

Iranians Bid Farewell to 'Martyr of Courage'

TEHRAN -- Tens of thousands of Iranians from different walks of life have taken part in the funeral ceremony to say farewell to a brave national hero in the northeastern city of Sabzevar.

Known as "martyr of courage", Hamidreza Aldaghi was laid to rest in the martyrs' section of the cemetery of the city on Tuesday.

Hamidreza has been hailed as a hero after a viral CCTV video showed him bravely defending two girls against a number of knife-wielding thugs in one of the



streets of Sabzevar. He was cowardly stabbed in the back and chest while rescuing the defenseless girls and succumbed to knife wounds in the hospital.

"As a young father, Hamidreza couldn't stand by and watch thugs harassing the innocent girls. He deemed the troubled girl as his own daughter and rushed to her aid. We are proud of him..." said his bereaving wife.

Hamidreza Aldaghi's name is now trending on Twitter in Iran as "martyr of courage".

UNESCO Declares Marrakech as Islamic Cultural Capital

RABAT (Dispatches) -- Morocco's Minister of Youth, Culture, and Communication, Mehdi Bensaid has proclaimed Marrakech as the Islamic world's cultural capital for 2024.

Bensaid made the statement at the closing ceremony of the event "Rabat Culture Capital in the Islamic World 2022," which was organized by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Orga-

nization (ICESCO).

Marrakech's designation as a cultural capital serves as an opportunity to showcase the red city's historical civilization and rich culture, reflected in its Andalusian architecture and the Islamic architecture of mosques and palaces.

The designation will also be an opportunity to highlight the tourist attractions of the city, its intangible heritage, and its archaeological sites.

UNESCO listed the Medina of Marrakech as a World Heritage Site in 1985 for its monuments and architectural jewels.

The Red City boasts a number of impressive monuments such as the Kasbah, Koutoubia Mosque, Ben Youssef Madrasa, Saadian Tombs, and Jamaa El Fna Square, which has become a symbol of the city since its foundation.

Considered by many as the

heart of Moroccan tourism, Marrakech is no stranger to international recognition. The red city was recently voted the eighth-best city for tourists in TripAdvisor's Most Popular Tourist Destinations for 2023.

Marrakech also featured on Vogue's list of "best winter sun" destinations in 2023. Prior to Marrakech, ICESCO named Rabat the Islamic world's cultural capital for 2022.

South Korean Student Eats \$120,000 Art Work

SEOUL (Guardian) -- A South Korean art student who ate a banana that formed part of a renowned installation by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan said he did so because he was "hungry".

Noh Huyn-soo was filmed brazenly removing the banana, which was duct-taped on to a wall at the Leeum Museum of Art in Seoul, unpeeling it and eating it in front of stunned on-lookers before reattaching the banana skin to the wall using the same tape and walking off with a satisfied grin.

The incident was recorded by a friend of Noh, a student at Seoul National University, and lasted for over a minute.

When the museum asked Noh why he ate the banana, he replied that he was hungry after skipping breakfast, according to the Korea Herald. He later told the broadcaster KBS that he thought "damaging a work of modern art could also be [interpreted as] artwork" and that he came up with the idea to re-attach the peel as "a joke".

He added: "I thought it would be interesting ... isn't it taped there to be eaten?"

The banana, part of Cattelan's Comedian installation, gets replaced every two or three days.

Cattelan, a sculptor and performance artist based in New York, was reportedly informed about the incident and simply replied: "No problem."

It is not the first time a banana from the work has been scooped. During the work's debut exhibit at Miami Art Basel in 2019 a banana was removed and eaten by the performance artist David Datuna.

Datuna later told the Guardian that while he considered Cattelan to be "a genius", he took issue with the huge amount of money made from a banana that

cost 20 cents.

The first and second editions on display at Miami Art Basel both sold for \$120,000 (£95,640), and another was put up for sale for \$150,000 before Datuna showed up to eat the fruit. "I have travelled in 67 countries around the world in the last three years, and I see how people live," Datuna said. "Millions are dying without food. Then he puts three bananas on the wall for half a million dollars?"

Cattelan, who was born in Padua, is also known for provocative artworks that challenge popular culture. One - an 18-carat gold toilet called America and valued at £1m -



made headlines in September 2019 after it was ripped from its display wall during an overnight robbery at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

A middle-finger sculpture by

Cattelan - known as Il Dito (the finger) but officially called L.O.V.E - opposite the stock exchange in Milan was vandalized by environmental activists in January.

Picture of the Day



The picking of strawberries in the northern Golestan province starts at the end of the current Iranian month of Ordibehesht and continues for a month.

Photo by IRNA

Short Film Festival Calls for Entries



TEHRAN -- The Tehran International Short Film Festival has called for entries.

The 2023 edition of the Iranian festival has released a call for registrations at the various sections of the festival.

This year's edition will be launched in order to identify and introduce the best short works at the national and international level and to create cultural justice in all parts of the country, a constructive competition is also held between filmmakers.

In this festival, films that focus on localism in the genre

and use creativity and innovation to produce diverse and numerous works from Great Iran are of special importance and are the priority of selection and judging.

Organized by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and a member of International Short Film Conference, the festival aims to provide an opportunity for young filmmakers to exchange their experiences.

The 40th edition of the festival is scheduled for October 19-24, 2023.

Book Fair Announces Tajikistan as Guest of Honor



TEHRAN -- The 34th edition of the Tehran International Book Fair has announced Tajikistan as the 2023 guest of honor of Iran's major trade fair for books.

According to Iran's Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affairs Yaser Ahmadvand, the Tajikistan culture minister and a large number of the country's cultural figures and writers will attend the book fair.

As a move to improve the book trade between Iran and Tajikistan, a memorandum of under-

standing is also scheduled to be signed by the culture ministers of the two countries during the book fair.

The Tehran International Book Fair will take place at Imam Khomeini Mosalla from May 10 to 20.

This year, over 3000 foreign and Iranian publishing houses and over 200 major Iranian bookstores have applied to participate in the fair.

"The future is readable" is the motto of this year's book fair.

'Roya' to Compete in Italian Festival

TEHRAN -- Iranian short film 'Roya' has made it to the 2023 edition of Wag Film Festival in Italy.

The Iranian Youth Cinema Society reported that 'Roya' will take part in the eighth edition of Wag Film Festival.

'Roya', directed by Muhammad-Reza Mohammadi, is about a young Afghan couple who tries to illegally enter Europe but faces various challenges.

'Roya' was awarded at several festivals, including the Five Continents International Film Festival in Venezuela.

The upcoming edition of Wag Film Festival will take place on May 11-14.

The theme of this year's edition of the festival is "The Value of Small Things".