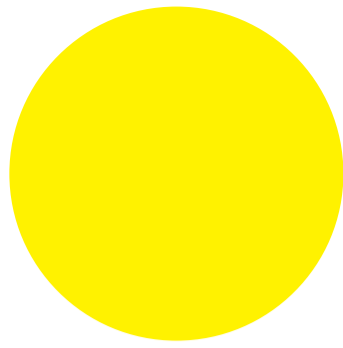


Leader's aide: US can pursue economic interests with Iran

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Pezeshkian: Iran neither seeks war nor hesitates to defend itself

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Dozens killed in Israel's fresh strikes on Gaza

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A young boy looks on as Palestinians stand amid the devastation in the yard of a school, a day after it was hit by an Israeli strike, in the al-Tuffah neighborhood of Gaza City on April 4, 2025. **OMAR AL-QATTAA/AFP**

A lifeline for Iran's national, international development

By Reza Salehi Amiri
Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In today's world, the tourism industry is seen not only as a cornerstone of economic and cultural development for countries but also plays a key role in promoting culture, expanding international relations, and creating job opportunities. Developing this sector will not be possible without investing in core infrastructure. With its unparalleled cultural, historical, natural, and geographical capacities, Iran can boost its global standing by scaling up its tourism infrastructure.

In this vein, the opening of the five-star Araz Hotel in the northern city of Nowshahr on April 1—now the largest in the country—marks a major leap forward. The project, backed by a \$150 million investment, is not just a physical structure but a symbol of the government's commitment to supporting tourism investment and improving its infrastructure. The Araz Hotel, equipped with facilities that measure up to global standards, has created new opportunities for drawing in both domestic and foreign tourists, contributing to economic growth and job cre-

ation in the region. Expanding tourism infrastructure will not only open the floodgates to more visitors but will also help win over investors—both local and international. With its rich natural and cultural resources, Iran is well-positioned to carve out a hub for regional and global tourism. Yet this vision can only come to fruition with large-scale investments in hotels, accommodation centers, transport networks, and other supporting infrastructure. Global tourism has become a cutthroat battleground where countries are to maintain their competitive edge through modern technologies and the development of smart infrastructure. Iran, with its ancient heritage, has great potential for attracting tourists, but unlocking such potential needs establishing standard infrastructure that meets tourist expectations.

Investment in tourism needs legal transparency and streamlined implementation. Creating suitable environments for both domestic and foreign investors, particularly in accommodation and leisure, is among the government's long-term goals. Slashing red tape and supporting the private sector are essential steps. Projects like the Araz Hotel are significant not only economically but also as a symbol of government support for private investors.

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Two-week wrap-up: Iranian sport enjoys continental glory

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Vali Castle; the confluence of artistry and heritage

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Marketers of treasure hunts send people on wild goose chase

One person single-handedly determined to destroy Iran



INTERVIEW

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India's Holi festival unites cultures through color, tradition

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

With a spirit of togetherness, Indian Ambassador Shri Rudra Gaurav Shresth hosted a lively Holi festival at his residence in Tehran on April 4. The event, steeped in ancient traditions, brought together neighbors and friends to celebrate the arrival of spring, casting away negativity with a bonfire and sharing lively colors. As the ambassador gave an overview of the festival's rich history and its parallels with Iranian celebrations, he highlighted how Holi transcends boundaries, fostering joy and community spirit among people of all faiths.

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