

Promoting Tourism through Arts, Music and Fashion

By Nadia Shabir



Women have played key role in economic development, politics, commerce, tourism and social affairs. To celebrate the courage and determination of women, who have conquered the odds and have reached prominent positions in popular fields of music, business, arts, tourism and fashion, this article will highlight the contributions of Naseem Naheed noted fashion designer of Turkey and Shabana Yassir celebrated artist from Peshawar in promoting celebrated heritage of their country. These women have made significant contributions to the development of regional society.

A predicament of contemporary tourist industry across Muslim countries can be summed up in one word, unpredictable. Current surge in civil strife across Middle East and North Africa has had dire implications for tourist industries of Muslim countries. Without a doubt, tourism remains a critical sector in global economy and one that provides significant prospective for economic growth and progress internationally. Tourism sector creates jobs, contributes to national income,

and makes a hefty contribution to country's Gross Domestic Product. Furthermore, the sector is thus an important driver for growth and prosperity and has played a pivotal role in poverty eradication and bridging gaps between different cultures and religions.

Tunisia, along with other North African and Middle Eastern countries, has experienced impressive growth rates in its tourism sector during the last decade, even during the financial crisis. The sector was among the



Autograph

Naseem performing



NN Turkey





most promising to further reduce unemployment in the region, with many new resorts being planned along the country's Mediterranean coast. Unfortunately, a longer downturn in the tourism sector would deepen the social, economical problems related to a high unemployment rate in the region.

However, a widely held depiction of Tunisia as a jewel of North Africa was completely tarnished during last month's revolutionary events.

Unfolding political crisis and rallies across the country has had severe consequences for Tunisia's Billion dollar tourist industry. World media closely followed and documented ousting of country's former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. While most Tunisian celebrated the overthrow of government, country's tourism industry continues to bear a negative brunt. Tourists had to be evacuated from their destinations, and travel operators have been forced to

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cancel future trips to country. Across the border into Egypt, anti-regime protests and civil unrest has seen foreign offices issuing travel alerts for their citizens to avoid travels to Egypt. Egypt enjoys tourism all year round and it is one of the country's main economical resources. Tourism industry employs 12% of Egyptian work force and accounts for 11% of GDP. In recent times, tourism has earned Egypt \$13bn. Due to current change in geo political climate of country, tour operators across the world have been forced to cancel their planned seasonal trips, cruise ship tours and heritage

tours to country. Australia, Britain, Germany, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have sent commercial and chartered planes to Egypt to evacuate their citizens. Yet, thousands wanting to leave the country remain stranded at Cairo's international airport. Tourism is so very important to this country, and hence the image of military Tanks in front of Pyramids of Giza is an image that world tourism industry never dreamed of.

Terrorism is a modern threat that also has affected tourist industries across the globe. In 2010, Taksim square bombings in Istanbul had an impact on Turkey's travel

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Naseem Nahid



industry. Pakistan's tourist industry has been in a steady decline since 9/11 events. War in Afghanistan and deteriorating security situation in Northern region saw a drastic fall in economic revenues. Following the devastating floods in 2009, Ecotourism society of Pakistan has estimated a damage of \$550 million to its industry. Recently, the governor of Punjab was assassinated in the downtown area of Islamabad, putting the country out of bound to travelers. The afflicting circumstances

across Muslim countries are bad news for the future of tourist industries. There is an urgent need for individuals and officials on all levels of civil, economical, social and entertainment sectors to unite to overcome this hurdle and work together to package and promote tourism opportunities in their countries. Few artists, musicians and individuals have taken a courageous step towards marketing their industry on international platform.