

# Attacks inflict \$48.6mn damage on Iran's cultural heritage sites



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Saturday that recent US and Israeli attacks caused an estimated 75 trillion rials (about \$48.6mn) in damage to historical sites across the country. Salehi-Amiri said 140 registered sites were hit in 20 provinces, calling the losses "significant" and confirming the assessment had been formally submitted to the government. Tehran bore the brunt with 63 sites affected,

followed by Isfahan with 23 and Kurdistan with 12, ISNA reported.

In the capital, damage was reported at prominent landmarks including Golestan Palace and the Sa'adabad Complex, as well as a range of museums, historic buildings and cultural institutions. Authorities said several facilities within the Sa'adabad complex, including multiple museums, sustained impacts.

Isfahan, a major cultural hub, recorded damage to sites within the Naqsh-e Jahan Square ensemble, including the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque and Ali Qapu Palace, alongside other historic mosques, palaces and traditional houses. The Chehel Sotoun Palace museum complex was also among affected sites.

In the western provinces, officials listed multiple damaged

locations in Kurdistan and Kermanshah, including historic mansions, mosques and bathhouses. In Lorestan, the Falak-ol-Aflak Castle complex sustained damage from blast waves, authorities said.

Khuzestan province reported 13 affected sites, with preliminary assessments indicating impacts on historical areas and museums in cities such as Dezful, Ahvaz and Andimeshk. Some locations tied to the Sacred Defense era were also cited.

Salehi-Amiri said restoration planning was under way, stressing the need to "preserve" national heritage and ensure rapid rehabilitation.

He added that detailed technical surveys would refine the initial estimates as authorities move to safeguard damaged structures and reopen affected cultural venues.



A general view of the Sa'adabad Complex, damaged during US and Israeli attacks on Iran that began on February 28 and continued through March 18, 2026, in Tehran, Iran.

● FATEMEH BAHRAMI/AFP

## Iran logs over 29m Nowruz trips as travel aids social recovery

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Iran recorded more than 29 million trips during the Nowruz holidays from March 16 to April 4, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said, describing travel as a key mechanism to restore "calm" and social resilience in the wake of recent tensions.

"This year's Nowruz was 'unprecedented,'" Mohseni Bandpey said, noting that the holiday period coincided with a sensitive national environment following what officials termed the "third imposed war."

He added that travel shifted from a purely leisure activity into a stabilizing force that helped sustain normal life flows, IRNA reported. Authorities moved early to streamline services and shore up readiness. The Central Headquarters for Travel Services Coordination convened 137 meetings across national and provincial levels from mid-March to early April, including emergency sessions and joint reviews attended by the minister. Provincial and county-level coordination began on March 13, enabling decentralized, on-the-ground management, while designated supervisors monitored



compliance with service and security protocols.

Nowruz trips were registered with an average stay of 6.8 days and a repeat travel rate of 34%, marking longer stays and multiple journeys during the period.

Mohseni Bandpey said travel patterns underwent a "fundamental" shift, with preferences tilting toward smaller cities and rural areas. Spending priorities also pivoted from entertainment to essential goods, while trip planning became more fluid.

Data based on mobile tracking showed the northern provinces topping the list of destinations. Mazandaran drew 4.48 million travelers, followed by Gilan with 3.21 million. Khorasan Razavi hosted 1.81 million travelers, while East Azarbaijan received 1.66 million. Bushehr ranked 31st

with 232,943 visitors.

Supervisory teams carried out 44,527 inspections of accommodation centers and travel agencies to ensure service quality and standards. The checks resulted in 1,582 commendations, 2,161 warnings, 166 formal notices, and 131 closures or suspensions. Authorities also flagged 878 deficiencies for corrective action.

Mohseni Bandpey said evolving travel behavior requires updated governance tools. He called for steering travelers toward less congested destinations, expanding access infrastructure, strengthening supply distribution networks, and developing a security-tourism atlas to better manage travel flows. Such measures, he said, would bolster the sector's resilience and enhance public satisfaction in the years ahead.

## Music album 'Minab Angels' unveiled, honoring schoolchildren killed in strike

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Iran's Culture Ministry on Saturday unveiled the 'Minab Angels' music album at the 'For Iran, the Source of Art' event in Tehran, featuring works dedicated to elementary schoolchildren killed in a missile strike in Minab, southern Iran.

Babak Rezaei, director general of the Music Office at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's Artistic Affairs Department, said the album compiles pieces produced over the past 40 days by Iranian musicians, centered on the "martyred" children of the Shajareh Tayebeh school in the southern city,



ILNA reported.

The collection has been released by the Iran Music Association and will be distributed via cards handed out at the ceremony and at evening public gatherings in Tehran. Each card carries a QR code that opens access to the

tracks upon scanning.

Contributors include Zanko, Ali Raha, Hatef, Mohammad Fereshtehnejad, Reza Rahimian, and Amir Haghghat.

Rezaei described the project as a cultural tribute shaped in the wake of a national tragedy.

## Theater production 'Hotel' to reopen in Tehran, launching 2026 stage season

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Directed by Marjan Aghanouri, the immersive theatrical production 'Hotel' will reopen its run on April 16, at Iran Art Boutique in Tehran, marking the venue's first performance of the current Iranian calendar year which started March 21, 2026, after its earlier staging was suspended in last year amid wartime disruptions.

Written by Marjan Aghanouri and Solaleh Safari, the experimental and participatory piece initially began performances in March 2026 but was halted due to "special conditions" in the



country before returning to the stage this week.

Positioned as an atmospheric, site-specific experience, 'Hotel' places audiences in a suspended, uncanny environment where they move alongside performers through a decaying, fire-scarred hotel.

The narrative follows a theater troupe attempting to stage a performance inside

the building, only for the storyline to be disrupted by a character identified as "the jinn," who alters the trajectory of events.

"I want to write to the Performing Arts Center so they stop turning my home into a theater hall," reads the production's synopsis.

Aghanouri, a recipient of an honorary medal at the 2025 Actors' House Theater Festival, has previously won multiple national and international awards, including best director at the Tehran Theater Festival and best actress at the Simorgh International Festival, alongside appearances at regional cultural events.

## Italian composer unveils 'Iran Symphony' in Rome

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Iran's Ambassador to Italy Mohammadreza Sabouri and Italian composer Antonio Papalardo unveiled the 'Iran Symphony' in Rome, celebrating cultural ties between Iran and Italy through a musical work presented as a symbol of solidarity with the Iranian people. The event brought together diplomatic and cultural figures in the

Italian capital, where Papalardo's newly composed 'Iran Symphony' was introduced as an artistic gesture of "solidarity" and respect for Iran's societal resilience, ISNA reported. The Iranian envoy highlighted the piece as a reflection of "cultural connection" and shared artistic heritage amid sensitive regional circumstances. Organizers described the ceremony as an evening "filled with art and epic spirit,"

featuring a preview of the symphony's final movement. The performance incorporated heroic verses attributed to Ferdowsi alongside a poem by Italian writer Achille Zaino titled "Lions of Persia," marking a cross-cultural narrative woven into the composition. Guests also heard excerpts from the concluding section of the symphony, marking its official unveiling in the Italian cultural scene.