



Prominent filmmaker hails Iranian people after ‘Bread and Books’ wins at Busan

Korean award makes Majidi’s film eligible for Oscar race

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi paid tribute to the Iranian people and dedicated the top prize at the 31st Busan International Film Festival to them after his latest feature, ‘Bread and Books’, won best film at the South Korean event. “You are the real heroes of our films. Cinema is alive because of you, and we make films out of love for you,” Majidi said, IRNA reported on Thursday. At the festival’s closing ceremony, Majidi thanked his family and the film crew for their dedication to the project. The festival took place from October 6 to 15, 2026, in Busan, a city in southeastern South Korea, bringing together films from across Asia and beyond. The victory also makes ‘Bread and Books’ eligible for consideration in the international feature

film category at the Academy Awards under new rules linking the Busan prize to Oscar eligibility. However, the win does not guarantee an Oscar nomination. The film centers on Davoud Solan, a contract teacher at a school in an impoverished village in the Chabahar region of southeastern Iran. Hoping to land a permanent teaching position and find a home for himself and his mother, Solan faces a major setback when a benefactor who had been paying for the students’ meals dies. With the school’s future in jeopardy and its pupils at risk of losing their meals, he turns to fuel smuggling to keep the school running, forcing him to confront difficult moral choices. The story highlights poverty, educational inequality and the obstacles children in disadvantaged communities face in accessing education. Majidi revealed that his mother,

who died before filming began, had always been a source of support. He said her spirit and prayers remained with the film throughout its production. Her character was portrayed by a woman with no previous acting experience. In dedicating the prize to Iranians, the director praised their enduring resistance to oppression and their pursuit of independence. He also voiced hope for a world free of war, where peace, love and brotherhood prevail. Majidi also spoke about the attack on Shajareh Tayyebbeh School in Minab, southern Iran. The school was hit by a US missile strike on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli war against Iran, killing 168 people, most of them children. Majidi said some of the children’s bodies had never been recovered. He further added that during



Iranian director Majid Majidi, who won the grand prize at the 31st Busan International Film Festival for his film ‘Bread and Books’, walks the red carpet at the closing ceremony, Busan, South Korea on October 15, 2026.
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40-day US-Israeli aggression, around 150,000 homes had been bombed and between 4,000 and 5,000 people had been killed in the strikes. Majidi is among Iran’s best-known filmmakers on the international stage. His film ‘Children of Heaven’ earned an Academy Award nomination for best foreign-language film in 1999, bringing wider international attention to Iranian cinema. His other acclaimed works include ‘The Color of Paradise,’ ‘Baran’ and ‘The Song of Sparrows.’ His films frequently explore the lives of children and low-income families, placing people facing



hardship at the center of stories about difficult moral choices and human dignity. These themes are also central to ‘Bread and Books,’ which portrays a teacher’s struggle to keep a school serving a disadvantaged community afloat. The 2026 edition of the Busan International Film Festival

featured 246 officially selected films from 59 countries, including 95 world premieres, according to the organizers. The festival also reached a new milestone this year after receiving A-list accreditation from the International Federation of Film Producers’ Associations.

Hafez gathering in Stockholm highlights Persian cultural ties

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Writers, researchers and cultural figures of Iranian, Afghan, Tajik and Uzbek descent gathered in Stockholm, Sweden to honor Persian poet Hafez and discuss his literary legacy and the role of Persian in connecting communities beyond borders. The event, titled ‘Hafez at the Summit of Persian Ghazal,’ was held at the Avicenna Hall of the Iranian Embassy to commemorate Hafez of Shiraz. Speakers examined his place in Persian literature, the mystical dimensions of his work and the language’s role in sustaining cultural ties. Iranian Ambassador to Sweden Hojjatollah Faghani



attributed Hafez’s enduring appeal to his blending of love, mysticism, Quranic teachings and linguistic subtlety. He also highlighted the poet’s influence on German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and American essayist Ralph

Waldo Emerson. Ataollah Mohajerani, a writer and former Iranian culture minister, discussed the Quran’s influence on Hafez’s poetry and worldview, focusing on the religious and mystical concepts woven into his verses. Afghan poet and former diplomat Abdolghafour

Arezou described Persian as a lasting bond among communities that extends beyond modern political borders. Minoo Shams, an Iranian children’s literature writer based in Sweden, stressed the need to introduce the younger generation of Iranian migrants to Persian poetry and literature to help preserve their cultural heritage. The program also featured poetry readings by writers from Afghanistan, Tajikistan and other Persian-speaking communities. Participants closed the gathering with discussions on Hafez’s enduring legacy and literature’s role in maintaining cultural connections among Persian speakers.

Iranian groups to take part in Kirkuk street theater festival

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Six Iranian theater groups will participate in the 10th International Street Theater Festival in Kirkuk, northern Iraq, which opens on November 11, ISNA reported on Thursday. Afshin Naseri, a member of the festival’s organizing secretariat and international committee, said that 24 productions from 12 countries, including France, the Netherlands, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, Argentina, Spain, Russia, Brazil, Tunisia and Palestine, will be presented. “Iran will have the largest number of productions at this year’s event,” he said. The festival’s theme is “Theater: A Common Language among Nations and a Bridge to Peace and Coexistence”. Its opening program will feature a carnival through the streets of Kirkuk, with street theater performances and music. One of this year’s highlights will be the presentation of the festival’s Golden Statuette to internationally recognized artists who have worked to promote peace and reconciliation, Naseri said.



The research section will publish selected studies in book form rather than ask researchers to submit paper abstracts. The books will be distributed to participating groups during the festival. The event is fully competitive, with five prizes to be presented for directing, writing, best actress, best actor and best group. Iranian participants will include groups from Bukan and Saqqez cities in western and northwestern Iran, Sanandaj city in western Iran and Miandoab city in northwestern Iran. Iran will also have two representatives in the festival’s executive and international committees. Naseri serves on the international committee.

Calculus of risk

By engaging in a high-risk operation, Trump aims to shatter the illusion of an untouchable Axis of Resistance. **Page 1 >** First, there is the goal of Degrading Asymmetric Capabilities. The U.S. recognizes that the Houthi-Iranian synergy is based on the ability to impose costs on the U.S. without facing symmetric retaliation. A decisive, high-impact operation serves to dismantle the infrastructure of these asymmetric threats, proving that “sanctuaries” in Yemen or the Iranian coast are no longer safe.

Second, the intervention is a Psychological Reset. In geopolitical signaling, a “risk-averse” superpower is seen as a declining one. By operating in high-threat environments, the U.S. signals that it is willing to accept tactical risks to achieve a strategic victory. This is intended to intimidate regional proxies and force Tehran to recalculate its cost-benefit analysis regarding the blockade of maritime straits. However, Iran, as the principal regional power, considers its legitimate right to employ defensive and asymmetric deterrence

instruments against foreign military presence and threats to its national security and economic interests, and to confront any American military adventure with heavy costs.

Strategic gamble: risk vs. reward

The operational risk is undeniable: the potential for a miscalculation leading to a full-scale regional war. However, the “risk of inaction” is viewed as higher. If the U.S. allows the Bab al-Mandab or the Strait of Hormuz to be effectively controlled by non-state

actors or a hostile regional power, the global economy suffers, and the U.S. loses its status as the guarantor of maritime security. Furthermore, this move aligns with the broader objective of forcing a “better deal” or total capitulation from Iran. By demonstrating a willingness to operate in the “danger zone,” the U.S. creates a climate of uncertainty for the Iranian leadership, undermining their strategic patience and forcing them to prioritize internal stability over regional expansion. Washington must accept that

the era of unilateral hegemony in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea has come to an end, and that sustainable security in these vital waterways can only be achieved through regional cooperation, respect for national sovereignty, and an end to sanctions and maximum-pressure policies. Trump’s approach is a shift from “containment” to “active disruption.” While the military disposition of Iran and the Houthis suggests a high probability of attrition, the U.S. is leveraging its superior intelligence and precision-strike capabilities to deliver

a “strategic shock.” The goal is not necessarily a permanent occupation, but a decisive demonstration of power that restores the deterrent edge, ensuring that the cost of disrupting global trade becomes prohibitively expensive for the Axis of Resistance. Therefore, any American military adventure in the region will not only fail to create deterrence, but will also strengthen the resistance of the region’s nations and the synergy of the Axis of Resistance, bringing heavy strategic and economic costs upon the United States itself.