

# Iran to Produce ‘Mother Koniko’ Animation



TEHRAN -- Iran is set to produce an animation featuring a Japanese mother whose son was martyred during the 1980s Iraq-Iran war.

‘Mother Koniko’ is themed on the life of Koniko Yamamura, the mother of an Iranian martyr named Muhammad Babaei, iFilm reported.

She changed her name to Saba Babaei after converting to Islam and became well-known in Iran as the only Japanese mother of an Iranian martyr who fell during the Iraq-Iran war.

The script for the animation, directed by Yadollah

Tanavar, is based on a book titled ‘Immigrant from the Land of the Sun’ that narrates the Japanese mother’s memories of living in Iran.

Written by Hamid Hesam based on extensive interviews with Yamamura, the book was published by Sureh-Mehr in 2020.

In 2022, a commendation from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for the book was unveiled.

Yamamura passed away last year and was laid to rest in Iran.

‘Mother Koniko’ comprises 26 episodes of four minutes each.

# ‘Hotel’ Sets New Record at Iranian Box Office



TEHRAN -- Masoud Atyabi’s comedy ‘Hotel’ has set a new record in Iranian box office, only one week through screening.

The film, an autumn screening in Iran, secured the first place in the box office pushing Karim Amini’s record-breaking comedy ‘Fossil’ down to the third row on the weekly box office, iFilm reported.

Between Sept. 28 and Oct. 3, more than 195,000 spectators went to the theaters to watch the adventures of Ramin Qader, a man who ventures on a trip with his ex-wife. The two make this trip to the Kish Island hop-

ing to earn some money, yet they’re unaware that some unexpected troubles may happen”.

Considering the first week eye-catching success of the film, it is anticipated to leave its mark among the best-selling titles of the all-time Iranian cinema.

The second on the box office is another new-comer, an animation titled ‘Smart Kid’ made by Hadi Muhammadian, Behnoud Nekouee, and Muhammad-Javad Jannati.

The film attracted around 80,000 movie-goers to the local cinema halls this week.

# Film Festival for Children and Youth Opens in Isfahan

TEHRAN -- Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Muhammad Mahdi Esmaili said during the opening of the 35th International Film Festival for Children and Youth Saturday that Iran will step up investment in children’s cinema.

The festival, he said, is a chance to gather children together and share Iranian culture and art among them.

“Today, Iran’s Islamic Revolution, with a span of more than forty years, has raised great children in every period and generation. Iran has been the cradle of high-ranking martyrs, great men and women who marked our proud history,” he said.

Addressing the young judges and journalists of the festival, the minister, “You are the great treasures of this country.”

The government, he said, has put culture and art as the basis of its foundation,



adding there are still many problems in this field that should be addressed.

Esmail said, “We see this festival as an important step in the beginning of a bright path, and we will make a big investment in the field of children’s films.”

The 35th International Film Festival for Children and Youth is taking place in Isfahan from October 7 to 12.

# What’s All in a Crispy, Golden Crust of Rice?

TEHRAN -- Tahdig, the crispy, golden crust of rice that forms at the bottom of the pot when cooking Persian rice, holds a special place in the hearts and on the tables of Iranians worldwide. This simple yet deliciously complex dish connects Iranians to their cultural roots and the land their ancestors came from centuries ago.

Referred to by some as the holy grail of Persian cooking, Tahdig has become an Iranian specialty. It’s called Tahdig because “tah” translates to “bottom,” and “dig” means “pot” in Farsi.

When it comes to that crunchy bottom of the pot, siblings often fight over who gets the golden brown crust until all that is left are potatoes, tagine, and a floor covered in rice.

As with all great Iranian foods, tahdig is a labor of love. To get that iconic golden color to the crust, cooks use saffron, which is frequently cited as one of the most costly spices in the world but gives an incredible flavor to the otherwise plain rice dish. Many Iranians have fond memories of their mothers and grandmothers expertly flipping over pots to reveal the tahdig. But many mothers have less-than-fond memories of the number of tries it took to get there. Getting the rice to become golden without burning is a feat that utilizes the Mail-lard reaction, a phenomenon that occurs in baguettes and french fries and is what makes all those dishes caramelize.

Persian rice dishes are often served along with one of the numerous types of exquisite slow-cooked braises called “khoresh”. Popular khoreshes include yellow split pea khoresh and green herb khoresh that gets poured over the crunchy rice.

Burnt rice is not unique to Persian cuisine howev-



er, scorched rice dishes can be found all throughout the world. One example is Okoge, a blackened rice native to Japan that is usually eaten with vegetables. Latin America’s version of the dish goes by Cucayo. So what is it that makes Tahdig so special?

The origins of tahdig date back to rice cultivation in the northern regions of Iran. Rice has been grown in the Caspian Sea littoral for thousands of years, and Persians became masters at cooking the slender,

aromatic grains. Tahdig likely emerged as a way to make the most of the crispy remnants of rice left in the pot after cooking. Over time, it evolved into an art form, and regional variations developed based on pot style and heat source.

A fascinating urban legend about Tahdig begins in the 1800s with the Iranian Qajar dynasty who ruled the Persian Empire in the 1800s. According to the tale, the king’s servants would enjoy the king’s leftovers as their meal the day

after. Until one day, the servants started arguing at full volume over who gets the last bit of crunchy rice at the bottom of the pot.

The crispy rice commotion eventually became so loud and he asked to understand what the ruckus was about. After learning of tahdig, he asked for it to be brought to him, and from then on, the crunchy rice at the bottom became a nightly tradition for him. Though maybe the servants weren’t as excited with their leftovers after that.

Whatever the truth of the tale, by the end of the nineteenth century, tahdig had gone big time. With everyone who’s anyone trying their hand at the Iranian delight, tahdig even made its way to Israel.

Each crispy bite of tahdig transports them back to the aromas of an Iranian kitchen filled with simmering rice, saffron, and love.

# Picture of the Day



Saturday marked Village and Nomads Day in Iran. Villagers in Shotaveh, Zizi, and Tang-e Higoun in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province make a living through cultivation of pomegranates and rice and animal husbandry. Photo by IRNA