

President calls for climate-aligned agricultural data, cropping patterns

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored the necessity of establishing a precise agricultural data system for water and soil resources, developing cropping patterns tailored to regional capacities and climates across the country, and empowering both citizens and farmers to address challenges in the sector.

During an unannounced visit to the Ministry of Agriculture on Saturday, Pezeshkian held a meeting with the minister, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezjelaj, and senior officials of the ministry. Provincial heads of Agricultural Jihad organizations across Tehran Province also attended the session virtually, with officials from various departments presenting updates on their latest initiatives and programs, IRNA

reported. Addressing the discussions, the president emphasized that, "The issues raised must be comprehensively analyzed in consultation with the minister to resolve existing challenges."

"We face significant problems in water, soil, and agriculture. Timely and effective measures must be designed and implemented to prevent these challenges from escalating into crises," he stated.

Pezeshkian also urged agricultural and food security officials to contribute to developing "a thorough and accurate understanding of the country's water and soil conditions, the alignment of current cropping patterns with available resources, and adherence to productivity principles."

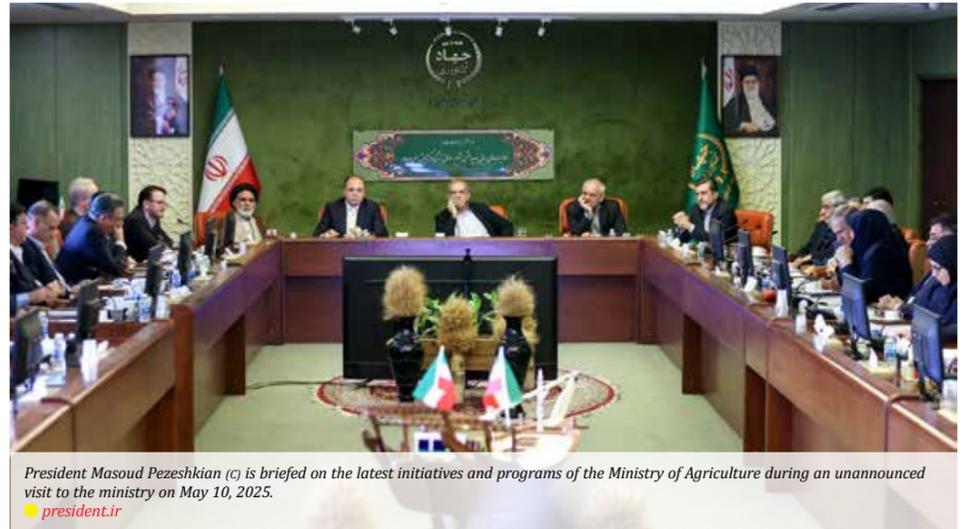
The president highlighted the critical importance of evaluating

whether agricultural production for export is rational and sustainable given Iran's water resources.

"Exporting agricultural products is effectively a covert export of water," he noted. "We must meticulously assess which crops can be produced and exported reasonably, considering our water constraints."

Pezeshkian posed a pointed question, "Is it wise to extract groundwater indiscriminately and cultivate water-intensive crops while ignoring the depletion of water resources, severe land subsidence, and soil degradation?"

Criticizing the lack of actionable data, Pezeshkian remarked, "Unfortunately, we lack a comprehensive and precise data system to map agricultural capacities and needs, which is essential for strategic planning."



President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) is briefed on the latest initiatives and programs of the Ministry of Agriculture during an unannounced visit to the ministry on May 10, 2025.

president.ir

He stressed that, "Cropping patterns must be defined based on this agricultural data frame-

work. If we fail to guide farmers on optimal practices, they will simply follow traditional meth-

ods. In such cases, the fault lies not with farmers but with our own inadequate planning."

Over \$3b in new refining projects to be launched this year: Deputy minister



Economy Desk

The Iranian Oil Ministry will inaugurate new refinery projects worth more than \$3.0 billion this year, despite years of

stagnation in the country's refining sector, a senior official from the ministry said on Saturday.

Head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar said that the country's refining industry had faced stagnation over the past three years, adding, "This year, over \$3 billion in new projects will be inaugurated," IRNA reported.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday during the third day of the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining, and Petrochemical Exhibition, Azimifar noted, "While Iran was a gasoline exporter in 2020, it has become a gasoline importer

in recent years."

He reported a 43% decline in power plant fuel reserves at the start of the current government's term (July, 2024), saying, "Major refinery overhauls were delayed in the past three years due to financial imbalances." Despite these challenges, the Deputy Minister emphasized, "Power plant fuel consumption has risen by 80% this year."

Azimifar also highlighted a reduction in CNG consumption from 23 million cubic meters in 2020 to 18 million cubic meters.

"Since the current government took office, nearly 8 million liters have been

added to the country's oil and gas production, with an additional 7 million liters added to gasoline output," he added.

Gas production

Meanwhile, at a separate press conference on the sidelines of the exhibition, Touraj Dehqani, CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company, addressed the Oil Ministry's gas production target for this year and said, "A production ceiling of 725 million cubic meters has been set."

Dehqani went on to say that, "In the Kish gas field, 14 wells have been drilled, with 10 completed and ready for production, yielding 28 million cubic meters—equiv-

alent to one phase of South Pars."

Also, Gholam Abbas Hosseini, CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex, underscored the facility's role in supplying 73% of Iran's gas, SHANA reported.

He announced the early commencement of major refinery overhauls and plans to boost daily gas production by 10-15 million cubic meters this winter.

"The South Pars Complex, the Middle East's largest gas facility, produces nearly 600 million cubic meters of sweet gas daily. It also supplies feedstock to the Persian Gulf Star Refinery," Hosseini stated.

Taxes fund 70% of government's current expenditure

Contribution to GDP reaches 8.3%



Mohammad-Hadi Sobhanian
ISNA

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian's government prioritized strengthening fiscal sustainability through increased tax mobilization, with new data revealing that 70% of the state's current expenditure was funded by tax revenues last year (began on March 20, 2024).

Head of the Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) Mohammad-Hadi Sobhanian, stated, "Last year, nearly 70% of the government's current expenditure were funded by taxes, with tax collec-

tion exceeding both economic growth and inflation rates."

Speaking at the 14th Iran Fiscal and Tax Policy Conference on Saturday, Sobhanian noted, "The tax system is expected to provide sustainable resources for the country's current expenses, but due to high oil revenues, this had not materialized for decades."

"In recent years, taxes have become one of the government's stable resources for funding national expenses. The share of taxes in various ratios reflects reduced budget dependency, indicating significant progress in this area. Last year, despite challenges such as energy shortages and subsequent bank closures, we mobilized 1,229 trillion tomans (≈ \$15 billion USD) in tax resources, compared to 305 trillion tomans (≈ \$3.7 billion USD) in 2021," he added.

Emphasizing a fourfold growth in tax resource mobilization over four years, he said, "The tax-to-GDP ratio stood at approximately 5.7% in 2021, rising to 8.3% last year."

The deputy economy minister further stated, "Over the past two years, nearly 50% of the budget has been funded by taxes."

Tehran, Moscow stress expansion of maritime transport cooperation

Economy Desk

Iran and Russia stressed expansion of maritime transport cooperation during a phone call between the deputy ministers from both sides.

In a phone call between Iranian Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development Saeed Rasouli and Russian counterpart, Dmitry Azarov, the two sides emphasized strengthening maritime transport collaboration and agreed to hold a joint meeting in the port of Makhachkala, Russia, IRNA reported.

The two sides reached an agreement to convene a joint session within the next two months at the Russian port of Makhachkala, aimed at operationalizing the establishment of the Iran-Russia Maritime Transport Consortium.

The meeting will include officials from Iran's Ports and Maritime Or-

ganization alongside private sector representatives, as well as managers from Russia's Ministry of Transport, the Federal Maritime and River Transport Agency, and Russian private entities.

During the call, Rasouli underscored the critical importance of boosting combined transport and transit along the Caspian route, reflecting Tehran and Moscow's shared commitment to revitalizing the North-South Transport Corridor. The head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization stressed the need to streamline and enhance efficiency across all existing routes of the corridor, particularly by activating Caspian Sea transport operations — especially container shipping via northern Iranian ports and Russian ports. Rasouli thanked the Russian side for their cooperation in drafting and signing the 2025 roadmap for

expanding Iran-Russia transport cooperation, which was recently finalized.

He also urged the swift formation and launch of the Iran-Russia Maritime Transport Consortium with participation from both countries' private sectors, which he described as "instrumental in advancing transport and transit in the Caspian region."

The deputy minister noted that maximizing the use of logistical and transit capacities in the Caspian Sea and expanding commercial collaboration align with the directives of senior Iranian and Russian leadership. He also expressed Iran Ports and Maritime Organization's full preparedness "to engage in this specialized meeting to develop a comprehensive maritime roadmap and a joint action plan for maritime transport."

Saudi Arabia sincere ...

Iran-US relations have been through many ups and downs over the past four decades,

Page 1 > ranging from outright hostility to limited dialogue and occasional breakthroughs in easing tensions. In such a climate, even establishing a normal relationship calls for a shift in approach and some tough, intricate negotiations.

The prevailing sentiment at home is one of support for diplomacy; while hardliners persist, their sway is minimal in the current climate. On the US side, internal

divisions run deeper. Yet, but with Donald Trump in the White House, congressional backing, and his distinctive style, many of Washington's statements come across as negotiating tactics rather than final positions. Therefore, observers should do well to ride out the highs and lows of the talks with patience and care, steering clear of jumping to conclusions. At this juncture, the spotlight should be squarely kept on official statements from the Iranian negotiating team, and unofficial opinions and commentary should be played down. Bolstering the Irani-

an team's confidence and creating breathing room for them can help bring about greater achievements. With this approach, it is hoped that talks will bear fruit in a more favorable atmosphere.

Despite the checkered history between Iran and Saudi Arabia—sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet—a calm and conflict-free Iran and region is, by and large, preferable for Saudi Arabia and all Persian Gulf Arab states. Riyadh would jump at such a scenario, though this does not mean any party will give up its interests for the other, espe-

cially Iran. Tehran must continue to define and pursue its interests on a win-win basis, in line with the shifting sands of today's international order.

Saudi Arabia is genuine in its stance on ironing out issues between Iran and the US, and stands to gain far more from this process than it might lose. Some pundits, both inside and outside Iran, argue that improved Iran-US ties could cramp Saudi Arabia's style in certain areas. Yet, what Riyadh stands to gain from a possible diplomatic breakthrough far outweighs any

potential loss.

Should Iran and the US strike a deal, Saudi Arabia is likely to fall into step with Iran. But should the talks fall flat, the landscape will be entirely different and must be addressed in due course. With Trump's regional tour and Araghchi's visit to Saudi Arabia now in play, it is hard to imagine that Iran-Saudi talks would sidestep the Iran-US negotiations. Iran will certainly have advice for Saudi Arabia, and Riyadh will have its own views to put on the table. Such consultations are not only timely, but absolutely vital.