

Minister vows to promote cultural heritage, tourism as key to peace and security



Iran's new Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, was inaugurated on Wednesday, vowing to promote the country's rich cultural heritage and tourism industry as a key to peace and security. Salehi Amiri became the Minister

of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on August 21, 2024, with 168 votes in favor out of 288 votes. He began his work on August 24. In his inaugural speech, Salehi Amiri said that the world should view Iran through the lens of its

heritage and arts, rather than its defense and nuclear capabilities, IRNA wrote. "The world should study Iran from the perspective of its heritage and art, not its defense and nuclear capabilities," he said. Salehi Amiri emphasized that

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (C) flanked by new Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri (L) and Tourism Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami (R) attend the inauguration ceremony for the new minister in Tehran, on September 18, 2024. ● ISNA

tourism is a guarantee of peace and security, and that the country needs to remove obstacles and work towards development and progress. "We must stop the migration of our young people and make them proud of their past and hopeful for their future," he said. Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said that the country's rich cultural heritage is a symbol of its civilization and a source of national pride, and that the tourism industry has the potential to create 100,000 sustainable jobs annually. Aref praised the efforts of the former minister, Ezzatollah Zarghami, and welcomed the new minister, saying he is one of the country's prominent cultural figures. Aref emphasized that cultural heritage is a national treasure that must be preserved and passed on to future generations. He noted that Iran's cultural heritage is a source of national pride and a key indicator of the country's rich cultural identity, both domestically and internationally. The vice president also highlighted the importance of handicrafts as a tool for regional diplomacy,

saying that it is an area where Iran can build bridges with other countries. The new minister also highlighted the importance of cultural heritage in elevating Iran's status in the region and the world. "Cultural heritage is a source of pride and a means of elevating Iran's status in the region and the world," he said. Salehi Amiri's predecessor, Ezzatollah Zarghami, praised the new minister as a "dedicated, creative, and interactive" individual who is well-suited to lead the ministry. "He has a number of positive qualities, including being a good manager, creative, and interactive," Zarghami said. "These are valuable qualities, especially in the tourism sector, which is a cross-sectional field." He also highlighted the progress made in the tourism sector, including the lifting of visa requirements for citizens of 30 countries. "We have made significant progress in the tourism sector, including the lifting of visa requirements for citizens of 30 countries, which is a major opportunity for the country," he said.

Iraqis show strong interest in learning Persian: Iranian official

Iran's trade representative in Baghdad says Persian is the most popular language among Iraqis, and hopes to see it taught in the city. Maryam Aboud, Iran's trade representative in Baghdad, made the comments during a visit to the Iranian pavilion at the Baghdad International Book Fair, which opened on September 12 and runs until September 22, ISNA wrote. The fair, which features 600 publishers from 21 countries, including 23 from Iran, showcases books on various topics, including religion, children's literature, Islamic resistance, and language



learning. Aboud, who has also attended the Tehran International Book Fair, praised the event, saying it was a "good and attractive experience" with a large number of book enthusiasts. She also expressed her admiration for Persian literature, particularly the works of Omar Khayyam, and said she enjoys watching Iranian films to improve her language skills. The Baghdad International Book Fair, which is in its 25th year, is being held under the slogan "Iraq reads." It aims to promote reading and literacy in the country.

Iran, Turkmenistan to hold joint tourism festival

Iran and Turkmenistan are teaming up to co-host a joint festival showcasing their tourist attractions, handicrafts, and music in State Academy of Arts in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, from October 22 to 24. "The goal of this festival is to foster stronger connections between tourism agencies in both countries, promoting the development of tourism and showcasing the attractions of Iran," according to Navid Rasouli, Iran's cultural attaché to Turkmenistan stated, Mehr News Agency reported. International diplomats, senior officials from Turkmenistan's Ministry of Culture, and Tehran's ambassador to Ashgabat are among the invitees to the festival, which is now in its second edition. The festival will feature travel showcases, handicraft exhibitions, and live music performances, Rasouli said. It is part of ongoing efforts to boost cultural and tourism ties between the two nations, which share a 1,000-kilometer border. Iran and Turkmenistan have enjoyed good relations since the latter's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, cooperating in areas such as economy, transportation, infrastructure, and energy.



Iran to ramp up Umrah flights to Saudi Arabia amid renewed diplomatic ties

Iran's national carrier will increase the number of daily flights to Saudi Arabia for the Umrah pilgrimage to four from next month, up from the current two, a company spokesperson said Wednesday. Hessam Qorban-Ali, spokesperson for Iran Air, told that the first Umrah flight of the current pilgrimage season took off from Imam Khomeini International Airport on Wednesday morning, carrying 257 pilgrims to Medina. Qorban-Ali said that from September 18, two daily flights will be operated using a wide-body aircraft, increasing to four flights from October 8, with two aircraft serving the route. Each flight can carry around 255 passengers, meaning around 500 pilgrims will be transported daily. The Umrah pilgrimage, a series of rituals performed by Muslims at the Kaaba in

Mecca, became possible for Iranians again in April after a nine-year hiatus, following the resumption of diplomatic ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

The pilgrimage season is expected to run until December 20, with a second phase scheduled from December 21 to the end of the Umrah season.



Iranian film '21 Weeks Later' heads to Turkey

Iranian filmmaker Nasrin Mohammadpour's award-winning short film '21 Weeks Later' was selected to compete at the 31st Adana International Film Festival in Turkey. The 14-minute film, which has already picked up the Best Asian Short Film Award at the 28th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea and screened at the 32nd Raindance Film Festival in the UK, will now vie for top honors in the short film category at Adana, Mehr News Agency reported. The Adana festival, one of Turkey's largest, will run from Sept. 23 to 29 and feature a jury of prominent Turkish directors, including Nuri Bilge Ceylan. '21 Weeks Later' has been making waves on the international circuit, with a cast that includes Banafsheh Riazi, Leila Hassanzadeh, Soudabeh Bahraminejad, and Parisa Asgari. Cinerama, led by Neshat Bagheri, is handling international distribution and sales.