



# Iran's publishing industry on display at Yerevan book fair

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian publishers will open their stand on September 5 at the 8th Yerevan International Book Festival, unveiling the Armenian translation of 'Three Magical Whistles' by children's author Ahmad Akbarpour. The fair runs through Sept. 7 in Republic Square and brings together more than 50 publishing houses from Armenia, Iran, the Caucasus and Europe. The Iranian booth, jointly managed by the Iran Book and Literature House, Alhoda International Publishing and the cultural office of

Iran's embassy, features a wide collection of titles in literature, history, tourism and social sciences, many already translated into Russian and Armenian. Organizers said the effort is aimed at expanding readership for Iranian works, while "building deeper ties" with Armenian and Russian-speaking audiences. A highlight of this year's participation is the launch of 'Three Magical Whistles,' translated into Armenian for the first time. The novel, which explores family and tradition through a lyrical narrative, will enter the Armenian book market after



its debut at the festival. "It is a story about love, solidarity and the role of family," Akbarpour said during a presentation at the Iranian stand. Akbarpour, a prize-winning writer known for his imaginative approach to chil-

dren's themes, will attend panel discussions in Yerevan's National Library and meet teachers of Persian at the city's Blue Mosque. His visit is supported by the Iran Book and Literature House and the Embassy cultural mission.



## Composer Ahmad Pejman, first Iranian to write for opera, dies at 90



### Arts & Culture Desk

Ahmad Pejman, the pioneering Iranian composer who became the first in his country to write operas, died on Friday in Los Angeles at the age of 90, according to a statement on his official social media page. Pejman was celebrated as a leading figure of contemporary Iranian music, blending Western classical traditions with Persian motifs, ISNA reported. Over a career spanning more than six decades, he wrote symphonies, ballets, rhapsodies, or-

atorios, film scores and operas that placed him at the forefront of Iran's modern cultural life. His works were performed both in Tehran and by international orchestras abroad. Born on July 10, 1935, in the southern Iranian city of Lar, Pejman studied violin in his teenage years with conductor Heshmat Sanjari and learned theory under composer Hossein Naseri. A scholarship in 1964 took him to the Vienna Academy of Music, where he trained with Austrian masters before returning to Tehran as a composer for Roudaki Hall and professor at the University of Tehran. It was during this period that he composed landmark operas such as 'The Farmer's Celebration,' 'The Hero of Sahand' and 'The Phoenix.' "He was a trailblazer," said one Tehran critic, noting his ability to fuse Iranian themes with

classical forms. In 1975, Pejman moved to the United States to pursue a doctorate at Columbia University in New York, studying with American and European composers including Vladimir Ussachevsky and Jack Beeson. He later settled in Los Angeles, continuing to compose and research. Beyond the concert hall, he left his mark on Iranian cinema, writing memorable scores for films by directors such as Bahman Farmanara and Majid Majidi. His achievements earned him two Crystal Simorgh awards at the Fajr Film Festival and four golden statuettes at Iran's annual film celebration. Critics often described Pejman's style as a "fusion" of Iranian folk melodies and classical counterpoint. In later years he also wrote in popular forms, expanding his audience at home and abroad.

## Short film 'Domestic' heads to four int'l festivals

### Art & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Nima Abdolazimi's short film 'Domestic' was selected for competition at international film festivals in Croatia, Britain, the United States and Iraq. The work marks the start of its global run with screenings at the Dalmatia Film Festival in Croatia, the Realtime Festival in Britain, the New York Kurdish Cultural Cinema Festival and the Slemani International Film Festival in northern Iraq. The production was backed by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, Abdolazimi and co-producer Nishtiman Salehi. The Dalmatia Film Festival, which carries the motto "Dalmatia is my lifeline," showcases feature films, documentaries, animation and experimental works in summer open-air screenings. Its 10th edition opens in Sutivan in August 2025, before moving to Kastel Lukšić and other cities, with a closing program in Split in early December. The New York Kurdish festival, founded in 2017 to highlight Kurdish heritage from antiquity to modern times, runs its ninth edition on September 20-25. Organizers say the event offers a space for Kurds in



different communities to "revive traditions, celebrate and build friendship." Britain's Realtime Festival, launched in 2016 with an emphasis on independent cinema and digital accessibility, will mark its 10th edition on October 17-19. The fifth Slemani International Film Festival, dedicated to Kurdish culture and global cinema, is scheduled for October 1-7. Domestic tells the story of Afshin, a man who encounters a magical creature on a moonlit night and must accept conditions to fulfill his dream. The cast includes Mey-sam Damanzeh and Shima Molaei with international distribution handled by Solmaz Etemad.

## Iran, Iraq sign accords to expand academic ties, scholarships for students

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Iraq signed new agreements in Tehran on Saturday to deepen academic and scientific cooperation, including scholarships for Iraqi students to study at top Iranian universities, according to the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. The accords, reached during a meeting between Iran's Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and Iraq's Deputy Higher Education Minister Hayder Abed Dhahad, aim to strengthen long-term collaboration through student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and the creation of dual academic programs, IRNA reported. Officials described the new deals as a step toward "broadening" educational opportunities and cementing cultural bonds between the two neighbors.

Simaei-Sarraf noted that initiatives such as "Iraq Week" in Tehran last year had already paved the way for closer ties. He said Iran was ready to host more Iraqi students under fresh scholarship programs and urged Baghdad to introduce top candidates to leading universities, including Shahid Beheshti and Sharif University of Technology. "Good progress has been made in implementing agreements, particularly on the exchange of professors and students," he said. Dhahad welcomed the expansion of bilateral research projects, pointing to 139 joint programs currently under way. He said the new memorandums would not only support Iraqi students abroad but also allow Iranian professors to conduct short-term study opportunities in Iraq.

"One of our goals is for Iraqi students to study in the best universities in Iran," he said, calling Iran's scientific advances an example of capabilities that could help Iraq's academic development. The Iraqi deputy minister added that Baghdad was prepared to reciprocate by admitting Iranian students at leading Iraqi universities. He highlighted a seven-year agreement signed between Sharif University of Technology's science park and the University of Baghdad to establish a joint model of innovation and technology. Dhahad also praised what he called Iran's "victory" in the recent 12-day war with Israel, saying it was regarded in Iraq as a shared achievement. He offered condolences for the loss of Iranian scientists, describing them as "a true model" for the region.

## 'The Love' set for stage at Italy's Sele Teatero Fest

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian playwright and director Jafar Mahyari will bring his performance 'The Love' to Italy for the 27th Sele Teatero Fest, running from September 4 to 7 in the southern town of Olive-to Citra. The festival, known for spotlighting experimental works that strip down words and highlight human struggles through movement, will stage Mahyari's performance that blends body theater with live music. It aims to probe contemporary human themes through unconventional dramatic language, ISNA reported. 'The Love' tells the story

of a man worn down by the emptiness of his daily routine, caught in the grip of hidden taboos, until an unexpected encounter with love steers him toward transformation. The play, carried by Mahyari's own performance, unfolds through physical movement rather than dialogue, accompanied by live Santur (hammered dulcimer) and Daf (Persian frame drum). Hamidah Barmakhshad serves as assistant and international coordinator, with Armin Rastegari on Daf, and Mahyari himself playing the Santur. The poster design is by Mehdi Raygani, while Mahmoud Nouraei advises on direction and media. The show is



backed by Bermakh Cultural Institute, led by Mahshid Barmakhshad. First staged in Würzburg, Germany, in 2017, 'The Love' later appeared in Lyon, France, in 2019 and in Tehran in 2022.