

Semnan to host National Handicrafts Exhibition in November

Iranica Desk

The deputy director for handicrafts and traditional arts at the Semnan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization announced that the province will host a national handicrafts exhibition from November 14 to 20. Speaking to IRNA, Samaneh Soltanipour said handicraft artists from across Iran will take part in the exhibition, providing artists from Semnan with an opportunity to introduce, display and sell their products.

She said cultural programs will also be held alongside the exhibition to highlight the province's cultural potential. Nightly programs have been planned, including events marking "Semnan Cultural Week" and "Semnan Day." Soltanipour also noted the number of active handicraft artists in Semnan has surpassed 6,000 following significant growth in recent years. She noted that the num-

ber had previously been estimated at more than 4,500, but has now increased to over 6,000.

According to Soltanipour, increased financial support, assistance with sales and marketing, greater promotion of artists and efforts to facilitate their participation in exhibitions have contributed to the growing interest in handicrafts. She said such measures have increased confidence among the province's artistic community and encouraged younger generations to enter the handicrafts sector.

She also announced plans to expand online sales of handicrafts, saying a meeting with representatives of Digikala is scheduled to be held in the province next week. A number of handicraft artists and facilitators will attend the meeting to explore ways of increasing the visibility of Semnan handicraft products on online sales platforms. Soltanipour added that some artists in the prov-



• eligasht.com

ince are also active on social media, while the provincial department is seeking to use exhibitions across the country to provide opportunities for artists to promote and sell their products.

She said 15 handicrafts markets and exhibitions had been held in different parts of the province

since the beginning of the current Iranian year.

Referring to the expansion of permanent handicrafts markets in the province, Soltanipour said that, in addition to existing permanent markets in Shahroud and Garmsar, a permanent handicrafts market has also become operational

in Aradan through the efforts of local officials and support from the provincial department.

She also identified the publication of the "Electronic Booklet of Semnan Handicrafts" as another recent initiative. The booklet is available on the provincial Department of Cultural Heritage,

Tourism and Handicrafts' website and is being used to introduce local artists and their products.

Soltanipour further announced that a handicraft artist from Semnan will participate in the Global Crafts Festival in Vietnam. She said four representatives from Iran are taking part in the festival this year, with one of the places allocated to Semnan Province.

She described the participation as an opportunity to promote the province's handicrafts internationally, adding that the presence of Semnan artists at national and international events could help showcase the province's handicraft potential.

She also stressed the importance of incorporating handicraft-related elements into urban design. In Mehdishahr, which holds the title of National Needlework City, she said, successful steps had been taken to incorporate handicraft-related elements into the urban environment. She expressed

hope that mayors in other parts of the province would also pay greater attention to this potential. Regarding handicrafts training programs, Soltanipour said 1,240 people across the province received free handicrafts training last year.

She added that training courses in packaging, marketing and branding are also being held for artists so that those working in the sector can strengthen their skills not only in production but also in promoting and marketing their products. She said the Handicrafts Creative Event has so far been held three times in the province, and talks have been held with the provincial Science and Technology Park about organizing the event at the national level.

Soltanipour added that, if the necessary conditions are met, Semnan will host the National Handicrafts Creative Event this year in cooperation with the Science and Technology Park.

Visit Khoein where heritage meets everyday life

Iranica Desk

The historic village of Khoein in Ijrud, Zanjan Province, is a place where history is not confined to the stones and mud bricks of old buildings. In Khoein, history lives in the names of alleyways and gardens, local customs, oral traditions and even in the language spoken by its people.

Located in the Halab region of Ijrud-e Pain Rural District, the historic village is home to a combination of cultural and natural heritage, as well as an ancient Iranian dialect. Its attractions range from the village's historic tower to mosques, a bathhouse, mills, fortifications, garden-lined lanes and the surrounding mountainous landscape.

Perhaps most significantly, the Khoein language — classified in linguistic studies as part of the Tati group of languages and dialects — is an important element of the village's cultural identity. Alongside its architectural heritage, the language also needs to be documented and passed on to future generations.

Khoein lies approximately 60 kilometers from Zanjan, on the Zanjan-Bijar route. Thanks to its combination of historical and natural attractions, it has in recent years attracted attention as one of Zanjan Province's designated tourism villages. Tourism sources identify the village's tower, Mandeh Fortress, mill, historic bathhouse and mosques, together with the surrounding landscape and valleys, among its principal attractions.

The village developed in a mountainous area, and its geographical setting has influenced both its architecture and the way of life of its residents. Garden-lined lanes, agricultural land and orchards

form an important part of the village's traditional landscape. Grapes, apples, apricots, cherries, sour cherries, dried apricots, walnuts, almonds, figs, peaches, quinces, pears and various varieties of plums are among the area's reported orchard products. Farmers also grow watermelons, melons, cantaloupes, eggplants, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes and various vegetables.

would require documentary and historical research before they could be regarded as established historical facts.

Yet perhaps the most striking landmark encountered when approaching Khoein is the Khoein Tower, a tower-like structure standing on the heights west of the village and visible from various points in the surrounding area.

According to information pub-

lished by the cultural heritage authorities of Zanjan Province, the structure has been attributed to the fifth to seventh centuries AH and is said to stand more than 10 meters high. Its location on a natural elevation is one of its most notable features, allowing it to be seen from considerable distances.

Across the historical geography of Iran, towers have served a variety of purposes. Depending on their period and location, they could be used for observation, route guidance and visual communication. Local and tourism sources have similarly emphasized the possible use of the Khoein Tower as a landmark and observation point. Its height and location would have given it



• chtn.ir

the village.

The significance of the Khoein Tower, however, extends beyond its age. A tower-like structure standing on a natural elevation creates a landscape in which architecture, geography and history intersect. Tourism in Khoein can begin from this very point, where visitors encounter a historical landmark rising above the village before even entering its historic fabric.

If the Khoein Tower can be regarded as a symbol of the village's historical and architectural identity, the Khoein language is one of the most important living expressions of its cultural identity.

The people of Khoein speak a dialect known in various sources as Khoeini, which is classified

among the Tati languages and dialects. Some general sources describe it as the "Khoeini dialect of the Tati language," while more recent linguistic studies classify Khoeini as one of the Tati varieties among the languages and dialects of northwestern Iran.

This is significant because Tati constitutes an important group of northwestern Iranian languages and dialects that have survived in

various forms in different parts of Iran. Khoeini is one such variety that developed in and around Khoein and has retained distinctive linguistic features. Some sources describe Khoeini as an endangered language. Migration, the decline in the village's population, changes in the communication patterns of younger generations and the growing dominance of standard Persian can all contribute to a decline in the use of local languages.

Documenting vocabulary, proverbs, stories, songs, place names and the speech of older residents could therefore play an important role in preserving this heritage. Khoein's significance cannot be reduced to a single monument

or language. A combination of natural and cultural elements has created a multilayered picture of the village. Fortifications and historic sites, mills, the bathhouse, mosques, old cemeteries, gardens, farmland and the surrounding mountains each form part of this landscape. Tourism sources have also identified the walnut forest and surrounding valleys as among Khoein's natural assets. Under these circumstances, preserving Khoein's heritage means more than restoring a historic building. If Khoein is to be presented as a destination for historical and cultural tourism, its language, architecture, natural environment, handicrafts, agricultural products and oral traditions should also form part of preservation and tourism-promotion programs.

Khoein can perhaps be seen as an example of a village where "heritage" has not yet been separated from everyday life. The historic tower stands on the mountain, but the local language is still heard in homes and daily conversations. Gardens and fields remain part of the village landscape, while local names connect memories of earlier generations with the present.

Ultimately, the value of Khoein lies in this connection between past and present: a village that looks toward history through a centuries-old monument while carrying a living heritage into the present through the Khoeini language. Preserving such heritage requires buildings to be considered alongside language, oral culture and the people's way of life. If one of these links is lost, the picture of Khoein — and part of its authentic identity — will be lost with it.