



Iran, Russia ink tourism agreement

In a significant development, Iran and Russia inked a bilateral agreement aimed at bolstering their tourism cooperation. The signing took place on the sidelines of the Russia-Islamic World Forum held in Kazan. The newly formed agreement encourages both nations to expedite the implementation of a previous accord, which focused on waiving visa requirements for group travel between Iran and Russia for their respective citizens.

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

Translation of Iranian, Omani books promotes cultural exchange

The director of book fairs in Oman emphasized the significant role of translating books from Iran and Oman into Persian and Arabic, in fostering the relationship and interaction between the two nations.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Khalfan al-Abri disclosed that a panel of experts from both countries has compiled a list of books to be translated. The forthcoming phase will involve the planning and execution of translation and publication of these books. Al-Abri highlighted the participation of Oman in the 34th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), where representatives from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, as well as other organizations, are present.

The Oman booth at the fair is showcasing over 1,200 books in various fields such as culture, religion, tourism, medicine, and sports, presented in the English, Arabic, and Persian languages.

Discussing a recently translated book in Oman, Al-Abri provided insight into the book titled, 'A Reformer on the Throne,' which delves into the life and significant events associated with Sultan Qaboos.

Also known as Qaboos bin Said Al-e Said, Sultan Qaboos serves as the 14th Sultan of Oman in the direct line of the Al-e Said Dynasty. Al-Abri emphasized Sultan Qaboos' distinguished reign, which stands as the longest among Arab rulers.



The book has been translated into five languages, with a Persian translation currently in preparation and slated for future release. Commenting on the close and amicable relations between Iran and Oman, Al-Abri acknowledged the geographical proximity of the two countries and their enduring positive relations throughout history. The participation of both nations in each other's book fairs serves to fortify cultural and political ties.

When evaluating the Tehran International Book Fair, Al-Abri expressed his professional perspective, stating, "Due to my responsibilities, I have attended numerous book fairs

worldwide. However, I firmly believe that TIBF is unquestionably among the finest of its kind globally."

Al-Abri further noted the overwhelming response from the public and the considerable number of visitors at the International Book Section's booths, attesting to the immense interest in books and reading.

Extending an invitation, he urged publishers, organizers, and all book enthusiasts in Iran to attend the Muscat International Book Fair in Oman.

He concluded that the presence of both coun-

tries in each other's book fairs facilitates a deeper understanding of their respective cultures and countries, while also providing a foundation for closer relations between the two nations.

The 34th edition of the book fair, which commenced on May 10, will run until May 20, offering an expansive platform for literary exchange and collaboration.



Fathollahov Mansion symbolizes Iranian-Russian architecture



Iranica Desk

The historic mansion of Fathollahov is located in downtown Tabriz, in East Azarbaijan Province. With regard to its structure and exterior, it is considered as a unique historical symbol of Russian architecture. Fathollahov Mansion is situated close to Arg-e Alish, or Arg of Tabriz, the remnants of a large acropolis fortification and city wall in downtown Tabriz. Historical evidence and existing photos in the archive of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of East Azarbaijan Province suggest that the construction of Fathollahov Mansion pertains to at least 150 years ago. The Qajar era building was registered on the country's National Heritage List in 2005, according to IRNA. Due to the negligence of related bodies, the mansion has fallen into oblivion and some parts of the building have collapsed. However, the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts

Department of East Azarbaijan Province is renovating the building. If the mansion's renovation is completed, it could turn into a major tourist attraction.

With dimensions of 20 meters by 40 meters, this building has three floors including a basement. It has many beautiful rooms with decorative plasterwork, columns, wooden fences and stairs. Thick walls and wooden doors are prominent features of the structure and its exterior is a combination of Russian and Iranian architecture.

Foreign-style construction

A senior official of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of East Azarbaijan Province told IRNA that related provincial bodies are cooperating to restore the Fathollahov Mansion. Nasser Zavari said one of the major features of the mansion pertains to its internal plasterwork. He noted that these features symbolize Tsarist Russian

architecture. The official said there is an ab-anbar (a roofed underground water cistern) in the basement of the mansion. He added that efforts are underway to preserve its original condition.

Renovation costs

The deputy head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of East Azarbaijan Province said the renovation operation of Fathollahov Mansion began four years ago. Vahid Navadad added that about \$20,000 have been spent on restoring the house over the past four years. He said some \$60,000 are needed to complete the mansion's renovation. The official said a proposal has been submitted to the Planning and Budget Organization of East Azarbaijan Province and the Ministry of Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to allocate the appropriate funds. Navadad noted that the mansion's renovation will become

complete by March 20 next year if the project is funded in due time.

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of East Azarbaijan Province said earlier that the renovation of historic houses in Tabriz, including the Fathollahov Mansion, is among the priorities of the department. Ahmad Hamzehzadeh said the mansion is among historical attractions of the province, which is a combination of Russian and Iranian architecture. He said that with its 400 historic houses, Tabriz offers great tourism potential.

The official said the provincial tourism sector is only able to restore a limited number of historic houses because it does not have sufficient funds. Hamzehzadeh called for assistance on the nation level to help restore historic houses in Tabriz. Presently, a number of famous historic houses in Tabriz lure many domestic and foreign tourists.

Foreign tourist visits to Iran quadrupled in 2022

Arts & Culture Desk

In 2022, Iran experienced a remarkable surge in foreign tourism, as declared by the World Tourism Organization (WTO), with a staggering 315% increase in the number of international visitors.

The country welcomed 4.1 million tourists during this period compared to a mere 990 million for 2021, marking a momentous achievement, IRNA wrote.

It is worth noting that Iran's fast-growing number of foreign tourists attracted last year was three times higher than the global average in this field. Looking at the broader Middle East region, the total number of

foreign tourist trips to the region in 2022 reached an impressive 66 million, demonstrating a remarkable growth rate of 163% compared to the previous year. In this context, it is estimated that Iran attracted 6% of tourists visiting the Middle East.

According to statistics released by the WTO, global foreign tourist trips reached a record-breaking 963 million last year, showcasing a notable growth of 111% compared to the preceding year. The year 2021 witnessed more than 450 million trips made by international tourists worldwide.

Thus, the global surge observed in 2022 amounted to an astounding 513 million additional foreign tourist trips compared to the previous year.

