

# Iran kicks off tourism roadshow in Malaysia



Iran launched its Tourism Roadshow Southeast Asia 2024 in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, underscoring the importance of strengthening bilateral tourism ties between the two Muslim-majority countries. Iran Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handi-

crafts, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, said the launch highlighted the Iranian government's recent efforts to boost tourism and attract investment, which included organizing roadshows and fervently promoting the country's diverse tourist attractions. Shalbafian said his ministry had

invited renowned travel agencies from around the world to participate in business-to-business (B2B) sessions with their Iranian counterparts. "The government has received a positive response from global travel businesses and many individuals who recognize Iran's po-

tential as a tourism destination. This initiative will help counteract media distortion and fabrication about the country," he said during the event. Over 100 representatives from both Iranian and Malaysian travel companies attended the event. To attract tourists, Iran has

waived visa requirements for over half of the world's population, including Malaysia and most of the Southeast Asian countries. Recently, Iran granted tourist visa exemptions to 28 additional

countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Tanzania, Mauritania, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Brunei, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus and India. The ambassador of Iran to Malaysia, Valiollah Mohammadi Nasrabadi, who was present at the ceremony, emphasized the importance of opening Iran to tourism, and highlighted the numerous attractive destinations and the positive impact that tourism could have on the country's image. Nasrabadi acknowledged that Iran's reputation has suffered in recent years due to negative portrayals by Western media but he believed that tourists visiting the country would be pleasantly surprised to find out that the negative perceptions were unfounded. "Opening up Iran for tourism offers many benefits, including economic and social potentials, as well as advancements in science and technology. We invite people from all over the world to visit Iran and experience the reality in the country," he said.

Iran's tourism delegation including Ambassador to Malaysia Valiollah Mohammadi Nasrabadi (3rd L) and Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Ali-Asghar Shalbafian (4th L) pose for a photo at the opening ceremony of Tourism Roadshow Southeast Asia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on July 3, 2024. ● BERNAMA

## Iranian artist to stage Persian classic in Russia



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian playwright Peyman Khazeni will produce and perform the Persian cultural project 'Khosrow and Shirin' in Voronezh, Russia. The original story of Khosrow and Shirin was created by Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi in 1177. Melika Shahab, artistic director of the multimedia project, said this is part of Khazeni's ongoing efforts to promote Persian culture, language, and literature. The project will debut with support from the M.B.A. International Academy's music department, IRNA wrote. "The research phase of this project is complete, and the writing is in its final stages," Shahab said. "It will first be released as an audio production and later as a multimedia stage performance." Shahab described 'Khosrow

and Shirin' as a masterpiece of lyrical literature and one of the world's most famous romantic epics, with versions existing in other cultures. The story tells the tragic love tale of the Persian prince Khosrow and the Armenian princess Shirin, with the involvement of Farhad. The multimedia performance will incorporate visual arts and Iranian improvisational art, blending modern and traditional Iranian art forms, Shahab added, the music will be presented in contemporary Iranian styles and performed by an ensemble. Zohreh Firoozi, known for her acting and singing in 'Nowhere' will play the role of Shirin in the upcoming project. Peyman Khazeni has produced several works, including 'Where Is the Wind's Home,' 'Remember Me,' and 'Parichehreh.'

## Tehran, Islamabad hold conference on academic-cultural dialogue

The Second International Conference on Iran-Pakistan Academic-Cultural Dialogue took place at Allama Iqbal Open University on July 2-3. The event, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, brought together delegations from six Iranian universities and 20 participants from major universities in Pakistan. The two-day conference aimed to strengthen academic, research, and cultural ties between Iran and Pakistan. Attendees discussed the importance of scientific communication between the two countries' academic and cultural centers.

Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairperson of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, emphasized the necessity of cultural, scientific, and educational exchanges to enhance bilateral relations. He stressed the importance of utilizing shared experiences and overcoming mutual differences for the benefit of both nations. The head of the Iranian delegation leader Hojatoleslam Seyyed Abolhassan Navab, president of University of Religions and Denominations, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to visit Pakistan and highlighted the shared values and cooperation opportunities between the two countries.



Both sides committed to enhancing interactions between their academic institutions and promoting the mutual benefits of their cultural and educational collaborations.

## Iranian men play twice as many video games as women

### Social Desk

A new report by the Iran Computer and Video Games Foundation reveals that Iranian men play video games twice as much as women. The study, based on a sample of 34 million people, shows that 12% of players are professional gamers, with men making up a significant portion. The report provides detailed information on Iranian gamers, analyzing demographics, behavior, consumption, and geography. It examines game consumption patterns, preferred genres and characters, daily playtime, and spending, ILNA wrote. The study identifies three categories of gamers based on weekly playtime: Casual gamers (1-5 hours), dedicated gamers (5-21



hours), and professional gamers (21+ hours). Casual gamers, who represent 45% of the total, engage in gaming for short periods under specific conditions. Dedicated gamers are the middle group, while professional gamers are highly engaged, leading in spending, online play, and daily gaming hours. The report highlights daily gaming as a key indicator, with only 6% of professional gamers not playing daily. Preferences differ by gender: men favor sports games, while women prefer puzzle and strategy games.

## 'Salman the Persian' returns to northern Iran for new filming phase

The TV series 'Salman the Persian,' directed by Davood Mirbagheri, returned to Shahroud for its latest filming phase. The series, which began production nearly five years ago, features over 1,000 main actors and 4,000 extras. It is expected to continue filming in Shahroud until October before moving to Tehran's Ghazali Cinema Town, IRNA wrote. As the largest TV project in Iran's history, the series will undergo technical work for at least another five years. 'Salman the Persian,' produced by Hossein Taheri and written by Mirbagheri, began filming in Kerman in Decem-

ber 2019 and has also filmed in Qeshm, Jolfa, and various cinema towns. The series covers three historical periods: Sassanid Iran, the Byzantine Empire, and early Islamic Hejaz. The cast includes Farhad Aslani, Alireza Shoja Nouri, Dariush Farhang, Mohammad Reza Hedayati, Behnaz Tavakoli, Ehteram Boroumand, Ramona Shah, Ali Dehkordi, the late Changiz Jalilvand, Mehdi Faghih, Mohammad Javad Jafarpour, and Alireza Mehran, along with several international actors from Armenia, Greece, Morocco, and Tunisia, and about 1,500 local theater actors.