

Iranica Desk

The martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, made numerous remarks on the importance and value of Iran's handicrafts. These statements reflect his profound insight, keen attention to detail, and comprehensive understanding of the culture of Iran. Paying attention to and understanding the meaning of his views constitutes a clear example of the path toward the advancement of the handicrafts sector.

He stated, "Take handicrafts very seriously and invest in them." More than two decades ago, during a visit to Yazd and a meeting with the city's intellectuals, he encountered an elderly man who asked why the production of Zilu (a traditional handwoven cotton floor covering) was not supported. In a brief and perceptive reply, carrying a practical message, he said, "I had to undertake a cultural initiative, and I did. I covered my entire Hosseiniyeh and my residence with Zilu, and I expect others to do the same."

In fact, with this short yet meaningful statement, he responded to the concern and demonstrated his commitment to this Iranian artistic craft, which had become intertwined with both his personal and working life.

Following this, orders were placed with Zilu weavers, and all of the carpets in the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh at his residence were replaced with simple yet deeply symbolic Zilu floor coverings. This initiative became a symbol of practical support for national production, handicrafts, and Ira-

Martyred Leader's lasting legacy for Iran's handicrafts



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nian employment. According to those active in the sector, it played an effective role in reviving the art and craft of Zilu weaving.

In response to those who insisted on using carpets that had been donated to the Hosseiniyeh, the martyred Leader said, "These Zilus are a handicraft that is on the verge of disappearing, and there are still people who earn their livelihood from producing and selling them. No one buys them. If we do not buy these Zilus either, this handicraft will become

extinct, and those who are still working in this craft will face difficulties in making a living. Therefore, in order to support employment and handicrafts, we must buy these Zilus." Although today the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh is without his profound speeches and resolute footsteps, this initiative, after more than two decades, helped revive the Zilu-weaving industry and further strengthened the motivation of the weavers and workers engaged in this



● donya-e-eqtasad.com

valuable artistic craft. The initiative stands as testimony to the importance of handicrafts, domestic production, and national employment — an example that officials should also adopt as a guiding principle, follow, and provide the necessary conditions for its realization. Indeed, in recent years, the annual slogans designated by the late Leader have largely focused on economic themes. In his Nowruz message marking the beginning of the Iranian

year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025), he stated, "Having studied the views of experts, I have come to the conclusion that one of the fundamental keys to solving the country's economic problems is the issue of production — domestic production and national production. That is why, over the past several years, we have consistently emphasized production. If growth in production and progress in national production are achieved in a satisfactory manner, many major economic problems,

such as inflation, unemployment, and the value of the national currency, will move significantly toward resolution."

At the location where the Leader delivered this Nowruz message, Iranian handicrafts were prominently displayed. Two authentic Iranian arts attracted particular attention in the setting: Pateh-Duzi, the handcrafted embroidery of Kerman's artisans, and a Negargari (Persian miniature painting) artwork titled Ya Muqallib al-Qulub wa al-Absar (part of a traditional Persian New Year invocation inspired by Qur'anic themes).

Pateh-Duzi is one of Kerman's oldest and most authentic handicrafts, producing highly delicate works distinguished by beautiful and diverse patterns.

Negargari, an authentic Iranian art form with deep roots in the culture and beliefs of the Iranian people, represents the delicate and intricate tradition of Persian painting. Its works emerge from the artist's imagination, dreams, and the soul's spiritual journey, transcending the physical world.

The late Leader also visited the domestic products exhibition, where he spoke with artisans at the handicrafts booths, reflecting his attention to the handicrafts sector and the artists working in this field.

Eastern Iran's windmill heritage moves toward global recognition

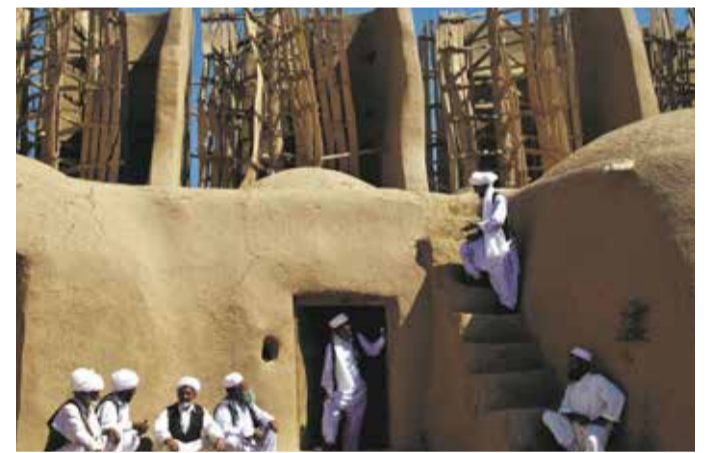
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The member of Iran's Parliament representing Khaf and Roshtkhar has announced that the UNESCO world heritage nomination dossier for the region's historic windmills is being finalized through coordinated efforts among the provinces of Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, and Sistan and Baluchistan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Speaking to ISNA, Amir Tavakoliroudi said UNESCO has proposed registering the traditional windmills of Nashtifan as part of a broader, multi-provincial heritage package covering the three eastern provinces. He added that the proposal has

been discussed with the governor-general of Khorasan Razavi, and that a recent joint meeting of the governors of the three provinces was held in the same region to define responsibilities and ensure completion of the nomination file by January for submission to UNESCO. Following this coordination, he said, local authorities in Khaf have prepared a detailed checklist to address remaining obstacles. A joint session involving members of the Islamic City Council, the mayor, officials from the Cultural Heritage Department, the Housing Foundation, and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development agreed to proceed with clearing and safeguarding the buffer zones surrounding the windmills.

Tavakoliroudi described tourism as the world's third-largest economic sector, noting that investment in each segment of the industry can generate between seven and nine jobs and contribute significantly to local economic growth. He emphasized that tourism is one of the key development potentials of Khaf and Roshtkhar, adding that Khaf ranks as the second most visited destination in Khorasan Razavi Province, reflecting its strong capacity for targeted tourism development. The lawmaker noted that rural eco-tourism infrastructure in Khaf had long been underdeveloped but has recently begun to expand. He highlighted the windmill sites of Nashtifan, Khaf, Barabad, and Sangan as unique

examples of ancestral engineering that harnessed wind power, describing them as the "jewel" of Khaf's tourism assets. He stressed that efforts to promote these heritage sites at both national and international levels have been ongoing for years, and said significant progress is now being made through coordinated work on the UNESCO nomination file. Tavakoliroudi expressed optimism that the long-stalled process would finally be completed through joint action, including buffer zone clearance and the development of an appropriate conservation and presentation plan consistent with the site's heritage value. He also pointed to financial support for eco-tourism busi-



● shidrokh-travel.ir

nesses in Khaf and Roshtkhar, as well as initiatives to develop gemstone cutting industries in Khaf, expressing hope that jewelry making and stone carving

would evolve into sustainable model industries in the region. Khaf is home to 121 traditional windmills, of which 89 have so far been restored.

Qerveh village blends heritage with sustainable tourism

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Across the vast landscape of Zanjan Province, on the outskirts of Abhar, lies a village where time seems to have stood still. The historic village of Qerveh is a perfect example of the harmonious coexistence of Iranian architectural ingenuity and a mountainous natural setting. Today, the village has become one of the region's most attractive tourism destinations, not only because of its unique historical monuments but also due to its pioneering role in revitalizing deteriorated areas and promoting sustainable tourism. The most distinctive feature of Qerveh is its rock-cut architecture. In this style, ancient craftsmen and builders, with a deep understanding of the environ-

mental potential, carved their living and service spaces out of massive rocks. In addition to its technical features in terms of sustainability and natural insulation, this architecture has created a visual spectacle that inspires admiration in every visitor. The houses, which appear to have grown from the heart of the mountain, are a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the people of this land to their geographical conditions.

At the heart of this historic village stand two prominent monuments that narrate the history and culture of its inhabitants: **Historic Qerveh Mosque:** With its domed ceilings and authentic brick decorations, this structure has served not only as a place of worship but also as a



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gathering place for the social and cultural activities of the local people over centuries. **Qerveh Bathhouse:** Built according to the principles of traditional Iranian bathhouse architecture, the bathhouse consists of various sections, including the Sarbineh (changing

hall), Garmkhaneh (warm chamber), and Khazineh (water reservoir). Its restoration and preservation have opened a window into the lifestyle of past generations. One of Qerveh's greatest strengths is the special attention given to restoration and revitalization. Through the efforts of

the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of the province and the participation of local residents, many of the village's valuable structures have been restored using traditional methods and locally sourced materials. These activities have transformed Qerveh from a deteriorating settlement into a successful model for cultural heritage preservation. The vitality of the village is not limited to its historical monuments; handicrafts remain alive and thriving there as well. In Qerveh, women and men work side by side in small and large workshops, creating artistic works: **Kilim weaving:** The craft of the village's women, who weave kilims featuring geometric patterns and natural colors. These

works have gained recognition in the markets of Abhar and Zanjan. **Pottery:** Qerveh's male and female artisans use local clay to create functional and decorative pottery. Today, these handmade products have become among the village's main souvenirs, attracting visitors. Tourism development in Qerveh has been accompanied by an emphasis on ecotourism. Several eco-lodges operate in restored historic houses, providing visitors with the opportunity to experience authentic rural life. Enjoying local cuisine, breathing the clean mountain air, and staying in an environment filled with history and traditional mud-brick architecture create an unforgettable experience for visitors.