



# Iran waives zoning fees to lure foreign tourism investment, eyes global rebound



● MOJ NEWS AGENCY

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has scrapped land-use conversion fees for tourism projects in a bid to attract foreign investment and revive its post-sanctions tourism economy, Cultural Heritage Minister Reza Salehi Amiri announced on Saturday. The measure, long demanded by developers, is expected to unlock stalled projects and ease entry for international hotel chains, eco-tourism ventures, and wellness brands, IRNA reported. "This is a game-changer," Salehi Amiri said at a high-level meeting in Tehran. "We are opening the door to global investors. Our mission is to put Iran firmly back on the international tourism map." The move comes as Iran seeks to rebuild its cultural and tourism sectors amid a wider drive

to diversify the economy and counter years of isolation. Until now, developers were required to pay up to 80% of land value to convert agricultural land — a key hurdle for both domestic and foreign investors. New exemptions now apply to hotels, eco-lodges, marine resorts, and other qualifying projects. The reform is part of a broader five-year overhaul that includes tighter governance, increased cultural diplomacy, and higher budgets. Salehi Amiri said Iran's tourism and heritage strategy had entered a "new phase," marked by direct provincial coordination, international outreach, and structured performance benchmarks. Officials cited recent cultural engagement with Egypt and Azerbaijan, as well as expanded UNESCO site nominations, as proof of the country's growing

soft power. The minister also pointed to national resilience during the recent 12-day war, praising swift crisis management and coordinated provincial response. Deputy Minister Ali-Asghar Shalbafian called the fee removal "historic," saying it fulfilled a 10-year demand from the private sector. Ali Darabi, another deputy, said reopening museums and training tourism workers are now top priorities, while a new push is underway to inscribe Alamut Castle as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Under its 7th Development Plan, Iran aims to raise the number of museums to 1,000 and will host an international handicrafts fair in September. Talks are also in progress to increase ministry funding by 60% and boost staff salaries by half.

## Iranian documentary on traditional needlework to be screened at UK's Lift-Off Sessions



## Arts & Culture Desk

'Pateh, Intangible Heritage,' a documentary directed by Azam Ramezanzadeh and produced in central Iran's Yazd Province, will be screened at the 2025 Lift-Off Filmmaker Sessions in the United Kingdom. The documentary, supported by IRIB Media Trade, was selected for the seventh edition of the global event, which runs from

July 28 to August 11. The festival showcases selected works from around the world in both online and in-person screenings, IRNA reported. The 50-minute film explores the cultural roots and historical value of Pateh-bafi—a centuries-old Iranian needlework craft practiced mainly by women in the south and southeast. Through interviews with artisans and textile scholars, the

film highlights intricate stitching techniques and the role of the craft in local identity and collective memory. Ramezanzadeh's team traveled across Kerman and Yazd provinces to document "the delicate and complex" process of Pateh embroidery. The film also sheds light on the economic pressures threatening traditional crafts in Iran and the urgent need for intergenerational transmission. One artisan interviewed in the film called the embroidery "a silent language of women's resistance and creativity." Iran's selection at Lift-Off marks a rare international spotlight for its textile heritage. The festival's global platform "opens the door" for wider recognition of intangible cultural practices, IRIB said in a statement.

## Iranian opera singer Fekri to perform in Zagreb with French conductor Niquet

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian opera singer Reza Fekri is scheduled to perform Marc-Antoine Charpentier's 'Te Deum' under the baton of French conductor Hervé Niquet at the Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall in Zagreb on October 26, according to the Croatian National Theatre and the event's official website. Part of the long-running 'Lisinski Saturdays' concert series, the performance highlights Fekri's growing international footprint, IRNA reported. A tenor with the Croatian National Opera, Fekri will appear as the soloist in Charpentier's triumphal Baroque piece, often linked with "splendor and victory" in classical tradition. The concert will also feature works by Lully and Campra, drawing from France's 17th and 18th-century musical heritage. Fekri, one of Iran's leading classical vocalists, has held the stage in major European venues.



He was invited three years in a row to perform 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' under Iranian maestro Ali Rahbari at the Mariinsky Opera in St. Petersburg, and has worked with Helikon Opera in Moscow, the Zagreb Philharmonic, Tehran Symphony Orchestra, and others. Niquet, founder of the early music ensemble 'Le Concert Spirituel,' is widely recognized for reviving sacred and secular French Baroque music. His collaboration with Fekri marks a rare cross-cultural pairing on the classical stage.

## Italian festival to show Iranian short animation 'Paper Flowers'

## Arts & Culture Desk

The short animation 'Paper Flowers' by Iranian filmmaker Ramak Amin Kazemi will compete at the ninth Nebrodi Cinema Festival held from September 29 to October 5 in Messina, Italy, the Iranian Documentary, Experimental & Animation Film Center (DEFC) announced. The festival will showcase 'Paper Flowers' in its competition section, highlighting the film's international reach following previous screenings at festivals in Italy, Turkey, Russia, Iraq, and Iran, ILNA reported. The film has garnered several awards, including Best



Animation at Russia's Kazan Festival, the Fifth Real Cinema Festival prize in Russia, and Best Costume Design at the Fumi Festival in the UK.

'Paper Flowers' tells the story of a renowned author who retreats to an isolated mansion in a neglected garden after his second book meets a "cold reception."

## Iran wins five silver medals at 2025 International Physics Olympiad in Paris

## Social Desk

Iran's national high school physics team won five silver medals at the 55th International Physics Olympiad (IPhO 2025), held in Paris from July 15 to 25, the Ministry of Education reported Saturday. The team members, Mohammad-Hassan Sadeghinejad, Aria Zarabi, Ilya Ghashaei, Mohammad-Hassan Golabdar, and Milad Mohammadi, each received a silver medal in the competition, which featured representatives from more than 90 countries. Ahmad Shirzad and Alireza Norouzshad

served as team leaders. This achievement highlights the "valuable knowledge and efforts" of Iran's young scholars and reflects the country's growing footprint in international scientific arenas. Iran's consistent participation and medal-winning performances in the IPhO underline the nation's commitment to advancing STEM education. The International Physics Olympiad is an annual competition for high school students, first held in Warsaw in 1967. Since then, except for three years, it has been hosted by different countries



The Iranian team poses for a group photo on July 24, 2025, following winning five medals at the 2025 edition of the International Physics Olympiad.

worldwide. The 2025 contest drew roughly 400 students from 94 nations, testing their skills in theoretical and experimental physics. Iran's latest results follow strong showings in recent years. At the 54th IPhO

held in Isfahan, Iran, last year, the national team earned one gold and four silver medals, finishing fourth overall. In 2023, at the Tokyo Olympiad, Iranian students secured five medals, including four silver and one bronze.