

Iranica Desk

At the southernmost tip of Ilam Province, nestled on the verdant slopes of Kabir Kuh, lies a village that seems to have been entrusted with all of nature's beauty. Fazelabad, a village in the Central District of Darreh Shahr, Zarrin Dasht Rural District, rests on a flat plain near historic gorges and the Zagros Mountains, easily accessible via an asphalted road. Home to people of Lor descent, Fazelabad is a land where history and nature are interwoven, and every corner whispers a tale of life, patience, and beauty to travelers.

According to archaeological evidence, the area where Fazelabad is located was, in the not-so-distant past, part of an important historical corridor during the Sassanid era. The discovery of rock-cut tombs and pottery dating back to the Sassanid period near the village indicates the region's special place in the ancient history of western Iran. Additionally, "Tappeh Kahriz 4" to the west of Fazelabad is an ancient site belonging to the Sassanid period and the early Islamic centuries, which has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. These artifacts have turned Fazelabad into a treasure trove for history and archaeology enthusiasts according to ISNA.

Fazelabad village blends ancient history with pristine nature



The main attraction of Fazelabad is its pristine, untouched nature. Seasonal rains bring temporary waterfalls to the area, lending it a special beauty. One of the most famous of these attractions is a waterfall located four kilometers southeast of the village. With a height of nearly 25 meters, it cascades down from the rocks in two tiers. The waterfall can be reached via the Fazelabad road and the village of Marzban. Nearby, the

remains of a water mill dating back more than 150 years bear witness to a time not long ago when water was the axis of life for the people of this land. Farzad Sharifi, Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Ilam Province, told ISNA about the village's features: "On the slopes of the hills near Fazelabad, there are two ancient qanats that locals call 'Kariz Bala' (Upper Kariz) and 'Kariz Pain' (Lower Kariz). These qanats are a masterpiece



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of water engineering from the past, showing that the people of this land have long been familiar with the art of water management. These historical structures not only served as sources of agricultural and drinking water but are also considered today as attractions for tourists and researchers." He noted, "In recent years, Fazelabad has become one of the most popular destinations for ecotourism in Ilam Province. Numerous eco-lodges have

been established in the village and surrounding areas, offering travelers the chance to experience life in the heart of nature. The lodges are situated in a quiet corner of the village, adjacent to pristine forests, and maintain their silence and tranquility even on the busiest days." Sharifi stated, "Ecotourism accommodations in the fields connected to the forest and river provide a calm and pleasant atmosphere in a mountainous region. These lodges experience

cool air in summer and a blanket of snow in winter, hosting travelers seeking peace in the heart of nature."

Omid Esmaili, an expert from Ilam General Governorate, also spoke about the natural features of this beautiful village: "With its moderate mountainous climate, Fazelabad has a unique beauty in every season of the year."

The expert stated, "Spring with blossoming trees and flowing waterfalls, summer with cool weather suitable for mountaineering and hiking, autumn with colorful trees, and winter with snow cover — each offers a different experience for travelers."

He added, "With its eco-lodges, this village provides an opportunity to spend quiet nights in the heart of nature and to experience local cuisine and the hospitality of the Lor people."

Fazelabad village, with its blend of ancient history and pristine nature, is one of the most valuable tourism treasures of Ilam Province. It is an ideal destination for history enthusiasts, nature lovers, and travelers seeking a different and peaceful experience in the heart of the Zagros Mountains. Fazelabad awaits those who wish to discover the hidden beauties of Iran.

Iran's textile heritage inspires new fashion trend

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From ancient Persian horsemen to contemporary luxury collections, the fabric belt is making a comeback — bringing with it a history that stretches back centuries.

Imagine stepping into the atelier of a fashion designer in Paris. Strips of fabric adorned with geometric patterns lie across a worktable beside leather samples. One of the industry's best-known designers picks up a woven fabric belt and smiles. "These fabric belts are a modern trend," they say. Yet the fashion world may be rediscovering something Iranians understood centuries ago: strength does not always lie in rigidity, but in flexibility, according to IRNA.

This accessory, now taking pride of place in the windows of contemporary fashion boutiques around the world, has deep historical connections to Iran. From the days when Persian horsemen relied on flexible fabric bands rather than heavy bronze and metal fittings for greater freedom of movement to the Safavid era, when silk waist sashes became an integral part of the attire of aristocrats and artists, the fabric belt has long held a place in Iranian dress.

In Iranian culture, the belt has always been more than a simple means of holding up trousers. Today, as the fashion world grows weary of the rigid conventions of the past and searches for ways to combine comfort with identity, it is returning — perhaps unwittingly — to a tradition that once travelled from Iran to the wider world along the Silk Road. The history of clothing in Iran is a story of ingenuity, reflecting a people who have long sought to balance beauty with practicality. For Iranians, clothing was never merely a way to cover the body; it was an expression of culture, identity and lifestyle. From garments designed for ancient horsemen to silk fabrics and the elaborate attire of royal courts, each reflects Iranians' expertise in working with raw materials, colours and textile craftsmanship.

In earlier times, climate and lifestyle played a significant role in shaping what people wore. Persian horsemen, for example, needed garments that allowed them greater freedom of movement in the saddle and on the battlefield.



Trousers, boots and other riding-friendly clothing consequently became widespread among many Iranian peoples. The use of wool, cotton and silk also illustrates how Iranians made use of the natural resources available to them. Over time, this practical knowledge merged with weaving traditions and a sophisticated aesthetic sensibility, transforming Iranian clothing into a valuable part of the country's cultural heritage.

Iran's position along major trade routes has also ensured centuries of contact with diverse cultures. Textiles, motifs and tailoring techniques travelled along these routes to other lands, sometimes acquiring new names as they spread. Part of Iran's sartorial legacy, therefore, can be traced

through designs that remain visible in other cultures today. Many items now considered commonplace — or even iconic — in Western fashion have connections to Iranian aesthetic traditions, although their origins have not always been widely acknowledged. From woolen shawls to the Boteh Jegheh motif, known in the West as paisley, these designs travelled from Iran to India and eventually to Europe, evolving along the way. Today, numerous global luxury

brands continue to turn to Iran's artistic heritage as a seemingly inexhaustible source of inspiration, although the origins of such influences are not always explicitly acknowledged.

Fashion designer Riccardo Tisci, for example, incorporated motifs inspired by Iranian textiles into luxurious velvet garments for Givenchy's 2015 collection. Maison Margiela, meanwhile, presented designs combining traditional Persian carpets

imagery associated with the Sassanid period. Over the centuries, the design has travelled far beyond its original cultural setting, becoming a familiar feature of expensive European scarves and a recognized motif in international fashion.

The return of wide fabric belts to the latest collections of international fashion houses offers another example of historical influences re-emerging in contemporary design. According to British Vogue, the cummerbund has taken

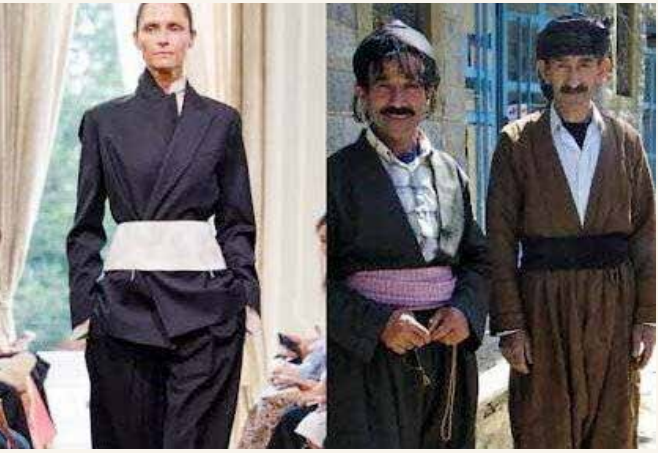


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on a prominent role in recent designs by labels including Ralph Lauren, Kallmeyer and Ahluwalia. Once associated primarily with formalwear, the accessory is now appearing in more casual combinations with skirts, dresses and wide-leg trousers.

The word cummerbund is generally traced to Hindi and Urdu, with its linguistic roots linked to the Persian word Kamarband, meaning a waist belt or sash. This connection, alongside historical evidence of the use of wide belts and waist sashes in Iran, points to a long tradition of similar garments in the region.

That tradition remains alive in Iranian dress today, particularly in Kurdish, Lori and Bakhtiari clothing, where waist sashes continue to form



brands draw inspiration from Persian carpets and miniature paintings for their collections, revisiting an aesthetic tradition associated with historic centers such as Persepolis and Isfahan.

with transparent plastic. Even the celebrated Boteh Jegheh pattern, popularized internationally by the Italian fashion house Etro, is often linked to the cypress-like motif found in Persian art, including

part of traditional attire. Their survival demonstrates how elements of Iranian dress can continue to inform contemporary fashion and shape global design sensibilities.

The sudden resurgence of fabric belts on the international market is no coincidence. It reflects a broader shift towards more relaxed dressing in recent years, as consumers increasingly move away from rigid formalwear.

Many people no longer want to be constrained by stiff, uncomfortable leather belts that limit movement. Lightweight, easily adjustable and versatile, fabric belts work with a wide range of casual and informal outfits. They have consequently become part of a broader vision of effortless, understated style.

Environmental concerns are also influencing the shift. A new generation of consumers is seeking vegan and recycled alternatives — options that conventional leather production cannot always readily provide. By using organic cotton or recycled polyester, brands are presenting fabric accessories as products more compatible with contemporary lifestyles and sustainability-conscious values.

The trend is also opening up opportunities for manufacturers able to experiment with textures, woven structures and colour combinations, giving everyday clothing a distinctive new identity.

When someone on the other side of the world ties a fabric belt or waist sash around their waist today, they may know little about its long and complex history. Yet the gesture represents more than a passing fashion trend: it is part of the continuing journey of Persian aesthetics beyond national borders, where traditions rooted in the past find new expression in the fashion of the present.