

Minister unveils phased reopening plan of museums, historical sites after 12-day war

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts announced a three-stage plan to gradually and safely reopen museums and heritage sites across the country, following a period of heightened security concerns. The phased roadmap, approved by senior officials including Deputy Minister Ali Darabi, outlines a return to normal operations "rooted in international protocols" and domestic recovery measures, IRNA reported.

The plan comes as Iran moves past what officials described as an "emergency phase." Drawing

from lessons in cultural crisis management and the 1954 Hague Convention, the ministry is aiming not just to reopen cultural venues, but to restore their social role and safeguard the nation's historical identity. The program also reflects broader efforts by Tehran to stabilize public life and rebuild confidence following months of unrest and site closures. According to Darabi, the first phase — a month-long "limited and expert-led reopening" — will only include low-risk provinces. Visits will be restricted to open-air archaeological sites and venues without museums, such as Naqsh-e Jahan

Square, Taq-e Bostan, the Bam Citadel, Bisotoun, Persian gardens, and historic mosques. Phase two, set to begin one month later, will expand access to other museums and sites, but only in areas that have regained full security clearance. Small-scale cultural programs may resume in open spaces. "This is not a one-size-fits-all approach," Darabi noted, stressing that reopening timelines will vary based on provincial risk assessments and approval by local security councils. The final phase will mark a full return to regular operations. With clearance from national security agencies, all museums will resume

public services including cafés, gift shops, and interactive exhibits. Authorities also plan to document lessons learned and update protective protocols. The reopening is not without ongoing oversight. Darabi confirmed that a dedicated museum crisis committee will remain active under the ministry's emergency task force to monitor risks, respond to threats, and supervise site readiness. He described the move as "a cautious but necessary step" toward cultural stability. "We're not just unlocking buildings — we're re-activating memory and meaning," he said.



Archaeologists uncover centuries-old ironworks hub in northern Iran



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Iranian archaeologists announced the discovery of extensive medieval iron-smelting operations near Masuleh, a mountain town in Gilan Province, after a new round of exca-

vations began earlier this summer. The first season of excavation at the Khan Baji Sara site, located three kilometers from the old town of Masuleh, revealed evidence of continuous iron production spanning from the late Seljuk period (12th–13th century) through the Qajar era (19th century), ILNA reported. The work is part of Iran's broader effort to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for Masuleh's cultural landscape. Lead archaeologist Abdolreza Mohajernejad said that the team, including five Chinese experts, uncovered remains of iron smelting furnaces and

tools used over several centuries. "We've identified all four traditional stages of smelting," he said. The process included transporting raw iron ore from local mines, extracting sponge iron, and forging items ranging from household tools to swords and cannonballs. The excavations also turned up fragments of colored glass bangles, hinting at small-scale glassmaking in the region. But the central story remains the scale and longevity of metalwork. "The technology used in Khan Baji Sara's furnaces appears older and more advanced than what we've seen in Kohneh Masuleh," Mohajernejad

said, referring to earlier digs in the historic section of the town. According to the findings, the region served as a key corridor for iron goods flowing westward to Gilan, Ardebil, and Azarbaijan. "This was a hub," said Mohajernejad. "They weren't just making tools for themselves—they were feeding a broader trade network." The site's geographical placement, along an ancient east-west trade route, backs up that theory. Its output appears to have played a vital role in the region's commercial and military economy well into the 19th century. Excavators found later-peri-

od artifacts linked to the production of cannonballs during the Qajar dynasty. Masuleh today still carries the legacy of that metallurgical heritage. Blacksmithing is one of its few surviving crafts, with several workshops still active. "The reason blacksmithing stuck around here is because it never really left," Mohajernejad said. The dig wrapped up earlier this month. Samples are now being tested in Tehran, and findings will be submitted as part of the documentation package for UNESCO consideration. Further excavations may follow based on lab results and funding.

Top contemporary painting prize opens in Tehran

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The third edition of the Grand Prize of Iran Contemporary Painting opened Friday at the Iranian Artists Forum in downtown Tehran, showcasing works by 170 painters from across the country. The exhibition, which features selected entries from more than 4,500 submissions, will run through July 20, excluding Saturdays. The annual event, one of Iran's leading platforms for contemporary painting, is organized by the Iranian Painters Association in col-



laboration with Saman Insurance. The exhibition spreads across six galleries—Mirmiran, Namayesh, Bahar, Tabestan, Paeiz, and Zemestan—inside the well-known

arts hub. This year's jury includes veteran artist Shahriar Ahmadi, critic and painter Rozita Sharafjahan, and academic Amir Nasri. The prize aims to elevate contemporary voices in Iranian visual art and spotlight emerging talents. According to the organizers, the high number of submissions signals growing public interest in painting as a form of "critical expression" amid shifting cultural dynamics. The event is backed by multiple working groups under the Painters Association, including curatorial, research, and digital units.

Iran resumes work on northern cultural megaproject after years of delay

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, visited the eastern Golestan province and officially relaunched construction on what is set to become the largest museum in northern Iran after a years-long halt. The Golestan Grand Museum, a long-stalled project located in the city of Gonbad-e Kavus, aims to serve as a regional flagship of cultural preservation. Originally launched in 2016 but left unfinished, the museum is designed to showcase the historical, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Iran's northern provinces. Officials now hope to turn the project into what they call a "civilizational mission" rather than just a building, Tasnim News Agency reported. Salehi Amiri, who toured the construction site in Dariush Park on the first day of his trip on July 9, called for swift mobilization. "This museum must become the beating heart of heritage in the north," he said. Stressing the symbolic importance of the project, he framed it as essential for safeguarding Iran's identity and "narrating the story" of its ethnic mosaic. The government plans to break ground again within the next month. The first phase will proceed based on the existing structure, with financing split between national and provincial sources. Parliament representatives and local officials are expected to help fast-track the process. Around half of the total budget, the minister noted, will go to construction, while



the rest will cover interior design, content curation, and conservation systems. Private sector and local investors—especially those in handicrafts and cultural industries—are expected to foot part of the bill, as long as the project stays "within the Iranian-Islamic identity" and avoids turning into a commercial venture. Abdolhakim Agharkakli, who represents Gonbad-e Kavus in parliament, urged the government to allocate a dedicated national funding line through Article 23 budget procedures to "accelerate the timeline" and respond to public demand. Fereydoun Fa'ali, Golestan province's cultural heritage chief, reported that since ground was first broken in 2016, nearly \$2 million have been spent, mostly from national sources. The museum sits on a 20,000-square-meter municipal land grant, of which 2,500 square meters have been excavated and reinforced. Physical progress stands at just 20 percent. According to Fa'ali, the museum will be built in stages. The state heritage office is responsible for the gallery and storage units; the city will handle landscaping and a garden-museum; and cultural tourism investors will develop the hospitality segment.

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for CHIMEC 4242 // 6000 kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of CHIMEC 4242 for Olefin plant. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until July 22, 2025. Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: August 02, 2025
Email: me.rahimi@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34282592

Tender	No	Quantity
CHIMEC 4242	PVS-0431022	6000 KG

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