

# President calls for urgent reforms in Sistan and Baluchestan Province

Efforts underway to secure Iran's water rights from Hirmand River: **Minister**

President Masoud Pezeshkian stated that the current situation in Zabol and southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan is unacceptable to him as an Iranian and official.

He emphasized that visiting Zabol and meeting with its people has once again reshaped the perspective of officials regarding the type of services that must be provided, saying, "This situation must be improved."

During his visit to Sistan and Baluchestan Province on Friday afternoon, Pezeshkian met with groups of people in Zabol and reflected on his past experiences in the region.

"Fifty years ago, I came to this area and spent time in villages like Zahak, Kuh Khajeh, and Deh Kolukhi. Witnessing the living conditions and challenges of the people back then changed my outlook on life and gave me a deeper understanding of the hardships and potential of this land," he said.

The president highlighted the changes the region has undergone in recent decades, noting that Zabol, especially its rural areas, faces more challenges today compared to the past.

"Areas that were once lush and fertile have become much harsher due to drought and resource shortages. This issue requires serious planning and action to restore life and prosperity to the region," he said.

## Criticism of Chabahar development plans

The president criticized the lack of comprehensive and progressive plans for Chabahar's development despite its potential as a gateway to the world.

"If Chabahar is supposed to be our gateway to the world, why are the roads and railways designed for it not aligned with its needs?" he asked.

During a meeting on the issues of southern part of the province, held earlier on Friday, Pezeshkian stated that his government's visits to provinces aim to address problems within their capacity.

"I believe that if the people participate, we can solve the problems. Without their cooperation, the government alone cannot resolve these issues," he said.

He added that after identifying the problems, he would discuss solutions with the governor and ministers. "I do not accept the idea of addressing education and healthcare issues in three phases. I believe these problems can be solved in one stage, provided the people join the effort. If we wait for others to solve our problems, we will remain stuck in the same situation."

Pezeshkian noted that national and local officials would design a robust

development plan for the region. "Unfortunately, the current development plans for the region are neither comprehensive nor forward-looking. Even the areas designated for tourism, if developed, will only worsen traffic congestion. The port is currently located in a place that requires passing through the city center. It's surprising that, despite the vast land available, development plans are designed in a way that creates issues like traffic and environmental damage."

## Visit to Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar

On Friday morning, the president visited various sections of the first phase of Shahid Beheshti Port in Chabahar as he was briefed by officials on the port's activities and development plans.

According to port managers, with support from the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the port is currently handling regular import, export, trans-shipment, and logistical services. Officials from the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) stated that studies for the second phase of the port have been completed, and its construction will begin next year to accommodate ocean-going vessels.

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd added that the port's development will not proceed beyond the second phase to protect local fishing docks, and new port locations are being identified for further expansion.

## Belief in vision plan

On Thursday evening, Pezeshkian emphasized during a meeting on investment opportunities in Chabahar Free Zone that his visit to Sistan and Baluchestan aims to support the region.

"We have held numerous meetings with various agencies and have gained some understanding of the current situation. These efforts align with the Leader's vision for the Makoran region," he said.

The president criticized that the goals outlined in the 20-Year Vision Document are not being fully realized today. "This does not mean that the efforts made so far are insignificant. Major steps have been taken, and we appreciate them. However, the vision document represents the collective expertise of the country, approved by the Leader, which envisions Iran as a developed nation with leading economic, scientific, cultural, and managerial standing in the region. Achieving this requires significant effort, as it is not an easy task."

Pezeshkian stressed that the vision document must become a shared belief.

"If we want to succeed in the world we



live in, we must do everything in our power. What matters is not just reaching the goal but the effort made along the way. We must prepare all necessary foundations, environments, behaviors, laws, and regulations to achieve our objectives."

## Inauguration of Zabol-Zahedan highway project

During his visit to Zabol, the Iranian president inaugurated the final 200-kilometer section of the Zabol-Zahedan highway. At the inauguration ceremony, he noted that this is the incumbent government's second visit to Sistan and Baluchestan since taking office.

"We will do everything in our

power to address deprivations and solve the problems of the people in Sistan and Baluchestan and other deprived provinces," he said.

Also, the minister of roads and urban development provided a report on the construction process of the highway, which cost approximately 25 trillion rials (about \$31.25 million).

## Pursuing Hirmand River water rights through dialogue

On the sidelines of the president's visit to the province, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi stated that efforts are underway to secure Iran's water rights from the Hirmand River through dialogue with Afghanistan.

"Several projects are being implemented to provide water for the people of Sistan and Baluchestan," he said on Friday.

Aliabadi emphasized the need to pursue the Hirmand water rights issue through interaction with the neighboring country. "Negotiations are ongoing, and the results will be announced soon," he added.

The minister stressed the importance of water conservation, stating, "The Ministry of Energy is making every effort to provide sustainable and quality water for all regions of the country, including Sistan. However, water conservation in all sectors is essential to help alleviate the water shortage in the province."

## Paknejad stresses support for private sector to realize oil industry progress

Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad emphasized the need for collaboration with private sector actors to develop and sustain the country's oil industry, stating that the private sector paves the way to progress and prosperity.

He added that the Oil Ministry will utilize all legal capacities to remove obstacles facing the private sector, Shana reported.

Paknejad made the remarks during a meeting on Friday with representatives from oil industry equipment manufacturers' associations.

He highlighted the importance of the private sector's role in advancing the country's broader goals, stating that the Oil Ministry welcomes active private sector participation in various

areas, including investment, operations, technical expertise, knowledge enhancement and research.

Paknejad said the use of indigenously manufactured equipment is a top priority for the Oil Ministry, adding that serious measures must be taken to strengthen domestic oil equipment producers so they can compete and expand their presence internationally.

### Importance of effective collaboration

The minister stressed the importance of synergy and effective collaboration between the Oil Ministry and the private sector.

He reiterated the ministry's support for private sector activities at all stages of

oil projects, stating that the ministry is ready to provide comprehensive cooperation and support to enhance the country's oil industry through private sector involvement.

After listening to private sector representatives, Paknejad welcomed the points raised during the meeting and emphasized the need to build trust with the private sector.

He said, "To attract public investment in projects, we must first earn their trust."

Paknejad described the private sector as a complement to and supporter of the government, stating, "The private sector is the path to the country's progress and salvation. We must all work together to elevate Iran's standing. The

Oil Ministry will use all legal capacities to remove obstacles facing this sector."

### Need to address FATF issues

Private sector representatives at the meeting raised their challenges and concerns, including issues related to liquidity, debt settlements, receivables, fair competition with semi-state entities, and the need to establish joint task forces between the Oil Ministry and the private sector.

Industry players clarified that supporting domestic production does not mean halting projects to wait for local manufacturing or banning imports. Instead, they called for creating conditions that allow fair competition with foreign producers.

Representatives from oil equipment manufacturers' associations highlighted the urgent need to resolve issues related to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), stating that without addressing these challenges, the private sector will not be able to compete with foreign companies or enhance its capabilities. Private sector representatives also criticized the increasing state control over new technology-based firms (NTBFs), the expansion of semi-state entities, and insufficient oversight of their financial activities.

They stressed the need for government agencies to coordinate in formulating laws, regulations, and guidelines to foster economic growth and support entrepreneurs.