



Italy welcomes collaborating with Iran on archaeological projects and the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Isfahan's historical monuments, according to Rome's ambassador to Tehran, Paola Amadei. During her first visit to Isfahan, Amadei said that Italy has a history of successful cooperation in the restoration of the city's cultural heritage. "Our past collaborations have been productive, and upon arriving in Isfahan, I visited the Abbasi Grand Mosque. I saw firsthand the contributions of Italian archaeologists who have worked to preserve and restore the site for visitors," Mehr quoted the Italian envoy as saying on February 26. The ambassador emphasized Italy's willingness to expand its involvement in archaeological projects across Iran, particularly in Isfahan. She noted that several projects related to the preservation, revitalization, and restoration of historical sites could benefit from Italian expertise.

Italy Ready to Assist in Preserving Isfahan's Historical Sites, Ambassador says

Nain Jame Mosque: One of The Oldest Mosques in Iran

The Jameh Mosque of Nain is the grand, congregational mosque (Jāme'h) of Nā'in city, within Isfahan Province of Iran. Although the mosque is one of the oldest in Iran, it is still in use and is protected by Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization. The initial construction of Jame Mosque within Isfahan province dates back to the 8th Century CE, but the whole of the complex has been constructed incrementally. One of the oldest mosques in Iran, its magnificent plasterwork over the niche, the marvellous brickwork around the yard, and its silent basement—which may have been used as a fire temple before the mosque was built here—are only a few of the remarkable features of this mosque.

The mosque has no Iwan and dome as do the other famous mosques in Esfahan and Yazd. A 28 m tall octagonal minaret was added to the mosque almost 700 years ago. If you stand in the middle of the yard, you will find yourself surrounded by fourteen columns, each one adorned with a unique and intricate pattern

of brickwork. You might also be interested in the alabaster stonework which reflects sunlight throughout the basement. One of the most exquisite pieces of artwork inside the mosque is the wooden marquetry pulpit (Persian: menbar). The carpenter matched the wooden parts together like a piece of a puzzle. The pulpit is decorated with organic geometrical designs. According to the wooden inscription on the left side of the pulpit, it was created about 700 years ago. An underground water channel runs underneath the mosque. There is a stairway that connects the mosque to the water channel and to chambers above the pool. In the past, people used the water for ablutions before prayers. The basement used to be a prayer chamber in hot summers and cold winters. The temperature in the basement is always moderate, never varying more than 10 to 15 degrees. The basement wasn't actually built; it was dug into the ground, which means no materials were used to construct it.



Iranian Tourism Minister, German Ambassador Discuss Cultural Ties



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has met with the German ambassador to Iran to explore avenues for strengthening cultural relations between the two nations.

During the meeting, Salehi-Amiri emphasized the long-standing cultural ties between Iran and Germany, ISNA reported.

"Both nations show mutual respect and positive sentiments toward each other. Strengthening these cultural ties is essential," the minister told Ambassador Markus Potzel.

He also highlighted the potential of German museums, particularly the Pergamon Museum, in fostering collaboration. "Why shouldn't artifacts from the Pergamon Mu-

seum be exhibited in Iranian museums, and why shouldn't Iranian museum collections be displayed in Germany? My proposal is to organize joint museum exhibitions, which could further enhance our cultural cooperation," Salehi-Amiri suggested.

The minister also proposed the annual organization of cultural conferences between Iran and

Germany to sustain ongoing scientific and cultural exchanges. "With our successful history of collaboration in cultural and archaeological fields, we can further develop and enhance these ties," he added.

Stressing the importance of cultural diplomacy, particularly when political diplomacy faces challenges, Salehi-Amiri noted that cultural diplomacy ultimately strengthens people-to-people connections, with tourism serving as a key starting point.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister underscored the role of tourism in cultural relations, stating, "We must develop our ties through tourism. The academic institutions and elites of both countries seek collaboration, and tourism provides an effective pathway to strengthen these connections. The Iranian government

ensures the safety and security of German tourists visiting Iran."

Additionally, he mentioned the upcoming German tourism exhibition in Berlin, during which Iran is engaged in discussions with multiple countries to expand tourism relations.

Potzel, for his part, shared personal insights on Iranian culture's influence on his family, stating, "All members of my family have visited Iran and have been profoundly impacted by its culture. Personally, I am very familiar with Iran's cultural and social environment."

He also mentioned ongoing discussions with Iran's Foreign Ministry regarding reopening German consulates in Iran, expressing optimism that the new Iranian administration could present opportunities for enhanced bilateral relations.

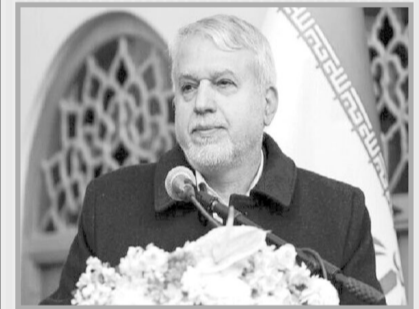
Perspective



Rudbar, a Hub of Iranian Civilization, Must Attract more Foreign Tourists

The Iranian tourism Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri has emphasized the importance of attracting foreign tourists to Gilan province, calling Rudbar a key center of Iranian civilization. Speaking to reporters on Thursday during his visit to Rudbar, Salehi-Amiri highlighted the historical significance of the city, which is "home to 75 registered heritage sites". He stressed the need for further archaeological excavations in Rudbar and its surroundings, stating that more valuable and significant artifacts are likely to be discovered in the area. "Rudbar is a collection of Iran's natural and historical beauties and stands as a pillar of civilization in this land," the minister said.

The minister also underlined Gilan's potential to establish numerous museums and promote both maritime and nature-based tourism. He pointed out that proper investment in the tourism and handicraft sectors could significantly contribute to the province's economic prosperity. Expressing optimism about Gilan's tourism future, Salehi-Amiri



noted that the province's tourism capacities have not been fully utilized. He announced that a considerable share of tourism-related financial support would be allocated to Gilan, facilitating the transformation of forested, plain, and agricultural lands into tourism hubs. Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister highlighted plans under Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, which includes the construction of 100 hotels annually and a significant expansion of the tourism industry. He stated that Gilan currently has 50,000 accommodation beds, with plans to double this capacity in the near future. "Gilan holds 10 percent of the country's total accommodation capacity, and the government is determined to resolve challenges in the tourism sector," he said. Salehi-Amiri concluded that attracting tourists from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region is a key economic priority for Gilan province. Gilan is known for its tourist attractions and warm-hearted and hospitable people. The people of Gilan from different ethnic groups, including Gilak, Talesh, and Tat, have come together and formed a very rich and diverse culture and customs. The northern region was within the sphere of influence of the successive Achaemenian, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires that ruled Iran until the 7th century CE. The subsequent Arab conquest of Iran led to the rise of many local dynasties, and Gilan acquired an independent status that continued until 1567.

What are the World's Most Cinematic Destinations?

While New York and London lead the way, Madrid and Argentina surprisingly rank high as popular filming locations. With the Oscars taking place this weekend, the real scene-stealers are not just the actors and directors. Stunning landmarks all around the world also bring their movie magic to life. In the lead-up to the 97th Academy Awards, new research from film location experts Giggster has revealed the all-time most filmed landmarks in the US, the UK and beyond. From the California coast and downtown London to Sydney's soaring heights and Rome's ancient Colosseum, these locations have lured filmmakers for more than a century, providing the backdrop for some of cinema's most unforgettable moments.

Far from being just famous settings for the silver screen, they are also popular tourist destinations in their own right, drawing visitors eager to experience these iconic backdrops firsthand and walk in the footsteps of movie legends. Unsurprisingly, the world's most filmed locations are in Hollywood's home state.

California has appeared in more than 380,000 movies. Not all of them were set in Hollywood, either. From indie darling 'Sideways', which highlights the Santa Barbara wine country, to Alfred Hitchcock's San Francisco-based thriller 'Vertigo', California has provided a backdrop to countless

Oscar-winning or shortlisted films.

In both the US and the world, New York comes in at number two, with more than 294,000 films set in the Empire State. Most, including seminal films such as 'Taxi Driver' and the original 'King Kong', feature New York City itself - a full 273,569 of them, in fact.

The world's most filmed landmark outside of the US and UK isn't the Eiffel Tower or the Roman Colosseum. It's Australia's Sydney Opera House.

The Sydney landmark has appeared in over 160 movies. This UNESCO World Heritage Site has served as a backdrop in films ranging from romantic comedies to action-packed thrillers, including 'Anyone But You' and 'Pacific Rim: Uprising'.

A close number two? That would be the Eiffel Tower, which has featured in 158 movies. Synonymous with love and adventure, this global icon can be seen in countless romantic classics, including 'Midnight in Paris' and 'Amélie'.

Filmmakers are not only captivated by the Eiffel Tower, though. The Louvre Museum (ranked third with 110 films) and the Arc de Triomphe (tenth place with 73 films) further cement the French capital's reputation as a filmmaker favourite - a sentiment shared by the 50 million annual visitors to the French capital.

Iran has exported \$224 million worth of handicrafts during the current Persian calendar year (started on March 20, 2024), with an equal amount estimated to have been exported through suitcase trade, according to the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, following a cabinet meeting, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri stated that the government is actively working to remove barriers to handicraft exports. He highlighted the resolution of foreign exchange commitments in collaboration with the Central Bank [of Iran] as a major step forward. Additionally, efforts are underway to provide insurance for handicraft artists, he said.

"Handicrafts are entering a new era with a promising future ahead," Salehi-Amiri said. He also noted that [Saeed Al-Qaddoumi], the president of the World Crafts Council has referred to Iran as a "paradise of handicrafts," underscoring the high artistic and commercial value of Iranian artisans' creations on the international stage. In a separate comment, Salehi-Amiri addressed the cultural significance of the overlapping observances of Nowruz and Ramadan in Iran's history. He recalled past instances where similar cultural intersections were managed smoothly by the public, expressing confidence that people would respect Ramadan's traditions while maintaining social vibrancy.

Last week, in an address to the closing ceremony of the 9th International Fajr Handicrafts Festival, also known as Sarve Simin, expressed his deep appreciation for Iran's contributions to global handicrafts. He acknowledged Iran's rich artistic legacy and its recognition as a leader in preserving and celebrating traditional crafts. "Iran has always held a special place in my heart... With 16 cities and villages designated as global handicrafts hubs, Iran's dedication to its artistic traditions is unparalleled," he said.

Moreover, Al-Qaddoumi extended his appreciation to all those involved in organizing the festival, emphasizing the importance of strengthening ties between Iranian artisans and their international counterparts.

Iran's Handicraft Exports reach \$224 Million in Year

