

# President inaugurates 72 projects in Ardebil, pledges millions for development

**Economy Desk**

Seventy-two infrastructure projects were inaugurated in the northwestern province of Ardebil on Thursday during a visit by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. The projects, launched with €180 million (\$211 million) in foreign currency investment and 187 trillion rials (\$188.3 million) in domestic public and private funding, are expected to create about 4,700 jobs, IRNA reported. Key projects included Iran's first private serum production plant with an annual capacity of 60 million bottles, a methanol-producing petrochemical facility, 7,800 hectares of irrigation network downstream of the Khoda Afarin dam, and a 30-hectare greenhouse complex. During a meeting with investors and business leaders, Pezeshkian pointed

to Ardebil's special advantages, saying "capable people and unique capacities exist in this province, and it is enough to adopt a new approach to solve the problems." He voiced concern over the country's continued dependence on crude oil exports, arguing that such reliance leaves Iran vulnerable to external pressures and sanctions. He also expressed dismay that, despite the nation's abundant natural resources, skilled workforce, and industrial potential, Iran has not yet achieved economic independence and sustainability without leaning on oil revenues. Work also began on 75 new economic and infrastructure projects with €860 million (\$1 billion) in foreign investment and 320 trillion rials (\$322.2 million) in domestic funds, projected to generate 9,000 jobs. An agreement was signed between

private investors and related state organizations for the establishment of a large greenhouse unit in Parsabad and a major livestock farm in Germe county. Pezeshkian later attended meetings with educators, investors, political, cultural and social figures, and the provincial planning and development council. At the end of his trip, Pezeshkian announced that nearly 800 trillion rials (\$805.6 million) would be allocated for investment and development in Ardabil under 38 projects. He noted that the agreements and directives resulting from the visit span a wide range of sectors, including water, electricity, transportation, healthcare,



and agricultural development. Within this framework, between 36 and 38 targeted projects have been formally signed.

## Iran Plast 2025 marks strategic push for regional trade, petchem growth



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Iranian deputy oil minister, Hassan Abbaszadeh, visited the 19th International Exhibition of Plastic, Rubber, Machinery, and Equipment on Thursday, describing the event as a milestone for expanding trade cooperation with neighboring countries. Abbaszadeh, who doubles as the CEO of the National Petrochemical Company, said the "targeted presence of specialists and stakeholders" was a key feature of this

year's event, enabling effective business connections within the petrochemical sector, IRNA reported. The 19th edition of the exhibition, known as Iran Plast 2025, which is one of the prominent events in the plastics and petrochemical industries, was held in Tehran from Sept. 8-11 with the aim of strengthening the domestic market and facilitating global marketing for Iran's petrochemical sector. Abbaszadeh attended the final day of the event and highlight-

ed foreign traders, downstream challenges, and innovative knowledge-based products as key achievements of this year's exhibition. "Even on the last day of the exhibition, we saw a broad presence of specialized visitors, reflecting the significance of this event for industry players," he said. He highlighted the exhibition's focus on attracting professional visitors and facilitating interactions between domestic producers and foreign traders. Many participants were able to establish meaningful connections, especially with traders from neighboring countries who were invited specifically to attend, according to Abbaszadeh. This approach aligns with President Masoud Pezeshkian's emphasis on prioritizing regional markets and has brought positive results for the petrochemical industry, he added. Another major achievement of IRAN PLAST 2025 was the presence of knowledge-based companies, which showcased a variety of innovative products, many of them

produced for the first time. Some of these offerings could replace chemical additives that may face global restrictions in the future, he said. "This achievement is very promising, as the global treaty on plastic pollution will impose strict limits on the use of chemical additives, especially in contact with food," Abbaszadeh said. He pointed to the display of bio-additives and plant-based materials that substitute chemical compounds in this event, underscoring the leading role of Iranian knowledge-based firms despite sanctions that limit the import of such technologies and the transfer of know-how. Compared with previous years, he said, the quality of downstream industry production has improved, with many companies reaching export standards. "Conversations with exhibitors revealed that a significant portion of their output is exported, demonstrating progress and rising standards in the sector," he concluded.

## Iran, Russia close in on gas transfer pact under joint energy ties: Envoy

**Economy Desk**

Iran and Russia have made significant progress on transferring gas to Iran as part of their joint energy cooperation, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said. "One of the important matters agreed upon between Tehran and Moscow in joint energy cooperation is the gas transfer to Iran, and initial steps have been taken. It is now on the verge of finalization," Jalali said, IRNA reported on Thursday. The announcement followed recent talks between Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin in China, during which all aspects of bilateral relations, particularly economic projects, were discussed. "Based on these discussions, a Russian delegation will visit Tehran next week to finalize these matters. The details of the negotiations are in their final stages, and after completion, information will be provided," the envoy added. During their several-hour meeting on September 1, Pezeshkian and Putin addressed various issues, with a focus on a comprehensive long-term agreement between the two sides. Iran is expecting to begin receiving Russian gas transferred through Azerbaijan, the Iranian ambassador told the Russian state-run media outlet TASS last month. According to the envoy, the two countries must first reach an agreement on price and "once that's finalized, the entire operation can proceed." The forthcoming deliveries stem from a deal inked in April 2025 between Tehran and Moscow, which in turn followed a memorandum of understanding signed between the Russian state-run energy giant Gazprom and its Iranian counterpart, the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC).

## Tehran, Beijing in talks to expand solar power, renewable energy storage: Official

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Iran is negotiating with several Chinese companies to develop solar power plants and build energy storage systems, a senior official at the state-run Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Management Company (Tavanir) said on Thursday. Mohammad Allahdad, deputy for transmission and foreign trade at Tavanir, said Chinese firms are global leaders in installing solar cells and battery energy storage systems (BESS), IRNA reported. He added that talks had been held with two major Chinese companies active in the solar sector. "China has by far the world's largest solar capacity, and storage facilities have been installed alongside them," Allahdad said. The government and the Energy Ministry have prioritized renewables development, particularly solar power, given Iran's large

number of sunny days, he said. As Iran begins expanding its solar capacity, energy storage systems will be required to boost efficiency. "Solar plants can only operate during the day, but if storage is used, energy from these plants can also be consumed at night," Allahdad said. He noted that Chinese companies also have strong capabilities in building pumped-storage plants and have already cooperated with Iranian partners on two dam projects. Under the current talks, Tehran expects to cooperate with Chinese firms to transfer technical know-how on storage manufacturing while simultaneously developing solar power plants. "This way, both the technical knowledge of building storage systems will be transferred to the country and the development of solar plants will be pursued," Allahdad said. Separately, Akbar Hasanbeklou,



managing director of the Tehran Province Electricity Distribution Company, announced the construction of a 350-megawatt solar power plant in Varamin in Tehran Province by a Chinese company, with an inauguration ceremony scheduled in the coming days. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the rapid growth of wind and solar gen-

eration is the main driver of renewables' expansion, with output surpassing 4,000 terawatt hours in 2024 and projected to exceed 6,000 terawatt hours by 2026. The agency says renewables will meet more than 90% of global electricity demand growth through 2026, with hydropower expansion also contributing to the rise.

## Active diplomacy, stronger ...

The reality is that the United States has already imposed almost every sanction possible, taking full responsibility for their enforcement. Yet UN sanctions cannot be dismissed altogether. While their enforcement mechanisms may be weaker than Washington's, once the UN authorizes sanctions, all member states are given the green light to implement them. Even if European parties to the JCPOA - France, Britain and Germany - were to trigger snapback, Iran would not stand still. The country intends to press ahead both on the battlefield and in the diplomatic arena, maintaining and expanding ties with friendly and neighboring states to prevent enemies from attaining their hostile objectives. Now, Israel and its support-

ers are working hard to portray the Islamic Republic as a global security threat, seeking thereby to mount international pressure. But through a measured and well-calibrated diplomatic strategy, Tehran can head off such efforts. In particular, cooperation with Eastern powers, such as Russia and China, offers an avenue to cement alliances against hostile policies. The recent Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in China demonstrated Western unease—especially in Washington—at growing Eastern cooperation. US President Donald Trump himself issued a sharp reaction. Against this backdrop, active diplomacy and deeper engagement with Eastern partners stand out as a practical strategy for offsetting sanctions and countering Western and American hostility.