

24th Iran Media Expo kicks off

# Minister: Press event unexpectedly received

Media's significance, no less than battleground:  *Hamas official*



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili, cuts the ribbon to open the 24th Iran Media Expo in Tehran on February 18, 2024.  
 ● REZA MOATTARIAN/IRAN DAILY



### Arts & Culture Desk

The 24th Iran Media Expo officially began on Sunday in the Iranian capital, Tehran, with the presence of Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili and media people. The event marked the end of a six-year hiatus in holding the expo, as emphasized by the minister. Esmaeili expressed his satisfaction with the reopening of this cultural and artistic event, stating, "I am pleased that another delayed matter in the field of arts and culture, which had experienced a six-year hiatus, is now reopening with the presence of media professionals."

The minister said a total of 450 media outlets were participating in the expo. Esmaeili extended his gratitude to all attendees and apologized for the logistical challenges faced due to the unexpected high welcome by the visitors. He attributed the logistical issues to the overwhelming response from participants, stating, "This challenge is due to an unexpected and extraordinary reception that has taken place, and it is a source of pride and honor for us. I thank you all." Esmaeili expressed hope for collaboration among journalists, photographers, and media managers to properly record the greatness and achievements of the Iranian people, projecting

a bright and shining future for the country. Following the opening ceremony, Esmaeili visited the Gaza booth and added that he will return on the following days to have a comprehensive tour. In addition to local media, a dozen resistance media outlets from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Türkiye, Tunisia, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, and Lebanon have participated in the 24th Iran Media Expo. In addition, foreign media outlets affiliated with the Resistance Front are actively participating, contributing to the dissemination of news related to regional resistance efforts, particularly the recent October 7 Operation Al-Aqsa Storm

carried out by Palestinian resistance groups. The expo is expected to be a hub for sharing ideas and promoting collaboration in the field of media. A senior Hamas official movement emphasized the significance of media activity in their fight against the Zionist regime, noting that its importance is no less than the battle on the ground. Osama Hamdan stated, "I recall the memory of the media martyrs in Palestine, their number exceeding 120 since the beginning of the Zionist regime's invasion." The senior Hamas official added, "There is no doubt that the media has played a crucial role from the past to the present.

Media activity is part of our struggle against the Zionist regime, and its importance is not less than the battle in the field. That's why the enemy targets journalists." The four-day event (February 18 to 22) provides a platform for journalists and media outlets to exchange views on the latest developments, showcasing their achievements across various mediums, including news agencies, newspapers, websites, and magazines. Next to Iranian news agencies, Al-Manar and Al-Mayadeen are also among the international news agencies present at the 24th Iran Media Expo. IRNA has dedicated a pavilion to the Organization of Asia-Pa-

cific News Agencies (OANA) during this event. As the rotating president, Iran's official news agency aims to facilitate information exchange among regional countries with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Within the OANA, IRNA, Fars, and Mehr serve as the three news agencies representing Iran. IRNA was one of the first members of the organization and previously presided over it from 1997 to 2000. Additionally, the Iranian news agency held the position of vice chairman within the regional organization in 2016 and currently serves as a member of the executive committee of OANA.

## Winners of 39th Fajr Int'l Music Festival announced

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In a ceremony held on Sunday at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, the winners of the 39th Fajr International Music Festival were unveiled, celebrating the excellence and diversity within the realm of music. The event, which took place from February 12 to 17, showcased the talents of musicians across various sections. The closing ceremony, graced by the presence of Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister, Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili, witnessed the recognition of outstanding artists with the prestigious Barbad Award, Song Award, Music and Media Award, and the Popular Song Award. Amir-Hossein Samiei, the director of the music department at the Ministry of Cul-

ture and Islamic Guidance, expressed gratitude, stating, "Thanks to the festival, effective cultural services were provided to the people from the perspective of cultural justice. This edition notably featured the separate and daily participation of women, along with the encouraging presence of children and teenagers, aiming to pave the way for future generations." Reza Mahdavi, the festival's secretary, discussed the festival's goals, stating, "We aimed to invite artists from the mainstream music scene who perform annually. At the beginning of my tenure as the festival's secretary, I mentioned a 20% potential growth this year, and I hope we have achieved that. Several ideas, such as organizing separate festivals for Iranian pop and

women's sections, and focusing more on the research and street music sections, fulfilled during this edition, with hopes of further realization in the coming years." The festival also paid tribute to three pioneers of Iranian music, honoring them in a special section attended by key figures, including Esmaeili and other high-ranking officials. The distinguished figures recognized during this section included Fazlollah Tavakol, a veteran Iranian musician, Hamayoun Rahimian, a composer and orchestra conductor, and Darvish Reza Monazammi, an acclaimed musician. Additionally, the festival presented the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance's top artistic honor symbolically to Seyyed Jalaeddin Mohammadian, an Iranian music vocalist.

## Iran ready to host Saudi cultural week: ICRO head

Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour said that Tehran is ready to host Saudi Arabia's cultural week. Imanipour and Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Iran Abdullah bin Saud al-Anazi, met in Tehran on Sunday to discuss cultural diplomacy, IRNA wrote. The head of ICRO emphasized the importance of cultural and scientific ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, stating that cultural ties serve as the safest way to bring the two nations closer to each other. He also pointed out that both countries face the common issue of Islamophobia, and that the world is grappling with double standards when it comes to diplomacy and media activities. A prime example of those double standards is the ongoing war in Gaza, the Iranian official said, adding that if any oth-

er party had been involved in crimes like those happening in Gaza, it would have been dealt with seriously. Saudi Arabia's envoy acknowledged the shared values between the two neighboring and brotherly countries, stating that their relations are based on mu-

tual respect and good neighborliness. He emphasized the significant role of both countries in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and called for the acceleration of cultural cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia.



Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization Mohammad Mehdi Imanipour and Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Iran Abdullah bin Saud al-Anazi hold talks in Tehran on February 18, 2024.  
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