

Big steps of tourism industry under late president

The previous government wrapped up its nearly three-year-long term with the tragic loss of its president on May 20, but the reverberations of his actions will carry over into multiple areas. President Ebrahim Raisi's government knocked it out of the park in the tourism sector, which this note will focus on.

Big steps of tourism industry

Despite the relentless smear campaign waged by certain foreign media outlets aligned with imperialist powers, and amidst the onslaught of sanctions imposed by the United States and several European countries — all fueling Iranophobia — Raisi's government steadfastly prioritized tourism and attracting foreign visitors. Determined to reveal the true essence of Iran to the world, the late president, along with his cabinet members, worked tirelessly. As a result, the tourism industry not only kept its upward momentum but accelerated, as evidenced by this report.

In line with the Leader's policies on tourism, the government pulled out all the stops. Consequently, figures revealed that Iran's tourism industry raked in \$7.8 billion over the last two years.

The tourism numbers for last year were also crunched and showed a 58% jump in visitors, with 6,382,755 tourists touching down, compared to the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended March 20, 2023), when a mere 4,230,000 people visited.

According to figures from Ali-Asghar Shalbafian, the Deputy Tourism Minister, foreign investment in the tourism sector has skyrocketed since the previous government took office, leaping a massive 18 times and hitting \$256 million by the end of the calendar year

1402 (ended March 19, 2024).

The late president's provincial trips were a real boon for local tourism industries. A total of 1,610 tourism projects kicked off across the country since his government took office.

As stated by the deputy minister, a staggering 2,400 tourism projects valued at 400,000 billion Rials (over \$68 million) are currently underway. Of these, 81 projects, accounting for 97,000 billion Rials (over \$167 million) in investment, are over 80% complete.

The government gave the green light to cancel tourist visa requirements for citizens of 33 countries, a strategic move that saw tourist numbers soar to 6,382,000 by the end of last year.

Ezzatollah Zarghami, the minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, maintained that the Islamic Republic has thrown open its doors to the world, rolling out the red carpet for international visitors and offering them the chance to discover the country's unique attractions firsthand. He further emphasizes the need to counter the barrage of negative advertising, rumors, and Iranophobia propagated by the arrogant powers.

According to

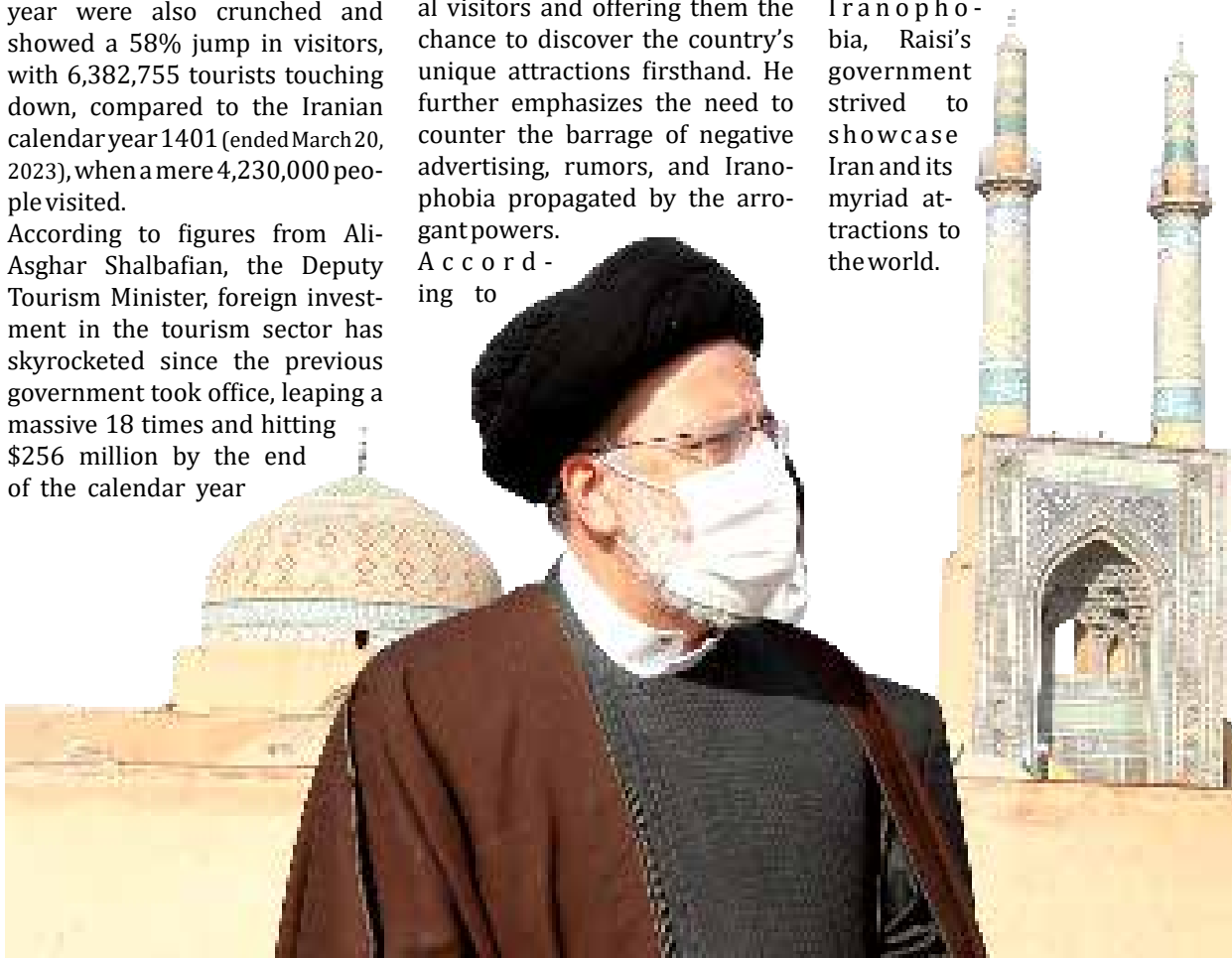
Zarghami, the cabinet firmly believed that tourism is the birthright of everyone on the globe, and Iran stands out as one of the most breathtaking countries owing to its unique history, natural wonders, ecotourism, hospitable locals, and health tourism.

Moreover, the Iranian tourism industry experienced a boom in job creation under president Raisi, witnessing a 10.3% spike in employment in 2023 compared to the previous two years. Last year's surge propelled the industry's contribution to the country's total employment to a substantial 6.6%.

What we've covered here only scratches the surface of the previous government's efforts in the realm of tourism. Despite facing significant challenges, including the global coronavirus pandemic, which brought worldwide tourism to a grinding halt, and amid strong smear campaigns and Iranophobia, Raisi's government strived to showcase Iran and its myriad attractions to the world.



The late Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi visits the historical neighborhood of Yazd, Iran, on December 17, 2021, to oversee efforts at restoring historical monuments.



Martyr President