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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (10th R - Front Row) and his counterparts pose for a family photo during a Non-Aligned Movement ministerial meeting in Kampala, Uganda on October 15, 2025.
mfa.gov.ir

Trump's 'peace talk' masks push to weaken Iran

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



US President Donald Trump is known for his hostile stance toward Iran. During his previous term, he withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, imposed "toughest ever" sanctions, and ordered the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani. Back in the White House for a second term, Trump resumed talks with Tehran, yet revived his "maximum pressure" policy. In the June war waged by Israel against Iran, just before the fifth round of nuclear negotiations with the US, he rushed to aid the aggressor, striking Iranian nuclear facilities. Now, while Trump talks up peace with Iran, he keeps the pressure on and lays out demands that the Islamic Republic considers its red lines. Against this backdrop, his sudden show of goodwill raises serious questions about his hidden agenda. Middle East analyst Qadir Nasri believes Trump's aims to extract major concessions from Iran, warning Tehran should stick to smart, calculated policy to safeguard its interests in face of his approach. In this interview with

Iran Daily, Nasri unpacks the layers of Trump's strategy toward Iran.

IRAN DAILY: Do Trump's recent remarks about peace with Iran contain signs of a hidden strategy or undeclared objectives? If so, what policy lies behind them?

NASRI: Trump's speeches in the Israeli Knesset and in Sharm el-Sheikh carry a key message: until now, Washington's Iran policy was everything without Iran, but under Trump, it has turned into everything against Iran. In his recent statements, Trump sent at least six signals suggesting that the US does not seek war and that Iran should seize his offer of friendship. Yet, true to the logic he outlined decades ago in his book 'The Art of the Deal,' as well as his record during his previous presidency, Trump's main tactic is to gain "victory without conflict and war". His aim is to apply the rules of the market to the realm of power politics. In the first step, he tries to strip his rival of legitimacy, while repeatedly inviting them to friendship, so that if he later mount pressure, be it economic or military, he can shield himself from backlash in global opinion and international law. Trump's pursuit of strategic gains from Iran rests on at least four drivers. First, he has about 1,000 days left in his term. Trump is racing to

secure a game-changing concession from Iran—one that can boost his domestic standing and strengthen his hand in global politics. Second, Trump believes Iran is facing shortages at home, diminished regional reach, dependence on China and Russia, and low foreign investment which make it ripe for pressure. He assumes that a weakened Iran will have no choice but to give in. Third is Israel, which is the heart of the Iran-US rift. "Zero enrichment" is Trump's red line; "unconditional enrichment" is Iran's. The clash is existential and symbolic. By hammering on uranium enrichment, Trump wants to send a message to the region defiance does not work and all must comply with US-led liberalism. Fourth, Trump views China as his chief global rival and aims either to bring Iran to his side or to make sure that any Tehran leaning toward Beijing is stripped of strategic depth. He does not want a strong, innovative Iran with advanced industries, exports, and infrastructure standing beside China. Rather, he seeks to weaken Iran. All this shows that Washington, under Trump, is trying to address global issues one after the other. Iran should beware of his agenda that is to force the country into surrender after undermining it.

How can Iran stay out of this trap while protecting its national inter-

ests? Should it pursue engagement with the US, or keep up the course with an independent policy? Iran has three crucial tasks ahead. First, it should not walk away from the negotiating table. Whether with regional actors, the IAEA, the EU, or other independent players, Iran should stick to an active and creative diplomacy. Second, Tehran should address the public's genuine concerns—both symbolic and economic. The government can roll out small but meaningful reforms. For instance, designing targeted support programs such as modest stipends for university students like those for conscripts is not a heavy lift. The same approach could extend to struggling groups, like the proposed cash allowance for mothers. Some may call them generous cash handouts but they are not. Maintaining social cohesion is vital. Iran's enemies seek to use inflation, falling investment, and public hardship to stir unrest. The government should take such measures to prevent turmoil. Third, Iran should prepare creative policy proposals for 2026. During Israel's election in October 2026, room for maneuver will be limited, but afterward, Tehran could advance fresh nuclear initiatives including joint enrichment in the region and economic engagement with Washington.

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'Political extortion': Araghchi at NAM raps revival of anti-Iran resolutions

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister said reinstating the UN Security Council's terminated resolutions by the West against Iran lacks legitimacy, describing the move as "a means of political extortion."

Abbas Araghchi made the remarks in an address to a ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Uganda's capital Kampala on Wednesday.

"Just last month, the United States and the European permanent members of the Security Council tried to misuse the UN Security Council to reinstate terminated UN Security Council resolutions against Iran – a clear breach of the provisions laid out in Resolution 2231," Araghchi said.

The Resolution 2231, which endorses the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, expires on October 18.

The 15-member Security Council on September 19 failed to adopt a resolution that would have prevented the



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (3rd R) addresses a ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Uganda's capital Kampala on October 15, 2025.
● mfa.gov.ir

re-imposition of UN sanctions on Iran after the three European parties to the nuclear deal triggered the "snapback" mechanism of the landmark agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Subsequently, the UN reinstated the sanctions on September 28. Britain, France and Germany initiated the return of sanctions over accusations Iran had violated the JCPOA. The Islamic Republic has denounced the European measures as "unlawful, unjustified and provocative."

Pointing to the date when the resolution expires, the Iranian top diplomat said that "the revival of these terminated measures is completely groundless and illegitimate, amounting to nothing more than a means of political extortion."



The Iranian foreign minister called on the NAM member states to refuse to

go along with such "invalid and illegal maneuvers, which are purely aimed at

gaining political leverage by flouting international law and norms."

Parliament's new law as AEOL's criterion for working with IAEA: *Nuclear chief*



Mohammad Eslami
● TASNIM

International Desk

Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOL) Mohammad Eslami said on Wednesday that the agency's criterion for working with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the new law of the Iranian Parliament.

In response to questions about the IAEA inspectors' presence after the activation of the snapback mechanism of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal by the European parties to the agreement, Eslami clarified that the presence of IAEA inspectors is now severely restricted and operates strict-

ly under the framework of a bill passed by the Parliament.

On June 25, the Iranian Parliament unanimously passed legislation requiring the government to suspend all cooperation with the IAEA.

It came a day after Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations, managed to impose a halt to Israeli-US aggression that also targeted three of the country's nuclear sites in a clear violation of international law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Eslami explained that the new law sets two conditions: the IAEA

must condemn attacks on Iran's nuclear sites and provide a formal guarantee to protect information related to Iran's nuclear industry. "Up to this point, the IAEA has not fulfilled its legal duty," he said, adding that as long as "these measures are not taken, the parliament's law cannot be implemented."

Eslami highlighted that the presence of inspectors in Iran is not determined by the agency's own plans, emphasizing that only two pre-approved inspections — at the Bushehr nuclear facility and the Tehran research reactor — have been authorized, during which inspectors "arrived, conducted their inspections, and then left the country."

He also said that the construction of eight nuclear power plants in the southern Iranian provinces of Bushehr and Hormozgan under a long-standing agreement with Russia is on the agenda.

"Since the 1980s, the agreement between the governments of Iran and Russia has included the construction of eight large-scale power plants. Four of these power plants with a capacity of 5,000 megawatts have been planned for Bushehr," he said.

Eslami confirmed that a second cluster of four units will be constructed in Hormozgan Province.

Tehran warns against Israel's continued breach of Gaza truce

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry warned against the continued violation of a US-brokered cease-fire in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli regime.

In a statement on Tuesday night, the ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei condemned recent Israeli attacks that had killed and injured many more Palestinians in the besieged territory.

The killings came days after Hamas and Israel agreed to cease hostilities. Under the 20-point peace plan proposed by the US president, Hamas also released all remaining Israeli captives held in Gaza in exchange for about 2,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

The deadly attacks underscore the challenges ahead to keeping the cease-fire on track as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have been displaced multiple times throughout the war try to return to their homes.

Baghaei urged guarantors of the cease-fire agreement to act against the regime's ongoing atrocities.

He also denounced the destruction of olive groves, the burning of residential homes, and the desecration of the al-Aqsa Mosque by extremist Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank.



Displaced Palestinians ride donkey carts loaded with belongings past destroyed buildings in Gaza City on October 11, 2025.

● ABDEL KAREEM HANA/AP

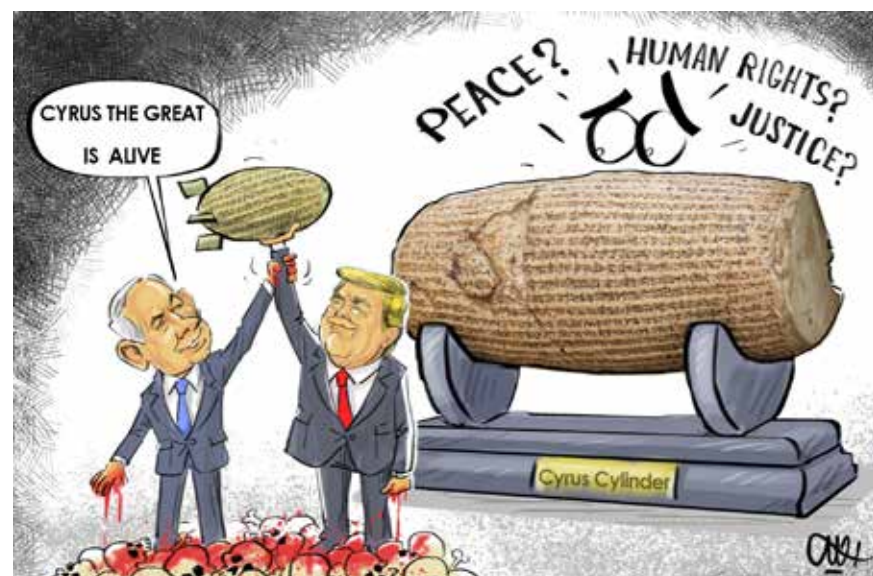
Baghaei called on the guarantors of the ceasefire to hold the Zionist regime accountable and to compel it to halt its ongoing crimes.

The Iranian official warned about the consequences of any inaction by the ceasefire guarantors in the face of the regime's attacks on Palestinians in Gaza.

According to medical authorities in the Gaza Strip, at least 10 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli regime since the cease-fire took effect on October 10.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Trump's 'peace talk' ...

One question about Egypt. Given Cairo's recent diplomatic moves, like hosting meetings between Iranian and IAEA officials, and mediating Gaza peace talks, can we say Cairo is trying to reclaim its role as the Arab world's leader? Absolutely. Traditionally, Egypt's regional rivals were Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Today, that list has grown to at least a dozen, including the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Israel, and Iraq. Meanwhile, unrest around Bab al-Mandab, the declining importance of the Suez

Canal, the rise of Qatar's regional diplomacy, the collapse of Arab nationalist movements, and Egypt's chronic economic woes have all chipped away at Cairo's prestige.

President [Abdel Fattah El-] Sisi is now trying to make up for his legitimacy deficit through diplomatic performance and to cash in on the economic benefits of regional deals. Should reconstruction begin in Gaza or the West Bank, Egyptian companies and workers would likely take the lead.

At the same time, any crisis in Jordan, the West Bank, or Gaza could drive refugees toward Egypt, creating expectations that Cairo will step in. Sisi is seeking to carve out an economic corridor through diplomacy, a lifeline for a nation of over 110 million facing dwindling Nile waters, fierce economic competition, and heavy military spending.

His goal is twofold: to polish Egypt's image at home and abroad, and to reap the economic dividends of the region's new wave of agreements.

TPO: Trade with Russia nears \$1b as industrial exports surge



Iron, steel exports rise 26% to nearly \$4b in H1: ISPA



Economy Desk

Iran's exports of iron and steel chain products climbed 26% in value to almost \$4 billion in the first six months of the current year (began on 21 March), data from the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) showed.

The volume of exports in the iron and steel sector rose 34% year-on-year during the same period, while total exports across the entire steel production chain jumped 45%, Mehr reported.

Exports of upstream products, particularly iron ore concentrate, continued to grow sharply, doubling in volume compared to the first half of last year. The surge in raw material exports has raised concerns among domestic steelmakers, the report added.

In contrast, exports of long steel products continued to decline significantly. Rebar — which accounted for more than 85% of long steel exports last year — saw a 22% drop in shipments in the six-month period.

Meanwhile, exports of steel sheets nearly tripled to over \$320 million, driven by what the report described as a stronger export-oriented strategy adopted by Iranian steel companies.

Razi expands vaccine exports, eyes wider presence in West Asia



Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute said the institute's products have been registered and marketed in several foreign countries, with negotiations under way to expand exports to more markets across West Asia.

"In the first six months of this year (began on March 21), about \$1.3 million worth of various vaccines were exported," Ali Es-haqi said, IRNA reported.

He added that several countries have requested to purchase the institute's products and that "talks over financing and delivery are progressing well."

The institute has already exported vaccines for livestock and poultry, and coordination is under way to expand exports to other types of vaccines.

Highlighting the institute's contribution to promoting knowledge-based exports, Es-haqi said the Razi institute aims to boost its share in regional and international markets.

"Given our scientific and technical capacity, we expect to see significant growth in the export of medical and veterinary products this year and next," he said.

Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced on Wednesday that the country's trade with Russia is on a sharp upward trajectory, with exports approaching the \$1 billion mark.

"There is significant potential for export growth to Russia," Mohammad Ali Dehqan

Dehnavi said in an interview with ILNA, noting that, "Iran's exports to Russia are nearing one billion dollars."

He added that during the first five months of the current Iranian year (began on March 21), trade between the two countries grew by more than 30%.

Industrial goods lead export expansion

The deputy industry minister

said Iran's exports to Russia had expanded beyond agricultural and food products, which once dominated bilateral trade.

"Fortunately, our trade has developed into industrial sectors as well," he said.

"Soon, nearly half of our trade with Russia will consist of industrial and manufactured goods."

Iran currently exports steel,

containers, auto parts, pipes, and profiles to Russia, he added, describing these as areas showing "strong performance" in recent months.

Untapped opportunities in Russian market

According to Dehnavi, Russia imports about \$300 billion worth of goods annually, providing vast potential for Iranian exporters.

IMF foresees Iran's 2025 growth at 0.6%, with modest rebound in 2026



Economy Desk

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected Iran's real gross domestic product (GDP) to grow by 0.6% in 2025, with a rise expected to improve slightly to 1.1% in 2026, according to its latest outlook released in October.

Iran's economy has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program, which continues to weigh on growth prospects and access to global markets.

The United Nations also reinstated an arms embargo and other sanctions on the country on September 29,

following a "snapback" process triggered by European powers in response to concerns over Tehran's nuclear activities.

According to the report, the inflation is projected to stay high at 42.4%.

The fund on Tuesday raised its global economic growth forecast for 2025 to 3.2% from 3%, while keeping it stable at 3.1% for 2026.

An IMF report said that despite the forecast's increase from the previous report, global economic growth is projected to slow from 3.3% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026 amid "policy shifts and complex forces."

Pars pipeline project set to reduce reliance on road tankers

Economy Desk

Deputy Oil Minister Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar said on Wednesday that Iran has launched construction of the Pars strategic pipeline in Fars Province — a €150 million project aimed at "reducing dependence on road fuel tankers and cutting transport costs" by several trillion tomans.

Speaking at a meeting on oil, gas and solar energy investment projects in the southern province of Fars, Azimifar said the 400-kilometer pipeline, connecting Mehrararan, Fasa and Shiraz, will have a daily capacity of 73,000 barrels and is expected to save the country more than 4 trillion tomans (around \$36 million) per year.

"The Pars pipeline project marks a significant step in reducing reliance on road tankers and saving several thousand billion tomans in fuel transport costs," he said, adding that its operation will cut the use of around 60 million liters of tanker fuel per year.



The construction contract for the Pars pipeline was signed between the National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company and Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters on Wednesday, Shana reported. The contract is planned to be completed within 36 months.

Azimifar highlighted the government's broader plan to strengthen petroleum transport infrastructure as Iran currently uses nearly 17,000 road tankers, about 3,000 rail tankers, and 15,000 kilometers of pipeline for the transfer

of petroleum products.

"The biggest challenge in the transport sector is our dependence on road tankers and their high operational costs," he said, stressing that expanding the pipeline network for fuel transportation remains one of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company's top priorities.

According to Azimifar, nearly 1,000 kilometers of crude oil and petroleum product pipelines have come online over the past year (began on March 21, 2024) with a total investment of around €800 million.

Gaza war costs each US taxpayer \$165, counting



US Air Force aerial porters load Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) support equipment being sent to Israel onto a C-17 Globemaster III on October 16, 2024.
● ZEESHAN NAEEM/US AIR FORCE

ANALYSIS

The Gaza war, which kicked off on October 7, 2023, has not only caused a humanitarian crisis in Palestine but has also placed a heavy financial burden on American taxpayers. As Israel's largest financial and military backer, the United States has, since the conflict's onset, channeled billions of dollars to prop up the Zionist regime's military operations. This aid, largely funded by American citizens' taxes, has raised serious questions about budgetary priorities, ethical consequences, and its impact on the US domestic economy. This piece, drawing on reliable data, breaks down the scale of this aid, the pathways for funding the war, and the share borne by each American taxpayer, revealing how tax dollars have been funneled into Israel's war machine in Gaza.

Look back at US support for Israel

Since the establishment of the fake Israeli regime in 1948, the US has been its primary financial and military patron. According to a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) report, by 2022, Israel received over \$310 billion (inflation-adjusted) in aid, with roughly 71% earmarked for military purposes. This support has been structured through long-term agreements, such as the 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) hammered out in 2016 under the Obama

administration. Under this deal, the US signed off on providing Israel with \$3.8 billion in annual military aid through 2028, which includes \$3.3 billion for purchasing weapons from US companies and \$500 million for developing defense systems like Iron Dome. This aid primarily takes the form of "vouchers," meaning Israel must spend the bulk of these funds to purchase military equipment from US firms. This mechanism not only builds up Israel's military capacity but also feeds significant profits back into the US defense industry. However, the Gaza war has ramped up this support to unprecedented levels, setting in motion new emergency aid.

Scale of US emergency aid in Gaza war

Since October 7, 2023, the US has set aside at least \$17.9 billion in direct military assistance for Israel. According to a recent Brown University Costs of War Project report, this figure is only one part of the total costs linked to US military support for Israel and regional operations, which add up to \$22.76 billion. Some estimates, like those from the Quincy Institute and Harvard University, put the total costs at \$33.77 billion, which also takes in planned future arms deals.

This aid has included:

- **Weapons provision:** Thousands of precision bombs, Hellfire missiles, 155mm

artillery shells, and bomb guidance kits have been transferred to Israel. In April 2024, an \$18 billion sale of 50 F-15 fighter jets to Israel was signed off on.

- **Bolstering strategic stockpiles:** The US has maintained a weapons stockpile in Israel since the 1980s, valued at \$500 million annually.

- **Support for defense systems:** The annual \$500 million funding for Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow 3 was used to ward off missile attacks from Iran and Hezbollah. The April 2024 emergency supplemental appropriations act also set aside \$5.2 billion for developing the Iron Beam laser system. This aid has directly beefed up Israel's operational capacity in the Gaza war. Without this backing, Israel would have had to fall back on its domestic budget or more extensive borrowing to cover its military expenses, which could have reined in its military operations.

US Channels for funding Israel's war

The Gaza war has inflicted immense costs on Israel. Based on various estimates, the war's costs by the end of 2025 will be between 140 and 300 billion shekels (\$41.7 to \$89.4 billion). The discrepancy stems from different calculation methods and the inclusion of direct (e.g., munitions) or indirect (e.g., reconstruction and compensation) costs. The sources making up the war's funding include:

- **Israel's public budget:** Israel's 2025



\$17.9 billion could have covered health insurance for 6 million children or the hiring of 195,000 teachers. Simultaneously, the environmental protection budget for 2024 was cut by one billion dollars, while military aid went up. With a federal budget deficit of \$711 billion and a national debt of \$36 trillion, these costs are adding severe inflationary pressure on the US economy.

budget is about 620 billion shekels (\$184.8 billion), with 110 billion shekels earmarked for the Ministry of Defense. An increase in the budget deficit from 4.9% to 5.2% was also approved to cover additional military costs.

- **US aid:** The annual \$3.8 billion in aid and the \$17.9 billion in emergency assistance have played a key role in supplying weapons and munitions.

- **Military exports:** Israel earned approximately \$14 to \$15 billion from arms exports in 2024, making up for part of the financial burden.

- **Domestic and foreign borrowing:** Increased public debt and borrowing to cover the budget deficit have piled more economic pressure on the residents of the occupied territories. This mix of sources highlights Israel's dependence on foreign aid, particularly from the US, to keep up its military capacity in the war.

American taxpayer's share of war that is not theirs

To grasp the impact of this aid on US citizens, the costs must be broken down per taxpayer population. Assuming \$22.76 billion is the total cost for military support to Israel and regional operations, and the US taxpayer population is approximately 268 million adults, the share borne by each taxpayer is about \$85. If we only factor in the direct \$17.9 billion to Israel, this figure drops to around \$67.

Higher estimates also exist. The Center for American Progress estimated that each taxpayer has paid over \$140 extra (on top of the \$25 in annual commitments) for the Gaza war since October 2023, bringing the total to over \$165.

Regional differences also come into play. In California, which pays the most federal tax, \$609 million has been earmarked for supporting Israel. Cities like Los Angeles, with \$50.6 million, and San Diego, with \$18.6 million, also shoulder a significant share.

These figures are approximate as taxpayers with different incomes pay different rates, and some costs are covered by the discretionary defense budget. Nevertheless, these numbers show that every American citizen is indirectly chipping in to fund the Gaza war.

Comparison with domestic needs

As stated, the Gaza war has cost American taxpayers a fortune. As Israel's largest backer, the US has provided at least \$17.9 billion in direct military aid, which, when factoring in regional operations according to the Brown University report, adds up to \$22.76 billion. All this while the domestic US needs have been sidelined.

For instance, \$17.9 billion could have covered health insurance for 6 million children or the hiring of 195,000 teachers. Simultaneously, the environmental protection budget for 2024 was cut by one billion dollars, while military aid went up. With a federal budget deficit of \$711 billion and a national debt of \$36 trillion, these costs are adding severe inflationary pressure on the US economy. Critics argue these policies show the priority of a foreign war over domestic needs like healthcare and education, while the primary benefit goes to US arms companies, and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza heats up.

Ethical, political consequences

Unconditional US support for Israel, especially following UN reports of famine in Gaza, has sparked widespread criticism. Both Senator Bernie Sanders and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene have pointed out the role of American taxpayers in this crisis. Human rights groups like Taxpayers Against Genocide have also



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators gather at the office of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in New York City, US, on August 1, 2025.
● CHARLY TRIBALLEAU/AFP



accused the US government of complicity in human rights violations. Polls indicate a sea change in public opinion, particularly among the youth. According to a Pew Research Center poll from March 2024, 51% of those

aged 18–29 oppose military aid to Israel. Even among American Jews, 4 out of 10 believe Israel has committed genocide. This public pressure may, in the future, lead to a reassessment of military aid agreements.

Challenges, prospects of future US support
As the end of the 2019–2028 MoU draws near, negotiations for a new agreement will kick off. Proposals such as replacing direct aid with security pacts or tying aid

to human rights compliance have been put forward. Analysts like Steven Cook believe Israel should cut its dependence on foreign aid. However, powerful lobbies like AIPAC and bipartisan support in Congress make scaling back aid difficult.

At the same time, public pressure and campus protests may push policymakers to re-evaluate their priorities.
The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

US gov’t admits F-35 a failure

By Dan Grazier
Former Marine Corps captain

ANALYSIS
Nearly a quarter century after the Pentagon awarded Lockheed Martin the contract to develop the Joint Strike Fighter Program into the F-35, the government finally admitted the jet will never live up to Lockheed’s ambitious promises — used to sell the \$2 trillion boondoggle to nearly 20 countries around the world.
The Government Accountability Office released a report last month detailing the ongoing challenges the program faces. The first paragraph of the highlights page includes this sentence: “The program plans to reduce the scope of Block 4 to deliver capabilities to the warfighter at a more predictable pace than in the past.”
The casual reader will be forgiven for possibly glossing over the passage because of its anodyne wording. But the statement is a profound admission that the F-35 will never meet the capability goals set for the program. “Reduce the scope of Block 4” means that program officials are forgoing planned combat capabilities for the jets.
Block 4 is the term to describe ongoing design work for the program. It began in 2019 and was termed as the program’s “modernization” phase. In reality, Block 4 is just a continuation of the program’s initial development process. Officials were unable to complete the F-35’s basic design within the program’s initial budget and schedule. Rather than making that embarrassing admission and requesting more time and money from Congress, Pentagon officials claimed the initial development process was complete (it was not) and they were moving on to “modernization”. What they really did was simply reclassify initial development work with a fancy rebrand.
So, when program officials say they plan to “reduce the scope of Block 4,” they are saying the F-35 will not have all the combat capabilities



ties that were supposed to be a part of the original design. This is a remarkable development. The American people have been paying a premium for more than two decades to develop and build the most sophisticated strike fighter jet in history. Pentagon officials, politicians, and defense industry executives have been saying for years that the United States needed the F-35 and all its planned capabilities to maintain a qualitative technological advantage over potential rivals. The combat capabilities at the top of the “scope” of Block 4 included some related to electronic warfare, weapons, communication, and navigation, according to the GAO. These top-level capabilities were the ones for which the American people supposedly needed to pay a premium. Admitting that the program cannot deliver the jets that were promised is really an admission that the entire project is a failure. The implications of that could be profound beyond the money that has been wasted throughout the past quarter-century. There are 19 countries

that either already are, or will shortly, operate F-35s after buying them from the United States. Several countries, like the United Kingdom, Norway, and Italy, have been a part of the program well before Lockheed Martin won the contract to develop the F-35. These countries have invested heavily in the program with the expectation that they would receive the most combat-capable aircraft in history. All have seen their costs rise throughout the years, and now they find out that the jets will never live up to the hype.
So, in addition to being a military disaster, the F-35 may also prove to be a foreign relations disaster as well. F-35 boosters in the United States sold the jet to the leaders of these countries with elaborate pitches of the combat capabilities they planned to deliver. There were also promises made early in the process about the program’s affordability, which seem comical today. The next time an American attempts to sell a “transformative” weapon abroad, they shouldn’t

be terribly surprised if a potential customer expresses skepticism. F-35 customers have paid a fortune above the quoted price, receiving only a fraction of what was promised. The United States may find a shrinking market for weapons exports in the years ahead. This should be a moment of deep reflection for the entire national security establishment. The F-35 was never going to live up to expectations because its very concept was deeply flawed. Trying to build one jet that could serve as a multi-role aircraft to meet the needs of just a single military branch is a highly risky proposition. When you try to build a single jet to meet the multi-role needs of at least 15 separate militaries, while also being a global jobs program and political patronage scheme, you get a \$2 trillion albatross.

The article first appeared on Responsible Statecraft.

A model F-35 stealth fighter jet is on display at the Lockheed Martin stand at the Dubai Air Show in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on November 16, 2021.
JON GAMBRELL/AP

Admitting that the program cannot deliver the jets that were promised is really an admission that the entire project is a failure. The implications of that could be profound beyond the money that has been wasted throughout the past quarter-century. F-35 customers have paid a fortune above the quoted price, receiving only a fraction of what was promised. The United States may find a shrinking market for weapons exports in the years ahead.

Air Force service members from the 62nd Fighter Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, conduct flight line operations in support of the F-35 Lightning II while on temporary duty at Joint Base San Antonio-Kelly Field, Texas, on October 28, 2021.
BRIAN G. RHODES/502ND AIR BASE WING



Qalenoey blames domestic league, injuries amid Iran's dip in form

Sports Desk

Under pressure after a string of disappointing performances, Iran head coach Amir Qalenoey believes the poor form of the domestic league players and injuries to his key men have played a major part in Team Melli's recent struggles on the pitch.

A 2-0 victory over Tanzania in Dubai on Tuesday offered some breathing space to the Iranian coach, who has been under growing scrutiny from fans and pundits at home, with less than eight months remaining until the World Cup finals.

Tractor striker Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh put Iran in front 17 minutes into the game at Rashid Stadium, sending the Tanzanian goalkeeper the wrong way from the spot, before FC Rostov forward Mohammad Mohebbi doubled the lead with a deflected strike from inside the box nine minutes later.

The result ended a three-game winless streak for the Asian powerhouse, which had suffered a 2-1 loss to Russia in a friendly game in Volgograd on Friday.



Iranian striker Kasra Taheri (27) is seen in action during a friendly win against Tanzania in Dubai, UAE, on October 14, 2025.

While fellow Asian heavyweights Japan and South Korea faced Brazil and Paraguay during October's international break, Iran's match

against Tanzania – ranked No. 107 in the latest FIFA World Ranking – was hardly seen as a proper test ahead of next June's World Cup

finals in North America. Qalenoey, however, saw it differently. "Tanzania was a decent side and well-organized in defense,"

he said. "The team didn't concede more than two goals in any of its World Cup qualifying games and even defeated Senegal in a friendly in July. Not to mention, our team had a five-hour flight from Russia, where the weather conditions are quite different from the UAE. We made some mistakes throughout the game, but in the end, it was a good result."

"We made a couple of errors in the early stages of the game but seized control after that and scored twice. We could have had more goals in the first half, but that's the problem with Iranian players — they tend to lose intensity after taking a two-goal lead. We also lost our rhythm after making several changes in the second half. The result is the last thing that matters in friendly games, but I'm still grateful to my players for the victory," Qalenoey added.

When Iran secured World Cup qualification in June, Qalenoey called on his players to maintain their form throughout the year leading up to the finals.

Asked if his expectations had been met in that regard, Qalenoey said, "Honestly speaking, no. The Ira-

nian players in the domestic and Emirati leagues have been far from their best form. A player at this level must have a more professional mindset and approach."

"The team's recent run of results and performances has been hampered by injuries to several key players such as Sardar Azmoun, Mehdi Ghayedi, and Hossein Kan'anizadegan. Some of the new players in the squad have struggled to fill their places, and I'm not sure if they will be with us for the next games, as we'll have to finalize our starting XI and squad during the upcoming international breaks. That will only happen if the injured players return as soon as possible," he added.

Qalenoey still found positives, praising Hosseinzadeh for "forcing his way into the loop with his recent contributions."

Next up for Team Melli is a four-team friendly tournament – also featuring Uzbekistan, Egypt, and Cape Verde – to be held in Dubai during November's international break. Iran will face Cape Verde in the opening match, with the winner meeting Egypt or Uzbekistan in the final.

Iran names star-studded GR squad for Islamic Solidarity Games

Sports Desk

Iran Greco-Roman head coach Hassan Rangraz has named a strong six-man squad, featuring world and Olympic champions, for the wrestling competitions at the upcoming Islamic Solidarity Games.

The sixth edition of the multi-sport event will kick off in Riyadh on November 7.

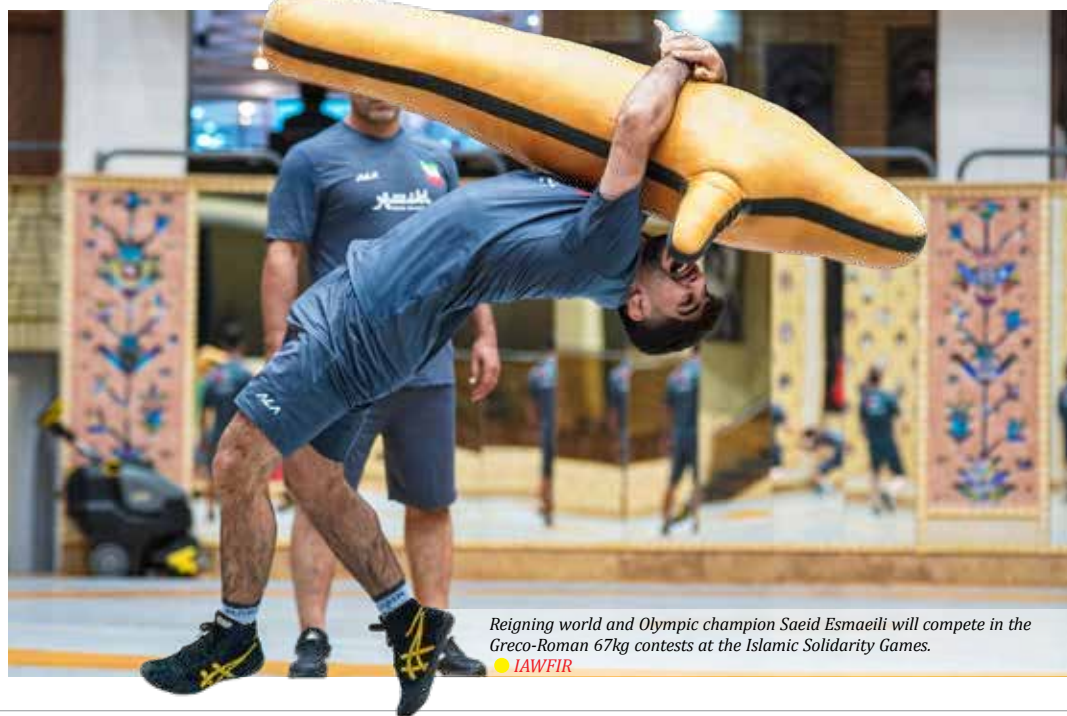
Reigning Olympic champions Saeid Esmaili and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, who also captured gold at September's World Championships in Zagreb, will be clear favorites in the 67kg and 97kg weight

classes, respectively. Gholamreza Farrokhi, fresh off a gold medal on his debut at the Wrestling World Championships, will also be the man to beat in the 87kg category. The Games, however, will mark his third major event in less than two months, as the young Iranian is also set to represent the country at the U23 World Championships starting Monday in Novi Sad, Serbia.

Joining the trio in the Iranian squad will be senior Asian champion Fardin Hedayati, who will first defend his world under-23 title before vying for 130kg glory in the Saudi capital.

Ali Ahmadi Vafa endured a 60kg campaign to forget in Zagreb after suffering a first-round exit against Japan's Kaito Inaba, but with the 2024 world U23 and junior titles under his belt, the 20-year-old Iranian will still be among the favorites for the ultimate prize in Riyadh.

Former world U23 and junior bronze medalist Amir Abdi is yet to make his mark at the senior level and will be eager to turn the tide in Riyadh after defeating two-time world U20 champion Alireza Abdevali – who finished fifth in Zagreb – to secure the 77kg spot in the Iranian squad.



Reigning world and Olympic champion Saeid Esmaili will compete in the Greco-Roman 67kg contests at the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Asian Table Tennis Team Championships:

Iran finishes eighth in men's event, secures spot at World Ch'ships

Sports Desk

Iran had to settle for an eighth-place finish at the Asian Table Tennis Team Championships in Bhubaneswar, India, after a 3-1 loss to North Korea on Tuesday.

Despite the setback, Iran still managed to secure a spot at next April's ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships in London.

Noshad Alamian was the only Iranian player to record a win against North Korea, defeating Chon Jong Bom in straight games (11-8, 11-4, 11-5). Iranian prodigy Benyamin Farajali fell to a narrow 3-2 defeat (11-5, 12-14, 11-3, 10-12, 11-9) against Ri Jong Sik and Mohammad-Taher Mousavi was beaten in three games (11-7, 11-7, 11-4) by Ham Yu Song, before Alamian reduced the deficit to one. Ri sealed the victory for the

North Koreans with a 3-0 win (11-9, 11-5, 11-6) against Mousavi.

Iran began the day with a 3-2 defeat to South Korea in the first of the 5th-8th placement matches in the competition.

The event may not go down as a success story for the Iranian team, but teenage sensation Benyamin Farajali produced several impres-

sive performances and results in Bhubaneswar.

The pinnacle of his campaign came during Iran's 3-1 loss to China in Monday's quarter-finals, when the 15-year-old Iranian rallied from behind to stun world No. 2 Lin Shidong in a five-game thriller (8-11, 12-10, 11-8, 5-11, 11-9).

Farajali then staged another comeback on Tuesday, recovering from two games down

to edge South Korea's world No. 13 An Jaehyun 3-2 (5-11, 7-11, 13-11, 11-7, 11-8).

Iran opened the tournament with successive 3-0 victories over the Maldives and Mongolia to top Group 2 and advance to the knockout stage, before defeating Singapore 3-1 to set up a last-eight clash with China.

Meanwhile, Iran finished 11th in the women's competition – courtesy of a 3-0 win against Sri Lanka on Tuesday – also booking a ticket for London as one of the continent's top 13 teams.

The Iranian team – comprising Neda Shahsavari, Setayesh Iloukhani, Shima Safaei, Fatemeh Yariseraji, and Saba Seraji – came out on top against Kyrgyzstan and Nepal without conceding a single match, but fell to a 3-0 loss to Malaysia to stand runner-up in Group 4, before beating Kazakhstan 3-1.



ISNA

Moharrami aware of 'high expectations', eyes wushu glory in Riyadh

Sports Desk

Iran's Erfan Moharrami says he is fully aware of the high expectations surrounding him after his impressive gold medal at the World Wushu Champion-



iranwushufed.ir

ships, but has set his sights on repeating the feat at the upcoming Islamic Solidarity Games.

The sixth edition of the multi-sport event will get underway on November 7 in Riyadh.

Moharrami defeated Kazakhstan's Alizhan Ablagatov to claim the ultimate prize in the men's sanda 70kg event in August's World Championships in Brasilia.

"After winning the world gold in Brazil, expectations have gone up, and that makes my job as world champion even tougher heading into the Islamic Solidarity Games. I'm still fully prepared and have no fear of the competition," Moharrami told Mehr News Agency.

"It won't be easy in Riyadh as everyone will be out to beat the world champion, but I'm confident I can return home with another gold medal," added the Iranian. "My Kazakhstani opponent in the world final will probably be competing in Riyadh as well. Together with the coaching staff, we've analyzed all our potential rivals."

Bashqurtaran Castle witnesses to centuries of defense, culture

Iranica Desk

In the Shirin Su district, a subdivision of Kabudarahang and the northernmost point of Hamedan Province, there stands a fortress that, though weathered by time, remains a mirror of history and civilization. The historical Bashqurtaran Castle is located about 1.5 kilometers south of a village of the same name, perched atop a mountain that can be reached via a steep, narrow path. This village is the northernmost settlement in the province and has great potential for tourism. In addition to the main fortress, there are two other manor castles in the village, known as Hadi Khan and Fathi Sultan, as well as the historical Bashqurtaran Bathhouse, according to chtn.ir.



● wikipedia.org



Iranica Desk

The first and only season of archaeological excavation at Bashqurtaran Castle was carried out in 2012 under the supervision of Esmaeil Rahmani. Based on the pottery fragments discovered, the site dates back to the Middle Islamic Period, covering the Seljuk to the Ilkhanid eras. The castle, situated in a mountainous area, was primarily a military and defensive structure. Bashqurtaran includes towers and walls, and within it, several buildings were uncovered during the excavation — such as a cistern (water reservoir) and a section believed to have served as a reception room. The structures are relatively small, consistent with the needs of a fortified military site, and the presence of pottery workshops indicates that essential supplies were produced locally for the castle's inhabitants. Inside the fortress, there are mound-like remains of other buildings whose functions can only be determined

through further excavation, which would help reveal the architectural layout. According to the archaeologist who led the first excavation, it is possible that the castle's foundations date back to the Sassanid period, though further archaeological seasons would be needed to confirm this. What is certain so far is that the visible remains belong to the early and middle Islamic periods. Strategically, the fortress's proximity to the Zanjan Plain likely played a major role in its establishment. During the Middle Islamic Period, it was one of the region's most significant Islamic cultural settlements, serving as a link between Hamedan and Zanjan. The castle's position atop the highest elevation in the area reflects its strategic, economic, political, and cultural importance. Architecturally, the fortress has an irregular plan, built on natural rock formations. It measures approximately 98 meters in length and 65 meters in width, with walls about 4.5

meters high. The main materials used are natural stone blocks bound with sarooj (a traditional lime-based mortar), with small brick sections appearing in certain parts. The structure, with its defensive walls and commanding view of the surrounding region, was built in the style of military fortresses, making access to it difficult. Bashqurtaran Castle resembles the Ismaili fortresses. Given its construction style, it seems the castle's original foundation was laid by the Sassanids and later rebuilt by the Ismailis. Excavations revealed several architectural features, including cisterns and small and large ovens, situated close to each other — indicating that the castle's needs were met on-site. Due to its exposed location, the fortress has suffered erosion and decay from wind and rain over the centuries. The pottery uncovered includes monochrome turquoise-glazed, underglaze-painted, and splash-glazed types, typically dating from the 10th–13th centuries CE.

Chogha Ahovan sheds light on prehistoric civilization in western Iran

Iranica Desk

The ancient mound of Chogha Ahovan, situated north of Mehran and dating from the seventh to the third millennium BCE, is regarded as one of the most significant historical settlements in western Iran, according to Habibollah Mahmoudian, a professor of prehistoric archaeology. He explained that this archaeological site lies approximately five kilometers north of the border city of Mehran in Ilam Province, near the Iran–Iraq frontier. The most prominent permanent river in the region is the Kanjan Cham River, which originates from the western slopes of the Kabir Kuh Mountains and flows through the entrance of the Mehran Plain, forming a natural boundary between Iran and Iraq, according to ISNA. Mahmoudian noted that the river's presence in the warm, lowland areas of western Iran has long rendered the region suitable as a winter settlement for nomadic communities. Consequently, archaeological sites within this geographical zone — including Chogha Ahovan — have retained their historical importance for millennia owing to these favorable environmental conditions.

Highlighting the site's cultural characteristics, the archaeologist pointed out that the quantity and variety of cultural materials, particularly the numerous forms and styles of pottery, confirm multiple phases of occupation at the site. Regarding the stone tools unearthed, Mahmoudian reported that several stone implements — such as hand mortars and wheel-shaped perforated stones — have been identified on the mound. Determining their precise chronological placement, he added, requires scientific analysis and comparison with artifacts from other archaeological sites, along with further study of the mound's surface cultural evidence. He continued that across the site — especially on its western slope — archaeologists have found numerous stone blades of differing sizes and hues, including white, brown, and gray examples. A few small blades were also discovered, though less frequently than larger specimens. Mahmoudian emphasized that the parent rock fragments scattered across the mound's surface could yield valuable insights for future archaeological investigations. Referring to the architectural remains of Chogha Ahovan, he stated that traces of ancient human activity have been

identified throughout western Iran — in the mountains, valleys, intermontane plains, and Zagros foothills. These remains, he observed, serve as tangible evidence of the creativity and adaptability of the people who, through intelligence and resourcefulness, developed living conditions suited to their environment and era. He further explained that examining such remains provides extensive information about how early humans utilized natural resources to establish settlements, domesticate animals, and develop agricultural and pastoral systems. Among the most strategic and fertile areas of this region is the Mehran Plain, which, due to its location between the Mesopotamian lowlands and the Iranian Plateau, has long held remarkable historical importance. Discussing the research background of the region, Mahmoudian stated that Chogha Ahovan is considered one of the largest prehistoric mounds in the area. The site was first identified in 1998 by a domestic archaeological team led by the late Ali-Mohammad Khalilian, and later surveyed and studied in 2002 by a team from Islamic Azad University. In 2003, the official boundaries of the site were established.

Mahmoudian added that the mound holds particular importance due to the breadth and diversity of its cultural evidence spanning various prehistoric periods. A wide array of plain and decorated pottery featuring diverse colors, designs, vegetal tempers, and small gravel inclusions has been collected from the site. In its eastern section, archaeologists have also identified traces of an ancient pottery workshop. Artifacts such as stone tools, large and small blades, obsidian fragments, and parent rock samples are among the key cultural materials discovered. A stone axe recovered from the mound's surface, attributed to the Neolithic period, further enhances the archaeological and cultural value of this ancient settlement. According to Mahmoudian, a preliminary study of the mound's surface cultural materials — particularly the diversity of pottery — indicates multiple phases of habitation in this area. The chronology of these ceramic materials spans from the seventh to the third millennium BCE. Explaining the settlement patterns of Chogha Ahovan, he stated that initial analyses identify the site as a prehistoric settlement within Iran's western

peripheral zone, maintaining continuous contact with neighboring Mesopotamian civilizations to the west. The archaeologist also noted that illegal excavations and damage to the mound's eastern slope — caused by the installation of military equipment during the Iran–Iraq War — exposed a large deposit of pottery fragments and architectural layers, with the pottery stratum itself measuring approximately three meters thick. He added that the study of surface cultural materials — including pottery and stone blades — suggests possible settlements dating back to the seventh millennium BCE, as well as the early development of writing. The discovery of obsidian artifacts at both Chogha Ahovan and Golan indicates strong connections between these sites and nearby settlements, particularly those in Dehloran (Iran) and Badrah (Iraq). Mahmoudian emphasized that preliminary excavations at the mound have uncovered architectural remains from prehistoric periods in the Mehran region. The distance between Chogha Ahovan and Chogha Golan is roughly 15 kilometers, and an analysis of their cultural evidence reveals notable similarities between the two sites.



Kabir Kuh
● irangardi.app



Mehran Plain
● fararu.com



Chogha Ahovan
● IRNA



Chogha Ahovan
● IRNA



Iran jabs at Trump ‘Cyrus’ comparison

‘Defender of Gaza massacre, not defender of human rights’

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran’s Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, took a swipe at those who liken US president Donald Trump to Cyrus the Great during a ceremony in Moscow on October 14, 2025, marking the 2,550th anniversary of the world’s first human rights charter.

Speaking at an event hosted by the Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK), Jalali said the Persian charter, issued by Cyrus in the 6th century BC, enshrined values of “freedom, tolerance and human dignity” long before the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, IRNA reported.

He said it was “absurd” to associate such principles with anyone backing mass civilian deaths, referring to the

ongoing conflict in Gaza.

“One cannot call someone who supports the killing of tens of thousands in a small land like Gaza a defender of human rights or liken him to Cyrus the Great,” Jalali said.

The envoy urged a “return to civilizational traditions” to confront modern challenges such as extremism and inequality, adding that Eastern cultures had long championed coexistence among faiths. He cited Iran’s and Russia’s examples of interfaith harmony.

Among the speakers was Davlatshoh Gulmahmadzoda, Tajikistan’s ambassador to Moscow, who called the Cyrus Charter “a symbol of respect for humanity and justice.”

He said Cyrus had united peoples across Asia, Africa and Europe, noting



Iran’s Ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, speaks at a ceremony at the Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK) in Moscow on October 14, marking the 2,550th anniversary of the world’s first human rights charter.

● IRNA

that ‘Herodotus’ recorded more than 70 nations under his rule.

The ceremony featured Persian poetry readings, traditional music, and the opening of a joint Iran-Tajikistan cultural exhibition, displaying handicrafts, rare books and images of Iran’s ancient monuments, including scenes from the ‘Shahnameh’.

Earlier in the day, Jalali met Malyshev Vladimir Sergeevich, VGIK’s president, to discuss expanding Iran-Russia film cooperation. Malyshev, who also heads



the BRICS Association of Film Universities, welcomed Iran’s growing role

in Russian film festivals and pledged stronger academic ties.

Iranian short film ‘The Diving’ wins top award at Toronto’s TINFF



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian short film ‘The Diving,’ written and directed by Mohammad Tanabandeh and produced by Amir Seydabadi, won the Best Short Film award at the 9th Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF), which ran in Toronto.

The festival, often dubbed the “Canadian Oscars” for

its high-profile international line-up, recognized ‘The Diving’ as one of the year’s most outstanding short dramas. The jury praised it as “a standout in originality,” honoring Seydabadi during the closing gala for his production work.

‘The Diving’ features a strong Iranian cast, including Hossein Mehri, Atefeh Akbari,

Mohammad Sadeqh Mir-mohammadi, Mahkameh Zarrineh, Ali Asghar Noei, Fariborz Shahkarami, Nasser Jazandari, Arvin Zand and Mahan Derakhshan.

Centered on the character Azar, the film explores the struggles of a woman confronting deep personal dilemmas. Its opening line — “The last thing on my mind is having a child” — sets the tone for a raw and introspective story of choice and identity.

Held annually in Toronto, TINFF is one of Canada’s most prominent independent film festivals, spotlighting global voices across short and feature films. The 2025 edition screened works from over 50 countries, with The Diving standing out among the top international entries.

Nasser Taghvai leaves his story in every frame

Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian film community mourns the passing of Nasser Taghvai, whose artistic vision left an indelible mark on cinema and culture. His death coincides poignantly with the anniversary of Dariush Mehrjui, marking the loss of two pillars of modern Iranian filmmaking.

Ali Nassirian, who worked closely with Taghvai, described them as “legends who pioneered change in the late 1960s. Taghvai first with ‘Tranquility in the Presence of Others’ (1969) and then Mehrjui with ‘The Cow,’ both announcing a fresh perspective on Iranian cinema and culture.”

For Nassirian, Taghvai was “himself, honest and without pretense.” Reflecting on their collaboration in ‘Captain Khorshid,’ he recalled how a small detail — a golden tooth — became the key to his character, “Some think actors are just tools for the director, but the director gives the clues, and it’s the actor who breathes life into the role. That’s what I did in ‘Captain Khorshid,’” he said.

Nassirian added that the director’s meticulousness, sometimes frustrating, ultimately elevated the work.

Taghvai’s films were nourished by literature, drawing inspiration from both Iranian and Western texts. In ‘Captain Khorshid,’ he adapted Hemingway’s ‘To Have and Have Not’ into a story steeped in southern Iranian culture.

“Such localization is not for everyone. Taghvai knew the southern environment intimately. He could turn a foreign narrative into something unmistakably Iranian,” Nassirian explained.

Reflecting on Taghvai’s literary sensibilities, writer



● KHABAR ONLINE

Houshang Moradi-Kermani noted, “Taghvai was one of those artists who entered the arts through literature, starting with the short story collection ‘That Same Summer.’ His perspective was always literary and story-driven, and this shaped every frame of his cinema.”

He added, “I never saw a bad film by Taghvai. He always preserved the soul of the story in his films. Even small changes could not diminish the essence of the work. ‘My Uncle Napoleon’ is a perfect example of his precision—humor and gravity coexisting seamlessly, with actors like Parviz Fannizadeh and Nassirian delivering their best under his direction.”

Film critic Mohsen Soleimani Fakher described Taghvai’s cinema as a mirror reflecting society itself. “Every film positions the community as the protagonist, examining how societal structures — from patriarchy to bureaucracy — seep into private lives, love, work, and even humor. Taghvai was a silent historian, a poet in the guise of a sociologist,” he said.

Alireza Pirouzan highlighted Taghvai’s role as a cultural thinker. “Through cinema, he questioned his society, preserving the memory of the south, the people, and the language. His works endure because

of their blend of intimacy, critical awareness, fidelity to reality, and imaginative daring.”

Documentary filmmaker Hadi Afarideh emphasized Taghvai’s pioneering vision in non-fiction cinema. His documentaries, from ‘Arbaeen’ to ‘Wind of Jinn,’ combined poetic storytelling with anthropological insight, portraying rituals, local beliefs, and the human confrontation with nature. “He wasn’t an outside observer; he lived with the people, crafting films that were both honest and aesthetically resonant,” Afarideh noted.

Photographer Majid Saeedi recalled that Taghvai’s early photography shaped his cinematic eye. “He captured humans within vast landscapes, balancing realism with a hidden poetic order. This ability to see through the lens first, before translating to narrative, became the hallmark of his films. His compositions spoke without dialogue; every frame was a self-contained story.”

Composer Sattar Orki remembered Taghvai as a “rare artist whose understanding of music and film intertwined. From ‘My Uncle Napoleon’ to ‘Tranquility in the Presence of Others,’ every score was an extension of his vision, and he guided composers subtly to achieve the perfect match.”

Critics and collaborators alike underline his meticulous selection of actors, attention to mise-en-scène, and careful dialogue writing. Maziar Fekri Arshad wrote, “Taghvai’s work transcended social classes, from elite Tehranis to southern laborers, each portrayed with authenticity and depth. His films endure because he transformed his extensive knowledge into art.”

Despite declining to direct in later years, Taghvai’s written works, such as the recently published three-volume screenplay ‘Mirza Koochak Khan,’ and his films like ‘Unruly Paper,’ testify to a filmmaker who never compromised artistic integrity. Abolfazl Jalili observed that even unfinished projects reflect his rare intellect, meticulousness, and respect for narrative truth.

Haroun Yashaii, producer of ‘Captain Khorshid,’ said, “Taghvai demanded quality over quantity. Working with him was challenging, but every detail mattered. He knew when to step away, leaving an example of patience, dignity, and unwavering dedication to his craft.”

Funeral arrangements have been announced for October 16 at Tehran’s Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery, with family, friends, and colleagues gathering to pay their final respects. Nasser Taghvai’s legacy, from literature-inspired cinema to documentaries that elevate everyday life, secures his place as a master storyteller. In every frame, every score, and every carefully chosen word, he revealed the heartbeat of Iran. His films remain, not merely as records of a bygone era, but as living, breathing testaments to the power of art to illuminate, question, and endure.

Veteran Iranian dubber Mozaffari dies at 83

Arts & Culture Desk

Saeed Mozaffari, one of Iran’s most celebrated voice actors and dubbing directors, died on Tuesday in Tehran at the age of 83 after suffering cardiac complications.

Born in July 1942 in Shahrud, he began his dubbing career in 1962 and became a defining voice in Iran’s postwar cinema culture, bridging global cinema and Iranian audiences through six decades of work, IRNA reported.

Mozaffari’s commanding tone and emotional range made him the Persian voice behind dozens of Hollywood and Asian screen legends.

He dubbed Clint Eastwood in Sergio Leone’s Westerns ‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’ and ‘A Fistful of

Dollars,’ and voiced Ryan O’Neal, Pierce Brosnan, Matthew McConaughey, Brad Pitt and Jackie Chan in many of their films.

His versatility and precision established him as one of the few Iranian dubbers whose voice audiences could recognize instantly.

He also lent his voice to iconic television characters such as Rick Grimes in ‘The Walking Dead’ and Ragnar Lothbrok in ‘Vikings,’ roles that cemented his reputation across generations.

Mozaffari often recalled his first dubbing experience — a short part in ‘The Miracle’ starring Roger Moore — as the moment that set him on a lifelong artistic path.

Beyond performance, Mozaffari became a respected dubbing director, mentoring younger artists and overseeing the translation



of global cinema into Persian. Colleagues praised his discipline and artistry, calling him “a perfectionist with a golden ear.” Farshid Shakiba, head of IRIB’s dubbing unit, said the industry had “lost one of its firm pillars.”

Funeral services are scheduled for Friday, October 17, at the Artists’ Section in Behesht-e Zahra cemetery in Tehran.