

Iran moving from industrial dependence to national industry: Veep

Economy Desk

Iranian first vice president stated that the country is transitioning from dependency to national industry and is pursuing a strategy of self-reliance in all industrial fields. Speaking at a ceremony commemorating National Skills Week on Tuesday, Mohammad Reza Aref emphasized that the country is transitioning from dependency to national industry, underscoring the pursuit of “a strategy to achieve self-sufficiency in all industrial fields and meet the country’s needs,” IRNA reported. The vice president stressed that, of course, close ties must be maintained with global scientific, technological, and academic centers and institutions along this path. Aref stated, “today, in technological advancements, the share of Iranian scientists

is greater than their proportion relative to the population,” adding that the necessities of the human resource development chain impose the strengthening of this link upon the country. He asserted that Iran must hold a superior position in advanced technologies, particularly emerging ones, within the region. Aref noted that specialists and university graduates cannot lead this path, as progress in this field rests with technologists. Globally, he pointed out, the share of scientists is less than that of technologists and is incomparable. The vice president added that Iran must move “at high speed in the competitive arena of technological advancements alongside world countries.” This raises the question, he posed, of whether this path can be traversed relying solely on university researchers and theoretical graduates, to which the answer is negative.

Consequently, he stated, the pursuit is for collaboration between the scientific and technological sectors. Aref declared that Iran must have no lag behind any advanced country in emerging and prominent technologies. He stated that highly motivated youths mean technologists should lead the way, and given that “we are in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the role of technologists is more specific than that of scientists.” Aref stated that science must keep pace with technology and moderate its behavior; otherwise, it could exhibit harsh and inhuman behavior.



Tabriz-Baku flights resume, boosting ‘trade and economic diplomacy’



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Flights between Tabriz and Baku, and vice versa, resumed on Tuesday following a several-year interruption, with “the development of trade, tourism,

and economic diplomacy” cited as key objectives for reinstating the route. The resumption follows President Masoud Pezeshkian’s official visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan in April and recent diplomatic efforts by the governor

general of East Azarbaijan Province. At the inaugural ceremony for the Baku route held at Tabriz Shahid Madani International Airport, Governor General of East Azarbaijan Bahram Sarmast said that advancing trade, tourism, and economic diplomacy are primary goals of reestablishing the air link, IRNA reported. Provincial officials attended the ceremony, presenting flowers to passengers aboard the first flight. Sarmast emphasized the flight’s restoration stems from Pezeshkian’s diplomatic engagement and underscores East Azarbaijan’s strategic importance in relations with Baku. He noted that the resumption of Tabriz-Baku flights is happening after an interruption of several years, explaining

that establishing these flights is one of the outcomes of the president’s visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan and signifies the importance and position of the northwestern province in relations with Baku. Expressing hope for an increase in flights on this route, the governor general of East Azarbaijan stated, “The province has been one of the country’s important industrial and commercial hubs, and the long-standing history of the Chamber of Commerce in Tabriz, the existence of 70 industrial towns and zones, and 4,800 industrial and production units signify the province’s substantial share in the national economy.” “East Azarbaijan, due to its location at the crossroads of northwestern provinces and its capabilities in tourism,

health tourism, non-oil exports, technical and engineering services, and agricultural and horticultural products, holds a central position in economic relations and exchanges with the Republic of Azerbaijan,” Sarmast said. He said that developing transportation and transit, completing important road projects and border bridges with the Republic of Azerbaijan, visa cancellation, and developing air transport cooperation are among this province’s strategies for connecting with Baku. The Director General of East Azerbaijan Airports, Ramin Azari, also stated at the ceremony that currently, 18 flight routes are active at Tabriz airport. He added, “direct and scheduled flights are also established from this airport with four foreign countries.”

MP: Committee agenda targets water crisis with Persian Gulf transfer, conservation

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A member of the Iranian Parliament’s Development Committee announced that plans for water transfer from the Persian Gulf and promoting water conservation culture were prioritized during a Tuesday meeting with the energy minister to address the water crisis in Tehran and Fars provinces. Speaking to ICANA, Mohammad Reza Rezaei Kouchi said, “A meeting was held with the Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi on Tuesday to examine the water crisis situation in the capital and also to secure drinking water for Fars Province.” Regarding the meeting’s outcomes, he said that the session had two main parts. The first part was dedicated to Tehran’s water crisis, which has led to a severe shortage of drinking water due to poor advance planning. This situation, he noted, was predictable given population growth and rainfall patterns, yet proper planning had not been undertaken. Rezaei Kouchi further stated that while the Energy Ministry is attempting to resolve Tehran’s problem by transferring water from dams in adjacent counties, this is not a fundamental solution. He emphasized the necessity of changing water consumption habits and establishing sustainable water transfer to Tehran, including from the Caspian Sea, as priorities. Unprecedented efforts are underway to resolve the water crisis in Tehran and the region through the transfer of water from the Taleqan Dam. The core concept of the project, launched in January, 2023, is to increase the water intake capacity from the

Taleqan Dam and transfer it to Tehran via the existing route (Ziyaran to Bilaqan). According to the project managers, the project has the capacity to transfer 6.5 cubic meters of water per second. Combined with the 5 cubic meter capacity of the old water conveyance line, it will enable the annual transfer of 300 million cubic meters (mcm) of water to Alborz and Tehran provinces. The parliamentarian also stressed that Tehran’s per capita water consumption is significantly higher than the global average and that efforts in promoting conservation culture have been weak. **Only rescue for arid provinces** The Development Committee member continued that the second topic was the transfer of water from the Persian Gulf to Fars Province in south of Iran. He warned that unless solutions are devised for this province immediately, a crisis similar to Tehran’s would soon occur in Fars. The private sector has invested in the sea water transfer project to Fars, but faces obstacles such as the Energy Ministry’s lack of commitment to guaranteed water purchase. Rezaei Kouchi clarified that agreements were reached during the meeting to support the contractor through guaranteed water purchase, banking facilities, and advance water purchase by large industrial units. He asserted that transferring water from the Persian Gulf is the only way to save Fars, as groundwater aquifers are in poor condition and excessive extraction has caused land subsidence. Highlighting the necessity of changing the national water consumption pattern, Rezaei Kouchi noted that approximately 90%



of Iran’s water is consumed in the agricultural sector with inadequate efficiency. He emphasized the need to reform cultivation patterns and recognize water as a national value. He referenced other water transfer projects in the country, stating, “Projects for transferring water from the Sea of Oman to Sistan and Baluchestan, the Persian Gulf to Kerman, and from Yazd to Isfahan are underway.” “However, government cooperation and utilizing the National Development Fund’s capacity are essential for developing these projects,” he said. The parliament member projected that water transfer to Fars would take at least four years. Furthermore, he mentioned that the plan to transfer water from the southern sea to Isfahan Province has already been implemented, but due to high transfer costs, it is currently only for industrial use. He added that gradually, with government support, financial resource allocation, and utilizing other national capacities, Persian Gulf water could also be delivered to Isfahan for drinking purposes.

Trump’s flight from ...

In fact Iran cannot relinquish its enrichment program, since under Article III of the IAEA Statute and Article IV of the NPT, the right to peaceful nuclear energy—including prospecting, mining, enrichment, and reactor operation—is a “inalienable right” guaranteed to all signatories. Iran’s enrichment cannot be abandoned because the program transcends individuals or governments—it is a national endeavor. The program, built independently from foreign assistance and largely through trial and error with significant sacrifice, and loss of young, elite talent, cannot be abandoned without defying logic and national dignity. Acknowledging these rational and lawful arguments appears to be one of the most difficult admissions in modern political history—a difficulty that pushed Trump to launch an attack against Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. Araghchi’s second major point in that Fox News interview addressed Iran’s adherence to the NPT. He said the country would never go to 90% enrichment and would be committed to staying below 5% for civilian power reactor fuel, and only enrich up to 20% for a TRR research reactor. We do enrich uranium for our own needs, he pointed out. This reaffirms a central tenet of Iran’s nuclear doctrine and underscores its public promise to remain strictly non-military—a point emphasized in IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi’s latest report, which reiterated the absence of any credible evidence of diversion, though the report provided Israel with a justification to attack Iran. If two decades of honest cooperation with the IAEA could not dispel doubts about Iran’s peaceful intentions, the most telling test should come after the assault on Iran. If Iran had aimed to build a bomb, what better time than the post-attack period to

claim justification? Yet Iran remains a party to the NPT and continues to observe its obligations. The upcoming visit of an IAEA deputy to Iran signals Iran’s continued compliance, a reality Trump seems reluctant to acknowledge, since Iran’s compliance contradicts the justifications offered by the US and Israel for their aggression. Thus, Trump lashes out, resorting to crude rhetoric. Araghchi also signaled openness to dialogue, saying Iran was open to dialogue “though not directly at this stage.” But he stressed that if the goal was a “win-win outcome”, he would be ready to engage. Yet Trump appears to have ignored that part of the message. He seems bent on viewing negotiations as extortion, not opportunity—and recoils from acknowledging hard truths. Trump’s refusal to face reality likely stems from the bitter truth about the ineffectiveness of military aggression. As Araghchi reiterated, the illegal bombing of Iran’s nuclear sites reaffirmed that no military solution exists. If doubts linger about the peaceful nature of Iran’s program, the military action did nothing to prove otherwise—whereas a negotiated solution might still succeed. At its core, Trump’s rhetoric is an implicit admission of failure. His claim that Iran is “still enriching” tacitly acknowledges Iran’s enduring capability—proving that the two-day mission by US bombers to target Iranian nuclear sites was effectively for nothing. Nuclear knowledge cannot be destroyed—the centrifuges, facilities, and even scientists may be targeted, but the expertise remains. The sooner Trump embraces this reality, the closer he would return to its campaign of “Make America great again.” Likewise, recognition of Iran’s nuclear program as a permanent capability—not to be reversed by force—could shift the negotiation landscape and pave the way for a rational deal.