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Tehran eyes role as health tourism hub for Islamic countries

Arts & Culture Desk

Tehran is on track to become a regional hub for medical tourism among Islamic countries, Majid Zangooei, secretary general of the Islamic Countries Health Tourism Development Center, said at the Fourth International Conference on Health Tourism in Tehran. The gathering, held at the IRIB International Conference Center, drew medical experts, policymakers, and business leaders to discuss how Iran could turn its long-standing medical achievements into a new growth industry, IRNA reported. Organizers pitched the idea of naming Tehran the “capital of health tourism” in the Islamic world, calling it a rare opening for the country’s tourism sector. Zangooei said outdated attitudes still weigh down Iran’s health economy. Despite “real capacities” at hand, he

argued, restrictive views continue to block comprehensive growth.

He urged the government to step back and allow professional guilds such as the Iranian Medical Council to take the lead.

He also called for broader engagement by students and young specialists in international projects, saying that active involvement could curb brain drain.

“With existing potential in Islamic countries, Europe and Africa, stronger backing is essential,” he said.

Zangooei pointed to the Tehran Municipality as one of the most forward-looking partners in fostering entrepreneurial activity in the sector.

Mohammad Raeiszadeh, president of the Iranian Medical Council, said the country’s doctors have what it takes to make Iran a trusted destination for patients abroad. With 220 boards and 400 active members, the council offers a strong base of support, he noted.



Secretary General of the Islamic Countries Health Tourism Development Center Majid Zangooei speaks at the Fourth International Conference on Health Tourism in Tehran on September 4, 2025.

● IRNA

He cited advances in cardiac surgery, ophthalmology and new treatment techniques as proof that Iran has reached global benchmarks. The mix of modern hospitals, quality hotel facilities, and cultural attractions, he said, gives the country “a real chance” to draw in foreign patients.

“Alongside economic investment, we should be a messenger of peace and friendship for the region,” Raeiszadeh said.

He added that Iran’s rich record in medicine, dating back centuries, stands out against other civilizations and deserves wider recognition.

Both speakers pressed for clear regu-



lations and legal frameworks from the government to help the industry flourish. With the right policies, Raeiszadeh

said, Iran could move up the ranks of international health tourism destinations.

Nine-volume ‘Splendid Iran’ published in Bosnian

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts on Friday released a nine-volume book series titled ‘Splendid Iran’ in Bosnian, with both print and digital editions presented by the Iranian cultural center in Sarajevo. The collection marks the first time the series has been translated into a language shared by countries of the former Yugoslavia. Already available in 16 languages on the “Visit Iran” website, the series highlights Iran’s cultural wealth and natural diversity while offering readers a closer look at everyday life, IRNA reported. Each volume introduces a different facet of the country, from “A Splendid Feast” on Iranian cuisine and



“Splendid Religions” on sacred sites, to “Splendid Nature” exploring mountains, deserts and seas. Other titles cover heritage, destinations, events, accommodations and Iran’s most celebrated highlights. The food volume runs through 14 chapters of regional dishes, desserts and drinks. It urges readers not only to try well-known stews such as Ghormeh Sabzi and Fesenjan, but also sweets like Gaz and Sohan.

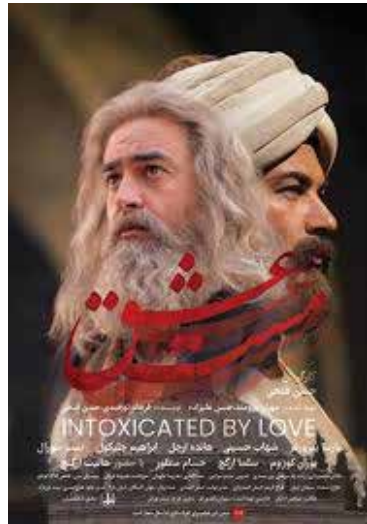
“Chefs in Iran display a rich variety of flavors,” the preface notes, adding that dining is “an opportunity to discover” styles of cooking and table traditions. Another volume, Splendid Religions, presents mosques, churches, synagogues and fire temples as a blend of art and architecture, adorned with tilework, mirrorwork and calligraphy. It describes Iran as home to followers of Islam, Christianity, Judaism,

Zoroastrianism and Mandaeism, alongside ancient cults such as Mithraism. Iran, ranked tenth worldwide with 29 UNESCO World Heritage sites, dedicates an entire booklet to its registered treasures. The series also points readers to festivals, creative cities, boutique hotels and natural attractions ranging from Mount Damavand to the southern seas. Physical copies are displayed at the Iranian cultural gallery in Sarajevo, while the e-books are accessible through the center’s official portal. The project, Iranian officials said, aims to showcase Iran’s “splendid” mosaic of history, culture and hospitality, offering an affordable journey with “unforgettable memories to share.”

Iran’s hit film ‘Intoxicated by Love’ set for int’l release in Turkey, Europe

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Hassan Fathi’s ‘Intoxicated by Love,’ a box office success at home last year, will be released in Turkey and 10 European countries starting October 17, the film’s producers said on Friday. The feature, which tells the story of the poet Rumi and his bond with Shams Tabrizi, became Iran’s top-selling non-comedy in 2024. Its upcoming rollout marks the first step in a wider global launch across Asia, the Arab world and the Americas. Shot in Istanbul, Konya and other Turkish cities, the film stars leading Iranian and Turkish actors including Shahab Hosseini, Parsa Pirouzfar, Hande Erçel, Halit Ergenç and İbrahim Çelikkol. The late Morteza Poursamadi was behind the camera as director of photography. The film will open on 250 screens in Turkey before moving on to Persian Gulf states, East Asia, Russia, the United States, Canada and South America. The international distribution is being handled by Istanbul-based Content Turkey.



Alireza Ghorbani performs the theme song, with music composed by Fahir Atakoğlu. Producers Mehran Boroumand and Hassan Alizadeh said the blend of “spiritual” and “cinematic” elements in the soundtrack was designed to capture both Iranian and international audiences.

Tehran’s path to ...

From an economic standpoint, Europe incurred virtually no cost. Iran plays no role in Europe’s energy supply chains, and trade ties are negligible. Politically, however, the move was costly, showing Europe’s misjudgment of Iran’s response and making trust harder to rebuild. Europe expected Iran to cave—to reduce uranium stockpiles, increase cooperation with the IAEA, or return unconditionally to negotiations with Washington. None of that happened. What, then, are Iran’s options? Neither extreme path will succeed. A rush to build nuclear weapons or a complete retreat from its nuclear program would both be dead ends. A hedging strategy offers the only viable solution: retain nuclear capability while staying open to dialogue. This enables Iran to maintain strategic flexibility, manage European pressure, and balance threats. It also allows Iran to secure its national interests without resorting to either escalation or capitulation. This strategy includes preventive measures, man-

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aging the effects of sanctions, building economic and social resilience, and strengthening strategic partnerships with countries such as Russia and China. Limited options like threatening to withdraw from the NPT or closing the Strait of Hormuz are neither effective nor sustainable. North Korea’s experience shows that leaving the NPT and brandishing nuclear threats without real operational backing only creates costs without results. Unlike North Korea, Iran faces a hostile adversary—Israel—on its doorstep, which makes such tactics even riskier. Hedging, by contrast, is rational and practical. It keeps the door to negotiations open, strengthens resilience, and preserves nuclear capability as leverage. In today’s polarized world, where Iran is already perceived as a structural adversary in Europe, hedging provides the only realistic framework. It offers Iran the means to protect its interests, maintain diplomatic flexibility, and balance threats while avoiding the pitfalls of both confrontation and submission.

Tehran, Tokyo hold talks on research cooperation in housing, urban development

Social Desk

Iranian and Japanese officials met in Tehran to explore closer cooperation in road, housing and urban development research, according to Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. The talks brought together Ghazal Raheb, head of Iran’s Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center, and head of the economic section at Japan’s Embassy in Tehran, along with other senior delegates, IRNA reported. The meeting underscored Tehran and Tokyo’s longstanding scientific partnership, which has included joint training programs on seismic design of steel structures. Officials said the new round of talks aimed to “step up” joint research, share expertise and



strengthen resilience in construction and urban planning. Atefeh Jahanmohammadi, head of the center’s structures and buildings division, gave a detailed account of past collaboration, highlighting the knowledge-transfer program on earthquake-resistant design. She urged that the exchange continue, stressing Japan’s “valuable experience” in building safety and disaster resilience.

The Japanese official welcomed the initiative and called for broader work between the two sides in engineering, architecture, urban development and transportation. International research partnerships, he said, could “pave the way” for overcoming technical challenges facing both countries. Raheb described the Tehran-based research center as the ministry’s think tank, active for five decades in scientific, technical and educational projects. She voiced readiness to expand cooperation with foreign partners, including Japan, and to export Iranian engineering services. She noted that past programs with Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Japan Cooperation Center for the Middle East had been “a successful model.”