

Iranian filmmaker among five int'l judges at Moscow festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Saeed Nejati is among the five international judges of the Creative Cities Festival in the Russian capital, Moscow. The Iranian filmmaker and instructor, alongside Ivan Tordovski from Russia, Tam Lizba from Brazil, Zhang Hiu from China, and Vidhi Khandwal from India, will serve as judges and mentors for the festival, IRNA reported. Nejati is also conducting a workshop titled "Directing for Children and Adolescents" for filmmakers at the festival.

The Creative Cities Festival has accepted works from filmmakers around the world that focus on their hometowns. The festival is organized by the Moscow Tourism Organization, the School of Art and Design at the Moscow University of Economics, and McGuffin University. Accepted filmmakers at the festival are set to initiate a collaborative project titled "The Territory of the Future; Moscow 2030." This year's Creative Cities Festival takes place from August 10 to 25 in Moscow. During the submission phase, 32 films were se-

lected from 294 entries across 12 countries. In the subsequent phase, these films were judged by five judges to ultimately select 10 three-minute films. Among these films is an Iranian entry directed by Hadi Sheibani, which is about the city of Mashhad, the director's hometown. Ten international filmmakers are participating in the festival, pitching their films with the aim of collaboratively creating a film about the city of Moscow (Moscow 2030). The 2030 project envisions Moscow as a fully electronic and creative city.



Pianist's show axed after comments on Israel's 'targeted assassinations of journalists'



The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO) has cancelled an acclaimed pianist's upcoming recital after comments he made on the Israel-Gaza war. Jayson Gillham premiered Witness at a show at the MSO on Sunday. The piece was penned by another composer as a tribute to the Palestinian press. The British-Australian was scheduled to perform again on Thursday, but the MSO has said it is reworking the program after Gillham introduced the piece by saying Israel had killed more than 100 journalists, BBC reported. A spokesperson for Gillham told the ABC he won't comment on the decision to drop him "out of respect to the MSO and his ongoing relationship with them". Gillham - who is billed on the MSO website as "as one of the finest pianists of his generation" - was born in Australia but lives in the UK. At the concert at the Iwaki Auditorium on Sunday, he performed a range of works, from Beethoven to Chopin. He also played

Witness, written by Australian composer Connor D'Netto, which the MSO says was a last-minute addition. "Over the last 10 months, Israel has killed more than 100 Palestinian journalists," Gillham said before starting the piece. A number were "targeted assassinations of prominent journalists" who were travelling in marked press vehicles or wearing press jackets, he claimed. "The killing of journalists is a war crime in international law, and it is done in an effort to prevent the documentation and broadcasting of war crimes to the world," he added. In an email to patrons, the MSO said they were blindsided by Gillham's comments and he had put them in a "difficult situation". "The MSO does not condone the use of our stage as a platform for expressing personal views", it added. Israel launched an air and ground offensive in Gaza following a Hamas attack last October that killed

about 1,200 people in southern Israel. More than 39,790 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli aggression, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry. The Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent organization that promotes press freedom, reports that 113 of those were journalists. Apologizing for the "offence and distress" caused, the MSO said it had removed Gillham from the program and would update customers soon. In a statement given to local media, a spokesperson for the MSO said: "Mr Gillham's remarks went beyond the remit of his contract." The decision has caused a backlash on social media. High profile barrister Greg Barns said the cancellation was "truly appalling" while arts critics and former Sydney Symphony Orchestra chairman Leo Schofield said "MSO management should hang its collective head in shame". The Israel-Gaza war has become a volatile political issue in Australia that all sides have sought to carefully manage.



MSO management should hang its collective head in shame.

Petroglyphs of Golpayegan's Yan Cheshme enter Iran's heritage list

Arts & Culture Desk

The petroglyphs at the historical site of Yan Cheshmeh in the Gharqab mountain-



ous region of Golpayegan, covering an area of over 16 hectares, have been listed as a national heritage site in Iran, said the head of Isfah-

an Province's National Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts organization. Mostafa Qanouni told IRNA on Wednesday that Yan Cheshmeh is one of the richest petroglyphic sites in the Gharqab, also known as Timreh, due to the variety of its artworks and designs, IRNA reported.

The historical region of Timreh, located along the ridgeline of the three provinces of Markazi, Isfahan, and Lorestan, spans about 300 kilometers along the Anar Bar river and contains a wealth of petroglyphs and

rock art. Qanouni said that the file documenting the rock carvings in this area was compiled in 2018 and it was registered under number 34088 in the country's national heritage list. According to the provincial official, these artworks combine animal motifs, customs, hunting methods, and tools, mostly dating back to pre-Islamic times. Qanouni added that the petroglyphs across the entire Timreh region range from pre-Islamic eras to contemporary periods.

Efforts underway to ...

It appears that European countries close to Israel, along with the United States, are trying to link Iran's legal right to respond to Israel's terrorist act to the issue of a cease-fire and, in effect, portray Tehran as responsible for escalating regional tensions and undermining efforts to achieve a cease-fire. It seems that European countries cozy with Israel, in cahoots with the United States, are attempting to tie Iran's legal right to respond to Israel's terrorist act with the cease-fire issue. In doing so, they effectively shift the blame to Tehran for ramping up regional tensions and throwing a spanner in the works of cease-fire efforts. On Tuesday, US President Joe Biden, in response to a question about whether he expected Iran to refrain from responding to Israel if a cease-fire was reached

in Gaza, said that he would expect that. In response to these claims, Iran's mission to the UN emphasized on Friday that "a sustainable cease-fire in Gaza is our priority; any agreement that Hamas accepts will be accepted by us as well. We have the right to self-defense, and this is separate from the Gaza cease-fire, but we hope that our response will be timed and carried out in a way that does not undermine a potential cease-fire." From the outset of the Gaza war, Iran has opposed the continuation of the war and the country has consistently supported efforts to achieve a cease-fire. In the previous confrontation with Israel, which involved the targeting of its consulate building in Damascus, Tehran responded to the terrorist act in a way that did not lead to a wider war or increased regional tensions, taking into account

national and regional interests, and avoided escalating the situation into a full-blown war or heightening regional tensions. Another key point to note is that while Iran stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Gaza and resistance movements, it doesn't meddle in the decision-making of these movements, Hamas included. Hence, Hamas takes the driver's seat when it comes to calls on a cease-fire agreement, and as Iran's mission to the UN has articulated, if such an agreement is clinched, Tehran will be on board. Reuters also claimed, quoting sources in Iran, that Tehran would refrain from retaliating against Israel for the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh if a cease-fire agreement is reached in the Gaza war. However, CNN, citing an informed source, painted a different picture, saying, "Cease-fire talks won't

deter Iran from responding to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh." Another source told the news network, that there is concern across the region that Iran may not refrain from attacking Israel because the Biden administration is not putting enough pressure on Netanyahu to reach an agreement. As of the writing of this report, the presence of Hamas representatives in today's negotiations remains uncertain. A Hamas official told Lebanon's al-Mayadeen that the group would not participate in Thursday's talks. Netanyahu has put forward new conditions that weaken the negotiation process. Reuters also quoted a source in Hamas as saying that the movement is committed to the previously agreed-upon principles and emphasizes implementing such agreements instead of resuming futile negotiations.