

VP says Iran’s transit hits record 20m tons via regional cooperation

Economy Desk

Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref stated at an international conference of landlocked developing countries in Turkmenistan that his country’s achievement of a record 20 million tons of transit cargo is the result of close cooperation with regional countries. At the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in Awaza, Aref noted that eight neighboring countries of Iran constitute one-quarter of the world’s 32 landlocked developing countries, all of which maintain close bilateral and multilateral transit interactions with Iran. “The Islamic Republic’s access to open waters, coupled with its adjacency and proximity to these countries, has created valuable mutual opportunities,” he added. Addressing the conference held on Tuesday with the participation of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres and heads of state and officials from various countries, Aref said Iran reached the record of 20 million tons of transit cargo last year (began on March 20, 2024), attributing the success to close collaboration

with regional nations. He added that the country has “accelerated and simplified the transit process by implementing digital management and electronic exchange of transport documents.” According to the vice president, customs cooperation and reducing clearance times are among other areas that have received attention. Formulating a roadmap for transportation cooperation with regional landlocked countries is another measure that could strengthen these collaborations. “The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a key transit nation, plays a pivotal and strategic role in connecting the three major continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe,” he said, adding that the country’s “unique and strategic geographical position has provided suitable opportunities for landlocked countries in the region to access open waters and expand their trade.” “To this end, strengthening transportation corridors passing through Iran along the North-South and East-West routes has been a priority in the country’s development programs, and extensive capacities have been prepared for trans-

Iran’s First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref addresses the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Awaza, Turkmenistan, on August 5, 2025. [fvpresident.ir](#)

portation development in Iran,” he said.

Openness to foreign investment

Referring to the country’s transportation capacity, Aref stated that through investments made, Iran now possesses “a transportation capacity including 15,000 kilometers of railway network, over 250,000 kilometers of various roads, 16 commercial sea-ports in the north and south of the country, more than 167 customs centers nationwide, and over 54 commercial airports, ready to receive and cooperate in transportation with regional countries, particularly neighbors and landlocked nations.” He declared that Iran welcomes “both joint and independent foreign investment.”

Readiness to establish logistics centers

The vice president announced his country’s readiness to establish logistics and transit



centers in southern ports for the neighboring landlocked countries. Aref stated that Iran, with its access to open waters through the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Indian Ocean, and serving as Turkmenistan’s gateway to Central Asia and the Caucasus, plays a vital role in the transit of goods and energy for landlocked countries.

The presence of transit ports such as Chabahar and Bandar Abbas, along with international North-South and East-West road and rail corridors, enables the connection of countries in the region to global markets. “Within the framework of multilateral cooperation, including the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Ashga-

bat Agreement, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and other regional and international multilateral agreements, Iran strives to cooperate with Central Asian and Caucasus countries to create the necessary and favorable conditions for sustainable development in the transportation sector,” he concluded.

NIPC announces plans to fetch \$100b investment in petchem projects



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A senior official from the National Iranian Petrochemical Company (NIPC) announced on Tuesday that the total required investment for 144 licensed projects in the strategic industry is approximately \$100

billion, reporting on plans to attract domestic and foreign investment in the sector. Investment Manager of the NIPC, Hamidreza Ajami, announced plans to attract domestic and foreign investment in the industry, emphasizing, “Completing semi-finished projects

and developing the petrochemical value chain requires diverse solutions to overcome financial and currency challenges,” IRNA reported. Ajami said that petrochemical development plays a significant role in the country’s economic, social, and national security, and relying solely on domestic investment leads to limited growth. To increase competitiveness in global markets, attracting foreign investors must also be on the agenda. He pointed out that 25% of the country’s non-oil exports and 19% of its industrial value-added returns are provided by the petrochemical sector. He reminded that the industry, with advanced technology, is not only the intermediary link between the upstream oil sector and downstream industries but also serves as a major factor in job creation and entrepreneurship within the country. According to the official, over \$87 billion has been invested in the petrochemical industry from 1978 to 2022. Nineteen percent of the figure originated from foreign sources, and

over 11% came from the National Development Fund and other domestic and foreign resources. He noted that \$22 billion in new investment is also projected for the Seventh Development Plan, stating, “Currently, some of these projects have become operational, and we are striving to complete the remaining projects.” Elaborating on the current status of petrochemical projects, Ajami added, “Out of the total 144 projects, 20 projects with \$11 billion investment have achieved over 70% progress; 32 projects with \$22 billion are between 20% and 70% complete; and 92 projects with \$67 billion have less than 20% physical progress.” The investment manager emphasized the necessity of attracting foreign investment, stating, “Recently, within a memorandum of understanding with the Investment Organization and Economic and Technical Assistance of Iran, it was agreed that opportunities in this industry would be introduced to international investors more than ever before. Additionally, leveraging the capacity of

BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for developing collaborations is being pursued.” He referred to the petrochemical industry’s resilience against sanction pressures, noting, “Despite international difficulties, the path of project implementation through domestic resources and foreign credit lines has continued, and a number of projects will become operational this year.” Ajami listed the most significant investment attractions in Iran’s petrochemical industry as the availability of legal and supportive infrastructure, a large domestic and regional market, access to open waters, specialized human resources, and the technological capacity of knowledge-based companies. He pointed to completing semi-finished projects, developing mid-stream and downstream projects, flare gas collection, and increasing foreign currency generation as the main investment priorities of the company, emphasizing the simultaneous use of experiences from both domestic and foreign partnerships.

FAO stresses boost in cooperation with Iran in agriculture, livestock

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The representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Iran announced the exploration of potential areas for cooperation with Iran in the fields of agricultural and livestock health, such as designing training courses and specialized capacity building. During a visit to one of the subsidiaries of the Agriculture Ministry, Farrukh Toirov, the FAO representative in Iran, emphasized the vital role of vaccine production in

preserving the health of the food production cycle, Mehr reported. He stated that the in-house scientific capacity and existing indigenous knowledge in Iran constitute a valuable asset, beneficial not only for Iran but also for the people of the region. The FAO representative highlighted the close interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health, stressing the importance of the “One Health” approach, which is a shared priority for both FAO and the World

Health Organization (WHO). In this regard, he clarified that FAO is currently preparing and presenting a joint proposal within the framework of the “One UN” approach. “This initiative involves the participation of organizations such as FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, as well as national entities including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Department of Environment. The aim is to strengthen joint cooperation in addressing common health threats among humans, animals, and the environment,

Toirov added. The official further announced FAO’s readiness to explore areas of cooperation, including designing training courses and specialized empowerment. He added that providing a list of priority educational and research topics could be an effective step for planning and expanding collaborations. During the meeting, the importance of international cooperation to combat hunger and enhance global food security through science and innovation was also emphasized.

