



LANGARUD

LANGARUD (lit. the lower limb of the river), a city and sub-provincial district (*šahrestān*) in **Gilān** located at lat 37°11' N, long 50°09' E on the Langarud River, which cuts through the city, dividing it into two parts. The suffix “rud” in the name of the city probably refers to the **Safidrud**, the exact embouchure of which has changed over the centuries. According to Sayyed Žahir-al-Din Mar'aši (apud Rabino, p. 303, tr., p. 354), Rāh-Pošta, one of the neighborhoods of the city of Langarud, was located on the banks of Safidrud.

Being mentioned for the first time in 1118-19 (Rabino, p. 341, tr., p. 396), the city owes its fame to the commercial and administrative functions it has performed throughout history. Located in the heart of a region that produces rice and silk, with the nearby quarter of Čamkāla functioning as its commercial port, Langarud witnessed strong growth late in the 19th and early in 20th century when Iran's trade with Russia and Europe was flourishing. Prior to the administrative reforms under Režā Shah (r. 1924-41) that led to the creation of the sub-province of Lāhijān in 1937, of which Langarud was just a district (*baḡš*), Langarud had long been the administrative capital of Rānekuh. In the wake of further reforms, late in the 1960s, the sub-province of Lāhijān was divided into three *šahrestān*, including Rudsar, Langarud, and Lāhijān. Langarud comprised of a small area of 471 km².

Throughout the Qajar period, Langarud was ruled by the local family of notables named Monajjem-bāši, one of whom had married a daughter of Faṭḥ-'Ali Shah. This family ran the administrative system of Gilān Province, and a number of them served as court ministers. Their manor, including the old



mansion in the district of Faškāli (Sotuda, pp. 249-50) is still among the most attractive monuments of the city. Bridges made of burnt bricks—and especially the *Kešt-e Pol* (originally made of lumber), which connects the neighborhoods of the districts of Faškāli and Rāh-Pošteh—constitute another scenic attraction of Langarud (Sotuda, pp. 258-60, pls. 184-85).

Langarud is the fourth most populated city in the province of Gilān. The city's fairly rapid demographic growth, from 14,580 inhabitants in 1956 to 45,910 in 1986, enabled it to exceed in importance the neighboring city of Lāhijān, but with subsequent slowing of the rate of population growth the city fell to fourth place by 2006 (65,369 inhabitants). The slowing of the tempo of demographic growth is due to the city's administrative insignificance as well as to the weakness of industrial infrastructures (only 802 locals were employed by the 43 companies of the city; *Sāl-nāma*, pp. 262-63, 267) and the stagnation of rural activities in the sub-province. In 2006 the rural population amounted to 55,432, that is, 41.5 percent of the total of 133,559 inhabitants of the sub-province and the adjacent small towns of Komeleh and Šalmān (5,703 and 5,651 souls respectively).

The main products of the sub-province of Langarud and its rural environs are rice and silk, although early in the 20th century they produced wheat and flax. Langarud remains the leading supplier of cocoons in Gilān, but this happens during a period of recession. The total production of cocoons in the province of Gilān, which was long stabilized at higher levels, fell from 5,497 tons in 2000 to 1,653 tons in 2007 (see bacsasilk.org/en/iran), and the number of the boxes of silk worm eggs produced by Langarud farmers in 2006 was at the same level recorded for the year 1974 (25,000 boxes according to *Sāl-nāma*, p. 211). Langarud also grows tea, especially in the farming complexes located in the southern parts of the sub-province in the district of Oṭāqvar. With 5,662 hectares of plantations in 1971, Langarud ranked third in the province of Gilān after Lāhijān and Rudsar, but as a result of trade liberalization policies of the Iranian government in the early 2000s, it suffered, like the rest of the province, from the collapse of tea prices (Allaverdian, p. 67).

The population of Langarud consists of Gilaks, who speak the Lāhiji dialect of the [Gilaki language](#) in the plain and the Gāleši dialect of the same language in the southern heights of the sub-province. However, there exists a substantial minority of Kurds from the region of Kermānšāh in the districts of Čamkāla and Gāleškalām, not far from the Caspian coast. These Kurds settled in Langarud during the reign of the last Qajar king, Aḥmad Shah (r. 1909-24), to



“form a defensive line against the Russian threat.” They adhere to the Ātašbeygi faction of the *Ahl-e Ḥaqq* sect. Their villages are centered around the Jamkāna, where they gather to perform their rituals. These Kurds are specialized in the breeding of buffaloes (*gāvmiš*), a type of farming that is not practiced by the local inhabitants of Gilān (Pourfickoui and Bazin, p. 8).

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