Pezeshkian launches Persian Gulf water transfer project to supply central industries

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday officially launched a major water transfer project from the Persian Gulf to the central areas of the country to secure industrial water supply and reduce pressure on the Zayandehrud River basin.

Stretching from Sirjan to Isfahan, the 800-kilometer pipeline — developed over two years at a cost of 35 trillion tomans (approxima tely $290 million) — was implemented with major support from Mobarakeh Steel Company. The project aims to provide a sustainable water source for Isfahan Province's industries, which previously faced the threat of operational shutdowns due to water shortages, the president's website president.ir reported.

Speaking at the online inauguration ceremony for the first phase of the Persian Gulf-to-central plateau water transfer project, Pezeshkian said the initiative would protect both the environment and local communities.

"With the implementation of this project, the ecological share of the river and the water rights of local communities will be preserved," he said.

"By transferring seawater to Iran's central plateau, the demand from large industries for groundwater will decrease, and their allocation from the Zayandehrud will be cut — significantly protecting the river's downstream environment and the people who depend on it," he added.

Emphasizing the need for long-term, expert-driven planning, Pezeshkian said, "To address this challenge at its roots, sustained scholarly work by university professors and a firm commitment to sustainable development must be prioritized. From now on, new industrial loads should be placed alongside the sea."

The seawater transfer scheme is described as a foundational and vital infrastructure initiative, symbolizing foresight, value engineering, and proactive water-resource risk management, and representing an effective measure to safeguard the Zayandehroud watershed.

Expanding subsequent phases and increasing transmission and distribution capacity could significantly enhance national industrial water security while boosting public confidence and social capital, according to officials.

During the ceremony, Pezeshkian said numerous meetings have been held to address water scarcity in central Iran and other parts of the country — a process he said would continue.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) orders via video link the official launch of a major water transfer project from the Persian Gulf to the central areas of the country in Tehran on December 6, 2025.
president.ir

The country has embarked on large-scale transfers of desalinated water from the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf to eastern and southern region, part of a nationwide program launched in 2021 that includes five desalinated seawater transfer lines designed to ease water shortages.

Iran, Russia ink MoUs, tech deals to boost digital cooperation

Economy Desk

Iran and Russia finalized 20 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and five formal contracts during the fifth session of their Joint Communications Working Group, marking a new phase in bilateral technological cooperation, officials said Saturday.

The agreements underscored a growing alignment between the two countries in strategic digital sectors, with Iranian private companies taking a leading role.

Five leading Iranian private tech firms signed cooperation agreements with their Russian counterparts following two days of bilateral talks in Moscow, IRNA reported.

The deals were formalized at a ceremony attended by Iran's ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Technology for Technology and Innovation, Meysam Abedi, and Russia's Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media.

IRNA

Abedi said Iran and Russia have in recent years seen growing collaboration on data transit, smart government systems, and postal infrastructure.

"Today, Iran's private sector has signed specific contracts with Russian partners in areas such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, infrastructure equipment manufacturing, and joint projects," Abedi said. "In total, 20 MOUs and five contracts were concluded during this trip, and we expect the value and scope of these collaborations to expand in the coming years."

Iran's ambassador to Russia described the outcomes as the result of sustained efforts by Iran's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT). "Good results from the fifth session of the Iran-Russia Joint Working Group on Communications and ICT reflect the ministry's consistent follow-up with the Russian side," Jalali said.

"The ministry's initiative is effective because its delegations to Russia carry a minimal government footprint — focused instead on showcasing the capabilities of Iranian ICT companies to Russian partners."

"Beyond introducing Iranian capabilities, these efforts result in concrete outcomes — first MOUs, then binding contracts."

The Iranian delegation, led by the deputy communications minister and accompanied by representatives from 16 top Iranian tech companies, traveled to Moscow to participate in specialized meetings with prominent Russian firms as part of the working group session.

Of the agreements reached during the visit, five contracts were symbolically signed at Friday's ceremony.

The fifth session of Iran-Russia Joint Communications Working Group concluded on Friday with the signing of an intergovernmental memorandum of understanding.

Cloud fertilization operations forging ahead via planes, drones: *Official*

Economy Desk

A senior Energy Ministry official announced at the 21st Water and Wastewater Exhibition in Tehran on Saturday that four operational zones for cloud seeding has been designated for the current week and aerial missions are to be conducted using both aircraft and drones.

Mohammad-Mehdi Javadianzadeh, head of the Organization for Development and Operation of Modern Water Technologies at the Ministry of Energy, told reporters that cloud seeding operations began on November 1 and have so far included two successful missions, which were carried out in the Lake Urmia and Khorasan Razavi watersheds, IRNA reported.

"Four aerial cloud seeding operations will be conducted this week in the Lake Urmia and Zayandeh Rud basins," he said.

Emphasizing Iran's natural suitability for weather modification, Javadianzadeh said, "Iran, due to its mountainous terrain, is the best region for cloud seeding. Many countries face challenges in this field because they lack suitable mountains, but Iran's conditions are favorable."

He noted that cloud seeding has been practiced in Iran since 2001, with earlier efforts dating back to 1974–1978 in collaboration with Canada. According to him, the technique typically increases precipitation by 18% to 20%, though effectiveness depends on atmospheric conditions and moisture levels.

The cost of producing 1,000 cubic meters of water through cloud seeding ranges from $15 to $22, he added.

Looking ahead, Javadianzadeh expressed hope that "in the near future, with policymakers' support, a network of 12 specialized cloud seeding bases will be established."

He acknowledged challenges related to aging equipment, attributing the issue to the Western sanctions and limited financial resources.

"International evaluation models are used in Iran, but existing tools and sensors have become old and conventional," he said. "Procurement of new sensors is being pursued both through imports and domestic production by knowledge-based companies."

Javadianzadeh also highlighted a critical gap in the country's meteorological infrastructure, saying, "Weakness in weather radar coverage is one of Iran's serious shortcomings compared to advanced countries." While full radar coverage is standard globally, "only part of Iran's western border is under radar surveillance, and the interior lacks active weather radars."

He added that a domestic radar development program is underway, modeled on Iran's successful production of defense radars.

Javadianzadeh stressed that final evaluation of cloud seeding results will occur only after the operational season ends. "All rainfall data from monitoring stations will be collected and published," he said. "Consultants will be tasked with distinguishing between natural precipitation and rainfall induced by cloud seeding."

According to data from Iran's Water Resources Management Company, nationwide precipitation from the start of the water year in September has been 84% below the long-term average, leading to a 38% decline in inflows to dams.

Persistent drought has created severe challenges for meeting the country's water needs, further contributing to the 38% drop in dam inflows.

Impact of US ...

In that sense, what has changed under Trump—as in previous presidencies—is the manner of implementation and the instruments deployed, not the nature or strategic weight of US interests themselves. This, of course, does not diminish the importance of changing tools in achieving these goals.

Page 1

Against this backdrop, the new National Security Strategy is unlikely, in and of itself, to have any direct impact on future relations within the region—either among Middle Eastern states or between them and the wider world. The determining factor shaping the foreign policies and relations of the regional states remains their national interests, which in recent years have grown more influential even as the role of international forces and global context has waned.

The only potential effect is that the "relative reduction of Washington's attention to the region" may offer Middle Eastern governments broader room for maneuver—evident, for example, in the opening of what is now the largest US consulate in the world, located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Yet one exception stands out that is Iran. In this case, the influence of Israel on US policy is expected to continue shaping Washington's approach.