on display at the Falak-ol-Aflak Archaeological Museum in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan Province, the Director General of the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization said.

Ata Hassanpour said, "The museum exhibits a wide range of archaeological artifacts from

various periods, with a special emphasis on the prehistoric sites of Khorramabad Valley, which have been nominated for registration on the World Heritage List." He continued that in total, 385 objects from the Paleolithic, Upper Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, as well as the Bronze and Iron Ages, the Seleucid, Parthian, Sassanid periods, Islamic eras, and archaeological findings from the excavations of the Fal-

ak-ol-Aflak hill are displayed in different sections of the museum, ISNA wrote. The museum is organized into four sections with an area of 224 square meters, namely General Introduction to Prehistory, Prehistory, General Introduction to Historical Periods (with a focus on the Falak-ol-Aflak castle and hill), and the Islamic Period. Hassanpour emphasized that the first section of the museum includes a map classifying key

archaeological sites in Lorestan Province by period, information about the geomorphology of Khorramabad Valley, and an overview of province's prehistoric periods; this section also features a model of a cave depicting a Neanderthal human making stone tools beside a child. He stated that the museum's prehistoric section includes 185 paleontological and archaeological specimens, with the oldest artifacts dating back to the Middle

Paleolithic period, some of which were discovered in the Humian Rock Shelter north of Kuhdasht and are over 100,000 years old. This official noted that Upper Paleolithic finds, related to the anatomically modern humans' entry into the region, include stone tools, animal remains, and bone tools excavated from the Yafteh Cave, dated between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago. Hassanpour pointed out that Yafteh Cave is one of the most

important Upper Paleolithic sites in Iran, providing valuable insights into the lifestyles and traditions of humans of that era. Tools from the Epipaleolithic — the final stage of the hunting and gathering era — are displayed from the Pasangar Cave. He said, "With the end of the Ice Age, humans living here between 10,000 and 12,000 years ago gradually began domesticating animals, cultivating grains, and establishing rural life."



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