



# Iran among world's top 20 tourist destinations

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran was named one of the world's top 20 tourist destinations, according to the latest figures from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), Iranian Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said July 16 in Tehran. Speaking at a meeting of the Visit Iran international website policy council on July 14, Bandpey cited a UN report highlighting Iran's global ranking in the months leading up to the 12-day war earlier this year, IRNA reported. He described the country's performance in the final quarter of the Iranian calendar year, December 2024 through March 2025, as "the region's best," calling it a sign of policy maturity, industry resilience, and a "new window into public diplomacy."

Iran's placement reflects a combination of factors, including improved infrastructure, strategic private-public collaboration, and a more accurate global narrative about the country, Bandpey said. The national tourism portal Visit Iran, backed by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, has played a central role in promoting Iran as a stable and attractive destination. Officials say this momentum must now be sustained through intensified international marketing. "This is not just about numbers," Bandpey told the gathering of senior government officials, tourism entrepreneurs, and media representatives. "It's about smart policymaking and showing the real face of Iran to the world." He called for the platform to evolve beyond a basic infor-

mation hub into a powerful tool for destination branding, perception management, and public diplomacy. Planned upgrades to Visit Iran include redesigned content based on tourist behavior analysis, interactive smart travel guides, multilingual and multimedia storytelling by local creators, and partnerships with global marketing experts. Bandpey emphasized the importance of combining state and private sector efforts to transform the website into a "global tourism brand." With hopes for a rebound from recent geopolitical shocks, officials see this recognition as both a milestone and a motivator. "Regaining our global tourism standing is no longer a distant dream," said Bandpey. "It's within reach, if we continue to tell our story strategically."



● IRNA

## Tehran launches permanent Persian literature section at Bangkok's TK Park Library



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Iran inaugurated a permanent shelf of Persian books at Bangkok's TK Park library on Saturday as part of its week-long cultural initiative titled 'Reading Iran', marking the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties with Thailand, according to Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO). Held at CentralWorld's sixth floor, the event featured film screenings, calligraphy and miniature painting workshops,

a crafts and lifestyle exhibition, and a cultural tour, all culminating in the launch of a dedicated section of Iranian books aimed at Thai readers. Organizers said the shelf was designed to promote "cross-cultural dialogue" and deepen mutual understanding through literature, history, and the arts. The collection includes classic and contemporary Persian poetry, historical studies, and cultural texts. Many volumes are paired with

Thai or English translations to broaden access for non-Persian speakers. The books are now available to the public through TK Park's lending system. The shelf stands in the library's "World Cultures" section and has been decorated with Iranian visual motifs and symbols. It is intended as a long-term cultural foothold, unlike previous temporary showcases, and signals a more sustained Iranian presence in Thailand's public cultural

scene. Iran's cultural attaché in Bangkok called the initiative a "strategic investment" in soft diplomacy. "This isn't just a display — it's a lasting bridge between the two peoples," he said during the unveiling. TK Park, or Thailand Knowledge Park, is a public library and cultural center under the Thai Ministry of Culture. The new Iranian section is expected to serve students, researchers, and readers interested in Asian civilizations.

## Iranian animated series 'Javanmardan' picked for Belarus Animaueuka

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Iranian animated series 'Javanmardan,' (literally translated as 'The Chivalrous'), produced by Saba Animation Center, was selected to compete at the 2025 Animaueuka International Festival in Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) confirmed on July 16. The selection was made by the IRIB's General Directorate of International Media Affairs, which submitted the series as an official entry to the festival. Animaueuka, running from September 24 to 26 in the eastern city of Mogilev, is considered one of the leading animation events in Eastern Europe. Since its founding in 1998, the festival has drawn top-tier global talent and entries across three main categories—professional films, children's content, and visual arts. 'Javanmardan' tells an epic tale of resistance against the Mongol invasion, portraying themes of valor, faith, and patriotism through a blend of national and religious symbolism. Its creators have described it as



a "historical and heroic narrative" highlighting Iran's cultural legacy. The IRIB said the work's inclusion marks a "major step" in showcasing Iranian animation on the world stage. For Tehran's cultural diplomacy, the selection is seen as more than symbolic, it's a chance to reflect the country's rich storytelling traditions through a modern artistic lens. The 'Javanmardan' series is part of Saba's wider push to export Islamic-Iranian values through soft power.

## Military drama 'God of War' to premiere in Lebanon

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Iran's controversial military drama 'God of War' will kick off its international theatrical run in Lebanon on July 18, according to a statement released by Owj Arts and Media Organization on Wednesday. The film is directed by Hossein Darabi, produced by Saeed Sa'di, and developed by Mohammadreza Shafah, all known figures in Iran's state-backed cinema scene, ILNA reported. The film dramatizes the launch of Iran's first post-revolution missile and aims to portray what it calls the country's "military strength" through cinematic language. Produced by Owj, a state-funded group tied to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the film blends defense propaganda with a modern storytelling ap-

proach and seeks to reshape regional narratives through cultural export. 'God of War' was first screened at Iran's Fajr Film Festival earlier this year. Its international debut marks a calculated move by Tehran to leverage soft power in the Arab world amid rising regional tensions. The cast features a roster of well-known Iranian actors, including Saed Soheili, Hossein Soleimani, Payam Ahmadiania, and Nader Fallah. The film follows a fictionalized account of Iran's early missile program. "This time, it's our turn to launch the first missile," reads the tagline, underscoring the nationalistic tone. The narrative seeks to align with Tehran's broader messaging strategy by revisiting what it views as key moments in its post-1979 military history. The Lebanese release comes as



Iran ramps up its cultural outreach across the Middle East, often using cinema, television, and literature to promote its strategic narratives. Further international screenings are expected but have not yet been officially announced.