

# President calls for prioritizing renewable energy infrastructure

President Masoud Pezeshkian called on governor generals to prioritize the development of infrastructure for renewable energy to address electricity shortages and eliminate educational facility deficits.

Speaking at the fourth nationwide meeting of the 14th administration's governors on Monday, Pezeshkian described governors as the executive pillars of the country, stating, "If you governors perform successfully, the country's problems will be resolved."

Responding to requests from some governor generals for greater delegation of authority, the president clarified that the government defines delegation of authority based on performance and specific objectives.

"For example, we are ready to delegate any authority necessary to provincial governments for developing solar energy infrastructure. However, delegating authority without clear objectives will lead to chaos," he said.

Pezeshkian also addressed issues raised by governor generals from border provinces, noting that border areas, which should be sources of revenue, have instead become hubs of poverty and hardship.

"This trend must be corrected," he said, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive assessment of the challenges faced by these provinces.

He proposed involving ministers, economic players, academics, and scholars to develop a prioritized, expert-backed plan for cabinet review and approval.

The president highlighted the strong collaboration among the heads of the three branches of government in addressing national challenges.

"We currently hold weekly meetings with the heads of the legislative and judicial branches, and the cooperation has been excellent," he said.

Despite numerous challenges, Pezeshkian expressed confidence that unity and cooperation would enable the country to overcome its difficulties.

"We have significant capabilities and potential that are not easily subject to sanctions. Moreover, there are many paths forward for us to resolve issues in the economy, industry, energy, and other sectors," he said.

Pezeshkian reiterated his two key expectations for governor generals as developing renewable energy infrastructure and addressing educational facility shortages.

"We must minimize our reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation as much as possible. By developing solar energy infrastructure in offices, stadiums, schools, universities, and other public spaces, we can sell our gas and oil products at their real value and meet other national needs," he said.

The president emphasized the importance of promoting energy conservation and a culture of efficiency. "While we waste approximately \$150 billion annually in energy subsidies due to inefficiency, by conserving energy, we can preserve our resources and secure the funds needed to solve the country's



problems," he said. Pezeshkian noted that, thanks to government planning and management, the country has moved past the critical stage in energy supply.

"We truly did not want to burn mazut, but circumstances forced us to do

so. However, with the measures being taken in renewable energy and conservation, we certainly should not need to use mazut next year," he said.

The president urged governor generals to prioritize the development of solar power plants alongside efforts to ad-

dress educational facility shortages. "Any authority required in this area will be granted to you, and the other branches of government are aligned with the administration. If we join hands and combine our efforts, we can solve these problems," he said.

## Aref highlights gov't focus on large enterprises as drivers of economic growth



The Iranian vice president emphasized the government's serious support for addressing the shortcomings of large economic enterprises, stating that the current administration's strategy is to facilitate and reduce bureaucracy for these key drivers of the country's economic growth. Speaking at Iran's Top Companies Conference on Monday, Mohammadreza Aref highlighted the history of drafting and approving the first development plan, which was not implemented due to divergent views.

He stressed the need for large economic enterprises to drive growth, noting that while the government is not an effective business operator, it should play a transparent, supportive, and facilitative role in guiding these enterprises.

This approach, the VP said, has been emphasized since the third development plan and is central to the seventh development plan, which focuses on the private sector and large enterprises.

He praised the conference for elevating the role of large en-

terprises in the national and regional economy and addressing public demands.

He noted that Iran's wealth, largely tied to underground resources like oil, has been framed to maintain the status quo, discouraging reliance on large economic and industrial enterprises and instead promoting assembly and imports from industrialized nations.

### Oil revenue and economic challenges

The VP pointed out that Iran's oil revenue at times "falls below the sales of dolls and toys in some other countries."

He praised the Islamic Revolution and the efforts of prominent elites for steering the country toward the 20-Year Vision Document, which aims for regional leadership. However, he acknowledged that post-vision challenges and imposed crises have tested the nation, with the creativity of large enterprises shining during these difficult times.

Aref highlighted the valuable data collected from large enterprises at the conference, criticiz-

ing some entities for avoiding responsibility by labeling documents as confidential, often without substantive content. He stressed the importance of sharing such information with planners to support the evolution and sustainability of these enterprises.

### Resilience amid energy shortages

Despite power and gas outages affecting industrial units and large companies this year, Aref noted that these enterprises continued their operations, driven by a sense of purpose and commitment to serving the public.

He praised their resilience, particularly in the face of energy imbalances, and called for greater appreciation of their contributions.

To achieve the 8% growth target outlined in the Seventh Development Plan, Aref acknowledged the need for significant resources.

He noted a shortfall of 18,000 megawatts of electricity this summer, with predictions of a 24,000-megawatt deficit next year.

The government, he said, is planning to generate 5,000 megawatts from wind energy and 30,000 megawatts from solar energy, with domestic investments secured to meet these goals. He expressed hope that 8,000 to 10,000 megawatts of solar energy would be operational by next year.

### Export development

Aref identified export develop-

ment as a serious strategy of the 14th administration, emphasizing the use of trade corridors and active participation in regional economic organizations. He noted the emergence of strong markets in the region and within Iran's cultural sphere.

The official also highlighted the government's support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) alongside large economic drivers, recognizing their critical role in job creation, development, and reducing urban migration.

### Economic targets and industrial growth

Aref outlined the government's economic targets, including 8% growth, single-digit inflation and unemployment rates, 8.5% industrial growth, and 13% mining growth.

He emphasized the importance of supporting leading enterprises, as outlined in the Seventh Development Plan, which calls for the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade to develop a national industrial advancement strategy.

### Leveraging human capital for technological advancement

Reflecting on Iran's industrial progress since the revolution, Aref noted the country's ability to compete globally in new technologies, leveraging its human capital.

He cited achievements in nanotechnology as an example of this approach and stressed the importance of adopting cutting-edge technologies, includ-

ing artificial intelligence, for national development.

Aref underscored the necessity of drafting a national industrial advancement strategy with input from experts and global best practices.

He called for avoiding politicization and ensuring the strategy is implemented as a national commitment.

The VP identified market expansion and competitiveness as critical for leading enterprises, warning that failure to compete with advanced nations would lead to significant challenges. He emphasized the role of research and development (R&D) in achieving competitiveness, citing weaknesses in the automotive sector as a result of insufficient R&D investment.

### Science, technology as foundation of large enterprises

Aref stressed that the foundation of large enterprises lies in leveraging science and modern technologies.

He noted the establishment of committees within the presidential office to address obstacles faced by large companies, emphasizing the complementary roles of the government and enterprises.

Aref highlighted the importance of combining competition and collaboration to drive national growth and praised the achievements of Iranian enterprises over the past four decades, noting their ability to compete with global leaders.

At the event, Aref also honored top economic enterprises with certificates of appreciation.

## Iran resumes direct flights to Europe despite sanctions



Iran Airtour, a private airline, is launching direct flights from Tehran to Paris late this month despite Western sanctions targeting the country's aviation industry.

The flights are scheduled to begin on January 31, operating from Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport every Monday and Friday, IRNA reported.

Iran Airtour's CEO, Reza Mousavi, met with Imam Khomeini Airport and law enforcement officials on Monday to discuss ways to improve coordination between various operational departments and ensure seamless operations for the route.

Mousavi said he was optimistic that flights to other European destinations would soon be resumed. "We hope that other European flights will be established in the near future."

The head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, Hossein Pourfarzaneh, previously said that the Paris-Tehran route would be re-established with the launch of Iran Airtour's flights.

Direct flights to Europe are resuming more than three months after the suspension of Iran Air's European routes due to EU sanctions.

Iran's aviation industry has suffered years of Western sanctions that prevent the country from purchasing new aircraft and spare parts.