



Iraqi cities to host Iranian tourism roadshow

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will stage a large-scale tourism roadshow in Iraq from October 6 to 9, targeting an annual flow of 10mn visitors between the two neighbors. The event, organized by Iran's Association of Travel Agencies in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, will be held in Basra, Baghdad and Karbala. It marks the most extensive tourism promotion Iran has undertaken abroad, with plans to attract up to 5mn Iraqi travelers a year. Deputy Tourism Min-

ister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said previous roadshows "have not matched the scale" of the upcoming Iraqi event. He stressed that Tehran wants to move beyond pilgrimages and medical visits, long the mainstay of cross-border travel, towards leisure, heritage and recreational tourism. Iranian organizers expect thousands of travel agents, hoteliers, airline executives and free-trade zone representatives from both countries to attend. Cultural nights featuring joint Iranian-Iraqi concerts are also scheduled in the three

cities. Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri is due to join the delegation and hold talks with Iraq's prime minister and tourism minister on widening cooperation. "Our target is 2.5 million Iraqi visitors in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (by March 2026), rising to 5 million in the next year," Mohseni-Bandpey said. Private-sector operators from both sides are expected to sign co-operation agreements during the event, aimed at distributing tourists across a wider range of destinations in Iran and Iraq.



● IRNA

Eight Iranian children awarded at Japan's JQA drawing contest



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Eight young Iranian artists were honored in the 24th JQA International Environmental Children's Drawing Contest, held in Japan in 2024. The competition, organized by the Japan Quality Assurance Organization

(JQA), received 8,514 entries from 68 countries, with 160 submissions from Iran, IRNA reported. The Iranian Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) participated with 50 artworks, resulting in eight awards and honorary diplomas for its mem-

bers. The contest, themed "joyful times for people and nature," aims to encourage children worldwide to express their thoughts on environmental issues through art. Among the winners, 13-year-old Sana Khodai from Boshrouyeh, South Khorasan Province, received the Special Jury Prize. Four first-place awards were granted to Setayesh Ghavibazou, 9, from Meshkinshahr, Ardabil Province; Zahra Jalili, 10, from Tehran; Mahya Asadi, 12, from Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province; and Mahshid Ghasemi, 14, from Kahriz Sang, Isfahan Province. Also, three honorary diplomas were awarded to Mohammadreza Mousavi, 13, from Tehran; Hananeh Nasiri, 13, from Meshkinshahr; and Zeinab Rahimi, 14, from Namin, Ardabil Province. The JQA contest, established to foster global environmental awareness among children, has been a platform for young artists to showcase their perspectives on nature and sustainability.

National identity on display at 'Green, White, and Red'



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The Art Bureau Gallery in Tehran is hosting 'Green, White, and Red,' an exhibition presenting new works by leading Iranian painters Kazem Chalipa, Hossein Khosrowjerdi, and Mostafa Goudarzi, each interpreting a symbolic color reflecting facets of Iran's cultural and historical identity. The exhibition, curated by Amir Abdolhosseini, showcases Chalipa's green-themed exploration of Islamic mysticism, features cypress trees and hoopoe birds as emblems of spiritual ascent. Khosrowjerdi's minimalist white work evokes Mount Damavand



and the sun, symbols of renewal and resilience. Goudarzi's red piece pays tribute to martyrs and draws inspiration from contemporary Iranian poetry. "This small piece is a tribute to all those who sacrificed their lives for Iran," Goudarzi said. Veteran actor Dariush Arjmand, present at the gallery, praised Goudarzi's painting as "a lesson in contemplation," observing that it transcends technique to embody thought and philosophy. He highlighted the birds in the artwork, noting their lifelike presence amid abstract forms. 'Green, White, and Red' will run until October 5, open from Saturday to Wednesday.

Iran signals readiness for joint biosphere reserve with Armenia

Social Desk

Iran expressed readiness to establish a shared biosphere reserve with Armenia, aiming to enhance conservation efforts and promote sustainable development. The proposal was discussed during a meeting between Hamid Zohrabi, Iran's Deputy Head of Natural Environment and Biodiversity at the Department of Environment (DoE), and Aram Meymaryan, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Environment, on the sidelines of the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (WCBR) in Hangzhou, IRNA reported. Zohrabi highlighted the potential for collaboration, stating

that Iran is "prepared to develop a joint biosphere reserve with Armenia, focusing on the revival of a shared species and the protection of natural habitats." He emphasized the importance of leveraging international platforms to facilitate scientific exchanges and technical cooperation between nations. The discussions align with broader regional efforts to strengthen environmental partnerships and address transboundary ecological challenges. The proposed biosphere reserve would encompass areas rich in biodiversity, potentially including regions such as the Arasbaran biosphere reserve in Iran, which borders Armenia.

The project a growing trend of cross-border environmental cooperation in the South Caucasus, underscoring the shared commitment to preserving natural heritage and fostering sustainable development. In addition to the biosphere reserve discussions, Zohrabi confirmed that Iran is set to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Academy of Sciences in the coming days. The Iranian delegation, led by Shina Ansari, Vice President and head of the DoE, is participating in the congress, which runs from September 22 to 26, to engage with global stakeholders on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development strategies.

Palestine recognition could ...

Yet in international politics, "symbol" is not just about propaganda, it can gradually evolve into a norm and influence the behavior of actors. Recognition of Palestine by European countries, even under public pressure, creates grounds for greater legitimacy of legal and political action against Israel. So, while tactical and political motives do lie behind these decisions, their consequences will not be confined to symbolism—provided they are backed by practical steps such as sanctioning settlement activity, applying coordinated diplomatic pressure, and supporting Palestinian institution-building.

In this context, how can Iran's position—emphasizing the creation of a single state and holding a referendum—contribute to resolving the conflict?
From the outset, the Islamic Re-

public of Iran has pursued a principled stance based on justice, maintaining that the only sustainable solution lies in the democratic principle of "self-determination." Tehran's proposal for a referendum, involving all original inhabitants of Palestine—Muslims, Christians and Jews alike—is a comprehensive, humane and internationally legitimate approach. This initiative has three main features: unlike imposed plans, it leaves self-determination to the people themselves; it paves the way for the return of Palestinian refugees; it can attract broad support from global public opinion and independent states. Clearly, such a plan faces serious short-term obstacles from the United States and Israel. Yet by putting forward this initiative, Iran underscores both its commitment to justice and humanity, and its offer of a solution that could, in

the long run, serve as the basis for global consensus against occupation. Iran's role should be analyzed on three levels: Diplomatic and discursive: advancing the referendum initiative in regional and international forums, strengthening the discourse of justice and self-determination. Legal: supporting judicial action at the International Criminal Court and other legal bodies to deepen Israel's isolation. Regional: fostering practical consensus among Islamic states and the Non-Aligned Movement to prevent the Palestinian issue from being traded away in short-term political bargains. Ultimately, Iran's position reflects the broader framework of its foreign policy—supporting the oppressed, resisting occupation, and upholding nations' rights within the rules of international law.