

Iran, Oman urge cementing social, cultural ties

Social Desk

During a meeting between Ensieh Khazali, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, and Oman's Minister of Social Development, Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, both parties stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations, particularly regarding women and family affairs. Al Najjar, who traveled to the Iranian capital city of Tehran, met and held discussions with Iran's Vice President for Women and Family Affairs after visiting the Iran Expo where she was briefed on the achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Sunday, IRNA wrote.

Al Najjar discussed with Khazali the cultural and social similarities between Iran and Oman, proposing joint projects in family-related fields and suggesting the organization of joint exhibitions for women, especially focusing on handicrafts and knowledge-based companies.

Khazali highlighted the need for unity among Islamic countries to address the oppression and crimes perpetrated by the Zionist regime in Gaza. The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to explore further collaborative opportunities to enhance ties between the two nations.



Iran's Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali (l) and Oman's Minister of Social Development Laila Ahmed Al Najjar discuss cultural and social cooperation in a meeting held in Tehran on April 28, 2024.



Foreign investment in Iran's tourism grew 18 times since mid-2021

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, announced a significant surge in foreign investment in the tourism sector since August 2021. Speaking at the 6th export potential exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Expo 2024), Shalbafian disclosed that foreign investment in tourism has multiplied by 18, reaching \$256 million by the end of the last Persian calendar year.

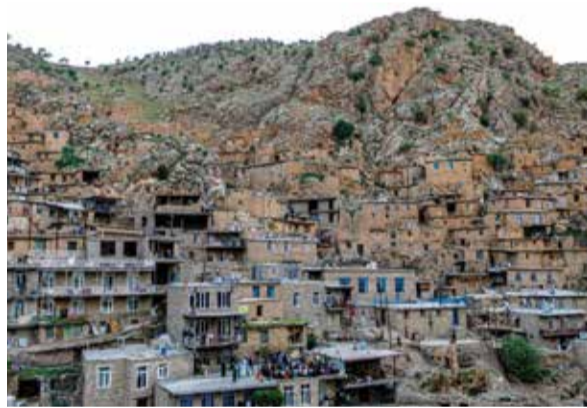
The deputy minister visited the hall of handwoven carpets, handicrafts and tourism and referred to the presentation of 600 investment packages of more than four million dollars at Iran Expo 2024.

The exhibition, which attracted over 80 countries and 2,000 foreign businessmen, serves as a platform for showcasing Iran's tourism potential and products.

Shalbafian emphasized the ministry's commitment to engaging with foreign investors to further boost tourism.

Iran Expo 2024 features 600 investment packages exceeding four million dollars each, highlighting the opportunities available in Iran's tourism sector. Shalbafian highlighted the significance of events like the expo in attracting foreign investment, portraying Iran's stability and security to the global business community.

Iranian sites compete for best tourism villages worldwide



Arts & Culture Desk

Eight villages across Iran are vying for recognition as the best tourism villages in a competition organized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). Abyaneh in Isfahan, Bisheh in Lorestan, Esfahak in

South Khorasan, Ghaleh Bala in Semnan, Palangan in Kurdistan, Meymand in Kerman, Kandolus in Mazandaran, and Fahraj in Yazd are part of a global initiative to promote rural tourism development, IRNA reported. The program aims to boost

tourism as a driver for rural development and prosperity. The selected villages represent exemplary rural tourist destinations with rich cultural and natural assets, promoting values, products, and lifestyles rooted in rural communities while demonstrating a commitment to innovation and sustainability.

The selection process involves collaboration between the organization and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, with identified villages meeting specific criteria and standards set by the UNWTO. Previously, the village of Kandovan in East Azarbaijan province was globally recognized in 2023 as the first Iranian village for its

outstanding tourism potential. Following the submission of necessary documentation by the provinces, a virtual session will be held to review, summarize, and address any deficiencies. The process aims to ensure transparency and fairness in the selection of villages, highlighting notable aspects to the provinces for further improvement.

The UNWTO's initiative, launched in 2021, seeks to transform tourism into a catalyst for rural development and welfare, focusing on nine key indicators including cultural resources, promotion and protection, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social sustainability, tourism potential and development,

value chain integration, governance, and prioritization of tourism, as well as health, safety, and security. Over 70 villages from 40 countries have been recognized as the best tourism villages worldwide, with Iran joining this group with the registration of Kandovan.

Benefits of being selected as a global tourism village include international recognition as a distinguished rural tourist destination, receiving a certificate signed by the UNWTO Secretary-General, opportunities for knowledge exchange and training, participation in relevant rural development and tourism events, and showcasing the country as the owner of the village in various tourism dimensions.

PICS OF THE DAY



Iranian archaeologists unearthed ancient objects in Isfahan's Kamar Zarrin at the end of the first season of archaeological exploration.

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Iranian exhibition in Venice Biennale stands in solidarity with Gaza: Envoy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ambassador to Italy, Mohammad-Reza Sabouri, visited the official pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 2024 Venice Biennale, showcasing Iranian artists' works.

Sabouri emphasized the strategic depth of Iran's policies in the Middle East, noting that amid the sad conditions in Gaza, such exhibitions could provide solace to the oppressed Palestinian people and raise awareness about the nefarious goals and

crimes of the Zionist regime. Sabouri praised the exhibition's content, layout, and artistic quality, suggesting it as a profound reflection of current regional dynamics. Notably, the pavilion's theme and artworks are meticulously selected in response

to the region's transformations. He anticipated that visitors would deeply contemplate these aspects after viewing the showcased works. Iran's cultural attaché in Italy Mohammad-taqi Amini accompanied Sabouri and also

visited Iran's pavilion.

The Iranian pavilion presents works by artists such as Mostafa Goodarzi, Kazem Chalipa, Morteza Asadi, Abdolhamid Qadirian, and Gholamali Taheri, all revolving around the oppression of Gaza's children.

The pavilion features a selected piece from the media section of the 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival, titled 'Mirrors of Light' by Maryam Safaei and Mohammad Amin Owji. This interactive installation, based on Persian architectural geometry and ancient mirror craftsmanship, creates a celestial and paradisiacal atmosphere through light reflection.