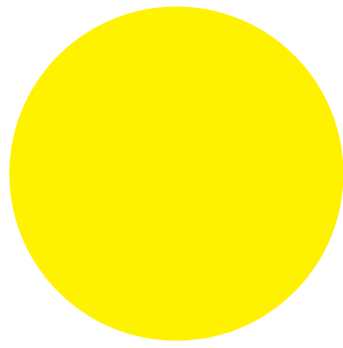


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Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd outlines her ministry's priorities in a press conference in Tehran, Iran on March 4, 2025. **FARS**

Trump's showpiece diplomacy at dead end

By Ebrahim Rezaei
Iranian lawmaker

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Trump administration is facing seven crises at once: domestic turmoil, tensions with neighbors Canada and Mexico, a widening rift with Europe, the war in Ukraine, challenges in West Asia, hostilities with Iran, and a fierce rivalry with China. At the heart of all these crises, however, lies the economy.

Trump has banked on putting America's short-term economic interests first, believing that this approach will somehow keep everything under control. His sights are set on Europe—not in the name of defending democracy, but to chip away at the trade deficit and turn the continent into a dependent market.

Washington's contradictory support for Ukraine ties into this very strategy—it's less about countering Russia and more about undermining the European Union while tightening its grip on Ukraine's mineral resources, which are crucial in the economic showdown with China. Yet, European leaders still have not caught on. They fail to see that this war is not just about weakening Russia—it is about crippling Europe's economic future.

Trump is racing against time, desperately trying to tick off six other crises from his to-do list so he can zero in on China—the economic giant that poses a direct threat to America's dominance in global finance and technology. His all-out tariff war against Beijing is a clear reflection of this obsession. However, he is kidding himself if he thinks tariffs and economic pressure alone will be enough to rein in China. The reality is that the world is no longer a one-horse race but a multipolar arena. The traditional US allies—from Europe to Japan—are no longer willing to blindly fall in line.

What Trump also fails to grasp is that the America of today is a paper tiger—a superpower weighed down by astronomical debt, deep social divisions, and a hegemony that is on its last legs.

It is fair to say the honeymoon phase of Trump's showpiece diplomacy is over. Europe is waking up to the fact that sticking to NATO and clinging to the dollar will only erode its sovereignty. France and Germany, in particular, are gradually coming around to the need for an independent European military and a stronger euro. Meanwhile, China has dodged the tariff war trap by doubling down on technology investment and forging new alliances.

And yet, Trump remains stuck in a world of paperwork and empty blueprints, failing to see that in 2025, the unraveling of American power will make each crisis harder to handle than the last. The US is now caught in a web of overlapping crises that will swallow its 1990s-era dominance like a whirlpool—dragging down the very hegemony it once took for granted.



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After Trump's dispute with Zelenskyy

Three divides, three scenarios for Europe, US

ANALYSIS

As tensions between Washington and Europe reach new heights, the latest rift over Ukraine exposes three major fault lines—financial support, NATO's future, and the path to peace. Trump's push for negotiations with Russia clashes with Europe's commitment to standing firm against Moscow, leaving NATO at a crossroads. Will Europe strengthen its military independence, or will US pressure force it back into alignment? Could growing transatlantic tensions weaken NATO itself? With uncertainty looming, three possible futures emerge, each carrying profound consequences for global power dynamics. One thing is certain—Europe and the US are no longer on the same page. **See page 5 >**

Iranian illustrators nominated for 2025 Bratislava Biennial

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Russia voices readiness to help resolve Iran-US disputes amid 'Putin's mediation bid'

International Desk

The Kremlin spokesman expressed Russia's readiness to help Iran and the United States resolve their disputes through negotiations as American media reported that Moscow had agreed to assist US President Donald Trump's administration in talks with Tehran over its nuclear program and its alleged support for regional anti-American resistance groups. Dmitry Peskov told Bloomberg that "Russia believes the US and Iran should resolve all issues through negotiations" and that Moscow "is ready to do everything in its power to achieve this."

Bloomberg's sources also said Russian President Vladimir Putin had agreed to mediate talks between Trump and Tehran during a phone call with his US counterpart on February 12. On February 18, senior officials from the Trump administration discussed the matter with their Russian counterparts during talks in Saudi Arabia.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov made a one-day visit to Tehran last week and held talks with Iranian officials over a range of issues, including Iran's nuclear program.

When asked whether Russia had offered to mediate between Tehran and Washington, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman responded that it is normal for countries to extend such offers. "Given the importance of these matters, it is entirely possible that many parties will show goodwill and willingness to help resolve various issues. From this perspective, it is natural for countries to offer assistance if needed," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said.

In 2015, Iran reached a nuclear deal with Britain, Germany, France, the United States, Russia and China, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US quit the agreement in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as US president, and Iran began moving away from its

nuclear-related commitments under the deal.

The US unilateral withdrawal from the agreement and re-imposition of sanctions removed under the deal left the future of the JCPOA in limbo.

However, Iran has been trying to revive the JCPOA during the past years and have held several rounds of talks with the European parties to the deal, which their non-compliance to the agreement had a great impact on the implementation of the agreement.

There have been speculations on new negotiations between Tehran and Washington on Iran's peaceful nuclear program in recent months, especially after Trump's return to power in the United States in January.

However, Trump's language of threats and imposition of sanctions against Iran have made Iranian officials skeptical of negotiations with the US.

Trump last month restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran which includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to



Dmitry Peskov
AP

zero. Iranian officials say that negotiations under pressure are not meaningful. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali

Khamenei said in February that talks with the US were "not smart, wise, or honorable". Khamenei criticized Trump's past administration for not honoring its JCPOA promises.

"Negotiating with America is neither smart, wise, nor honorable. It will not solve any of our problems. The reason? Experience!" Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Iran summons Turkish envoy to protest 'false statements'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Turkey's ambassador on Monday to protest recent remarks by the Turkish foreign minister against Iran's regional policy.

Iran Foreign Ministry's Director General for the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe Mahmoud Heydari warned Turkey's Ambassador in Iran Hicabi Kirlangic that "false statements" could lead to tension between the two neighboring countries.

"The common interests of the two countries and the sensitivity of regional conditions require avoiding wrongful comments and unreal analyses that could lead to differences and tensions in our bilateral relations," Heydari said.

In an interview with Al Jazeera late last month, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Iran risked plunging West Asia into "disorder."

"If this policy continues, I don't think it will be good," Fidan said, accusing Iran of seeking to "create disorder" in the region.

"If you are trying to sow chaos in a third country, other countries can also follow suit by supporting groups in your own country," Turkey's foreign minister added.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman also reacted to the Fidan's remarks earlier on Monday.

"We highly value our bilateral re-



lations with Turkey. Unfortunately, the words repeatedly heard (from Turkey) were highly unconstructive, and it was necessary for Iran to decisively and clearly state its position in that regard," Esmail Baqaei said.

"Perhaps it is necessary for our Turkish friends to think more about the Zionist regime's (Israel) policy in Syria and the region."

Meanwhile, a senior advisor to Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei strongly criticized Fidan's remarks, warning Ankara against repeating such unfounded allegations that could harm long-standing regional relations.

Ali Akbar Velayati asserted that the Islamic Republic would not allow any country to undermine its deep-rooted and historic regional ties through irresponsible statements.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always adhered to a policy of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We expect Turkish officials to uphold diplomatic decorum and refrain from making baseless accusations," he stressed. The high-ranking advisor emphasized that Iran was a powerful nation with an ancient civilization and had consistently worked to promote regional security and cooperation.

The official further underlined the Islamic Republic's regional standing, warning Turkey against misjudging the country's position and strength in the region.

"If some figures in Turkey believe that by echoing incorrect stances influenced by foreign powers they can weaken Iran's standing in the region, they are gravely mistaken," he said.

Hamas terms disarmament as 'red line' amid Gaza truce impasse

International Desk

Hamas leader Sami Abu Zuhri said Tuesday that disarming is a red line for his movement and other Palestinian resistance groups engaged in negotiations to extend the Gaza cease-fire.

"Any talk about the resistance's weapons is nonsense. The resistance's weapons are a red line for Hamas and all resistance factions," Abu Zuhri said shortly after Israeli foreign minister Gideon Saar demanded the "full demilitarization" of Gaza to proceed to the second stage of the January truce.

Speaking at a news conference in the occupied al-Quds, Saar said Israel's conditions for proceeding to stage two of the cease-fire are Gaza's full demilitarization and the return of captives.

"We don't have an agreement on phase two," said Saar. "We demand total demilitarization of Gaza - Hamas and Islamic Jihad - and give us our hostages. If they agree to that we can implement tomorrow."

Hamas also urged Arab leaders Tuesday to "thwart" the relocation of Palestinians from Gaza as they meet in Cairo to counter US President Donald Trump's widely condemned proposal.

"We look forward to an effective Arab role that ends the humanitarian tragedy cre-



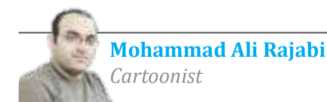
ated by the occupation in the Gaza Strip... and thwarts the (Israeli) occupation's plans to displace (Palestinians)," a statement by the group said.

Arab leaders gathered in Cairo on Tuesday to discuss an alternative to Trump's proposal for a US takeover of the war-battered territory and the relocation of its inhabitants to Egypt and Jordan.

The meeting came amid deadlock between Hamas and Israel over next steps in a fragile January 19 cease-fire in Gaza.

After the first phase of the truce ended over the weekend without agreement on how to continue, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced a halt to "all entry of goods and supplies" into the territory.

Israel's "closure of the Gaza Strip crossings for the third consecutive day, and its prevention of the entry of aid and goods, represents a Zionist insistence on violating the cease-fire agreement, and a clear war crime," Hamas said in its statement.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranian court sentences ex-ministers to jail over corruption

An Iranian court sentenced two former ministers to prison over a multi-billion-dollar corruption case involving imported tea, the Judiciary said Tuesday. The case, known in Iran as the Debsh Tea Scandal, opened in 2023 and implicated more than 60 people, involving a total of \$3.7 billion, the Iran Newspaper reported in May, citing the country's chief justice.

Forty-two defendants were sentenced in the case, including former agriculture minister Javad Sadatinejad and former industry minister Reza Fatemi Amin, said Mizan Online, the judiciary's news

outlet.

Sadatinejad received a one-year sentence, while Fatemi Amin was handed two years for their roles in the scandal, Mizan reported.

The pair, who served under late president Ebrahim Raisi, were convicted of complicity in disrupting the country's economic system, with the sentences deemed "final and binding."

The court also sentenced Akbar Rahimi-Darabad, the chief executive of Debsh Tea company, to 66 years in prison for various crimes, including disrupting Iran's economy, smuggling foreign

currency and bribery.

Rahimi-Darabad was ordered to repay over \$2.38 billion in smuggled funds and a fine of \$1.5 billion.

Under Iranian law, jail sentences run concurrently, meaning Rahimi-Darabad would serve 25 years for the longest of his convictions.

In April 2023, lawmakers impeached Fatemi Amin over soaring car prices.

That same month, Sadatinejad was sacked from his position. In May 2024, he was sentenced to three years on another corruption case involving animal feed imports.

Rasht-Astara railway project proceeding with full force: Roads minister

'Indians will not leave Chabahar'



Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd outlines her ministry's priorities in a press conference in Tehran on March 4, 2025.
● FARS

Economy Desk

Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd stated that numerous meetings have over the past six months been held with Russian and Azerbaijani officials to advance the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a key component of which is the completion of the Rasht-Astara railway project. During her first press conference on Tuesday, Sadeq-Malvajerd outlined the

ministry's priorities, emphasizing the need to adhere to constitutional laws, the Seventh Development Plan, and annual budget regulations. She highlighted the importance of transparency in operations, ensuring accurate information is shared with the public and oversight bodies. Sadeq-Malvajerd also stressed the significance of justice in various sectors, including access to rural roads, flights, housing—particularly for the underprivileged—and diverse housing pro-

grams. Regarding the INSTC, she noted that legal concerns over contracts had been raised, and ambiguities were communicated to the Russian side as the Russians insisted on completing land acquisition before proceeding with technical studies. Sadeq-Malvajerd confirmed that land acquisition along the route will be finalized by the end of next Iranian year (March 20, 2026), and Russia has agreed to conduct technical studies simultane-

ously. She assured that funding for the railway fleet and infrastructure remains intact, and the project is progressing with increased momentum. "Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev has also emphasized the project's importance, securing a guarantee of 5 million tons of transit from Russia, with expectations to increase this to 15 million tons annually." A 2025 transportation cooperation roadmap with Russia has been approved, which includes expanding existing capacities and completing additional corridors.

Warning on overcharging airline ticket prices

Sadeq-Malvajerd warned airlines against selling tickets above approved rates, stating that violators will have their licenses revoked. The Civil Aviation Organization of Iran (CAOI) has been instructed to monitor ticket prices and take action against offenders. She attributed most flight delays during the Nowruz holidays to weather, safety, and security issues, emphasizing that passenger rights must be upheld in all other cases. Airlines failing to meet obligations may face license cancellations.

Tehran-Isfahan high-speed rail project

Sadeq-Malvajerd pointed to the Tehran-Isfahan high-speed rail project, noting that while Chinese financing was initially at risk of being canceled and reallocated, the ministry's efforts have secured the funding. She said the ministry is now working to activate post-financing resources and is optimistic about leveraging asset productivity.

Chabahar Port

In response to questions about India's presence in Chabahar, Sadeq-Malvajerd confirmed that India will not leave the port, and operations will continue as usual. Sadeq-Malvajerd also acknowledged the unpredictability of housing project costs due to inflation and rising material prices, noting that the ministry does not regulate utility rates. However, support packages are being developed to assist citizens. She mentioned efforts to expedite banking facilities, particularly through the Housing Bank, which has accelerated payments in recent months. The ministry is working to connect eligible individuals—over 1.7 million people—to the banking system for housing loans. The minister acknowledged an imbalance in the rail fleet and stressed the need to address it promptly, with private sector involvement playing a key role.

GDP improved under Pezeshkian gov't, CBI subsidiary finds

Economy Desk

The growth of Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) in the three months leading to Dey 1403 (September 22-December 20, 2024), the early months of President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, reached 1.7% compared to the same period last year, which marks an increase from the estimated growth of 1.2% in the fall, according to a report by IRNA. Despite inflationary pressures, international sanctions, political turbulence, and energy sector shortages, the government's efforts to sustain economic growth and investment are evident. However, achieving the targeted 8% annual growth outlined in the Seventh Development Plan (2024-28) remains a long-term challenge. While Iran's economy remains heavily reliant on oil revenues, other sectors also play a significant role in economic growth. Addressing energy imbalances, injecting liquidity into production units, finding export markets for domestic products, and improving macroeconomic indicators such as reducing inflation, maintaining monetary discipline, and cutting budget deficits could mitigate some of the challenges posed by sanctions on Iran's oil industry. Accurate and timely statistical data are crucial for economic decision-making and policy formulation. The Monetary and Banking Research Institute recently published a report on Iran's economic growth in the three months leading to Dey 1403, analyzing the impact of the Pezeshkian administration's economic policies on GDP

growth. The report indicates that despite political and economic challenges, the government has managed to stabilize the economy to some extent. The report utilized monthly transaction data from 281 industries, Iran's foreign trade data, and road transportation data. Oil sector activity was estimated using data on crude oil and petroleum product production. The nominal value of retail and wholesale transactions grew by 35% in the three months leading to Dey 1403 compared to the same period last year. Adjusted for inflation, real transaction values increased roughly in line with price growth. However, growth in Dey was 39% compared to the same period last year, higher than in previous months.

Transportation and real estate

The value of transportation transactions grew by 17.6% in the three months leading to Dey, indicating reduced activity in this subsector. Heavy vehicle traffic on roads, which grew by 3.1% in the first half of the year, turned negative in the fall, reaching -3.2%. By Dey, this decline worsened to -5.7%. The nominal value of transactions in real estate sales, management, and leasing grew by 62% in the summer of 1403, up from 6% in the first three months of the year. Growth in the fall was 55%, but it declined to 39% in Dey. Despite a 40% inflation rate in the housing sector, the positive growth in real estate activities contributed to overall service sector growth, though the trend is declining.



Financial, industry and oil sector

The nominal value of financial sector transactions grew by 1.2% in the first three months of the year compared to the same period last year. By the second quarter of 1403, growth surged to over 60%. In the fall, transaction values more than doubled compared to the same period last year, showing significant growth alongside the real estate sector. The industry and mining sector's activity index declined by 1.7% in the three months leading to Dey 1403 compared to the same period last year, unchanged from the fall. The Central Bank of Iran reported 1.7% value-added growth in the summer, lower than in the spring. The negative growth trend is expected to continue into the winter. The oil sector's activity index grew by 4.3% in the three months leading to Dey, down from 11.8% in the summer, indicating a declining trend. The Central Bank reported 8.8% value-added growth in the oil sector in the summer of 1403. According to the US Energy In-

formation Administration (EIA), Iran's crude oil production grew by 6.7% in the last quarter of 2024 compared to the same period last year. Growth in the first nine months of 2024 was 18.8%, showing a slowdown. OPEC data indicates a 3.3% growth in Iran's oil production in January 2025 compared to the same period last year.

Other indices

Agricultural production grew by 2.1% in the three months leading to Dey 1403, up from 1.9% in the summer. The Central Bank reported 2.8% growth in the summer, showing an upward trend compared to the spring. Unlike the previous water year (ending in Shahrivar 1403), rainfall in the first four months of the new water year (Mehr to Azar) was below the same period last year. If this trend continues, agricultural growth in 1403 may remain positive, but it could decline in the following year due to reduced rainfall. Based on growth estimates across sectors, GDP growth in the three months leading to Dey 1403 is estimated at 1.7%, slightly higher than the 1.2% growth in the fall.

Oil minister: Energy shortages linked to 8% rise in household consumption

Economy Desk

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad attributed the current energy sector shortages to an 8% increase in household consumption and past imbalances. He emphasized the need for proper management of power plants' fuel mix to compensate for reduced gas supply. Speaking at Tuesday's public session of Parliament, Paknejad responded to questions from Qom representative Mohammad-Manan Raeisi and 59 other lawmakers regarding fuel deficits and negligence in power plants, IRNA reported. He stated that the energy imbalance is not the result of decisions made in the past three months, three years, or even six years, but rather the outcome of policies and actions taken by relevant energy institutions over the past three decades. Paknejad cited limitations and structural issues in the oil sector as contributing factors. He referenced a letter from former oil minister Javad Owji to the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) on May 1, 2024, which highlighted fuel supply challenges. While the letter's contents are classified, Paknejad revealed that it emphasized the need to compensate for gas shortages by increasing mazut consumption in power plants. The minister noted that the letter outlined a plan and request-



Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad speaks at a public session of Parliament, responding to questions regarding fuel storage on March 4, 2025.
● SHANA

ed the SNSC's approval for mazut usage in power plants. He stressed that the gas shortage was evident early in the year, and the previous administration's oil sector had proposed solutions, including mazut consumption. Paknejad explained that in 1402, gas exports to Turkey were halted for four months, freeing up 3.6 billion cubic meters of gas for domestic use, including power plants. However, in the current Iranian year, household, commercial, and industrial gas consumption increased by 8% compared to the previous year. To address the gas supply shortfall, Paknejad called for better management of power plants' fuel mix, which includes gas, diesel, and mazut. He noted that mazut usage should be increased up to a specified limit, as outlined by the Supreme National Security Council.

London summit: Show of unity or growing transatlantic rifts?

ANALYSIS The London summit, which was held on March 2 with the participation of leaders from Europe, NATO, and Ukraine, once again brought out the growing disagreements between Europe and the United States over supporting Ukraine. The meeting, which focused on continuing military and financial aid to Kyiv, also set the stage for new tensions in transatlantic relations.

The London summit, hosted by the UK, included 18 European countries as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. During the meeting, the emphasis was put on continuing support for Ukraine, with European countries pledging new packages of military and economic aid. However, the meeting took place without a representative from the United States, which itself highlights the deep divide between Europe's approach and the new policies of the White House under the leadership of Donald Trump. The summit had some key points, including Europe's emphasis on strong support for Ukraine and the formulation of long-term security guarantees, an increase in Europe's defense budget and a reduction in dependence on the United States, differing views on how to deal with Russia, and the absence of an American representative and concerns over Washington's reduced support for NATO and Ukraine.

Key statements by European officials

Donald Tusk, the prime minister of Poland, at the London summit, stressed that "the West has no intention of capitulating" before Russia and warned that any retreat in the face of Moscow could lead to the weakening of Europe's overall security. He added, "Everything must be done to ensure that Europe and the United States speak with one voice."

Tusk also clarified that Ukraine needs ongoing support and a strong position before negotiating with Russia, and any peace must be based on conditions that guarantee Ukraine's long-term security.

Viktor Orbán, the prime minister of Hungary, contrary to many European leaders, expressed concern over the continuation of the war in Ukraine and described the London summit as "dangerous". He stated that "European leaders decided in London today that they want to go on with the war instead of opting for peace," and he considered this move a mistake. The Hungarian PM emphasized that his country is in favor of peace negotiations and seeks a solution to quickly end the war without continuing military conflicts.

Mark Rutte, NATO secretary-general, announced at the London summit that some European countries have drawn up plans to increase defense spending and described this as "very good news". He said, "Europe must take more responsibility for its own security."

In response to concerns about reduced American support for Ukraine, the NATO secretary-general clarified that "Washington remains committed to NATO," but European countries must act more independently in developing their defense capabilities.

Due to necessity or American pressure?

One of the key outcomes of the



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (from 3rd R) and other leaders participating in the London Summit on Ukraine leave the stage after taking a group photo on March 2, 2025.
● EPA

London summit was the emphasis by European countries on increasing defense budgets and beefing up the military. NATO secretary-general announced plans to increase military spending, and Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, called for rapid European rearmament.

Why has Europe turned to increasing defense spending? The reasons for the shift towards higher defense spending can be found in three main issues.

1. Trump's pressure: The US president has repeatedly asked NATO members to contribute more to military spending.

2. Concerns over NATO's future: With escalating disagreements, Europe is worried that America might back out of its commitments to NATO.

3. The Russian threat: Europe does not want to remain defense-

less against Moscow without American support, hence it is moving towards strengthening its own forces.

However, the increase in military spending will put significant economic pressure on European countries, and some, like Hungary, strongly oppose it.

Divide deeper than ever

After the tense meeting between Trump and Zelenskyy at the White House, it became clear that the White House is looking to reduce support for Ukraine and focus on negotiations with Russia. In contrast, Europe still emphasizes the continuation of the war and pressure on the Kremlin. However, the main disagreements between Europe and America can be explored in three issues.

1. Financial and military support for Ukraine: Trump has spoken

out about reducing American aid to Ukraine, while Europe wants to increase support.

2. NATO's role: Europe is concerned that Washington might reduce its role in NATO and weaken the alliance.

3. The path to peace: Trump is seeking a quick agreement with Russia, but Europe is worried about an imposed and unstable peace.

At the London summit, European leaders tried to send a strong message to Washington that they do not intend to leave Ukraine alone, but the absence of America at this meeting has made the future of transatlantic cooperation even more uncertain.

Europe inching toward strategic independence?

One of the outcomes of the London summit was the emphasis on Europe's security indepen-

dence and reducing dependence on America. France and Germany proposed strengthening military cooperation and even sharing nuclear weapons, but this issue still faces opposition.

Europe's military independence faces challenges, including the need for massive investments, the traditional dependence of European countries on American military support, and differing views among European countries on the future path of defense.

However, the London summit showed that Europe is moving towards a more independent role in global security, even if this process is slow.

Future of Europe-America relations

The London summit, instead of strengthening the alliance between Europe and America, emphasized the existing divides. While Europe is trying to play a more prominent role in the Ukraine crisis, America is distancing itself from its traditional commitments.

Therefore, after this meeting, several scenarios could unfold.

1. Strengthening Europe's military independence: If Europe can deliver on its promises, we might see a more Europe-centric NATO.

2. America's return to its commitments: If pressure on Washington increases, the White House might continue its support for Ukraine.

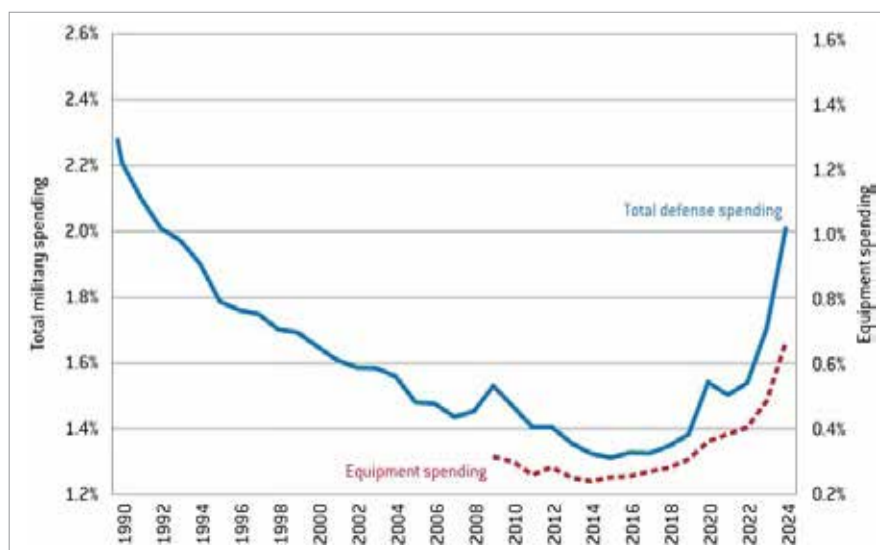
3. Escalation of disagreements and weakening of NATO: If tensions continue, NATO might face structural changes or even a survival crisis.

Ultimately, the London summit showed that the future of transatlantic relations is more uncertain than ever, and the Ukraine crisis is just one of the factors intensifying this divide.

The article first appeared in Persian on Tasnim.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer (R) speaks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as the latter arrives for a summit on Ukraine at Lancaster House in London on March 2, 2025.
● CHRISTOPHE ENA/POOL



The chart shows the defense spending of the 27 members of the EU from 1989 to 2024 as a percentage of GDP.
● bruegel.org



At the London summit, European leaders tried to send a strong message to Washington that they do not intend to leave Ukraine alone, but the absence of America at this meeting has made the future of transatlantic cooperation even more uncertain.

After Trump's dispute with Zelenskyy

Three divides, three scenarios for Europe, US

ANALYSIS The tension at the recent meeting between the presidents of the United States and Ukraine in the White House has raised questions about the future of US relations with its European partners, particularly regarding the war in Ukraine. In light of these questions, analysts have developed transatlantic scenarios.

The war in Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, remains one of the most complex geopolitical crises of the current century. This conflict has not only turned Ukraine into a bloody battleground but has also put the unity of the Western world to a severe test.

From the outset of the war, the US and European countries, especially through NATO and the European Union, have supported Kyiv with substantial aid categorized as military, financial, and humanitarian. By the end of 2024, the US had allocated over \$56 billion in military assistance to Ukraine, while the European Union and its member states had provided approximately €90 billion.

However, US President Donald Trump claimed during his recent meeting with his French counterpart at the White House that "The United States has put up far more aid for Ukraine than any other nation, hundreds of billions of dollars." "We've spent more than \$300 billion, and Europe has spent about \$100 billion. That's a big difference," Trump said.

This transatlantic cooperation has not remained unified. Differences in priorities and strategic viewpoints between the US and Europe have repeatedly led to tensions, which have manifested at various times. With Trump's rise to the presidency in January 2025, these disagreements entered a new phase. The peak of these tensions became evident on February 28, 2025, in the White House, when a meeting between Trump, Marco Rubio, and J.D. Vance with Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine, which was supposed to result in an agreement on Ukrainian mineral resources, turned into an unprecedented public dispute. This incident not only strained US-Ukraine relations but also revealed deeper differences with Europe.

Main disagreements between US, Europe

With Trump's return to power in January 2025, the US approach to the war in Ukraine has changed significantly, exacerbating differences with Europe. These discrepancies can be examined along three main axes:

Strategic objectives: The Joe Biden administration viewed the war in Ukraine as part of a global rivalry with Russia, aiming for the long-term weakening of Moscow. In contrast, Trump has adopted a more pragmatic approach, seeking a quick end to the war through negotiations with Russia, even if it means conceding to Putin. This position was clearly articulated during the February 28 meeting, when Trump told Zelenskyy, "You're either going to make a deal or we're out, and if we're out, you'll fight it out, and I don't think it's going to be pretty." He also accused Zelenskyy of leading the world towards World War III by continuing the war. Meanwhile, Europe, particularly countries like France and Estonia, emphasizes the importance of preserving Ukraine's territorial integrity and preventing a strategic victo-



A worker adjusts the US and EU flags before the arrival of European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and then-US secretary of state Antony Blinken during the EU-US Energy Council Ministerial meeting at the European Council building in Brussels on April 4, 2023. ● VIRGINIA MAYO/AP

ry for Russia. Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, stated after this meeting that any leniency towards Russia jeopardizes European security. This difference in perspective highlights a profound divide between US and European priorities.

Military support and its nature: Under Biden, the US took the lead in sending advanced weapons, such as ATACMS missiles and HIMARS systems, while encouraging Europe to increase military support. However, as evidenced in the February 28 meeting, the Trump administration has shown less inclination to continue this trend. J.D. Vance told Zelenskyy during the meeting that Ukraine lacks the manpower to utilize additional weaponry and should turn to diplomacy instead. This statement drew a sharp response from Zelenskyy, who urged Vance to visit Ukraine and witness the reality. In contrast, following this incident, Europe reinforced its commitment to escalating military aid. Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, announced that additional funding would be allocated for sending weapons to Kyiv. This contrast indicates that Europe is taking a more aggressive approach compared to the more conservative stance of the new US administration.

Sanction policies and diplomacy:

The Biden administration imposed extensive sanctions on Russia and urged Europe to act in concert. However, in recent weeks, Trump has proposed reducing sanctions as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Putin, an idea that has faced strong opposition from Europe. The French president and other European leaders have emphasized that maintaining sanctions is vital for exerting pressure on Russia, especially following reports in February 2025 of North Korean forces entering the war alongside Russia. The difference in diplomatic approaches, particularly after the February 28 meeting where Vance called diplomacy the only solution, has deepened the rift between the US and Europe.

When US was pulling Europe along

Last Friday's meeting in the White House marked a turning point in showcasing the differences between Europe and Trump's America regarding the war in Ukraine. What was intended to lead to the signing of a mineral agreement between the US and Ukraine quickly devolved into a public dispute. Vance told Zelenskyy that Ukraine no longer has the capacity to continue the war and should be grateful for US

assistance, to which Zelenskyy responded angrily, saying, "Come to Ukraine and see for yourself." Trump, interrupting Zelenskyy, accused him of "disrespect," stating that he needs to be more grateful; "You don't have the cards right now." The tension escalated to the point where the press conference was canceled, and Zelenskyy was forced to leave the White House. This incident triggered an immediate response from Europe, with Macron and Kallas expressing their strong support for Zelenskyy and emphasizing the need to increase aid.

Even during Joe Biden's presidency, there were disagreements between the US and Europe regarding the management of the war and support for the Ukrainian military. For instance, in January 2023, Germany reluctantly sent Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine after US pressure. Additionally, in June 2024, Macron's proposal to send NATO troops to Ukraine faced opposition from both the US and Germany, highlighting Europe's greater caution in response to the more aggressive US approach under Biden. However, with the shift in US policy under Trump's leadership, this dynamic has reversed.

Where are transatlantic relations headed?

The recent disputes in the White House, the cancellation of the mineral agreement, and the open tensions with the Trump administration have weakened Kyiv's trust in unconditional US support. After leaving the White House, Zelenskyy wrote on X, "Thank you, America," a remark that seems to carry a hint of sarcasm. This incident has increasingly pushed Ukraine towards Europe, where leaders like Kallas have asserted that Ukraine is part of Europe and that they will increase their support.

At the level of transatlantic relations, these tensions will deepen the existing divides between Europe and the United States. Concerned about the deal-oriented approach of the Trump administration, Europe is seeking greater strategic autonomy. Macron has repeatedly spoken about the necessity of self-sufficient European defense. Meanwhile, the US under Trump expects Europe to act within NATO and under Washington's guidance. This dynamic could weaken the transatlantic alliance.

Future analysis, possible scenarios

In light of recent developments, three scenarios can be envisioned regarding the future of U.S.-European disagreements related to the war in Ukraine: Scenario One; Continuation of the current state with intensified tensions: The Trump administration's more aggressive approach may push Europe to adopt more independent policies, while Ukraine remains caught in the middle. This scenario could work to Russia's advantage, benefiting from the Western divide. Scenario Two; Reduction of US support for Ukraine: Trump and Vance's harsh comments during the February 28 meeting suggest that Washington may condition or halt its support for Ukraine, especially if Zelenskyy does not comply with Trump's demands regarding negotiations with Russia. This would increase pressure on Europe to fill the gap left by a US withdrawal. Scenario Three; Renewed Western convergence: This scenario would only occur if the threat from Russia against other NATO members escalates. However, currently, there are few signs supporting this scenario.

Final thoughts

The disagreements between the US and Europe regarding the war in Ukraine, which peaked during the February 28 meeting, stem from the strategic differences and priorities of both sides. While both parties support Ukraine, their methods and objectives remain contentious. These tensions have not only placed Ukraine in a difficult position but have also challenged the future of transatlantic relations. The success of the West in this crisis depends on its ability to find a balance between these viewpoints. However, recent events indicate that such coordination remains out of reach.



US President Donald Trump (R) meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C., on February 28, 2025. ● MYSTYSLAV CHERNOV/AP



At the level of transatlantic relations, these tensions will deepen the existing divides between Europe and the United States. Concerned about the deal-oriented approach of the Trump administration, Europe is seeking greater strategic autonomy.

AFC Champions League Elite:

Esteghlal boss Bozovic hails defensive resolve in Al Nassr draw

Sports Desk

Esteghlal head coach Miodrag Bozovic praised his side's solid defensive performance in the goalless stalemate against Saudi heavyweight Al Nassr at home in the first leg of their AFC Champions League Elite last-16 tie.

Despite missing Cristiano Ronaldo and Aymeric Laporte, Al Nassr dominated large spells in front of a packed crowd at Tehran's Azadi Stadium and created several clear-cut chances, but Esteghlal captain and goalkeeper Seyyed Hossein Hosseini delivered a man-of-the-match performance to leave the tie finely balanced ahead of next week's return leg at Riyadh's Al-Awwal Park.

Colombian striker Jhon Duran went close to break the deadlock in the 20th minute but was denied from inside the box by Hosseini with Rouzbeh Cheshmi keeping out Aiman Yahyah's follow-up with a crucial headed clearance.

A best chance for the visitors came right before the hour mark, when Duran's lob in a one-on-one situation was tipped away by the Blues keeper.

Marcelo Brozovic created another chance two minutes later with a delightful through ball into the box for Duran, who beat Hosseini only to be denied by the right post from a tight angle. "It was a tough match for us against a team with quality players individually," said Bozovic,



who was in charge of the Blues' bench for only a second outing, following Thursday's defeat against city rival Persepolis in the Iranian top flight. "There were moments in the

match when they played better or tried to get into scoring positions. There were also moments when we played better and had scoring chances.

"I think they were better than

us, but the draw was a deserved result for both teams. I think we are happy with the way the players and the fans performed. I am happy that we did not give up the result and even tried to

win. When our goalkeeper is the best player on the field, there is nothing left to say."

Bozovic's Italian opposite number Stefano Pioli, meanwhile, was frustrated with his side's

inability to convert its chances, saying: "Although I'm very happy with the performance of my players, we could have scored but we did not manage to do so. We know that we have a second leg and we will prepare for that match and see what happens."

"We have played six games in a short period and Ronaldo also had a minor injury so we could not bring him to Iran."

The former Milan boss however, remained positive and is focused on getting the job done when the teams meet again on March 11.

"We had more scoring opportunities than Esteghlal. I was happy with the performance of all my players. They played well and my team is not player-oriented. Our full focus is on the second leg and we will try to play our best game."

"Our team had six 100 percent scoring opportunities but we were unable to use them. Esteghlal also had some opportunities. However, we are preparing ourselves for the return match. It is true that we have not had good results in the past matches, but we will continue to try to have better results."

Ex-FIFA chief Blatter states his innocence on court return over fraud case

REUTERS - Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he was innocent when he appeared in a Swiss court on Monday alongside France soccer great Michel Platini, 2-1/2 years after they were both cleared of fraud.

Blatter and Platini were acquitted in 2022 at a lower Swiss court following a seven-year investigation into a payment of 2 million Swiss francs (\$2.22 million) to Platini.

The Swiss federal prosecutor has appealed against that decision, leading to a new hearing at the Extraordinary Appeals Chamber of the Swiss Criminal Court in Muttens, near Basel.

The prosecutor asked for the judgment to be set aside in full. Blatter told the court on Monday he was not guilty of fraud. "When you talk about false-

hoods, lies and deception, that's not me. That didn't exist in my whole life," he said.

"We had principles in my family - we take only money we have earned," he added. "I am innocent."

The 2022 indictment accused Blatter and Platini of deceiving FIFA staff in 2010 and 2011 about an obligation for world soccer's ruling body to pay the Frenchman, who was president of the sport's European governing body UEFA at the time.

"They falsely claimed that FIFA owed Platini, or that Platini was entitled to, the sum of 2 million Swiss francs for advisory work. This deception was achieved through repeated untruthful claims made by both accused parties," the indictment said.

The case wrecked Platini's

hopes of eventually succeeding Blatter, who resigned from FIFA in 2015 following a separate corruption scandal.

Blatter and Platini were suspended from football in 2015 by FIFA for ethics breaches, originally for eight years, although their exclusions were later reduced.

The pair were cleared in the 2022 case after a judge accepted that their account of a "gentlemen's agreement" for the payment was credible. The judge also said serious doubts existed about the prosecution's allegation that it was fraudulent.

The Swiss federal prosecutor is seeking a sentence of 20 months, suspended for two years, against Blatter and Platini, the former France soccer

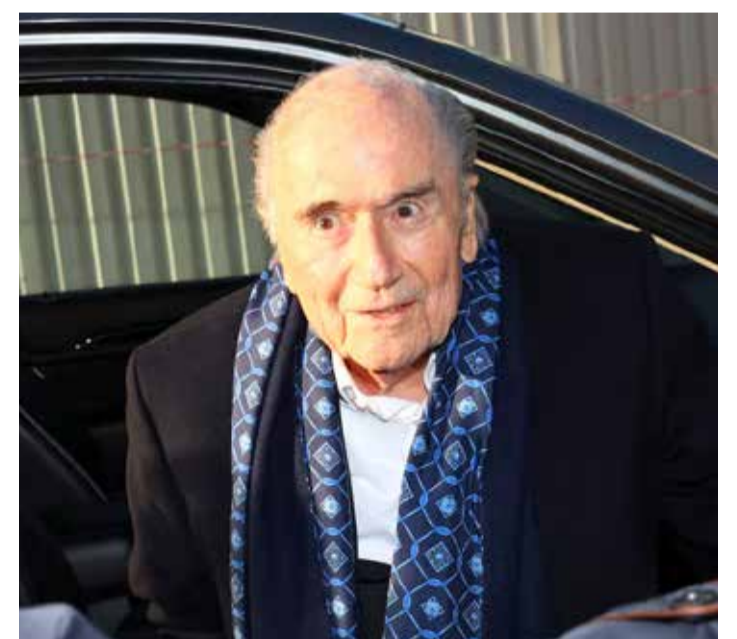
captain and manager. Blatter, who was FIFA president for 17 years until 2015, said before the hearing that he felt he was the subject of a witch hunt.

"We did nothing wrong, nothing," the frail-looking 88-year-old told reporters outside the court at the end of the first day's hearing.

Platini, three times European Footballer of the Year, denied the accusation of fraud "100%," the 69-year-old's lawyer said.

Platini told the court that he had a contract agreed to work for four years as an advisor to Blatter between 1998 and 2022. He was not paid immediately because Blatter said FIFA lacked the funds to pay him at that time.

Platini invoiced FIFA for the 2 million francs payment in 2011.



● DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS



● TINGSHU WANG/REUTERS

Djokovic, Alcaraz on collision course in Indian Wells draw

REUTERS - Carlos Alcaraz could run into Novak Djokovic in the quarter-final stage in his quest for a rare Indian Wells "three-peat," while defending women's champion Iga Swiatek also faces a tough test, according to the draw released on Monday.

Djokovic beat the Spaniard to reach the Australian Open semi-final in January and is hoping he can become only the third man to claim 100 career singles titles when the main draw of the tournament kicks off on Wednesday in the California desert.

The Serb, who got a first-round bye, will

hope to have put recent injury concerns behind him as he kicks off his campaign at the 1000-level event against a qualifier or Australian firebrand Nick Kyrgios.

The men's draw could also see German top seed Alexander Zverev play against rival Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas in a potential quarter-final meeting, while 2022 champion and home hope Taylor Fritz may run into Russian Andrey Rublev in the final eight.

On the women's side, Polish second seed Swiatek was on a quarter-final collision course with Zheng Qinwen months after the Chinese seventh seed knocked her

out in the Olympic semi-final.

Top seeded Aryna Sabalenka will hope to bounce back after a pair of early exits from Doha and Dubai last month with Italian Jasmine Paolini potentially standing between her and the semi-final stage. A tantalising all-American quarter-final clash could be in the cards after 2023 U.S. Open winner Coco Gauff and newly minted Australian Open champion Madison Keys were pulled into the same half of the draw.

Each hope to end an American women's Indian Wells trophy drought, with 24 years since Serena Williams last won.

Creative approaches to revitalize tourism in Isfahan

Iranica Desk

Isfahan, the capital city of Isfahan Province, has long been recognized as one of the main hubs for tourism in Iran; however, the drying up of the Zayandeh Rud river, the city's vital artery, has posed significant challenges for the tourism industry.

The decline in tourist numbers, the adverse impact on the local economy, and the deterioration of green spaces are just a few of the consequences stemming from this crisis. The pressing question remains: is there a practical solution that could revive Isfahan's tourism without relying on the Zayandeh Rud river?

Revitalizing river's route

Although there is currently no water flowing in the Zayandeh Rud river, its path can still be transformed into a vibrant tourist space. Creating multipurpose parks along the Zayandeh Rud river can provide extensive green areas equipped with recreational facilities, biking and walking paths, and cultural markets, according to IRNA.

A successful example of this concept has been implemented in arid countries like the UAE. The development of artificial lakes in certain areas, along with the creation of small urban lakes, can play a crucial role in improving air quality while also providing spaces for boating and leisure activities for tourists.

Furthermore, establishing green spaces with smart irrigation systems that utilize treated wastewater could create a natural landscape along the Zayandeh Rud river without the need for new water resources.

Cultural and artistic tourism

Isfahan is a city rich in historical

and artistic heritage, possessing the potential to become a center for modern cultural tourism. Hosting international festivals and events, such as music festivals, street theater performances, and visual arts exhibitions, can significantly enhance the city's appeal. Many of Isfahan's old houses can be transformed into art galleries, boutique hotels, and cultural cafés, which would attract new visitors.

Creating cultural streets is equally important; streets like Chaharbagh can evolve into vibrant cultural hubs by implementing pedestrian walkways, hosting street artists, and featuring live performances. In many cities worldwide, night tourism is regarded as one of the most important sources of revenue, yet in Isfahan, this potential has not been fully realized.

Establishing nighttime local markets and handicraft stalls can contribute to urban economic growth. Additionally, experiencing visits to iconic sites such as Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Khaju Bridge, and Imam (Naqsh-e Jahan) Square at night — enhanced by modern lighting — could extend tourism activities well beyond daytime hours.

Around-the-clock restaurants and cafés can also be established, and encouraging night businesses to offer special services could create a unique experience for both domestic and international tourists.

Desert and nature tourism

Despite the drying up of the Zayandeh Rud river, the pristine deserts and natural areas surrounding Isfahan still hold significant potential. Investment in desert tourism should be prioritized; the Varzaneh Desert and similar regions can become ecotourism hubs through the development of luxury camping sites and



Dried river bed of the Zayandeh Rud
● rokna.net

nighttime safaris. Birdwatching at Gavkhouni Wetland could also serve as a viable tourism project — rehabilitating this wetland and creating suitable infrastructure could attract nature enthusiasts. Furthermore, utilizing technology in nature tourism should be considered. Designing tourism guide apps, smart walking trails, and sustainable accommodations can significantly enhance this sector and promote its growth.

Health tourism

With the development of medical infrastructure and specialized accommodations, Isfahan has the potential to become a destination for health tourists. Establishing hydrotherapy centers is essential; even in the absence of rivers, advanced spa and therapeutic centers can be designed to attract visitors. The use of native medicinal plants should also be taken into account, and developing treatment centers based on traditional Iranian medicine could appeal to a specific audience.

Digital marketing

As tourist behaviors evolve, maintaining a strong presence in the cyberspace is more crucial than

ever. Collaborating with international influencers, as well as inviting YouTubers and travel bloggers to showcase Isfahan, can have a direct impact on visitor numbers. Additionally, offering virtual tours that provide a digital experience of Isfahan's historical sites can attract a global audience.

Targeted advertising campaigns

Implementing digital campaigns on social media, particularly targeting markets such as the Gulf States and Europe, can help draw foreign tourists to Isfahan.

The drying up of the Zayandeh Rud river represents a significant challenge, but it does not signify the end of tourism in this city. Through scientific planning, investment in new sectors, and the adoption of modern technologies, Isfahan can still maintain its status as a premier tourist destination.

Now is the time to act! The government, investors, and the people of Isfahan must approach this crisis with a fresh perspective and leverage existing capacities to create new tourism experiences. If we don't take action today, we may find that no opportunities remain tomorrow.



Chaharbagh Street
● pinorest.com



Imam Square
● IRNA



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque
● yazdirad.com

Art of gargur-bafi; a coastal craft of southern Iran

Gargur-bafi (*Gargur-weaving*) is a unique form of handicraft specific to coastal cities in southern Iran. The *gargur*, known locally in the Hormozgan dialect as *kel-gar*, is a type of cage featuring a dome-shaped top that functions as a one-sided funnel. These ingenious traps are designed to capture fish, allowing them to enter but preventing their escape. Fishermen typically use

remnants of other fish or leftovers from previous catches as bait to lure fish into the *gargur*. Historically, *gargurs* were constructed from the branches of palm or *gaz* (*tamarix*) trees. While wooden *gargurs* were effective at trapping larger fish, they had a significant drawback: they were not particularly durable and would often deteriorate within a few months due to de-

terioration. The traditional process of making a *gargur* involved cutting branches from palm trees and then slicing them in half with a knife. The cut branches were soaked in seawater to enhance their flexibility, making them suitable for crafting into cages. This labor-intensive process required considerable time and effort.

However, the introduction of

thin metal wires to the market marked a turning point in *gargur* construction. Fishermen began to replace the wooden materials with metal wires, which offered greater durability. The modern method of creating a *gargur* involves twisting these wires at specific intervals to form the dome shape at the top. The bottom part of the cage is crafted in a circular form, allow-

ing fishermen to fully open the trap when retrieving the fish from the water.

Most of the *gargur*-making process is performed manually, with no machinery involved; the only tool utilized is a wire cutter. *Gargurs* are available in various sizes, which fishermen select based on their needs. For instance, a *lenj* — a type of trading boat — has ample space

to accommodate large *gargurs*, whereas smaller boats can only carry smaller versions due to limited capacity.

Gargurs are efficient traps capable of attracting a variety of fish species. Notably, they can effectively capture fish that dwell at depths of about fifty to sixty meters, showcasing their versatility and effectiveness in the fishing practices of the region.



● jahannews.com



● karnamehjoonob.ir



● jahannews.com

Iranian illustrators nominated for 2025 Bratislava Biennial

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has announced the nomination of ten illustrators for the 2025 Bratislava Biennial of Illustration, one of the world's most significant illustration events.

The nominees were selected by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), the Children's Book Council of Iran, and the Iranian Illustrators' Society, IRNA reported.

The biennial, organized under the auspices of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), takes place in Slovakia's capital every two years, showcasing outstanding works from illustrators worldwide. A national selection process was held on March 2, 2025, in Tehran, where a jury of experts evaluated 40 submitted works.

Among the nominated works are 'The Dal Girl' by Noushin Sadeghian, 'Bahram and the Seven Domes' by Narges Mohammadi, and 'Sweet Salt' by Negar Ourang. Other selected pieces include 'The Clever Fox's School' by Ghazaleh

Bigdelou, 'I Saw It Myself' and 'Let the Chick Have It All' by Pedram Kazerooni, 'A Sun in the Turkmen Desert' by Najla Mahdavi, and 'The Lion King' by Amir Shabanipour.

In addition, 'The Uninvited Guest' by Maryam Tahmasebi and two internationally titled works, 'Dad Is Right Here' by Mahshid Raghani and 'Milloon's Mind' and 'Imagine a Garden' by Hoda Haddadi, will also represent Iran.

The selected works will be featured in the Bratislava Biennial catalog and compete for top prizes, including the Grand Prix (\$3,000), five Golden Apples (\$1,500 each), and five Special Medals (\$1,000 each). The top winner will also have the opportunity to present their work independently at the next exhibition.

Illustrator Fatemeh (Parisa) Behabadi has been chosen to participate in the symposium, while Melika Jamali will join the illustration workshop at the biennial.

The Bratislava Biennial, established in 1967, remains a platform for celebrating global excellence in children's book illustration.



Iran backs private sector with free booths at ITB Berlin 2025



Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's deputy tourism minister announced full support for the country's private tourism sector to participate in the ITB Berlin 2025, one of the world's leading travel trade shows. Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey stated that,

given the challenges faced by private tourism operators, particularly in inbound tourism, the government has provided free 100-square-meter exhibition spaces and booth construction services for Iranian travel agencies, ILNA reported. "In line with the admin-

istration's policy of maximum support for the private sector, facilitating their presence in global tourism markets remains a priority," he said.

A total of 12 Iranian travel agencies are attending this year's event, which runs from March 14-16 in Berlin, Germany. The ITB Berlin, hosting exhibitors from 190 countries and drawing over 100,000 visitors, is a key platform for networking and business expansion in the global travel industry.

Iran's participation aligns with the event's theme, "The World of Travel is Here", leveraging international exposure to enhance its tourism sector's global reach.

Indian scholars honored with Sa'adi Award for Persian language contributions

The 10th Sa'adi Cultural and Literary Festival recognized the contributions of Indian scholars in the field of Persian language and literature.

The event, held at Jamia Millia Islamia University, was attended by Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, head of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature and the Sa'adi Foundation, along with Iranian Cultural Attaché Fariduddin Farid Asr, and prominent Persian scholars, ILNA reported.

For the first time, two additional awards were introduced: One for cataloging Persian manuscripts in India, presented by the Delhi-based Persian Research Center, and another for identifying Persian manuscripts, awarded by the Noor International Microfilm Center.

This year's Sa'adi Award recipients included:



Syed Akhtar Husain, professor at the Center for Persian and Central Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Professor Aziz Bano, faculty member at the Department of Persian, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. Sharif Hussain Qasemi was honored for his work in cataloging

and publishing Persian manuscripts, particularly the works of Bidel.

The Sa'adi Award, established in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of modern Iran-India cultural relations, aims to honor scholars who have dedicated their lives to preserving and promoting Persian in India.

DoE chief urge environmental education in schools amid growing ecological crises

Social Desk

Shina Ansari, Vice President and Head of Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) emphasized the urgent need for integrating environmental education into school curricula, warning that neglecting ecological responsibilities would exacerbate the country's environmental crises.

Ansari stressed that environmental protection cannot be the sole responsibility of the organization, calling for collective efforts from institutions. "If authorities remain indifferent, the result will be an increasing trend of environmental problems and damages," she stated at a national event on sustainable environmental education

on Tuesday. Highlighting the role of education, Ansari pointed to Article 50 of the Iranian Constitution, which enshrines environmental protection as a public duty.

"We must all stand together to safeguard our natural resources; otherwise, the country's fragile environment will deteriorate further," she warned.

She suggested environmental teachings to begin at an early age, emphasizing the significant role of schools. While formal education includes subjects like "Humans and the Environment," she noted that extracurricular and hands-on learning could enhance students' environmental awareness.

Hadi Kiadaliri, Deputy for Education and Public Participation at the Department of Environment, underscored the global urgency of environmental issues. "Iran's unique geography makes us particularly vulnerable, and any delay in addressing environmental concerns is no longer acceptable," he stated.

Kiadaliri linked the crisis to broader ethical and behavioral shortcomings. "We have environmental knowledge but lack environmental behavior," he said, calling for a shift from a human-centered to an ecology-centered approach.

The officials announced initiatives such as the "Environment Ambassadors" program in schools, green



management strategies, and the expansion of environmental vocational schools.

"Environmental awareness is not just a subject; it's a way of life. If we fail to instill this mindset in students, we will face severe consequences in the future," Kiadaliri concluded.

Tehran Int'l Book Fair unveils 'Read for Iran' as official slogan

The 36th Tehran International Book Fair selected "Read for Iran" as its official slogan, organizers announced.

Ebrahim Heidari, spokesperson and deputy director of the event, said a public call for slogan submissions was issued on February 4, receiving approximately 1,500 responses.

"After expert review, the proposals were presented to the fair's policy council, which ultimately chose 'Read for Iran' as this year's slogan," Heidari stated. The 36th Tehran International Book Fair will take place from May 7 to 17 at the Imam Khomeini Molla in the Iranian capital.

