

Exhibition diplomacy key to postwar tourism recovery



Iranian officials and representatives attend a meeting of the Foreign Exhibitions Policy Council at the Tourism Ministry in Tehran on June 17, 2026 to discuss a roadmap for rebuilding the country's tourism sector through exhibition diplomacy.
 ● CHTN

Arts & Culture Desk

Exhibition diplomacy will play a central role in rebuilding Iran's tourism sector after wartime damage, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpey said on Wednesday at a meeting of the country's Foreign Exhibitions Policy Council in Tehran. The high-level gathering, held at the Tourism Ministry's deputy office and attended by senior government officials, tourism associations, business chamber rep-

representatives and free-zone authorities, focused on selecting priority international exhibitions, appointing organizers and defining Iran's global tourism marketing roadmap, CHTN reported. Iran's cultural heritage authorities said that recent strikes by the United States and Israel which began February 28 have damaged 149 historical sites. Mohseni Bandpey described peace, stability and national cohesion as the foundations of tourism recovery, saying the industry must unite

to overcome the impact of wartime losses and restore momentum. "Today, more than ever, we need solidarity across the tourism sector to compensate for the damages and consequences imposed during the war," he said. Deputy minister said 64 tourism facilities and establishments, along with 149 museum, historical and civilizational sites, sustained damage during the conflict. Despite the setbacks, he stressed that international marketing efforts would continue.

"Our plans to introduce Iran's tourism potential to global audiences will not stop," he said, adding that overseas exhibitions remain among the most effective platforms for promotion, market development and tourism diplomacy. With reconstruction costs and economic pressures limiting available resources, the deputy minister said Iran would pursue a more targeted and strategic presence at major tourism fairs abroad. He identified neighboring and border countries as the primary focus of the country's tourism diplomacy and called for greater involvement from free zones, provincial authorities, the Iran Chamber of Commerce and professional tourism organizations. He also proposed leveraging the capacities of border provinces by assigning some exhibitions in neighboring countries to adjacent Iranian provinces for implementation and coordination. Council members and industry representatives reviewed priority markets and support mechanisms for the private sector, while examining several planning scenarios for participation in foreign tourism exhibitions. Participants emphasized the importance of strengthening Iran's presence in neighboring countries, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), health tourism markets and key European destinations.

Iran-UAE film enters post-production ahead of festival circuit



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian-UAE short film 'Hide and Doubt' has moved into post-production after completing principal photography in Tehran, marking the latest joint cinematic venture between the two countries, according to the project's media office. Written and directed by Mohammad Zolfaghari and Sepehr Vali and produced by Amir Khatibi, the film is now undergoing editing and technical post-production work as its producers prepare it for submission to domestic and international film festivals, PANA reported.

The project is backed by KIMIA ARTS COMPANY, a Dubai-based international arts organization active in cinema, theatre and contemporary arts. The company has positioned cross-border cultural engagement and artistic collaboration between Iran, the wider region and the international arena at the heart of its activities. With cameras now switched off, the production team has turned its focus to refining the film's final cut and advancing distribution plans for the festival circuit. The cast features Mahrokh Rafizadeh, Pardis Shirvani and Hana Ahmadi.

Iran to receive first of 20 Russian rescue helicopters by March 2027

Social Desk

Iran has moved forward with a major overhaul of its aerial rescue fleet after the Iranian Red Crescent Society signed an agreement in Moscow on Wednesday to purchase 20 helicopters from Russia, with the first four aircraft scheduled for delivery before March 2027, according to Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Chief Pirhossein Kolivand. Kolivand and Nikolay Kolesov, director general of Russian Helicopters, signed the memorandum at the Russian state-owned company's headquarters as Tehran presses ahead with efforts to strengthen emergency response capabilities across the country, IRNA reported. "Today we signed an agreement for the direct purchase of 20 helicopters from Russia to reinforce Iran's logistics network and air rescue fleet," Kolivand said. He described the deal as an unprecedented step in the history of the Red Crescent Society, adding that a finalized contract for the first four helicopters



would allow their delivery before the Iranian New Year of 1406, which begins in March 2027. The acquisition advances a broader Iran-Russia cooperation plan first outlined in early 2025. Russian and international reports previously estimated the overall program at around \$500 million, including aircraft procurement, spare parts, pilot and technician training, and support services. Kolivand said the helicopters would be equipped with modern technology and night-vision systems, enabling round-the-clock operations. The aircraft will also support medical evacuation missions, emergency relief efforts, and firefighting operations. The new fleet is expect-

Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) Chief Pirhossein Kolivand (R) shakes hands with Nikolay Kolesov, director general of Russian Helicopters, after signing a contract for the purchase of 20 helicopters at the Russian state-owned company's headquarters in Moscow, Russia, on June 17, 2026.
 ● IRCS

ed to significantly expand Iran's ability to respond to natural disasters, wildfires, and emergencies in mountainous and remote regions, marking one of the largest upgrades to the country's airborne rescue capabilities in recent years. Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali and Parliament budget committee chairman Gholamreza Tajardoost attended the signing ceremony.

Tehran unveils three SCO initiatives, calls for wartime protection of universities

Social Desk

Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister Hossein Simaei Sarraf on Wednesday proposed three major initiatives to expand academic, research and technological cooperation among members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), while urging stronger international protection for universities and scientists during conflicts. Speaking at the SCO University Presidents Forum and the 10th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Education and Science in Minsk on June 17, Simaei Sarraf said scientific cooperation should move beyond declarations and evolve into practical, problem-oriented programs capable of addressing shared regional challenges, IRNA reported. The minister also condemned attacks on universities and scientists, describing academic and cultural institutions as a red line in times of conflict. "Universities should be safe havens for thought, dialogue and hope, not victims of confrontation," he said, calling on the global



Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister Hossein Simaei Sarraf speaks at the SCO University Presidents Forum and the 10th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Education and Science in Minsk, Belarus, on June 17, 2026.
 ● IRNA

scientific community and international organizations to take a clearer and more responsible stance in safeguarding universities, researchers and scientific centers. "Security for universities is security for humanity's future," he added, warning that silence in the face of attacks on academic institutions could encourage further violence against science and civilization. Turning to Iran's proposals, Simaei Sarraf announced a Shanghai Talent and Researcher Exchange Program, under which Iran is prepared to offer 100 annual scholarships for master's and doctoral students as well as 10 postdoctoral research op-

portunities at its leading universities. The program would focus on joint research addressing real-world challenges across the region. He also proposed the creation of a Shanghai Network of Innovative and Technological Universities, linking leading universities and science and technology parks to accelerate commercialization of research and strengthen university-industry cooperation. Iran expressed readiness to host the network's secretariat. As a third initiative, the minister called for the establishment of joint research consortia in three strategic fields: Intelligent natural resource manage-

ment, particularly water resources, artificial intelligence, and advanced pharmaceutical technologies. The minister said the true value of science lies in improving people's lives and solving societal problems, stressing that agreements and policy documents become meaningful only when translated into action in classrooms, laboratories and research centers. "Universities are not merely educational institutions," he said. "They must serve as standard-bearers of rationality, entrepreneurship, hope and international scientific cooperation." The SCO education and science ministers' meeting continues in Minsk through Thursday, focusing on expanding multilateral cooperation in education, research and technology across the region.