Minister highlights Yazd's potential to attract tourists

Iranica Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has described Yazd as a destination that brings together a wide range of the country's tourism attractions, from desert landscapes and ancient civilization to traditional arts and handicrafts.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to Bafq, Salehi-Amiri said Yazd forms part of Iran's golden triangle of tourism, alongside Isfahan and Shiraz, Mehr News Agency reported.

"We consider these three provinces to be on an equal footing and the main pillars of this triangle," he said, adding that Yazd has been designated one of Iran's major tourism hubs in both domestic and international tourism development plans.

The minister also highlighted the role of elected representatives in addressing local concerns, noting that Yazd's parliamentary representatives regularly follow up on issues affecting their constituencies.

He said one parliamentary constituency covers six cities, along with numerous cities, towns, villages and rural municipalities, making it a substantial responsibility.

During his visit to the region, Salehi-Amiri toured several significant historical and cultural sites, including an area containing historic structures where experts from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage have conducted preliminary research and assessments. He said archaeological excavations are now set to begin at the site.

Describing the area as historically and archaeologically significant, the minister said officials would refrain from releasing further details until the excavations and final studies had been completed and their findings were ready to be made public.

Salehi-Amiri also praised the Afarinesh Museum in Bahabad, which he visited during his trip. "Having traveled to various provinces across the country and visited numerous museums, I have rarely encountered a collection of this quality and beauty," he said, describing it as a commendable achievement.



mehrnews.com

He added that the model could be replicated in other parts of Iran and said he would pursue efforts to support, expand and promote the initiative.

Turning to the region's desert tourism potential, Salehi-Amiri said Yazd Province, particularly Bafq, possesses the natural assets needed to become a major destination for both domestic and international tourists.

He said the area's sandy terrain and distinctive natural landscapes, which he had observed firsthand during the visit, offered considerable opportunities for tourism development.

Realizing this potential, however, would require addressing existing obstacles. Some issues fall under the responsibility of local officials, others require action by provincial authorities, while some must be addressed at the national level.

The minister said he would pursue matters requiring action by the central government after returning to Tehran.

Salehi-Amiri also stressed the importance of supporting tourism businesses and encouraging local investment.

He said the tourism assets identified during his visits, particularly in Bafq, deserved greater attention and called for financial assistance for local operators and the removal of barriers to their activities. He announced that the ministry would allocate a special support quota for handicraft artists in Bafq.

He added that Bahabad and other parts of Yazd Province would also receive priority, particularly areas within the six-district parliamentary constituency that face greater economic and development challenges.

Salehi-Amiri also called on industrial and mining companies operating in Yazd Province to assume greater responsibility for supporting local communities.

He said these companies should play a more active role in addressing economic hardship and local development challenges through their corporate social responsibility programs.

The minister also highlighted Bafq's architectural and historical attractions, particularly the historic tower at Baqerabad, which is registered as a national heritage site in Iran.

He described the tower as one of the most beautiful structures he had visited in Iran, stressing the need to promote such attractions more effectively and create opportunities for more domestic and international tourists to visit the area.

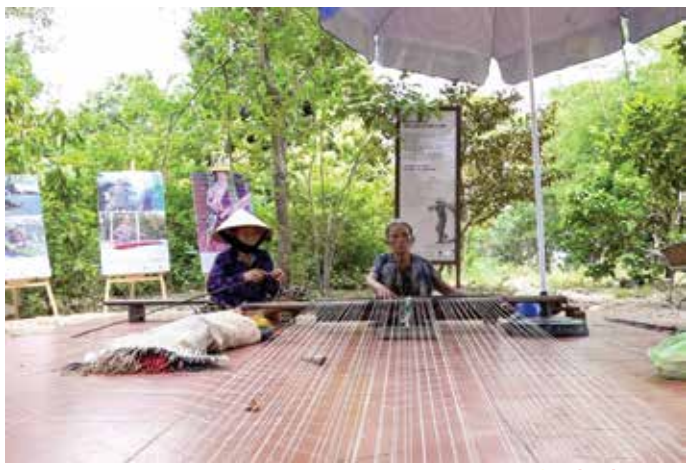
Salehi-Amiri said several proposals aimed at achieving this goal had already been discussed with ministry officials, the local parliamentary representative and the Governor of Yazd Province.

Iranian handicrafts gain international recognition at Hanoi festival

Iranica Desk

Iran's participation in the Global Festival for the Conservation and Development of Craft Villages in Hanoi, Vietnam, held from November 13 to 16, 2026, resulted in several notable achievements, including an international artist residency award for an Iranian artisan, representation on the jury of a global handicrafts competition, and the presentation of proposals aimed at strengthening the country's handicrafts education and development programs.

Narges Rajaei, Director-General of Education and Promotion Department at the Ministry's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, described the festival as a valuable opportunity to showcase Iran's capabilities and cultural heritage on the international stage. Held under the theme "Converging Craft Village Cultural Identities – Connecting Global Excellence," the event brought together 200 artisans from 57 countries, according to chtn.ir.



en.baodanang.vn

In her report, Rajaei highlighted the participation of an Iranian representative as a member of the jury for the 2026 World Handicrafts Competition. She noted that this provided an opportunity to become familiar with international judging standards and exchange professional expertise. She also highlighted Fatemeh Alipour Yousefi's achievement in receiving the VIETCRAFT (Vietnam Handicraft Exporters Association) Artist Residency Award, describing it as recognition of the standing of Iran's traditional arts internationally.

Rajaei further referred to field visits to specialized craft villages in Vietnam, where woodworking, marquetry, pottery and basketry are practiced. She described the integration of production workshops and sales exhibition spaces within these villages as a successful model for establishing direct links between producers and consumers.

She also highlighted the establishment of strategic connections with international institutions, including the Cultural Tongyeong Foundation in South Korea, with a view to future cooperation in research and artist exchange programs.

Drawing on official data from Hanoi on employment generation and handicrafts exports, Rajaei said the visit had provided valuable insights into approaches to safeguarding traditional knowledge and transferring skills to younger generations.

Among the proposals she put forward were the development of an international educational cooperation program, the organization of Iran's first international handicrafts event dedicated to young people, the documentation of master artisans' knowledge in crafts at risk of disappearing, and the adoption of modern technologies.

She emphasized that developing a comprehensive program for handicraft villages, integrating education, production, tourism and sales, reviewing the structure of festival awards, and expanding cooperation with universities and international designers were among the key proposals for strengthening Iran's handicrafts sector.



Narges Rajaei

She added that, given Iran's rich cultural and artistic heritage, implementing these initiatives could help unlock the country's existing potential and create greater opportunities for the development and international recognition of Iranian handicrafts.

Restored Safavid-era bathhouse reopens in Isfahan

Iranica Desk

Shah Bathhouse, a historic bathhouse in Isfahan's traditional bazaar district near Mukhles Bazaar, has officially reopened following a restoration project supported by public participation and private investment.

The opening ceremony was attended by Mehdi Jamalinejad, Governor General of Isfahan Province; Ali Asghar Shalbafian, head of the Investment Center at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts; Mojtaba Shokri, Head of the Fund for the Development and Revitalization of Historic Buildings; and Amir Karamzadeh, Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization in Isfahan Province.

Dating to the Safavid era, the bathhouse is considered a notable example of Persian architecture. The historic complex covers approximately 2,000 square meters and features domed chambers and traditional vaulted ceilings.

The restored property has reopened as a traditional Iranian bathhouse offering hygiene and therapeutic services, as well as a cultural complex featuring a museum. The project has created 30 direct jobs.

Speaking at the ceremony, Jamalinejad praised the investor's efforts to restore and revitalize the historic property. He said protecting and preserving the country's valuable heritage depends on the commitment of individuals willing to safeguard its historic assets.

Jamalinejad also pledged the provincial government's full support for historic preservation and revitalization projects, emphasizing the need to streamline procedures and facilitate private-sector participation in such initiatives.

Shokri also praised the investor's role in restoring the property, saying the commitment demonstrated throughout the project had brought the historic landmark back into active cultural and tourism use in Isfahan.

He noted that the restoration had not only preserved an important example of Safavid architecture but also created 30 direct jobs, highlighting the potential of historic properties to support tourism and local economic growth.

Shokri praised the cooperation of Isfahan's cultural heritage officials and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage's handicrafts division, stressing the importance of continued coordination between government agencies and private investors to restore other historic properties.

He also reported significant private-sector investment in the restoration and revitalization of historic buildings across Isfahan Province.

Of the 34 historic properties transferred to investors through the Fund for the Development and Revitalization of Historic Buildings, 26 are now operational, while eight remain under restoration, Shokri said.

He added that the fund plans to hold a dedicated auction of historic properties in Isfahan in the near future. The historic Vasiq and Bajoghlu buildings are among the properties expected to be included in upcoming transfers.

Shokri also discussed plans to revitalize the historic Risbaf Factory, saying the fund had been appointed by the minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts to serve as the secretariat overseeing the property's transfer process.

Three specialized meetings have been held by the project's working group, he said.

The secretariat's first report on progress and actions taken is expected to be released in the coming weeks.



IRNA

The project is intended to reflect Isfahan's industrial heritage and historic identity while bringing together the city's cultural, economic and heritage resources in a unified development plan.

The historic Risbaf Factory is one of the last surviving remnants of Isfahan's wool-spinning industry. Located along the city's historic Chahar Bagh-e Bala corridor, the complex covers approximately 74,000 square meters, with a built-up area of about 54,000 square meters.