



Leader offers condolences over demise of Quran translator Fuladvand

Tehran Times Culture Desk
TEHRAN — Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has offered his condolences over the demise of Iranian scholar Mohammad Mehdi Fuladvand, who was the first Iranian to translate the Quran into French.

Following is the text of the message, which was sent on Sunday:

"I offer my condolences on the demise of the prominent translator of the Holy Quran, Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Fuladvand, to his respected family, relatives, and the people who enjoy his works. May his service to the Quran be accepted by the Creator."

Fuladvand passed away at his home in Tehran on August 5. He was 88.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian scholars to review book on Greco-Roman art

TEHRAN — The Persian translation of "The Cambridge Introduction to the History of Art" will be discussed during a session at the main branch of the Book City in Tehran on August 12.

Translated by Hassan Afshar, the book is an 8-eight volume collection studying the art of ancient Greece and Rome until 20th century.

The Markaz publishing company has printed the Persian version.

Iranian scholars Mehdi Sahabi, Ali Ramin and Hassan Afshar have been invited to the seminar.

Romanian cartoonist displaying works in Rasht

TEHRAN — Artwork created by the Romanian cartoonist Florian Doru Crihana is currently on display during an exhibition at the Khatam-ol-Anbia Cultural Complex in Rasht.

Considered one of the world's most renowned cartoonists, his works will be showcased until August 15.

Spain to host Iranian cultural festival

TEHRAN — Iran's cultural attaché office in Spain and the Vitoria municipality will hold an Iranian cultural festival entitled "Iran, the Gate of the East" from August 15 until September 18.

Emphasizing the theme of Iranian culture and civilization, the festival will showcase Iranian handicrafts and photos from Iran's rich variety of historical sites.

European festivals to screen Iranian animation

TEHRAN — The Iranian animation "Loneliness," directed by Alireza Sheikhan, will be screened at festivals in Spain and Greece.

The animation will be screened at the Animasyros Festival, which will be held from September 19 to 21 in Greece.

It will also go on screen at the Marbella Film Festival in Italy from October 2 to 5.

Mobarak Intl. Puppet Theater Festival kicks off in Tehran

Tehran Times Art Desk
TEHRAN — The 12th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival kicked off in a hilarious opening ceremony at Tehran's City Theater Complex on Saturday.

The ceremony began with concerts and several street theater performances including a wooden horse ritual performance from Bojnurd, in North Khorasan Province.

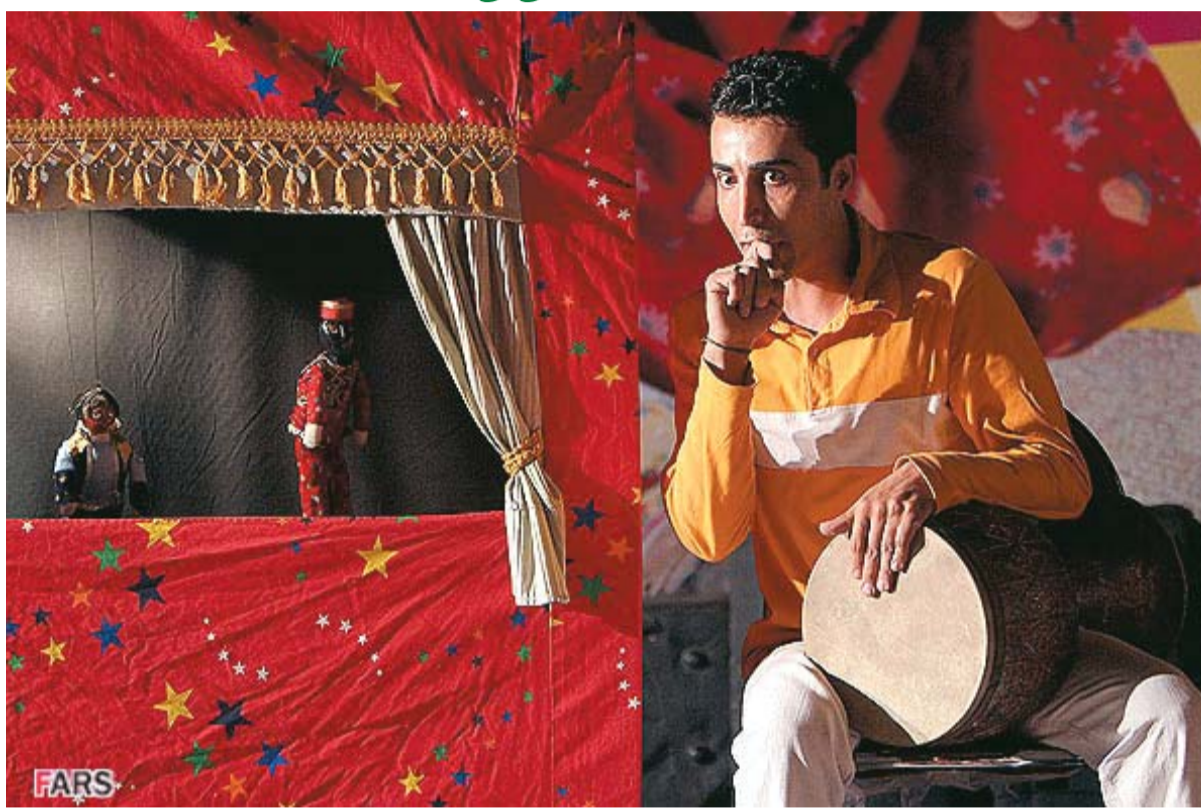
Later, secretary of the festival Rahmatollah Mehrabi gave the opening address, consisting of a short report about the festival.

"In the stage plays section, 296 works were submitted to the secretariat of the festival of which 161 were from Tehran and the rest from other cities. Also, at the street theater section, 27 works were submitted.

"This year, 25 works are competing in the stage play section, and seven foreign plays will compete with six Iranian works at the international section. Also included, are 17 street plays," he added.

Iranian traditional puppet mobarak and several other puppets were also present at the ceremony, attracting dozens of parents with their children to it.

The ceremony ended with a



A puppeteer performs a show with Mobarak, an Iranian national character, during the opening ceremony of the 12th Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival at Tehran's City Theater Complex on August 9.

(Fars/Abolfazl Salmanzadeh)

fireworks display and musical performances.

The City Theater Complex, Sangalaj Hall, as well as Honar and

Ferdowsi halls will play host to the plays through August 16.

Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish dies

RAMALLAH, West Bank (Reuters) — Mahmoud Darwish, whose poetry his fellow Palestinians embraced as the voice of their suffering, died on Saturday after heart surgery in Texas.

President Mahmoud Abbas declared three days of national mourning to honor the 67-year-old writer who, a close friend said, never came round from a major operation two days earlier.

"The passing of our great poet, Mahmoud Darwish, the lover of Palestine, the pioneer of the modern Palestinian cultural project, and the brilliant national leader, will leave a great gap in our political, cultural and national lives," Abbas said.

"Words cannot describe the depth of sadness in our hearts," he added. "Mahmoud, may God help us for your loss."

The death of a man whose life and words were tightly bound up in a struggle for a Palestinian national rebirth that seems little closer now than when his first work was published in 1960 immediately triggered a wider outpouring of popular emotion.

As news from Houston filtered through, people, some weeping, gathered round candles in the darkened streets of Ramallah. The poet had made his home in the West

Bank city since returning in the 1990s from a long exile during which he rose to prominence in Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Palestinian television interrupted programs to air film of Darwish, the "national poet," reading from his work. Officials said his body would be

flown back for burial in Ramallah.

He won new generations of admirers with work that evoked the pain of Palestinians displaced, as he was as a child, by the establishment of Israel 60 years ago, but also did not shrink from criticism and touched on broader human themes, like love.

An intensely private man who

largely lived alone, he enjoyed a mass following across the Arab world, where he had the kind of readership contemporary poets in other languages only dream of.

Palestinians at home and abroad spoke of intense, personal feelings of bereavement. "His death is a loss to the Palestinian people, to the Palestinian cause and to freedom-loving people around the world," said Ahmad Ibrahim, a banker in Ramallah.

Philosophy professor Abdel-Rahim al-Sheikh was choked with emotion: "I cannot speak now. My soul is not helping me."

Last month, Darwish, a heavy smoker who had twice before undergone major heart surgery, spoke to Reuters of his fading health and his gloomy assessment of the world he would leave.

His last works are imbued with a sarcastic humor and a sense of both Israelis and Palestinians, however antagonistic, bound irredeemably together to share an uncertain future.

"Sarcasm helps me overcome the harshness of the reality we live, eases the pain of scars and makes people smile," he said.

"History laughs at both the victim and the aggressor."



Mahmud Darwish is pictured during the 2005 international Carthage festival in Tunisia. Palestinians on Sunday mourned the passing of Darwish, who gave voice to their decades-old struggle and is widely considered one of the Arab world's greatest modern poets.

(AFP/File/Fethi Belaid)

Comedian and actor Bernie Mac dies at 50



Bernie Mac smiles at the premiere of "Ocean's Thirteen" at the Grauman's Chinese theatre in Hollywood, California June 5, 2007. The movie opens in the U.S. on June 8. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

LOS ANGELES (Reuters Life!) — Comedian and actor Bernie Mac, who starred in one of

U.S. TV's few black sitcoms and appeared in the "Ocean's 11" movies, died in Chicago on Saturday after a bout with pneumonia. He was 50.

Publicist Danica Smith confirmed the death in a statement but gave no further details. "We ask that his family's privacy continues to be respected," she said.

Reactions poured in from Hollywood, which was taken by surprise because two days ago, Smith said he was "responding well to treatment" and remained in "stable condition."

"The world just got a little less funny. He will be dearly missed," said George Clooney, who starred with Mac in the "Ocean's" trilogy of hit box office films.

Mac was hospitalized in Chicago on August 1, and Smith said then his illness was unrelated to a chronic tissue inflammation called sarcoidosis, which had been in remission since 2005.

The Chicago-born comedian, whose given name was Bernard Jeffrey McCullough, was best known for his TV comedy "The Bernie Mac Show," which ran for five seasons until 2006.

Along with the "Ocean's" capers, he appeared in movies such as comedy "Guess Who" and "Mr. 3000." He recently worked on a new TV show "Starting Under" and an upcoming film "Soul Men."

With his beefy frame and bulging eyes, Mac cut an imposing figure. His scathing comedic observations were inspired by his impoverished childhood in Chicago and honed by years on the stand-up circuit.

"I reflect on my childhood, my young adulthood, the disappointments of life -- the problems I brought on myself, the self-pity I went through before I became a man," he told once in a magazine in 2003.

Iran making TV series based on Hugo's "Les Miserables"

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Mohammadreza Honarmand is directing the TV series "Wind and Vent" based on an adaptation from "Les Miserables" by Victor Hugo.

Written by Ahmad Rafizadeh, the project will be produced by Ramin Abbasizadeh in 26 episodes for TV channel 2.

"Various kinds of adaptations from Hugo's novel 'Les Miserables' has so far been written. But I tried to feature Iranian characteristics and the Iranian society in this story," writer Rafizadeh told MNA.

"The story of 'Wind and Vent' begins in 1940's and continues until the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Most of the foreign adaptations of the novel are loyal to the theme but we changed it into an Iranian style, which was not an easy task, though," he explained.

Rafizadeh is currently acting as head of the writers in the project "Milky Way" by director Saman Moqaddam.

Honarmand was director of the Iranian TV series "Under the Blade" that was highly acclaimed by audiences when it was aired on TV channel 1 two years ago. Renowned actors Parviz Parastui, Atila Pesyani, Hushang Tavakoli and actress Fatemeh Motamed-Arya were among the cast.

Private sector to restore Safavid caravanserai of Karaj

Tehran Times Culture Desk

TEHRAN — A private foundation plans to restore the Shah-Abbasi Caravanserai in order to convert the Safavid monument into a traditional hotel.

The Fund for Restoration and Utilization of Historical Sites, affiliated to the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, granted the right to Shahid Mohammad-Hoseein Fahmideh Foundation.

The foundation was established to promote Mohammad-Hussein Fahmideh, 13-year-old Iranian boy who jumped with a grenade underneath an Iraqi tank to stop the Iraqi tank division's advance during the early days of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The foundation should restore the monument within two years and consequently, it will have the right to make use of the traditional hotel for 15 years, the fund director Ali-Asgahr Parhizgar told the Persian service of CHN on Sunday.

Covering 3000 square meters in area, the caravanserai is located on the Qods Street. It was constructed during the reign of Safavid king, Shah Suleiman I (1666-1694).

The monument comprises four iwans and a yard surrounded by 21 rooms.

BOOKSHELF

Compendio Delle Dottrine Islamiche

Author: Allame Tabatabaai

Translator: Z.Esmaeili

Publisher: Al-Hoda International Publications

Containing the outlines of Islamic doctrines, the book elaborates on the main principles of the Islamic religion in layman's language. It aims to introduce Italian readers to Islamic thoughts.

Allameh Seyyed Muhammad Hossein Tabatabaai (1892-1981) was one of the most prominent scholars of contemporary Shia Islam. He is famous for Tafsir al-Mizan, the Quranic exegesis.

