

Foreign investment in tourism

On April 27, 2024, Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian, Iran's deputy tourism minister, highlighted the surge in foreign investment in the tourism sector. He noted that since president Raisi took office, foreign investment in tourism had multiplied eighteenfold, reaching a substantial \$256 million by the close of the calendar year 1402 (ended March 19, 2024). This was accompanied by the presentation of 600 investment packages by over 2,000 businessmen from 80 countries at the Iran Expo 2024 event.

He deemed the exhibition's timing crucial in light of previous events, underscoring its significance as the standout feature of the next expo. He elaborated, "The very fact that this exhibition is taking place sends a clear message about the prevailing security in our country. This visual testament can be leveraged by businessmen and merchants to convey this reality to the world, effectively dispelling any doubts that may have arisen due to recent developments."

Revival of Gorgan Bay after 25 years

Gorgan Bay, also known as the Gulf of Gorgan, and its environs earned international recognition in 1975 as a wetland of significance by the Ramsar Convention. In 1976, UNESCO further acknowledged its ecological importance by classifying it as a natural biosphere reserve. However, between 2017 and 2021, a confluence of factors, including a drop in the Caspian Sea water level, sediment buildup, rampant marine plant growth, canal closures, decreased rainfall, and heightened evaporation rates, resulted in the desiccation of 35% of this once-lush bay.

Following the previous government's swift and effective interventions to resuscitate Gorgan Bay, the esteemed American scientific publication Science took note. A paper reported that just four weeks after the Ashuradeh Canal opening in 2023, a massive 1.5 billion cubic meters of water surged from the Caspian Sea into Gorgan Bay, elevating the water level by a full 40 cm. This timely influx of water resuscitated some 400 meters of coastal areas along the Caspian Sea that had previously dried up, restoring 3,000 hectares of the bay. Additionally, water salinity levels dropped from 48 units per thousand to 27 units per thousand.

Restoration of historical monuments

In October 2023, Shahab Talai, CEO of Iran's Fund for the Development and Restoration of Historical Textures, unveiled an enticing incentive. He announced that any individual, company, or institution incurring expenses related to the repair, restoration, or refurbishment of tourist sites could have those costs recognized as tax equivalents. This recognition would be granted with the endorsement of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the devel-

opment and restoration fund, facilitating a beneficial arrangement for those contributing to the preservation of tourist attractions.

Highlighting the fund's resources and capabilities, he emphasized the ability to offer diverse and tailored support to owners and custodians of historical buildings. He elaborated, "The government extends a range of benefits to those active in this field, one of which comes in the form of tax exemptions."

