License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency
Publisher: Iran Cultural & Press Institute
Chair of ICPI Board of Directors: Sadegh Hossein Jaberi Ansari
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Iran Daily

irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir | IranDailyWeb

Vol. 8214 ● Wednesday, September 16, 2026 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

Iran turns heritage into force for cultural diplomacy: *FM spox*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's historical heritage, cultural legacy and tourism potential have become key instruments of the country's soft power and public diplomacy, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said Tuesday, September 15, at a senior cultural diplomacy course in Tehran.

Speaking at the course titled 'Iran in the Mirror of the World: Heritage Diplomacy, Culture and Civilizational Narrative,' held at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts' Fajr Hall, Baqaei called for a strategic approach to presenting Iran's history and civilization to international audiences. The program brought together specialists in diplomacy, media and cultural cooperation, along with ministry managers and provincial representatives, CHTN reported.

Baqaei said the nature of modern conflict has changed, making cultural diplomacy increasingly important. Tourism, he noted, should no longer be viewed solely through an economic lens but also as a means of conveying an authentic image of Iran and strengthening social resilience.

"War today is not fought only on the military battlefield," Baqaei said, arguing that political and media narratives often precede military confrontations and seek to shape perceptions of a country.

He said Iran's historical identity had also become part of what he described as the contemporary "war of narratives," particularly amid recent tensions with the United States.

"When we speak about Iranian civilization, we are speaking about part of the identity and historical memory of a nation," Baqaei said.

He urged cultural institutions to draw more systematically on Iran's archaeological, architectural and artistic heritage to communicate the country's history to global audiences. Historical monuments and cultural sites, he said, should be regarded not merely as tourism attractions but as strategic national assets.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei speaks during a senior cultural diplomacy course in Tehran, Iran, September 15, 2026.
CHTN

"Today, these works have become a component of power for the country," he said, describing Iran's heritage as an important element of its soft power.

Baqaei also placed the Iranian people at the center of the country's cultural diplomacy. "Iran's treasure is the Iranian people," he said, stressing the importance of connecting public participation with the country's civilizational narrative.

The spokesman said a stronger link between Iran's people, heritage and public diplomacy could help present a more grounded picture of the country internationally.

The one-day course was organized by the Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, in cooperation with several ministry departments. Its focus was on strengthening strategic approaches to Iran's cultural heritage and civilizational narrative in international engagement.

Baqaei called for the protection and presentation of Iran's heritage to be given a central place in public diplomacy, describing it as an asset that belongs not only to the past but also contributes to how Iran is represented in the contemporary world.

Minab children's paintings put wartime memories on display at UN Geneva

Arts & Culture Desk

An exhibition of paintings by children from Minab opened on September 15, at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, bringing the colorful visions of young Iranian artists to an international audience following the deadly attack on their school, according to Iran's Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Titled 'Children of Minab Still Draw the Sun', the weeklong exhibition features works by pupils of Shajareh Tayebeh Primary School in Minab, Hormuzgan Province. Some paintings were recovered from the rubble of the school after the February 28, US-Israeli strike, IRNA reported.

The exhibition portrays the experiences of children whose ordinary school days were abruptly

disrupted by war. More than 168 pupils, teachers and school staff and their loved ones were killed or affected in the attack, according to a later UN account.

The display was organized in connection with the International Day to Protect Education from Attack, observed annually on September 9. The UN established the day to promote the protection of schools, students and teachers and uphold children's right to education during armed conflict.

The paintings offer an unvarnished glimpse into how children see their world, with bright colors and simple forms carrying memories of school, friendship and dreams.

"Children still draw the sun," the exhibition title declares, turning a childlike image into a testament to resilience.

The exhibition's introduction describes a school as more than a building, calling it a place "where dreams are formed, friendships are forged, and the future takes its first steps."

By bringing the Minab children's artwork to the UN, the exhibition places their personal memories within a wider international conversation about protecting education and preserving childhood amid conflict.

Minister urges local control to unlock tourism potential in Semnan

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri called for greater local authority and private-sector participation in tourism development during a meeting with academics, experts and tourism and handicrafts activists in western Semnan Province on Tuesday.

Salehi-Amiri said the government was pursuing economic priorities while supporting the armed forces and safeguarding the country's interests through diplomacy, CHTN reported.

He acknowledged the pressure of inflation and rising prices, saying the government was working to address public needs under difficult economic conditions.

He described social capital as the country's "greatest asset" and said public participation was essential to national development. The government, he added, should transfer executive responsibilities to local communities, private businesses and civil society organizations.

The minister also called for further decentralization, saying provincial authorities should be empowered to resolve local issues rather than referring decisions to Tehran. He urged officials in Semnan to use their expanded authority to address heritage and tourism needs in Garmsar, Aradan and Eyvanekey.

Salehi-Amiri identified western Semnan as a promising tourism destination, particularly because of its proximity to central Iran.

He said Garmsar and Aradan could become major tourism hubs with a clear development roadmap and targeted investment.

He highlighted desert tourism sites including Qasr-e Bahram, the Salt Lake, Mount Dragon, historic sites and the ancient stone-paved road. The road, he said, could become a candidate for UNESCO World Heritage status once its nomination dossier is prepared.

The minister outlined six potential tourism pillars for Garmsar and Aradan: historic roads and caravanserais; deserts and wildlife; astronomy and night skies; salt and geotourism; local cultures and handicrafts; and rural and culinary tourism.

More than 36.6 million domestic trips were recorded during Nowruz 1405, he said, underscoring the scale of Iran's domestic tourism market.

Two straits, one ...

Bab al-Mandeb, Hormuz gave intertwined fates

Yemen's battlefield has shifted from a two-way *Page 1* dispute into a lineup pitting the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and their allies against one another, each claiming its own stake. After Iran called for an Oman meeting on a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz, the American lobby urged Saudi Arabia to hold off, hoping to use the Bab al-Mandeb card as leverage there. Lacking Arab consensus, and amid Saudi anger at Tehran over the Houthi "resistance front" eroding Riyadh's grip on Yemen, the Persian Gulf Arab states postponed the critical Hormuz meeting.

This deadlock coincided with renewed Houthi missile and drone attacks on Saudi targets. Tehran-backed militias in Iraq also forced Saudi Arabia to shut a critical east-west pipeline that had become Riyadh's stand-in export route after Iran rendered Hormuz effectively inaccessible. That shutdown, the postponed meeting, and the Houthis' seizure of Yemen's Red Sea coast giving them Bab al-Mandeb too combined to push oil past $108 a barrel.

Three scenarios

While global attention stays fixed on Iran and Israel, Yemen's humanitarian crisis keeps deepening without commensurate funding as if everyone is waiting for Saudi Arabia to finish the job with US backing. Three scenarios stand out:

1. Gradual escalation toward full-scale war (most likely, short term). Every military move is met with a counter-move, with no deterrent breaking the cycle. Analysts like Ahmed Nagi of the International Crisis Group warn that while a window for containment remains, each step narrows it. The Houthis' capture of the western coast, UN warnings of the highest war risk since 2022, and resumed Red Sea attacks all point this way likely toward a longer war of attrition, since neither side will simply collapse.

2. Local containment, a return to "no war, no peace" (likely, medium term). With active Omani-UN mediation and a Saudi Arabia reluctant to fully re-enter the war after bearing its costs for years, the parties may settle back into a fragile equilibrium resembling 2022-2026, without a formal ceasefire but with reduced intensity. Saudi Arabia has so far avoided large-scale ground operations, mostly reacting instead.

3. De facto fragmentation of Yemen (background structural risk). The STC's collapse in winter 2025-2026 exposed how fragile the anti-Houthi coalition is. Analysts like Abdulsalam Mohammed suggest Yemen could drift toward fragmentation instead of renewed centralized war: the north under Houthi control, the south riven by rivalry between separatists and the central government, and peripheral areas held by local groups or al-Qaeda entrenching an unstable status quo for years.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0540009

First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	CASING, API GRADE L-80, SEAMLESS, "VAM","NEW VAM" THREAD, R-3 API 5CT/ISO 11960, PSL: 2, AS PER API 5CT/ISO 11960, SIZE(OD), WEIGHT(PPF), AS SPECIFIED MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5CT , NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I: 1),"QCP/MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM" , "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION", OD: ACC. TO CLAUSE 8.11.1 API5CT 10 ED. (TABLE 13 & 14 & 15), WT: ACCORDING TO CLAUSE 8.11.2 API5CT 10 EDITION MASS: ACC. TO CLAUSE 8.11.3 API5CT 10 EDITION (TABLE 16), ID. ACCORDING TO CLAUSE 8.11.4 API5CT 10 EDITION, 5-1/2 IN., 20 PPF	2,000LE
2	COUPLING, CASING, API GR.L-80, SML ,ALL WEIGHTS, AS PER API 5CT/IOS 11960 AND NACE MR0175, COUPLING, CASING, API GRADE L-80, SML, ALL WEIGHTS, AS PER API 5CT/IOS 11960 AND NACE MR0175, TO BE ELECTRO PLATED, SIZE, THREAD AS SPECIFIED TO BE ELECTRO PLATED, 5-1/2 IN., (VAM-N.VAM-SEC)	30NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their" Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 32,180/14 EURO or 57,689,979,366 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D., INCLUDING AN ADVANCE PAYMENT. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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