

Minister urges enhanced cultural ties with Pakistan



Arts & Culture Desk

IRNA – Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili met with his Pakistani counterpart, Caretaker Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah, on the sidelines of the two-day conference of Culture Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Doha, Qatar.

During the meeting both sides emphasized the importance of enhancing bilateral cultural relations and signed a new memorandum of understanding in the cultural sphere. They also stressed the need to accelerate the production of joint cinematic works, particularly in promoting the works of renowned filmmaker Iqbal Lahori.

In their discussions, the ministers underscored the necessity of developing collaborations in various cultural and artistic fields. Pakistan's culture minister extended an invitation to his Iranian counterpart to visit Islamabad and participate in Iran's Cultural Week, expressing Pakistan's interest in introducing Iranian arts such as calligraphy and visual arts in Pakistani schools.

Minister Esmaeili, who traveled to Doha for the conference, had previously met with Salim bin Mohammed Al-Malik, the Secretary-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), emphasizing Iran's eagerness to strengthen cooperation with the organization.

He highlighted the diverse cultural concerns within the Islamic world and the need for increased dialogue and collaboration among Islamic nations, with ICESCO playing a pivotal role in this regard.

Al-Malik also expressed his willingness to visit Tehran and praised Iran for its rich cultural heritage. He emphasized that Iran, as an active and culturally robust nation, could contribute significantly to ICESCO's development programs.

The ICESCO chief stated, "Through cooperation with Iran, we can achieve a multitude of projects together."

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Tourist arrivals in Iran grow by 38%

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A total of 3.35 million foreign tourists traveled to Iran in the first half of the current Iranian year, showing a 38 percent growth compared to the previous year, Ali-Asghar Shalbfafian, said the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism. Shalbfafian made the statement at a press conference on the occasion of World Tourism Day and Tourism Week in Iran.

According to IRNA, Shalbfafian said that with the cancellation of events with Iraq last year, we witnessed a significant growth in tourism from that country, and now it is the top country of origin of tourists to Iran.

However, regional developments in Azerbaijan and Afghanistan have reduced the volume of tourists

from these areas to Iran, he added.

He noted, referring to the theme of World Tourism Day (Tourism and Green Investment) this year, coinciding with Tourism Week in the country, that over 130 tourism programs, with the theme "Green Tourism," will be held in over 60 counties across the country.

Shalbfafian continued that there are programs focused on green tourism in over 50 ecotourism sites and 47 programs in collaboration with associations and educational institutions, along with three specialized roundtable discussions and the organization of the Isfahan International Tourism and Handicrafts Exhibition, as part of the activities of this week.

Iran's tourism official noted, "In line with the government's policy of developing cooperation

with countries, especially neighboring ones, we have proposed the cancellation of visas to 68 countries."

"Furthermore, negotiations have been conducted regarding facilitating travel for tourists with private vehicles, in cooperation with eight agencies, and this will be unveiled during Tourism Week," he added.

Regarding the initiation of tourism relations with Egypt, Shalbfafian said, "Our tourism relations with Egypt fall within the framework of foreign policy. Last week, there was correspondence with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism, and a group of managers from Egyptian airlines will travel to Iran." He further clarified that "Egypt tours" will only make sense when we have direct flights. As far as we



● IRNA

know, we do not have direct flights at present. Shalbfafian also mentioned the cancellation of group visas with Russia, saying that the cancellation of group visas with Russia

has been implemented, and on September 27, the first group of Russian tourists will arrive in Iran. He concluded, "We are also considering canceling group visas with China.

The Chinese government has approved Iran as a destination, which is why we have witnessed good growth in Chinese tourists traveling to Iran in the past year.

Iran Cinema Days at Tashkent Int'l Film Festival



IRNA – Iran Cinema Days will be held at the 15th Tashkent International Film Festival, also known as the "Pearls of the Silk Road," scheduled to run from September 29 to October 3 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Among the featured films from the Farabi Cinema Foundation are: 'No Prior Appointment,' directed by Behrouz Shoeibi; 'Romanticism of Emad & Tooba,' directed by Kaveh Sabaghzadeh; 'Squad of Girls,' directed by Monir Qeidi; and 'Mehran,' directed by Roqayyeh Tavakkoli.

The festival provides a platform for Iranian filmmakers to share their works and engage with the global cinematic community, further strengthening cultural ties between Iran and Uzbekistan. The "Pearls of the Silk Road" festival continues to be a significant platform for celebrating diverse and compelling films from around the world. The festival is held in order to preserve and develop the age-old traditions of national cinematography, and further develop cultural and educational activities in Uzbekistan.

'Suitcase' wins at Parma festival

The short film 'Suitcase,' directed by Saman Hosseinpour and Ako Zandkarimi, was awarded the Best Screenplay prize at the 11th edition of the Parma Film and Music Festival in Italy.

The film, produced by Fariba Arab, tells the story of an immigrant man who loses his homeland once again, ILNA reported.

The Parma Film and Music Festival is a platform for showcasing and promoting feature films, short films, and documentaries of all genres and nationalities. The festival aims to

highlight the importance of music in cinema as a fundamental element for a film's success. The 11th edition of the Parma festival took place from September 18 to 23 in the city of Parma, Italy.

'Suitcase' had previously won the Audience Award at the 4th Kobani International Film Festival and had been featured at the 46th Drama International Short Film Festival in Greece, the 13th Kurdish Film Festival in Berlin, and the 3rd Moscow Kurdish Film Festival."

