

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan approve MoU for port development

Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) and the National Investments Agency of Kyrgyzstan have agreed on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the development of the southern ports of Iran.

The PMO and the National Investments Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the MoU for port development during an online meeting, Director General of Transit, Logistics and Agreements of the PMO Kazem Salehi said, Mehr News Agency reported.

In the virtual meeting, the two sides reviewed and approved the contents of the MoU regarding the participation of Kyrgyzstan's private sector in the southern ports of Iran.

The draft of the MoU will be signed by the parties during the visit of Kyrgyzstan's delegation to Tehran shortly, Salehi added.

By signing the said MoU, the two countries will participate in the establishment of joint logistics centers in Iran's southern ports. So, the trade relations between two countries will subsequently increase.

Salehi said that facilitation and promotion of regional transit through multi-modal transport is necessary and the PMO welcomes the presence of neighboring countries, especially Central Asian countries, in the infrastructure projects of Iran's ports.

The National Investments Agency is a governmental agency in Kyrgyzstan for promoting foreign investments and assisting international companies in finding business opportunities. Following three strategic missions of Iran's PMO in 2024 i.e., "sea-based economy", "transit", and "logistics management", the PMO opened 27 projects last month in six provinces across Iran that amounted to 59,531 billion IRR while starting 23 more projects with 569,909 billion IRR public and private investments in five provinces.

# Iran's economy to grow 3.2% in 2024, inflation to fall 5.2%: *World Bank*

### Economic Desk

The World Bank (WB), in its latest report, forecasted that Iran's economy is expected to grow by 3.2% in 2024, with the inflation rate projected to decrease to 35.3%.

According to World Bank estimates, Iran's economy grew by 5% and experienced a 40.7% inflation in 2023, Mehr news agency reported.

According to WB, the country's inflation rate, which was 40.7% last year, is also expected to decrease to 35.3% this year.

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) reported in late June that the country's gross domestic product (GDP), including oil, grew by 4.5% in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on

March 19).

The World Bank also forecasted that Iran's non-oil sector, which grew by 3.8% last year, will reach 3.0% this year.

Iran's oil sector, which saw a significant growth of 17.1% last year, is also expected to grow by 5.0% this year, Mehr news agency reported.

Additionally, the World Bank predicts that Iran's oil production will increase by 200,000 barrels compared to the previous year, reaching 3.2 million barrels per day.

The agricultural sector in the country is expected to grow by only 0.9% this year, while the industry sector is projected to reach 4.9% growth and the service sector is expected to grow by 2.6%.



## Wheat cultivation via plasma-activated water to begin for first time in Iran

### Economic Desk

Wheat cultivation using plasma-activated water (PAW) will be implemented for the first time in Iran as of October under the aegis of the Iranian Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC), as announced by an official from the council.

Secretary-General of the INIC Emad Ahmadvand said wheat cultivation via PAW, supported by the INIC,

will launch in Bu-Ali Sina University's farms, Tasnim news agency reported.

Ahmadvand stated on his X social media account that plasma-activated water positively impacts crop efficiency, although it has not been extensively assessed on a large scale in the country.

Water is a crucial factor in agriculture for enhancing production and productivity. Plasma water is a modern solution to increase

this productivity. Plasma is a state of matter composed of a quasi-neutral gas of charged and neutral particles.

PAW, through oxidation and other chemical changes, possesses disinfectant properties and acts as a plant growth stimulant. This clean technology can enhance agricultural productivity, reduce water consumption, improve product quality, and minimize waste.

Moreover, plasma-activated water has proven effective in disinfecting and preserving food products, leading to longer shelf life and reduced food waste.

Applications of PAW in agriculture include improvement of the germination rate of seeds. Plasma-activated water can enhance plant growth and performance, and can help manage soil acidity by reducing its adverse effects.

## Iran's exports to Iraq up 28% in Q1 calendar year

Iran exported about \$3 billion worth of products to the neighboring Iraq in the first three months of this year in the Iranian calendar (started March 21, 2024), showing a 28% increase compared to same period

last year.

The West Asia Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) submitted a comprehensive report on the trade between Iran and Iraq from March to June 22, 2024, first three



months of the Iranian calendar, Mehr News Agency reported.

Iraq is one of Iran's important trade partners as the

Islamic Republic exported about \$3 billion worth of non-oil goods to the neighboring country between March 21 to June 22, 2024.

The natural gas, ferrous or steel bars, tiles and ceramics, fresh apples, iron ingot, watermelon, evaporative coolers, tomatoes and gas turbines were of the main products exported from Iran to the neighboring Iraq in this period, the report added.

In turn, Iran imported \$108 million worth of products from Iraq in the first quarter of this year in the Iranian calendar, registering a 25-percent growth com-

pared to the same period last year.

Raw gold, aluminum alloys and tires for passenger cars were the main products imported into the country from Iraq.

According to the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian Plan and Budget Organization (PBO), the Islamic Republic exports products valued at \$12 billion to neighboring Iraq annually.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Pezeshkian's foreign policy ...

Pezeshkian championed engagement, both internationally and within Iran, urging a united front on key national issues.

In other words, his approach was to engage with other spectra of politics, power, and society domestically. His emphasis on domestic cooperation and constructive engagement is on full display in his recent article. This perspective aligns neatly with the Islamic Republic's overarching stance on foreign rela-

tions. Pezeshkian doesn't want to swing too hard toward either the East or the West, nor does he aim to sour beneficial relations with China or Russia. He advocates closer ties with neighbors and regional players, while also signaling openness to working with Europe and the United States – all within the framework of Iran's interests. In international relations jargon, this balanced foreign policy conveys a simple message: Iran won't pick sides between the East and the

West; instead, its national interests take center stage.

It's safe to say that this approach will resonate with the global community. Europeans, particularly, have been frosty toward Iran lately, viewing Tehran as cozying up to China and Russia to disrupt global stability. Pezeshkian's balanced foreign policy, however, suggests that Iran seeks neither a showdown with the West nor a wholesale embrace of it; its priority lies in its own national

interests. Nevertheless, there is a tall wall of mistrust between Europe and Iran, and it remains to be seen how much progress can be made in tearing down this wall. But there's reason to believe Pezeshkian's article and the ideas within could go down well with European nations and the US. At its core, Iran's new president champions balance and puts the country's interests front and center in shaping its foreign policy.