

VP: Gov't not to allow obstacles to hold back producers

Economy Desk

Iran's Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref emphasized that supporting the private sector is a top priority for the government, stating that its task is to remove obstacles from the path of producers.

"For development programs to endure and succeed, the private sector must take the lead and assume responsibility, while the government acts as a facilitator," Aref said at the launch ceremony of phase one of the Azarbaijan fruit plain agro-industrial complex in East Azarbaijan Province. Earlier in his remarks, Aref described the launch of phase one as aligning with the Vision Document, the Seventh Development Plan, national policies, and the theme of the current year. "With this phase becoming operational, a vital regional project is now realized," he said, as reported by ISNA.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in his felicitation message on the occasion of Nowruz on March 20, called for "Investments for Production."

Notably, phase one of the Azarbaijan fruit plain agro-industrial complex — developed through private sector investment — was inaugurated with Aref in attendance. It will directly employ 300 individuals and create 1,000 indirect jobs.

The vice president also noted that past experience has shown government-led execution imposes limited growth capacity due to bureaucratic constraints, whereas public-driven initiatives unlock limitless potential.

"The history of the Islamic Revolution demonstrates that whenever the people have actively participated, capacities became boundless, and we achieved our goals entirely. This outlook aligns with the Fourteenth Government's strategy," he said.

"The government's task is to remove obstacles — or, in industrialists' terms, to avoid creating new barriers. Under this administration, we will not permit hurdles to be placed before producers," Aref added.

"We are pursuing self-sufficiency and resilience in industry and agriculture despite water shortages and declining rainfall."

Stressing that production serves employment, meeting public needs, and wealth generation, Aref stated, "Production here relates to our shared civilizational sphere, home to a 300-million-strong population bound by cultural, historical, and civilizational commonalities."

Referencing the strategy of agriculture and strategic goods production to meet domestic needs across development plans, he acknowledged, "In some years, we exceeded 120 million tons of agricultural output, but post-harvest losses and intermediary exploitation remained critical issues. Short-term profit motives have historically blocked processing industries from gaining traction."

Aref also criticized the "predatory pricing of horticultural products by brokers in the northwest," reaffirming that successive governments have prioritized strengthening processing industries. "These industries address national needs, create jobs, and elevate living standards, particularly for marginalized communities."

On water scarcity, he stressed the urgency of coordinated ac-



Iran's Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref (l) inaugurates the Azarbaijan fruit plain agro-industrial complex in East Azarbaijan Province on May 12, 2025.
● ALI HAMED HAQDOUST /IRNA

tion, "Public cooperation can rationalize consumption, while the government must secure water through supply projects and inter-basin transfers."

Aras River water transfer project

In the northwestern province

of East Azarbaijan, he noted, the Aras River water transfer project — allocating 180 million cubic meters — will supply Tabriz, Jolfa, Marand, Shabestar, and surrounding villages. "The government is fully prepared to resolve the project's core challenges. Contractors

have pledged to complete it a year ahead of schedule," he said.

Aref further highlighted that the Seventh Development Plan targets 8% annual growth to drive economic progress. "An 8% growth rate necessitates investment in production."

CBI: Removal of four zeros from national currency on agenda

Economy Desk

The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran stated that the removal of four zeros from the national currency is among the Central Bank's priorities for this year.

Mohammad Reza Farzin made these remarks on Monday during the analytical meeting on enhancing monetary and banking governance, investment for production, and the policies of the Central Bank, Mehr reported.

"One of this year's key priorities is the removal of zeros from the national currency unit. We are pursuing this measure, as many countries have implemented zero removal. We can establish a reconfigured structure for the rial, which will materialize if executed at an appropriate time," he emphasized.

The long-delayed redenomination

of the national currency will strike four zeros from the rial and formally replace it with the toman in a bid to simplify transactions.

The CBI head further noted that national GDP growth has experienced significant fluctuations in recent years. "After 2019, the economy transitioned from negative to positive growth, with 2023 recording the highest annual growth rate of 5.3% in recent years. However, this declined to 3.7% during the first nine months of the past year (began on March 20, 2024). Sustained high growth rates are essential to achieving increased per capita income," he stated.

"Since 2023, when inflation rates peaked, the point-to-point inflation rate reached 62%, but began declining monthly. By March 2024, it had fallen to 39.7%," the Central Bank governor said.

US, China reach deal to temporarily slash tariffs, easing slump fears

The United States and China have agreed to temporarily slash reciprocal tariffs in a deal that surpassed expectations as the world's two biggest economies seek to end a damaging trade war that has stoked fears of recession and roiled financial markets.

The US will cut extra tariffs it imposed on Chinese imports in April this year to 30% from 145% and Chinese duties on US imports will fall to 10% from 125%, the two sides said on Monday. The new measures are effective for 90 days, Reuters reported.

The dollar rose and stock markets lifted following the news, which helped allay concerns about a downturn triggered last month by US President Donald Trump's escalation of tariff measures aimed at narrowing the US trade deficit.

"Both countries represented their national interest very well," US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent

said after talks with Chinese officials in Geneva. "We both have an interest in balanced trade, the US will continue moving towards that."

Striking a conciliatory tone towards China, Bessent was speaking alongside US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer after the weekend talks in Switzerland in which both sides hailed progress on narrowing differences.

"The consensus from both delegations this weekend is neither side wants a decoupling," Bessent said. "And what had occurred with these very high tariffs ... was the equivalent of an embargo, and neither side wants that. We do want trade." The tariff dispute had brought nearly \$600 billion in two-way trade to a standstill, disrupting supply chains, sparking fears of stagflation and triggering some layoffs.

The Geneva meetings were the first

face-to-face interactions between senior US and Chinese economic officials since Trump returned to power and launched a global tariff blitz, imposing particularly hefty duties on China.

Bessent said the deal did not include sector-specific tariffs and that the US would continue strategic rebalancing in areas including medicines, semiconductors and steel where it had identified supply chain vulnerabilities.

Since taking office in January, Trump had hiked the tariffs paid by US importers for goods from China to 145%, in addition to those he imposed on many Chinese goods during his first term and the duties levied by the Biden administration. China hit back by putting export curbs on some rare earth elements, vital for US manufacturers of weapons and electronic consumer goods, and raising tariffs on US goods to 125%.

Iran, Qatar launch 'Green Customs Corridor' to boost trade

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Iran and Qatar established a "Green Customs Corridor" to facilitate and expand trade and transit between the two countries, marking the first time a bilateral customs cooperation agreement of this scope.

The initiative was formalized on Sunday evening, with the signing of a customs cooperation protocol between Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) Foroud Asgari and Chairman of the General Authority of Customs Ahmed bin Abdullah Al-Jamal, ISNA reported.

This marks the first time a bilateral customs cooperation agreement of this scope has been signed between the two nations. Qatar aims to increase its share of Iran's foreign trade and transit, similar to the role played by the

United Arab Emirates.

During bilateral negotiations in Tehran, the customs chiefs agreed on key measures to enhance customs relations, implement the World Customs Organization's (WCO) framework for security and trade facilitation standards, and provide trade-friendly incentives. The agreement includes streamlining trade processes and accelerating customs procedures for export-import goods, harmonizing customs standards, eliminating redundant regulations, and creating "Green Customs Corridor" for authorized commercial goods.

Additionally, both sides will enhance trade security through data-sharing mechanisms, particularly for high-risk goods, and combat smuggling via advanced technologies such as smart systems and X-ray scanners for cargo inspection.

Envoy: Iran seeks to enhance ties with Russia in automotive, auto parts industries

Economy Desk

Iran aims to broaden its collaboration with Russia in various sectors, including the automotive and auto parts industries, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali stated. The remarks were made on Monday during the opening ceremony of the 29th international trade fair for automotive production, aftermarket and service industry in Moscow, IRNA reported.

Jalali highlighted the strategic comprehensive treaty signed between the two countries on January 17 and the implementation of the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), effective from May 15, describing the outlook for Iran-Russia relations in 2025 as "promising and expanding."

Noting that representatives of Iran's automotive and auto parts industries are participating for the fourth consecutive year in a unified pavilion at the Automobility exhibition, he emphasized, "Iran's annual auto-

mobile production stands at approximately 1.2 million units, though production capacity has been higher in certain years."

"Iran has made significant advancements in auto parts manufacturing, with over 1,850 active auto parts companies operating in the country today," Jalali further remarked, "My presence at the opening of this international exhibition sends a clear message: We are prepared to deepen cooperation, particularly in the auto parts sector."

The international exhibition, titled MIMS Automobility Moscow 2025, commenced on Monday, and will run for four days. According to organizers, 15 Iranian companies are participating in this global event, showcasing their expertise in automotive components, services, and technologies.

The exhibition is recognized as the largest annual automotive industry event in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Key sectors featured include spare parts, vehicle maintenance,



Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali (2nd L) visits the pavilion of an Iranian company after the inauguration of the national pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran at MIMS Automobility Moscow 2025 on May 12, 2025.
● IRNA

electronic equipment, oils and chemicals, digital solutions, electric vehicles, and autonomous technologies.

This edition of the exhibition hosts 1,920 companies from 20 countries, including Iran, Italy, China, Hungary, India, South Korea, and Singapore.