



Zanjan's metalworking heritage looks for new markets

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FEATURE REPORT

From copperware and knife-making to silver filigree, traditional crafts remain an important part of production in Zanjan province, northwestern Iran.

For generations, the Iranian city of Zanjan has been known for its metalworking traditions. Its knives have earned a place in the country's cutlery trade, while its



copperware and delicate silver filigree reflect the skills of artisans whose crafts have deep historical roots.

Today, these traditions remain part of the province's economic life, extending beyond cultural heritage into workshops and production businesses.

Yet maintaining that role presents a challenge: Zanjan's artisans must find ways to compete in modern markets while preserving the skills and techniques that distinguish their work. Mikaeil Mousavi, head of the Zanjan Province Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, says the province has considerable capacity in metal-based handicrafts, particularly copper products, knives and filigree jewelry. "Zanjan ranks fifth among Iran's provinces in overall handicraft production. Its combination of specialized skills, established production traditions and diverse craft industries makes it a significant center for traditional metalwork," he said.

Traditional craftsmanship meets modern market challenges

Copperworking is one of the province's major craft industries. Mousavi says Zanjan produces about 5,000 metric tons of copper products annually, spanning more than 1,400 varieties.

"Although Isfahan is one of Iran's main sources of copper raw materials, Zanjan surpasses the province in the volume of copper products it produces," Mousavi said.

The figures, however, cover copper products broadly and do not establish how much of that output qualifies specifically as handicrafts rather than industrial or workshop production.

That distinction matters when assessing the scale of traditional craftsmanship in the province.

Knife-making is another of Zanjan's best-known metalworking traditions, with a history that Mousavi says stretches back thousands of years.

The industry continues on a substantial scale. Zanjan produces around six million knives each year, including fruit knives, pocketknives and butcher knives, Mousavi says.

The province supplies nearly 10% of Iran's domestic demand for knives, he adds.

Despite that production capacity, local manufacturers face growing pressure from imported alternatives, particularly Chinese knives. Mousavi says some imported products imitate designs developed by Iranian manufacturers, creating additional difficulties for domestic producers.

He argues that Zanjan's

knife-making industry has the technical and artisanal expertise to increase production, supply a larger share of the domestic market and expand exports.

The challenge is turning that potential into sustainable business growth. Production capacity alone does not guarantee access to customers, particularly when local manufacturers must compete with imported goods and establish a stronger presence in overseas markets.

Filigree gives city distinctive identity

If copperworking and knife-making demonstrate the production scale of Zanjan's metal crafts, filigree showcases their more intricate artistic side.

The technique is used to create silver jewelry and other silver products and is among the province's most prominent handicraft traditions.

"Zanjan holds the leading position in Iran's filigree production as World City of Filigree," he said. In 2019, this city was registered on World Crafts Council (wcc) list as the World City for Filigree.

According to Mousavi, the province produces almost four metric tons of filigree products and silver jewelry annually.

Filigree is more than a specialized craft in Zanjan. It is also part of the city's cultural identity, linking the skills of individual artisans with a tradition that has become a defining feature of the region.

But recognition does not necessarily translate into financial security for the people who practice the craft. The long-term viability of filigree depends not only



on preserving its techniques and reputation, but also on whether artisans can continue producing their work, reach customers and sell their products in wider markets.

Thousands of artisans, dozens of crafts

Zanjan's handicraft sector extends well beyond its three best-known metalworking traditions.

"More than 12,000 handicraft artists and artisans work in Zanjan and of the 299 handicraft disciplines identified nationwide, 55 are practiced in the province," he says.

That breadth provides a foundation for production and employment across a range of traditional skills. It also extends activity beyond the province's urban centers.

Some villages have workshops specializing in handicrafts, particularly knife-making, Mousavi says.

In certain areas, these businesses

have developed into local centers of entrepreneurship, creating opportunities for economic activity outside larger cities.

Provincial officials are also pursuing efforts to promote and register other distinctive local crafts, Mousavi says, building on the recognition already associated with Zanjan's filigree tradition.

Exports remain largely informal

Despite Zanjan's range of products and established craft industries, reaching foreign customers remains a challenge.

A substantial share of Zanjan's handicrafts is not exported through formal channels, Mousavi says.

"Instead, products are often transported through suitcase trade or carried as part of other shipments," he said.

Zanjan-made knives have reached markets including Iraq, while locally produced giveh, a traditional handwoven footwear,

is exported to Arab countries, according to Mousavi.

These trade routes indicate that some of the province's products have buyers abroad. But without figures on export volumes, sales values and destination markets, the overall scale of that international business remains unclear. For Zanjan, the task is to turn an established metalworking heritage into a more sustainable economic asset. Its copper products, knives and filigree demonstrate that traditional craftsmanship remains part of the province's productive life.

The next challenge is ensuring that these skills can continue to support the people who practice them.

That will depend not simply on how much the province produces, but also on whether workshops can remain viable, artisans can pass their knowledge to future generations, and local products can compete effectively at home and abroad

Iran demonstrates biodiversity at UN conference in Armenia

Social Desk

Iran is showcasing the biodiversity and conservation experience of Semnan province at the 17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17) in Yerevan, Armenia, as President Masoud Pezeshkian calls for stronger protection of nature during wartime.

In a speech to the summit on Monday, Pezeshkian said biodiversity conservation was no longer solely a scientific or environmental issue, but was directly linked to peace, security, public health, food and water security, and justice between generations.

He called for effective, transparent and enforceable mechanisms to protect natural heritage and biodiversity during war, arguing that countries facing

military aggression or sanctions should not bear the environmental costs alone. Iran has been waged by the United States and Israel in two major military campaigns in recent years. The first was the 12-day war in June 2025, and the second 40-days war happened in late February 2026. COP17 runs from October 19 to 30 in Yerevan, where governments and international stakeholders are discussing biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. The Iranian pavilion was established by the Semnan Department of Environmental Protection with support from the province's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture. Semnan Province, in north-central Iran, is home to diverse ecosystems, protected areas and endangered wildlife, including the Asiatic cheetah.

Saeed Yousefpour, head of the provincial environmental protection department, said the conference offered an opportunity to present Semnan's natural assets, share conservation experience and expand international cooperation. He highlighted the province's work in wildlife protection and the management of the Touran and Kavir biosphere reserves. Yousefpour also stressed the importance of involving local communities in conservation programs, saying cooperation could help facilitate the exchange of knowledge and access to international scientific, technical and financial resources. Semnan ranks first among Iran's provinces in biodiversity, according to Yousefpour. Despite its reputation as a dry, desert region, the province supports a wide range of plant and animal species.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0440060

First Announcement

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	CASING, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS "VAM", "N.VAM", THREAD, RANGE 3, (MAX LEN: 40.5 FT), MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), AS SPECIFIED NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I:1) "QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM " "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION" REF. VALLOUREC MANNESMANN OIL & GAS, 9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, SPECIAL DRIFT: 8 IN.	5,000LE
2	NIPPLES, CROSSOVER SUB, CASING, API GRADE L-80 SEAMLESS, ACCORDING TO API SCT SIZE (OD), WEIGHT (PPF), THREAD AS SPECIFIED REF. NIOC OR NISOC APPROVED VENDOR LIST 9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, VAM TOP PIN X 9-5 NEW VAM BOX, 8-1/2 IN., DRIFT, PSL:2	100NO
3	9-5/8 IN., 53.5 PPF, NEW VAM PIN X 9-5 VAM TOP BOX, 8-1/2 IN., DRIFT, PSL:2	100NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 85,587/24 EURO or 161,243,275.547 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN. PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D. INCLUDING AN ADVANCE PAYMENT, SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
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