

Tourism holds up despite crises, 1.2m foreign visitors in six months

Arts & Culture Desk

About 1.2mn foreign tourists visited Iran in the first half of the Persian calendar year to September 22, the tourism deputy minister said on Wednesday, as the sector kept operating despite recent crises including the 39-day US-Israeli war that broke out in late February. Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said domestic and foreign tourism had not stopped, while accommodation occupancy rose to more than 75% to 80% from August, IRNA reported. Mohseni-Bandpey credited the resilience of tourism businesses and support from the private sector and industry associations with keeping the sector running. He said scenarios had been drawn up for different conditions, including war and peace, to help the industry withstand unexpected disruptions. "Iran should focus on keeping foreign tourists in the country for longer to extract greater economic value from their vis-

its," Mohseni-Bandpey said. "Health tourism and Iran's cultural and spiritual attractions could prove more resilient during crises and help keep foreign tourism flowing," he added. More than 1,000 tourism events are being held across Iran during Tourism Week to boost domestic travel and drive demand. "Isfahan has the potential to become an international health tourism destination," Mohseni-Bandpey said at a Tourism Week event in the city. He said the health capacity developed in Isfahan had helped prompt the relocation of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) tourism summit to the city following a proposal by the provincial governor. According to the official, Isfahan's tourism industry has also embraced digital technology and artificial intelligence to redesign tourism. "AI can personalize travel and turn a tourist's stay into a lasting experience," Mohseni-Bandpey said, citing the historic Ab-

basi Hotel as an example of a shift from simply providing accommodation to creating experiences and lasting memories. The government is backing tourism businesses and working to remove legal and administrative barriers. Mohseni-Bandpey said President Masoud Pezeshkian had ordered a mechanism to examine demands over Article 83 and tax exemptions for tourism businesses. He said tourism investment should be supported because it contributes to employment and promotes Iran's cultural and historical attractions as well as generating profits. Isfahan has 120 programs planned for Tourism Week, including the first ceremony honoring the province's tourism figures. The event also recognized tourism industry workers and saw the launch of the "Isfahan Smart Journey" application. World Tourism Day is held annually on Sept. 27, while Iran's Tourism Week began on the same date this year.



● IRNA

China, Iran highlight shared future at National Day reception in Tehran

Social Desk

China and Iran highlighted closer bilateral ties and the idea of a "shared future for humanity" at a reception in Tehran marking the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The National Day event, hosted by China's embassy in Tehran on Tuesday, brought together Iranian officials, diplomats and other guests. It opened with Chinese songs performed by students from the University of Tehran's Chinese language group, followed by a recitation of Mao Zedong's 1925 poem "Qinyuanchun: Changsha". Chinese Ambassador Cong Peiwu said China had made major economic and technological advances over more than seven decades and was moving forward with its 15th Five-Year Plan.



Students from the University of Tehran's Chinese language group sing Chinese songs at China's embassy in Tehran during a ceremony to mark the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on September 29, 2026. ● [persian.cri.cn](#)

He also outlined China's vision of building a "community with a shared future for humanity" and four global initiatives covering security, development, civilization and global governance. He said the initiatives offered Chinese solutions to common challenges facing the world. Cong said this year also marked the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Iran and expressed hope that China's diplo-

matic missions in Iran would help "write a new chapter" in bilateral ties. Iranian Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh praised China's development and its vision of a shared future for humanity, describing it as "wise foresight". He said China's economic transformation and technological advances reflected "collective determination, continuous effort and wise governance". Madanizadeh also thanked China for hu-

manitarian assistance to Iran during the recent war and for its positions in support of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He said Iran was determined to strengthen comprehensive relations with China under their 25-year Comprehensive Cooperation Program. Cong said the Middle East belonged to the people of the region and that regional security should be safeguarded by regional countries. Sensitive regional issues, he said, should be resolved through dialogue and consultation.

Iran ageing rapidly as demographic window set to close within 15 years

Social Desk

Iran is among the five countries with the fastest-growing elderly populations and its demographic window is expected to close within 15 years, with older people set to outnumber young people and teenagers, the head of the State Welfare Organization said on Wednesday. Javad Hosseini told a press conference, attended by Iran Daily, that about 13% of Iran's population, or nearly 11 million people, are currently elderly. But the impact of ageing extends beyond this group, with about 23.5 million people in the country's active population facing issues related to ageing in various ways. The elderly population is growing at 4.8%, more than four times the overall population growth rate of 1.24%, Hosseini said as his organization marked the International Day of Older Persons. He said estimates showed Iran's demographic window would close between 2041 and 2043, when the number of elderly people would exceed the number of young people and teenagers. By 2051, he said, elderly people were expected to account for 31% to 33% of the population. "Iran has not yet entered the stage of an ageing crisis, but the speed of its movement towards severe ageing is high," Hosseini said, warning that without planning, ageing could become a social crisis. The government is preparing for the economic impact. Hosseini said a com-



Javad Hosseini, head of the State Welfare Organization of Iran, speaks at a press conference in Tehran, Iran on September 30, 2026. ● [IRAN DAILY](#)

prehensive Silver Economy roadmap had been drawn up across 14 areas, while a comprehensive employment plan for older people was being prepared. A Silver Economy exhibition is also due to be held in November. The social pressures are already significant. About 260,000 elderly people have disabilities, accounting for 22% of people with disabilities, while around 77,000 elderly women are heads of households, Hosseini said. About 60% of elderly people do not receive pensions, he added, as declining family support, a growing number of elderly people living alone and rising healthcare and living costs increase the need to redesign social and economic support policies.

Iranian documentary 'Disaster' wins honorary diploma at Russian film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian documentary Disaster, directed by Saeed Nabi and Maryam Khadivi, received an honorary diploma at the 21st Vladimir Menshov International Film Festival "Won Together" in Russia. The closing ceremony was held in So-

chi as part of the second Global Forum "New World: Values That Unite", bringing together filmmakers and guests from several countries, ILNA reported on Wednesday. Disaster was among 105 films from 40 countries screened at the festival, which featured an international competition,

a student competition, a national documentary competition, the "Memory" and "Reflection" sections, as well as special and non-competitive programs. The Vladimir Menshov International Film Festival "Won Together" is a Russian cinema event showcasing films from different countries that focus on

historical, social, cultural and human themes. Nabi and Khadivi directed Disaster, with Mehran Fardpour serving as cinematographer, Arash Zahedi-Asl as editor, Behrouz Shahamat as sound designer and Habib Mohammadi as sound recordist.

