

# Pezeshkian: Armenia, Belarus visits to empower private sector, expedite deals

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced that the main focus of his upcoming visits to Armenia and Belarus would be to facilitate private sector activities and accelerate the implementation of agreements. On Sunday, a coordination meeting was held with the participation of Pezeshkian, cabinet ministers, and senior executive officials to review various dimensions and outline the agenda of the official visits to the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Belarus, IRNA reported. The president will leave Tehran for Yerevan today and then travel to Minsk. Pezeshkian underscored that among the key priorities of the two visits are facilitating the activities of the Iranian private sector in both destination countries and expediting the implementation of pending agreements and major projects, particularly joint investment initiatives.

The president said these priorities would shape his meetings with Armenia's prime minister and Belarus's president, as part of efforts to deepen relations and advance mutual interests. During the Sunday meeting, the different aspects and levels of Iran's relations with Armenia and Belarus were comprehensively examined. The existing and potential capacities in key sectors such as energy, transportation, trade, investment, healthcare, environment, science, culture, and tourism were thoroughly outlined. Opportunities, challenges, and obstacles to developing mutual cooperation were identified, and practical solutions to overcome them were carefully discussed. One of the major and sensitive issues raised during the session was the recent agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan on establishing a transit corridor.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) heads a coordination meeting on the agenda of his official visits to Armenia and Belarus in Tehran on August 17, 2025.

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Azerbaijan and Armenia last week signed a peace treaty in Washington aimed at ending nearly four decades of conflict. Reports indicated that a US private consortium would oversee the Zangezur corridor along Iran's border, a development that has drawn Tehran's close attention. In this regard, the engagement of Armenian officials with senior authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure the protection of Iran's national interests and considerations was cited as an example of the country's active and constructive diplomacy. In addition, draft cooperation documents and memorandums of understanding between Iran and Ar-



menia and Belarus, which are on the verge of being signed, were closely reviewed to pave the way for their prompt implementation. In the session, the president, with

particular attention to the issues raised — especially in the sphere of trade and economic exchanges — emphasized the firm determination of the Islamic Republic to expand

regional cooperation and strengthen friendly relations with neighboring and like-minded countries, based on constructive engagement and mutual interests.

## Deputy minister: Foreign banks still serving Iranians, but under tight FATF oversight



A view of the building of Central Bank of Iran

● [IRNA](#)

not been cut off, but they remain heavily restricted. This is while, at present, for Myanmar, only identity verification has been set by countries as a requirement." The FATF has, for the first time in six years, formally invited the head of Iran's Financial Intelligence Unit to participate in direct negotiations. The invitation follows Iran's recent presentation of its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing measures to FATF's regional group, as well as the ratification of the Palermo Convention by the country's Expediency Council. Speaking to Tasnim, the head of the Financial Intelligence Unit responded to a question about the status of countries with FATF action plans similar to Iran's, saying that about 28 countries are currently under FATF action plans and are effectively on the "grey list," with some

coordinating their measures with FATF mechanisms. Three countries — Iran, Myanmar, and North Korea — remain under enhanced monitoring and on FATF's blacklist. The deputy minister noted that Myanmar currently has a better status than Iran on the blacklist, and with the final ratification of the Palermo Convention, there is hope that countermeasures against Iran may be eased at the upcoming FATF meeting. Khani added that FATF assesses countries' performance within the framework of implementing domestic anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws. Most countries have incorporated FATF's 40 recommendations into their legal systems. If shortcomings are identified, countries are first placed on the grey list, during which they are asked to make necessary reforms within a specific timeframe (usually one to one-and-a-half years). Failure to comply may lead to blacklisting. Khani stressed that the essential difference between the grey list

and the blacklist is that, in the former, the target country is directly addressed by FATF and urged to correct deficiencies, while in the latter, all FATF member states are called on to apply countermeasures against the country. Citing the tougher conditions facing North Korea, he said that unlike Iran, banks and financial intermediaries linked to North Korean nationals are completely deprived of access to global financial services. FATF has also authorized its members to adopt even harsher countermeasures against countries on the blacklist — measures that some countries are already sporadically applying against Iran. Referring to the upcoming FATF meeting, scheduled for late September or early October in Spain, Khani said Iran has demonstrated goodwill in recent years through multiple legislative reforms and, ultimately, ratifying the Palermo Convention. He said Iran's participation in the Madrid session would be an opportunity to open the door for dialogue, particularly to reduce

countermeasures or secure a return to the grey list. Khani emphasized that Iran's action plan was approved about eight years ago and, despite the official timeline having expired, it is still in place. This is while FATF has annulled the action plan for countries such as North Korea. The continuation of this process, he said, shows Iran's engagement and acceptance of FATF's general framework. He noted that even recent assessments on Iran are based on outdated versions of the recommendations, while other countries are evaluated based on actual performance and proof of effectiveness. He concluded that ratification of the CFT Convention by the Expediency Council is a necessary step toward improving Iran's position within FATF. Expert reviews have long been completed, leaving only the final session and vote. He stressed that this matter should be expedited, as remaining in the current situation only gives Iran's adversaries more room to apply international pressure mechanisms.

## ISA: Private sector faces no restrictions in satellite manufacturing

'Shahid Soleimani' constellation underway with consortium of private/state-owned firms

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The head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) announced on Sunday the organization's readiness to hand over satellite manufacturing projects to the private sector. In an interview with ILNA, Hassan Salarieh, outlining the country's space projects, said there are no legal restrictions on satellite production. "Based on the technical capacity and financial strength of the private sector, the agency intends to assign several projects to it." He explained that the reason for the new approach is the belief that competition and growth in the space industry will only occur once the private sector enters the field. Furthermore, successful participation in international collaborations and major space projects will only be possible if the private sector plays a more active role in satellite design and production, delivering multiple outputs. However, he added, "Some high-risk projects are still better pursued and designed by government research centers, the Space Research Institute, and state-owned companies, since the technological risks of major

projects should not be placed on the shoulders of the private sector. For this reason, the public sector remains more active in such areas." The ISA head also announced the launch of experimental models of the "Shahid Soleimani" constellation within the current year (to be ended on March 20, 2026). Salarieh explained that "Shahid Soleimani" is Iran's first narrowband constellation, being designed and built through a consortium of private and state-owned companies. As previously stated, prototypes of these satellites are currently being designed and manufactured. He stressed that the project is one of the country's most important space initiatives, as it represents the first constellation to be fully designed and built domestically, with the private sector playing a significant role in satellite production. He went on to say that the concepts of simultaneously manufacturing multiple satellites, launching them together, managing them concurrently, and operating them as part of one constellation all involve specific technical dimensions, which are being addressed in the project.



Underlining that the construction of experimental models is nearing completion and they will soon be launched, he added that the launch of the main models must be coordinated with the launch vehicle program after ground tests are completed. He said the project has progressed well, with designs finalized and subsystem manufacturing advancing. Salarieh elaborated on the private sector's role in completing the agency's projects, noting that the "Kosar" and "Hodhod" satellites were launched in 2024. These were entirely designed and manufactured by the private sector, making them the first satellites in the country to be fully developed domestically by private companies.

## Two mega projects turning eastern provinces into transit hub

Iran's eastern provinces are becoming a transit hub with the commissioning of two mega projects aimed at enhancing transportation infrastructure and promoting trade development. Mehdi Parsi, the director general of Roads and Urban Development of Sistan and Baluchestan, announced that 30 kilometers of the highway on the Zahedan-Birjand route will be put into operation by the end of the Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025) as part of the government's transportation development plan across the country's eastern strip. "This project will not only help reduce accidents and increase travel safety, but also play an important role in facilitating trade and improving the quality of life in the province,"

Parsi said, underlining that the timely financing of the project could bring it on stream in a shorter time frame, Press TV reported. The total length of the Zahedan-Birjand route is 211 km, of which 150 km has been converted into a highway and is currently in operation. The highway project is currently under construction with over 40% physical progress and requires the allocation of necessary funds to expedite its completion. Mansour Bijar, the governor-general of Sistan and Baluchestan, also visited the Zahedan-Birjand project to review the status of its executive operations. Emphasizing the significance of the highway as one of the country's vital transit arteries, Bijar said, "The completion of the project, as the province's

top priority, will help solidify Sistan and Baluchestan's position as a key link in Iran's eastern transit corridor." Another high-profile infrastructure project is the Chabahar-Sarakhs railway, which has been branded as a catalyst for the economic and transit transformation of eastern Iran. Connecting Chabahar Port to Sarakhs, the railway project can facilitate trade exchanges for landlocked countries in Central Asia and Afghanistan and contribute to the sustainable development of the region. Governor-General of South Khorasan Province, Mohammad Reza Hashemi, described the project as a vital artery that fortifies the country's transit infrastructure and helps access to international corridors.