

Iran's animation 'Loopetou' could compete internationally: Filmmaker



Abbas Askari, the director of popular Iranian animation 'Loopetou' told to the media that the animated piece can compete with foreign cartoons.

The director added that when the film could stay at the top of cinema's box office for over a month, then it has the ability to compete with foreign films, ifilmtv.ir reported. The animation took nearly seven years to be ready, Askari said, adding that 30 animators were involved in making the production.

The animation is about a hospital where Dr. Saeed Kamali treats his mental patients through letting them make toys.

"A person disguised as a patient vandalizes the workshop and causes its closure. The doctor's son, Ali, tries to help his father to solve the problem," a synopsis for the film reads. 'Loopetou' previously took part in various festivals in Iran and across the world, including the Universal Kids Film Festival in Turkey.

It was also awarded at the 4th edition of Ahmedabad International Children Film Festival in India.

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 ● Managing Director: Abas Aslani
 ● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
 ● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684
 ● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5
 ● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
 ● Website: www.irandaily.ir
 ● Email: newspaper.irandaily.ir
 ● Printing House: irandaily@icpi.ir
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Iran to open Persian teaching center in Oman



Najafi said the center in Oman will respond to a growing interest in reading Farsi books in the Arab country.



Iran plans to set up a center in Oman to teach Farsi, Iran's Ambassador to Muscat Ali Najafi announced. Najafi made the announcement while touring Iran's stall at the 27th Muscat

International Book Fair, IRNA wrote. He said the center in Oman will respond to a growing interest in reading Farsi books in the Arab country. During the envoy's visit to

the Iran's pavilion, 11 children's books, being translated into Arabic, were also unveiled. The translated books have great illustrations, making them highly attractive for

Omani book readers, the envoy said, adding that the Persian versions of the books also received kudos from Iranian families residing in Oman. The 27th Muscat Interna-

tional Book Fair opened in the Omani capital on February 22 and will continue through March 3, as 826 publishers from 32 countries have participated in.

Cost-of-living crisis in UK: One in five parents spend less on books for their children

One in five parents and carers in the UK are spending less on books for their children because of the cost-of-living crisis, and a quarter have asked children to borrow more books from the school library, new research has found.

The research, which surveyed more than 3,000 parents and carers across Great Britain, also found that the cost-of-living crisis is having a concerning impact on children's education, with one in six respondents to the survey saying their child was struggling more at school now compared with 12 months ago, the Guardian reported.

While around 20% of parents and carers overall said they were spending less on books for their children as a result of the increasing cost of living, this increased to 36% for families who felt that they were struggling financially with the increase in the cost of living.

The research is from the National Literacy Trust (NLT) and digital bank Chase, and was conducted by YouGov. It looked at reading habits as well as spend-

ing on books, finding that 10% of parents and carers said they were too stressed to read to their child because of economic pressures. This figure almost doubled to 19% when it came to parents and carers who deemed themselves as struggling financially.

Jonathan Douglas, chief executive of the NLT, said: "We know that experiencing poverty and financial strain impacts children's literacy - with families not being able to afford books and having less time and energy to spend reading, writing and talking to their children at home."

According to the research, around 40% of families say they are struggling financially, leading to lower spending on books for children.

Around 40% of respondents said their child did not have access to a quiet space to read at home. Parents and carers instead are increasingly relying on school libraries to get their children access to books and to provide a welcoming reading environment. This is despite



the fact that one in seven state primary schools do not have a dedicated library space, affecting more than 750,000 children, according to the NLT. Schools are not statutorily required to have a library on their premises. Author Cressida Cowell, in her final act as children's laureate in 2022, renewed a call for the government to invest £100m in primary school libraries, following research that showed school libraries help to improve academic standards, as well as foster a love of reading in children. The NLT and Chase's research comes at the start of the second year of the Chase Rewarding Futures school library programme, which aims to support children and young people to fulfil their future potential by developing an early love of reading.

James Bond novels to be reissued with racial references removed

Ian Fleming's James Bond novels are to be reissued with a number of racial references removed and a disclaimer that the books might use terms of attitudes "considered offensive by modern readers".

April marks 70 years since Casino Royale, Fleming's first book featuring British spy Bond, was published. To mark the occasion, a full set of the thrillers will be reissued.

Ian Fleming Publications Ltd, which owns the rights to the author's work, employed sensitivity readers to look at the texts and make recommendations for changes. The changes include the removal of the N-word in almost all cases, and omitting references to the ethnicity of a number of minor characters, the Guardian wrote.

The reissued books will also carry a disclaimer, according to the Telegraph, which will explain the changes and will read: "This book was written at a time when terms and attitudes which might be con-

sidered offensive by modern readers were commonplace.

Many of the changes in the Bond books are around the depiction of Black people. In 'Live and Let Die', Bond's comment that would-be African criminals in the gold and diamond trades are "pretty law-abiding chaps I should have thought," has been changed to just "pretty law-abiding chaps I should have thought", says the Telegraph.

Another change comes in a scene where Bond visits a nightclub in Harlem, and a reference to the "audience panting and grunting like pigs at the trough" has been changed to "Bond could sense the electric tension in the room".

A statement from Ian Fleming Publications to the Telegraph said that they had "reviewed the text of the original Bond books and decided our best course of action was to follow Ian's lead".

They encouraged "people to read the books for them-



elves" when they are reissued.

The changes come after a furore over changes made to books by Roald Dahl, which saw the texts changed after a review by sensitivity readers. Changes to Dahl's books in the 2022 editions include using "enormous" rather than "enormously fat" to describe the antagonist Augustus Gloop in 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' and "beastly" rather than "ugly and beastly" to describe Mrs. Twit in 'The Twits'.

In response to criticism, Dahl's publisher Puffin, the children's imprint of Penguin Random House, said it would release the author's works in their original versions as well as the new texts.

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When it finally snows in NYC — head to @CentralParkNYC! Though this Central Park scene by William James Glackens was painted ca. 1905, swap in some 2023 winter gear and this scene could be from today. What's your favorite snowy moment in NYC?

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Xinhua Culture & Travel @XinhuaTravel & China state-affiliated media

Dao xiao mian, or sliced noodles, is a famed dish from Shanxi Province, north China. Made with a base of expertly cut dough, this delicious specialty is not only popular among Chinese but is also gradually winning the hearts of global foodies

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This extraordinary exhibition will open a new page in public understanding of late imperial China. Exhibition curator Jessica Harrison-Hall explores #ChinasHiddenCentury through five themes — the court, the military, artists, urban life and global Qing: ow.ly/koXV5oN3QVG

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