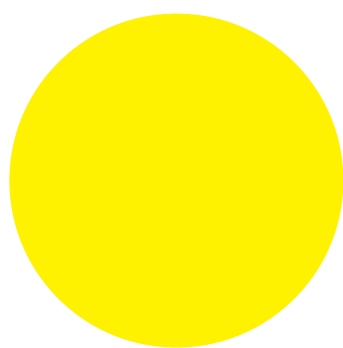


Iranian films to spotlight cinema made under war at Antalya festival



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Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (R) shakes hands with Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni in Doha, Qatar on October 6, 2026.

QNA

When algorithm replaces warhead: SALT I written for age of AI

From Moscow 1972 to Washington 2026: first treaty of the post-bipolar order



By Hossein Kazemi
International affairs analyst

O P I N I O N E X C L U S I V E

On May 26, 1972, Richard Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev signed a document in Moscow that few people today remember beyond scholars of international relations, but which gave the bipolar world a form of "managed" order. SALT I did not eliminate the bomb, nor did it completely tie the hands of either superpower. But for the first time, it acknowledged that the weapon determining the balance of the world had to be jointly restrained. Nearly half a century later, on September 26, 2026, at the end of Chinese President Xi Jinping's three-day visit to Washington, a similar scene unfolded, but with different players and different tools. This time, the issue was not warheads and launchers; it was the algorithm.

Order written by bomb

To understand the significance of this moment, we must go back to the logic of the post-World War II order. The bipolar structure of that era can be read through its arms control treaties: SALT I and II, START I and II, and New START. They were all about one thing: the number of launchers, strategic bombers and nuclear warheads, and how to limit them. The reason was simple. The atomic bomb was the principal balancer of the international system, structurally determining the gap between the two superpowers and the rest of the world. Every other country was effectively playing in a different league when it came to strategic power.

These treaties met divergent fates, and that in itself is telling. SALT II (1979) never made it through the US Senate following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

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UN chief urges US, Iran to return to diplomacy

Pezeshkian says negotiations with Washington 'meaningless'

International Desk

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday urged Iran and the United States to return to diplomacy and end the war, while hailing Pakistan's "pivotal role" in creating conditions for dialogue between the two sides.

"Your efforts helped deliver the 17 June Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, the subsequent ceasefire, and the framework for further negotiations," he said, adding that "every Pakistani should be proud of that pivotal role."

His remarks came during a joint news conference with Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar in Islamabad.

"And from Islamabad, I want to send a loud and clear message to all parties: End the conflict. Return to diplomacy. Fully restore navigational rights and freedoms in accordance with international law," Guterres said.

Despite a ceasefire in April, a memorandum of understanding in June and

talks at the UN General Assembly last month, Washington and Tehran remain at odds over several issues including the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

On Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said talks with the US were "meaningless" and have only resulted in renewed attacks.

"Our problem with the US is that every time we come to the negotiating table, war is immediately imposed upon us," Pezeshkian said at a meeting with Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Ararat Mirzoyan.

"So far, they have attacked us three times after talks, and this shows that they are not seeking dialogue; rather, their goal is to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran," he added.

"Negotiations with an enemy that engages every day in assassinations, sanctions, pressure, and threats, and that violates agreements, are meaningless. Our people do not accept such an approach either," he said.

The US and Israel launched an unpro-



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres (L) shakes hands with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar upon his arrival in Islamabad, Pakistan, on October 6, 2026.

● AFP

voked war on Iran on February 28, killing Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, senior military commanders and thousands of civilians.

Iran responded with a series of retaliatory operations targeting US military assets and bases across the region.

The escalation ultimately forced the US and the Israeli regime to agree to a ceasefire on April 8 after Iran's retaliatory operations inflicted significant costs on the aggressors.

The Islamabad MoU was aimed at ending the war, but Washington soon violated the agreement by failing to respect Iran's arrangements concerning the Strait of Hormuz.



The strategically vital waterway was largely closed during the war on Iran. The Strait remains closed, and Iran

has made clear that it will not allow its reopening until the US meets the demands Tehran has announced.

Tehran, Doha to form joint task force to follow up on agreements: *Momeni*

Iran to send technical team to Qatar for further talks on Iranian pilots

International Desk

Iran and Qatar have formed a joint task force between their interior ministries to follow up on decisions and agreements reached between the two countries during recent meetings, Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said.

Speaking after a meeting with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on Tuesday, Momeni said Tehran and Doha held a "good and constructive" discussion on issues of mutual interest. According to Qatar's News Agency (QNA), the two sides discussed developments in the region and ongoing de-escalation efforts to strengthen security and regional and international stability amid the US aggression against Iran.

Qatar, alongside Pakistan, has mediated between Iran and the US to end the ongoing conflict between the two countries.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry official Ibrahim Al-Hashmi told a regular press briefing on Tuesday that the US and Iran are still engaged in talks despite an apparent deadlock seven months into the conflict.

"I can confirm that the talks are continuing and the exchange of messages between different par-



Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (L) meets with Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha on October 6, 2026.

● QNA

ties are continuing via Qatar and its regional partners," Ibrahim Al-Hashmi said.

"As you know, the scale of this conflict and the magnitude of the price that the whole world is paying require us to put our best efforts to end this immediately through a negotiable solution on the negotiation table," the official added.

Fate of Iranian pilots

Earlier on the day, Momeni held separate talks with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani on several issues including Iranian pilots held in the Persian Gulf country.

He said Tehran will send a technical team to Qatar to hold further discussions on the fate of Iranian pilots held in Qatar.

Momeni said negotiations have already been held on the issue of the Iranian pilots "and it was decided

that a technical delegation would visit again and hold meetings as part of continuing the work."

The case dates back to March 2, when two Iranian Air Force Su-24 aircraft carried out a mission against Al-Udeid Air Base in Qatar during the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

The aircraft were struck by "enemy air defense" systems while returning from the mission, forcing the pilots to eject.

One of the four Iranian pilots, Majid Kazemi, was killed, while the other three — Javad Salehi, Abdolmajid Dashtian and Emran Behrouzian — were captured alive by Qatari forces.

Kazemi's body was later returned to Iran and buried in the southern city of Shiraz in late July. Doha initially denied that the pilots had been captured by Qatari forces.

Iran says that three pilots were detained by Qatari forces after their aircraft were downed in Qatar's airspace.

President calls for expansion of ties with India, Denmark, Thailand

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held meetings with new ambassadors of India, Denmark and Thailand, during which he stressed on expansion of ties and cooperation with their countries.

During a meeting with Indian Ambassador Shri Vishvesh Negi, Pezeshkian said expansion of relations between Tehran and New Delhi would benefit not only the two countries but also serve regional peace and security.

Pezeshkian referred to his recent visit to India, saying extensive and constructive talks had been held with senior Indian officials during the trip.

"Very good understandings" had been reached between the two countries, Pezeshkian said, adding that he had stressed that the agreements should be put into effect and become operational as soon as possible.

Pezeshkian also pointed to cooperation between the two countries within the BRICS group, saying good understandings had been reached there as well. Such understandings, particularly in economic cooperation and strengthening multilateralism, should be pursued and expanded more seriously, he said. During his meeting with Denmark's new ambassador, the Iranian president said Iran is ready to expand bilateral interactions and cooperation with Denmark, adding that more engagement in



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) meets India's new Ambassador to Tehran Shri Vishvesh Negi in Tehran on October 6, 2026.

● president.ir

economic, scientific and cultural fields could pave the way for deeper ties between Tehran and Copenhagen.

Pezeshkian said the Iranian people had throughout history been a peace-loving nation that had pursued peace, calm, constructive communication and sound engagement with other countries.

Denmark is also among the countries with which Iran sought to expand relations and interactions, he said.

In his meeting with Thailand's new Ambassador Sake Nopthaisong, Pezeshkian highlighted the broad potential for developing relations between Iran and Thailand, saying bilateral ties could be expanded further in the economic, scientific and technological fields.

Six members of same family killed in Saudi strike: *Ansarullah*

International Desk

Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement on Tuesday said a Saudi airstrike killed six members of the same family as fighting intensifies in the impoverished country's resurgent war.

The bombing of a village in Hajjah governorate, bordering Saudi Arabia, "caused the deaths of six people from the same family" including the mother, father and four children aged three to eight, the Health Ministry in Sana'a said.

Fighting across Yemen has killed more than 270 Yemeni troops backed by Riyadh and Ansarullah's fighters over the past day, sources on both sides told AFP on Tuesday.

Fighting has intensified in Yemen since the Saudi-backed government in south

launched a counter-offensive aimed at recovering territory seized by resistance fighters last month.

The focus of the violence is on southwest Yemen, around the Bab al-Mandab strait that is crucial to global energy flows.

Ansarullah also said it launched an attack on the Saudi capital's main airport and on Tuesday denied being pushed back by Saudi-backed forces.

The Ansarullah's statements come as Yemen's Saudi-backed forces claimed it had removed the resistance group from areas around the Bab al-Mandab strait, a Red Sea chokepoint, and the port city of Mocha.

Claims by both sides in Yemen have been impossible to independently verify, with the situation on the ground moving fast and access for journalists difficult.

After a four-year ceasefire, Yemen's long-running conflict has reignited during the Middle East war, which has roiled world energy markets and snarled trade routes.

Ansarullah's military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group still held all territory seized last month when they swept through coastal areas along the Red Sea oil-and-cargo route.

Resistance fighters "have full control over all their advances on the ground", he posted on Telegram. Saree said they had carried out dozens of strikes in the past few hours targeting Saudi-backed forces in Yemen's Al-Jawf and Marib regions, while also attacking Taiz governorate. On Monday, Ansarullah said it had struck Riyadh airport and a refinery belonging to Saudi state oil giant Aramco.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Minister reports 500% rise in fiber connections, prioritizes smart government



Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi (c) presents a report on the ministry's performance and future plans at a meeting with members of Parliament's Planning and Budget Committee on October 6, 2026.

Economy Desk

Iran's communications minister reported a 500% increase in fiber-optic connections, while saying the National Information Network and smart government were strategic priorities for President Masoud Pezeshkian's government.

Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi made the remarks on Tuesday at a meeting with members of Parliament's Planning and Budget Committee, where he presented a report on the ministry's performance and future plans, IRNA reported.

Hashemi said the government had adopted a program-based approach despite resource constraints, identifying strategic priorities in line with the country's needs and allocating resources accordingly. The government took office in August 2024. He said the ministry's action plan had been developed based on the country's actual needs, with smart government, the National Information Network, digital economy infrastructure, artificial intelligence and the development of satellite-based services among its strategic priorities. Under these priorities, the ministry has defined key projects, including the "government cloud" and the creation of centralized communications ecosystems, which are being pursued under

Article 107 of the Seventh Development Plan, Hashemi said. On smart government, he said the ministry was focused on integrating government systems to prevent people from becoming lost in a "jungle of systems." In the 5G sector, the ministry has also worked to free up unused frequencies, while the city of Babol in northern Mazandaran Province became the first city to receive full 5G coverage, Hashemi said. The country's critical infrastructure centers were also brought out of a critical situation after a decade through special measures, he added.

Fiber-optic connections rise 500%

Hashemi said changing the pattern of traffic consumption from mobile to fixed networks was necessary. While global standards show that 75% of traffic runs over fixed networks, the ratio in Iran is exactly the opposite, with most traffic carried over mobile networks, he said.

To address this, the current government has stepped up a major national project to shift from copper cables to fiber optics. Although many leading countries began the process years ago and are now nearing its completion, Iran has recorded growth of about 500% in connecting households and businesses to fiber-optic networks in a relatively short period, Hashemi said. On artificial intelligence, Hashemi said the Communications and Information Technology Ministry was responsible for developing computing and storage infrastructure. Given constraints on government resources, the ministry issued a call for the private sector to establish "artificial intelligence operators" after an expert assessment, he said. Several companies expressed interest, and three have reached the final stage of the process, Hashemi said, adding that the ministry hoped to see a major improvement in the country's computing infrastructure within the next month.

TPO plans new transport links to ease impact of sanctions, trade restrictions

Economy Desk

Iran's Trade Promotion Organization is planning a series of measures to strengthen transport and logistics links and mitigate the impact of sanctions and trade restrictions, including agreements on transport and trade, a meeting of the heads of free zones in Iran and Pakistan, electronic customs documents and a joint session with railway officials from Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and China. Amir Roshanbakhsh Qanbari, deputy head of international business development at the Trade Promotion Organization, outlined the plans at a news conference on the sidelines of the seventh Transport, Logistics and Related Industries Exhibition, ILNA reported. Iran's southern ports remain under a US naval blockade imposed by President Donald Trump in mid-April, aimed at pressuring Tehran into an agreement after a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. Already under decades of Western sanctions over its nuclear programs, the

country also faces a new wave of US sanctions targeting its aviation sector. Qanbari said transport had become increasingly important to foreign trade as restrictions, war and sanctions had forced Iran to alter some trade routes and transport corridors and turn to alternative routes. "Since last year, with the emergence of restrictions, war and sanctions, we have been forced to change some of our trade routes and transport corridors and move toward alternative routes," he said, adding that existing capacity on other routes had so far failed to meet the country's needs. He said greater use should also be made of capacity in the Caspian Sea and other maritime routes. Qanbari also stressed the need to involve all parts of the transport and logistics chain, including customs and standards authorities. Standards and customs are among the factors affecting trade and form part of non-tariff requirements, he said, adding that they could not be separated from the logistics chain.

Transport and trade agreements

The TPO is also planning to sign cooperation agreements on transport and trade during the exhibition, Qanbari said. He said the organization had pursued plans to hold a meeting of the heads of Iran and Pakistan's free zones during the exhibition, with a joint session involving free zones located in Pakistan also planned. In customs, cooperation on customs documents and records is on the agenda, with the electronic processing of customs documents among the issues under review. Qanbari said this could have a significant impact on facilitating logistics processes.

Iran-China rail route

Qanbari also announced a meeting to examine opportunities and challenges along the rail route between Iran and China, to be attended by senior railway officials from Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and China, with the Iranian railway company also taking part. He said one of the problems

facing exporters and traders using rail transport was the increase in cargo transit times. Shipments from China to Tehran or other destinations that previously could take about 15 to 20 days now take around two and a half to three months, he said.

Cooperation with Belarus

During a visit by an Iranian delegation to Belarus last week, it was agreed that a delegation from Belarus's multimodal logistics sector would visit Iran, Qanbari said. The aim is to make use of Belarus's capacity within Eurasia and bring the country into the network of trade and logistics routes used by Iran, he said. "If there is export capacity but no means of connection and no stable route for transporting goods, trade effectively loses its meaning," Qanbari said.

Herat-Mazar-e Sharif rail project talks

Separately, Iran and Afghanistan discussed expanding economic and trade cooperation, particularly the development



of infrastructure including construction of the Herat-Mazar-e Sharif railway, IRNA reported. The talks were held Tuesday between Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy, Hamid Qanbari, and Mohammad Naeem, deputy minister for financial and administrative affairs at Afghanistan's Foreign Ministry. Iran approved the general framework of an East-West transport corridor anchored by the railway project in August, aiming to increase its share of the international

transit market and expand regional economic cooperation. Iranian companies have begun construction of an 800-kilometer railway linking Herat and Mazar-e Sharif, according to Iran's state railway chief, Jabbar Ali Zakari, who said the project aimed to complete a transport corridor linking Iran, Afghanistan and China. The project is being financed by the Afghan government under a "railway-for-minerals" arrangement, under which Iran will build the railway in return for investment in Afghanistan's mining sector.

ISA plans satellite constellations for imaging, remote sensing applications

Economy Desk

Iran plans to develop constellations of remote-sensing and imaging satellites with different resolutions over the coming years to cover a range of applications, the head of the Iranian Space Agency said on Tuesday. Hossein Salarieh made the remarks at a specialized meeting on the role of domestic satellites and satellite imagery in producing, monitoring and processing geospatial information, ISNA reported. "We are seeking in the coming years to create constellations of remote-sensing and imaging satellites with different resolutions, from better than one meter to several tens of meters,

so that we can cover a range of different applications through various methods of data integration," Salarieh said. He said the plan reflected the capabilities available in Iran's space sector, adding that knowledge-based companies, private firms, specialized centers, researchers, the Iranian Space Research Center and similar organizations had valuable capabilities in the field. Salarieh also pointed to cooperation between the Iranian Space Agency and the National Cartographic Center, saying the agency planned to make its satellites available to the center, including the Paya and Khayyam satellites and several others being prepared for launch, such



as Pars-2. The imagery would be made available to specialized institutions working in mapping, agriculture, water resources and other fields and turned into value-added products, he said. The data should help meet domestic needs, support economic development and increase pro-

ductivity across different sectors, Salarieh added. "Economics does not always mean producing something and selling it at a higher price; being able to prevent a major loss from occurring or expanding at a certain cost also means creating economic value," he said. Iran, like many parts of the world, faces various crises including floods, earthquakes and other disasters, while the improper use of resources and unauthorized construction can also cause losses, Salarieh said. If such losses can be identified and managed using the "single-window land" system, mapping tools and imaging technologies, this could help increase productivity and improve eco-

nomic conditions and quality of life, Salarieh said. Iran's space industry is growing but needs advice, consultation and support from specialized institutions that use satellite imagery, he added. Salarieh said obtaining feedback from specialized users was important in designing future satellites and would be taken into account in satellites currently being designed and built. The expertise, advice and views of colleagues at the National Cartographic Center could help guide the process, he said, adding that such input would help ensure satellites are built to meet the country's needs with greater quality and effectiveness.

UN isn't declining; it's decomposing

By Stewart Patrick and Theodore Zaritsky

Fellows at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

OPINION

On September 22, the United Nations General Assembly began its annual debate, and António Guterres gave his last opening remarks as secretary-general. He spoke as steward of a Security Council divided among its five permanent members, two of them waging wars of aggression. With interstate conflict at an 80-year high, even Guterres seems to doubt whether the UN is fit to carry out its founding mandate: “We cannot keep peace when there is no peace to keep.” Sharing the mottled green podium with Guterres that morning was US President Donald Trump, who returned to that grand hall for the sixth time. Last September, Trump gave a largely self-congratulatory speech remembered less for solemnity than for pandering to the minority of Americans who balk at deferring to the UN. Despite Trump’s assurance to Guterres that he stands “behind the United Nations 100%” and the remarkably disciplined messaging from US representatives on getting the organization “back to basics,” the administration lacks a compelling plan for how to do so. Trump has lamented that he “never even received a phone call from the United Nations offering to help” with his peacemaking, saying the “United Nations wasn’t there for us.” As the Security Council prepares to select Guterres’s successor, the United States must be ready not only to pick up the phone, but to actually work with whoever is on the other end of the line. The president’s current, selective approach toward engaging the UN is hastening the destruction of its peace-and-security functions. Salvaging this situation will require senior administration officials to coalesce around a strategy to revive the UN’s mission, both at its core and its periphery.

At the core

Maintaining international peace and security is not the charge of Guterres alone, nor the tens of thousands of UN peacekeepers stationed across a dozen countries. The job is spread across the UN’s organs, each with its own function: the Security Council, the Secretariat, the General Assembly, and others. These pieces of the postwar order, battered by austerity and bruised by derision, are still pressed into service by those who believe peace can only be maintained by keeping them together. The problem today is that great powers are straining these organs past the limit of their design, and the body is decomposing around them.

The Security Council bears primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security but asserts its authority only as its members allow. Last year, the council passed the fewest resolutions in 35 years, partially due to four vetoes — two cast by the United States, which has refused even modest restraints on the veto, as France and the United Kingdom now observe in the case of mass atrocities. Increasingly, selective obstruction defines how the council exercises its power to make binding decisions and authorize force.

The Trump administration is also wielding its permanent seat to move UN peacekeeping missions toward closure, not success. For example, in South Sudan, the United States insisted upon political benchmarks as a condition for renewal, producing the first fight over the mission’s continuation in 15 years. At the same time, the United States backs sanctions regimes such as arms embargoes and asset freezes while building around, not repairing, their weakening oversight — as when the Biden administration launched a substitute for the



devex.com

Panel of Experts on North Korea sanctions in 2024, after Russia vetoed the panel’s routine renewal. This selectivity extends to command itself, as the council increasingly hands authority off to regional coalitions. For example, the United States voted to let the African Union lead its own forces with UN financial backing in 2023, but then blocked adequate funding for the mission in Somalia in 2025. It now champions another form of outsourcing in Haiti, where the US has lobbied other council members to airlift troops for the Gang Suppression Force, which is not run by the UN.

The Security Council has not authorized a new peacekeeping operation since 2014 — a result of the fewest conflicts ending in negotiated settlements in decades — which leaves the Secretariat to maintain legacy mandates. Peacekeeping remains remarkably effective and cheap, yet it has been the most direct target of American cuts. The Trump administration looked to zero out its mandatory contribution and rescinded roughly \$800 million already appropriated, driving the drawdown of one in every four peacekeepers. More recently, the administration released about a 13th of its peacekeeping arrears, tying the rest to a “10% cut in long-standing, ineffective peacekeeping missions,” and as well as a third of what it owes the UN’s regular budget — enough to secure its vote in the General Assembly.

Special UN political missions in Somalia, Yemen, and elsewhere are funded piecemeal and left exposed to cuts, even as predictable financing is possible. Washington talks of stabilizing them but has resisted expanding models such as the Peacebuilding Fund’s newly assessed contributions. The absurdity sharpens

as the work becomes more humble but still life-saving, such as with the UN mine-removal service: The United States has been an architect of global mine clearance since 1993, only to end such leadership overnight in January 2025 when no one thought to exempt it from the blanket freeze on foreign aid.

At the periphery

Further from the core, the UN’s ostensibly apolitical humanitarian machinery is doing the work politics has failed to do. Guterres’s infrequent use of his “good offices” to prevent and mediate conflict has been a major disappointment of his tenure. Instead, the secretary-general has devoted more of his attention to mitigating human suffering in war, marshaling the organization’s myriad agencies to coordinate aid, secure food, provide healthcare and shelter, and protect the displaced. In the absence of true peace processes, humanitarian aid workers are increasingly called upon to fill the breach, holding the pieces together.

The Trump administration’s support for emergency relief, however, remains uneven and unpredictable. US humanitarian funding to the UN has fallen by roughly four-fifths in three years, even as the United States routes \$3.8 billion through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs under an agreement that excludes Gaza, Yemen, and Afghanistan. The United States nominated an “America First” official to lead the World Food Programme, even as Washington cuts roughly half of its former support (\$2.6 billion) and despite having backed the 2018 Security Council resolution classifying starvation, when used as a tool of war, as a peace-and-security concern. The Office of the High Com-

missioner for Refugees, which coordinates protection and returns alongside peacekeeping missions in every major displacement crisis, has had to slash a third of its costs — but even that pales beside the US funding ban (likely to become permanent) to the Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, the backbone of aid delivery in Gaza.

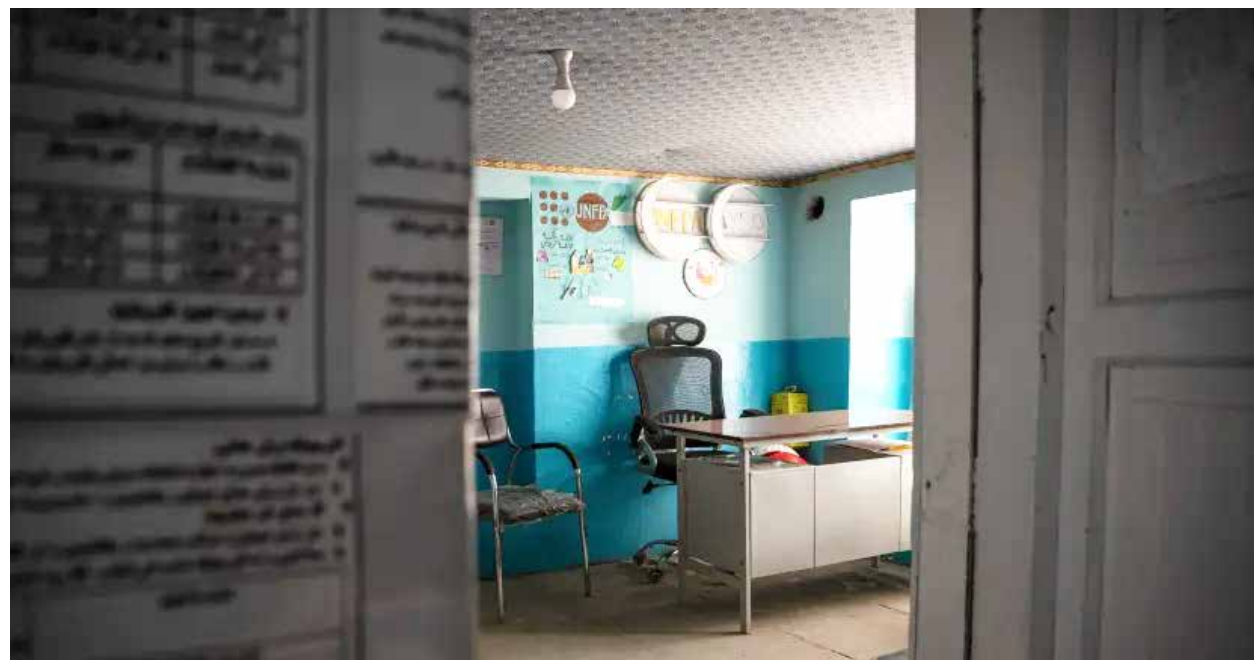
À la carte peace

This selectivity — feeding some functions while letting others wither — undermines the UN’s ability to carry out its basics, in effect pulling it apart at the seams. Administration officials have all but admitted this inconsistency. Secretary of State Marco Rubio says the United States aims to make the UN “an effective tool for advancing peace”. Yet the administration’s flagship initiative, the Gaza peace plan, was run in parallel through the Board of Peace, with Rubio unable to say whether it would ever be routed through Security Council authority: “We haven’t decided. Maybe. We don’t know.”

To be sure, Trump is hardly breaking precedent in seeking the Security Council’s blessing when convenient. Every administration since President Harry S. Truman has sought the council’s stamp of legitimacy at least once. In his first term, Trump brought the Doha Agreement with the Taliban before the council, which adopted a resolution welcoming it. In his second term, even while chairing his own Board of Peace, Trump returned for the Security Council’s endorsement of his 20-point Gaza plan. Few states are as well positioned as the United States to extract the Security Council’s imprimatur. This is what makes the administration’s strategy toward the



The United States has seen what happens when that credibility lapses. In 2020, having lost a vote to extend the arms embargo on Iran, US diplomats tried to trigger a snapback mechanism the Trump administration had already forfeited by quitting the Iran nuclear deal two years earlier, and 13 of 14 Security Council members refused to treat its claim as legitimate. The Iran deal itself is the counter-case — a text co-authored by Russia and China, adopted unanimously within a week — and the standard against which any future Iran deal will be measured.



The clinic of Larga, Afghanistan, sits empty in August 2025 since its closure due to US funding cuts, which has left locals in the remote village cut off from health services.
● ELISE BLANCHARD/GETTY IMAGES

UN so self-defeating. Credibility is a depletable asset, slower to amass than to spend, and collecting the stamp of legitimacy without reinvesting in the institution that issues it leaves less for the United States to draw on in the future. The United States has seen what happens when that credibility lapses. In 2020, having lost a vote to extend the arms embargo on Iran, US diplomats tried to trigger a snapback mechanism the Trump administration had already forfeited by quitting the Iran nuclear deal two years earlier, and 13 of 14 Security Council members refused to treat its claim as legitimate. The Iran deal itself is the counter-case — a text co-authored by Russia and China, adopted unanimously within a week — and the standard against which any future Iran deal will be measured.

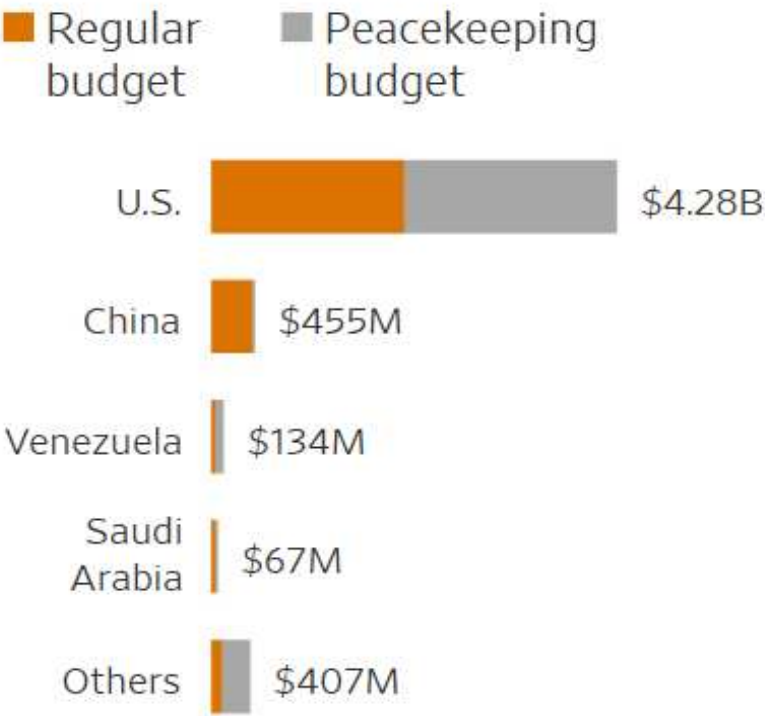
Decomposition
Trump's candor lies in refusing to subsidize what he does not want while keeping council-conferred legitimacy. His error is treating that stamp of approval as separable from the system backing it. Selectivity is not a uniquely American habit, but US disregard for the same prohibition normalizes the sense that it binds no one. In this permissive environment of impunity and violence, a new cast of middle power peacemakers

is emerging (among them Turkey and Pakistan), and they are picking which parts of the UN to contract for their own diplomatic purposes and leaving the rest to fend for themselves. In parallel, other countries are picking which peace efforts to bolster. For example, Lebanon is already courting bilateral deployments from Italy, France, and Spain to backfill the long-standing peacekeeping mission, which the council voted, under sustained US pressure, to start winding down. The UN is not declining so much as decomposing — what was a one-stop shop for peace and security is becoming a bundle of boutiques. This is not the first time this has happened. The League of Nations' machinery for both refugees and health outlived its own irrelevance, absorbed wholesale into the UN before the league had even dissolved. The question today is not whether selectivity and instrumentalism will be fatal to the UN, but which pieces can outlast the whole, as demand for each survives independently of the bundle. The General Assembly, empowered since 1950 at the urging of the United States to backstop a receding Security Council, may assume more of this strain — its 2023 resolution demanding a humanitarian truce in Gaza being the clearest recent case of it stepping up where the council fell down. Certainly, the Veto Initiative — spearheaded by tiny Liechtenstein to require any permanent member that wields its veto to explain itself to the plenary chamber — suggests a General Assembly that still draws breath.

The way forward
Restoring the UN's promise of peace means treating it as more than the sum of its shiniest parts, and seeking the Security Council's stamp of approval alone means presiding over an empty UN. The tell will be which functions Trump admits are worth paying for, if any. The United States owes the UN roughly \$4 billion, arrears that Guterres warns have brought the organization to the brink of "imminent financial collapse". Getting "back to basics" is a slogan that does not substitute for strategy. Agreeing that the UN should maintain peace and security still requires those at the State Department, and US diplomats posted in New York and Geneva, to do a real accounting of which levers of engagement serve that end and merit US support. Indiscriminate cuts will cost Trump more than they will save before he leaves office — and he's already paying for them, in lost allies, lost trust, and lost leverage.

The article was first published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Largest unpaid arrears by U.N. members to May 28



● ANDREW BARNETT/WSJ



By Moncef Khane
Former United Nations official

OPINION

The annual general debate of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) started on September 22 in New York amid dire circumstances. Besides traffic gridlock and overpriced hotel rates, cavalcades of motorcades and successive dignitaries delivering calibrated speeches, this session heard Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's last speech on the state of the UN. Guterres headed the UN for 10 years, and during that time, he repeatedly failed to defend it when it came under attack. He passes on his post at the top of a world organisation on the verge of financial collapse and more marginalised than ever before. Paradoxically, Guterres has the United States, the host government of the UN, and its mercurial president, Donald Trump, to thank for this dismal state of affairs. Earlier this year, the Trump administration withdrew from dozens of UN agencies and organs and, in an extraordinary move, ceased all payments of its dues to the regular and peacekeeping budgets of the UN. But these drastic policy decisions did not spring out of nowhere. Trump's unhappiness with the UN is multifaceted, and his decision to stop fulfilling Washington's legally binding financial obligation may well be the logical culmination of decades-long US policy. In the mid-1980s, the Reagan administration accused the UN of being a third-world, anti-US forum. To compel the organisation to better serve its interests and under the guise of the ubiquitous need for reform, which all secretaries-general fell for, the US started to withhold a share of its assessed contribution, which accounted for a quarter of the regular budget and a third of the peacekeeping budget back then. By 1987, the US relaxed its payment withholding policy, but the precedent was set. Washington continued to use the threat of withholding payment to maintain its grip on an organisation it viewed and continues to view as a vehicle serving its national interests rather than a multilateral agent serving the whole of humanity. Ever since the Reagan years, the US has kept the UN on a short financial leash,

Undermining UN not new US policy



● CHLOE CUSHMAN/FOREIGN AFFAIRS

and to this day, has been deliberately accruing arrears. It currently owes an estimated \$4.2 billion — that is equivalent to 120 percent of the regular UN budget for 2026. Trump has readily embraced this policy of financial blackmail. His administration has slow-walked mandatory payments, although in early September, it paid \$827 million towards its outstanding dues so it could preserve its voting rights in the UNGA. The president's ambivalent view of the UN may be rooted in a lesser-known detail. In 2001, Trump, then a real estate developer, lobbied then-secretary-general Kofi Annan to be awarded the billion-dollar renovation project of the

UN headquarters, but he did not get his way. That was probably not forgotten. But just like during the Reagan years, there is another major factor driving Trump's assault on the UN: US congressional politics. As Israel faced growing backlash at the UN for its genocide in Gaza, pressure from the Israeli lobby in Washington mounted. The Iron Dome diplomatic cover the US provided to Israel in the UN Security Council (UNSC) was no longer sufficient. By 2025, two years into the genocidal campaign, Guterres's tepid and overdue criticisms of Israeli policies, critical UNGA resolutions and scathing reports by special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council — including Francesca

Albanese, whom Washington placed under sanctions in violation of its host country obligations — became too much for Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the US Congress. In the 1980s, Washington deemed the UN a third-world anti-US forum; today, it is deemed anti-Israel and anti-Semitic. The US's blind and unconditional support for Israel has brought it growing isolation at the UN as has its decision to launch a war of aggression against Iran. Against the backdrop of these developments, the selection of the next secretary-general is dominating the behind-the-scenes agenda. Guterres's lacklustre tenure at the helm of an organisation on the verge of financial bankruptcy and political demise will soon be forgotten. But what should be remembered is that his appeasement policy vis-a-vis Washington since the first Trump administration has evidently failed. The new secretary-general will inherit the modus vivendi under which all secretaries-general since Javier Perez de Cuellar have had to operate — chronic cash flow problems due to US arrears. That should motivate the new UN leadership to consider an overhaul of how the UN budget is put together and how member states' contributions are allocated. Leaving the power of the purse in Washington's hands is a self-inflicted perpetual wound that could prove lethal for the organisation. Another fundamental question is whether the UN would be better off had its headquarters not been in the US. For too long, Washington has seen the UN either as a vector of its national interests or in adversarial terms. It has even used its position as a host to exclude world leaders it has viewed as hostile or undesirable, such as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and today, the President of the Palestinian Authority (PA) Mahmoud Abbas. Evidently, those are decisions only the UNGA can take. But a secretary-general with foresight and political backbone ought to provide views and leadership on those seminal questions to save the organisation from further marginalisation and possible demise.



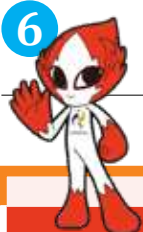
The US president's ambivalent view of the UN may be rooted in a lesser-known detail. In 2001, Trump, then a real estate developer, lobbied then-secretary-general Kofi Annan to be awarded the billion-dollar renovation project of the UN headquarters, but he did not get his way. That was probably not forgotten. But just like during the Reagan years, there is another major factor driving Trump's assault on the UN: US congressional politics.



Palestinian and other diplomats celebrate after a Palestinian-drafted, non-binding resolution demanding Israel to end "its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" within 12 months was passed by 124 votes to 14, with 43 abstentions, on September 19, 2024. ● GETTY IMAGES



The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



Iran has what it takes to reach pinnacle of women's karate, Saeidabadi insists



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

When Iranian female karatekas Atousa Golshadnejad and Fate-meh-Zahra Saeidabadi headed to the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, the former, entering the -68kg category as the reigning world champion, was regarded as the overwhelming favorite in her event, while few fancied 20-year-old Saeidabadi, making her debut at the continental multi-sport showpiece, to challenge for top

IRAN DAILY: Nagoya was your first Asian Games. Tell us about your campaign and how you reached the final.

SAEIDABADI: It was my first year and first appearance at the Asian Games. I won my first three bouts and reached the final, but unfortunately lost to the Malaysian representative and took the silver medal.

When you entered the Asian Games, did you believe you could reach the final and win a medal?

Yes, I believed I could reach the final. I always go to competitions targeting the gold medal. This medal was also God's blessing, and I hope I can change its color at the next edition. I went there for gold and won silver, but I am still grateful to God.

There were protests from the Iranian coaching staff over some refereeing decisions in the final, and your coach Pegah Zangeneh was even removed from the coach's chair after protesting. What is your view of the officiating?

Many of my techniques deserved points, but they were not awarded. However, I never use that as an excuse and do not want to attribute my defeat to refereeing. They could have awarded many of my points, but they did not. The most difficult moment of the competition for me was the final. I gave everything I had, but the points I should have received were not awarded. My coach was just doing her best. It was a very difficult and sensitive situation. I went there for gold and naturally wanted to finish first, but silver was also God's blessing and I am grateful for it. Nevertheless, I gained a lot of experience from this competition. Next time, I will fight differently so that the judges have to award the points and there is no room for them to deny them.

What is your next goal?

My main goal right now is to become the senior world champion. First, we have the World Cup team competition, which will be held in Hangzhou in November. I hope we can win gold there and become world champions.

We are also scheduled to compete at the World Championships next year. The host city has not yet been announced and will be revealed soon. I hope I can compete there and become world champion.

After that, my main goal is to compete at the Olympics and win Olympic gold. It has been said that karate will be included in the 2032 Olympic Games, and my goal is to make it there and win the gold medal.

Given the competition at the international level, how realistic are the

prize in the -55kg class.

However, as Golshadnejad's campaign came to an end in the quarterfinals following a 2-0 loss to Japan's Tsubasa Kama, Saeidabadi defied the odds by securing three emphatic victories to reach the final, including an 8-0 semifinal win over Indonesia's former Asian silver medalist Cok Istri Agung Sanistyarani.

The young prodigy ultimately had to settle for silver following a 6-4 defeat to Malaysia's Adeola Fay Robert – Iran's 10th women's kumite medal since the karate program was first introduced at the Asian Games in Hiroshima in

1994, with Hamdieh Abbasali remaining the country's only female gold medalist in the history of the event.

A world U21 champion in 2024, Saeidabadi might feel hard done by in the final showdown, believing she was denied some clear points by the judges, but does not want to blame the defeat on officiating. Instead, she says she will fight in future competitions in a way that leaves the judges no choice but to award her points.

The karateka has set her sights on competing at the World Championships and Olympic Games and winning gold at both events. She

also believes Iranian women karatekas have the ability to reach the top of the sport globally and could become a major force in world karate if they are given more opportunities to compete internationally.

Speaking to Iran Daily, Saeidabadi discussed her first experience at the Asian Games, the difficulties and controversies surrounding her campaign, her journey into karate in the central Iranian city of Kahrizkuh, the challenges professional athletes face regarding education and their careers, and the prospects for Iranian women's karate on the international stage.



world and Olympic titles for you?

I have some tough rivals. For example, athletes from Egypt and Ukraine are among my main opponents. In my weight category, the champion two years ago was from Egypt, while the Ukrainian representative was the runner-up. They are among my main rivals, but I know I have the ability to overcome them and win gold.

athletes' motivation. I think we will achieve even better results in women's sport in the coming years.

As a female athlete, what is the biggest challenge you face? Are the problems mainly related to facilities, or are there other issues?

There are certainly problems in terms of facilities and other areas, but everyone

focus fully and with peace of mind on sporting success and bringing honor to their country.

What is the current situation regarding financial support for Iran's women's national karate team?

We have a sponsor. Since around March, a mining company in Faryab has been supporting us. As national team mem-

Asian Games medal?

As I took part in different competitions and tested my ability against other athletes, I gradually gained confidence in myself.

I started karate in Kahrizkuh, Kerman Province, and continued my career there. We had very limited facilities in Kahrizkuh. Families even found it difficult to agree to send their daughters into sport. But my family supported me greatly. My coach's words and the beliefs she instilled in us also had a major impact on me.

That support helped me believe that I could succeed and continue on my path.

What about now? Do girls in your city still face the same restrictions from their families when they want to take up sport professionally?

There were more restrictions in the past, but things are much better now. Speaking about my own city, many more girls are now involved in sport and the situation has changed.

The medals won by female athletes have encouraged families and given them greater motivation to send their children into sport.

There must have been many difficult days behind this silver medal. Was there ever a time when fatigue, pressure or obstacles made you consider quitting?

We trained in difficult conditions in Kahrizkuh. It was very hot and our gym did not have adequate cooling facilities. We trained in extreme heat and sometimes even suffered from heat exhaustion because of the heat and sweating.

Nevertheless, our coach motivated us so much that we could not give up or stop training. That motivation and support from our coach helped us enormously to stay in professional sport.

How big is the gap between Iranian women's karate and the world's elite? Can Iran become one of the leading powers in the coming years?

In recent years, Iranian women karatekas have competed in many international competitions and gained valuable experience. Women's sport in Iran has made significant progress.

What I see is that, particularly in karate, our athletes have the ability to reach the highest level in the world. Our karatekas are already very close to their major rivals in international competitions.

I can confidently say that Iranian women karatekas can reach the top of the world, especially with the support currently being provided to women's sport. If we are given more opportunities to compete internationally and gain experience, we can certainly become a major force in world karate in the not-too-distant future.



Iranian karateka Fate-meh-Zahra Saeidabadi (L) is seen in action against Indonesia's Cok Istri Agung Sanistyarani at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games at Toyohashi City General Gymnasium, Toyohashi, Japan, on September 22, 2026.

AINAGOC

When did you join the national team camp ahead of the Asian Games, and what was your route to Nagoya?

We had been in the national team camp since last year. At first, it was not clear who would be selected for the Asian Games, but we continued training. Eventually, the Asian Championships were held, and that competition more or less served as the selection event for the Asian Games. I managed to secure my place in Nagoya.

Women's sport, particularly in martial arts, has made significant progress in the country in recent years. How do you assess this development?

I have personally witnessed this change in recent years. I am still young, but during this period I have seen greater attention being paid to women's sport by the Sports Ministry and the Karate Federation. Our federation president has also recently changed, and more importance is being attached to women's sport.

This attention has led to women winning more medals and has increased

is currently trying to reduce them. One important issue, however, is athletes' education and future.

Like other people our age, we pursue our studies, but we cannot devote as much time to education as we need to because professional sport takes up so much of our time.

At the same time, all athletes are concerned about their future. We may not continue in sport one day, so what do we have to rely on then? I think something needs to be done for athletes competing at the highest and national levels to secure their professional future.

So you believe professional athletes should have career support alongside their sporting careers?

Exactly. Professional athletes should be treated professionally. Athletes who win medals at the highest level should have a job or position they can rely on after ending their professional careers. They should not have to worry about making a living, earning an income, finding a profession or pursuing their education. That would allow them to

bers, we receive support, and it has been very helpful. But if we are no longer members of the national team, naturally we have to cover many of our expenses ourselves.

Are you satisfied with the rewards given to Asian Games medalists?

So far, we have only received the reward from the National Olympic Committee, which has been a good incentive for us. I am grateful and satisfied, but naturally there is a big difference between the reward for a silver medal and that for gold. I think this needs to be reconsidered to provide other athletes with greater motivation as well.

Let's go back to the beginning. Why did you choose karate?

I was in kindergarten, and my karate coach was my kindergarten teacher. I was spotted there by one of the coaches and then went to her club and started karate.

Did you imagine at the time that you would progress so quickly, reach the national team and eventually win an

Ardabil to host Iran's first handicrafts city

Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department of Ardabil has announced the construction of the country's first and largest city dedicated to handicrafts and traditional arts at the Aali-Sara Tourism Complex, also known as Dehkadeh Sangi.

Mohammad Reza Shayeghi said the project is being developed entirely through private-sector investment and is expected to be ready for operation by the end of autumn this year, according to chn.ir.

The Ardabil Carpet and Handicrafts City is being developed with the aim of creating a specialized hub for introducing, showcasing, promoting and expanding the market for the province's handi-

crafts and traditional arts.

The complex covers an area of more than 6,000 square meters. One of its key features is a dedicated exhibition hall with a floor area of approximately 1,000 square meters and a height of more than 10 meters. Designed specifically for exhibitions, the hall will provide suitable space for specialized exhibitions, the presentation of handicrafts and carpets, traditional arts events and related programs.

Shayeghi emphasized the important role of private investment in the development of the project, noting that all funding for its construction has been provided by the private sector. He described the project as an example of the significant potential for non-governmental investment in developing cultural, tourism and handicraft infrastructure in Ardabil Province.

The official added that the launch of the handicrafts city could provide a platform for bringing together artists, craftspeople, producers, retailers and other professionals in the handicrafts sector. It could also create a dedicated destination for tourists and make the introduction and sale of locally produced handicrafts more organized and targeted.

He further said that one of the main objectives of the project is to establish a direct connection between tourists and the local handicraft-producing community. This would allow visitors, in addition to exploring the province's historical and natural attractions, to become familiar firsthand with the art, culture and productive capabilities of the people of Ardabil and purchase locally made handicrafts.



● chn.ir

Haj Rajab-Ali Mosque at risk due to restoration delays

Iranica Desk

The Haj Rajab-Ali Mosque, located in the heart of Tehran's historic Sangelaj neighborhood, is a structure more than a century old featuring valuable tilework and inscriptions. Today, however, the mosque is deteriorating amid cracked walls, structural decay and years of uncertainty over its restoration. Heritage enthusiasts warn that the building, once at the center of a much larger cultural and social complex, could become another lost piece of Sangelaj's historic identity if restoration is delayed further.

According to IRNA, those involved in the activities related to cultural heritage and tourism, say what is happening at the Haj Rajab-Ali Mosque, goes beyond ordinary deterioration and amounts to a historic crisis. When an old building reaches such a critical condition without a sustained support and restoration plan, they argue, fu-



● IRNA

ture generations may have little tangible heritage left to inherit. The neglect reflects a situation in which the perceived value of preserving history has fallen below the cost of restoration. Hamidreza Narenji-Nejad, a tourism advocate, described the condition of the mosque's surviving elements as an ar-

tistic and historical disaster. He pointed to hundreds of remaining fragments of the mosque's historic tiles, which he considers among the building's most remarkable features, as well as the delicate signatures left by the tile craftsmen. These signatures, he said, are now being

gradually lost to erosion and destruction.

Referring to some of the fragments that are barely recognizable, Narenji-Nejad said their delicate nature makes them easy for ordinary visitors to overlook, which in turn leaves them vulnerable to further damage. Some of the tiles are only palm-sized, yet bear the signatures of the artists who created them. Over time, he said, these details have been allowed to fade from view.

For years, efforts by various institutions to find sponsors and donors for the mosque's restoration have reached an impasse. More recently, however, reports have emerged that funding may finally have been allocated to the site. "We repeatedly held talks with the cultural heritage authorities, the Municipality and the Endowments Organization and worked to find a sponsor or donor, but we have yet to see the results," Narenji-Nejad said. "Recently, however, it was announced that the cultural heri-

tage authorities have allocated a budget for the site."

He believes a proper restoration could transform the mosque into a landmark for the Sangelaj neighborhood.

"If this mosque is restored properly, it can become the pride and centerpiece of Saneg-laj neighborhood," he said. "We are dealing not only with a religious site, but with one of Iran's potentially important cultural tourism destinations. If the way forward is cleared, our weekly heritage tours could end here." Narenji-Nejad also highlighted the exceptional quality of the mosque's tilework, saying it compares with that found at some of Iran's most renowned historic monuments.

"The tilework here is on a par with what you see at the Jaame Mosque or the magnificent buildings of Isfahan," he said. "Some of these works are even comparable in delicacy to the tilework of Golestan Palace."

According to him, the mosque once functioned in practice as

a neighborhood congregational mosque and formed part of a much larger social and religious complex. The complex extended from the Dargah neighborhood and included a school, bathhouse, water reservoir and Tekyeh, meeting the community's everyday and spiritual needs.

One of the building's most remarkable engineering features, he said, is the way its architects addressed the orientation of the qibla — the direction of prayer toward Mecca.

Pointing to the mosque's distinctive mihrab, Narenji-Nejad said the building took 17 years to construct. "What is astonishing is that, despite the geographical constraints of the site, the architects used highly precise engineering to align the qibla perfectly with the structure," he said.

He argued that this level of precision demonstrates that the mosque should be viewed not simply as an old building, but as an architectural achievement.

Gerivan women weave memory into wool, color

Iranica Desk

In a corner of North Khorasan Province, where mountains merge with the morning mist and the silence of village life blends with the sound of wind moving through the trees, an ancient art continues to shape the lives of local women while preserving its identity across generations.

In the village of Gerivan, kilim weaving is more than a job or pastime. It is a form of meditation, a silent language and a way of recording memories, brought to life through the woolen warp and weft.

Kilim weaving can be regarded as one of the oldest connections between people and nature. The word "kilim," derived from the Turkic root kil, meaning wool, reflects the close relationship between the craft and the wool-bearing flocks that roam the mountain slopes of the province. Unlike pile carpets, which are formed through numerous knots, kilims emerge from the direct interlacing of warp and weft, combining striking simplicity with profound complexity. There are no formal patterns or maps

here. The weaver is an artist who paints with her mind, engraving designs not on paper but deep within her memory and spirit before turning those visions into reality with every beat of the beater and every movement of the weft.

When Gerivan enters the picture, however, the rules change. Gerivan kilim is the authentic creation of the village's Turkic women, an art in which geometry evolves from a mathematical concept into a language of mysticism and aesthetics. In Gerivan weaving, the world is distilled into three simple yet profoundly meaningful forms: the square, the triangle and the circle.

These geometric forms are woven into the fabric with a combination of delicacy and strength. The designs are neither pictorial nor representational; instead, they are abstract and symbolic, as though each shape expresses a fragment of the weaver's ancient beliefs and understanding of existence. The earliest patterns emerged in the hands of the village's young girls as they prepared decorations for their dowries. This hopeful origin has helped give



● chn.ir

Gerivan kilims a sense of freshness and the vitality of everyday life.

Weaving a Gerivan kilim is an intersection of manual skill and patience. Cotton warp threads and woolen weft provide the structure with strength, but what transforms the piece into an artwork is its distinctive weaving techniques. From slit weaving to Pich-Bafi and Jajim-Bafi, each method adds another

layer of complexity to the textile.

The colors of a Gerivan kilim seem to mirror the landscape of North Khorasan. Deep red evokes the warmth of the sun and the blood of life; blue echoes the sky; camel brown recalls the earth and mountains; and ivory white carries the calm of dawn. Together, these colors create a distinctive harmony that is soothing to the eye and calming to the spirit.

In Gerivan, kilim weaving follows the rhythm of nature. When autumn and winter arrive, the land prepares for rest, and women are freed from the demands of farming and orchard work. Looms are then set up inside their homes. It is a season of turning inward, when, amid the silence of cold nights, the sound of warp and weft becomes more prominent than words and stories.

Gerivan kilims also serve practical purposes in village life, including in the form of saddle bags, while providing an important source of household income. Yet they are far more than utilitarian objects. Each kilim is a unique work in which the weaver's hands, time and the history of a people become intertwined.

The craft has been passed from mother to daughter over generations, with each generation adding new patterns to the tradition while preserving its essential character, as firmly rooted as the trees of the region.

Gerivan kilim is more than a handwoven textile. It is a village's memory book, writing the pages of its history in wool and color.



Iranian films to spotlight cinema made under war at Antalya festival



Arts & Culture Desk

Three Iranian films will be screened in a special section of the Antalya Golden Orange International Film Festival devoted to filmmakers working under war and occupation. The section, "Roots, Light and Camera", brings together films from Iran, Lebanon, Ukraine and Palestine. It highlights filmmakers who have continued to make films despite conflict and difficult working conditions. The Iranian selection includes "No Sight No Sound", directed by Yazdan Tabrizi and produced

by Hossein Bozorgzadegan. The film will have its international premiere at the festival. Also selected is the short film "Out of Tune", directed by Vahid Mazraeh and produced by Sam Shojaei. "Hanieh", another Iranian short, is directed by Ali Andarz and produced by Taha Khanjani. The three films will be internationally distributed by White Dreams Film, which is managed by Mastaneh Mohajer. The special section brings together films from countries where war and occupation have directly affected the lives

and work of filmmakers. The program presents cinema as a way to keep telling stories and expressing experiences despite those conditions. The 63rd Antalya Golden Orange International Film Festival will be held in Antalya from Oct. 24 to Oct. 30. The festival, established in 1963, is one of Turkey's longest-running film events. The selection gives the three Iranian productions an opportunity to reach audiences outside Iran while placing them within a program focused on filmmaking under pressure.

Huge Castle registered as national heritage site

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has registered the 22-hectare Kalfir Castle in northwestern East Azerbaijan as a national heritage site, recognizing a large military compound whose star-shaped layout reflects Qajar-era defense architecture and possible links to the Russo-Persian Wars. The castle, in Ahar, has four pentagonal towers at its corners, with geometric extensions forming a star-shaped plan. The design served defensive and surveillance purposes and shows the influence of European military methods on Qajar-era fortifications, said Ahmad Hamzehzadeh, director general of East Azerbaijan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Historical evidence places the castle in the period of the Russo-Persian Wars. Given the military presence and activities of Qajar Crown Prince Abbas Mirza in the region, the complex may have been used to support or station troops. Its exact role, however, has not been firmly established and requires further historical and archaeological study. The castle's 22-hectare footprint also provides scope for studying the organization of military defenses, troop deployment and changes in the region over time. The national registration provides a stronger basis for research, conservation and protection. But parts of the castle and surrounding area have already been affected by agricultural activity, with trenches and other defensive structures damaged.



Protecting the site's boundaries and buffer zone is therefore a priority. Archaeological surveys are also needed to identify surviving remains and historical layers and to guide future conservation. The exact year of construction and the identity of its builder have not been established by reliable historical evidence. Further research could help clarify the castle's role and significance in Iran's military architectural history.

Iranian cinemas draw over 6.58m spectators despite war

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian cinemas drew 6.58 million spectators in the first half of the Persian calendar year, despite wartime conditions, while box-office receipts topped 8.25tn rials (nearly \$3.1 million). The figures, recorded by the Cinema Sales and Screening Management System (SAMFA), cover the six months to Sept. 22. The period followed the start of a war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28, Mehr News Agency reported on Tuesday. Attendance picked up sharply toward the end of the period. September was the busiest month, drawing more than 2.23 million spectators. Kourosh Cinema Complex led the country with more than 365,000 spectators. Iran Mall Cinema Complex followed with more than 287,000, while



Hedish Cinema ranked third with more than 190,000. The Death Bath, directed by Kazem Daneshi, was the most-watched film, drawing more than 1.25 million spectators. The Pool, directed by Soroush Sehat, came next with more than 1.16 million. Adventure on James Bond Island, directed by Bahman Goodarzi, ranked third with more than 754,000 spectators.

When algorithm replaces ...

START II (1993) never entered into force, while START III was never signed and remained at the stage of proposals and negotiations. New START, the final link in this chain, expired on February 5, 2026, leaving, for the first time since 1972, no legally binding ceiling on the US and Russian strategic arsenals. The arms control architecture of the Cold War has effectively collapsed. This collapse is not accidental. When the principal balancer of the order is no longer the bomb alone, treaties that only counted bombs lose their relevance. The question is: What is the new balancer?

Every technological leap, a new order

History offers a fairly clear answer to this question. Whenever a technological leap has entered the arena, it has disrupted the balance of power and pushed the international order toward a new configura-

tion. Gunpowder made feudal fortresses obsolete and gave rise to centralized states. Steam power and electricity replaced land-based power with industrial power. Air power broke through the boundaries of the battlefield. The internet turned information into a field of competition. Artificial intelligence is now making inroads simultaneously into the economy, military, information, education and governance, and this reach is broader than that of any previous technological leap. Chinese scholars such as Yan Xuetong, one of the country's leading international relations theorists, argue that the turning point in the transformation of the international order in our time will come through competition over digital technologies. If that is the case, the question is not whether AI will reshape the order, but who will rein it in and how.

Washington moment

The news of the end of the

Trump-Xi meeting should be read through this very question. According to the White House, the two sides agreed to establish a "US-China dialogue on superintelligence" to exchange views on its risks and benefits, as well as to launch a dedicated "bilateral communication channel" for AI-related incidents. The idea for the channel was put forward by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng: if either side identifies an AI-related incident that threatens national security, such as a cyberattack or a biological risk, it would notify the other side. Xi also stressed that the two countries share a responsibility to keep the technology "under human control." Let's be honest: this agreement still has no ceiling and no counting mechanism. Reports have also emphasized the absence of a major substantive agreement on tariffs, rare earths and chips. Critics argue that the channel is more

akin to the direct hotline established in 1963 following the Cuban Missile Crisis than to SALT I. But that very resemblance to the hotline is itself part of the argument. SALT I was not a comprehensive ceiling either. It was an interim agreement that froze the number of launchers at existing levels and paved the way for subsequent negotiations. Its significance lay not in the numbers, but in the "moment of recognition." The two rivals acknowledged that an unrestrained race over nuclear bombs capable of determining the balance of power would hurt both sides. Precisely this logic was reproduced in Washington in 2026: what came to the table was not a race over development, but a mechanism for control. And what is noteworthy is that, unlike any previous technological agreement, the two sides are discussing how and to what extent to constrain an emerging technology before it reaches full maturity.

Order taking shape

If "AI SALT I" succeeds, the order that emerges from it will be fundamentally different from the previous one. It will have three characteristics. First, it will be post-bipolar. The bomb concentrated power in two poles, but AI is a multi-layered technology: chips, data, algorithms, computing infrastructure and human expertise each create a separate center of power. Instead of a single pole, we will face multiple centers of power, with different actors occupying positions within each of them. Second, it will be post-human. Robots and intelligent systems will play decisive roles in economic, military and information-related decision-making. The role of humans will shift from executors to framework designers and overseers. China's leader's emphasis on keeping AI "under human control" shows that this concern has moved from academic circles into the leaders' negotiating

room. Third, it will be post-Western. The growth of digital technologies and AI in non-American and non-European countries is breaking the West's historic monopoly over rule-setting. SALT I was written by two European-descended powers; this time, one of the signatories is in the East, while middle powers and developing countries will ultimately seek a share as well. SALT I consolidated the bipolar order and gave the world several decades of relative stability. It is still too early to know whether what began in Washington will lead to SALT II or, like it, stall somewhere along the way. But one thing is clear: the new balancer of the global order has acquired a name and an identity. The difference is that this time, the subject of negotiations is not a warhead that can be counted, but an algorithm that is changing every day. And perhaps that is the hardest and most consequential difference between the two orders.