



BĪĀBĀNAK

BĪĀBĀNAK, a group of oasis settlements in central Iran. Located approximately between 54° 15' and 55° 15' E and 35° 10' N, these isolated desert settlements stretch over an area of 70 by 90 miles of what is mostly desert. The administrative district of Kūr (K^vor)-Bīābānak is one of three *baḳšes* in the *šahrestān* of Nā'īn. The whole district is bounded in the north by the salt swamps of the Dašt-e Kavīr (q.v.), which in winter often turns into shallow lakes and which is impassable. The eastern margin is marked by the *kavīrs* of Ṭabas/Golšan. In the south the vast desert stretches of the *baḳš* of **Bāfq** and in the west those of the **Anārak** district delineate the Bīābānak basis complex. The oases of Bīābānak are located in the frostfree zone and are part of the northern fringe of date palm cultivation in Iran. The climatological station of Kūr-Bīābānak (55° 02' E, 33° 47' N), situated at 850 m above mean sea-level, has an average annual temperature of 20°C, with a monthly low of 7.5°C in January and a monthly high of 32.3° in July. Precipitation averages 36.1 mm per year, with extremes ranging from less than 3 to 68 mm per year (figures based on an unpublished 13-year observation period).

Due to the extreme aridity of the Bīābānak district, water supply of the villages is traditionally by *qanāts*, in recent years also by wells and motor pumps. A few artesian wells supply additional water, some of it in the form of warm springs (see **āb-e garm**). Irrigation is the basis of agriculture, especially date palms and grain. Animal husbandry is less important. The predominantly Shi'ite and Persian-speaking population, which originally clustered in heavily fortified villages subject to raids by Baluchi nomads, is almost exclusively



engaged in agriculture. According to Razmārā (*Farhang* X, p. 80) the district consisted of 18 villages with a total population of 13,490 in the early 1320s Š./1940s. The Bīābānak oases are, like other oasis areas of central Iran (cf. Ehlers, 1980), characterized by emigration and depopulation. Nowadays only the larger communities, such as Farroḳī, Čūpānān, Jandaq, and above all Kūr–Bīābānak as the main center, still possess an intact infrastructure, with school, mosques, bath houses, and other services. In 1348 Š./1969 the district was recorded as containing 183 farms, villages, and other settlements with a total population of about 14,000, but only three villages had over 1,000 inhabitants: Kūr (2,912), Jandaq (1,411), and Farroḳī (1,325; Markaz-e Āmār, pp. 21-24). The former strategic importance of caravan trade and traffic is no longer of importance. Jandaq is the birthplace of the 13th/19th-century poet Mirzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Yaḡmā Jandaqī.

See also [bīār](#).

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