

Iranian films win top int'l honors; animation heads to Polish festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinema productions earned international recognition this week, with the short film "These Voices Are Real" winning four awards at overseas festivals, the documentary "I Won't Remain Alone" receiving the top prize at an Italian film festival, and the animated feature "Dream City" securing a place in competition at a children's film festival in Poland. "These Voices Are Real" written and directed by first-time filmmaker Baran Nikrah and co-produced by Nikrah and actress Hoda Zeinolabedin, collected four awards during its early international festival run. The social drama, which focuses on the lived experiences of women and girls in contemporary society, received the Audience Special Award, the Rospin Spirit Award and an Honorable Mention from the international jury at the 38th Minimalen Short Film Festival in Trondheim,

Norway. The film later won a Best Director award at the Golden Grape Short Film Festival and was recently screened in competition at SXSW London. The film stars Zeinolabedin and Dorin Afsharian. Meanwhile, the documentary "I Won't Remain Alone", directed by Yaser Talebi and produced by Talebi and Fariba Arab, won the Francesco Pasinetti Award for Best Film at the 23rd Pasinetti Film Festival in Italy. The award, the festival's highest honor, was selected from more than 2,000 submissions from around the world. The documentary follows an elderly couple whose child suffers brain death and whose decision to donate the child's organs transforms the lives of recipients and their own understanding of loss. The film revisits the family five years later to examine the lasting impact of that decision. Festival jurors praised the film for its portrayal of grief, memory and

human resilience, citing its sensitive direction and cinematography. The Pasinetti Film Festival was held from May 28 to May 30 in Italy. Separately, Iranian animated feature "Dream City", directed by Mohsen Enayati and produced by Mostafa Hassanabadi, was selected for the main competition section of the 11th Kinolub International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Poland. The film, produced by the Soureh Animation Center, will compete alongside international entries at the festival, which runs from June 14 to June 27 across several cities in southern Poland. Festival organizers said winners would be announced on June 25 by both professional international juries and youth juries. The selection marks another international appearance for Iranian animation as filmmakers seek to expand their presence in European markets and festivals.



Public engagement key to tackling environmental challenges: DoE chief



Social Desk

Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) chief Shina Ansari said on Monday that education, public awareness and social participation are critical to addressing the country's mounting environmental challenges, warning that government agencies alone cannot resolve years of accumulated environmental problems. Speaking at the 9th session of the "National Uprising for Iran" campaign in Tehran, Ansari said Iran faces a range of environmental pressures, including water scarcity, groundwater depletion, land subsidence, air pollution, habitat destruction, forest fires and dust storms. "Resolving the country's accumulated environmental challenges is not possible without the cooperation of the public, government agencies and cultural institutions," Ansari said, according to a statement released by the DoE. The official said many of

the challenges stem from years of insufficient attention to environmental considerations and stressed that environmental protection is a collective responsibility under Article 50 of Iran's Constitution. "All institutions, organizations and members of society must play a role in this process," Ansari said, adding that the Department of Environment is not capable of addressing all environmental issues on its own. Ansari highlighted the link between environmental protection and broader social and cultural issues, saying that achieving environmental goals requires public engagement and social consensus-building. Education and cultural initiatives are among the most effective tools for promoting environmental stewardship, she added. The DoE chief also pointed to the government's focus on environmental education, arguing that awareness efforts should begin in schools. Embedding en-

vironmental values among students can help change behavior, improve lifestyles and strengthen social responsibility toward nature, she said. Ansari cited the implementation of the national "Mohit-Yar" (Environment Companion) program, launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to expand environmental education in schools. The initiative has received support from provinces across the country, particularly in less-developed regions, she said. She also announced the development of a national framework aimed at promoting environmental culture, prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and other government bodies. According to Ansari, expanding environmental awareness requires greater coordination among cultural, educational and social institutions, as well as the use of cultural and artistic resources, modern technologies and religious teachings to encourage environmentally responsible behavior. Protecting Iran's natural resources and preserving the country's environmental heritage for future generations is a shared responsibility, Ansari said, calling on all sectors of society to contribute to reducing environmental problems and advancing sustainable development.

Award-winning filmmakers launch project on Minab school tragedy

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmakers Manouchehr Mohammadi and Babak Khajehpasha are developing a new feature film centered on martyred schoolchildren from the southern city of Minab in US-Israeli attack on February 28, following their previous collaboration on an award-winning film about children in Gaza, a producer said on Sunday. Mohammad Sasan, head of the Soureh Cinema Production Center, said the project, tentatively titled "168", is being produced by the Soureh Cinema Organization in partnership with veteran producer Mohammadi and director Khajehpasha. The film will focus on

children linked to a school tragedy in Minab, Sasan said, adding that the project is intended for international audiences and will be developed with a cross-border perspective similar to the filmmakers' previous work, "The Land of Angels". "We are currently conducting research and working with a creative team to finalize the screenplay," Sasan said. Further details will be announced at a later stage, he added. Mohammadi and Khajehpasha previously collaborated on "The Land of Angels", a film depicting the hardships faced by children in Gaza. The film received widespread attention at Iran's 44th Fajr International Film Festi-



val, where it won five Crystal Simorgh awards and eight honorary diplomas, making it the festival's most decorated entry. No production timetable or casting details for "168" were immediately announced. On the very first day of the unprovoked war of aggression by a US-Israeli military coalition on February 28, US Tomahawk missiles

struck Shajareh Tayyebeh Girls' Elementary School in Minab, in southern Iran, killing at least 175 people, most of them schoolgirls. Excavators and workmen dug close to 100 graves at a cemetery in Minab, Iran, before the funeral for children and teachers killed in a US-Israeli airstrike on a school on February 28, 2026. Iran's Foreign Media Department

Iranian documentary scoops Special Jury Prize in Chile

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Javad Gholamnejad Jaber has won a Special Jury Prize at an international environmental film festival in Chile for his short documentary "Khasak". The award was presented at the 4th International Sea Film Festival in Concepción, Chile, an event focused on films exploring marine ecosystems, environmental conservation and ocean-related issues. Mohammad Hossein Zandvian, director-general of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Iran's Bushehr Province, said "Khasak" was recognized by the jury for



its artistic portrayal of a marine species and its focus on the importance of protecting the Persian Gulf ecosystem. In a statement, festival judges praised the documentary's poetic storytelling, human-centered perspective and emotional impact on audiences, according to Zandvian. The film is among the latest works by Gholamnejad Jaber,

a filmmaker from the southern coastal province of Bushehr whose documentaries on marine and environmental themes have previously been screened and honored at international festivals. The Sea Film Festival is regarded as a specialized event dedicated to environmental and maritime cinema, bringing together filmmakers and conservation advocates from around the world. The award marks another international recognition for Iranian documentary filmmaking and highlights growing attention to environmental themes in the country's independent cinema sector.