

1,500 Iranian book titles on display at Baghdad fair

Iran has stepped up its presence at the 25th Baghdad International Book Fair, which kicked off Thursday with a significant showing of 1,500 book titles. Iran is turning out for its fourth appearance at the fair, with a 36-square-meter pavilion featuring a wide range of books that run the gamut from Islamic studies to literature, children's books, university publications, and language learning materials. Twenty-three Iranian publishers and cultural institutions are also weighing in on the event. A memorandum of understanding between the Tehran International Book Fair and the Baghdad International Book Fair is also expected to be signed during the event, marking a significant step in promoting cultural exchange and cooperation between the two countries. The fair, which will run from September 12 to September 22, was officially opened by Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakkak Al-Badrani, who was joined by other high-ranking government officials, including the Minister of Youth and Sports, the Minister of Education, the Governor of Baghdad, and the Deputy Minister of Trade. The event is being held under the theme "Iraq Reads," which is aimed at



getting Iraqis to pick up a book and read. In his opening remarks, Al-Badrani said he was standing in for Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani at the event. The Minister of Youth and Sports, Ahmad Al-Mubarak,

pointed out that the fair plays a key role in boosting Iraq's reading rate, which has been lagging behind in recent years. Minister of Education Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri also on Friday said that the opening of the 25th edition of the book fair is evidence of Iraq's stability and

an occasion to support paper reading in the cultural scene after electronic books have dominated. Al-Jubouri told the Iraqi News Agency (INA) during his attendance at the 25th session of the Baghdad International Book Fair: "Today we are witnessing

the opening of the Baghdad book fair, and this is evidence of Iraq's stability," noting that "after the Baghdad International Book Fair, there will be a similar exhibition in Erbil, Mosul, Najaf and Basra." He added that "the exhibition contributes to returning paper

reading to the cultural scene, which has been dominated by electronic reading," noting that "Iraq includes a large number of talents, intellectuals, scientists, writers, artists and academics, all of whom love reading." Sattar Al-Jabiri, Deputy Minister of Trade, highlighted the importance of book fairs as spaces for connection between authors, readers, and the broader cultural community. He noted that the Ministry of Trade is committed to supporting cultural industries, including writing and publishing, as a key driver of Iraq's socio-economic development. The fair's organizer, Sada Al-Aref Company, has brought together 600 publishers from 21 countries, including Arab and foreign nations, as well as writers and intellectuals from Iraq and the Arab world. The event will feature morning and evening seminars, as well as art exhibitions and play readings. Abdul-Wahab Al-Radi, head of the Baghdad International Book Fair, said the event aims to make Baghdad a beacon of knowledge and culture, just as it was in the past. He noted that the fair has been held for 24 years, despite various challenges, including wars, sanctions, and terrorism.

Maestro Ali Rahbari to conduct Iranian piece in St. Petersburg

Arts & Culture Desk

In his fourth artistic season in St. Petersburg, Iranian conductor Ali Rahbari will perform a work by a contemporary Iranian composer at the Mariinsky Opera. On September 26, Rahbari will conduct the world premiere of Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour's 'Harp Concerto', alongside Schubert's 'Symphony No. 9' and Arutiunian's 'Trumpet Concerto', as part of the 2024-2025 artistic season. The piece was previously recorded by Rahbari and the

Naxos company in London. Rahbari's upcoming performances at the Mariinsky Opera include concerts with the Istanbul Symphony Orchestra on October 11, featuring Tchaikovsky's 'Piano Concerto' and 'Symphony No. 5'; the Mariinsky Symphony Orchestra on November 8, performing Bruckner's 'Symphony No. 5'; the Beijing Symphony Orchestra on November 17, with Tchaikovsky's 'Romeo and Juliet', Schubert's 'Symphony No. 9', and Edward Gregson's 'Suite'; and the Hang-

zhou Philharmonic Orchestra on November 24, with Bruckner's 'Symphony No. 5'. Other upcoming performances include concerts with the Ningbo Symphony Orchestra on November 30, the Wuhan Symphony Orchestra on December 7, and the China Youth Symphony Orchestra in Beijing on December 13. Rahbari was first invited to the Mariinsky Opera in the 2021-2022 season by Valery Gergiev, the opera's artistic director, to conduct works by Shostakovich

and Korsakov. He has since become a regular guest conductor at the opera, performing works by renowned composers from around the world, including Russian and Eastern European artists. As a former artistic director of symphony orchestras in Brussels, Malaga, Zagreb, and Prague, Rahbari has conducted a wide range of works, including pieces by Iranian composers. He has also invited Iranian opera singer Reza Fekri to perform at the Mariinsky Opera on two occasions.



Veteran Iranian actor Sadreddin Hejazi dies at 76

Sadreddin Hejazi, a prominent Iranian cinema and television actor, died on Saturday at the age of 76 after a spell of illness. The actor, who had been suffering from cancer for some time, had slipped into a coma during the past couple of days and was hospitalized in the ICU, IRNA reported. Born in the central Iranian city of Shahreza, in Isfahan Province, Hejazi started studying dramatic arts at University of Tehran in 1963. He acted in many movies and series,

including 'Mirza Kuchak Khan', 'Mokhtarnameh', 'Once Upon A Time', 'The Loneliest Commander', 'The Muzzle-loading Rifle', and 'The Man with Two-Thousand Faces'. He was the father of renowned Iranian musician Sina Hejazi.



Iranology center to be established at Pakistani university

Pakistan's Rawalpindi Women University announced plans to establish an Iranology center to foster scientific and educational cooperation between the two countries. According to a statement released on Friday, Mehdi Taheri, Iran's cultural attaché, visited Rawalpindi Women University and met with Anila Kamal, the university's vice-chancellor, to discuss potential areas of cooperation, IRNA reported. Taheri highlighted the importance

of scientific and academic collaboration between Iranian and Pakistani universities, citing the international standing of Iranian universities, with 73 institutions ranked globally by Times Higher Education. During the meeting, Taheri emphasized the potential for cooperation in various fields, including student and instructor exchange programs, joint research projects, educational initiatives, and cultural events. He also suggested introducing Per-

sian language classes and establishing an Iranology center at the university. Kamal welcomed the proposal, citing the university's existing ties with Iranian universities, particularly Al-Zahra University, in areas such as science, culture, arts, language, and research. She expressed her institution's willingness to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Iranian cultural center in Rawalpindi and other Iranian universities to formalize cooperation.