

Pezeshkian launches 90 free zone projects, eyeing global competitiveness

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday commissioned 90 investment projects across Iran's free trade-industrial and special economic zones during an online ceremony focused on construction, investment, and tourism developments.

Speaking at the event, Pezeshkian emphasized that strategic planning is necessary for each free zone's advancement. "Strategic planning for each free zone is essential. If we don't have a scientific, expert-based plan for developing each zone based on competition with successful global free zones, and merely rely on construction without a roadmap, we will ultimately fall behind global developments," his website, president.ir quoted Pezeshkian as saying.

The president stressed the necessity of a strategic, forward-looking approach grounded in new technologies to guide development in such areas. He stated that industrial and production units must be designed to ensure sustainability, competitiveness, quality, and reasonable pricing to compete regionally and globally, with resulting benefits flowing to the nation and its citizens.

Pezeshkian also underscored the importance of environmental considerations in project execution. "We hope the spaces created in these zones will be envi-

ronmentally friendly and extensively use solar panels and clean energy, such that a healthy and sustainable environment based on renewable energy is provided for thermal energy supply, heating and cooling," he said.

He expressed hope that this comprehensive, forward-looking, and sustainable approach would pave the way for prosperity, balanced development, and all-around progress in the free zones and surrounding regions.

According to IRNA, the commissioned projects span the Aras, Qeshm, Arvand, and Chabahar free trade-industrial zones, as well as the Sahlan Special Economic Zone. In the Aras Free Zone, 27 projects were inaugurated, generating direct employment for 1,079 people and indirect jobs for 4,495 others. The Qeshm Free Zone saw 25 projects enter operation, creating 248 direct and 417 indirect jobs. Four construction and investment projects were launched in the Arvand Free Zone. In Chabahar, 20 projects commenced operations, providing 201 direct and 22 indirect employment

opportunities. Five projects were inaugurated in the Sahlan Special Economic Zone, yielding 336 direct jobs.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) orders the inauguration of an investment project in the Aras Free Zone among tens of investment projects commissioned across the country during an online ceremony in Tehran on February 7, 2026. president.ir

The commissioning aligns with the government's core strategy to achieve developmental objectives, stimulate in-

vestment, expand employment, and reinforce the role of free zones in driving national economic growth.

Gold bullion imports fetch \$140m in foreign investment: ICE



Economy Desk

Iran attracted more than \$140 million in foreign investment through the import and sale of standard gold bullion after a cabinet decision in October eased restrictions on such transactions, a spokesman for the Iran Center for Exchange of Currency and Gold (ICE) said on Saturday.

"Following the cabinet's resolution in October to facilitate imports of standard gold bullion by foreign investors, more than \$140

million in foreign investment has been channeled into the economy through bullion imports and sales at the exchange center," spokesman Asghar Balsini said, IRNA reported.

According to the center's latest data, foreign investors have imported and sold 488 kilograms of standard gold bullion since October, Balsini said.

He added that the imports were carried out under this year's cabinet resolution, which lifted restrictions on the entry of standard gold

bullion by foreign investors and authorized trading through the Iran Center for Exchange of Currency and Gold.

"Under this framework, 21 foreign companies have imported gold as foreign investors and, after offering it at the exchange center's in-person auctions, reinvested the proceeds in priority economic projects," Balsini said. He said the investments have been directed into petrochemicals, copper, steel and base oil sectors, calling the move a step toward attracting foreign capital, strengthening the standard gold market and supporting sustainable economic growth.

"The implementation of this mechanism shows that easing restrictions on standard gold bullion imports has, in the short term, helped generate capital inflows and support the production sector," Balsini said, adding that continued implementation could lead to greater foreign participation in other infrastructure projects.

Gas supply peaks at record 886 MCM as winter demand soars

Economy Desk

Iran's natural gas production and transmission reached 886 million cubic meters (MCM) on Friday, setting a new record for the country's supply system, SHANA reported on Saturday.

The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) statistics showed Friday's volume of sweet gas produced and transmitted to the national grid reached 886 million cubic meters. The new achievement was realized during the winter season amid sharply increased demand for domestic and commercial gas consumption, reflecting sustainable capacity building and optimal operation of production facilities, transmission lines, and pressure booster stations across the country's gas network.

Winter operations for the national gas network this year are being implemented with precise planning, preventive maintenance, and maximum utilization of production capacity from gas fields, including South Pars, to the country's refineries. According to SHANA, this cohesive performance has further underscored the vital role of gas infrastructure in ensuring



national energy security under harsh climatic conditions and maintaining the domestic production cycle.

According to IRNA, the latest figures from the NIGC showed consumption by the domestic, commercial and small industries sector on Friday reached 589 million cubic meters, accounting for 66 percent of the country's total gas production. Analysis of recent daily consumption data for this sector indicates a decline in the intensity of domestic gas usage, with Thursday's consumption recorded at 592 million cubic me-

ters, Wednesday at 549 million cubic meters, Tuesday at 558 million cubic meters, and Monday at 589 million cubic meters. Observing optimal consumption patterns, especially during the coldest days of the year, helps maintain network stability and facilitates gas supply to industrial consumers.

The all-time peak for gas consumption in the domestic, commercial and small industries sector was recorded on January 22 at 737 million cubic meters, equivalent to 85 percent of the country's total gas production at that time.

RMTO posts nearly 14m tons of cargo transit via land borders in 10 months



Economy Desk

Iran transited 13,852,905 tons of goods through its land borders during the first 10 months of the current Iranian year, which began on March 21, a senior official at Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) said on Saturday.

"This volume of road cargo transit was carried out

through 624,550 trips by international transport fleets crossing the country's territory," said the director general of the organization's Transit and International Transport Office, Javad Hedayati.

During the same period, 11,122,498 tons of goods were exported from Iran through more than 464,000 cargo transport fleet trips, while

2,105,354 tons of goods were imported via nearly 96,000 trips by fleets active in the sector, he said.

A total of 2,944 companies are operating nationwide in the international cargo transport sector, alongside 68 companies and branches active in international passenger transport, Hedayati said.

"With the efforts of 63,000 professional drivers and

the use of 51,000 vehicles in the public transport sector, with an average service age of 12 years, the movement of cargo and passengers on international routes is continuing without interruption," the official said.

He added that 26 border terminals operating across 12 provinces are currently facilitating cargo exchange and passenger

movement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and neighboring countries.

Citing Iran's favorable geographic position in Asia and access to neighboring markets, the official said, "Developing road transport infrastructure and strengthening logistics services can help increase cargo transit through the country's territory."