



Tehran advances tourism reconstruction, targets hotel brand development



Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri (R) and Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani exchange documents during a meeting to discuss tourism development, the completion of unfinished projects and hotel brand expansion in Tehran, Iran, September 20, 2026.
● CHTN

ty infrastructure on Sunday, as part of broader efforts to advance reconstruction and development in the sector. At a meeting at Milad Tower, Salehi-Amiri called for coordinated support to establish reputable hotel brands, saying Tehran needs a recognizable hospitality identity rather than simply more hotel buildings, CHTN reported. "Tehran needs branding beyond a few structures," he said, stressing the importance of planning for and supporting the development of established hotel brands. The minister said the ministry and municipality had agreed to work together

to resolve obstacles facing unfinished tourism projects and speed up their completion. He also called for closer coordination among relevant agencies, streamlined administrative procedures and effective support mechanisms to bring developments into operation. Seven investors presented their proposals and outlined challenges affecting hotel construction and accommodation projects. Officials discussed ways to facilitate licensing, make use of municipal incentives and help projects advance toward completion. Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, head of the ministry's Center for Investment and Economic Affairs, highlighted an incentive granting an 80% exemption for the construction of hotels and tourism facilities in Tehran. Initiated by the municipality, the measure has since been implemented in 53 cities, he said. Shalbafian also pointed to joint efforts to develop mixed-use tourism projects and identify suitable sites for new hotels across the capital. He urged

investors to meet their commitments and project deadlines, emphasizing that public-sector support must be matched by timely implementation. Nasrollah Abedian, Tehran's deputy mayor for urban planning and architecture, said preliminary studies and a thematic tourism plan were underway across nine areas, including cultural and historical attractions, religious sites, recreation, health, accommodation, transit routes, commerce and events. The municipality has also defined 12 projects in areas surrounding historic buildings, aimed at strengthening ecological capacities, and is seeking the necessary approvals to make better use of existing incentives. The meeting focused on coordinating reconstruction and development priorities, completing unfinished projects, expanding accommodation capacity and removing administrative barriers to tourism investment in Tehran.

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi-Ami-

ri and Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani reviewed plans to accelerate the completion of unfinished tourism projects and strengthen the capital's hospitali-

Iran to showcase cultural heritage in four Russian cities

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will stage a weeklong cultural festival in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan and Astrakhan from October 1 to 6, bringing together a 168-member delegation of scholars, university professors, artists and cultural practitioners, the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization announced Sunday. Hossein Divsalar, the organization's deputy for scientific and cultural cooperation, unveiled the program at a press conference in Tehran, describing the event as an opportunity to expand cultural diplomacy and deepen exchanges between the Iranian and Russian peoples, CHTN reported. The delegation, named Minab in remembrance of schoolchildren killed in an attack, will present a broad range of Iranian artistic, academic and cultural achievements to Russian audiences. The festival will feature exhibitions spanning around 20 disciplines, including visual arts, painting, calligraphy and carpet weaving, alongside displays highlighting Iran's cultural heritage and civilization. One of the main attractions will be the Iranian National Orchestra, with around 60 musicians scheduled to perform in Moscow, Kazan and St. Petersburg. A concert at Mos-



Hossein Divsalar, deputy for scientific and cultural cooperation at Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, speaks at a press conference in Tehran on September 20, 2026, announcing a weeklong Iranian cultural festival in Russia from October 1 to 6.
● IRNA

cow's Bolshoi Theatre is also planned. Film and animation screenings will bring Iranian cinema to audiences across the four cities. Organizers also expect to sign a joint cinema production cooperation agreement following nearly three years of negotiations. Academic exchanges will complement the artistic program, with about six university and scholarly meetings planned in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kazan. The events will bring together Iranian and Russian cultural officials and academic institutions. Kazan, a major center of the Muslim world, will host special activities marking the Year of the Prophet of Mercy, including musical performances, exhibitions, conferences and academic discussions. The festival will also feature children's and teenagers' activities, traditional Iranian

sports, ethnic clothing, and showcases of video games and creative industries. Business-to-business meetings will connect Iranian and Russian cultural entrepreneurs, with the aim of developing longer-term cooperation and cultural exports. A meeting of the cultural committee of the Iran-Russia Joint Cooperation Commission, chaired by the two countries' culture ministers, is also on the agenda. Organizers are additionally preparing a memorandum of understanding between Iran's National Library and the Center for Studies of the Written Heritage of Islam and Iran in St. Petersburg. "We want to move beyond a symbolic or exhibition-based initiative and turn the cultural week into a platform for meaningful cooperation," Divsalar said, emphasizing the role of cultural diplomacy in fostering lasting relations between nations.

Minab to open new fine arts school as Iran expands arts education

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance will open five new fine arts schools across the country, including a boys' school in Minab, Hormozgan Province, at the start of the new academic year in September, ministry official Mohammad-Hossein Esmaeili said. The Minab school is part of a broader expansion of specialized arts education aimed at widening access to formal training in the arts across the provinces, IRNA reported. The new schools will also include boys' and girls' schools in Damghan, Semnan Province, a second girls' fine arts school in Tehran, and a boys' school in Sirjan, Kerman Province. 'Minab' will thus join a growing network of institutions offering specialized instruction in various artistic disciplines, giving young students in the southern Hormozgan city a dedicated setting



to pursue arts education. The five schools will bring the number of fine arts schools established over the past two years to 12, while the national network now comprises 75 schools serving more than 10,000 students. The ministry has set an objective of establishing at least two fine arts schools, one for boys and one for girls, in every province under the country's Seventh Development Plan. The expansion is intended to strengthen both the reach and quality of arts education and provide students across Iran with broader opportunities to develop their artistic talents.

Trump more focused ...

Limited and localized military actions may continue alongside these measures. One possible objective would be to reopen parts of the Strait of Hormuz and allow more oil to leave the region, helping Washington manage the oil market and keep prices around their current levels. I believe this is the main direction of Trump's policy, at least until the mid-term elections.

What message does the recent meeting of the US CENTCOM commander with Israeli and Arab military commanders in Germany send about the region's future security

arrangements?

I believe this meeting is part of a broader effort to establish new security arrangements in the region. The developments of the past several months have shown that the existing regional security arrangements need to be readjusted, and all sides are working on this in different ways. The United States appears to be considering what kind of security structure should emerge after the conflict. This includes the future of US military bases in the region, the relationship between the United States, Israel and Arab countries, and the possible roles of China and Russia. There are also questions about

Iran's future military capabilities, including its missile and drone programs and regional groups closed to Tehran. These are among the issues that are now being considered as the parties try to shape the region's future security environment.

How much influence can the Persian Gulf Arab countries have on Washington's decisions about the continuation or suspension of the conflict? The Arab countries can certainly have a major influence. A significant part of the conflict has taken place in their territory, and they have demonstrated that they have room for ma-

neuver in their relations with major international powers. For example, during the Biden administration, some regional countries showed that they could distance themselves from Washington and develop closer relations with Russia and China. Saudi Arabia also refused a US request to increase oil production and instead cooperated with Russia within OPEC Plus on production cuts. The formation of Mecca Defense Pact is an important initiative in parallel with the US wish to see regional states move towards burden sharing. These examples show that the Persian Gulf countries have considerable room to maneuver and can in-

fluence the decisions of major international powers through their policies. Their role will also be important in determining the future of US military bases in the region and the extent to which regional countries can assume a greater responsibility for regional security through cooperation among themselves. Such arrangements could become an important part of the future regional security structure.

With military developments, consultations with Arab countries and renewed discussion of negotiations taking place simultaneously, what role can diplomacy play

in the next phase of the Iran-US crisis?

This crisis ultimately has to be resolved through diplomacy. Wars generally could only have two possible outcomes: the complete defeat of one side and occupation of its territory, or a diplomatic settlement. Since the complete defeat of one side and occupation of territory are out of question in this case, there is essentially no alternative to diplomacy. Diplomacy will therefore have a decisive role in bringing the conflict to an end. It can also reduce the costs for all sides involved. Ultimately, this crisis will have to be settled through diplomatic means.