

Iran's 'In the Arms of the Tree' awarded at Asian World Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian family drama 'In the Arms of the Tree' won the Snow Leopard Special Jury Prize at the 10th Asian World Film Festival (AWFF). Over 60 films and special screenings, including 24 Academy Award submissions for Best International Feature Film, were presented over the nine days of the AWFF, held in Los Angeles, US, November 13 – 21. The film, written and directed

by Babak Khajeh Pasha and produced by Sajjad Nasrollahi Nasab and Mohammad Reza Mesbah, was selected as the representative of Iran's best international feature film for the 97th Academy Awards, ISNA reported. 'In the Arms of the Tree' tells the story of Kimia and Farid, a couple married for twelve years, whose life crisis shatters their children's world, children who know nothing but simplicity and kindness in life. This year, 'In the Arms of the Tree'

was screened at the AWFF, which showcases the best of Asian cinema in Los Angeles to promote Asian film talent and strengthen ties between the Asian film industry and Hollywood. The festival is supported by diverse Asian communities in Los Angeles and is open to the general public who are interested in foreign and independent cinema. Maral Baniadam, Javad Qamati, Rouhollah Zamani, Ahoura Lotfi, and Rayan Lotfi are in the cast among others.



Tehran wins top booth prize in Almaty

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The Islamic Republic of Iran was awarded the top booth at the 12th Kazakhstan International Book and Printing Exhibition, held in Almaty from November 20 to 22. According to the organizers' evaluations, Iran's booth stood out among those of other participating countries from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Asia, IRNA reported. The organizers awarded the Iranian cultural center a certificate and plaque for the best booth,

citing its artistic design, variety, and innovative ideas. The exhibition was attended by high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Culture and Information, Writers' Union of Kazakhstan, and other prominent figures, including Iranian Consul General Mohsen Faghani and Cultural Attaché Hossein Aghazadeh. At the exhibition, Iran's Cultural Center showcased the country's scientific, educational, tourism, and artistic capabilities, as well as the achievements of Iranian

women. The University of Tehran's School of Medicine also participated in the exhibition, offering information on medical education opportunities. Visitors to the Iranian booth were provided with a wealth of information on the benefits and opportunities of studying and traveling to Iran, in Kazakh, Russian, and English. Two websites from the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education were introduced to the audience, allowing them to select universities and register for courses. The Iranian cultural center also organized two competitions for young Kazakhs, one of which tested their knowledge of Persian poetry and offered five educational opportunities in Iran as prizes. The second competition, held on social media, awarded 10 handmade crafts to participants.



Iran's tourism industry a crowd-puller at Ankara fair

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Iran's rich cultural heritage and tourism industry were a major draw at the 7th International Tourism and Travel Fair (TRAVELEXPO) held in Ankara, Turkey, from November 14 to 17. The event drew in visitors from over 40 countries, as well as Turkish provinces and tourism-related institutions and companies. Iran's booth was a standout attraction at the fair, showcasing the country's traditional crafts and tourist attractions. The stall, set up by Iran's cultural center in Ankara, proved to be a major crowd-puller, with many visitors eager to learn more about traveling to Iran. Visitors to the booth were treated to a wealth of information on Iran's cultural and historical significance, including its shared civilization with Turkey. They also learned about the benefits of traveling to Iran, including its rich cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and natural beauty. The booth's popularity was a testament to the growing interest in Iranian culture and tourism, and it provided a unique opportunity for visitors to experience the country's rich heritage firsthand. The booth's attractive display and informative materials made it a must-visit destination for

anyone interested in learning more about Iran. The opening ceremony of the fair was attended by Turkish officials, ambassadors, and representatives of various countries, including Iran's cultural attaché. Russia was the guest of honor at the event, with several tourism companies in attendance. On the sidelines of the event, Iran's cultural attaché, Qassem Nazari, held meetings with political representatives and cultural attachés from various countries, including Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa, and Ethiopia, during which the expansion of relations and exchange of experiences were emphasized.



Could the IAEA...

The resolution requests that Iran provide clarification regarding the uranium particles detected at undeclared sites in Turqzabad and Varamin. This request is presented in light of the broader understanding that, since the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, the European signatories have faced challenges in fully adhering to their commitments under the agreement. The resolution encourages the IAEA chief to provide a thorough report on Iran's nuclear activities and its cooperation with the Agency prior to the upcoming Board of Governors meeting. Observers have noted that the adoption of this resolution may potentially set in motion a process that could lead to the activation of the snapback mechanism, thus reinstating the sanctions that were in effect before the JCPOA.

Context surrounding adoption of resolution

In the lead-up to the recent Board of Governors meeting, Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the IAEA, undertook a visit to Tehran, where he had the opportunity to inspect various Iranian nuclear sites. Throughout his discus-

sions with Iranian officials, Grossi was able to reach constructive agreements. Following these discussions, he shared in a press conference that Iran had committed to refraining from any further increases in its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium. It appears that members of the Board of Governors have been influenced by the Quad, comprising the US, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. As we approach Donald Trump's anticipated return to the presidency in approximately two months, it is noteworthy that his "maximum pressure" policy concerning Iran's nuclear program has garnered significant attention. His associated lobbying efforts seem to have encouraged some Board members to lend their support to the resolution. This resolution marks the third notable action taken by European nations concerning Iran in recent months, following sanctions that have targeted Iran's shipping and aviation sectors. These measures come at a time when a reformist Iranian administration is actively pursuing de-escalation and constructive engagement with Western powers. The intent behind these actions appears to be to enhance the

negotiating leverage for future discussions and encourage Iran to consider making further concessions. Advocates of the resolution suggest that Iran has been augmenting its uranium stockpile to levels that could be seen as a step towards weaponization, particularly in light of escalating tensions with Israel. However, it's important to note that these claims were addressed shortly before the meeting, following inspections of Iranian facilities conducted by Grossi, which provided a different perspective.

Iran's response

Following the adoption of the resolution, Mohsen Naziri Asl, Iran's ambassador and representative to the IAEA, expressed Tehran's steadfast commitment to fulfilling its obligations as a member of the Agency. He also underscored that Iran would consider its response to the latest developments with due diligence and care. The Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran have collaboratively issued a statement expressing concern that the recent resolution may undermine the constructive atmosphere that has been

fostered. They believe it could have adverse effects on future dialogues. The statement reaffirmed Iran's commitment to ongoing technical and safeguards cooperation with the IAEA in accordance with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. Furthermore, it indicated that directives have been issued to commence operations of a new set of advanced centrifuges. Russia's Foreign Ministry expressed concern regarding the resolution, characterizing it as a misstep that may not align with the objectives of non-proliferation. Moscow emphasized that the resolution could be seen as a diversion from the pressing situation in Gaza.

Future Scenarios for Iran

Iran is presented with a variety of potential pathways, which can be broadly outlined as follows:
 1. Demonstrating goodwill: Tehran has the opportunity to lower uranium enrichment levels to below 5%. This gesture could reflect its commitment to constructive engagement with the IAEA and potentially alleviate some international pressures.
 2. Reassessing own nuclear doctrine: The recent decisions from the Board

of Governors may encourage Iran to reconsider its nuclear doctrine. There have been discussions among some members of Iran's parliament encouraging the Supreme Leader to reflect on the existing religious edict (fatwa) that prohibits the pursuit of nuclear weapons. Advocates of this perspective suggest that a withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a commitment to developing nuclear capabilities could enhance Iran's deterrent strength and improve its leverage in diplomatic negotiations.
 3. Implementing threshold strategy: A prudent and cautious approach might involve Iran enhancing its technical, scientific, and infrastructural abilities essential for nuclear weaponization, while refraining from actual production or testing. This strategy would allow Iran to maintain a form of latent nuclear deterrence while steering clear of the potentially serious repercussions associated with openly advancing its nuclear ambitions. Each of these scenarios carries unique implications for Iran's role in the region and its relationship with the broader international community.