

‘Namira’ to Bring Timeless Saga of Ashura to Life

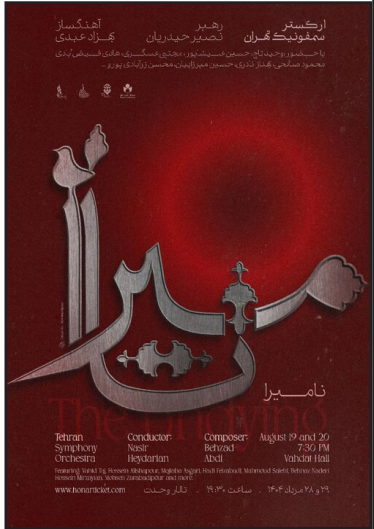
TEHRAN — The capital’s Symphony Orchestra gears up to perform *Namira*, a sweeping oratorio composed by Behzad Abdi and conducted by Nasir Heydarian.

Scheduled for August 18 and 19, this performance promises a rich blend of grand orchestration, choral power, and evocative vocals, all centered around the themes of freedom and the timeless spirit of Ashura.

Namira — which translates to “Immortal” — isn’t just another classical piece; it’s a sprawling, ambitious composition for a full orchestra, choir, and vocal soloists.

The cast features standout performers like Vahid Taj and Hussein Alishapour, bringing vocal depth and emotion to the work’s narrative. Other notable musicians include Mojtaba Asgari, Hadi Feyzabadi, Mahmoud Salehi, and Behnaz Naderi, rounding out a dynamic lineup.

The project is a collaboration between the Rudaki Foundation and the Maava Center for Music of the Islamic Revolution, with ad-



ditional backing from cultural organizations supporting the arts in Iran. It’s part of a broader effort to use music as a vehicle to explore spiritual and historical themes tied to the Ashura commemorations.

The show follows the recent Golgoun concert by the National Iranian Music Orchestra, which also delved into the legacy of Imam Hussein (AS) with compositions from top Iranian composers like Hassan Riyahi and Aminollah Rashidi.

Second Charity Literary Festival Calls for Poems, Stories of Generosity

TEHRAN —The second edition of the “Iran Charity Literary Festival” has officially opened for submissions, inviting writers to explore the role of generosity and philanthropy in society through fiction, poetry, and personal storytelling.

The festival, which will culminate in the fall of 2025, aims to encourage literary engagement with the concept of charity—not just as an act, but as a foundational value in Iranian life.

Organizers are accepting submissions in four categories: short stories (ranging from 500 to 3,000 words), poetry (including classical forms, free verse, modern styles, and songwriting), as well as memoir and personal essays. A dedicated section for children’s and young

adult literature—both poetry and short fiction—will also be featured.

The submission deadline is November 5, 2025. According to organizers, all entries will be reviewed during the second half of November, with the winners to be announced at a closing ceremony in December.

The festival is spearheaded by a nonprofit cultural center focused on promoting sustainable giving, in partnership with a charitable leadership foundation.

The initiative has also drawn the support of several prominent institutions, including the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, national literary organizations, a leading publishing network, the youth division of the Red Crescent,

Arabaeen: The Journey Uniting Millions Across Borders

TEHRAN -- Every year, millions of pilgrims embark on a remarkable journey across the heart of Iraq — a pilgrimage known as *Arbaeen*.

Stretching approximately 80 kilometers from Najaf to Karbala, this walk is more than a religious ritual; it is a living tapestry of humanity, weaving together people from diverse backgrounds, faiths, and nations in a profound expression of unity and devotion.

Arbaeen commemorates the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), a revered figure in Shia Islam whose sacrifice symbolizes justice and resistance against tyranny.

Yet, the pilgrimage itself transcends sectarian lines, drawing Sunnis, Christians, Yazidis, and even curious travelers from around the globe. This collective movement, with over 20 million participants in recent years, is among the largest human gatherings on Earth — a mass migration without passports, visas, or bor-



ders.

What sets Arbaeen apart is not just its scale, but its spirit. The roads leading to Karbala transform into vibrant corridors of generosity. Along the way, thousands of mawkibs — temporary rest stations — offer food, water, medical aid, and shelter free of charge.

Volunteers from all walks of life welcome strangers as family, embodying an ethos of hospitality that is at once ancient and urgent.

It is a grassroots network of kindness where social, political, and economic differences dissolve.

Travelers who join the pilgrimage often speak of a palpable sense of peace that flows from this shared human experience. In a region frequently marked by conflict, Arbaeen represents a living form of diplomacy — one forged not in boardrooms but on dusty trails.

Here, peace is a journey rather than a destination, measured by

each step taken side by side, each smile exchanged, and each act of solidarity.

For many foreigners, Arbaeen is a transformative encounter with the Middle East’s rich cultural mosaic, challenging media stereotypes and preconceived notions. Through firsthand participation, pilgrims gain a deeper understanding of a land often misunderstood, revealing layers of resilience, faith, and hope.

Beyond the spiritual, Arbaeen is a testament to the power of collective movement and emotional economy — where generosity is the currency and human connection the ultimate reward.

In a world searching for bridges, this pilgrimage stands as a vivid reminder that sometimes, the simplest act of walking together can carry the most profound message.

For travelers seeking a journey of meaning, Arbaeen offers an unparalleled opportunity to witness history, faith, and humanity converge on the road to Karbala.

Groundbreaking Study Aims to Chart Personality of Iranians

TEHRAN -- A groundbreaking national survey aimed at creating a comprehensive portrait of the character and personality traits of the Iranian population has officially begun.

According to a statement from the Public Relations Office of the Institute for Culture, Arts and Communication, the institute’s National Projects Center launched the “Survey of Iranian Personality Traits” in August.

The ambitious survey seeks to explore both individual and social dimensions of personality across the country, offering a scientific foundation for future cultural and social policymaking. By capturing the nuanced personal and communal characteristics of Iranians, the study aims to provide a detailed map of the nation’s collective temperament.

At the individual level, the survey measures fundamental personality traits such as levels of stress, anxiety, and fear, among



others. On the social front, it evaluates key structural attributes including trust, hope, and tendencies toward individualism or collectivism.

The study’s sample comprises roughly 5,500 participants aged 15 and older, drawn from ordinary households across 31 provincial capitals, non-capital cities, and rural areas. Fieldwork is scheduled to take place during the summer months of 2025.

Experts believe the findings

will serve as a valuable tool for identifying strengths and vulnerabilities within Iran’s social capital. The data is expected to enhance cultural strategies and inform policy decisions aimed at improving the quality of life for the Iranian people. Moreover, government agencies, academic institutions, and decision-makers will be able to design and implement programs grounded in a deeper understanding of the nation’s social fabric.

Iranian Filmmakers Take Center Stage on Global Festival Circuit

TEHRAN -- In a notable wave of global engagement, Iranian cinema continues to make its mark through both creative output and active participation in international film festivals—this time highlighted by new jury appointments and fresh festival selections.

Documentary filmmaker Pouya Aghalizadeh has been named a juror for the DMZ International Documentary Film Festival in South Korea.

The festival, held annually near the tense border region between North and South Korea, champions themes of peace, coexistence, and reconciliation. Now in its seventeenth edition (September 11–17, 2025), the DMZ Festival is a significant platform for documentary cinema in East Asia.

Aghalizadeh, also a member of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) and an established auteur, brings a distinct Iranian perspective to the jury panel.

His filmography includes award-winning works such as *Playback* (2022) and *Room No. 4* (2016), noted for their experimental forms and nuanced storytelling.

Meanwhile, acclaimed Irani-

an filmmaker Ahmad Zayeri has been appointed goodwill ambassador for humanitarian storytelling at the Earl’s Court International Film Festival in London.

Known internationally for his empathetic portrayals of children caught in war and crisis, Zayeri’s new role involves fostering international collaborations and supporting emerging filmmakers dedicated to socially conscious cinema.

His works, including *Olive Tree* of Saad and *War Citizen*, have earned accolades across diverse festivals—from the MENA Film Festival in the Netherlands to the Riverside International Film Festival in the U.S.

The festival’s director lauded Zayeri’s capacity to transform human suffering into profound, empathetic narratives, underscoring the alignment between his vision and the festival’s mission.

On the creative front, two Iranian short films are poised for international exposure. *Genesis X* (originally *Genesis Version X*), directed by Seyed Abbas Husseini, is an experimental project blending archival medical footage with AI-generated imagery to interrogate cinematic language

and the concept of human creation.

The film eschews traditional shooting methods, using X-rays, surgical videos, and digital composites to open new narrative pathways—an ambitious formal experiment that reframes the biblical Book of Genesis in a contemporary context.

Husseini’s prior works have been recognized at the Tehran Short Film Festival and the Farhang Foundation Film Festival in the U.S., marking him as a persistent innovator on Iran’s short film scene.

Further expanding Iran’s international presence, *I Hate My Left Hand*, written and directed by Abbas Mahyad, has been selected for the 2025 Louth International Film Festival in Ireland.

The festival, which runs from September 5 to 7, brings together a diverse array of filmmakers and audiences, with jurors including notable industry figures such as *Iron Man 3* director Shane Black.

Mahyad’s film adds to the growing roster of Iranian shorts resonating beyond national borders, reflecting the continued vitality and global relevance of Iran’s short-form cinema.

Picture of the Day



The Caspian Sea World Day, observed on August 12, commemorates the 2003 signing of the Tehran Convention by the five littoral states to protect the sea’s environment.

Photo by IRNA