

# Iranian artists upstage int'l musicians



Hojjat Ashrafzadeh  
 ● YJC



Indian ensemble  
 ● ISNA



Uzbek ensemble  
 ● IRNA

**Arts & Culture Desk**  
 Musicians from India, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan who performed at the second night of the 39th Fajr International Music Festival on February 13 could not attract as many audiences as Iranian vocalist Hojjat Ashrafzadeh did. The program began at Vahdat Hall with all-female music group Nushe attracting the female audience of Tehran, ana.ir reported. In Vahdat Hall, the first performance by the Indian Rajasthani ensemble, led by Rahis Bharti, failed to engage a considerable audience despite rhythmic

and traditional Rajasthani music pieces. Bharti expressed his desire for global harmony through music, emphasizing the unity of the musical community worldwide. At Rudaki Hall, the international performances were not warmly received. The first section by Uzbek artist Abrar Zufarov, showcasing the cultural wedding repertoire 'Nihar Ash,' did not resonate well with the Iranian audience. Following Zufarov, Tajik artist Sardar Suliev performed, blending traditional Tajik instruments and vocals. Suleev's performance also struggled to

attract the audience. The highlight of the night emerged at the second section of the performances at Vahdat Hall when Iranian musician Hojjat Ashrafzadeh performed. His performances including 'To Nafasi' and 'Halam Khobe Ba To' got the kudos. Expressing gratitude to the audience, Ashrafzadeh stated, "It's an honor to sing for my beloved family in this magnificent hall on the most romantic day. A mother is the only being worthy of worship after God, and tonight, I sing with love for my mother." Ashrafzadeh also highlight-

ed the value of Iranian local music, taking the audience on a journey through various regions' musical richness. Before performing the local piece 'Dorna,' he paid homage to the late Mohammadreza Shajarian, recalling the track's earlier performance in Shajarian's album 'Night, Silence, Desert.' The 39th Fajr International Music Festival opened on February 12 and will run through February 17. The event will be held in Tehran and 14 other provinces simultaneously. The seven venues in Tehran host more than 70 perfor-

mances and over 330 stage performances will be held in 14 provinces including East Azerbaijan, Bushehr, Semnan, Fars, Golestan, Markazi, Mazandaran, North Khorasan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Lorestan, Kerman, and Hormozgan. Organized by the Music Office of the Deputy for Artistic Affairs of Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the festival encompasses various sections such as the competitive (Barbad Award), non-competitive, and research sessions.



## Promotion of Muslim unity goal of Iran Int'l Qur'an competition: Official

The head of the organizing committee of Iran's 40th International Qur'an Competition referred to promotion of Islamic unity as one of the main goals of the Qur'anic event. Speaking to reporters at a press conference in Tehran on Wednesday, Hamid Majidimehr said when it comes to the Holy Qur'an, there are no differences among different groups of Muslims. He said the development of the rich culture of reading and recitation of the Qur'an and contemplating its teachings and enhancing relations among different nations are also among the other goals of the contest. He further referred to the motto of this year's competition and said that given the developments in the Gaza Strip, the motto was chosen to be "One Book, One Ummah, Book of Resistance". The poster of the contest also includes a diamond whose tip is red, symbolizing resistance groups that launched the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm against the Israeli regime, he added. According to Majidimehr, rep-



representatives from Palestine will visit Iran during the competition and symbols of resistance will also be showcased at the venue of the international event. The contestants will have a meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, he added. As for the number of contenders, he said Qur'an memorizers and reciters from 110 countries registered for the competition

and after the preliminary round, 69 contestants from 40 countries made it to the finals. Majidimehr also thanked the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Al-Mustafa International University, Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and other bodies that have contributed to organizing the Qur'anic event. The event opens today and will run through February 21.

## Health tourism revenue increase by \$1b: Minister

**Social Desk**

Iran's Health Minister, Bahram Einollahi said that annually, one billion dollars in revenue enters our country through health tourism. Einollahi made the statement during the 17th International Exhibition of Tourism and Related Industries, held at the Tehran International Exhibition Center, ISNA wrote. Einollahi explained, "We are witnessing the highest number of health tourism visits from countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, with one million and 200 thousand health tourists visiting our country in the past year, from 64 different nationalities." The minister said an increase in permits from 130 to 280 centers, showcasing the country's commitment to developing its health tourism sector. Einollahi emphasized that neighboring countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Armenia, Tajikistan, and those in the

Persian Gulf region, are the primary contributors to the influx of health tourists to Iran. He noted that the Iran's "healthcare infrastructure" makes it a preferred destination for medical treatment. He highlighted the strong interest of neighboring countries' citizens in seeking medical treatment in Iran due to its status as the region's healthcare hub. Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Persian Gulf nations, are the main countries whose people travel to Iran for receiving health services.

