

# Iran Oil Show: Minister announces accelerated investment in upstream petroleum sector

16 contracts, MoUs inked with knowledge-based firms

Economy Desk

Iran's 29th International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition officially opened on Thursday at the Tehran Permanent Fairgrounds, attended by Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad. The four-day event hosted 2,200 domestic and foreign companies, including 150 international firms from 14 countries. This year's key theme, "Investment in the Oil Industry: A Guarantee for Economic Growth and Development," reflects the sector's strategic priorities. The exhibition focuses on showcasing investment opportunities, cutting-edge technologies, domestic capabilities, and engagement with foreign investors. On the sidelines of the event's second day, the oil minister stated, "Under new measures, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is mandated to finalize investor proposals for upstream projects within 3-4 months." "In response to past criticisms over lengthy collaboration processes in upstream projects, and in line with the Leader's emphasis on streamlining procedures, we have significantly reduced these timelines through strategic planning," Paknejad added. Meanwhile, President Masoud Pezeshkian, while touring the

exhibition, urged participating companies to prioritize "foreign currency generation through efficiency and productivity." The president called on firms to submit proposals for boosting production and exports, which the Oil Ministry and government will review. The country's oil and gas industry has faced significant challenges in recent years, including international sanctions, geopolitical competition, and aging infrastructure. The exhibition serves as a bridge between industry, academia, and the private sector, playing a vital role in advancing Iran's energy sector. The event hosted companies from China, Russia, Spain, Italy, the UK, Switzerland, South Korea, Turkey, India, the UAE, Canada, France, Germany, and Brazil, facilitating knowledge exchange, commercial partnerships, and showcasing Iran's industrial achievements.

Focus on innovation, domestic capacity

With the world's second-largest gas reserves and fourth-largest oil reserves, Iran requires infrastructure modernization and technological upgrades. This year's exhibition featured events centered on knowledge-based firms, startups, universities, and tech parks, alongside workshops, technical

seminars, and unveilings of domestically produced equipment. Over four days, specialized conferences, training workshops, and book launches highlighted investment opportunities in oil and gas fields, exploration projects, and optimization initiatives. Press briefings with senior oil industry executives and media panels further enriched the event.

Oil output target set

The NIOC head announced on Friday that, "Based on planned programs, the country's oil production will increase to 250,000 barrels per day this year." During a press conference on the second day of the exhibition, Hamid Bovard said, "Oil production rose to 150,000 barrels per day at the start of the current administration. Plans have been made to increase this figure to 250,000 barrels per day this year, though achieving this target requires specific conditions to be met."

Key contracts

On Friday, National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) signed 10 supply contracts worth over \$24 million with domestic manufacturers and knowledge-based firms. The agreements cover drilling mud oxy-polymer, turbine spare parts, suspension materials, flanges, construction machinery,



drilling cement, and over 10,000 steel pipes. NISOC chief Ebrahim Piramoon emphasized that such deals aim to "strengthen domestic production, localize technology, reduce foreign dependency, and enhance supply chain resilience."

First-hand contracts reach \$500m

Hossein Afshin, vice president for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy of Iran commented on the volume of contracts signed with executive bodies, noting that the approved value of first-hand contracts — pioneering agreements aimed at

fostering domestic technology innovation, knowledge-based partnerships, and sanctions-resilient solutions — has reached \$300m to date. With today's signings, Afshin said, the total will rise to \$500m, underscoring efforts to scale up homegrown expertise and reduce reliance on foreign technologies amid economic pressures. Omid Shakeri, deputy oil minister for engineering, research and technology, stressed "maximizing legal and technological capacities to advance the industry," adding that leveraging first-hand contracts aligns with the ministry's tech-driven strategy.

Iran-China coal-to-gas MoU

Moreover, Iran's Research Institute of Petroleum Industry and China's Keyon Company signed a cooperation MoU to develop coal-to-natural gas conversion technology. Signed on the exhibition's opening day, the agreement addresses Iran's gas supply shortages and explores alternative fuels. Hamid Ganji, the head of the Gas Research Institute, emphasized Iran's "significant coal reserves" and Keyon's expertise in synthesis gas and hydrogen production, stating, "This collaboration aims to localize technical know-how and achieve industrial-scale utilization of this technology."

## Caspian Sea oil exploration resumes after three-decade hiatus

Iran targets 600m cubic meters of in-place crude



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Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad ordered on Friday the restart of exploratory drilling operations in the shallow waters of the Caspian Sea in north of the country. The drilling rig of North Drilling Company was deployed at the Rudсар structure in Block 18 of the Caspian Sea at a water depth of 70 meters, Tasnim reported. The official restart of exploratory

drilling was announced by Paknejad during the 29th International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition. The minister said, "If exploration operations in the Caspian Sea yield desired results, approximately 600 million cubic meters of crude oil in-place will be realized." "For nearly 28 years, drilling activities in the shallow waters of the Caspian Sea — the southernmost part of the sea — had been largely halted. After 28 years, operations will commence at the Rudсар hydrocarbon structure, located 15 to 16 kilometers offshore, at depths of 70 to 75 meters," he added. The minister emphasized, "Drilling will extend approximately 5 kilometers below the seabed. The success of this exploration will determine whether this hydrocarbon structure can be classified as a reservoir or field."

Paknejad said the move requires extensive calculations to be conducted by the National Iranian Oil Company. "Initial estimates based on seismic and geological studies suggest approximately 600 million cubic meters of crude oil in-place and 2 TCF of gas producibility. However, these figures will be confirmed after the completion of studies, which will take one year," he added. The exploratory drilling will reach a final depth of 5,077 meters to evaluate the reservoir potential of the Rudсар structure. The last shallow-water well in the Caspian Sea was drilled in 1997. Drilling in the deep-water section of the Caspian Sea had also been suspended since 2014. The Oil Ministry plans to resume activities in this section following repairs to the Iran-Amirkabir semi-floating platform.

## Iran, India sign two memos on customs, pharmaceuticals

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Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Minister of External Affairs of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar signed two memoranda of understanding at the end of the 20th Iran-India Joint Commission Meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Thursday. The agreements include a memorandum of understanding on customs cooperation and another on regulations related to pharmaceutical products. They also signed the minutes of the joint commission meeting, IRNA reported. Araghchi underscored that Iran-India economic relations remain



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and Minister of External Affairs of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar sign memoranda of understanding in New Delhi on May 8, 2025. ● IRNA

below expectations, stating that bilateral trade has fallen short of projected levels. He said that sanctions pose significant hurdles to expanding economic collaboration and expressed hope for addressing such issues in the future.

Leading a diplomatic delegation, the Iranian foreign minister arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday to engage in discussions with senior Indian officials on matters of mutual interest, as well as regional and international developments.

## How Netanyahu using ...

For many American hardliners, Israeli matters more than some US states. **Page 1 >** The US, at the same time, holds the veto power in the UN Security Council, which is the only body whose resolutions are binding and enforceable. While the UN secretary-general may speak out strongly, or the International Court of Justice may condemn Israeli actions, these judgments only mat-

ter if they are taken up by the Security Council. And there, a single US veto is enough to shut things down, even if European states fall in line behind the condemnation, or countries like Spain and some Arab nations speak up in favor of Palestinian statehood, their influence is greatly watered down when the great powers are lined up behind Israel. Israel has also latched onto the idea

that criticism of its actions is tantamount to opposing Middle Eastern stability — or even American power itself. It portrays its military operations as being carried out on behalf of these very powers. As long as this narrative holds sway, global public opinion or symbolic gestures from smaller states will have little real impact on Israeli policy. As a result, unless the big powers

change course, the UN will remain toothless when it comes to holding Israel accountable. Given this blanket of protection from major powers and the Security Council's inaction, Israel has felt free to shrug off international law. For any real change to occur, a ceasefire must be reached in Gaza, even if the current conditions are not ideal. Ending the war would pull the rug out from under Netanyahu and strip

him of the narrative that has kept him afloat. If that happens, it could open the door to real diplomatic momentum. Until then, the odds of Palestinian advocates or supporters getting a meaningful plan off the ground remain slim. As long as the war rages on, Netanyahu and his allies will continue to cash in on chaos, using it as both a shield and a stepping stone.