

Construction of Iran's first private town gets underway

Economy Desk

Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has approved the feasibility study and site selection for the construction of Central Makran New Town in Hormozgan Province, which will be developed as the country's first privately built new town, a senior official said on Monday. Gholamreza Kazemian, Deputy Roads and Urban Development Minister, made the announcement at the conclusion of a meeting of Iran's Supreme Council of Urban Planning and Architecture on Monday. He said the town will be built along the Oman Sea Coasts of Hormozgan and will rely entirely on domestic private-sector investment. According to Kazemian, the project has a 20-year development horizon and will be implemented gradually. He explained that given that this marks Iran's first experience with a privately developed new town, the plan has undergone heightened technical and institutional scrutiny. Construction will proceed in phases and will be closely aligned with the pace of job creation and population growth, with land allocation tied directly to demonstrated demand, he added.

A consortium of Iranian companies is participating in the project, with investors committing their own capital to finance and implement the development, Kazemian said.

Also speaking at the meeting, Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh stressed that relevant authorities are expected to facilitate the project, while ensuring that environmental considerations and the livelihoods of local communities are fully taken into account during implementation.

Central Makran New Town is envisioned as an advanced port-based economic hub and one of Iran's main commercial and transit gateways. It is expected to function as a major tourism destination and a multifunctional center along the Makran coast.

The city is also projected to meet housing demand, generate diverse employment opportunities, and attract skilled professionals, positioning it as a key regional center for innovative activities and startup development.

With plans to make extensive use of renewable energy and green infrastructure, Central Makran is expected to serve as a model for coastal ecosystem protection and environmentally



An aerial view of Chabahar Port along the Makran coast
• IRNA

friendly urban development. By the 2046 horizon year, the city is expected to emerge as a leading example of next-generation, smart cities in Iran, driven by domestic and

foreign investment and anchored in private-sector participation. The city is also expected to foster a dynamic cultural identity by hosting national and international events

and expanding public spaces, while simultaneously strengthening trade networks, scientific cooperation, and regional and international transit corridors.

Pezeshkian pledges to remove barriers to international commerce



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Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said improving trade relations, supporting merchants, producers, and exporters, and removing structural barriers are key priorities of his government's foreign policy agenda.

Speaking at a meeting with the Coordination Council of his deputies on Monday, he said the administration is focused on strengthening economic engagement with other countries while

creating a more supportive environment for domestic and international trade.

Turning to domestic priorities, the president stressed that government decision-making will be centered on the people, their livelihoods, and improving overall quality of life. He underscored the administration's determination to combat rent-seeking, corruption, and illegal practices as part of broader efforts to create the conditions necessary for sustainable economic improvement.

Pezeshkian added that removing cumbersome laws and regulations is another core component of the government's reform agenda, aimed at improving performance efficiency and the quality of public services. He also said his government is committed to downsizing the public sector through the transfer of state-owned companies and certain activities to the private sector wherever possible, while maintaining regulatory oversight by public institutions.

From globalization to energy mercantilism

Weaponization of maritime chokepoints & return to 'age of insecurity'



By Reza Mokhtar

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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The world is shifting away from a liberal order built on free trade—the era of Adam Smith—toward one marked by intense geo-economic rivalries and fragile supply chains. Drawing on recent real-world events, such as the war in Ukraine, tensions in the Red Sea, and seizures of commercial vessels, energy security is no longer a shared global good but has become a tool in hybrid warfare. The focus here is on the vulnerability of key maritime chokepoints and why nations are increasingly turning to strategic stockpiling and overland alternatives.

End of history & return of insecurity

The post-Cold War idea that economic interdependence would prevent major wars has lost its shine. The global liberal order is fading, not because it is failing everyone, but because its continued existence has ended up boosting rising powers more than it served its original architects—the United States and Europe. We are now in a time when trade

routes are not reliably safe anymore. Moving goods often requires military escorts, payoffs, or bilateral security deals. In this environment, supply chains for goods and energy are being reshaped not by comparative advantage but by relative security.

Wars at sea: breaking down recent events

Field reports make it clear that conflict has spilled from land into the oceans. Seas will matter even more in the years ahead—not just because shipping remains the cheapest way to move things, but because controlling oceans and straits is essential to dominating global energy flows. This shift shows up in several key areas. First, in the Black Sea and Mediterranean through targeting commercial fleets. Second, in the Indian Ocean through cargo seizures. Third, in energy geopolitics, infrastructure and corridor vulnerabilities, as Ukrainian drones have carried out strikes on Russian oil refineries and Yemen's Ansar Allah forces effectively partially closed Israel's Eilat port and made the Red Sea unsafe.

Survival strategies, stockpiling & alternative corridors

In this era of energy mercantilism, countries are pursuing two main ap-

proaches. First, strategic stockpiling, such as China's filling of its strategic petroleum reserves and building up of grain stocks.

Second, developing overland corridors, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the Belt and Road Initiative and rail routes through China, Central Asia, and Iran.

Fate of 'glass house' economies

In the end, smaller Persian Gulf states with highly exposed economies—sometimes called "aquarium economies"—look especially fragile in future conflicts. Their weakness is not just reliance on sea routes and the Strait of Hormuz; it is their dependence on imported security arrangements.

Potential regional adversaries like Israel have strong capabilities for air strikes. In a full-scale war, these gleaming but shallow economies could collapse structurally under sustained air and naval pressure. By contrast, nations like Iran and Russia, with abundant energy resources and robust overland connections, stand to show greater resilience if they manage supply chains and self-sufficiency well. Over the next decade, energy security will be measured not by market prices but by assured physical access.

Economic council approves major oil, power projects to boost energy output

Economy Desk

Iran's Economic Council approved several large-scale projects in the oil and power sectors aimed at increasing production capacity and strengthening the country's energy supply.

At a meeting held on Monday and chaired by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, the council en-

dorsed the general framework of a plan to raise oil output and offset declines in gas production, the vice-president's website reported.

The plan includes the implementation of pressure-boosting operations at the shared South Pars gas field, the development of the Sepehr and Jofeir oil fields, and accelerated production from the Azadegan

oil field.

The project involves an estimated investment of \$17 billion and is expected to generate revenues of up to \$520 billion, according to the website.

The council also approved a separate project aimed at real-time monitoring and smart management of the integrated petroleum products supply chain, with an investment of

€420 million, plus \$48 million funded from domestic resources of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company. The initiative aims to establish intelligent, integrated oversight of petroleum product production, transportation, and storage between 2026 and 2029. In the power sector, the council approved optimization and performance-upgrade projects for the Dez and Shahid Abbaspour dams and power plants in Khuzestan Province. Based on the approvals, generation capacity at the Dez power plant will increase from 520 megawatts to 720 megawatts, while capacity at each unit of the Shahid Abbaspour power plant will rise from 180 megawatts to 250 megawatts.



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