

ECO chief extols Iran's central role in advancing regional cooperation

FM casts multilateral relations among developing nations as 'necessity'

Economy Desk

The head of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Asad Majeed Khan, praised Iran on Tuesday for playing a "central role" in supporting ECO-affiliated institutions and hosting key organizations that have made "a significant contribution" to the body's activities.

He was addressing the second Iran-ECO conference in Tehran, where senior officials underlined the need for greater economic cooperation, digital integration and multilateral approaches, as the regional body works on a new long-term strategy beyond 2025, IRNA reported.

The conference opened earlier on Tuesday with Khan and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in attendance. Three specialized panels were held on 'intra-regional connectivity and interactions,' 'ECO and new technologies,' and 'ECO's vision in 2035.' The main goal of the meeting was to examine aspects of economic, technological and communication cooperation among member states and provide expert recommendations for drafting the organization's new vision.

Khan said Iran's national digital projects, aimed at creating seamless coordination, seek to move cooperation "beyond the limitations of formal policy-



Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Asad Majeed Khan addresses the second Iran-ECO conference in Tehran on September 16, 2025.

● IRNA

making processes, allowing all stakeholders to fully participate in advancing economic cooperation for the next decade."

He stressed that revising the 2025 vision – which has guided the ECO in achieving sustainable economic growth, enhanced connectivity and social services – is of particular importance. Lessons learned from the past would shape the organization's future strategy, he added.

"The first lesson is the need for a holistic, multi-actor approach to cooperation," Khan said, citing the necessity of integrated, cross-sector strategies, for example in trade and regional transport. He cautioned that no transport policy, however well-designed, would succeed without addressing digitalization, innovation and inclusive growth.

The ECO chief noted that these three pillars were reflected in Tuesday's panel discussions on connectivity, technology and resilience. "The experience shared this morning will not only inspire the development of ECO's strategic economic goals, but



also enrich our collective thinking beyond the 2035 vision," he said.

Also, Iran's foreign minister told the meeting that cooperation among developing countries in multilateral frameworks "is not a choice but a necessity."

Araghchi said Iran has been "one of the victims of the US' cruel unilateralism and the dangerous adventurism of the Zionist regime," and continues to face their consequences. "Nevertheless, Iran has never neglected its duties and responsibilities as an active, serious and influential player in multilateral and region-

al economic and development relations," he said, adding that Tuesday's conference was proof of that commitment.

He said the ECO is in the process of drafting its 10-year vision, setting strategic goals and identifying paths to achieve them. This process, he noted, offers an opportunity for collective action. "To realize these goals, we must have a precise understanding of existing opportunities and challenges, and avoid falling into unrealistic ambitions," he said.

The foreign minister stressed that success requires the views and assessments of all stake-

holders across member states and the region, including governments, the private sector, academia, women and youth. He described the ECO conference as "a valuable initiative in this direction."

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh, who heads the ministry's Institute for Political and International Studies, said he hoped the event would provide "an opportunity for constructive dialogue and practical policy frameworks toward a brighter future for this important and dynamic regional organization."

Iran-Iraq Chamber forecasts \$20b export growth to Iraq in H2



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Iran expects its exports to Iraq to reach \$20 billion in the second half of the current Persian Calendar year (started on March 21) despite a slight decline in the first five months, the head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday. Speaking at a meeting of business leaders involved in Iraq trade, Yahya Al-e-Es'haq pointed to the slight decrease over the first five months, noting that the largest drop pertained to gas exports. "In the second half of the year, the numbers will change, and we hope our exports will reach \$20 billion," he said, ISNA reported.

The meeting, held on Tuesday, gathered representatives from the Trade Promotion Organization, Iran Customs Administration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the headquarters for developing Iran-Iraq economic relations, and Iraqi businesspeople to review trade conditions, assess risks and obstacles, and form a special measures management committee at the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Meanwhile, Abdolamir Rabihi, director-general of the West Asia Office at the TPO, presented the latest trade data for the first five months of the year, saying that 53% of exported goods to Iraq were raw materials.

Rabihi noted that Iran's exports to Iraq have been declining since April, although part of the decrease has been offset, and the decline currently stands at 18%. He said the drop in exports of gas and rebar was primarily responsible for the fall.

"Iran's gas exports to Iraq in the first five months of last year totaled \$1.6 billion, whereas this year, the figure has decreased by \$650 million to \$950 million," he said.

He added that rebar exports to Iraq have also seen a significant drop, decreasing by \$174 million in the first five months of this year, compared to the corresponding period last year.

Overall, Iran's exports have declined by around \$1 billion compared to the first five months of last year, according to Rabihi.

"In the same period last year, we exported around \$4.6 billion to Iraq, whereas in the first five months of this year, due to prevailing domestic conditions, exports amounted to \$3.749 billion," he said.

Minister: Hi-tech gas turbine exported to Russia despite sanctions



Economy Desk

Iran's energy minister said the country had exported an advanced gas turbine to Russia for the first time, calling it a major achievement for the domestic power industry despite international sanctions.

"We were able, for the first time, to export an advanced gas turbine as a sophisticated Iranian-made equipment in the power industry to Russia," Minister Abbas Aliabadi said at the national event of exporters of technical and engineering services, goods, and knowledge-based enterprises in the water and power industry on Tuesday, IRNA reported.

He added that Tehran had also sold generators and other electrical equipment to Moscow and had successfully repaired aircraft

engines.

Aliabadi said exports were only valuable when combined with knowledge-based production that created added value. "For years we exported minerals and raw materials, but exports are honorable only when they are value-creating and generate added value," he noted.

Power plants in Iraq, Syria

The minister also highlighted Iran's track record in overseas energy initiatives, citing the construction of multiple power plants in Iraq and Syria, as well as the deployment of Iranian experts to conduct critical repair operations in Syria. The electricity sector had even managed to provide financing for some overseas projects, according to Aliabadi. For Iran's power industry to

succeed in global markets, he noted, the entire export chain must work together.

"Today, exports are not an option but a national strategy, and in this regard, the Ministry of Energy emphasizes facilitating the export of technical and engineering services and water and electricity industry goods," he said.

He urged stronger cooperation among Iranian companies to gain a more powerful entry into international markets. But he also lamented that in one case, political interference had blocked an Iranian bid for a project abroad, despite what he said were better quality and lower prices.

The Minister stressed the need for using international funding by the banking system with the aim of providing financial support to Iranian companies exporting technical and engineering services.

Aliabadi also said the global industrial landscape was changing rapidly. "The Fourth Industrial Revolution is ending and the world will soon reach the Fifth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, we should not remain in the past but move smartly toward the future and pursue intelligent policymaking and simplified export regulations," he said.

Government aims to position Iran as regional tech hub:

Deputy president



A view of Pardis Technology Park in Tehran Province

Economy Desk

Iran's deputy president for science and technology said on Tuesday that the government, by redefining its role as a facilitator rather than a controller, seeks to eliminate barriers and build the necessary infrastructure to position Iran as a leading hub for advanced technologies in West Asia.

Addressing the 27th Pardis Technology Park Summit, Hossein Afshin highlighted the role of innovation ecosystems in transforming knowledge into wealth, stressing the need to empower startups and leverage innovation diplomacy to attract investment and boost the export of knowledge-based products, ILNA reported.

He described the transformation of Pardis Technology Park into an international innovation zone as a milestone in the development of the country's innovation ecosystem.

Afshin said the new zone was once only a technology park but had become Iran's international

innovation hub through the continuous efforts of scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs.

"This transformation is not just a change of nameplate but the result of day-and-night work by those who rose from failures and built an innovative climate," he said.

The official said the zone has become a place where "knowledge turns into products, ideas into industries, and motivation into wealth and capital," with companies in the ecosystem serving as symbols of self-reliance at both national and international levels. Afshin added that smart innovation diplomacy is part of the government's plan, ranging from building bridges with regional countries and attracting foreign investment to exporting knowledge-based products.

He said the ultimate goal is to turn Iran into a hub for advanced technologies in West Asia, focusing on fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biotechnology, clean energy and modern financial technologies.