

# Farhadi returns to Cannes competition with 'Parallel Tales'

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian Oscar-winning filmmaker Asghar Farhadi will compete for the Palme d'Or at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival from May 12 to 23 in Cannes, unveiling a 21-film main lineup that also features Spain's Pedro Almodóvar and Russia's Andrey Zvyagintsev. Farhadi's new feature, 'Parallel Tales,' will screen in the main competition, marking a high-profile return to the Croisette for one of contemporary cinema's most decorated auteurs. The film brings together an international cast including Isabelle Huppert, Vincent Cassel, Virginie Efira and Catherine Deneuve, in

a multinational co-production spanning France, the United States, Belgium and Italy. Festival general delegate Thierry Frémaux said the United States would be "represented," though major studios are largely absent this year, shifting the spotlight toward global auteurs and independent voices. The selection includes multiple entries from Japan and Spain, marking a broad international sweep. Farhadi, a two-time Academy Award winner for 'A Separation' (2012) and 'The Salesman' (2017), returns to Cannes after securing the Grand Prix for 'A Hero' in 2021. His long-time collaborator, Iranian editor Hayedeh Safiyari,

is cutting 'Parallel Tales' in their seventh joint project, reinforcing a creative partnership that has shaped his precise, character-driven narratives. The jury will be chaired by South Korean filmmaker Park Chan-wook, the first from his country to hold the post, succeeding French actress Juliette Binoche. Honorary Palme d'Or awards will go to Barbra Streisand and Peter Jackson. Out of competition, the festival will feature works ranging from aviation-themed storytelling by John Travolta to sports documentaries revisiting iconic football moments involving Diego Maradona.



## US-Israeli hostilities damage 125,000 Iranian civilian structures as Tehran alleges war crimes

### Social Desk

Iran's Red Crescent Society on Friday attributed damage to more than 125,000 civilian structures across the Islamic Republic to US-Israeli military operations that began on February 28, 2026, as the nation's Human Rights Headquarters separately denounced the strikes as deliberate war crimes violating international humanitarian law. Pirhossein Kolivand, president of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), detailed in a televised assessment that residential properties accounted for approximately 100,000 of the compromised units, with numerous dwellings entirely razed, while commercial establishments sustaining losses totaled 23,500. Medical infrastructure bore significant brunt: 339 facilities, including Vali-Asr, Shahid Motahhari and Khatam hospitals alongside pharmacies, laboratories and emergency centers, incurred damage, though several resumed operations within 24 hours. Educational institutions faced widespread disruption, with 32 universities and 857 schools damaged, alongside 20 Red Crescent facilities directly targeted during the 39-day period of intensified hostilities. Critical infrastructure also suffered, comprising 15 strategic sites, five fuel depots, airports and civilian aircraft, while 49 rescue vehicles and 43 ambulances were struck during humanitarian operations. Iran's Human Rights Headquarters, issuing a concur-



Iranian firefighters with the help of an excavator clear rubble from a destroyed residential building in northern Tehran. ● IRNA

rent statement, condemned what it termed repeated and deliberate attacks by the United States and Israeli forces against civilian targets, including residential homes, hospitals, medical and relief centers, vital infrastructure, economic hubs, bridges and schools, as well as vessels and barges integral to livelihoods. The office stressed such acts constitute a clear violation of fundamental humanitarian and legal principles, potentially amounting to war crimes under international law. Referencing assaults on four fishing boats at Lengeh port and other civilian vessels set ablaze, the statement underscored direct breaches of the right to life, the right to work and the right to development. It further cited threats by US President Donald Trump and War Secretary Pete Hegseth to return Iran to the "Stone Age" as evidence of intent to commit war crimes against civilian infrastructure. The Human Rights Headquarters emphasized that the principle of distinction under international humanitarian law obliges all conflict parties to avoid

targeting civilian persons and property, asserting that systematic attacks against ordinary citizens and vital development arteries represent gross violations. It characterized US-Israeli practices as collective punishment breaching prohibitions on the threat and use of force under international law. Tehran has forwarded documentation of alleged humanitarian law breaches to the International Criminal Court prosecutor and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which subsequently validated the submissions, while maintaining that legal accountability sufficed without requesting foreign assistance. Volunteer ranks swelled by 1.6 million during the crisis, bolstering the organization's pre-existing four-million-strong force, with pharmacies operating round-the-clock to ensure uninterrupted access to medicines.

## Red butterflies soar over ruined Iranian school in memorial to Minab students

### Arts & Culture Desk

The Islamic Architecture Art Center, a cultural arm of Tehran-based Art Bureau, has suspended 2,000 crimson butterflies nine meters above the rubble of Shajareh Tayebeh Primary School in Minab, southern Iran, crafting a conceptual memorial that honors student martyrs on their fortieth-day commemoration, according to center director Mostafa Momeni-rad. The installation transforms the war-damaged campus into a contemplative space where translucent red forms, fashioned after blood-stained school notebooks, ascend skyward on 72 filaments, Art Bureau reported.



Momeni-rad said the design emerged from extensive consultation with bereaved families and rigorous analysis of visual documentation, selecting a metaphor that converts childhood aspirations into suspended symbols of resilience. Executed in Tehran before deployment to the coastal city, the artwork juxtaposes delicate aesthetics against the harsh reality of destruction. Each butterfly represents a young life extinguished, their names etched not in stone but in ephemeral light filtering through the ruined ceiling. Families visiting during installation reportedly found solace in the allegorical narrative, recognizing their children's trans-

scendence within the ascending forms. The temporary piece, engineered for swift disassembly, paves the way for the school's conversion into a memorial museum, while discussions advance for a permanent public monument in Minab's civic spaces. Completed under compressed timelines amid regional tensions, the project shows how cultural institutions can mobilize artistic language to process collective trauma. Momeni-rad noted that the center evaluated nearly 10 concepts before settling on the notebook-inspired motif, which he described as translating intimate grief into shared remembrance.

## Nationwide solidarity boosts blood donations as first-time, female donors step forward in Iran

### Social Desk

Iran's Blood Transfusion Organization chief Ahmad Gharehbaghian said Friday that blood donations have surged since the onset of the "third imposed war," on February 28, with first-time donors and women driving a sharp rise. Gharehbaghian said more than 63% of donors were giving blood for the first time, marking a significant shift in public participation as authorities ramped up mobilization efforts in the early days of the conflict, IRNA reported. He added that women's contributions climbed by over 79%,



a record high that underscores expanding civic engagement during wartime, according to IRNA. "From the outset," he said, coordinated planning helped "reshape" donation patterns nationwide, bringing new groups into the system and stabilizing supply chains under pressure.

He emphasized that the organization is now working to convert first-time donors into regular contributors, calling sustained participation "essential" to meeting long-term medical needs. The official also outlined upcoming outreach and education campaigns aimed at further boosting women's involvement in what he described as a humanitarian duty. Gharehbaghian praised donors, medical staff and media outlets for what he termed their "strong" support, saying their collective effort has reinforced national resilience.