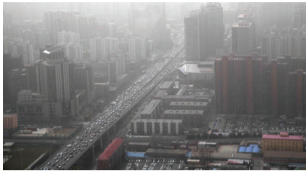


Air pollution impacts



A new study has found that exposure to air pollution may increase the risk of developing dementia. More than 57 million people worldwide are currently living with dementia, and estimates suggest that number will increase to 153 million by 2050.

Tehran-Moscow amicable ties promoting Islamic culture in Russia



Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

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 pro-

mote 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.

Persian kilim famous for amazing harmony of forms and colors

Leila Imeni
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

In a spring evening I went to Mostafa Khomeini Street in the southern part of Tehran. It is one of the most important and busiest streets of Tehran, which is full of shops, banks and offices.

Walking along the street, my eyes fell on the beautiful and colorful kilims that were displayed in the showcases of many carpet shops, or hanging outside of them. I had never seen so many kilims, with different patterns and designs, in one place before. A kilim is a type of woven handicraft with a smooth and lint-free surface, made of warp and weft, while, unlike Persian carpets, it does not have long piles.



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The thinner and finer the thread, the higher the quality of the kilim. That is why high-quality sheep's wool is used for weaving kilims. Flexibility, high durability and dyeability are among the main characteristics of the wool used for kilim production.

Historical documents show that kilim weaving

is a beautiful and valuable craft dating back thousands of years. Available evidence indicates that the ancient people who settled on the Iranian Plateau and its neighboring lands raised sheep and goats and spun their wool and hair. A piece of cloth woven from goat hair about 8,000 years ago



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was found on the Caspian Sea shore.

Some others believe that the world's oldest kilim was among the artifacts discovered in ancient Egypt. Meanwhile, remains of an old kilim were found in Anatolia Island, dating back to 1,000 BCE. Kilim weaving is an artistic craft which is mostly

done by women living in Iranian rural and nomadic areas.

In the beginning, kilim was used by people not only as a floor covering but also as a means to protect their body from the cold. Some tribal people living in Afghanistan still use a kind of woolen kilim as their upper garment.

The first kilims, made of wool in its own color, were very simple, with no pattern and design. However, over time, the people saw different colors in nature and decided to dye sheep's wool and produce colorful kilims.

Horizontal looms are the main tools used by nomadic people for weaving

kilims. Kilim weavers, like other craftspeople of the country, reflect their feelings, emotions and moods in their artistic products.

The Persian kilim is well-known for its geometric and abstract motifs and an amazing harmony of forms and colors. The beauty and uniqueness of Persian kilims have caused many people to use them as decoration.

Hand-woven kilims produced in rural and tribal areas of the country can be classified into several categories, based on their size, the methods and tools used for weaving them, and the place of their production.

In general, the Persian kilim is a colorful nomadic carpet with regional patterns, inspired by nature and the weavers' daily lives.