

Southern gas field secures \$600m investment for 20-year development

Economy Desk

Iran signed a \$600 million contract on Sunday to develop and operate the Madar gas field in the southern province of Bushehr, aiming to boost output and attract investment into the country's energy sector.

The agreement was signed by senior oil industry officials, including Hamid Bovard, deputy oil minister and head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC); Hamidreza Araqi, chairman of the state-owned Oil Industries Engineering and Construction (OIEC) group; and Saeed Zarandi, chief executive of Mobarakeh Steel Company, IRIB reported.

The 20-year project is expected to yield about 65 billion cubic meters of natural gas and 127 million barrels of gas condensates.

Planned works include completing 20 wells – 19 new and one workover – as well as building wellhead facilities, 70 kilome-



Hamid Bovard (c), head of the NIOC, shakes hands with Hamidreza Araqi (r), chairman of the OIEC group, following the signing of a trilateral contract on the development of Madar gas field in Tehran on September 14, 2025.

● ALI KHALILI/SHANA

ters of flowlines, 33 kilometers of production pipelines, and units for metering, separation and water treatment.

In addition to accelerating the development of the Madar field, the project is estimated to create new opportunities for steel industry participation in upstream oil and gas.

The plan is also projected to generate roughly \$16.7 billion in revenue for the government over the life of the contract.

Officials said the scheme also aims to maximize recovery from the field, create jobs in underdeveloped areas of the Province of Bushehr, and draw new investment into Iran's oil and gas sector.



Tehran, Islamabad open joint commission meeting to strengthen trade, economic links

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Iran and Pakistan will open the 22nd meeting of their Joint Economic Commission in Tehran today, focusing on expanding bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Pakistan's Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan arrived in the Iranian capital at the head of a high-level delegation on Sunday to attend the two-day meeting, which is being co-chaired by Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Kamal Khan, Mehr reported.

Talks are aimed at boosting cooperation in trade, investment, banking, energy, industry, transport and infrastructure, as well as promoting social, cultural and provincial exchanges.

The two neighbors agreed in 2025 to raise bilateral agricultural trade to \$3 billion over the next two years.

In reviewing the current situation and development opportunities in the field of imports and exports between the two countries, Reza Nourani, a member of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, said Iranian exports to Pakistan reached about \$606 million between March and June 2025, while imports from Pakistan stood at \$281 million.

Nourani said the long-delayed Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline could provide a stable energy source for Pakistan and deepen cooperation. He also noted that new cross-border markets under construction would help facilitate legal trade and curb smuggling.

He further highlighted the negative impact of international sanctions, identifying inadequate transportation and logistics infrastructure at border crossings as a major obstacle to expanding trade with Pakistan. According to Nourani, overcoming these challenges requires a set of strategic measures, including the development of joint border markets, the establishment of shared financial and banking mechanisms, the signing of new trade agreements, and the promotion of joint investments in energy, agriculture, and industrial sectors.

Tunisia touted as 'key gateway for Iranian exports' to North Africa: TPO



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Iran is seeking to revive a long-dormant trade agreement and reconvene a joint economic commission with Tunisia, a move Iran's Trade Promotion Organization official said could turn the North African country into "a key gateway for Iranian exports" to the region. Mohammad Sadeq Qanadzadeh, deputy head of TPO, told ISNA that restoring the pact and deepening ties with Tunis would allow Iran to tap into Tunisia's port and economic capacity and open a new route for regional commerce.

"Tunisia, with its political stability and trade potential, can become the gate-

way for Iran to North African markets," he said, adding that it remains the only African country with which Iran has a trade agreement.

Iran has recently established a shipping line to North Africa after years of absence and sees Tunisia as a potential hub for distributing goods across the region.

The push follows a recent diplomatic upswing between Tehran and Tunis. During a visit to Tunisia earlier this month, Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi met the country's president and foreign minister, announcing an agreement to hold a new session of the joint economic commission and to

strengthen cooperation in trade and tourism.

Iranian officials say reviving the commission could not only boost exports but also serve as a bridge for greater regional integration. They see expanded cooperation, including tourism links and port facilities, as essential to deepening Iran's presence in North Africa.

Call for raising share of imports

Rouhollah Latifi, spokesman for the Trade Development Commission of Iran's House of Industry, Mine and Trade, told ISNA that Iran's share of Tunisia's imports remains "insignificant" despite strong political ties. He pointed to opportunities in crude oil, steel products and automobiles, while stressing the need to improve transport infrastructure, financial mechanisms and product marketing.

Tunisia conducts about \$26 billion in foreign trade annually, exporting around \$20 billion and importing the rest. Latifi said Iran must carve out a place in this import basket, which is now dominated by Italy, China, France, Turkey and Algeria.

According to the official, Iran's exports to Tunisia saw a sharp rise in the first five months of this Persian calendar year (began on March 20). Steel product exports jumped to 18,000 tons worth

\$7.5 million from just 291 tons valued at \$372,000 in the same period a year earlier. This is while in 2023, Iran's total exports to Tunisia were about \$4.5 million. Other shipments included pharmaceuticals and spare parts.

Such progress, he said, shows the potential for broader trade if the commission is revived and agreements are implemented.

Latifi said Tunisia's agricultural, mineral and energy sectors, along with its proximity to European consumer markets, present major opportunities for Iran. He highlighted copper wires, petroleum derivatives and vehicles as sectors where Iran could compete, while noting that Tunisian exports such as olive oil and textiles could also complement bilateral trade.

He added that copper concentrate from Tunisia could supply Iranian producers, while nearby countries like Morocco and those with manganese reserves could further expand the scope of cooperation.

Latifi urged the development of banking ties, barter mechanisms and stronger promotion of Iranian products through exhibitions and trade events. "If we resolve transport, marketing, financial and tariff issues, we can take advantage of the existing capacities," he said.

Israel borne out ...

How could the current situation play out to Iran's advantage?

Page 1 > All states in the region — particularly the Persian Gulf Arab monarchies — have been left deeply uncertain about whether the United States will continue to guarantee their security vis-à-vis Israel. A great deal of skepticism has been sown; rulers may avoid airing the debate publicly, but the populations of those countries are now alert to what has transpired. This is especially true at a time when [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu has openly raised the idea of creating a "Greater Israel" in an interview with an Israeli domestic

outlet, signaling an intention to occupy parts of several regional states — Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Sudan and others.

Under these circumstances it is obvious that regional actors have been forced to conclude that the region's security can only be guaranteed by the region's own states. The proposal that Iran advanced during [former President Hassan] Rouhani's term — to form a regional security coalition to look after the region's security collectively — has come back into circulation among regional capitals, with a renewed emphasis on states collaborating to provide for their own secu-

urity and no longer placing trust in the United States. The argument is that foreign forces should withdraw from the region because their presence is not only unhelpful but detrimental to regional interests.

For decades Iran has advanced this very argument. Attempts were made to portray Iran as the enemy rather than Israel, but it has now become clear to many that Israel is the principal threat and that Iran is a friend to many of these states — a partner they can rely on.

Could this attack affect current pressures to disarm the "Axis of Re-

sistance" and Hezbollah?

The attack itself has made plain that Israel seeks to strike other regional states, and only those countries that possess the capacity to resist and defend themselves will be able to stand up to Israel. States that lack that capacity will face destruction. Some commentators frame the issue around Hezbollah specifically, but Israel's broader aim appears to be pinning on the Lebanese army a mission that the Israeli military failed to accomplish during the 66-day war — namely, to disarm the resistance forces so Israel can then manufacture a pretext for action. It is well understood that falsehoods

can be circulated to justify aggression, as is happening now in Gaza, where mass killings are taking place with the backing of the United States and Western powers. If Lebanon is attacked and its population is subjected to mass violence, the same pattern can be expected: the United States and European states will stand behind Israel. So long as resistance exists in Lebanon, the people will retain a degree of security; if resistance and its weapons are removed, there should be no doubt that Israel would not hesitate for a moment before launching an assault and carrying out mass killings under various pretexts.