

Pezeshkian urges agricultural reform for 'greater self-sufficiency'

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the need for a shift in agricultural policies, stating that measures must be taken to prevent the waste of agricultural products and ensure that farmers' hard work is not lost due to a lack of market demand. He stressed that deft management and planning are essential to steer the country's agriculture toward growth and sustainability. Speaking on Saturday at the 38th national ceremony honoring outstanding figures in agriculture, Pezeshkian also described farmers as the nation's invaluable assets. The president said the government is ready to work alongside farmers to implement such changes, supporting civil organizations and fostering collaboration to create better conditions for the agricultural sector. "Our goal is to achieve greater self-sufficiency and ensure future generations can sustainably benefit from these resources," he said. Pezeshkian highlighted the im-

portance of managing water and soil resources, warning that the future of the country is at risk if a balance between resources and consumption is not achieved. "Without water, we will lose our lands and be forced to leave this soil," he said. Pezeshkian praised innovative efforts, such as those in the restoration of qanats (underground water supply systems) and irrigation led by women and youth, as examples of how proper planning and hard work can effectively utilize vital resources. However, he cautioned that this is only the beginning, and serious thought must be given to preserving these resources for the long term. The president called for detailed planning in agriculture and resource management, urging both the government and local authorities to determine what crops should be grown, in what quantity, and with what quality in each region. He also emphasized the need for efficient distribution of products to meet the country's needs and explore trade opportunities with

neighboring nations. "Our products must meet international standards to remain competitive in global markets," he said. Pezeshkian expressed concern over the current state of the agricultural market, noting that middlemen often reap the most profit, while farmers who work tirelessly receive little. "This unfair situation must change," he said, calling for strengthened market management mechanisms to prevent such injustices. Pezeshkian recalled the role of agricultural cooperatives in the past and urged farmers to collaborate on solutions that ensure fair compensation for their efforts. Earlier in the ceremony, Gholamreza Nouri-Qezelgeh, the minister of agriculture, outlined the challenges facing the sector, including drought, declining water resources, and climate change. He stressed the need to transition from traditional farming to technology-based and market-oriented agriculture, leveraging modern technology and innovation to boost productivity.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the 38th national ceremony honoring outstanding figures in agriculture in Tehran, Iran on January 18, 2025. president.ir



The minister highlighted the significant achievements in various agricultural sectors, including crops, horticulture, fisheries, and livestock, which have contributed to sustainable production and added value. He reiterated the ministry's

commitment to facilitating the private sector's involvement in agricultural development through streamlined processes and transparency. The minister also expressed gratitude for the president's support for farmers and produc-

ers, pledging to ensure the country's food security by relying on the capabilities of farmers and their colleagues. The ceremony concluded with the president honoring national awardees in the agricultural sector from across the country.

Iran-Russia monetary deal implemented: CBI chief Hemmati says Tehran welcomes foreign investors



Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Mohammadreza Farzin, who accompanied President Masoud Pezeshkian during his visit to Moscow, announced that the monetary agreement between Iran and Russia had become operational. "The monetary agreement between Iran and Russia has been implemented, and the national currencies of the two countries, i.e. ruble and rial, have been used as the basis for the settlement based on the agreed rate on the commercial foreign exchange market," Farzin said. He also announced the connection of Russia's Mir CARD Network system to Iran's SHETAB banking network.

Iran-Russia oil deal near finalization

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said that he and his team have had detailed negotiations with energy officials on the Russian side, and the relevant clauses of the Iran-Russia contract are in the final stages. Paknejad noted that Russian companies are currently executing contracts worth more than \$7.5 billion in several Iranian oil and gas fields. Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati, who also accompanied Pezeshkian, said that foreign investors are welcome to work in his country.

Hemmati made the remark in a meeting with Russian economic activists late on Friday, expressing Iran's readiness for issuing guarantees for exporters. The Organization for Investment Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran is also ready to attract foreign capital, he noted. Meanwhile, Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd referred to the 20-year strategic pact between Tehran and Moscow and said the document indicates the will of two sides for the development of bilateral ties. The 20-year treaty signed on Friday by the presidents of Iran and Russia aims to facilitate joint investments, optimize banking relations and bilateral payments in national currencies, expand cooperation in transportation and energy, and establish a streamlined customs corridor. The agreement is seen as a significant economic milestone, particularly in light of regional and international conditions. The deepening economic ties between Iran and Russia, bolstered by their membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, further underscore the importance of this treaty. The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement between the

Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation consists of an introduction and 47 articles covering a wide range of sectors.

Direct economic ties between provinces

Article 16 of the treaty emphasizes the development of inter-provincial cooperation, recognizing its importance for expanding bilateral relations.

The treaty commits both parties to creating favorable conditions for direct economic ties between Iranian and Russian provinces. This will be facilitated through trade missions, exhibitions, fairs, and other joint events aimed at mutual economic and investment opportunities.

Both parties will support commercial and economic cooperation in areas of mutual interest, coordinated through the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission.

Facilitating joint investments

Article 18 outlines the commitment to developing trade, economic, and industrial cooperation, including joint investments, infrastructure financing, and facilitating trade mechanisms. The treaty also promotes cooperation in banking, mutual supply of goods, services, and intellectual property rights. The parties may explore joint investments in third countries through specialized multilateral mechanisms, leveraging their respective investment capacities.

Bilateral payments in national currencies

Article 20 focuses on increasing bilateral trade by developing cooperation between financial institutions, using international legal frameworks to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. The treaty encourages the use of

national currencies for bilateral payments, strengthens direct interbank cooperation, and promotes national financial products. The agreement also supports trade and investment in special economic zones, with both parties assisting in the establishment of joint ventures and industrial zones.

Expanding transportation cooperation

Article 21 highlights close cooperation in transportation, aiming to develop partnerships based on mutual benefit.

The treaty commits to facilitating transport operations, improving infrastructure, and increasing passenger and cargo volumes using all modes of transport.

Both parties will collaborate on road, rail, air, sea, and combined transport, as well as training specialists in the field. They will also actively develop international transport corridors, particularly the International North-South Transport Corridor, which passes through Iran and Russia.

The treaty promotes the use of digital transport systems and supports coordination in international transport organizations.

Energy cooperation

Article 22 focuses on expanding cooperation in oil and gas based on principles of equality and mutual benefit. The treaty aims to enhance energy security through optimal use of fuel and energy resources.

Key areas of cooperation include scientific and technical collaboration, technology exchange, and investment in oil and gas field development. The treaty also encourages infrastructure projects to enhance global and regional energy security and supports coordinated policies in international energy forums like the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) and OPEC+.

VP: Iranian gov't pursuing ratification of FATF bills



Iran's vice president for executive affairs said the administration was seriously pursuing the ratification of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) bills as required by the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. In an interview with IRNA, Mohammad-Jafar Qaempanah discussed the prospects of the FATF bills, pointing out that the bills cannot be put to vote in the Parliament again as Iranian lawmakers have already approved them. Members of the Parliament have the right to object, he said, referring to criticisms leveled by some lawmakers against renewed attempts to ratify the bills. However, he added, the administration is persistent and the fate of the FATF bills will be decided in the Expediency Council, an advisory board that settles disputes between the Parliament and Guardian Council over legislation. Asked how hopeful the administration is about the approval of FATF by the Expediency Council, Qaempanah said, "We do not have a precise assessment of the status of the council's review." He added, however, that the administration believes some of the pressure of sanctions "will definitely be removed after FATF is accepted." Late last month, President Masoud Pezeshkian announced that the Expediency Council would re-examine the bills so that the FATF restrictions on Iran's banking system would be lifted. Established in 1989, the FATF is an inter-governmental body aimed at setting standards and promoting effective implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational measures to combat money laundering, terrorism financing, and other threats to the international financial system. The FATF describes itself as a "policy-making body" that generates the necessary political will to effect national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.