

Iran drew nearly \$10b in foreign investment this year, official says

Economy Desk

Iran has attracted close to \$10 billion in foreign investment in the current Persian calendar year that began on March 21, a senior official said on Tuesday, stressing that improving conditions for existing investors remains a priority.

Mehdi Heidari, head of the Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance (OIETAI) told the first "National Branding" scientific conference in Tehran that the OIETAI policy was focused on resolving issues for investors to build a positive experience and send a signal of confidence to the market.

Heidari, who also serves as deputy economy minister, described national brands as the determining factors in reducing investment risk and financial premium.

"While Iran benefits from strong human capital, it faces serious challenges in indicators such as economic stability, governance quality, transparency, legal credibility and infrastructure — challenges that directly hurt national brands," he said, according to IRNA.

At the same event, Saeed Sho-

jaei, deputy industry minister, said: "Security of property rights, fragmented laws, and concentration of production at lower levels of the value chain have prevented the formation of powerful Iranian brands at the regional and global levels."

More than 92% of the country's production is concentrated at the lower and middle levels of the value chain, and Iran's unwritten economic strategy for years has been earning foreign currency through raw material sales, he said.

Shojaei called the shift in industrial policy direction in the Seventh Development Plan a sign of realism.

The Iranian government has implemented a measure allowing foreign investors to bring capital into the country in the form of standard gold bullion.

Under a decision approved in October by the Foreign Investment Board, investors can import gold, then offer it on the Iran Mercantile Exchange or the Foreign Exchange and Gold Center.

The move is expected to preserve asset value while enabling investors to enter production and export-oriented sectors.



IRNA

According to a February 8 report by the Iran Center for Exchange of Currency and Gold

(ICE), the country attracted more than \$140 million in foreign investment through the import

and sale of standard gold bullion. The center's data showed for-

ign investors have imported and sold 488 kilograms of standard gold bullion since October.

Iran, Pakistan pledge to accelerate implementation of trade deals



Economy Desk

Iran and Pakistan are moving to operationalize joint agreements to boost bilateral trade, with officials expressing confidence they can reach a \$10 billion target within two years, following talks in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qezeljeh told reporters after a joint meeting with Pakistani agriculture and commerce ministers in Islamabad, "Iran and Pakistan are serious about achieving a common goal in trade," emphasizing the implementation of joint agreements, especially in the agricultural sector.

He said the purpose of the visit to Pakistan is to follow up on agreements reached during President Masoud Pezeshkiyan's visit to Islamabad (in August), and deals that both ministers had

Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qezeljeh (2nd L), leading a delegation, attends a joint meeting with Pakistani agriculture and commerce ministers (not pictured) in Islamabad, Pakistan, on February 17, 2026. ■ IRNA

reached in Tehran in trade, agricultural products, research and academic cooperation in agriculture and related areas.

"In today's meeting, we also agreed to speed up projects aimed at developing the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries," Nouri Qezeljeh added.

He said technical and operational meetings continued throughout the day.

At the joint meeting on Tuesday, Pakistani Agriculture Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said, "Pakistan and Iran share longstanding ties, and we will use these capacities to expand joint trade by leveraging mutual capabilities in the agricultural sector."

He added, "The process of advancing these relations will accelerate, and we are confident that with joint work and coordinated steps, we can reach a free trade agreement."

Tajikistan seeks Iran assistance in chemical industry

Economy Desk

Tajikistan expressed its interest in working with Iran in the chemical industry, to upgrade its plants, the country's Minister of Industry and New Technologies, Shirali Kabir, said following talks with his Iranian counterpart in Dushanbe on Tuesday.

"Tajikistan needs to modernize its chemical industry plants, a move that could provide a suitable basis for joint cooperation," Kabir told Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and

Trade Mohammad Atabak, according to mimit.gov.ir.

He said the Tajik government was determined to expand economic relations with Iran.

Kabir noted that Tajikistan, which exports mainly cotton to Iran, could also export other products and benefit from Iran's market.

Meanwhile, Atabak said, said the Iranian government sought to boost trade with neighboring countries and that the nation had extensive capabilities in mining, mineral pro-

cessing, pharmaceutical industries, textiles among others.

"Iran, with high mineral reserves and expertise in industries including textiles and pharmaceuticals, is ready to develop interactions by accelerating the implementation of agreements," he added.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both sides emphasized the need to accelerate the implementation of agreements and remove administrative obstacles to realize joint cooperation.

Saffron export destinations top 70: Union leader

By Saeed Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The number of countries importing Iranian saffron has climbed to more than 70, posting a 40% rise in recent years, a union leader told Iran Daily.

"In the past, around 50 countries were importers of Iranian saffron, but now it has exceeded 70 countries, which indicates expansion of target markets and sustained demand for Iranian saffron," Gholamreza Miri, head of the Khorasan Razavi Saffron Exporters Union, said.

Khorasan Razavi province in northeast is the country's saffron production hub. Iran is the world's largest saffron producer and exporter and accounts for about 90% of global output.

Miri said saffron exports in the first half of the current Iranian year, which began on March 20, 2025, soared 75% year on year, without providing figures.

"This surge mainly occurred due to the emergence of new markets,"

he said.

However, export volumes fell in the second half due to a price shock in Iran during the harvest season which runs from early October to mid-December.

Miri said this year's harvest declined, leading to more than a doubling in the price per kilogram.

"The price increase caused a shock in global markets and some importers thought prices were inflated, as a result purchases decreased and exports fell in November, December and January," he said.

The union leader described the drop as "temporary" and said the market was adjusting to the new prices.

"Consumption of saffron has not declined and the global market still has high capacity to absorb the Iranian product," he said.

Miri expressed hope that with price stabilization and expansion of consumer markets, saffron exports would bounce back.

"Given the increase in the number of consuming countries, we expect the export trend to turn upward again, although it is not possible to accurately predict export volumes by the end of the year."

He noted that the global market effectively could not meet its needs without Iranian saffron.

Miri said that in the first 10 months of the year, 165 tons of saffron were exported, up about 10% from a year earlier. He forecast this year's production at around 400 tons.

Spain and Afghanistan also produce saffron, but Miri noted that their shares were not large enough to replace Iranian supply. Afghanistan between 12 and 20 tons and Spain produces a maximum of 700 kilograms annually.

Referring to export challenges in some markets, he said India had imposed a 38% tariff on Iranian saffron, prompting Afghan traders to buy Iranian saffron and export it to India with far lower duties, profiting from the difference.

Nevertheless, he said the world market was so dependent on Iranian saffron that in the event of any problems, Iranian saffron would find its way to global markets through various routes.

