

Iranian animation Legend of Sepehr hits Russian silver screen in memory of Minab kids

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian animated film *The Legend of Sepehr* has opened in 89 Russian cinemas, with a ceremony in Moscow honouring 168 people mostly schoolchildren killed in a US missile strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah School in Iran's southern city of Minab. The young children lost their lives on the first day of the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran on February 28. "This act of aggression was a great and painful crime, and we must not allow this crime to disappear from the memory of humanity," Iran's Ambassador To Russia Kazem Jalali told the opening ceremony, IRNA reported on Tuesday. He said Iran's cultural days in Russia, due to be held in October in Saint Petersburg, Moscow and Kazan, would feature a 168-member Iranian artistic group in memory of the victims. Iran's cultural counsellor in Russia, Abdolreza Rashed, also at-

tended the event.

Konstantin Yulkin, chief executive of Russian film distributor Russian World Vision (RWV), welcomed the screening and described the movie as a "good film for children".

"We express our sympathy to everyone who lost their children in this tragic tragedy and hope that this will not happen anywhere else in the world," Yulkin said. Vyacheslav Sengayevsky, chief executive of Russian company Kianosh Impex, which handled the animation's dubbing, promotion and theatrical release, said the company had moved ahead with the project after welcoming the filmmakers. He said the film had opened in 89 cinemas and would gradually roll out across Russia. "It is very important for Iranian artists to come to Russia and for Russian artists to come to Iran. Through these exchanges, we will be able to build a bridge of friendship between our countries," Sen-



Iran's Ambassador To Russia Kazem Jalali (1st R) speaks at a ceremony to launch Iranian animated film The Legend of Sepehr in Moscow, Russia on August 24, 2026.

● IRNA

gayevsky said, stressing the importance of stronger cultural ties in the current circumstances and in the "fight against enemies for independence and freedom". *The Legend of Sepehr*, also registered in Russia as *Легенда о Сене*, is a family adventure produced by Mehdi Jafari Jozani and directed by Emad Rahmani and Mehrdad Mehrabi. It follows Sepehr, a brave Iranian teenager who sets out on a heroic journey to save his family and homeland. The release marks another step for Iranian children's animation in the Russian market after *Dolphin Boy*. A Russian trailer for the film has also been released on Kinopoisk.



Royan Congress to feature hundreds of research papers, focus on scientific resilience

Social Desk

Iran's 27th Royan International Congress will go ahead next week despite the country's ongoing war, with more than 1,200 participants registered, 447 research projects and paper abstracts admitted, and six specialist workshops scheduled. "Over the past 27 years, despite various ups and downs, we have tried to hold the Royan Congress and there has been no disruption in its organisation," executive secretary Rouhollah Fathi told a press conference in Tehran on Tuesday. Fathi said 589 research projects had been submitted this year, of which 447 were accepted after detailed review. The accepted work will be presented alongside talks by leading Iranian and international researchers. The event, hosted by the Royan Institute and the University of Science and Culture, comprises the 27th Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine, the 22nd Congress on Stem Cells and the 21st Nursing and Midwifery Seminar. Six workshops will



also be held, four covering clinical and therapeutic subjects and two focused on basic sciences. The stem-cell program will cover cell and developmental biology, stem-cell biology, tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, new cancer treatments and gene therapy. Panels will also address entrepreneurship, commercialization and scientific resilience in difficult conditions. A new reproductive-medicine section will focus on monitoring the health of mothers and children born through assisted reproductive methods. "The goal is not only to enable infertile couples to have children, but also to ensure the health of mothers and children," said Azam Dalman, scientific secretary of the reproductive-medicine section.

Reza Moghadasali, scientific secretary of the stem-cell section, said a panel on "scientific resilience in academic environments in difficult conditions" would be held for academics, students and young researchers. Speakers from 13 countries will attend, including Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Russia, the United States and Australia. The main language will be Persian, while foreign guests will speak in English. Six prominent Iranian scientific figures will be honored at the opening ceremony, including Professor Kazem Parivar, Professor Mojtaba Rezazadeh Balochi, Professor Hamid Mirzadeh, Dr. Saghah Salehpour, Dr. Mohammad Kazemini and Dr. Marzieh Ebrahimi. An exhibition featuring 30 knowledge-based

companies and manufacturers of medical and pharmaceutical equipment will run alongside the congress. The opening ceremony will be held on Tuesday, September 1, at the University of Science and Culture in Tehran, with scientific panels running from 8 am to 6 pm on Wednesday and Thursday. Royan Institute was established in 1991 by Dr. Saeid Kazemi Ashtiani and a group of researchers at the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACE-CR) in Iran. Starting as a small surgical center for treating infertile couples, it has grown into a leading scientific hub in the Middle East, specializing in reproductive medicine, stem cell biology, and biotechnology. The institute is internationally recognized for producing Royana, the first cloned sheep in the region in 2006, treating over 10,000 infertile couples annually, and publishing numerous papers in top-tier journals, making it a prominent reference center in the region.

Iran unveils 50 water tourism projects, 300 investment opportunities

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran on Tuesday unveiled a package of 50 water tourism projects and 300 investment opportunities under a joint initiative by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Energy to develop tourism around the country's water resources and facilities. The two ministries also signed a "guideline for the implementation of tourism activities in water resources and facilities", aimed at moving the projects from policy-making to implementation and attracting investors, ILNA reported. Tourism Minister Reza Salehi Amiri said Iran's share of water tourism was "very small" compared with European countries that have invested heavily in

the sector.

"Iran has substantial water-related tourism potential in its northern, southern and western provinces," Salehi Amiri said, adding that tourism development should be a responsibility shared across government institutions. He described the Ministry of Energy's involvement as an important infrastructure step and said investment in tourism infrastructure could create jobs not only directly but also in hotels, restaurants, transport and handicrafts. Salehi Amiri also promoted tourism as a form of public diplomacy. "Enemies of the nation are trying to present an unreal image of Iran, but when tourists see Iran up close, their perceptions change," the minister said. He proposed presenting Iran's experience in developing water and heri-

tage sites to UNESCO and UN Tourism through bilingual written material, films and media reports. The investment guidebook for water tourism projects, unveiled alongside the package, is intended to support investment in the sector. Under the signed guideline, cooperation will be strengthened at provincial level between cultural heritage officials and regional water and electricity companies so projects can move forward from promotion to implementation and investment. Salehi Amiri also praised the Ministry of Energy for maintaining essential services and rebuilding damaged infrastructure amid what he described as difficult conditions and losses caused by the wars waged by the US and Israel against Iran this year and a year earlier.

China's strategic pragmatism ...

It is also clear that China's position can serve as political backing and a limited model within the current unjust global system, particularly for countries that have deeper economic ties with Beijing or engage more closely with China through frameworks such as BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Belt and Road Initiative. China is showing in this regard that international trade can continue without fully complying with unilateral sanctions and that reliable domestic legal and financial tools can be put in place to resist unfettered unilateralism. In addition to creating a degree of confidence among third countries, this approach will significantly raise the political cost of illegal US pressure.

Balance-oriented approach

Under such circumstances, intensified US pressure on Chinese companies could deepen Tehran-Beijing operational and tactical cooperation in areas such as energy, logistics and sanctions evasion. However, it should not be forgotten that such engagement does not amount to a full strategic alliance or mean that Beijing will abandon its principle of maintaining

a balance. As a major country and global power, China has consistently sought to balance its interests with Iran — including direct access to competitively priced energy, influence in the Middle East and opposition to unilateralism — with the management of its relations with the United States, including massive bilateral trade, technology and global financial stability. Beijing regards Iran as an important strategic partner, but there is no doubt that it defines its top priorities as domestic development, energy security through diversified sources and avoiding direct confrontation with Washington. Although the US irrational escalation of pressure under the Trump administration could push Beijing toward more overt support and the development of more resilient mechanisms against US unilateralism, Beijing's balance-oriented approach will continue within this framework. Overall, China's position toward this new chapter of US unilateralism can be described as a real but conditional shield. The Islamic Republic of Iran can use this environment to strengthen bilateral mechanisms, diversify its partners and reduce its vulnerability

to US military aggression and economic pressure. The Chinese logic in such cases is "strategic pragmatism," not anti-Western ideology, and the long-term success of Tehran-Beijing relations depends on Tehran's ability to offer Beijing sustainable and predictable benefits. Today, Iran, drawing on its considerable capacity for national resilience in the face of aggression by two nuclear powers and half a century of relentless economic pressure, as well as its unique geopolitical and territorial assets — including the Strait of Hormuz, the Makran coast, the Caspian Sea, maritime and land borders with 15 countries, and a rich and resilient civilization that has infused the "Iranian spirit" into the body of 90 million civilized, powerful and self-confident people — finds itself at a critical and historic juncture. By developing a precise and strategic understanding of this unique position, Iran can help reshape future equations in West Asia in cooperation with powers such as China and other regional actors, while playing a key role in scenarios such as "Persian Gulf collective security" and a "new West Asian order," both of which have been endorsed and emphasized by Beijing.