

Pezeshkian: Iran ready to boost ties with Africa in various fields

Minister says \$10b leap in Africa trade on agenda

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed optimism about enhanced cooperation with countries in Africa, underlining that the Islamic Republic is ready to share its achievements and capabilities with African nations.

Pezeshkian made the statement at the 3rd Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference in Tehran on Sunday, which was also attended by Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref and Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade Mohammad Atabak as well as representatives from over 50 African countries, including heads of chambers of commerce.

“We all live in a small house in this world with names like Africa, Asia, or America, but if we have a broad perspective, we all live on this planet and God has provided us with blessings that we can enjoy together,” Pezeshkian said.

“Our belief and conviction in Iran is that we are all from one root and we are all one single nation, there is no superiority between us and you except based on humanity, capability, and greater service,” he added. “We are ready to share all the achievements we have made with you,

to share our expertise with you in health, trade, industry, agriculture, security, and peace and tranquility, so that we can create a world where all human beings on the earth can coexist in peace, prosperity and harmony.”

Pezeshkian also expressed hope that the participation of African representatives and traders in the event in Tehran would strengthen opportunities for cooperation in various sectors.

The president also criticized certain governments for disregarding religious teachings and committing acts of aggression against the other nations.

The 3rd Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference is being held in Tehran from April 27 to 29, with the event set to continue in Isfahan from April 30 to May 1.

The African delegates are also scheduled to visit the Iran Expo 2025, which is set to be held in Tehran from April 28 to May 2 with more than 2,500 traders, economic directors and heads of chambers of commerce from over 100 countries.

VP: Africa holds special place in Iran’s strategic roadmap

During the opening ceremony of the inter-

national conference, Aref said the Islamic Republic views Africa not merely as a consumer market but as a strategic partner with a special position in the new global power structure.

“In the upstream documents of our country, including the Iran Vision Document, the Seventh Progress Law, and national development programs, the development of South-South relations and the expansion of interactions with African countries are explicitly emphasized,” he added.

Aref stressed that Iran has consistently engaged with African countries based on the principles of justice, dignity, and shared historical relations.

He said Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has emphasized the necessity of enhancing ties with African nations, and the Pezeshkian administration seeks to expand relationships with African nations.

Iran possesses abundant resources in oil, gas, and minerals, along with the necessary expertise and technology, Aref said, adding that the Islamic Republic aims to use these capabilities not for domination, but for collaborative and brotherly partnership.



Minister plans for \$10 billion trade leap

Speaking at the event, Atabak pointed to the extensive cooperation capacities between Iran and Africa, announcing plans for a tenfold increase in trade exchanges with African countries to \$10 billion.

Stressing that there are significant opportunities for collaboration between Iran and Africa, the minister said the current level of Iran-Africa trade accounts for only 3% of the Islamic Republic’s

exports and 1% of its imports, which is approximately 800 million dollars.

Atabak referred to the development of infrastructure, the construction of industrial parks and refineries, the expansion of new energies and extraterritorial cultivation, the launch of shipping lines to South and Southwest Africa, the launch of air routes, the facilitation of banking exchanges and bartering with the African countries as the major axes of the event.

Iran’s sovereign wealth fund, Kyrgyzstan ink €50m credit line deal

Economy Desk

Iran’s National Development Fund (NDF) signed a €50 million credit line agreement with Kyrgyzstan on Sunday. The agreement was inked by Mehdi Ghazanfari, chairman of the NDF Executive Board, and Bakyt Sydykov, Kyrgyzstan’s minister of economy and commerce, as reported by IRNA.

The credit line will be made available through a bank selected by the exporter, enabling Iranian exporters of technical and engineering services to finance their projects in Kyrgyzstan.

“This investment has two main benefits; on the one hand, it contributes to Kyrgyzstan’s economic growth through the implementation of construction projects, and on the other hand, it activates the production chain in Iran, as Iranian contractors will be required to use Iranian goods and equipment,” Ghazanfari said.

The chairman of the NDF Executive Board also said the two sides agreed to re-establish a joint investment committee to oversee the projects.

Pointing to the need for high quality projects, he added, “The quality of project implementation is very important for the National Development

Fund. We are seeking to create a mechanism where real representatives of the Iranian private sector, who prioritize national interests, are present in the joint committee so that the interests of the two countries are properly protected.”

Ghazanfari announced the possibility of doubling the credit line to €100 million, depending on project performance.

The Iranian official said the goal is to fully absorb the first 50 million euros by 2025, and if successful, the second 50 million euros will also be allocated, adding, “Exporting technical and engineering services will not only generate foreign currency for the country, but will also develop factories and create jobs.”

Sydykov, for his part, said Kyrgyzstan and Iran have always had strong relations, and Sunday’s deal will pave the way for the development of bilateral economic and technical cooperation.

Emphasizing the importance of this deal, he said, “We in our team are adopting the best working methods to attract investment. The demand for infrastructure projects in Kyrgyzstan is very high, and this joint cooperation with Iran will open a new chapter



in the economic relations of the two countries.”

Sydykov underscored the strong and expanding economic ties between the two countries, noting that current cooperation remains far below their potential.

The minister said the new agreement would bolster investment, highlighting Kyrgyzstan’s steady economic growth, controlled public debt, and an inflation rate between five and seven percent.

Sydykov also placed a premium on ongoing economic reforms and currency stability in Kyrgyzstan.

Minister urges accelerated shipment of goods to Imam Khomeini Port

Economy Desk

Iran’s minister of agriculture called for acceleration in directing ships carrying essential goods to berth at other southern ports, not least Imam Khomeini Port, following Saturday’s colossal blast at Shahid Rajaei Port.

Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljeh made the call on Sunday as he demanded serious and precise follow-up on the matter.

“Based on the initial information received from colleagues stationed at the scene of the incident, it appears that the essential goods present at Shahid Rajaei Port have not sustained serious damage, and there will be no problem in the process of supplying essential goods,” Nouri-Qezeljeh said.

“In line with emergency measures, the CEO of [the Agriculture Ministry’s] Livestock Affairs has been tasked with being dispatched to the site and following up on the transfer of refrigerated containers to powered locations, and if necessary, utilizing the ministry’s resources to assist the private sector,” he added.

Media reports said Shahid Rajaei Port, which is the main transit and container port and the country’s

largest trade center, after a short pause in activities, once again witnessed the resumption of goods exports and imports, and even foreign transit.

Farzaneh Sadegh, the minister of roads and urban development, announced at 9 a.m. local time on Sunday that various loading, unloading, and other activities are currently being carried out as usual in other zones and sections of Shahid Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas.

On Saturday, a powerful blast rocked the port of Shahid Rajaei in Hormozgan Province after a fuel tanker exploded for reasons still under investigation.

The tragic incident has so far claimed at least 40 lives and injured more than 1,000 individuals.

Iranian officials, emergency services, health departments, and crisis management teams are trying to ensure that victims and their families receive the necessary care and that potentially affected facilities are secured and rehabilitated.

Authorities have further reassured the public that an in-depth investigation is underway to establish the cause of the explosion and prevent its recurrence.

Iran, Azerbaijan can ...

Another issue that has impeded relations is related to customs procedures in Astara. Pezeshkian’s visit under these circumstances demonstrates that both countries are keen to resolve disputes through dialogue, especially considering their long-shared land and maritime borders. This reflects the positive nature of Pezeshkian’s diplomacy, which aims to foster cooperation and, in fact, to boost bilateral relations.

Both countries have a joint commission for economic cooperation, with meetings held alternately in Azerbaijan and Iran to set the framework for future cooperation. The organizations overseeing this engagement are linked to the relevant ministries in both countries.

Therefore, the ties between Iran and Azerbaijan run deep.

The Zangezur Corridor has also caused friction. Iran’s position on the corridor involves the Armenian territory that separates Azerbaijan’s Nakhchivan region in the west from the rest of Azerbaijan in the east. Based on a 2020 cease-fire agreement, Armenia was supposed to provide facilities for Azerbaijan, and Azerbaijan in turn was expected to allow Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh to use the Lachin Corridor to reach Armenia. However, this provision was not fulfilled, and consequently, the Zangezur Corridor issue also remained unresolved.

Iran proposed that since the two countries cannot find common ground, they

should use the same corridor that had been in place since the collapse of the Soviet Union, or even earlier. Since 1988, these two regions relied on Iranian territory to access each other’s regions, even before the outbreak of the Nagorno-Karabakh War.

Iran is keen on fostering comprehensive cooperation with Azerbaijan, and hopes that Pezeshkian’s visit will be a positive one, helping to resolve outstanding issues and improve relations.

The shared bonds between Iran and Azerbaijan are significant. Many Azerbaijanis live in Iran, and the majority of Azerbaijan’s Muslim population are Shias. Therefore, if outside meddling does not enter the picture, the two neighbors can easily take advantage of

their shared potential.

Both nations are members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and their cooperation appears to have the potential to lead to mutual economic prosperity. Iran has also abolished the visa requirement for Azerbaijani citizens, allowing them to enter its soil twice a year without the need for a visa. This has made it easier for Azerbaijanis to travel to Iran for tourism, religious pilgrimages, and even medical treatment, as Iran offers high-quality healthcare facilities, particularly for surgeries and disease treatment.

Many Azerbaijanis have already benefited from this, which has resulted in very positive outcomes in bilateral relations. Naturally, every country operates

based on its own interests and does not impose conditions on its neighbors. Iran’s foreign policy in the region emphasizes regional cooperation and non-interference in the affairs of its neighboring countries. By applying this policy, Iran has shown its goodwill, and there is huge potential for further cooperation, provided that internal and external forces—whether foreign or domestic—do not meddle and disrupt the amicable relations between Tehran and Baku.

Iran is hopeful that its relations with Azerbaijan will grow stronger with each passing day, especially since the Islamic Republic has confirmed that it is pursuing a balanced policy in the region.