



Iran's box office surpasses 1.7\$m in a month

According to the Cinema Organization of Iran, the total box office revenue for cinemas nationwide from June 22 to July 22 has reached \$1,772,220. Over the course of a month, the country's cinemas attracted a total audience of 2,084,459 attendees, Honar Online reported.

Development of tourism sector a promise of economic prosperity in Fars Province



An overview of Shiraz
shomanews.com



Margun Waterfall, Sepidan
chetor.com

Iranica Desk

The flourishing of the tourism sector in Fars Province is achievable through developing its accommodation centers, improving service provided to tourists, and introducing attractions which are less-known to people. The growing trend of investment in the provincial tourism sector is a promise of economic prosperity in the wonderful and vast province. The abundance of religious, historical, cultural and medical tourism centers in Fars Province, having 11 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, is not hid-

den from anyone. Although being a tourist-friendly destination has to some extent led to the prosperity of some businesses in Shiraz, Marvdasht and Sepidan, the economy of Fars Province has not flourished as it deserves, and a huge part of its potential capabilities remains unused. The enhancement of tourism infrastructures alongside increasing the people's awareness of the less-known attractions of the region would help increase the number of travelers choosing Fars Province as their destination. The average stay of for-

eign tourists arriving in Fars Province is presently less than two days. Some deficiencies such as accommodations, marketing and lack of direct flights from neighboring countries, as well as the absence of specific attractions have adversely impacted the province's tourism sector. Deputy Head of Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, Rouhollah Ravanshad, noted that 375 tourism agencies and 650 accommodation centers are operating across the province. He put the accommodation capacity of Fars

Province at 10,000 rooms and 25,000 beds. Managing Director of the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, Moayed Mohsennejad, noted that 32 tourism-related projects are presently being implemented across the province. He added that a number of hotel and hotel-apartments, traditional accommodations and tourism complexes are under construction in the province. Making investment in the tourism sector would help attract more Iranian and foreign visitors to the province, pave the way for local businesses

to prosper and generate jobs in the province. He noted that each exemplary tourism site of the province has its unique features, making investment in which would help generate jobs and income in Fars Province. Shah Cheragh Shrine is a major tourist destination and pilgrimage site in the provincial capital of Shiraz. The mausoleum is where one of the brothers of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Shia Imam, is laid to rest. It boasts architectural elements and motifs from various centuries. The mausoleum has undergone various restoration projects over

time, and was registered on the National Heritage List in 1939. During his trip to the province in October 2021, President Ebrahim Raeisi called for promoting the tourism industry in Fars Province. Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami also announced that the government has allocated financial aid to develop the Pasargadae Complex, the capital of the Achaemenid Empire under Cyrus the Great (559-530 BCE), who had ordered its construction as well as the location of his tomb.

Iran expands ties with neighboring countries to bolster environmental diplomacy



Head of Iran's Department of the Environment Ali Salajegheh (R) meets Kazakhstan's Ambassador Askhat Orazbay in Iran on July 25, 2023.
IRNA

Iranica Desk

The Vice President and head of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) Ali Salajegheh emphasized the country's commitment to strengthening environmental diplomacy with friendly, neighboring, and Muslim nations during a meeting with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Iran on Tuesday. Salajegheh highlighted the shared cultural and religious ties between Iran and Kazakhstan, expressing hope for the expansion of their relationship across various sectors, IRNA reported.

He further underscored the importance of the Tehran Convention, a joint agreement for the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, despite its lack of tangible achievements to date. The vice president voiced concern over the deteriorating conditions of the Caspian Sea, noting a decrease in water flow and an increase in pollutant concentration. He stressed the need for cooperative management among the coastal countries to address these issues.

Salajegheh also referred to Iran's role as host of the 7th COP summit and the anniversary of the Tehran Convention, expressing optimism for swift resolution of outstanding issues from the 6th COP summit. In light of global climate change and its repercussions, Salajegheh identified dust storms as a significant consequence requiring international attention and joint agreements. He recalled a regional meeting of environment ministers hosted by Iran on July 12, 2022, which led to the United Nations General Assembly designating July 12 as International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms. The head of DoE announced that Iran will host an international conference on dust management on September 9-10, 2023, expecting the participation of at least 60 high-ranking officials from around the world. He extended an invitation to the Minister of Environment and the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to attend the conference. Kazakhstan's ambassador to Iran, Askhat Orazbay, acknowledged the dust problem as a challenge in Kazakhstan as well and viewed the upcoming conference as an opportunity to explore management solutions. Orazbay also recognized the Caspian Sea as a shared heritage and stressed the need for cooperation among Tehran Convention member states to address its environmental challenges. Orazbay affirmed the strong relations between Iran and Kazakhstan across all fields, including environmental cooperation.

Narration of Ashura portrayed through arts: Minister



Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, attends a Muharram mourning event in Tehran on July 24, 2023.
BORNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili stated that the school of Imam Hussein (PBUH) has been intertwined with arts, expressing that the narration of all aspects of Ashura has taken place through various art forms such as composing poems, chanting elegies, playing music, and creating visual works. According to IRNA, Esmaeili made the statement while attending the Ashura arts tent in

Tehran. He mentioned that in recent years, with the introduction of modern arts and changes in public space, there were concerns about the possible fading of some Ashura rituals. However, fortunately, over the past two years, Tehran's Municipality has taken proactive measures to preserve and revive ancient Ashura arts. As a result, many religious ceremonies and mourning rituals during the month of Muharram have been re-created. The minister referred

to the Ashura arts tent as a gathering place to demonstrate the deep-rooted mourning culture of the people for Imam Hussein (PBUH). Esmaeili emphasized that the significance of the event in Haft-e-Tir Square, as one of the bustling city centers where citizens with diverse tastes and perspectives gather, conveys the message that the culture of Ashura is a unifying and harmonizing factor for all the people of our country.

End of public mask mandate in Iran

Social Desk

The Public Relations and Information Center of Iran's Ministry of Health, in an announcement based on the opinion of the National Scientific Committee on COVID-19, has declared the end of the COVID-19 emergency and provided new guidelines regarding the use of masks. The National Scientific Committee on COVID-19 has stated that it is no longer necessary for all members of society to wear masks, according to IRNA. The committee's opinion is based on the current stable conditions and the cessation of the COVID-19 emergency. Instead of recommending the use of masks for the entire population, the committee emphasizes that only individuals with specific risk factors should continue to use masks. These risk factors include old age, underlying diseases, immune deficiency, and conditions related to the kidneys, heart, lungs, and liver. Additionally, individuals who have been in direct contact with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases are also advised to use masks. In healthcare centers situated in areas where general or

cluster transmission of COVID-19 has been reported, it is recommended that masks be worn by all individuals, including employees and clients. However, in areas where there are isolated cases of definite transmission, mask usage is advised solely for employees who come into contact with patients. In recent weeks, Iran has witnessed days without any deaths attributed to COVID-19. Regarding the vaccination campaign, the Ministry of Health has disclosed the latest figures. To date, 65,237,012 individuals have received the first dose of the vaccine, while 58,632,705 people have completed the recommended two doses. Furthermore, 31,731,549 individuals have received three doses or more, signifying the administration of a booster shot. Cumulatively, the total number of vaccine doses administered in the country has reached 155,601,266. With these developments, the Public Relations and Information Center of the Ministry of Health aims to provide the public with updated guidance in line with the evolving situation surrounding the pandemic.

