

# Expats Blast Anti-Iranian '300'

Malaysian-based Iranian students have strongly criticized the production and distribution of a Hollywood recreation of the 480 BC Battle of Thermopylae by Warner Brothers Pictures.

According to Fars, Iranian expatriates, particularly students living in Malaysia, have written critical letters to different international organizations and domestic and foreign groups to protest the production and screening of controversial 116-

minute '300' released on March 9. The politically-motivated film, directed by Zack Snyder, is expected to be screened in Malaysia this week.

In the film, Hollywood director, Snyder, has depicted the Iranians as bloodthirsty, uncivilized and brutal nation as opposed to the brave and respectable people of Greece.

Cinema experts accuse the film of being politically inclined to the United States which is inciting public opinion against Iran and its long-

standing civilization. Adapted from a graphic novel by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley, '300' is about the ancient Battle of Thermopylae, which unfolded at a narrow pass on the coast of Greece whose name translates as Hot Gates.

Gerard Butler, Lena Headey, Dominic West, David Wenham and Vincent Regan are starring in '300'. Those willing to sign the petition may visit the site: <http://www.petitiononline.com/wpci96c>

# Artist Creates Biggest Bas Relief

An Iranian sculptor, who has so far created more than 100 statues in Turkey and taught sculpture for seven years in Istanbul Academy, is currently completing an artwork inspired by Gilgamesh, the most ancient myth in history.

Commenting on the work, Babak Sobhi said, "I always been interested in portraying Gilgamesh. I even considered making a film about it but it was not possible, said CHN.

"Then I proposed creating a bas relief of Gilgamesh on baked clay and this was approved," he said.

Based on research, the undertaking is unique in the Middle East since Gilgamesh was in written form and no work featuring it has so far been created.

Commenting on the mechanism for designing the artwork, he said, "We are a ten-person group, including three artists, read Gilgamesh several times and compiled a script on its basis. Then we painted the script in full details."

On the dimensions of the artwork, Sobhi said that it measures 120 meter by 2 meters. It includes 1,500 friezes measuring 40X40 cms and weighs five to seven kilos. The artworks will be presented in the form of series of tableaux arranged in a circular format on two-meter high pillars, he noted.

Sobhi further stated that the artwork will take nine months to complete because his assistants did not have sufficient skill and he himself has created all hands, faces and other parts.

He further said that the artwork will be installed in one of the parks in Turkey this summer.

The Epic of Gilgamesh is a long, boring, heroic poem by Gilgamesh, a Babylonian who plagiarized the story from ancient Sumerian sources and claimed that the events of the poem, outlandish though they are, actually happened to him. One of the poem's key episodes is the flood, which, when it is written about in the Bible, is known as the Biblical flood, but, in Gilgamesh, is referred to as The Deluge. The poem, which, written about 3000 BC, is among the oldest tall tales in Western literature, recounts King Gilgamesh's love affair with his friend, Enkidu, who later dies, abandoning his life.



Tile works at Soltani Mosque in Semnan

# Quadri-Arc Fire Temple Retrieved

Experts of Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization have successfully repaired a quadri-arc fire temple in Qasr-e Shirin in Kermanshah province.

Quoting an official, CHN reported that clumsy repair works on 'Chahar

Qapi' fire temple, which dates back to the Sassanid era (226-650 AD), four decades ago had led to its destruction.

Yousef Moradi, in charge of the project, said repairmen had earlier retrieved the temple in a wrong manner with stone and cement

which, according to 2001 explorations, created cracks in its walls.

"We repaired it using traditional building materials," he said, adding that the eight-year Saddam-imposed war (1980-88) inflicted much destruction on this historical site.

# Arak Bazaar in Disrepair

According to an ancient tradition, a bazaar in a city served as a venue for public gatherings which promoted cultural interactions. The Iranians viewed the Bazaar as a place for business.

Today, the valuable heritage has retained its historical relevance on the one hand, and, on the other, its historical texture and architecture have been preserved for the posterity. By the same token, Arak Bazaar is considered one of the historical complexes of the country.

According to ISNA, the historical Arak Bazaar Complex is among the ancient monuments in the city which was established during the reign of Fathali Shah of the Qajar dynasty. The complex includes all welfare facilities such as mosque, school and water reservoir.

The edifice, which is a



A view of Vakil Bazaar in Arak

valuable example of urban planning in the early 13th century AH,

was founded by the then ruler of Arak, Sepahdar Azam.

Arak Bazaar was considered an economic and trade hub and a place for trading carpet and its raw materials in the city from the ancient times.

Existence of caravansaries including Mehr Caravansary, which currently houses Handicrafts Museum, in the Bazaar are among the factors making the complex appealing for the visitors.

The roofed ancient caravansary, which has a unique architecture, was built near the market by skillful architects to serve as a resting place for travelers.

However, due to lack of comprehensive plan for repairing the complex, restoration works have been conducted on the monument as an emergency measure. Unfortunately, the ancient textures of the city and Bazaar Complex have been neglected in the course of urban development.

# 'Picnic in Apartment' On French Stage

The play 'Picnic in Apartment' directed by Gilbert Tsai was performed in four French cities for 20 nights by an all-female Iranian cast.

According to ISNA, Afsaneh Mahiyan, one of the actresses involved in the performance, said that the play was warmly welcomed by the French audience as fresh talks have been held to bring it on stage again, but a final decision on this is yet to be made.

Announcing that the play will probably be performed during Iran's

Cultural Week in France, she added that talks on this issue were held in a meeting between Iran's Cultural House in France and Iranian Embassy.

Since the theme of the play is compatible with the Iranian new year (Norouz) ceremonies, it is likely that the performance will be staged again in the current week.

Commenting on the performance of the play in Iran, Mahiyan further said that since the French Embassy has undertaken the production of the play, any

planning in this respect should be coordinated with the embassy.

However, several performances exclusive for journalists and artists are on the agenda, but the schedules are not yet clear, he noted.

'Picnic in Apartment' which revolves around Iranian traditions from 'Chaharshanbeh Souri' (the night of the last Wednesday of the outgoing Iranian year) up to 'Sizdah Bedar' (the 13th day of Norouz, the new Iranian year) was performed in Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Montero.

# King Makes Comic Book Debut

There are few things Stephen King hasn't tried when it comes to his work. He's already the master of horror fiction, a tour guide through disturbing and fantastical worlds, a writing coach, a nonfiction author, a screen writer and even a director, reported AP.

He can now claim a new genre with the recent Marvel Entertainment comics publication 'The Dark Tower', based on his books of the same name.

"I'm a big fan of the medium," King said of comic books. "A different way to tell stories is always exciting. It's like being a kid with a chemistry set."

It's not that he's a comic book buff. In fact, he hasn't really kept tabs on the medium since his 'Sandman' days as a child. But when the idea came up to make his seven-book 'Dark Tower' series into a comic serial,

he jumped at the chance.

The time is right for the collaboration, as both the genre and the author are being showered with critical and academic success like never before. These days, comic books aren't just for gangly teenage boys or geeky adults, and King isn't just a grocery store paperback writer.

"It asks something more of the reader than an old 'Donald Duck' or an 'Archie' or 'Veronica,'" King says of the new comic. "You have to learn how to read it, and find out you're going to be challenged."

The 'Dark Tower' is part Western, part fantasy and part adventure, centering on the story of Roland Deschain, a man who lives in a futuristic kind of world, and his quest to find the 'Man in Black' and later on, the dark tower.

King calls it his life's work it took him nearly 20 years to complete the

series, the final book was published in 2004. But unlike myriad other King stories, it's never been made into a film or TV show.

Marvel gathered its best artists and writers for the project. Jae Lee and Richard Isanove worked together on the drawings and the result is a somber, fluid book in deep red and black tones, very different from the traditional 'WHAM!' superhero comics.

The plot, too, is unlike traditional comic books, because writers Peter David and Robin Furth had to start from scratch. They work within King's story, but flesh out parts of Roland's life not detailed in the books.

"Unlike Marvel Comics with 40 years of reference, this world hadn't been drawn," said Marvel publisher Dan Buckley. "There's no movie, no TV show, no place we could go to as a style guide."

# TV to Air Mollaqolipour Films

Selected films by the late Iranian director Mollaqolipour will be broadcast by the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) TV during this year's Norouz (Iranian new year) holidays.

According to ILNA,

films by a number of filmmakers such as Mollaqolipour, Ebrahim Hatami-Kia, Majid Majidi, Reza Mirkarimi, Asghar Hashemi and Bahman Farman-Ara will be including in the final list of Norouz program.

The films 'Refugee', 'Flying at Night',

'Horizon', 'Help Me', 'Lunar Eclipse' (all by Mollaqolipour), 'In the Name of Father', 'A Small Kiss', 'Weeping Willow', 'Fake Woman', 'Online Murder', 'How Much You Get to Cry', 'Singles', 'When All Were Asleep', 'Here, a Light Is On', 'Stalin's Boots',

'Puberty', 'Kandelous Gardens', 'Pilgrimage', 'Bloody Diamond', 'Catch Me If You Can', 'Five Children and That', 'Pink Panther', 'House of Flying Daggers' and several other Iranian and foreign films will be aired for the first time during Norouz holidays.

**THEATER**

**Backyard**  
Director: Christa Yasrebi  
Time: 6 p.m.  
Add: Sayeh Hall, City Theater, Enqelab St., Vali-e Asr Crossroad

**Winter Light**  
Director: Saeed Shapouri  
Time: 8 p.m.  
Add: Sayeh Hall, City Theater, Enqelab St., Vali-e Asr Crossroad

**A Night With Grandpa**  
Director: Hossein Farrokhi  
Time: 5:30 p.m.  
Add: Qashqaei Hall, City Theater, Enqelab St., Vali-e Asr Crossroad

**INFORMATION**

**Prayer Timings**  
Dawn: 4:57  
Sunrise: 6:20  
Noon: 12:14  
Evening: 18:27

**WEATHER GUIDE**

	MON	TUE
Tehran:		
High:	12°C	16°C
Low:	2°C	5°C
	High °C	
Athens:	15	13
Ankara:	11	8
Cairo:	25	24
Copenhagen:	13	11
Frankfurt:	15	14
Karachi:	28	28
Kuwait City:	28	26
London:	13	15
Madrid:	16	17
Moscow:	5	7
New Delhi:	25	27
Paris:	16	14
Riyadh:	35	35
Rome:	20	18
Vienna:	15	15

**TONGUE IN CHEEK**

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