



Iran calls for ‘redefining relations’ with Uzbekistan based on shared heritage



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri (right) meets with Umid Shadiev, Uzbekistan's Deputy Minister of Environment and Head of the State Tourism Committee, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, April 25, 2025.
● IRNA

crafts, met with Umid Shadiev, Uzbekistan Deputy Minister of Environment and Head of the State Tourism Committee, in Tashkent, IRNA reported. Speaking during the talks, Salehi Amiri stressed that relations between the two nations should be “redefined” on the basis of common heritage, rather than “conventional diplomacy.” He warned that Uzbekistan’s share of Iranian outbound travel remains “tiny,” blaming “mutual negligence” in promoting each other’s tangible and intangible treasures. Recalling his trips to Samarkand and Bukhara, Salehi Amiri said Iranians feel a “sense of closeness” to Uzbekistan’s architecture and culture. He

called for cultural tourism that would not only offer new experiences but also revive “civilizational memory.” To drive cooperation forward, Salehi Amiri proposed three main steps: signing a comprehensive agreement, promoting both countries’ tourism assets through media and influencers, and holding joint exhibitions in cities like Tehran, Samarkand, Bukhara, Isfahan, and Shiraz. Salehi Amiri also mentioned preliminary agreements with Uzbek officials to hold a joint handicrafts festival and announced Iran’s readiness to host a bilateral tourism investment summit. “The groundwork for doubling tourist exchanges is ready,” he said, urging both sides to “take the relationship to a strategic level.” Shadiev welcomed Iran’s outreach, calling for a “new chapter” in ties through a strategic document in tourism. He described Iran’s International Tourism Exhibition as a “unique event” and expressed regret at miss-

ing the latest edition due to scheduling conflicts. However, he pledged a stronger Uzbek presence at future events. Shadiev, who had previously visited Iran, said he felt he had “recovered part of his own identity” during the trip, noting the “deep, authentic” cultural connections between the two nations. He also proposed academic partnerships between Uzbekistan’s Silk Road University and Iran’s Research Institute of Cultural Heritage. Toward the end of the meeting, Salehi Amiri invited a high-level Uzbek delegation to attend the Tehran tourism fair and called for joint exhibitions in historical Iranian cities. He underscored Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s “political will” to deepen ties with Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, saying, “It is now up to us to turn this strategic will into cultural and tourism policymaking and pave the way for civilizational synergy.”

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Uzbekistan agreed to step up cooperation in tourism and cultural exchanges, officials said on Friday,

highlighting their shared “deep roots” and calling for a “strategic” upgrade of ties. Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handi-

Iran showcases culture at Eurasia Int’l Book Fair as Russia opens film academy

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Russia unveiled the Eurasian Academy of Cinematographic Arts, while Iran drew strong attention with a major cultural presence at the Eurasia International Book Fair in Kazakhstan, IRNA reported. In a video address, President Vladimir Putin called the academy’s creation a “very important” step to strengthen cultural ties, aiming to build an “open platform” for creative collaboration across the region. Plans include student exchanges, workshops, and joint film projects to “lay a foundation for greater mutual trust.” The opening ceremony in Moscow drew artists and officials from Russia and 22 other countries. Russian Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova and Nikita Mikhalkov, head of the Russian Filmmakers’ Union, both spoke at the event. Mikhalkov said the academy should serve as a “hub for sharing cinematic knowledge and experience.” The academy unveiled its official symbol, the “Diamond Butterfly,” a sculpture blending traditional and modern elements meant to represent “flight and transformation” in cinema. The idea for the Eurasian Film Academy first surfaced at a BRICS culture ministers’ meeting in St. Petersburg. Built with the support of the Filmmakers’ Union, the Russian Culture Foundation, and the Foreign Ministry, the academy will promote films that reflect family and traditional values.



The first Eurasian Film Award ceremony will be held on December 5 in Moscow. Meanwhile, Iran showcased over 100 premium titles at the Eurasia Book Fair in Astana, ranging from literature and art to Iranian studies and Persian language learning. Many works were translated into Kazakh and Russian to reach a broader audience. Iran’s booth also featured Mojtaba Sajjad, head of Iran’s Jungle Publishing Institute, and master calligrapher Hamid Niroumand. Niroumand presented a new handwritten collection of Omar Khayyam’s quatrains, drawing crowds in a country where the Persian poet remains widely admired. The book fair, running through April 27, hosts more than 70 publishers from 15 countries, including Turkey, China, Portugal, Mongolia, Venezuela, and Spain.

Tehran, Ankara eye deeper tourism, cultural ties

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Iran and Turkey pledged to boost tourism and cultural cooperation on the sidelines of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) tourism summit in Erzurum, Turkish officials said on Friday. Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey, Iran’s Deputy Minister of Tourism, called for “practical steps” to expand tourist exchanges and showcase attractions in both countries. He also invited the Mayor of Erzurum to attend an upcoming global urban tourism summit in Iran, expressing hope that fresh talks would “lead to stronger ties.” The meeting, hosted by the Governor and Mayor of Erzurum, underlined the push for deeper collaboration. Both sides agreed to draw up plans to ease travel and boost joint cultural and economic projects “in the near future.” The push comes against the backdrop of lopsided travel flows between the two neighbors. Last year, more than 3.5 million Iranians visited Turkey, while only around 580,000 Turks traveled to Iran, said Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. “This meaningful gap needs a rethink,” Salehi Amiri said. He stressed the importance of achieving “strategic balance” in tourism under a broader cultural diplomacy drive. Iran and Turkey share deep cultural roots, a factor that officials believe could help pave the way for stronger cooperation in heritage preservation, handicrafts, and joint cultural programming. Salehi Amiri announced plans to hold two major cultural events — one in Tehran and one in a Turkish city — later this year, which has been dubbed the “Year of Shared Culture” by both countries. “Every tourist becomes a cultural ambassador,” he said,



underlining the role of tourism in promoting Iran’s image abroad. As a founding member of ECO and the host of its permanent secretariat in Tehran, Iran sees itself as a key player in revitalizing the regional bloc. Salehi Amiri said Iran would press for stronger bilateral and multilateral ties at the summit, aiming to “activate shared tourism capacities” among ECO members. Efforts are underway to secure an agreement that would have ECO countries officially recognize each other as “primary tourist destinations” in national programs. In a region marked by political strains, officials see tourism and culture as a springboard for greater economic, social, and cultural convergence.



Iranian filmmaker Maryam Bahrololoomi to judge at Turkish festival

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Iranian director and producer Maryam Bahrololoomi was named a jury member for the 8th International Women Filmmakers Festival in Turkey. Bahrololoomi, an acclaimed filmmaker with a string of internation-

al honors under her belt, will join jurors from Germany, France, and Turkey to evaluate feature films in the event running from May 5 to May 10, 2025, in the coastal city of Izmir, Mehr News Agency reported. Launched in 2015 by the Turkish Women Directors Association, the festival highlights cinema, shorts,

animation, and documentaries crafted by women. It has grown into one of Asia’s key platforms for showcasing women’s voices in film. Bahrololoomi, a member of the Iranian Directors Guild and the Film Producers Association of Iran, has “consistently” received recognition for her work and served as a juror

at numerous international festivals. The International Women Filmmakers Festival, known locally as Kadın Yönetmenler Festivali, has built a reputation for putting women’s storytelling “front and center” in an industry often dominated by men.