



Iran launches 268 nationwide tourism projects, creating 2,830 jobs

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran inaugurated 268 tourism projects across the country on Wednesday, generating direct employment for 2,830 people and involving nearly \$11.17 million in investment. The nationwide initiative, timed to coincide with Tourism Week (September 27 to October 3), was led via video conference by Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi Amiri from Tehran. The projects encompass a broad range of facilities, including 33 hotels and hotel-apartments, 98 traditional and eco-lodges, 26 teahouses, 12 tourism complexes, and 99 other tourism units. Salehi Amiri described the investment as “more than economic activity; it is a cultural act,” adding that each restored

or newly built site contributes to showcasing Iran’s history and identity. “Every building we restore or construct adds to Iran’s beauty,” he said. The minister emphasized the government’s commitment to clearing obstacles for ongoing projects, noting that more than 2,700 tourism initiatives are currently underway nationwide. He highlighted the role of private investors as “the engine of tourism development” and pointed to eco-tourism as a strategic tool to prevent rural depopulation, stating, “Our slogan is one eco-lodge per village.” Regional tourism hubs were singled out during the ceremony. Salehi Amiri praised Ilam for its rich history, hospitable population, and artisanal

handicrafts. Qazvin, with its historical sites such as the Sa’d al-Saltaneh complex and proximity to Tehran, was described as having “strategic advantages” for tourism expansion. Razavi Khorasan, home to the pilgrimage city of Mashhad, was recognized for both religious and broader tourism growth, while Bushehr and the northern provinces were highlighted for their potential in maritime and coastal tourism. Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, head of the ministry’s Investment and Economic Affairs, said tourism has become Iran’s third-largest investment sector. During the current administration, 860 tourism projects were inaugurated, and 153 projects have surpassed 90% completion. “Private investment is flourishing, and public engagement



Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi Amiri addresses guests during the inauguration of 268 tourism projects nationwide on October 1, 2025.
● ILNA

with tourism projects has grown more than 30%,” Shalbafian added. He also noted that 64 hotels, 73 tourism complexes, and 36 eco-lodges have received targeted financial support, while agreements with free-trade zones are expected to further boost investment. Salehi Amiri reiterated the administration’s commitment to tourism development. “The government stands firmly behind this sector,” he said, noting that President Maosud Pezesh-



kian regards tourism as one of the three top priorities for the current term. “We are devoted to ensuring

that every corner of Iran with historical or cultural significance can benefit from tourism investment,” he added.

4,000-year-old Elamite relief discovered in southwest Iran



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Wednesday that archaeologists uncovered the smallest known Elamite rock relief, dating back to 4,000 years ago, in the southwestern city of Izeh, Khuzestan, depicting a king in prayer to Nahunte, the Elamite god of the sun and justice. The discovery was made by a team led by Hossein Feyzi of Faculty of Archaeology (Susa) and Director of the National Base for the Cultural and Industrial Landscape of Masjed

Soleiman Ayoub Soltani, ISNA reported. It offers a fresh glimpse into Elamite religious rites and their cultural ties with Mesopotamia, the ministry said on its website. The hand-sized carving, about 26 centimeters across, shows a monarch seated on a plain throne, his right hand raised towards a solar disc carved above. In front lies a stepped platform, believed to have been used for offerings. Feyzi described the find as “small but momentous,” calling it the “smallest relief ever unearthed from the Elamites.” Located in the Ayapir district of Izeh, near the historic site of Ashkaf-e Salman, the relief was identified during a field survey involving archaeologists Feyzi, Soltani, Farzad Najafi and Mehdi Faraji. The team noted the site, known in ancient records as Ayapir or Alhak, had been a semi-independent city-state under

Elamite rule during the Middle Elamite period (1500–1000 BC). Although modest in size, the work shares striking iconographic features with larger Elamite reliefs at Kul-e Farah, Khung-e Azdar and Shahsavar, as well as with cylinder seals from Ur, Shimashki and Kassite Mesopotamia. “Its composition reveals a clear cultural dialogue across the region,” Feyzi said. Unlike most Elamite carvings cut into uniform stone, this relief was engraved on a patch of coarse conglomerate, a fragile surface that has left it vulnerable to erosion. Researchers are now turning to 3D laser scanning and photogrammetry to preserve the piece. Feyzi argued the find carries weight beyond its scale, “this carving not only introduces us to the devotional traditions of the Elamites, but also compels us to revisit the history of Elamite art and its connections with Mesopotamia.”

International Day for Older Persons

Iran, China collaborate to improve elderly care services

Social Desk

Iran is partnering with China to strengthen services for its rapidly ageing population, officials announced at a roundtable marking the International Day for Older Persons (October 1) at the State Welfare Organization of Iran. The collaboration aims to expand care infrastructure, introduce new technologies, and enhance social and health support for elderly citizens. With life expectancy in Iran exceeding 70 years, the country is experiencing one of the fastest rates of population ageing in the Middle East. China’s Ambassador to Iran, Zhong Peiyu, said China provides care services to 114 million people over 60 and is ready to assist Iran in enhancing elderly care. “We are committed to supporting infrastructure, social services, and technology transfer, including AI and robotic solutions for eldercare,” he said. The ceremony also unveiled a poster highlighting China’s healthcare assistance to people with disabilities and elderly citizens in Iran. Maryam Rahnama, a researcher at the Social Security Organization Research Institute said over 1.12 million elderly people currently live alone, a figure expected to rise to 3.5 million by 2051. “Solitary living places older adults at risk,” she said, highlighting the urgent need for targeted policy interventions. Officials stressed that women are disproportionately affected. Rahnama noted that 71.5% of elderly women living alone have no income, while 73% are illiterate. By 2051, most elderly women are expected to be educated and demand more sophisticated services. “The lifestyle of older women is set to transform,” she said, calling for robust public governance to ensure social protection. Mahmoud Abbasi, lead drafter of Iran’s Elderly Rights Bill, said only 1% of Iran’s 14,000 laws address the elderly, and these are scattered. The proposed 55-article bill covers healthcare, employment, family-care incentives, and legal protections, aiming to fill gaps and prevent social and financial vulnerability. Other initiatives in Iran include professional caregiver training and mental health programs. Mohsen Shatti, director of the official caregiver training system, said pilot projects will be launched in selected provinces to professionalize elderly care and adopt international best practices. Iran has also adapted the global elderly-friendly city framework. Ahmad Shahivandi, manager of the Strategic Plan for Elderly-Friendly Environments, said the



Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Iran Keita Ohashi (L), UN Resident Coordinator in Iran Stefan Priesner (2nd L), head of Iran’s State Welfare Organization Javad Hosseini (3rd L), China’s Ambassador to Iran Zhong Peiyu (4th L), Japan’s Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada (5th L) and South Korea’s Ambassador to Iran Kim Junpyo (R) pose for a photo during a ceremony marking the International Day for Older Persons at the State Welfare Organization in Tehran, Iran, October 1, 2025.
● ILNA

program now covers nine dimensions, including tourism, and is active in provinces such as Gilan, East and West Azerbaijan, and Kerman. He urged dedicated budget allocations for seniors, stressing rural areas as priorities. Data collection efforts are ongoing. Majid Kousheshy, a demographer at the University of Tehran, said the national survey on ageing, health, and retirement, launched in 2011, has been expanded to include spirituality, traditional medicine, and pre-senior age groups. The survey aims to track vulnerabilities, including those exposed during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. International partners emphasized gender-sensitive approaches. Keita Ohashi, Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Iran highlighted the “feminization of ageing” and the need to empower elderly women socially and economically. UN Resident Coordinator Stefan Priesner noted that rapid ageing requires proactive planning to safeguard health and social inclusion. Japan and South Korea also shared experiences. Japan’s Ambassador to Iran, Tamaki Tsukada, detailed the use of robotics and AI in eldercare, while South Korea’s Kim Junpyo highlighted initiatives to create one million jobs annually for seniors and provide AI-supported community care.

Fifty young reporters to cover Isfahan Int’l Children, Youth Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Fifty teenagers were selected to act as the official youth press for the 37th Isfahan International Children and Youth Film Festival, slated to be held from October 4 to 8. The young reporters, aged 13 to 16, were chosen from more than 350 initial applicants who responded to the festival’s annual call for youth journalists. Following a combination of tests and interviews, 50 candidates were confirmed for the role, ac-

cording to Behnaz Abedi, head of the festival’s Youth Reporters Committee. Before the festival, the selected teenagers took part in a series of free workshops covering journalism, cinema, critical thinking, and content production skills. The training sessions, held from September 23 to 29, were designed to equip participants with practical expertise ahead of the festival screenings. “They will be at the forefront of festival reporting,” Abedi said, noting that the content generated

by the teenagers will be published under their own names in reputable media outlets, news agencies, and the festival bulletin. The inclusion of a youth reporter program, a longstanding feature of the festival, has been credited with nurturing the next generation of media professionals in Iran. Abedi emphasized that “many leading journalists began their careers here,” highlighting the scheme’s role in cultivating future talent for the country’s media landscape.