

Natural resources

Zangazur is also rich in underground and surface natural resources.

There are rich deposits of copper-molybdenum, gold, shale and marble in the territory of Zangazur. Zangazur mines have been known since ancient Urartu. Medieval sources also say that copper was processed in Zangazur.

In Zangazur, mainly in many parts of it, there are different types of copper ore deposits. Formerly in the early 18th century, copper was mined in the western and eastern foothills of the Sayaddash mountain range located near the Armudlu (Danzaver), Keypashin, Gatar villages, and Chavundur River. Copper ore mines were also found near the villages of Atgiz and Pirdavdan and on the banks of the Harak River, as well as 3-4 versts from the village of Nuvadi.

Shortly after the annexation of Zangazur to Russia, the fields began to be exploited. In 1845, the Russian customs officer Yakov Rozov built a copper smelting plant on the Meghri River in Agarak (Akarak). The industrial smelting of copper in Zangazur began in the second half of the 19th century. The Greek master Allahverdi (Kharlampi Kundurov) from Trabzon started to operate the copper smelting plant on the Okhchu River in 1853 in Kavart (Gavart). In 1857, the Kundurovs built another copper smelting plant at the foot of Sayaddash Mountain, in the upper reaches of the Oxchu River, in the village of Pirdavidan.

In 1911, the mines in the Gafan area were handed over to French companies. A new copper smelting plant was also built here.

Copper-molybdenum deposits in Gacharan ranked second in terms of production capacity in the former Soviet Union. Copper-molybdenum deposits are also found near the village of Shahverdiushaghi, in the Jannat valley, around the villages of Barabatum, Khalaj, Shaharjik, Dastakerd, Gighi and Bartaz. Sayaddash copper ore consists mainly of copper pyrite, a mixture of copper and quartz. There is a layer of zinc and lead shine on the copper pyrite extracted from the ore mines. The copper ore of the Atgiz mines is rich in lead.

In addition to copper ore, there are many precious non-ferrous metals in the region. The richest gold deposit is in the territory of Zangilan region. There are limestones used in the household and found everywhere, gypsum around the village of Kavart, refractory clay produced near the village of Bazarchay, alum ore near the village of Astazur, chalk used to purify the grape juice and paint clay called "black soil" by the locals in the region. This clay is used to dye the wool yarns into black.

There are many mineral water sources in Zangazur. The most common of these waters are salubrious mineral waters, as well as sulphur waters for the treatment of skin diseases. These waters are located in the valley of the Kurdali wintering ground and near the village of Dashkend, as well as at the confluence of the Goruschay and Bargushad rivers. The hot springs on the Devil's Bridge, near the Tatev Monastery, are also of medical importance.

Mineral waters are also found in the following places: at the foot of Mount Chilgoz, also there is a spring called "Turshsu" at the foot of Shabadin village located 1800 meters above sea level, which contains iron and acid, a number of small acid springs in the ravine near the village Dashkend, acid spring near the village of Shikhlar. Hot sulphurous water flows in two places on the banks of the river Bargushad, near the

village of Shahverdiushaghi. There is an acid spring in the village of Akhlatyan, which does not deposit any sediment and contains a lot of carbon dioxide. The locals call this water "zeltar".

Although geological exploration work was carried out in gold deposits located in the administrative territory of Vejnali village of Zangilan region during the Soviet era, it had not been exploited yet. The field was occupied by the Armenian armed forces in 1993. During the occupation, Armenia illegally exploited the Vejnali gold deposits at the expense of foreign companies. The Vejnali field was liberated from occupation by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces on October 30, 2020. Vejnali field with 6.5 tons of gold and 3,000 tons of copper, contains Oxchuchay marble limestone with reserves of 6618 thousand cubic meters and suitable for the production of facing stone, Zangilan (Dashbashi-Asgurum) limestone with proven reserves of 129 million tons, crushed stone with reserves of 6024 thousand tons and Zangilan limestone suitable for lime production, Bartaz-I and Bartaz-II porphyry with total reserves of 28943 thousand cubic meters, Zangilan clay with reserves of 1102 thousand cubic meters suitable for production of brick-tile and Zangilan sand-gravel mixture deposits with reserves of 17367 thousand cubic meters. Most of the dozens of companies involved in the development of these fields, such as Sterlite Gold Ltd, Sirkap Armenian, Base Metals, Manex and Valex and the Armenian Copper Program, have been run by the Armenian diaspora abroad. Anglo Asian Mining PLC was one of the companies that owned shares in the Vejnali gold deposit.

The Azerbaijani state has appealed to the International Court of Justice to compensate the damage caused by the foreign companies that illegally exploited the Vejnali gold deposit during the years of occupation.

At present, a special state program is being implemented for the phased exploitation of existing natural resources in East Zangazur. The state is also carrying out restoration measures to eliminate the damage caused to the environment of Azerbaijan.