

Ilam's handwoven carpet industry in need of more attention

Iranica Desk

The people of the western province of Ilam have always been famous in various artistic fields and their past nomadic life has caused handicrafts to become prevalent in the region.

Today handicrafts, from embossed kilims to handwoven carpets, are being produced across the province. The available figures show that, presently, the craftspeople of the province manufacture 33 types of handicrafts, IRNA reported. Handwoven carpets have been found in the houses of local people since a long time ago. Consequently, a boom in the carpet-weaving industry has played a significant role in the livelihoods of rural families.

However despite its great capacity, the province's carpet-weaving industry has no fame in the country, and is not supported by relevant organizations.

Kobra Azizi, who has been involved in the carpet-weaving industry for 20 years, said that carpet weavers have to sell their products at very low prices. She said earning a low wage is the main problem faced by carpet weavers who are active in the province.

"A 2x3 meter rug takes at least nine months to be woven but, unfortunately, we don't get a good salary at the end," she said. She noted that a large num-

ber of the province's carpet weavers are not covered by social security insurance.

Ali Khodayari, a carpet expert, said that lack of branding is the main problem faced by the province's carpet industry, adding that 95 percent of handmade carpets produced in the province are being exported to foreign countries, but no one knows about that.

The designs of carpets woven in Ilam are taken from other parts of the country, thus the products woven in the region are sold to domestic and foreign markets under the name of other provinces.

He said that proper planning in the field of carpet production would help generate jobs for a large



number of villagers, pointing out that in some villages of the province, such as Cheshmeh Shirin of Badreh, most of the residents earn a

living through carpet weaving.

Khodayari continued that the unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran have caused a

reduction in the province's carpet exports, pointing out that the establishment of a carpet production township is the first strategy

which should be adopted to develop the sector in the province.

Head of the province's Industries and Mines Organi-

zation Mohammad Rahimi said that about 4,100 meters of handwoven carpets were produced across the province in the past Iranian

year (ended March 20, 2023). He noted that more than 3,050 people are involved in carpet weaving in the province.

Hamedan hosts several thanksgiving festivals in summer



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Sacrifice of sheep and making vows, as practices of worship and thanksgiving, are among rituals held in Iran since ancient times.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Festival is held by the residents of Sonqorabad village in the western province of Hamedan every year at the end of the

harvest season. Fariba Nemati, an expert from Hamedan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said that it is one of several thanksgiving ceremonies held in the province that coincides with the wheat harvest.

"Early in the morning, villagers gather around a hill at the foot of a mountain, have breakfast together,

sacrifice a sheep and cook abgoosht [a traditional Iranian stew]."

She continued that at the end of the day, they go to the shrine of an Imamzadeh in the village to pray and thank God for the blessings they have received, and then return to their homes.

Nemati said that due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country, the festi-

val was not held for two years, pointing out that efforts are underway to register the festival on Iran's National Heritage List. The expert said that another thanksgiving ceremony, named 'Dar-Imam,' is being held in Hamedan Province, which was registered nationally in June. It is a ceremony held several times a year in Heydareh Qazikhan vil-

lage, on a hill with several springs and trees. In May, when the springs are full of water, the rural people go to the hill, gather around a tree known as Dar-Imam, sacrifice sheep and cook abgoosht for lunch.

Another thanksgiving festival associated with the harvest season is held on the hill next to the tree on a day in July or Au-

gust, when the villagers sacrifice a sheep, spend time together until the afternoon and then pray to God.

Mount Alvand, with a height of 3,574 meters above sea level, is to the south and southwest of the city of Hamedan.

The altitude of this province and its location at the foothills of the Zagros and Alvand mountains

results in heavy rain and snowfall. This has created many springs to flow through this land.

These features have made this land green and have made it an ideal place for nomad life and cattle breeding.

The economy in this province is primarily based on farming and husbandry, and then on mining activities.