

Iran maps out plan to revive international tourism through cultural diplomacy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is preparing an operational package to reactivate international tourism markets by expanding regional tourism diplomacy, improving travel access and promoting the country's cultural and heritage attractions, Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said Wednesday in Tehran.

Speaking at a meeting on reviving international tourism under crisis conditions, Mohseni-Bandpey outlined a multi-pronged plan centered on regional diplomacy, specialized tourism roadshows, targeted participation in international exhibitions, expanded air access and improved financial services for foreign visitors, CHTN reported.

"Active" regional diplomacy, he said, should focus on priority markets and strengthen ties with tourism institutions across neighboring countries. Special-

ized roadshows would bring Iranian tourism operators, travel agencies and private-sector businesses directly into those markets to promote the country's attractions and tourism products.

The plan also calls for greater use of international exhibitions and economic forums, linking tourism diplomacy with Iran's broader economic and cultural outreach.

Mohseni-Bandpey identified air connectivity as a key requirement for restoring inbound tourism and called for efforts to expand foreign airline access to Iran. He also highlighted new payment infrastructure, including Bank Refah Kargaran's Pay-Well system and tourism cards offering rial, foreign-currency and international payment facilities.

Iranian communities abroad and the country's cultural attachés are also expected to play a larger role in attracting visitors. The proposed measures include



incentives for Iranians living overseas and practical solutions related to travel, residence, health insurance and other concerns.

The tourism ministry is also examining land-border procedures and services as part of efforts to facilitate regional travel. Religious, medical and halal tourism were identified as priority segments with po-

tential to attract visitors from neighboring and international markets.

At a second cultural event in northwestern Ardabil, Mohseni-Bandpey highlighted the role of Iran's 700 museums in presenting the country's historical identity and civilization to international audiences.

"Museums," he said, have become a pow-

erful instrument of cultural diplomacy, while an international museums conference can showcase Iran's history, culture and traditions to the world.

The second International Museums Conference in Ardabil received 185 academic papers from 10 countries, according to Jalil Jabbari, director general of the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

Iran plans to increase the number of museums from 700 to 1,000 under its Seventh Development Plan. The ministry is also prioritizing specialized and local museums to introduce lesser-known destinations and heritage sites to visitors.

The conference, held at Mohaghegh Ardabili University, focused on "Museums, War and Peace" and featured academic workshops and exhibitions examining the evolving role of museums in preserving historical memory and advancing tourism.

Archaeologists urge urgent protection for Persepolis heritage zone

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The Society for Iranian Archaeology has called on President Masoud Pezeshkian to take immediate steps to safeguard Persepolis and clarify the status of a plan involving about 160 hectares of its second-degree heritage buffer zone near Marvdasht, according to a statement published by ILNA.

The society's appeal follows reports that part of the buffer zone could be incorporated into Marvdasht's urban boundaries and included in a municipal land-use plan. The issue has drawn renewed attention as authorities review the proposal. In its statement, the archaeological society described Persepolis as part of Iran's "historical memory" and called for transparent publication of the maps, resolutions and correspondence related to the proposed expansion. It also urged an independent review before any change in land use or development affecting the



site's protected landscape.

The group called for a national expert committee involving archaeologists, conservation specialists, restorers and legal experts to assess the wider condition of Iran's archaeological heritage. It also requested stronger protection against unauthorized excavations and the trafficking of antiquities, along with sustained funding for conservation and restoration.

The controversy centers on a proposal dating back to 2024 involving roughly 160 hectares of the second-degree buffer zone around Persepolis. Recent reports said the proposal had received

approval from Iran's High Council of Urban Planning and Architecture, although the measure had not yet been formally implemented.

Fars provincial heritage chief Behzad Moridi has said the incorporation of the Persepolis buffer zone into Marvdasht is not accepted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and that the plan is currently halted and under review. Other provincial officials have also stressed that inclusion within an urban boundary does not automatically remove heritage protection requirements and that construction regulations governing the buffer zone remain applicable.

The Society for Iranian Archaeology urged the government to treat heritage protection as a national and intergenerational responsibility, warning that archaeological sites and historic structures contain cultural layers that cannot be recreated once lost.

Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, is among Iran's most prominent archaeological sites and has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 1979.

Iran Room to open at Indonesian university

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Iran's Cultural Consulate in Indonesia will open an 'Iran Room' at Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Yogyakarta in Yogyakarta on September 22, ILNA reported, citing the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

The new cultural and academic hub is designed to broaden exchanges between Iranian and Indonesian students, scholars and cultural figures, with a focus on presenting Iran's cultural heritage and expanding university-level cooperation, ILNA reported. The initiative will draw on the Indonesian university's academic capacity, particularly in the social and political sciences and international relations.

The Iran Room is intended to serve as a venue for knowledge exchange, cultural programs and academic interaction.

Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Yogyakarta, commonly known as UPN Veteran Yogyakarta, is



a public university in Indonesia's Special Region of Yogyakarta. Founded in 1958, it has expanded into a multidisciplinary institution offering programs spanning social and political sciences, international relations, communications, economics, engineering, energy and natural resources.

The university describes Yogyakarta as a major Indonesian center of education, culture and tourism. Its international programs also include opportunities for overseas students, reinforcing its role as a platform for cross-border academic engagement.

China edges into ...

Iran's explicit request for China to act as the guarantor of any potential agreement with the US has also played a role. Moreover, China's successful mediation between Iran and Saudi Arabia in 2023 has given Beijing the diplomatic capital needed for broader regional engagement.

If China enters the mediation process or facilitates talks between Iran and the US, what advantages does it have over mediators like Oman, Qatar, and Pakistan?

China holds several distinct advantages. Its global weight and permanent seat on the UN Security Council give Beijing legitimacy and high-level bargaining power that regional mediators lack. Additionally, China is the largest trading partner of both Iran and Persian Gulf states, providing it with durable economic leverage. Beijing is also the only major power with no military presence — and no colonial legacy — in the region, making it a more trustworthy option from Tehran's perspective. China can offer large-scale economic and security guarantees, whereas Oman, Qatar, and Pakistan are largely limited to narrower political assurances.

What are China's main levers for influ-

encing both sides? Can Beijing merely facilitate dialogue, or does it have the capacity to offer concrete incentives and guarantees for a lasting agreement?

China is not limited to setting the stage for dialogue; it possesses tangible levers to influence both sides. Its primary lever over Iran is Tehran's economic dependence on China: discounted oil purchases, investment, and trade constitute some of Iran's few vital economic lifelines under sanctions.

On the US side, Beijing can cash in on Washington's desire to reduce tensions and wind down its Middle Eastern entanglements, offering incentives such as easing trade frictions in exchange for diplomatic progress.

How do you interpret Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's recent trip to China in this context?

Araghchi's trip to China is highly significant, taking place just days before the anticipated September 24 meeting between Xi Jinping and Donald Trump in the United States. If mediation is indeed being considered, China needs to get a clear read on Tehran's demands and red lines directly from Iranian officials. The visit provides a strategic opportunity for alignment ahead of a potentially decisive meeting.

TENDER NO.: 08-21-0440032
Second Announcement

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	UNIT
1	CASING, API GRADE J-55, SEAMLESS "BUTTRESS" THREAD, RANGE 3, (MAX LEN: 40.5 FT) AS PER API 5CT/ ISO11960, PSL: 2SIZE(OD), WEIGHT(PPF), AS SPECIFIED MARKING: COLD DIE STAMPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH API 5 CT NOTE: LEVEL OF INSPECTION: 1 (L.O.I: 1) "QCP/ MPS DOCUMENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO REVIEW & CONFIRM" "ITP DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TECHNICAL EVALUATION" 20 IN., 133 PPF	2000	LE

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 than 14 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 111,776/72 EURO or 192,491,465,472 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN. PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D INCLUDING 25% ADVANCE PAYMENT, SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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