



Iranian wildlife documentary 'Dog Eater' wins best short film at Ankara festival

Arts & Culture Desk

The short wildlife documentary 'Dog Eater', directed by Iranian filmmakers Fathollah Amiri and Nima Askari, took home the Best Short Documentary prize at the 1st Ankara International Wildlife Documentary Film Festival in Turkey, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Produced and co-directed by Amiri and Askari, the film was Iran's sole entry among 691 documentary films from 89 countries competing across short and feature-length categories, IRNA reported.

The festival was held from May 15 to 18. After the jury's deliberation, 14 films were selected as winners—seven in shorts and seven in feature-length—from countries including Russia, Spain, Germany, the United States, Nepal, India, Austria, France, Norway, and Iran.

"This was the first year the festival was held," Amiri said. "The organizers put a strong emphasis on scientific and artistic value, originality of subjects, and storytelling in documentaries."

He said 'Dog Eater' received warm reception from the audience, festival officials, and the international jury.

Set in a village in North Khorasan province, the documentary explores a community's encounter with a leopard preying on their dogs. Although the leopard was eventually trapped, villagers demanded its release, highlighting local attitudes towards wildlife conservation.

Amiri, a prominent documentarian from Ilam province, has produced several acclaimed films on Iranian wildlife, including 'In the Realm of the Spider-tailed Viper' (2018), and 'In the Whirlpool of Extinction' on the Asiatic cheetah. His



Iranian filmmakers Fathollah Amiri (2nd R) and Nima Askari (3rd R) pose with the Best Short Documentary award at the 1st Ankara International Wildlife Documentary Film Festival in Ankara, Turkey, May 18, 2025.
● IRNA

work has earned him numerous domestic and international awards, including a Golden Bear equivalent for his spider-tailed viper documentary.

Alongside screenings, the Ankara festival hosted a panel on wildlife filmmaking, technology, narrative, and creativity, drawing filmmakers and nature enthusiasts. Amiri noted that wildlife documentaries open a window to new worlds and play a vital role in raising public awareness about environmental protection.

'Dog Eater' also featured last year at Iran's Cinema Verite, further cementing its place in the growing field of environmental storytelling.



Iran eyes economic, health cooperation with Switzerland, Saudi Arabia during WHO summit



Iran's Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi (1st L) and his Swiss counterpart Elisabeth Baume-Schneider (1st R) meet on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly in Tehran, Iran on May 20, 2025.
● IRNA

Social Desk

Iran's health minister held separate meetings with his Swiss and Saudi

counterparts on Tuesday in Tehran, focusing on economic ties and health diplomacy, according to Iran's Health Ministry.

During talks on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly, Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi and Switzerland's Health Elisabeth Baume-Schneider backed plans to hold the third Iran-Switzerland Joint Economic Commission in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Zafarghandi said the gathering is tentatively set for September 16, 2025, and could "boost cooperation," especially in the health sector.

He pointed to an internal task force dubbed the "Swiss desk," which helps resolve hurdles faced by Swiss health firms operating in Iran. "Their presence under sanctions has been of great value to us," he said.

Schneider, underscoring Switzerland's role as host of the World Health Organization, said Bern is committed to "glob-

al health" and is working on reforms to adapt to "a changing world."

She welcomed Iran's cooperation in anti-drug initiatives and said preparations for the Tehran economic commission were underway.

Ali Jafarian, senior adviser to Iran's health minister, called for reactivation of a special Swiss financial channel launched in early 2020 to facilitate humanitarian trade. That mechanism has since stalled.

Zafarghandi also met with Saudi Health Minister Fahad Al-Jalal, expressing hope for expanding what he called "health diplomacy" amid warming bilateral ties. He pointed to existing cooperation around Hajj pilgrim health and proposed a joint working group and a memorandum of understanding.

Iran, he noted, has "strong capabilities" in primary care, pharmaceuticals and medical education. A draft agreement with Saudi Arabia, already prepared, could pave the way for partnerships on smart hospitals, workforce training and global health security, Al-Jalal said.

Jafarian suggested Iran and Saudi Arabia could collaborate further on liver transplants, alongside Egypt and the UAE.

Zafarghandi invited his Saudi counterpart to visit Iran's health facilities to explore joint projects.

The WHO summit which began on May 19, runs through May 27 in Geneva under the theme "One World for Health." Iran's delegation is led by Zafarghandi and includes senior officials from the country's health sector.

UNESCO puts Iran environmental education on agenda

Social Desk

UNESCO's Iran office has added environmental education to its core programs in the country, aiming to push for "sustainable solutions" and deeper global cooperation, the head of the national commission said Tuesday.

Speaking at the 8th National Conference and Specialized Exhibition on Environmental Education, Secretary-General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO, Hassan Fartousi said the initiative reflects UNESCO's vision of awareness-building and training for climate action, IRNA reported.

"It's about knowledge, values and hands-on skills," he told delegates at Payame Noor University. He called environmental education a "vital process"

for addressing today's ecological challenges.

UNESCO's approach rests on four pillars, as Fartousi explained are raising public awareness, encouraging sensitivity to environmental issues, deepening understanding, and motivating action.

"UNESCO plays a key role," he noted, through scientific programs like the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP) and International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. These aim to improve the way people interact with the planet.

The commission also supports countries with data and guidelines to develop effective policies. According to

Fartousi, UNESCO is actively promoting education as a main tool to tackle climate change and ensure water sustainability.

One of the agency's newest pushes is the Greening Education Partnership (GEP). "It's a worldwide alliance," Fartousi said, calling on all countries to join. The programs don't just "raise awareness," he said, they also help build "sustainable solutions" through international collaboration.

A one-day exhibition held on the sidelines of the event showcased 30 booths featuring local research projects. Organizers said the goal was to align scientific efforts with emerging technologies for sustainable development.

The conference, delayed from March due to air pollution closures in the cap-



ital, drew scientists and policymakers aiming to exchange ideas and drive

innovation. It marks the eighth edition since 2012.