

# 16,000 handicraft artists active in Zanzan Province

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## Iranica Desk

About 16,000 craftspeople are active in Zanzan Province, 5,000 of whom are involved in the copper industry, said the head of Zanzan's Union of Copper-smiths.

Mosen Salimi noted that more than 1,250 coppersmithing workshops are operating across the province in the fields of *qalam-zani* (engraving), *firouzeh-kubi* (turquoise-inlaying), stone-carving, silver-inlaying and *mi-*

*na-kari* (enameling).

"According to historical findings the history of copper industry dates back to 9500 BCE and the cold-hammering method was used until 5000 BCE," he said.

Referring to financial and insurance problems as well as high taxation faced by those engaged in the copper industry.

Meanwhile, Head of Zanzan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Saeed Safavi said

that during the short term of its operation the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts carried out very fruitful measures to support those active in the sector.

He went on to say that 520,000 people are involved in activities related to the handicraft sector, of whom 16,000 are active in 500 branches of handicrafts in Zanzan Province.

"A law has been ratified for supporting handicraft trainers and artists and efforts are underway to enforce it as soon

as possible", he said.

Safavi mentioned that a significant amount of financial support has been provided to handicraft artists operating within household units in recent years. He highlighted that visiting handicraft workshops is a sub-category of tourism, and a related pilot plan has been initiated in the province in this regard.

Moreover, the official emphasized that brand-building and effective packaging can contribute to the growth of the

handicraft sector. He noted that several workshops have been established in the province to support these efforts.

Handmade knives, a local type of women's shoe named *charoq*, light cotton summer shoes, felt, tapestry work, carpet, kilim, *jajim* (loosely woven woolen carpet), *monabat-kari* (wood-engraving), and embroideries are among the traditional handicrafts found in Zanzan.

The city of Zanzan has been officially recognized as the National City Filigree Art, which has a history dating back several thousand years. Filigree is known for its intricate metalwork, ranging from delicate jewelry pieces to cast iron railings and balustrades. It involves creating finely shaped works using silver threads or ribbons to craft *eslimi* patterns and other geometric designs. These intricate works are used to adorn luxury items such as cups, containers, candlesticks, painting or photography frames, and jewelry, showcasing the artistry and craftsmanship of the region.

## Nahar Khoran Forest Park, a sanctuary of natural wonders



Nahar Khoran is a vast forest park located ten kilometers within the Ziarat village of Gorgan, Golestan Province. This national forest, part of the ancient Caspian Hyrcanian mixed forests dating back to the Jurassic period is a popular tourist destination in northern Iran. It was historically a resting place for pilgrims who would enjoy their lunch (Nahar in Persian) on the mountain's slopes to the south of Gorgan as they passed through the area, inspiring the

name Nahar Khoran.

Located along the shores of the Caspian Sea from the Republic of Azerbaijan to Gorgan, the Nahar Khoran Forest Park is a lush expanse dominated by broad-leaved trees, part of the expansive Hyrcanian forests spanning two million hectares. With a diverse geological composition featuring multiple layers, the forest's elevation ranges from 400 meters to 900 meters above sea level, transitioning from sloping terrain to flat plains. Encompassing a total area of three hundred hectares, the forest garden includes

a central district covering one hundred and sixty-eight hectares.

Every corner of the Nahar Khoran Forest Park boasts a variety of terrains, including highlands, valleys, drainage basins, ridges, and springs. Among the notable natural features is the charming Sefid Cheshmeh spring, bubbling in the forest's highlands. Additionally, Nahar Khoran is home to the Ziarat River, a forty-kilometer waterway fed by the Qarah Su drainage basin, providing essential irrigation for the region. Within Nahar Khoran, a scenic jungle road leads to the expan-

sive Baba Taher viewpoint, offering panoramic vistas of the surrounding mountains and lush forest. Complementing Baba Taher, Nahar Khoran features various amenities and attractions, including restaurants, hostels, amusement parks, small markets, hotels, and villas clustered around Nahar Khoran square, Jangal-e Dast Kasht (Hand-planted forest), and paradise. Forest huts are also scattered throughout the area, providing cozy retreats amidst nature.

The diverse wildlife of Nahar Khoran includes inhabitants such as boars, jackals, bats, mice, weasels, squirrels, eagles, falcons, laughing doves, woodpeckers, wagtails, accentors, green forest lizards, starlings, crows, tits, and finches.

The vegetation in Nahar Khoran comprises a rich tapestry of plant species, including oaks, velvet maples, parrotias, European hornbeams, lindens,

sweet cherries, date-plums, raspberry bushes, ruscus, common medlars, pines, common hawthorns, cypresses, magnolias, boxwoods, privets, weeping willows, common ivies, and leucanthemums.

Nahar Khoran is also known for its tranquil hiking trails that wind through the forest, offering visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the surroundings. The forest is home to a wide variety of bird species, including nightingales, hoopoes, and owls, adding to the rich ecosystem of the area.

Visitors to Nahar Khoran can enjoy picnicking by the riverside, where the peaceful sounds of flowing water and bird songs

create a serene atmosphere. The forest is also a popular spot for camping, allowing nature enthusiasts to spend the night under the starlit sky and experience the true essence of the wilderness.

Moreover, Nahar Khoran is known for its vibrant seasonal colors, with the cherry blossoms in spring and the golden hues of autumn leaves adding to the picturesque landscape. The changing flora throughout the year provides a delightful visual feast for those exploring the forest garden.

Overall, Nahar Khoran is not just a forest park but a sanctuary of natural wonders waiting to be discovered and appreciated by all who venture into its verdant embrace.