

Tehran, Cairo tourism ties soon to be expanded



IRNA - In the wake of the last week's speeches of Egypt's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ahmed Issa on easing visa requirements for a number of countries, Iran's Tourism Ministry asked Iranian travel agencies to wait for the detailed mechanism for Iranians' travel to the North African country. "Due to the absence of formal political ties between the two countries at the moment and until the announcement of the possibility of traveling to Egypt through legal grounds, holding any group travel and tours to the African destination is not recommended," the announcement reads.

Any further information will be announced to Iranian travel agencies, the announcement concluded. Issa said on March 27 that tourists from Iran will be allowed a visa upon arrival when heading only to the South Sinai region of the country through a certified tourist agency.

Issa announced the measure as part of new amenities provided to tourists from China, Iran, India, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria and those visiting from the occupied Palestinian territories amid efforts by Egypt to boost its tourism sector.

For decades, Egypt has imposed tight visa controls on travelers from Iran mainly because regional tensions have affected political relations between the two countries.

The new tourism amenities for Iranians come after Iran and Saudi Arabia reached an agreement in China in early March to restore their diplomatic ties after seven years.

The agreement has helped Iran and other Arab countries in the region to start to mend their strained relations.

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irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7263 ● Thursday, April 6, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

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EXCLUSIVE



Tehran-Moscow amicable ties promoting Islamic culture in Russia

Friendly relations between Iran and Russia will benefit Muslims of both countries and help promote Islamic culture in Russia, said a Russian Muslim who participated in a Qur'anic exhibition in the Iranian capital. "Whenever Iran-Russia ties have strengthened, their cultural communications and interactions have been promoted and the two sides have had a better understanding of each other's situation," said Mikhail Simonov. The 30th Tehran International Qur'an Exhibition opened on April 1st and will continue until the middle of this month. The Tehran International Qur'an Exhibition is organized annually by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance during the holy month of Ramadan, with the aim of promoting Qur'anic concepts and developing Qur'anic activities.

It showcases the latest Qur'anic achievements in the country as well as a variety of products dedicated to the promotion of the Holy Book. More than 20 countries including Russia have participated in the international section. Russia's participation in the expo, along with Islamic states, might seem a little strange. But if we knew that Islam entered Russia in the 8th lunar century (after hejira), we might think differently. Presently, Russia has up to 20 million Muslims, while Islam is the second biggest religion in the country. Most Russian Muslims live in the country's southern regions, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Mikhail lives in a small city in the Republic of Dagestan and is studying seminary sciences in Iran. He says his city has a population of about 50,000, most of

which is Muslim. "I am taking seminary courses to boost my knowledge in this field. When I realized Iran had better conditions for learning religious sciences I decided to come here. I will return to Russia when I finish my education and will spare no effort to help those who want to promote their knowledge about Islam," Mikhail said. He said Muslims fast in the holy month of Ramadan and participate in congregational prayers in his city. Mikhail, who has participated in the exhibition for the second time, said the expo was very attractive to him. Iran has provided opportunities for Russian Muslims to promote their Islamic knowledge. Majid Fayyazi is a member of the Ibn Sina Islamic Culture Research Foundation. The foundation was established in 2007, with



the stated goal of bringing together the members of the academic and student community involved in studying different aspects of Islamic culture, science and philosophy. Fayyazi said the foundation is, in fact, an Iranian institute, which has been registered in Russia

and is cooperating with Russian universities in the field of Islamic studies. He said a publication named 'Sadra' has also been registered in Russia, which has so far published over 170 kinds of books in the field of Islamic and other sciences. Fayyazi said 'Sadra' mostly

tries to introduce Islam in Russia. 'Sadra' books are not published in the Russian language, but have been warmly welcomed by Russians. He said some of these books have been sold across Russia through the cooperation of top Russian publishers.

Cannes Directors' Fortnight to honor Cissé with Carrosse d'Or award

SCREEN DAILY - Malian filmmaker Souleymane Cissé will receive the Carrosse d'Or award of the French directors guild La Société des Réalisateurs (SRF) at the 55th edition of the Cannes' Directors Fortnight strand which runs May 16-27. The director will be honored with the award, which recognizes filmmakers for their "innovative qualities", at the opening ceremony on May 17. Cissé's career has spanned over 50 years with his work having screened at Cannes six times. His 1987 drama 'Yelen' picked up the jury prize at the festival

when it played in competition. SRF board members signed a letter to Cissé that read: "Blending poetry and politics, social criticism and mythology, both rooted in the multicultural culture of your country, Mali, and open to the world in its pluriversal dimension, your body of work has made a deep mark on our cinephilia. (...) Your courage, so remarkable if we think about the dictatorial political climate in which you directed your first three feature films, 'Den Muso,' 'Baara' and 'Finye,' fills us with admiration."



Iranian director Kiumars Pourahmad dies at 74

Veteran Iranian filmmaker, film critic and writer Kiumars Pourahmad, known for TV mini-series 'The Tales of Majid' and cinematic film 'The Night Bus', died on Wednesday morning at the age of 74. Pourahmad's wife Mehraneh Rabi confirmed the news of his death. The director's lifeless body was discovered in Bandar Anzali, in Iran's northern province of Gilan, where the police found a piece of handwritten note next to his

dead body, unfortunately, indicative of his suicide attempt, Rokna wrote. The police are investigating the late director's possible motive for committing suicide. Pourahmad was born in Isfahan in 1949 and started his professional career in 1973 writing film reviews. Three years later, he started writing and making films and TV serials. After making some short films, he made his directorial debut, 'Tatureh'



in 1983. Children and young adults with their problems are the central characters in most of his films. Among his feature films are 'For the Sake of Haniyeh,' 'Strange Sisters,' 'The Longest Night,' 'Edelweiss,' 'The Night Bus,' and 'Where Are My Shoes?' He won the Grand Jury Prize of the Asian Pacific

Screen Awards for 'The Night Bus,' which also won the Best Screenplay Award and Best Feature Film Award. 'The Case is Open' is his last cinematic work, which was unveiled during the 41st Fajr Film Festival. Pourahmad also published an autobiography entitled, 'Unfinished Childhood'.