

Iran, Iraq to raise annual two-way tourism to 10m trips

Social Desk

Iran and Iraq aim to increase the combined number of annual tourist trips between the two countries to 10 million, up from about 7.2 million currently, Iran's tourism minister said on Wednesday. Reza Salehi-Amiri, Iran's minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts, said that plans to expand land travel, improve border infrastructure and organize medical tourism, IRNA reported. "The proposal was raised during the Iraqi prime minister's visit to Tehran, the Iranian capital, and meeting with Iran's president. Salehi-Amiri said about 3.6 million Iraqi tourists visit Iran each year, while roughly the same number of Iranians travel to Iraq.

The figures exclude the annual Arbaeen pilgrimage. Arbaeen comes annually 40 days after the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH). He said the figure falls outside conventional tourism because of its spiritual and religious nature. Iran plans to focus on land travel amid limitations in air transportation, with efforts to improve cross-border movement in four provinces: Khuzestan and Ilam in western and southwestern Iran, Kermanshah in the west, and West Azerbaijan in the northwest. The government also aims to make it easier for families to travel between the two countries in private cars. Salehi-Amiri identified the Shalamchah border crossing in southwestern Iran as a key point for expanding land tourism. He said 10,000 to 15,000



A tourist wearing a traditional Arab robe stands outside an unnamed hotel in Mashhad, northeastern Iran, in an undated photo.

● ZAHRA AYANI/ISNA

Iraqi nationals enter Abadan, a city in southwestern Iran, each day. Some come for medical treatment, while others visit for different forms of tourism, he said. The minister also said the government had approved the charter for medical tourism and the formation of a medical tourism council to better coordinate the sector. Salehi-Amiri did not specify a timeline for reaching the 10 million-trip target. Achieving it will require new planning and improvements to border facilities and land connections, he said.



India's ambassador to Iran seeks to expand cultural ties



India's ambassador to Iran Vishwesh Negi

● IRNA

Social Desk

India's ambassador to Iran said strengthening cultural cooperation and people-to-people ties was a priority of his mission, citing the two countries' shared history, philosophical connections and long-standing relations. Vishwesh Negi told IRNA that Iran and India had deep historical ties and that closer links between their people could help broaden bilateral cooperation. He said the presence of many Iranians in India and Indians in Iran provided an opportunity to strengthen cultural exchanges. Negi also pointed to shared philosophical values, saying the principles associated

with Mahatma Gandhi, including truth, nonviolence and sacrifice, were consistent with values found in Iranian society. He described Iranians as peace-loving people. The ambassador has returned to Iran for a second posting, about 20 years after serving there as the Indian embassy's second secretary. He said Iranians held India in high regard and that their positive attitude toward the country could help advance bilateral relations. Negi said his responsibilities extended beyond cultural affairs to include trade, communications and political relations. During his first month back in Iran, he said, he had met with people active in cultural,

political and economic fields and had visited several regions of the country. His remarks highlighted the role of cultural and public engagement in relations between the two countries, alongside broader diplomatic and commercial ties. However, he did not outline specific new initiatives or agreements to expand cultural cooperation. Iran and India have a long history of cultural and intellectual interaction, and both countries have communities living in each other's territory. Negi's comments underscored the potential for these existing connections to support closer engagement across several areas of bilateral relations.

Iranian books on display at int'l fairs in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is showcasing more than 600 book titles at international book fairs in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital and Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan in Central Asia, IRNA reported on Thursday.

The 12th Baku International Book Fair opened on October 21 at the Baku Expo Center. Iran's Book and Literature House is displaying nearly 300 titles on Iranian studies, culture and civilization, classical literature, and books for children and young adults. As Iran seeks to promote its literature and expand regional publishing ties, the books are available in Persian, Turkish and English. Organizers said 32 countries were represented,



including 10 participating for the first time. The fair also features 59 foreign organizations and 148 domestic organizations. This year's slogan, "Life is bigger than a screen: One child, one book, one real world," highlights the importance of encouraging children to read. The program includes book launches, author meetings, literary sessions, book



Visitors browse books displayed at the Iran Book and Literature House booth during the 12th Baku International Book Fair in Baku, Azerbaijan, on October 21-25, 2026.

● IRNA

signings, workshops, conferences and activities for young visitors. Iranian books showcase at Dushanbe book fair Iran is also presenting

more than 300 titles at the 14th Dushanbe International Book Fair, running from October 22 to 24 at the National Museum of Tajikistan.

The collection covers classical and contemporary Iranian literature, Iranian studies, and books for children and young adults. On the sidelines, Mohsen Javadi, Iran's deputy culture minister for cultural affairs, met Latifa Abdulkhalizoda, head of Tajikistan's National Library. They discussed exchanging scientific resources, protecting written heritage and strengthening cooperation between libraries.

Iran's participation in both fairs aims to introduce Iranian writers to regional audiences and expand links among publishers and cultural institutions.

Swiss online exhibition features 34 Iranian artists

Arts & Culture Desk

Works by 34 Iranian artists are being presented in an online group exhibition in Switzerland, featuring visual arts and handicrafts. The exhibition, titled 'Sar Zamin' (Green Land), opened on October 22 and is available to view through October 26, ILNA reported. The event is organized by the Aytist Art Group, the Iran Creative Tourism Center and the Ro'ad Al-Tijara Al-Intaj

Al-Alami Institute. Aynaz Zarei, a painter and head of the Aytist Art Group, is curating the exhibition. The participating artists are presenting 34 works spanning visual arts and handicrafts. The exhibition brings together a range of artistic practices in an online format, allowing viewers to access the works without attending a physical venue. Organizers have directed art enthusiasts to the Aytist

Art Group's Instagram account, aynazzareii, and its Telegram channel, as well as the official website of the Ro'ad Al-Tijara Al-Intaj Al-Alami Institute, to view the exhibition. Online exhibitions offer a way to present artwork beyond a conventional gallery setting, although the reach of such events depends in part on their promotion and the accessibility of their digital platforms. The exhibition is part of an



effort by the organizers to present Iranian visual arts and handicrafts through a shared online showcase.