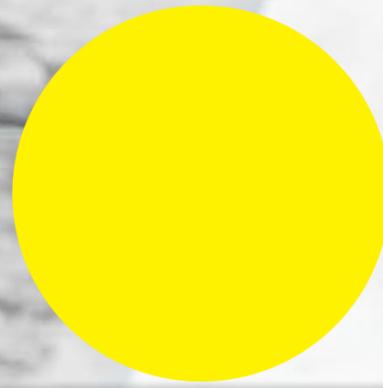


Leader plants olive sapling in solidarity with Palestinians

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei planted three saplings on Tuesday to mark Iran's National Arbor Day and Natural Resources Week.

He said that one of them is an olive sapling which was planted to show our solidarity with the oppressed and resilient people of Palestine. Arbor Day, which is celebrated every year to promote the development and preservation of greenery across the country, inaugurates the Natural Resources Week.



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US, Not Islam Dictating Policies of Islamic Countries

OIC responsible for Palestinians

Children starving to death in northern Gaza: WHO

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By Mehdi Shakibaei

West Asian affairs Expert

EXCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE

The extraordinary meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was held yesterday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This was the second meeting of the foreign ministers.

Both meetings, along with the summit of the member countries' leaders, were initiated and proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the early weeks of the Gaza war. This demonstrates Tehran's seriousness in pursuing the issues affecting the Islamic world, namely, the Gaza war and Israel's atrocities. In fact, Iran has been consistently following this issue since the beginning of the war; while, unfortunately, for many Islamic countries, news related to Palestine and Israel's massacres in the Gaza Strip has become normal.

Yesterday's meeting serves as a significant test for Islamic countries to take responsibility for the Palestinian cause and the suffering of the people of Gaza.

Despite the initial purpose of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation being to support Palestine, nearly five months into the conflict, the organization and member countries have not taken specific actions or initiatives to confront it and have lagged behind in international influence in decision-making regarding Palestine.

This lack of decisive action could be attributed to the influence of Western-oriented perspectives and the relations of Western countries with many Islamic countries.

This inactivity has also resulted in many Islamic countries not pursuing an independent policy in the international system and aligning most of their policies with those of the United States. Therefore, as the United States is not seeking to stop the war, a ceasefire has not been achieved. It simultaneously seeks to eliminate Palestinian resistance groups and pressure the hardline Netanyahu cabinet to ultimately get rid of this troublesome cabinet and replace it with another cabinet. Therefore, while claiming to strive for an end to the war, the United States continues to provide political and military support to Israel and veto ceasefire resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. This stance has turned into a political satire.

Therefore, since the Organization of Islamic Cooperation does not feel responsible for Israel's crimes and supporting the Palestinian people, it has not presented any serious plan, initiative, or even paid much attention to constructive proposals from the Islamic Republic of Iran at the summit of member states.

We hope that the meeting in Jeddah will lead to stronger positions being announced by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to prevent the genocide of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and to be more effective in the plans related to the future of Gaza and Palestine.

While the Islamic Republic of Iran remains committed to the rights of Palestinians, it also encourages other Islamic countries to take on their Islamic and ethical responsibilities.



A Palestinian girl carries a child through the rubble of houses destroyed by Israeli bombardment in Gaza City on March 3, 2024. ● AFP

46 villages still inaccessible due to Sistan and Baluchestan floods

Power, water restored in most parts of flood-hit areas

National Desk

Deputy Governor of Sistan and Baluchestan Province Mansour Bijar said most of the problems caused by recent floods in the province have been solved but "we are still facing problems in reaching 46 villages" cut off by rising waters.

Bijar said that power and water have been restored in most parts of the flood-hit areas and most of the roads, which had been closed due to the floods, have been reopened. However, he said that 31 villages still have no access to water, adding

that authorities have promised to solve the problem very soon.

Bijar said that no death has been reported so far. Head of the country's national crisis management organization Mohammad Hassan Nami said floods caused by heavy rains since Wednesday have hit 16 cities and 1,947 villages. Vast areas in the province have been inundated by floods. The cities of Dashtiari Qasrqand, Nikshahr and Chabahar are the hardest hit areas.

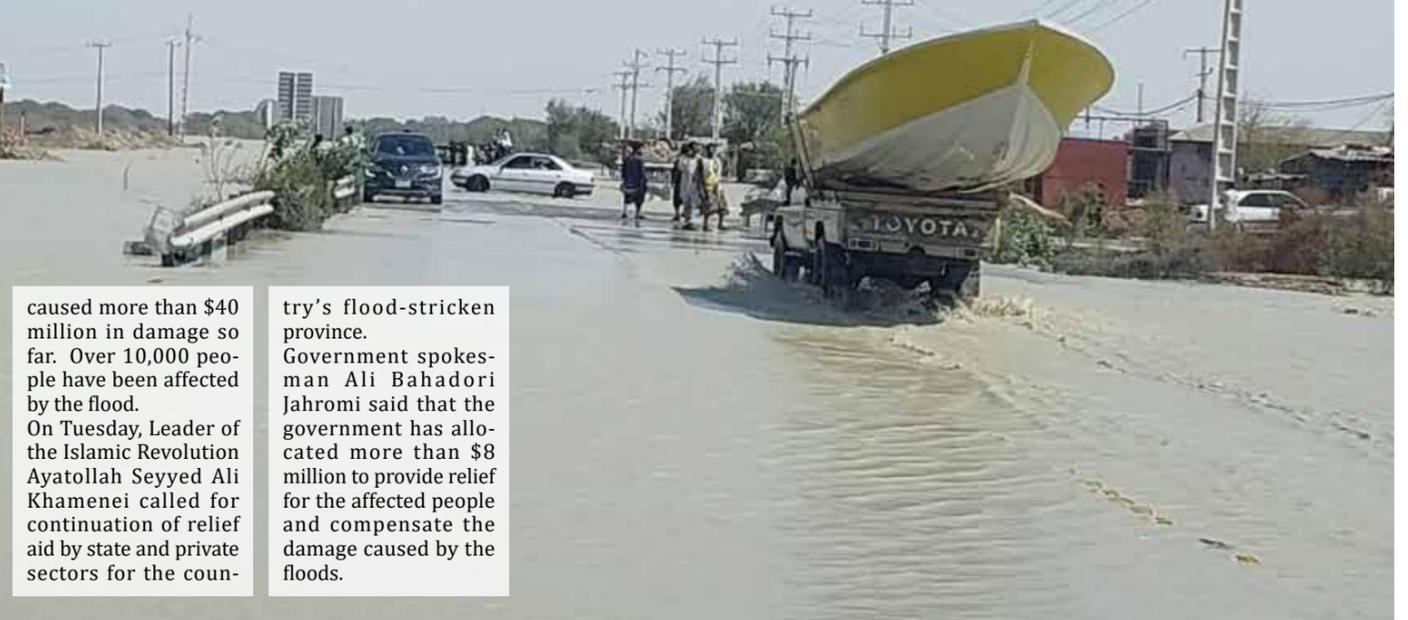
According to the head of the province's crisis management, Majid Mohebbi, floods have

caused more than \$40 million in damage so far. Over 10,000 people have been affected by the flood.

On Tuesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called for continuation of relief aid by state and private sectors for the coun-

try's flood-stricken province.

Government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi said that the government has allocated more than \$8 million to provide relief for the affected people and compensate the damage caused by the floods.



● IRNA

Iran, Uzbekistan discuss banking, transit issues

Tashkent seeks 'advanced technologies' from Iran for key sectors

Economy Desk

Iran and Uzbekistan have stressed on resolving banking and transit issues between the two countries, as well as increasing economic exchanges to \$2 billion. During a meeting with the Minister of Energy of Uzbekistan in Tehran, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber emphasized that solving financial and banking issues plays a fundamental role in the sustainable economic relations and activation of the private sector of both countries.

The vice president proposed that financial transactions could be conducted using the national currencies of both countries, emphasizing the importance of avoiding the use of a third country's currency. "It is crucial for enhancing

the value of the national currencies of Iran and Uzbekistan. The central banks of both countries should establish the required banking mechanisms for this purpose," he added. During the meeting, the energy minister of Uzbekistan hailed the capabilities of Iran in the energy sector, saying, "During visits to large Iranian companies, the significant industrial progress in the country was noticeable."

"We aim to utilize the advanced technologies in the oil, petrochemical, food, and industrial sectors of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Uzbekistan," said Jorabek Mirzamahmudov. He considered the establishment of industrial zones in both countries as a significant factor in introducing industrial projects and products to the public and

private sectors.

Emphasizing the necessity of increasing the transit capacity between the two countries, Mirzamahmudov said the current capacity for transporting goods "is up to 3,000 vehicles, which, according to assessments, can be expanded to 24,000 vehicles".

The Uzbek minister also described the historical meetings of the two countries' presidents over the past two years as a sign of deepening relations, adding that the heads of state have stressed the need to increase financial and economic exchanges from \$500 million to \$1 billion, with plans to reach \$2 billion in the near future. It is essential to establish the necessary framework for implementing the agreements between the two countries.

Children starving to death in northern Gaza: WHO

An aid mission to two hospitals in northern Gaza found horrifying scenes of children dying of starvation, amid dire shortages of food, fuel and medicines, the World Health Organization.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Monday the agency's visits over the weekend to the Al-Awda and Kamal Adwan hospitals "were the first since early October 2023 despite our efforts to gain more regular access to the north of Gaza", AFP reported.

The findings were "grim", he said on X, adding that "the situation at Al-Awda was particularly appalling, as one of the buildings is destroyed". The Kamal Adwan hospital, the only pediatrics hospital in northern Gaza, was overwhelmed with patients, he said.

"The lack of food resulted in the deaths of 10 children," Tedros said. In all, the Gaza health

ministry has said at least 16 children have died of malnutrition in aid-deprived northern Gaza.

The United Nations warned last week that famine in the Gaza Strip was "almost inevitable" because of the war that has been raging in the Palestinian territory since the beginning of the Israel's onslaught on Gaza on October 7.

In addition to the dire lack of food at the two northern hospitals, Tedros also cautioned on X that "the lack of electricity poses a serious threat to patient care, especially in critical areas like the intensive care unit and the neonatal unit".

The WHO chief reiterated an appeal to Israel to "ensure humanitarian aid can be delivered safely, and regularly".

"Civilians, especially children, and health staff need scaled-up help immediately," he said,



● AFP

stressing though that "the key medicine all these patients need is peace. Cease-fire."

A senior UN aid official recently warned that at least 576,000 people across the Gaza Strip - one quarter of the population - faced catastrophic levels of food insecurity and one in six children under the age of two in the north were suffering from acute malnutrition. And the regional direc-

tor of the UN's children's agency, UNICEF, said "the child deaths we feared are here, as malnutrition ravages the Gaza Strip". "These tragic and horrific deaths are man-made, predictable and entirely preventable," Adele Khodr said in a statement on Sunday.

Israel's has killed more than 30,500 people so far, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in Gaza.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran calls for 'stronger' actions by OIC against Israel's genocide in Gaza

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian called for "stronger and more effective" actions by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to stop Israel's war crimes and genocide in the Gaza Strip. The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks in a meeting with the OIC Secretary General Houssein Brahim Taha in the Saudi Arabian port city of Jeddah on Tuesday. Amir-Abdollahian ex-

pressed deep concerns about the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, where more than 30,500 Palestinians have been killed by Israel's strikes since October.

He said that the Islamic countries participating in the summit should send a strong message to the Israeli regime and its supporters by taking strong decisions and steps in order to put an end to the regime's genocide in the Palestinian territory. The OIC held an extraordi-

nary summit to discuss the ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Taha, for his part, expressed gratitude for Iran's strong position in supporting the Palestinian people.



● IRNA

Abbasian House in Kashan showcasing diversity of Iranian architecture



Iranica Desk

The Abbasian House in Kashan is considered one of the masterpieces of Iranian architecture, inscribed on Iran's National Heritage List. This historical house is located in the Sultan Amir Ahmad neighborhood and is so beautiful that it has been featured as a location in numerous Iranian television series. The unique structure and interconnected rooms of this mansion are appealing to every tourist, as they showcase the full spectrum of Iranian architecture. Additionally, visitors to this house will experience the fusion of various Iranian arts, from intricately patterned plasterwork to carved stone balustrades and more.

The Abbasian House is renowned as a masterpiece of Iranian architecture, making it popular among both local and international tourists. This historical house is considered one of the Qajar-era buildings, constructed over a 20-year period by Haj Mohammad Ibrahim, a well-known merchant of ceramics and glassware in Kashan. Construction began around 1829. This expansive house spans 5,000 square meters, with a built-up area of 7,000 square meters and boasts five courtyards.

Following the passing of its original owner, the house gradually evolved into five independent residences. What sets this complex apart from others like the



● IRNA

Tabatabaei and Borujerdi houses is its architectural uniqueness, appearing as if it emerges from the depths of the earth; notably, its first floor sits below ground level.

The Abbasian House in Kashan, with its unassuming and modest exterior, captivates every onlooker with its pinnacle of art and architecture within its walls. Designed in harmony with the warm and arid climate of the region, the expansive layout of the house is so vast that one might easily lose their way while exploring.

Registered on Iran's National Heritage List in 1998, the Abbasian House is presently safeguarded by the Kashan Municipality. Enriched by the presence of a traditional restaurant, this residence promises moments of delight. Moreover, visitors can enjoy additional amenities such as a café, a souvenir shop, a traditional drink shop, and a carpet-weaving

workshop within this complex.

Boasting five courtyards, each with distinctive architecture and its own unique name, this residence stands out for its unparalleled variety and abundance of spaces. The quality of these spaces sets them apart from those found in other houses. Noteworthy among the architectural marvels of this structure are the water channels sourced from the qanats, which meander through the adobe foundations of the courtyard, crafted from sarooj mortar to withstand the test of time.

Presence of ponds, trees, and green spaces in the courtyards of the Abbasian House significantly contributes to the internal humidity regulation. Moreover, the rooms surrounding the courtyards are designed to withstand desert sandstorms, cold winter winds, and harsh weather conditions. Considering these aspects, let's now explore some key ar-

chitectural features of this house.

Seasonal variation: Different sections of this mansion are allocated for summer and winter purposes, enabling specific areas of the complex to be utilized based on the seasonal weather conditions.

Symmetrical design: The inherent symmetry of this structure is visually appealing; if an imaginary line is drawn down the middle of each side of the house, both sides are perfectly symmetrical.

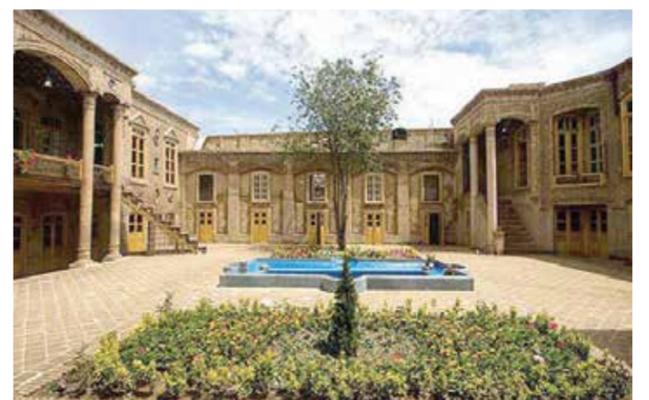
Islamic architectural elements: Upon entering the Abbasian House, one can observe the religious influences in its design. Alongside the internal and external divisions, the presence of interconnected rooms, a privacy wall to shield from neighbors' view, and the segregation of living spaces for women and men demonstrate this consideration. This meticulous planning is evident from the moment you enter the house, with distinct knocking sounds at the entrance

doors indicating the occupants' gender. This tradition originates from Kashan's historical association as Dar al-Momenin and the inherently religious architectural style of the Qajar era.

Inward-looking architecture: Ancient structures like the Abbasian House feature a simple exterior with minimal decorations; however, upon entering, they exude magnificence and beauty.

Courtyard trench: The Abbasian House is positioned below street level, following the architectural style known as "courtyard trench". This design facilitated the building's connection to the qanat for adequate water pressure. Moreover, utilizing excavated soil for brick-making led to cost efficiency. The consistency of materials with the neighboring soil further reinforced the building's structure. Additionally, this method provided insulation against both cold and heat, further enhancing its benefits.

Impressive design of Tavakoli House in Mashhad astonishing visitors



● fadatrains.com

Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi Province, hosting the holy shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH), the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims, stands as one of the country's notable metropolises. Historically, this city served as the capital of Iran during the Afsharid dynasty. Unfortunately, many of Mashhad's tourist attractions were sacrificed for road construction, leaving few historical buildings intact. Among these remnants stands the exquisite Mashhad Tavakoli House, recognized and list-

ed on the Iran National Heritage List in 2005.

History

Dating back to the 19th century and the Qajar era, Tavakoli House in Mashhad was originally the residence of the renowned merchant named Keshmeshian. Later, it came into the possession of Tavakoli, leading to its current name. Following Tavakoli's death, the house lay vacant until the Mashhad Municipality acquired it. Extensive renovations were undertaken in 2010,

culminating in the establishment of the Maktab-Khaneh Museum within its walls. The museum features wax figures depicting traditional educational practices and serves as a cultural hub.

Features

Upon entering Tavakoli House, visitors are greeted by a stunning entrance portal adorned with intricate brickwork and mosaic tile designs. The interior courtyard boasts a serene fountain and lush greenery, creat-

ing a peaceful ambiance. The house's two-story structure showcases a grand *ivan* (portico) with elaborately decorated columns, a hallmark of its architectural splendor. Noteworthy are the Orsi windows with colored glass and wooden mesh, adding to the house's charm.

The distinct design elements of Tavakoli House such as its columned ivans and precise brickwork reflect the architectural trends of the Qajar period. Despite rumors of hauntings due to the house's abandoned state, these are

merely superstitions. The house's historical significance and architectural beauty make it a must-visit attraction in Mashhad, complementing the city's religious sites and natural allure.

Whether embarking on a pilgrimage to Mashhad or exploring it as a tourist, a visit to Tavakoli House promises a glimpse into Iran's rich heritage. Whether part of an organized tour or an independent journey, experiencing the historical treasures of Mashhad, including Tavakoli House, is highly recommended.

Frederick present era bearing striking resemblance

Balancing classics, adaptation in Iranian theater



By Hamideh
Hosseini
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

IRAN DAILY: According to directors, free theatrical adaptation makes it easier to present a more audience-friendly performance. What is your view?

HAMIDREZA NAIMI: I disagree with this conclusion. Why should we limit or expand plays like 'Enemy of the People,' 'Doll's House,' 'A View from the Bridge,' 'A Streetcar Named Desire,' 'Life of Galileo,' and numerous other beautiful plays that are actually audience-friendly with their excellent concepts? This approach does not apply to all plays and productions. When Hamid Samandarian attended my theatrical adaptation of William Shakespeare's 'King Lear,' he said that classical and neo-classical works have no choice but to be adapted or dramatized for contemporary life.

Sometimes, in contemporary plays, due to political, and ideological reasons, and the challenges that may reflect a part of a play with the situation of our society and the censorship, or in terms of the duration of the performance, the director may be forced to delete certain parts of the work in the performance, which, in my opinion, should not be criticized as inherently non-audience-friendly. While being audience-friendly can enhance the power of a work rather than being a weakness or a sign of triviality.

I remember Claus Peymann's direction of 'Richard II,' performed at Vahdat Hall in 230 minutes, and Iranian audiences, including myself, were thrilled by watching it. This can truly be an example of audience-friendliness. For all intents and purposes, do we create a work to please the general audience or get them away from the stage. In the works I have directed, I try to pay attention to both the "unspecialized audience," referring to the general viewer, and the "specialized audience," whom we call the astute viewer. And this makes the theatrical production more challenging.

How do you compare the Iranian audience's interest in adaptations and local works?

Basically, the monitoring, evaluation, and governmental systems hinder the growth of Iranian playwrights. They show no mercy or compassion in giving permits to works by Iranian authors. They don't allow playwrights to freely write about political and social crises or adapt from classical Persian literary works or historical events.

In these circumstances, many local plays that are staged are either neutral, superficial, or have a significant gap in understanding the audience's awareness of the society's conditions. Iranian directors have no choice but to turn to staging translated or adapted foreign plays, classical and neo-classical works, or foreign novels and stories. This is due to the necessity imposed on Iranian directors. Although there are various sources for adaptation, there is no hope of obtaining a permit. I consider Iranian audience's enthusiasm for the works of Bahram Beizaei, Qotbeddin Sadeqi, Mohammad Rahmanian, Mohammad Yaqoubi, and others, who have written and worked on Iranian pieces, to be on par with the works of figures like Samandarian, Ali Rafiei, and Rokned-

din Khosravi, who have staged foreign plays.

Audiences seek to watch brilliant performances, whether Iranian or foreign. Personally, I may not be a supporter of Western or Eastern plays. Just as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Khayyam, Saadi, and Rumi belong to Western audiences, Homer, Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Goethe belong to Eastern people.

Given your experience in historical works, what is the reason for your interest towards Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's 'Frederick or the Crime Boulevard'? Why did you choose a philosophical theater?

The very first interest of any director in staging an emotional play. Directing a work give you the feeling that you are unique, you feel delighted. This stems from the writer's power in storytelling, dialogue writing, language, creating vibrant and dynamic characters, and the last but not least the genre of the work. The next step in selecting a piece is the form and the playwright's idea and concept. A director reads hundreds of plays, but through thought of a few works he undergo a paradigm shift in his thinking. Likewise, reading the play 'Frederick,' I was emotionally and intellectually preoccupied. Its tone and the atmosphere of comedic sections, which brightened the exhausted spirits of our current days, convinced me that its performance is a "necessity." By all means, this melodramatic play is not as philosophical as the works of Jean-Paul Sartre or Albert Camus or Samuel Beckett, but undoubtedly, the characters in this play have their own philosophies. Another aspect I appreciated was that, this time, I wanted the audience would become acquainted with the behind-the-scenes, the production process, rehearsals and performance of the play.

Discuss the challenges of staging theaters like 'Frederick'. Is it more difficult compared to Iranian plays?

Producing an Iranian play doesn't differ much from staging a foreign one. Undoubtedly, the most significant challenge is the lack of financial resources and government support for state theaters. The majority of a director's creativity, energy, ability, and time are devoted to find sponsorship and funding for the production. Approximately 70% of my energy and mental focus were dedicated to borrowing the required \$20,000 for this production. This work is the result of

30% of my creativity and focus. Looking back, I see that our 30% effort as Iranian directors is equivalent to 100% effort by foreign directors who, without any stress or worry, focus on creating their works. Theater artists are the forgotten people of Iran. Their challenging profession and beautiful art seem to have no value in the eyes of art authorities. We and our art matter only to ourselves and the audience we have.

I don't know how far we can continue this situation, but undoubtedly, we are in the darkest period of Iranian theater. A time when no official cares about culture, literature, arts, and education. A time when all the resources of this country are plundered without ensuring the basic necessities of life, such as genetic health, proper breathing, safe drinking and eating, proper sleep, reading, and thinking. Now that we are left to ourselves, I wish we had the freedom of thought and expression to raise our voices. Hopelessness about the future, job insecurity, unemployment, and lack of income are the biggest obstacles facing theater families.

The idea for this project dates back to 2019 and experienced years old hiatus before coming to fruition. What were the reasons, and what distinguishes the initial work from the one that eventually hit the stage on November 28, 2023?

In 2019, everything was ready for performance. We were preparing for mise-en-scène, costumes, and advertising, that the spread of the COVID-19 stopped the performance on March 26, 2020. In the following three years, despite officials' insistence, I did not find the conditions suitable for staging this work. During this five-year hiatus, the script remained unchanged, but as a director, I underwent changes in terms of age, literacy, and artistic taste. Set design, costumes, music, actors movement, creating characters for stage workers, changing some actors, adding singers and dancers to the performance, and of course, my own role as "Frederick," are among the significant changes.

In the initial week of Frederick's ticket sales, the play managed to achieve a revenue of \$4,300. What's behind this warm reception in this short period?

I never consider the sales of a play as the only criterion for its value. The opinions of critics and experts matter, and audience reception is crucial for the life of a theatrical work. Shaya

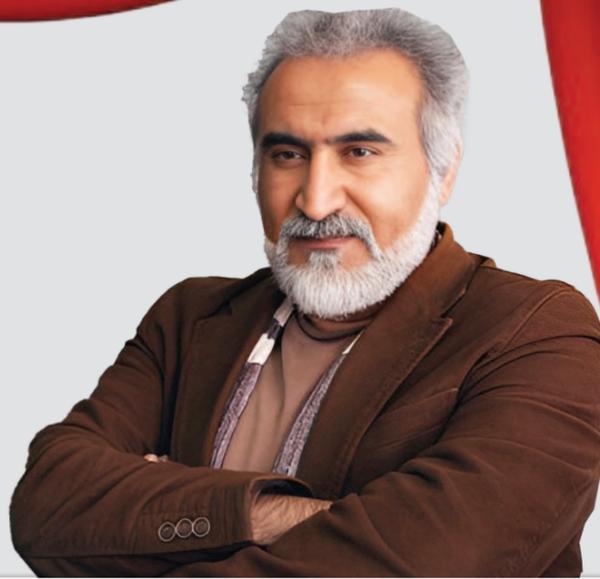


Hamidreza Naimi, a leading director and actor in Iran's theater, has made significant contributions with successful performances such as 'King Lear,' 'Faust,' 'Shining of the Promised Hour,' and 'Socrates.'

His latest theatrical work, 'Frederick or the Crime Boulevard,' penned by Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, is about the theater – about intrigues between actors, about a stupid playwright and greedy manager, about happiness and curse of the acting, and, of course, about love. In the play, theater, and life are inextricably intertwined as two poles of the whole. The play, held at Tehran's City Theater from November 28 to January 18, got kudos by large number of audiences and critics. The warm reception motivated us to sit down for an exclusive interview with the director.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Naimi talked about the adaptation of plays for contemporary audiences, the challenges faced by Iranian playwrights, and the balance between catering to both general and astute viewers. He dismisses the notion that free theatrical adaptation always leads to a more audience-friendly experience, emphasizing the long-lasting power of classical and neo-classical works. Discussing the adaptation of 'Frederick' for Iranian audiences, Naimi explains the deliberate infusion of Iranian cultural and literary elements into the play.

The full text of the interview follows:



Naimi has previously recorded successful performances such as 'Faust,' 'Shining of the Promised Hour,' 'Socrates,' 'Far East Near East,' 'Assassination,' 'The Good Soldier Schweik,' 'Once Upon a Time a Dog' and 'Richard III' in his professional portfolio.



Theater Group has a 30-year history, founded by individuals like Shahram Karami, Yaghoob Sabaahi, Behnaz Nazi, Hamidreza Azarang, Mandana Abqari, and myself during our college days. Over the years, we've invited individuals, some of whom are still with us, including Shabnam Moqaddami, and Kambiz Amini.

Certainly, the enduring success and stability of the group, along with the effort to create brilliant, thoughtful, and impactful works, are not hidden from the eyes of the Iranian audience. In 'Frederick,' we may not have a familiar face from television or cinema, but our credibility assures the audience that they can trust our shows from the very beginning. Obviously, the continuation of the reception depends on direct interaction with the audience. If the work is not good, audience won't recommend it to others.

In the play, Frederick is constantly changing costumes with different colors. What is the purpose behind this?

We are dealing with a star performer from the early 19th century. He is widely popular among the general audience. He is an artist whose attire, behavior, and style of this artist have always been under the scrutiny of his audience, much like today's cinema and theater stars who attract attention from photographers, magazines, and media. Therefore, considering just one costume for him from start to finish wouldn't be fitting. In the play, we see him in three different scenes, portraying different characters and types each time, requiring special costume designs for each character.

In staging this performance, you perform it in a manner that suggests Frederick is Iranian, grappling with the current issues faced by every Iranian. If its French elements were deleted, it could be considered a wholly Iranian piece. Explain about such artistic adaptations.

I have never written or adapted a play that does not relate to the conditions of Iranian so-

ciety. Even when performing a foreign script, I have always considered the necessity of its performance for my audience. The pain and suffering of 19th-century French plays sadly mirror the struggles of today's theater families in our country. Narrow-mindedness, jealousy, economic crises in producing artistic works, censorship, theater closures, wasting talents, and the despair of the cultural community to continue their work... these are the challenges we face today.

What is your opinion about adding Iranian cultural and literary elements to adaptations of Western plays and novels?

I don't perform this play in its original language, French, for a French-speaking audience. I perform it in Persian for Iranian audience. The translator has the flexibility to use Persian idioms, proverbs, and expressions to convey the meaning quickly. Consider a German proverb: "Lieber den Spatz in der Hand als die Taube auf dem Dach." A translator might change it to "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

I once asked Jamal Mirsadeqi why a Russian work

The play is about Frederick Lemaitre, a 19th-century larger-than-life, popular actor, an eccentric, a seducer, and a revolutionary for whom nothing is too much. Paris is fascinated by him. He seems ready for anything except love. On the stage, he is the embodiment of passionate love, whereas behind the scenes he has to buy ready-made love. When he meets Bérénice, a young and mysterious woman with no connection with the stage, he faces a crucial dilemma: love as an illusion or love as reality? The stage or real life?

was translated as "Rows of Tabrizi trees..." He said readers in Iran know that type of tree as "Tabrizi." Look at Ahmad Shamlou's translation of Federico Garcia Lorca's poems. Lorca, in Spain, mostly wrote folk and rural songs, but in Shamlou's translation, it strongly resembles Shamlou's own poetic language. The nuances and rules of translation is very important, but translating dialogues and plays of Shakespeare, which are poetic, differs from the artistic prose of Ibsen and all are considered in Persian translations. About the modern dance of the elders in the play, it's a deliberate break I've used in many other shows. In 'Socrates,' everyone wears suits and ties, but Socrates wears Greek attire. In 'Assassination,' all citizens of Kufa wear golden-colored watches. I use these jump cuts a lot in my shows, blurring the line between past and present.

Regarding the failures of artists in a society, as depicted in the play, can you briefly explain the current situation of artists in Iran?

It's exactly what I depict in the play. Talented individuals always bear the brunt the most. In the world and Iran, the basis of suffering is knowledge. Great artists and young talents are getting sacrificed much, while those tied to political parties benefit from privileges, favors, and blessings.

What's your reason for not using HF microphones?

Theater actors should have trained and eloquent expressions. There's no meaningful use for HF microphones unless for a specific purpose or dramatic reason. Using it without reason can be considered a shortcoming for actors and performance.

The stage design, especially the costume design, added to the appeal of this production. What were the challenges of costume and stage design for this work?

Unfortunately, we had to borrow money from family and friends to cover the costs of décor and costumes. I feel sorry for the indifferent officials who don't care about the hardships of artists.

What's the reason for playing the lead role, Frederick, yourself?

A renowned actor was supposed to play the role of Frederick, but 10 days before rehearsals, he left our project. This led to losing sponsors and our producer. It was a harsh blow, unexpected. In the short time I had, I contacted several well-known figures like Hamed Behdad, Amir Ja'fari, Amir Jadidi, Hamed Komeili, and Parviz Parastui, but they were all occupied with other projects. At the end of the day, with confidence in my ability to perform this role, I decided to play it myself, and I am very happy that the show was well-received despite the absence of recognizable faces. This shows that in theater, it's the quality of the performance that matters to the audience, not the presence of faces and stars. I hope producers and sponsors understand this.



Iranian Hazfi Cup: Esteghlal stunned by Mes; Persepolis, Sepahan ease into last-16

Sports Desk

Three rescheduled fixtures in the Iranian Hazfi Cup were staged on Monday, with defending champion Persepolis and Sepahan claiming comfortable victories over their opponents to march into last 16.

Meanwhile, the biggest upset of the third round saw Esteghlal crash out of the domestic cup after a 2-0 defeat at Mes Rafsanjan. Esteghlal defender Saleh Hardani could have given the Blues an early lead from the spot, only to see his effort well saved by former Persepolis keeper Hamed Lak in the 12th minute.

Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi put Moharram Navidkia's revived Mes in front with a composed finish in the 24th minute, before Iraqi midfielder Muntadher Mohammed's sublime lob doubled the home side's advantage midway through the second half.

This was only a second defeat for Javad Nekounam since he took charge of the Blues bench last summer, though it also meant that his side has now failed to win its last seven away games across all competitions.

Leading the Iranian top-flight table, Esteghlal will return to league action on Friday, visiting Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ahvaz.

Elsewhere, Persepolis continued its impressive run under Brazilian



Esteghlal's Jaloliddin Masharipov (blue) is tackled by Mes Rafsanjan midfielder Farshid Baqeri during an Iranian Hazfi Cup match in Kerman, Iran, on March 4, 2024.

Osmar Vieira – an ex-number two to his predecessor Yahya Golmohammadi – walking away with a

3-0 win against second-tier club Naft Gachsaran in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Mahdi Torabi broke the deadlock late in the first half, with Danial Esmailifar and Issa Alekasir on

the scoresheet in the second period as the Reds eased to a third successive victory after the Asian

Cup pause and will hope to repeat the success in the league when taking on Foolad Khuzestan on Friday ahead of next week's crunch Tehran Derby.

In Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Portuguese manager Jose Morais was thrilled to see his Sepahan team end a seven-game losing streak with a commanding 3-0 triumph over Shams Azar, which had beaten the Isfahan-based outfit by one goal in the league on the first of the new year.

Reza Asadi, the second top scorer in the league, scored his first goal since late December, flicking in a Ramin Rezaeian's effort into the roof of the net.

Omid Nourafkan's sizzling strike doubled Sepahan's lead on the hour mark, and substitute Reza Shekari sealed the victory with 20 minutes left on the clock.

Sitting third in the league table – eight points off the top with two games in hand – Morais will be eager to have his men keep up the momentum at home against Paykan on Friday.

Monday's winners will be joined by fellow top-flight sides Malavan, Iralco, Havadar, Golgozar, Paykan, Zob Ahan, and Tractor as well as second-division clubs Chadormalu SC, Fajr Sepasi, Saipa, Mes Kerman, Esteghlal Mollasani, and Mes Sungun in the next round of the Hazfi Cup.

Fazza 2024 Para Powerlifting World Cup: Gharibshahi wins heavyweight gold

Sports Desk

Iranians grabbed three medals at the Fazza 2024 Para Powerlifting World Cup in Dubai on Monday, including an Aliakbar Gharibshahi's gold in the heavyweight class.

Representing the country in the 107kg contests, Gharibshahi picked up where he had left off in last October's Asian Para Games as a best

lift of 250kg saw the Iranian claim the ultimate prize.

This was a third gold for Iran in Dubai, following Ahmad Aminzadeh's superheavyweight triumph as well as Mohsen Bakhtiar's Asian record-breaking performance in the 59kg event. Gharibshahi was joined by teammate Saman Razi – a Paralympic bronze medalist three years ago – in Monday's event but the Iranian

was unfortunate to miss out on the podium as he registered 215kg to end in the fourth place.

Elsewhere, Seyyed Hamed Solhipour – a silver winner in Tokyo – had to settle for the runner-up spot in the 97kg class, courtesy of a 221kg lift.

Reigning Paralympic champion Rouhollah Rostami took Iran's medal count to five later in day, when

he lifted 214kg to finish second in the 88kg weight class – a second major silver for the Iranian in five months after his runner-up finish in the Asian Para Games.

More than 180 athletes from 32 countries took part at the 13th edition of the competition, which also served as a qualification event for this summer's Paralympic Games in Paris.



paralympic.ir

Chelsea identify Amorim, De Zerbi as potential Pochettino replacements



ANDREW COULDRIDGE/ACTION IMAGES

THE GUARDIAN – Chelsea's desire to wait until the end of the season before reviewing Mauricio Pochettino's position has not stopped the club from identifying Rúben Amorim and Roberto De Zerbi as potential replacements for the Argentinian.

Pochettino, who was handed a two-year deal after arriving at Stamford Bridge last summer, faces an uncertain future after a mixed run of results. Supporters turned on the head coach during Chelsea's 2-2 draw with Brentford last Saturday and there are doubts over whether the 52-year-old will be in charge next season.

Chelsea, who are 11th in the Premier League, remain determined not to make any kneejerk decisions and key figures within the hierarchy are still supportive of Pochettino. Although results and performances have been inconsistent,

there is a view that the side is moving in the right direction under the former Tottenham manager. Pochettino has not lost a youthful dressing room and has had to contend with injuries to influential players all season.

However the pressure on the former Southampton coach grew after Chelsea lost the Carabao Cup final to an injury-hit and inexperienced Liverpool side in extra time last month. Pochettino's future is likely to depend on whether Chelsea, who host Leicester in the FA Cup quarter-finals on 17 March, secure European football.

Chelsea are taking a long-term view and hope to be ready should they decide to go in a different direction. They are assessing both Amorim, who has impressed at Sporting, and De Zerbi, who could leave Brighton at the end of the

season. De Zerbi is on Liverpool's shortlist to replace Jürgen Klopp and is of interest to Manchester United should they sack Erik ten Hag.

Liverpool are also looking at Amorim. The 39-year-old led Sporting to the Portuguese title in 2021 and he hopes to help them win the league again this season. Chelsea considered Amorim before appointing Pochettino last year.

Any manager who takes the Chelsea job would need to be willing to work beneath the club's sporting structure. Pochettino is not in charge of recruitment. The co-sporting directors, Laurence Stewart and Paul Winstanley, have largely been behind a spending spree on a host of young players. Joe Shields, the co-director of recruitment and talent, has also played a part and Behdad Eghbali, the co-controlling owner, is highly influential.

Iran VP urges global promotion of nation's culture, civilization



Arts & Culture Desk

In an effort to promote Iran's cultural richness worldwide, Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, the Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs, emphasized the need for a proper representation of Iran's religious teachings and ideals. Speaking at the closing ceremony of the first national award for outstanding international cultural research, held by Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) on March 5, Hosseini highlighted the importance of continuous

innovation in the fields of culture and communication, ICRO reported. He stressed the necessity of addressing social challenges through reading and research, asserting that knowledge knows no boundaries. Hosseini called for a deeper exploration of cultural and civilizational aspects, expressing the hope that the ongoing cultural program initiated by the organization would persist to effectively introduce Iran's cultural depth and current status to the world. While acknowledging the

importance of military strength as a deterrent, he emphasized the significance of "cultural power" in political and economic fields. Mohammadreza Dehshiri, the Head of the Department of International Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged for a comprehensive approach in scientific research, combining in-depth studies in anthropology with practical applications geared towards problem-solving. He cautioned against artificial dichotomies and invalid categorizations, urging a deep connection between

cultural research and societal studies. Dehshiri highlighted the value of historical oral discussions and called for the utilization of the experiences of cultural attachés and past managers in international cultural affairs. Expressing hope that the award would stimulate more interest among researchers in cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations, Dehshiri envisioned the award as a catalyst for increased focus on cultural studies in the realm of international relations.

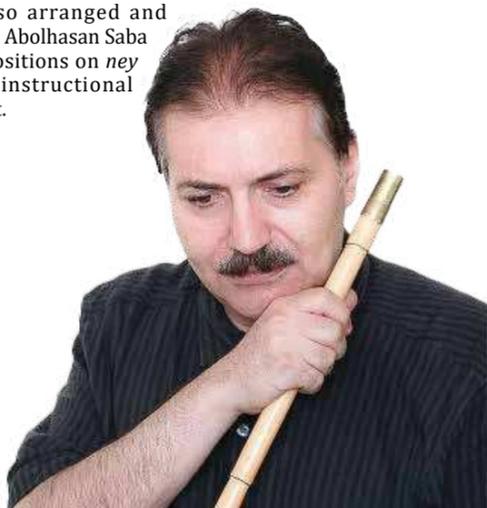
Iran's composer Jamshid Andalibi dies at 66

Iranian musician and *ney* (end-blown flute) player, Jamshid Andalibi, died at the age of 66 due to a heart failure.

The news was reported by IRNA from the Iran Music House, expressing condolences to his family and praying for patience and tranquility.

Born on March 3, 1958, in Sanandaj, Andalibi initially learned to play *ney* without a master. Later, he continued his musical education at the University of Tehran and honed his *ney* techniques under the guidance of Hossein Omoumi. He furthered his skills in traditional Iranian music with Nasrollah Nassehpour, Nourali Boroumand, and Mohammadreza Lotfi. In 1981, Andalibi sought advanced *ney* playing techniques from Hassan Kasai in Isfahan. Throughout his career, he collaborated

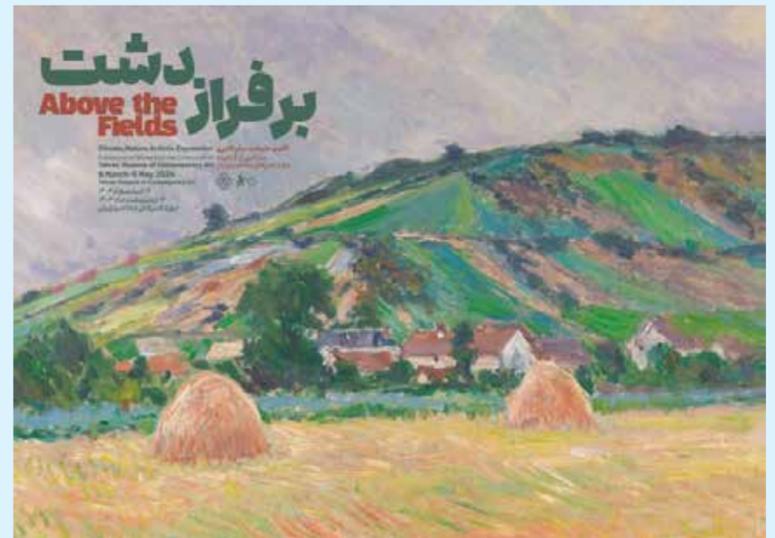
closely with Mohammadreza Shajarian on works such as 'Yad-e Ayyam' and 'Rosva-ye Del.' Besides his proficiency in playing *ney*, Andalibi was actively involved in composing, having produced albums in this domain. He also arranged and played Abolhasan Saba compositions on *ney* in an instructional format.



Tehran Int'l Animation Festival extended

The 13th Tehran International Animation Festival (TIAF), which began on March 3 at the Cultural and Artistic Creations Center of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) in Tehran, will be extended until March 8.

The decision to extend the festival was announced by the secretary of the TIAF, citing the enthusiastic response from students, art schools, artists, and animation enthusiasts, ILNA wrote. This extension provides an extended opportunity for visitors to explore the eighth National Animation Market and enjoy the works of participating artists during the festival.



'Above the Fields' displays Int'l painters' works

Arts & Culture Desk

The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art will host an international exhibition titled 'Above the Fields,' showcasing a curated selection of works by Iranian and foreign artists.

'Above the Fields' provides an opportunity to explore the relationship between climate, nature, and artistic expression in a chosen collection from the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. The exhibition adopts a nature-oriented approach, reflecting a significant

part of the world's visual art history, IRNA wrote.

Featuring 70 prominent pieces from renowned foreign and Iranian painters, the exhibition includes works by artists such as Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Jean Dufy, David Hockney, Ludovic Piéte, Sohrab Sepehri, Abolqasem Saeidi, Parviz Kalantari, Jalal Shabahangi, Hossein Mahjoubi, Farideh Lashai, and more. The exhibition will open on March 9 at Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and welcomes public visitors until May 5.

Iranian films get kudos in Malaysia



Arts & Culture Desk

Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Malaysia, Habib Reza Arzani, announced a 100% sales and overwhelming reception of Iranian films by Malaysians.

Arzani highlighted the simultaneous screening of the first part of the cinema festival in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, featuring the prominent Iranian artist Behrouz Shoaibi. The second part, set to open on March 6 in Penang, will host Narges Abyar, a renowned Iranian writer and director. With notable enthusiasm for Iranian films and a remarkable 100% capacity sale in cinema halls, Arzani expressed that this reception is unprecedented, surpassing the 28-30% reported for the Japanese

and French film festivals. Arzani emphasized the need to use this positive response for the effective promotion of Iranian cinema's capabilities, aiming for serious planning in the distribution and sale of Iranian films, as well as agreements for co-production with Malaysia.

The Iranian Cultural Attaché in Malaysia added that the opening ceremony of the Iranian Film Festival in Penang would feature the screening of 'Track 143,' directed by Abyar, in the presence of Malaysian artists.

Arzani outlined planned activities, including speeches at the opening ceremony, meetings with prominent Malaysian filmmakers, and conducting educational workshops on introducing Iranian cinema's ca-

pabilities. The Iranian official emphasized that this year's festival aims to strengthen cultural ties between Iran and Malaysia, introduce the national, religious, and moral values of the Iranian society, and foster artistic interaction among Muslim countries through film promotion. Arzani noted that films such as 'Henas' (2022), 'The Painting Pool' (2013), 'Track 143' (2014), 'Bodyguard' (2016), 'No Prior Appointment' (2022), and 'Today' (2014) would be screened during the festival. The festival opened on February 29 and will run through March 10 in Malaysia, organized by the Iranian Embassy in Malaysia, with support from the Iran's Culture and Islamic Organization.

13,430 Palestinian children killed in 151 days in Gaza

Palestinian civilians, children, and women in the Gaza Strip continuously targeted in attacks since Oct. 7



Number of
Palestinians
killed

30,534

▶ **SINCE OCT. 7**

Number of injured

71,920 

In Gaza Israeli army;

Destroyed **more than 1000** schools, universities, mosques, churches and hospitals

Killed **364** medics, **48** civil defense personnel, and **132** journalists

At least

13,430
children

At least

8,900
women

