

Egyptian Museum marks 113th anniversary amid tourism slump

November 16 2015, by Maram Mazen



In this Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2013, file photo, Egyptian security forces stand guard in front of the Egyptian museum near Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt. Egypt's Antiquities Ministry is marking the 113th anniversary of the country's famed Egyptian Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Pharaonic-era antiquities. This year's anniversary comes as Egypt grapples with a slump in tourism and massive tourist cancellations. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty, File)

Egyptian authorities sought to project an upbeat tone as the country on Monday marked the 113th anniversary of its famed Egyptian Museum, the home of the world's largest collection of Pharaonic-era antiquities, amid a slump in tourism and massive tourist cancellations.

Battered by years of political turmoil, Egypt's tourism sector took another blow after the Oct. 31 Russian passenger plane crash in the Sinai Peninsula that killed all 224 people on board, mostly Russian vacationers returning home from a Red Sea resort. An investigation into the crash, which Western officials say may have been caused by a bomb, is still ongoing.

As celebrations got underway outside the landmark museum building in the heart of the Egyptian capital, Cairo, officials, band players and performers outnumbered the tourists.

As he spoke to local TV stations, Antiquities Minister Mamdouh el-Damaty offered a traditional greeting for visitors: "Welcome to Egypt."

He promised there will be more attractions and breakthroughs, referring to last week's ministry announcement that thermal scanning results on the Great Pyramid in Giza revealed some anomalies that could lead to new discoveries about its construction.

"We always have new things when it comes to antiquities," el-Damaty said.



In this Sunday, April 24, 2011, file photo, a U.S. delegation of leaders from various tourism groups visits the Egyptian museum. Egypt's Antiquities Ministry is marking the 113th anniversary of the country's famed Egyptian Museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Pharaonic-era antiquities. This year's anniversary comes as Egypt grapples with a slump in tourism and massive tourist cancellations. (AP Photo/ Matt Ford, File)

El-Damaty said the new, Grand Museum of Egypt, which is still under construction, will partially open in May 2018. The sprawling complex, being built adjacent to the Pyramids in Giza, is now scheduled to be finished in November 2022.

It's meant to house artifacts, including the famed King Tutankhamun's full collection. The new [museum](#) was initially slated to open this year but the project has been delayed.



The exterior of the famed Egyptian museum is seen as Egypt's Antiquities Ministry marks the 113th anniversary of the museum which houses the world's largest collection of Pharaonic-era antiquities. This year's anniversary comes as Egypt grapples with a slump in tourism and massive tourist cancellations. (AP Photo/Maram Mazen)

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