



Iran's animation wins at Cleveland festival, eligible for Oscar



Iranian animation 'Anita, Lost in the News', directed by Behzad Nalbandi, won the Best Animated Short Jury Award at the 48th Cleveland International Film Festival, an Academy Award-qualifying event, held from April 3 to April 13 in the United States. The 17-minute film competed in the inter-

national documentary section along with 'Nyanga,' 'Medhin Twolde Serrano'. The synopsis of the film reads, "A little girl with big dreams, accompanied by her family, are illegal immigrants who have to cross the English Channel on a sail boat in search of better life." Nalbandi's previous film

'Torn Papers,' which garnered awards at various international and Iranian film festivals. 'Anita, Lost in the News' has previously been screened at several festivals including festivals in Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival in Czech and Tokyo Anime Award Festival in Japan.

Visa waiver to bring 3.5b tourists to Iran: *Minister*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts announced that with the cancellation of visa requirements for nationals of 33 countries, approximately 3.5 billion people globally will have the opportunity to travel to Iran without visas. Speaking at a meeting held at the National Museum of Iran, Ezzatollah Zarghami

stated that the government has shown special attention to the tourism sector, with the recent move to abolish visas for citizens of numerous countries seen as a significant step in boosting tourism, ISNA wrote. Zarghami noted that while the proposal was to eliminate visa requirements for citizens of 60 countries, the government ultimately agreed to waive visas for

nationals of 33 countries, facilitating travel for a substantial percentage of the world's population. He expressed regret over some foreign media outlets' fearmongering tactics aimed at impeding the growth and development of tourism. Zarghami emphasized the importance of tourism as a means to counteract Iranophobia. Furthermore, the minis-

ter highlighted significant progress in the handicraft sector, including the provision of insurance for 10,000 artists. He also mentioned plans to establish handicraft markets at the entrances of all cities nationwide, along with initiatives to promote the sale of handicrafts in cultural centers affiliated with the ministry and national and international platforms.

'Salman the Persian' series begins ancient Iran season

Arts & Culture Desk

Production of the 'Salman the Persian' series, directed by Davoud Mir-Baqeri, has resumed with filming Ancient Iran season, at Ghazali Cinema Town. It is expected that approximately one and a half years is needed for its completion, ISNA wrote. In this season, the childhood of the character Salman the Persian will be

portrayed, with actors who are not widely known. Titled as one of the most star-studded seasons of this historical series, this season features over 60 actors in various roles. Filming for the Ancient Iran season will continue through spring and summer, with plans to include scenes shot in Semnan. The series revolves around Salman the Persian, the Iranian companion of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is composed of three seasons, namely Byzantium, Ancient Iran and Hijaz.



First documentary of Avini released after 44 years

Arts & Culture Desk

In a ceremony marking the 31st anniversary of the martyrdom of Seyyed Morteza Avini, titled 'Morteza's Legacy,' Avini's first film, 'Barzan Village,' was unveiled after 44 years on Monday. The event, held at Vahdat Hall, was attended by several cultural and artistic figures, ILNA wrote. Alireza Afshar, one of the attendees of the ceremony, stated: "Art can be divided into three categories: state art, free art, and committed art. Avini emphasized committed art. Colonial govern-

ments seek to use art for their own purposes, but Avini was a flag-bearer of committed art and introduced the culture of sacrifice through his writings, speeches, and images." Afshar added: "Avini was an artist, but his pen was mightier. We should ensure that documentaries have an impact on society. His ability to depict realities made scenes more compelling, and we need to create films with messages. Those who can work in this way can produce valuable works exposing the crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza, suitable

for international dissemination." Barari commented: "Avini's first work was not a great or captivating film, and that's okay. It's good to see such works from a different perspective and understand how someone like Avini progressed step by step, and even how he wrote narration. So, we should discuss how Morteza progressed to create such magnificent works." Barari further stated: "Martyr Avini made 70 films under the title 'Chronicles of Victory.' In my opinion, Avini is Iran's first narrative writer. The rhythm of narra-



tive differs between the beginning and end of the film, and we see the same Morteza at the end of the film as we knew him. We should see the film from the perspective of how Avini evolved."

He added, "I have not seen anyone think as much as Avini did, always generating ideas. The seeds he planted have not yet sprouted, and his works need to be dissected to understand

his methods and structure. I hope a research initiative will begin because Morteza showed that his concerns were valid, and his films have not been forgotten after all these years." Iranian director Behrouz Afkhami said, "Morteza was more of a poet than anything else, and his artistic personality leaned more towards poetry than filmmaking. I believe if he were to create a story, he would incorporate both poetic language and imagery. He continued the documentary form in the post-war years and always used his own voice,

which had an incomparable quality." He recalled that "Morteza Avini was inclined towards discovery, observation, and understanding the essence of every subject, and therefore, he did not follow conventional forms or theories. He believed in approaching things without prejudice. Hence, when we look at the Iran-Iraq war from any theoretical or ideological perspective, we cannot reach the conclusions Avini did, and this perspective is the reason for the durability of his works."