

# Iran using advanced tech for new field discoveries: Deputy oil minister

Economy Desk

Iran's deputy oil minister announced that the country is ahead of its scheduled exploration targets, expressing hope that leveraging advanced technologies will enable access to new oil fields. Speaking at a ceremony commemorating the anniversary of Iran's first oil discovery, Hamid Bovard voiced optimism that by utilizing modern technologies, "we can access new fields (albeit smaller) and create opportunities for the private sector to participate through Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC) contracts or other contractual models." The head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) emphasized the need to prioritize shale and unconventional

oil resources, stating, "Lorestan shale oil must be seriously addressed." He noted that while accessing large fields has become more challenging, a significant number of oil fields remain undeveloped across the country.

Commercializing shale oil output

Meanwhile, Mohieddin Jafari, exploration director of the NIOC, highlighted ongoing efforts in shale oil development, saying, "Research initiatives in this field have enabled us to extract up to two barrels of oil per ton of shale rock in certain areas." "With adequate funding, plans to commercialize these resources will be prioritized," he said. During the commemoration event, Jafari referred to the southwestern city

of Masjed Soleyman as the birthplace of Iran's oil industry, saying, "117 years ago today (May 26), the Middle East's first oil discovery occurred here, paving the way for global energy giants to emerge. The world's oil industry owes its legacy to Masjed Soleyman." Jafari went on to say that, "Our focus is on harnessing new hydrocarbon potentials, particularly through shale oil research. We've achieved extraction rates of two barrels per ton of shale in select regions, and with financial support, we aim to transition toward commercial-scale production." Expressing optimism about future discoveries, he concluded, "Finding massive oil and gas fields — even on the scale of South Pars — remains within reach."



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## IMIDRO: Foreign investment deals guarantee machinery manufacturing



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The head of the Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) placed a premium on ongoing negotiations and agreements with foreign companies aimed at securing financing and foreign investment. "Foreign investment will be operationalized in the near future through collaboration with domestic contractors," Mohammad Aqajanloo said on Monday, as reported by IRNA. Addressing the National Mining Day commemoration ceremony in Tehran, attended by the minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Aqajanloo emphasized, "Foreign partners will prioritize the production of next-generation, high-capacity mining machinery by selecting Iranian contractors." He also highlighted IMIDRO's support for domestic manufacturing and mining equipment over the past two years, adding, "The Mining Activities Insurance Fund has played a significant role in this support, while streamlined import permit approvals have also been facilitated." The deputy minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade addressed the composition of imported machinery, noting, "Over the past two years, both new and used machinery have entered the country, though second-hand equipment has dominated imports." Aqajanloo identified productivity as the key driver behind the mining sector's 13% growth, stating, "45% of the growth stems from productivity gains, partly achievable through modernized equipment. Continuing with outdated machinery or fluctuating fuel prices lacks economic viability."

The deputy minister linked enhanced mining productivity to technological advancement and digital transformation, explaining, "IMIDRO is collaborating with the Ministry of Communications to expand fiber-optic infrastructure and interconnect mining data hubs. Coordination with the vice president for science and technology has also been established." He further announced support for knowledge-based companies and partnerships with universities to identify and develop cutting-edge mining technologies. "Three pilot mines — an open-pit, an underground, and a processing site — have been selected for smart mining integration," he said, adding, "If successful, this model will be expanded to other mines nationwide." The IMIDRO chairman also outlined plans to transfer 270 exploration licenses through regional and provincial packages.

Seven-fold hike in exploration

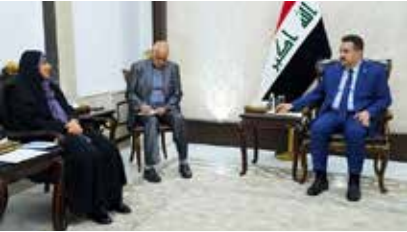
Meanwhile, Dariush Esmaeili, head of the Geological Survey of Iran, announced at the National Mining Day event, "Under the minister's directives, exploration services will expand to 6-7 times historical levels this Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025) through private sector collaboration." "Our strategic focus maximizes private sector capacity in both service delivery and exploration investment, supported by comprehensive planning," he emphasized. Esmaeili added, "Addressing geological risks — including water resources, earthquakes, subsidence, dust storms, and other challenges — remains a core governmental mandate of this organization."

## Iran, Iraq underscore completion of Shalamcheh-Basra railway

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Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani, during his meeting with Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadeq, stressed the expansion of rail and transit cooperation between the two countries and the necessity of completing the Shalamcheh-Basra railway to facilitate the transportation of pilgrims in Arbadeen. Sudani emphasized enhancing rail and transit collaboration, particularly in the development route project, and underscored the urgency of finalizing the Shalamcheh-Basra railway, IRNA reported. He described the project as critical for transporting pilgrims from both countries and Central Asia, especially during the Arbadeen pilgrimage. Arbadeen marks the 40th day since the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the third Shia imam and the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Every year, Muslim

pilgrims from across the world, including from Iran, flock to the Iraqi city of Karbala to mark Arbadeen, where the holy shrine of Imam Hossein is located. Sadeq traveled to Iraq with the aim of developing transportation relations and inspecting the Shalamcheh-Basra railway project. Prior to meeting the Iraqi prime minister, she also held discussions with Razzaq Muhaibis, Iraq's minister of transport, and Abdul Amir al-Shamri, Iraq's minister of interior. During an earlier meeting with Iraq's transport minister, Sadeq stated that transportation cooperation between the two countries is "satisfactory" and stressed, "Iraq must accelerate the construction of the Shalamcheh-Basra railway by handing over demined land." With the completion of demining operations along the Shalamcheh-Basra railway route, the implementation of the critical cross-border project by Iran's Ministry



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of Roads and Urban Development will proceed according to the predetermined schedule. The plan includes three main components, such as constructing the Shalamcheh railway station, building the Shalamcheh passenger terminal and completing the Basra drawbridge.

## Mobarakeh Steel Group pioneering smart industrial ecosystem

Economy Desk

A trilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) for joint collaboration in advancing research, technology, and innovation across Iran's steel industry value chain and related infrastructure was signed on Monday by Iranian Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Hossein Simaei Sarraf, Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy Hossein Afshin, and CEO of Mobarakeh Steel Group Saeed Zarandi. During the meeting, Zarandi said Mobarakeh Steel Group's focus is "on producing high value-added products," adding that, "In the first half of this year (began on March 20, 2025), we will prioritize the production of electrical and stainless steels as key projects, with their revenue potential exceeding fivefold that of other products." Our orientation towards producing high value-added products stems from our desire to advance innovation, Zarandi underlined. Mobarakeh Steel Group is transitioning from being merely a production-focused industrial enterprise to leading an intelligent and sustainable industrial ecosystem, with an emphasis on technological innovation, transparency in the supply chain, and value creation. We strive to continue the measures taken in this field centered on the innovation environment and leveraging advancements in artificial intelligence and digital transformation, the steel group's head said.



Zarandi highlighted energy costs as a critical concern, saying, "Unfortunately, Mobarakeh Steel Group's energy expenses will rise from 26 trillion tomans (≈ \$317.07 million USD) in last Iranian calendar year – 1403 (began on March 20, 2024) to 52 trillion tomans (\$634.15 million USD) this year. We are activating smart technology companies to reduce at least 10% of these costs through innovative energy solutions. Producing high value-added goods remains a national priority." Stressing the need to compete globally in high value-added sectors, he noted, "Global markets are segmented based on complex product manufacturing. We must ensure we remain aligned with cutting-edge technologies." Zarandi stated, "The process of implementing the law of leap in knowledge-based production has not been done as it should, and if the knowledge-based production leap law is implemented correctly, it can be a good

stimulus for the country's industries." Detailing collaborations with academia, he said, "Last year (1403), Mobarakeh Steel Group signed 320 billion tomans (≈ \$3.9 million USD) in joint contracts with 120 university research centers and pursued 160 research projects. We also organized industrial tours for 1,550 university elites." He stressed that the group has invested "250 billion tomans (≈ \$3.05 million USD) in university research infrastructure and science parks, and 600 billion tomans (≈ \$7.32 million USD) in tech park companies." The trilateral agreement, he concluded, aims to generate greater added value by leveraging capacities within top universities, research institutes, and science/technology parks, aligning with national science/technology policies and fostering innovation in Iran's steel value chain. It also seeks to strengthen academia-industry ties under the framework of the "knowledge-based production leap law."