

# Iran's tourism industry grew by 21% in 2023: WTTC

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) said Iran's tourism industry grew by 21 percent in 2023. Turkish tourists ranked second in visiting Iran after Iraqis. Despite a 45 percent drop in GDP share due to COVID-19 in previous years, Iran's tourism saw growth last year, as reported by IRNA. The latest statistics of the World Travel and Tourism

Council also showed that the share of the tourism industry in the total economy of Iran increased to 4.7 percent in 2023, slightly up from the previous year. In the same way, the value of this industry in Iran increased to \$11.3 billion during the last year. Tourism-related jobs in 2023 grew by 10.3 percent compared to the previous year. The number of peo-

ple working in this industry was 1.6 million people. The share of the tourism industry in Iran's total employment in 2023 reached 6.6%. The WTTC has predicted that Iran's tourism industry will grow by 12.1% in 2024 and the value of this industry will reach \$12.7 billion. Statistics show that in addition to the boom in foreign tourism in Iran, the domes-



tic tourism industry also grew well in 2023. Foreign tourists spent

\$1.05 billion in Iran in 2023, which was an increase of 83.6% compared

to the previous year. Iran's domestic tourists spent as much as \$7.5 billion, about

18.7% growth compared to 2022, according to the WTTC data.

## Iran, Oman discuss tourism cooperation



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ezzatollah Zarghami, met with Omani Minister of Social Development, Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, in Tehran to discuss expanding tourism ties between the two nations. During the meeting held in Tehran, Zarghami emphasized the importance of strengthening cultural, social, and political relations between Iran and Oman,

IRNA wrote. He highlighted the significance of cooperation in university partnerships and maritime tourism development. Zarghami stated that Iran's policy prioritizes boosting tourism relations with Oman, aiming to encourage Iranian tourists to visit Oman and vice versa. In response, Al Najjar invited Zarghami to participate in an upcoming specialized tourism conference in Oman, indi-

Iran's Tourism Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami (R) and Omani Minister of Social Development, Laila Ahmed Al Najjar hold talks in Tehran to discuss expanding tourism and social ties between the two nations. ● IRNA

cating Oman's interest in further collaboration with Iran in the field of handicrafts. She proposed the organization of joint exhibitions to promote handicrafts trade between the two countries.

## Amir Jadidi cast as tennis legend Mansour Bahrami in biopic

Amir Jadidi, acclaimed for his performance in the Oscar-nominated drama 'A Hero,' has been cast to portray tennis legend Mansour Bahrami in the upcoming biopic 'Mansour'.

France TV distribution has acquired world sales rights for Romuald Boulanger's upcoming bio-pic 'Mansour', capturing the journey of celebrity tennis player Bahrami's, from poverty in France, and then fame on the international circuit, ISNA wrote. Romuald Boulanger directs and produces under the banner of his Paris and L.A.-based company R-Lines Productions (On the Line, Like Me, Haters) with UK-based Unconditional Pictures. Unconditional Pictures's co-founder and co-head Dawn McDaniel wrote the screenplay with Philippe de Lyon taking co-writing credits

Iran-born Bahrami, 68, is a popular figure on the inter-

national tennis tournament circuit for his entertaining playing style and extraordinary life story. Born in Iran in the 1950s, he taught himself to play tennis using a frying pan as a racket



and disused swimming pool as his court. The film will capture how through sheer determination and quick wit, Bahrami navigated the complexities of life as an illegal immigrant, while forming lasting bonds with tennis icons who recognized his talent, to fulfill his childhood dream of

playing at Roland Garros. "Many people have told me over the years that my story is made for the screen but in fact it's very humbling to think there will be a feature film of my life," said Bahrami.



"I could not be prouder of the team we have with France TV distribution, R-Lines Productions and Unconditional Pictures and I'm so happy that Romuald Boulanger will be directing the film. Not only is he an exciting director but he is such a lovely guy. "Amir Jadidi is also an ex-

ceptional Actor. He really does transform. The fact he is a semi-pro tennis player is one of those great strokes of luck. Thank you to Dawn McDaniel for writing a beautiful script we all believe in. If my story can inspire people and make them smile, then I will be a very happy man."

Boulanger described Bahrami as "true hero" whose "resilience and passion have inspired countless individuals" "I am immensely honored to bring his extraordinary journey to the big screen," he said. France TV distribution team will launch the project in Cannes. "We have been moved by this story that illustrates the strength and determination of a man willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill his dearest dream," said VP International Cinema Sales Alexandre René and SVP International Sales Julia Schulte.

## Archeologists unearth 4,500-year-old architectural remnants in SE Iran

### Arts & Culture Desk

Archaeologists, alongside students from University of Zabol, discovered architectural remnants dating back approximately 4,500 years ago during an educational excavation at the Pirzal mound. Located 60 kilometers south of Zabol in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Pirzal mound was listed as a national heritage site in

2018. In 2023, University of Zabol conducted an educational excavation at Pirzal mound for practical archaeology courses, yielding significant findings, ISNA wrote. Among them was an architectural structure from the fourth era of Bronze Age (about 2,500 to 2,300 BCE) including remains of a house in the first layer of the site. Hossein Sarhaddi, a facul-

ty member at University of Zabol who supervised the



excavation, attributed the Pirzal mound site to the

Burnt City phase IV, dating approximately from 2,500 to 2,300 BCE. He elaborated on the architectural remnants, describing the house consisting of several rooms surrounding a central courtyard. During this season's excavation, conducted in a 10 by 10-meter area of Workshop 3, pottery dating back approximately 4,500 years, clay figurines, and

counting objects were unearthed. Archaeologists also discovered objects related to local goods management and trade systems, suggesting the site's integration with surrounding areas. These traded goods, according to archaeologists, included stone vessels, animals such as cows, sheep, and wheat, along with other life necessities of that era. They believe

that the exchange of stone items like figurines and marble vessels thrived at this mound. Sarhaddi emphasized the significance of this ancient mound, stating that based on surface findings, Pirzal is considered one of the largest mounds belonging to the late Burnt City phase, with its exact history and quality still under debate among archaeologists in southeastern Iran.