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Over $32m approved for restoration of Iran's war-damaged heritage

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has approved $32.7 million to repair 149 historic buildings damaged in the 40-day war, Culture Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri said on Monday.

Tehran and Isfahan accounting for nearly two-thirds of the affected sites damaged during the war that began in late February 2026.

The damage has affected some of Iran's best-known heritage landmarks. Damage to Tehran's Golestan Palace and historic sites in Isfahan, including Chehel Sotoun Palace and the Jameh Mosque.

Reports have also documented damage to historic architectural features and decorative elements.

"The government has initially allocated $3.7 million to launch restoration work, with the remaining funds to be released gradually," he said.

Tehran accounts for the largest number of damaged sites, with 63 buildings affected. Isfahan, in central Iran, has 33, while western Kurdestan province, including the area around Sanandaj, has about 12, Salehi-Amiri said.

The restoration budget was initially estimated at 75 trillion rials, or about $27.9 million, based on 2025 costs, he explained.

It was revised to 88 trillion rials, or about $32.7 million, to reflect rising expenses this year, Salehi-Amiri added.

"The funding was approved by the national reconstruction committee, chaired by the first vice president, following a nationwide assessment of war damage," he said.

Restoration priorities will be set by experts according to the extent of damage, the severity of destruction and each building's historical and architectural significance.

The ministry will also provide regular updates on the work, Salehi-Amiri said.

Salehi-Amiri described the reconstruction effort as a national responsibility to protect Iran's historical and cultural legacy.

The dollar conversions are based on an exchange rate of 2,690,000 rials per U.S. dollar.



Damage caused by US and Israeli strikes on Iran is seen at the Qajar-era Golestan Palace in Tehran, Iran, March 3, 2026.
ISNA

Pezeshkian says tackling corruption key to equitable resource distribution

Social Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that fighting corruption, smuggling and economic abuses was essential to ensuring an equitable distribution of public resources.

Speaking at a meeting on tax affairs on November 15, Pezeshkian said that better access to citizens' financial data would help identify people in need and expand support for them.

The government needed accurate, verifiable information to identify vulnerable people, he added.

"Our goal today is to identify people in need in society and provide them with more assistance," he said.

He called on government agencies to share relevant data with the National Tax Administration.

Linking national identification numbers, postal codes and financial and economic records, he said, would make activities easier to monitor and investigate.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian
ISNA

Pezeshkian said tax authorities were regarded worldwide as among the strongest institutions for combating financial violations.

According to the law, individuals must declare their property, real estate and other assets to the tax administration. Relevant agencies must also cooperate to prevent unauthorized construction, property disputes, preferential treatment, smuggling and corruption.

Pezeshkian criticized mismanagement and poor enforcement of laws, saying people who lived honestly were dissatisfied with economic abuses, preferential treatment and corruption.

He said the government was responsible for resolving public problems, safeguarding people's security, health and livelihoods, and protecting their rights in the distribution of public resources.

Tehran university seeks China studies center to deepen academic ties

Arts & Culture Desk

The University of Tehran has proposed hosting a branch of the Global Center for China Studies in Iran, as the two countries seek to expand academic cooperation.

University President Mohammad Hossein Omid made the proposal to boost cooperation through joint research, faculty and student exchanges, and language programs.

He attended the 24th China International Talent Exchange Conference in Shanghai on November 11 and 12 as the only invited speaker from Iran.

The gathering brought together university presidents and academic figures from 42 countries to discuss cooperation among Global South nations, cultural and scientific exchanges, China studies and mutual understanding between Eastern and Western civilizations.

Omid highlighted the historical role of the Silk Road in connecting Iran and China and called for that shared heritage to underpin modern academic cooperation.

He proposed joint programs in linguistics, international relations, engineering, technology, environmental studies and water resource management.



A file photo shows the Shanghai skyline at night.
planetofhotel.com

At Fudan University in Shanghai, Omid met President Jin Li for the first official meeting between the universities' leaders since they signed a cooperation agreement last year.

They discussed faculty and student exchanges, joint research, summer programs for Iranian students and a doctoral scholarship involving Fudan, Shanghai Jiao Tong and Tongji universities.

The University of Tehran has identified faculty members interested in joint projects, while Fudan is expected to nominate researchers. Omid invited Li to visit Iran.

At Beijing Language and Culture University, Omid discussed Chinese language training, graduate admissions and a proposed China studies center in Tehran.

The university offered to host Tehran faculty at its campuses in Hainan and Xiong'an to teach courses in English on Iranian culture and history, West Asian history and regional studies.

The sides also discussed exchanging Persian and Chinese academic books, supporting Iranian studies centers in China and creating a library section for works donated by the University of Tehran.

Iran, Oman push for closer cooperation on drug control

Social Desk

Iran and Oman should step up cooperation on drug prevention, treatment and trafficking, including intelligence-sharing on maritime smuggling, Iran's anti-narcotics chief said on Sunday.

Hossein Zolfaqari, the president's representative and secretary-general of Iran's Drug Control Headquarters, made the remarks during a meeting with Oman's ambassador to Tehran, Ya'arub bin Qahtan Al Busaidi. He described ties with Oman as strategic and said closer cooperation was essential to tackling a challenge shared by countries worldwide.

Zolfaqari praised Oman's role in promoting regional security and said Iran was ready to share information and experience on drug enforcement, prevention and treatment.

He proposed joint meetings and working groups to speed up practical cooperation under previous agreements. Referring to a law Oman passed in 2026 on combating narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, Zolfaqari said Iran also had several initiatives underway. The 69-article law, divided into nine chapters, covers the production, import, export, transportation and trade of narcotics, as well as regulation, medical use and penalties.

Iranian authorities seized more than 150 metric tons of drugs nationwide in the first six months of 2026, he said.

He described prevention as the most important part of tackling addiction and said Iran had drawn up a new plan to strengthen it. The plan includes classifying people with addiction and developing different treatment protocols. He also cited new measures to reduce harm and said Iran was reviewing its anti-narcotics law and related policies.

Zolfaqari said maritime drug trafficking was a shared concern and called for greater information-sharing between the two countries.

He also pointed to more than 1,400 types of new psychoactive substances, known as NPS, as another area for joint action. Al Busaidi stressed the importance of raising awareness about synthetic drugs, their different types and ways to combat them.



TINNAKORN JORRUANG/ GETTY IMAGES

He said the deep historical ties between Iran and Oman would withstand any regional turmoil.