

Iran, UN focusing on desert greening, combating dust storms

Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization emphasized the implementation of watershed management projects and reducing critical dust storm hotspots through cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Ali Teymouri, during a meeting on Saturday with Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labe, the officer-in-charge of the UNDP office in Iran, discussed joint cooperation priorities in natural resource management, combating desertification, and mitigating climate change impacts, as reported by IRNA.

The Iranian deputy minister highlighted Iran's climatic challenges as a country located in the world's arid and semi-arid belt and stressed the importance of international cooperation to preserve and restore natural resources. Referring to the 135 million hectares of natural resource areas under his organization's management and the existence of 32 million hectares of desert lands, Teymouri called



for UNDP collaboration in executing watershed management projects and reducing critical dust storm hotspots. He mentioned the national program to plant one billion saplings as a participatory initiative with the people, stating, "The organization is prepared to cooperate with the UNDP within the framework of our organization's goals and mandates."

UN works to counter sanctions on Iran environment
The UNDP officer-in-charge also outlined priority areas for UNDP cooperation with Iranian government institutions during the meeting. She proposed establishing micro-credit funds in provinces and local areas as an effective step towards expanding cooperation.

Highlighting the complexities involved in managing natural resources and the numerous variables at play, she emphasized the importance of utilizing local communities' capacities in implementing relevant projects. Medagangoda-Labe noted the decline in international financial resources for preserving natural resources and announced, "The UNDP office will strive to mitigate the impact of

sanctions on Iran's environment and secure Iran's financial allocation for climate change." She also reported consulting with financial funds to develop proposals in water management, drought, climate change, dust storms, and desertification. During the meeting, both sides emphasized expanding cooperation in watershed management and combating dust storms

through pilot and small-scale projects. They also called for continued dialogue to explore further areas of cooperation.

Head of Iran's Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization Ali Teymouri (R) meets Officer-in-Charge of the UNDP office in Iran Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labe on July 19, 2025. IRNA

Government signs memoranda for extraterritorial cultivation: Minister



Economy Desk

The agriculture minister announced that the government had set a target of approximately one million hectares for extra-terri-

torial cultivation, stating that the ministry has signed memoranda of understanding (MoU) with several countries in this regard. Announcing the above, Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji told ISNA that pre-

paratory work to commence overseas cultivation had begun. Nouri Ghezleji stated that the ministry has revised the regulations for overseas cultivation. "We must utilize overseas farming as we import about 20 percent of our required goods and foodstuffs. Therefore, we intend for our producers and economic actors to engage in producing the country's required food materials in suitable countries, transfer a portion of the products to Iran, and sell another portion in those same countries," he said. He added that the ministry is seriously pursuing "cooperation with 4-5 countries; work has commenced and good groundwork has been laid." Nouri Ghezleji said that during

recent visits, the ministry "signed memoranda of understanding and substantial headway has been achieved," expressing hope that extra-territorial cultivation in such countries will commence imminently. The minister emphasized that overseas cultivation presents an opportunity to export the technical engineering services. "This will allow our investors, agricultural graduates, and professional farmers to become active in other countries, transfer technology, bring part of the product back to the country, and sell part of it there," he noted. "The government's target is approximately one million hectares of overseas cultivation," he said.

Iran-Armenia trade tops \$1b with over 3.5% growth



Economy Desk

Iran's Ambassador to Armenia announced that bilateral trade between Armenia and Iran has reached approximately \$1 billion, indicating growth exceeding 3.5 percent. Mehdi Sobhani, Iran's Ambassador to Armenia, stated during an interview with Armenia's official television that trade volume between the two nations has reached about \$1 billion, Mehr reported. According to data released by Armenia's Statistical Committee (Armstat), the country's foreign trade with Iran reached \$737.4 million in 2024, representing a 6.5% increase compared to 2023. Bilateral trade during the first five months of the current calendar year also reached \$278.7 million, marking a 4% increase year-on-year. Ambassador Sobhani had earlier indicated Tehran's intention to increase this figure to \$1 billion by 2025. The Iranian Ambassador to Armenia stated, "During the first 11 months of last year, 276,000 Armenian citizens visited Iran for various reasons, while 176,000 Iranian tourists entered Armenia during the same period. This represents a natural process. Iranian tourist arrivals to Armenia during the first 11 months of 2024 increased by 20% compared to 2023." Data from Armenia's Tourism Committee shows that Iranian nationals accounted for 8% of the 691,900 tourists who visited Armenia during the first five months of the current calendar year.

Pakistan eases trade with Iran through new tariff measures

Economy Desk

Iran's commercial attaché in Pakistan said new decisions by Islamabad to reduce certain customs tariffs and base prices had created fresh opportunities for effective engagement between the private sectors of the two sides. According to IRNA, diplomatic efforts by Iran's ambassador in Islamabad and the commercial attaché of the Islamic Republic in Pakistan to reduce customs duties on Iranian exports to Pakistan yielded positive results following multiple meetings with customs officials of the neighboring country. "Pakistan Customs has re-

duced the Protective Regulatory Duty for inclusion in the new fiscal year's budget. Consequently, tariffs on certain Iranian export goods including detergents, milk powder, hot and cold rolled sheets, and tiles/ceramics will be reduced by 5 to 20 percent, with the maximum reduction being 20% for tiles and ceramics," said Morad Nemati Zargarani, Iran's commercial attaché in Pakistan. "With the new approach of Pakistan's government to eliminate redundant tariffs, and upon finalization of the Free Trade Agreement - which we hope will be expedited given both nations'

needs - bilateral trade relations, particularly exports to Pakistan, are expected to expand," he added. Nemati Zargarani pointed to the valuation basis for Iranian tile and ceramic exports to Pakistan, saying, "Since Pakistan Customs recently increased base prices and reduced country classifications from 4 to 3 groups, placing Iran in the 'Other Countries' list, written correspondence and negotiations took place between Iranian and Pakistani officials." "Ultimately, customs authorities of the neighboring country issued an executive directive, placing Iran in a separate category and ap-



plying the lowest base price for Iran compared to other countries," he added. Nemati Zargarani underlined that Pakistan Customs' previous Protective Regulatory Duty on certain Iranian export goods like tiles and ce-

ramics had reached up to 55 percent. Last October, Iran and Pakistan agreed to establish a joint committee to resolve customs issues at shared borders, aiming to leverage mutual trade capabilities.