

Iran eyes more foreign tourists to rake in \$6b in five years

Persian-Tajik Cultural Research Institute opens

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, announced a comprehensive five-year plan aimed at generating \$6 billion in revenue and attracting 200,000 tourists each year.

The minister made this declaration during a meeting with a high-ranking Iranian trade delegation and Tajik officials, highlighting the importance of strengthening tourism ties between the two nations, IRNA reported.

Speaking at an economic symposium, Salehi Amiri underscored Tajikistan's role as a crucial link for Iran to access the Caucasus and Eurasia, emphasizing the substantial economic potential of such collaboration.

He stated, "The identity of both nations is one, and what both people take pride in is rooted in this shared identity."

The necessity of transforming this cultural connection into economic collaborations, the minister highlighted.

To boost tourism, he announced am-

bitious plans to increase the number of tourists traveling between the two countries. "We aim to elevate the number of tourists from 8,500 to 100,000," he declared, outlining strategies to enhance the introduction of tourism attractions and cultural values to both nations.

He remarked, "Last year, Iran welcomed 1.2 million health tourists, generating \$2 billion. We aim to triple that revenue and significantly increase our tourist numbers."

In addition, the minister announced plans to facilitate visa waivers between the two countries, with discussions on this matter expected to conclude during the visit of the Iranian president to Tajikistan.

The symposium also resulted in multiple cooperation agreements signed between Iranian and Tajik companies, providing opportunities for direct negotiations among economic stakeholders. Salehi Amiri concluded that strengthening tourism ties will not only fortify cultural relations but also contribute to

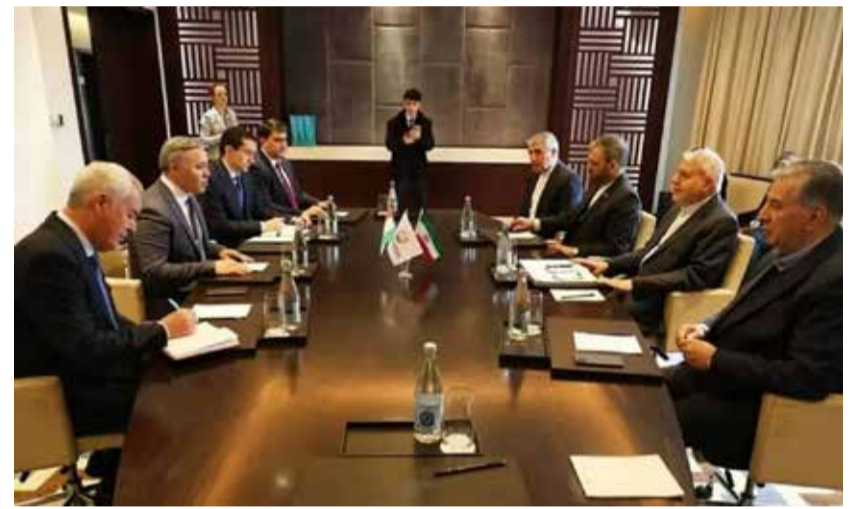
economic development and job creation in both nations.

On the sidelines of the economic delegation's visit, a Persian-Tajik Cultural Research Institute opened to aims to enhance cultural and economic ties between Iran and Tajikistan.

The institute was officially opened with the presence of Reza Salehi Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Matloba Khan Sattar Yan Aman Zadeh, Tajikistan's Minister of Culture, and Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce.

During the opening ceremony, Salehi Amiri remarked, "Today is a blessed day for the two nations of Iran and Tajikistan. The sweet Persian language is one of the main elements of the cultural identity that binds us."

He underscored that despite global conflicts, "what remains enduring is the connection of the Tajik and Iranian people through the Persian language." He further noted that the legacy of poets like Ferdowsi is crucial for maintain-



ing this cultural heritage. The minister expressed belief that the establishment of the Persian-Tajik Cultural Research Institute "can pave the way for further collaboration," introducing the first research project focused on exploring the linguistic roots

of both nations. He stated, "I will task the Faculty of Linguistics of the Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies to complete this project, with copies of the findings presented to the presidents of both countries, underscoring our lasting bond."

Minister: World recognizes Iran through literature

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, highlighted the significance of literature as a defining feature of Iranian identity. "Iran, if devoid of literature, ceases to be Iran; the world recognizes us through our literature," he stated, underscoring the global perception of Iran shaped by its rich literary tradition.

He made the statement in the meeting of the Board of Trustees of Iran Book and Literature House, ILNA reported. Salehi praised the cultural depart-

ment's extensive programs within Iran Book and Literature House.

He noted, "The cultural department carries out its primary tasks, from festivals to various initiatives."

Salehi elaborated on the unique position of Iran Book and Literature House, contrasting it with other cultural institutions within the ministry.

He explained that while various cinematic works are produced by the Farabi Cinema Foundation and the Iran's Cinema Organization, the House of Book and Literature serves as the central hub for cultural activities.

Describing the board members as a "rational and leadership body" of the cultural department, Salehi emphasized the importance of their role, stating, "The position of the cultural department in the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is crucial and does not equate with other departments."

The minister further stressed the vital connection between literature and civilization, asserting that "books are the substance of civilization," and urged the attendees to recognize their responsibility in preserving this essential cultural foundation.

Looking ahead, Salehi outlined a busy schedule for the Iran Book and Literature House, mentioning upcoming awards and festivals, culminating in the Tehran International Book Fair.

"The coming months will be very productive for all of you," he remarked, encouraging the board members as they prepare for their responsibilities in the realms of literature and upcoming events. During the session, board members engaged in discussions to analyze the challenges facing the book sector and offered insights on potential solutions.



Iran ranks eighth globally in halal market: Official



Social Desk

Iran ranks eighth in the global halal market, announced the head of the Halal Research Center of Iran Food and Drug Administration, Hossein Rastgaar.

He stated, "This ranking reflects the significant advancements the country has made in this industry." Rastgaar highlighted that there are still many opportunities for growth and improvement in various sectors. "There is vast potential for increasing the production and export of halal products in the country," he added, noting that this could substantially contribute to strengthening the national econ-

omy and enhancing non-oil exports, ILNA reported. He pointed to the global growth of the halal market, mentioning that halal products are increasingly welcomed on the international stage, with many non-Muslim countries entering this market. He cited that Nestlé has launched over 100 halal product lines worldwide, indicating a robust upward trend in the industry.

Rastgaar emphasized that despite Iran's current lower ranking in the halal food sector, there is potential for improvement. "By enhancing infrastructure and developing related sectors such as pharmaceuticals, fashion, and halal tourism, we can capture a larger share of the global market and strengthen our position," he said.

Furthermore, he praised Iran's performance in other halal market segments, including Islamic finance, halal tourism, and pharmaceuticals.

He noted that Iran ranks third in Islamic finance, 15th in halal tourism, and 11th in pharmaceuticals, demonstrating that the country can achieve remarkable growth in these areas by leveraging its existing capacities.

"The halal market presents a golden opportunity for economic development and the internationalization of Iran's brand," Rastgaar concluded. "We must utilize all of the country's resources to enhance our position in this valuable market."

Iranian animation 'Let's Make Peace' to be screened at Swiss film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian animated series 'Let's Make Peace' directed by Abdollah Alimorad continues its international showing as it is scheduled to hit the silver screens at the 26th edition of the Black Movie International Independent Film Festival in Switzerland.

The festival, taking place from January 17 to 26 in Geneva, showcases independent and diverse films from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, alongside innovative European productions. It aims to present films that are rarely seen in Swiss cinemas, Mehr News Agency reported.

'Let's Make Peace' is a stop-motion animation with a unique, wordless narrative, making it a truly international work. The animation has already made its mark at various international festivals, winning several awards.

The Black Movie International Independent Film Festival focuses on contemporary cinema and seeks to present innovative films that reflect the social realities and aesthetics of our time.

Soureh Cinema International is handling



the international distribution of 'Let's Make Peace'.

'Let's Make Peace' has already been screened at the 16th Big Cartoon Animation Festival of Russia, the 14th Ahmedabad International Children Film Festival in India, the 2nd T-Short Animated Film Online Festival in Germany, the 5th edition of the Tbilisi International Animation Festival of Georgia, the 12th Hsin-Yi Children's Animation Awards in Taiwan and Greece's Ionian Contemporary Animation Festival (ICONA). Also, the short animation has already won the best animation award from the Bridge of Peace film festival in France and was selected as the best animation by the Animur International Animated Film Festival in Russia.