

# Iran, South Korea mark 63 years of ties with joint calligraphy show

## Arts & Culture Desk

A joint Iran-South Korea calligraphy exhibition themed "Family" opened on Tuesday morning at the residence of the South Korean ambassador in Tehran, marking the first visit by Korean calligraphers to Iran in nine years, Mehr reported.

The event coincided with the 63rd anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries and brought together leading artists from both nations. The exhibition featured works by renowned Iranian calligraphers Tandis Taghavi, Esrafil Shirchi, and Mojtaba Sabzeh, alongside twelve members of the Korean Calligraphy Association, including its president and vice president.

South Korean Ambassador Kim Junpyo expressed his pleasure at hosting the event, describing it as a testament to the "warm

friendship" between Tehran and Seoul. "We are delighted that this collaboration, made possible through the CCCACD (Cultural Coordination Centre of Asia Cooperation Dialogue), has strengthened cultural ties between our two nations," he said. Speaking about the exhibition's theme, Kim noted: "The show revolves around the concept of family and seeks to convey its profound values."

"While Korean and Iranian calligraphy differ in appearance, both reveal the cultural depth and sensitivity of their peoples. I am confident that such exchanges will continue to deepen our co-operation," he added.

Mohammad Jafari-Malek, director of the CCCACD, congratulated the ambassador on the anniversary of bilateral ties and praised the choice of "Family" as a fitting and meaningful title for the event.

Taking the podium next, Yong Hyun-dak of the Korean Calli-

graphy Association said he cherished the 63-year-long relationship and hoped it would "flourish for another 630 years."

Iranian artist Tandis Taghavi highlighted the importance of family in Asian cultures and stressed that "artists play a vital role in strengthening political relations through cultural dialogue." She added that such initiatives help foster friendship not only between Iran and Korea but across the world.

Esrafil Shirchi remarked that in studying the Korean script, he found "structural similarities with Iran's Nastaliq script," noting that "even without meeting one another, we share a common artistic spirit and that is truly magnificent."

The ceremony concluded with a live calligraphy performance by the president of the Korean Calligraphers Association in the ambassador's garden.



## Film-concert in Tehran celebrates Hayao Miyazaki's anime legacy



## Arts & Culture Desk

A live film-concert featuring the music of Hayao Miyazaki's anime films was held Wednesday night at the Royal Hall of Espinas Palace Hotel in Tehran, performed by a 100-member orchestra under the baton of Sina Kheirabadi.

The sold-out performance brought Studio Ghibli's timeless worlds to life, with the orchestra performing Joe Hisaishi's acclaimed scores as scenes from Miyazaki's films were projected

on a large screen. The concert featured themes from "Spirited Away," "Kiki's Delivery Service," "Howl's Moving Castle" and "Porco Rosso".

Later, the audience was treated to music from "My Neighbor Totoro," "Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea," and "The Wind Rises," as well as a powerful segment from "Princess Mononoke" and themes from "Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind" and "Laputa: Castle in the Sky".

In the final moments, excerpts from

"The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness", a documentary offering an inside look at the making of "The Wind Rises" and Miyazaki's creative life, were screened.

Miyazaki, one of the most influential figures in global animation and co-founder of Japan's renowned Studio Ghibli, enjoys a strong fan base in Iran. His long-time collaborator, composer Joe Hisaishi, is celebrated for his blend of classical, jazz, and traditional Japanese music, which has become an integral part of the cinematic memory of generations worldwide.

The Miyazaki anime film-concert followed similar live screenings of Harry Potter and The Lord of the Rings, both staged for a combined 16 sold-out shows. Organized by Fidibo, is a leading Iranian digital platform for e-books and audiobooks, the event aimed to bridge music and cinema enthusiasts and offer audiences a shared experience of enduring works of art. Due to high demand, additional performances are scheduled for October 27, giving Miyazaki fans another chance to immerse themselves in his world of imagination and sound.

## Iranian director wins top honor at Baku documentary film festival

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ramin Khalighi has won the Best Film Award in the DokuBaku section of the 9th International Documentary Film Festival in Azerbaijan for his film "Downstream Shadows".

The DokuBaku section showcases rising filmmakers debuting their first or second films, with a focus on innovative and experimental storytelling. According to the festival's jury, the category aims to discover "new voices and fresh perspectives" in global documentary cinema.

In its statement, the jury praised Downstream Shadows for offering "a profound and precise reflection on the conflict between humans and their surroundings, capturing the struggle for survival with both poetic and documentary sensitivity." The panel added that Khalighi's film "explores contemporary challenges of documentary storytelling with remarkable clarity, leaving a lasting impact on both



jury and audience."

Speaking to IRNA, Khalighi described his documentary as an intimate portrayal of a family battling poverty and addiction, who make a living by collecting recyclables. "The story is a journey through hardship and hope, an effort to endure and reach for better days," he said.

He added that during production, three members of the featured family were admitted to a rehabilitation center for addiction treatment. "After recovery, they returned to society and began a new chapter

in their lives," the filmmaker noted.

Founded in 2017, the DokuBaku International Documentary Film Festival is the first and largest independent event of its kind in Azerbaijan and has become a major platform for documentary exchange in the Caucasus region.

The 9th edition of the festival, held from October 13 to 19 under the theme "HyperMatrix 5D World", screened works from more than 60 countries at the Nizami Cinema Center in Baku.

## Oliver Twist musical returns to Tehran stage

## Arts & Culture Desk

The musical Oliver Twist premiered on Wednesday at the Tennis Stadium of Tehran's Enqelab Sports Complex, marking the first performance of its new production run. Ticket sales for additional dates have already opened.

Originally staged in 2017 at Tehran's Vahdat Hall with a different cast, the new version remains faithful to the original script and structure while introducing minor revisions to the dialogue and several songs. According to the production team, these updates highlight social concerns, inequality, and the harsh realities of human life.

Directed by Hossein Parsaei and produced by Jalil Kia, the large-scale

musical features prominent Iranian actors Hootan Shakiba, Behnoush Tabatabaei, Banipal Shoomoon, Amir-Kaveh Ahaninjan, with Siamak Ansari and Kazem Sayahi in leading roles.

Based on Charles Dickens' classic novel, the production incorporates Lionel Bart's original musical compositions, dramaturgy by Mohammadreza Kouhestani, and the creative collaboration of theatre and music professionals.

Young performers Rayan Sarlak, Parham Gholamloo, and Arsham Jahanpanah share the roles of Dodger and Oliver in the Tehran revival, which showcases a striking new artistic design distinct from its 2017 staging.



## The Middle East's ...

Several Western governments have laid out plans to accelerate the rollout of renewable energy. In the United States, the Biden administration's package of climate, healthcare and tax legislation, known as the Inflation Reduction Act, has allocated roughly \$369 billion for climate and energy programs, including help for consumers in buying electric vehicles and investments in renewable and nuclear energy. The European Union has outlined plans to spend \$317 billion in the com-

ing few years on overhauling its energy supplies and ending its dependence on Russian energy. Ultimately what is required is not just to diversify away from a single energy commodity, but to change the nature of the energy system itself, and to do so while maintaining the affordable, secure provision of energy services.

This analysis seeks to examine the efforts to diversify the energy mix in the Middle East. The focus is on the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy (i.e. renewables and nuclear power). The Vienna-based Organi-

zation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) predicts that demand for renewables will expand five folds from 2020 to 2045, representing the single-largest incremental contribution to the future energy mix. The main point is that the world has not been investing enough in energy in recent years, a fact that left the energy system much more vulnerable to the sort of shocks seen the early 2020s. A smooth and secure energy transition will require a major uptick in clean energy investment flows.