

Pezeshkian vows 'targeted' aid for Iran tourism business after strikes

President lauds firefighters as 'front line of sacrifice' in wartime rescues



Social Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday ordered "targeted" support for tourism businesses and accelerated restoration of war-damaged cultural sites during a visit to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts in Tehran, then praised firefighters as the "front line of sacrifice" at a separate unannounced fire station visit. Pezeshkian reviewed damage assessments from recent US and Israeli strikes, pushing for "emergency" funding and faster documentation of destroyed monuments. Officials reported 149 historical sites across 18 provinces affected, with emergency repairs already under way. "Targeted" support is essential,

the president warned, outlining aid packages including financial facilities, deferred debt repayments, insurance backing, and capacity-building programs for tourism operators. He directed the economy and labor ministries to design and implement the measures. Despite wartime constraints, the ministry reported "acceptable" management of the Nowruz travel season, citing balanced trip distribution, expanded lodging and transport services, and improved traveler satisfaction. Separately, at a Tehran fire station, Pezeshkian thanked emergency crews for their "round-the-clock" efforts during the 40-day conflict. Officials said firefighters operated at more than 1,300 sites across 270 affected cities, rescuing between

2,000 and 3,000 people. Abbas Masjedi Arani, head of Iran's Forensic Medicine Organization, announced that from the start of the Ramadan War until the final hours of April 10, 2025, a total of 3,375 people died in US and Israeli strikes. "You entered the field when many were forced to leave," the president told firefighters. "This spirit of sacrifice is a great asset for the country." Operations included containing massive firestorms, clearing rubble, extracting survivors, securing high-risk zones, and evacuating civilians. Officials also reported damage assessments completed on roughly 88,000 private residential and commercial units nationwide, with repairs finished on about 27,000 homes outside major cities.

ICOM expresses readiness to help Iran's museum recovery

Arts & Culture Desk

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has pledged its support to Iran's damaged museums and cultural heritage sites in the aftermath of the 40-day conflict that severely impacted the nation's historic monuments. Responding to a request from ICOM Iran, ICOM's President Antonio Rodríguez emphasized that the organization stands ready to provide both expert advice and practical assistance for restoration and security efforts. Rodríguez, in his letter to Monir Kholghi, head of ICOM Iran, acknowledged the extent of the damage, which has been confirmed by international organizations including UNESCO, IRNA reported. He highlighted that ICOM can facilitate consultations with specialists in areas such as preservation, museum security, and crisis management. "We can rapidly connect with ICOM's international committees and experts from organizations like ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property)," Rodríguez said. Rodríguez also praised Iran's initiative to install protective blue shields at its museums



and historical sites, a move that has garnered significant attention on social media. "The widespread sharing of images showing blue shields on Iran's cultural landmarks demonstrates the effective use of available resources amid the current conflict," he added. Also, Rodríguez discussed the importance of maintaining a "Red List" of cultural artifacts, a crucial tool for combating illegal trafficking. While this list typically targets the black market, he noted that recent observations in Iran indicate significant threats to cultural heritage due to damage and destruction. "Updating and documenting museum inventories with high-resolution images is vital to ensuring the protection of these collections," he explained. He stressed the need for backing up these records in multiple locations to ensure

their security, particularly in the event of theft or loss. He further proposed that Iran submit a list of its most globally significant cultural treasures to UNESCO for special protection, citing Lebanon's recent successful request for protection of 39 of its historical sites. ICOM, a key partner in this effort, has expressed full support for such initiatives. In his final remarks, Rodríguez reaffirmed ICOM's commitment to supporting Iran's efforts and facilitating access to emergency funding. Through partnerships with entities like UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund and the ALIPH Coalition, ICOM is positioned to help meet the urgent financial needs of Iranian museums. "All ICOM members stand in solidarity, and we eagerly await further collaboration to safeguard Iran's rich cultural heritage," Rodríguez concluded.

Minister calls for responsive cultural research amid social change

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi called for faster, field-oriented cultural research during an April 19 visit to Tehran's Research Center for Culture, Art and Communication, urging state-linked bodies to "keep pace" with rapid social transformations and deliver actionable insights for policymakers. The directive targets a broader institutional realignment across state-linked cultural agencies. Long-range academic studies frequently lag behind fast-moving public sentiment, ILNA reported. Scholars must "bridge the gap" between theoretical models and field realities, particularly in cinema, music, and visual arts. Raw survey data requires immediate translation into actionable policy frameworks. "Cultural planning must anchor in empirical feedback rather than publishing isolated metrics." Rapid technological adoption has reshaped consumption patterns across the region. Legacy distribution networks face mounting pressure from digital platforms. Research units must map out emerging media ecosystems and assess



how algorithmic curation influences regional taste. Provincial centers require upgraded funding pipelines to capture demographic shifts outside the capital. Academic output currently concentrates in Tehran, leaving peripheral narratives underrepresented. Policy councils will embed within existing academic frameworks to synchronize research agendas with executive priorities. Cultural institutions carry a shared responsibility in navigating socioeconomic stressors. Recent regional developments serve as a catalyst for immediate scholarly review. Studies will track community

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi (3rd L) visits Tehran's Research Center for Culture, Art and Communication on April 19, 2026. ● IRNA

resilience, safeguard creative assets, and flag disruptive influences before they fracture social cohesion. State-backed cultural bodies will now prioritize crisis-responsive publications. Long-term projects remain active, but emergency research tracks receive expedited review.

Iran cuts dam discharge 19% below average to conserve water reserves



Social Desk

Iran slashed dam water discharge by 19% below the 10-year average through April 19, implementing conservative release strategies as reservoirs reached 59% capacity despite improved inflows, according to the latest weekly water index. Total outflow dropped to 17.12 billion cubic meters (bcm), representing a 6% year-on-year decline and a

19% shortfall against the long-term mean. The reduction signals heightened caution in water management as authorities brace for peak demand seasons, IRNA reported. Storage levels climbed to 30.55 bcm, marking a 14% recovery from last year but remaining 7% below the decade average. Total inflow surged 53% to 27.98 bcm compared to the previous year, though volumes matched rather than exceeded the 10-year benchmark of 28.09 bcm. The weekly index noted the "cautious approach" to releases aims to preserve supplies amid fluctuating precipitation patterns. The data covers the water year beginning late September. While the inflow improvement provides temporary relief, the persistent storage deficit show ongoing water stress challenges. Officials continue monitoring hydrological conditions as agricultural and municipal demand intensifies in coming months.