

Tehran, Moscow sign cooperation document, MoUs at 19th joint economic commission

Paknejad: Past agreements with Moscow now moving into implementation

Economy Desk

A cooperation document and four memorandums of understanding were signed between Iran and Russia on Wednesday during the 19th session of their Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, co-chaired by Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and Russia's Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilov.

On the final day, a memorandum of understanding on an executive cooperation program for 2026–2028 between Iran's National Standards Organization and Russia's Federal Agency for Technical Regulation and Metrology was signed by Farzaneh Ansari, Iran's vice president and head of the standards body, and Anton Pavlovich Shalaev, head of the Russian agency, IRNA reported.

Another MoU between Russia's Federal Accreditation Service and Iran's National Accreditation Center was signed by Mehdi Alipour, head of the Iranian center, and Dmitry Valeryevich Volvach, head of the Russian service.

Parvaneh Rezaei, Iran's deputy labor minister, and Mikhail Yuryevich Ivanov, head of Russia's Federal Service for Labor and Employment, also signed an MoU on cooperation in employment development and labor inspection.

A final memorandum between Art Khimia Joint Stock Company and the Petroleum Industry Research Institute was signed by Azim Kalantari Asl, head of the institute, and Andrey Vladimirovich Shpak, chief executive of the company.

Iran's oil minister noted in a live interview with IRIB that the 19th Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation between the two countries concluded after three days of intensive negotiations, and "with obstacles removed, many past understandings have entered the implementation phase."

At a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart, he added, "What was ultimately agreed upon at the meeting was a collective resolve to move from dialogue to concrete implementation."

During the three days of this commission's session, specialized working groups held detailed and intensive negotiations in various fields, according to Paknejad.

"Obstacles to a significant portion of past understandings were removed through expert negotiations and have now entered the implementation phase. The secretariat of the joint commission in both countries will be responsible for following up on implementation of the agreed provisions," he said.

With the activation of implementation mechanisms and the removal of existing obstacles, it is expected that economic and energy cooperation between Iran and Russia will develop at a faster pace, and the two countries will be able to benefit from existing capacities to expand cooperation, he added.

Main areas of negotiations

According to Paknejad, important discussions were held in the energy sec-

tor, particularly in the development of oil and gas fields and gas trade, the main focus of which was gas imports from Russia which is seriously on the agenda.

"In the transportation sector, the Rasht-Astara railway project was reviewed as one of the important joint plans, and existing obstacles were largely removed." The Russian side also committed to starting operational work on the project in early April 2026, he added.

Progress on Bushehr nuclear plant phases

"On the peaceful use of nuclear energy, particularly the development of phases two and three of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, it was agreed that implementation of the projects should be pursued at a faster pace," Paknejad said.

"We also reached agreements on the field of grain supply, livestock feed, and agricultural products, which can play an important role in meeting the country's needs," he added.

Also at the joint press conference with Russian minister, Paknejad said, "There is good cooperation in the oil and gas sector between the two countries, and we are examining the assignment of one of the country's important fields to Russian companies."

He reiterated that discussions on Russian gas exports to Iran have been concluded, with only one or two clauses remaining that he hoped would be fi-



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (R) and Russia's Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilov attend a joint press conference on the sidelines of the 19th Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation in Tehran on February 18, 2026.

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nalized and signed soon.

Addressing Iran's need for gas imports, Paknejad said production capacity has increased under the current administration, and that a production record was set on Tuesday at South Pars, but the imbalance remains significant enough that Iran still needs to import gas from Russia.

"As the trend of increasing the country's gas production capacity continues under President Masoud Pezeshkian's government, a record of 730 million cubic meters of daily gas extraction from the joint South Pars field was registered yesterday (Tuesday)," he said.

This amount is the highest figure recorded in the history of operation of this joint field, he added.

Thirteen-fold project success in 11 months

Tsivilov said at the press conference, "In the past 11 months, projects have been 13 times more successful than the previous year." "We are seriously cooperating with the Iranian government and have many projects in various locations; including blocks 2 and 3 of the Bushehr nuclear power plant that are currently under construction," Tsivilov said.

"Besides blocks 2 and 3 of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, we are examining new plant units. A working group has been formed in this regard that is to provide us with a summary of its discussions within three months, and this will be very impactful in the development of peaceful nuclear energy," he concluded.

Minister inaugurates projects, unveils new development plans in Khuzestan



The Ghadir water supply and transmission capacity expansion project is inaugurated in Khuzestan Province on February 18, 2026.

manshir River dam and navigation lock project, besides preventing salt and fresh water interference, also functions as a movable bridge with rotational joints to facilitate land and river transportation.

The main objective of the project is to prevent Persian Gulf saltwater intrusion into the Karun and Bahmanshir rivers and to stabilize the region's hydraulic conditions. Besides its protective role, the structure is expected to increase agricultural resilience and strengthen the local ecosystem.

Speaking at Tuesday's inauguration ceremony for the Bahmanshir River dam and navigation lock in Khorramshahr, Mavalizadeh said, "This infrastructure project is a precursor to completing two other dams in Mard and Choybdeh, and with the commissioning of these projects, fresh and high-quality water will be available to the people of the region."

He also announced the launch of three other important projects.

"Dredging of the Arvand is one of the vital projects for the province," he said.

"Also, the construction of the Shalamcheh-Basra railway is a complementary factor for transforming this region into a hub of growth and an economic driver of the province," the governor said.

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Iran's Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi marked the operational phase of a series of major water and electricity projects during a two-day visit to southwestern Khuzestan Province and announced the launch of several other strategic infrastructure projects.

The projects ranged from drinking water supply, transmission network development, water resource management, facility optimization, and electricity infrastructure strengthening and were either commissioned or had construction started with the minister's participation.

The Ghadir water supply and transmission capacity expansion project was inaugurated on Wednesday. According to Khuzestan Governor Mohammadreza Mavalizadeh, the project took about 10 months to complete and the increased capacity will help ease drinking water and agricultural shortages in several areas, ISNA reported.

Also, at a ceremony marking

the expansion, Aliabadi said, "We are on the verge of upstream development of the Bakhtiari Dam. With the plan now approved, a \$1.2 billion investment is set to flow into the region, creating a substantial boost in the region."

He added that the country has "12,000 MW of hydropower capacity, which, when combined with its solar resources, will significantly improve the energy situation," IRNA reported.

Also on Wednesday, seven electricity distribution projects by the Khuzestan Power Distribution Company were collectively commissioned in Shush County, aimed at developing energy supply infrastructure and improving services in urban and rural areas of the province.

On Tuesday, the first day of the minister's provincial visit, 39 projects by the Khuzestan Regional Power Company were inaugurated. In addition, the Bahmanshir River dam and navigation lock were commissioned.

According to ISNA, the Bah-

Iran, India discuss tech cooperation to form regional digital hub

Economy Desk

Iran's Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi said technological cooperation between Iran and India could lead to the formation of a regional digital power hub, during an official visit to India and a meeting on Wednesday with India's Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasad.

"Today, India is one of the main global software hubs that has been able to create and export significant capacities in information technology, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity to the world," IRNA quoted Hashemi as saying.

"Iran, with its strong human force and scientific infrastructure, has also taken important steps in developing new technologies, and technological cooperation between Iran and India, given the historical background and current capacities of the two countries, can lead to the formation of a digital power hub in the region," he added.

Hashemi identified expanding private-sector engagement between the two countries as a top priority, adding that Iran is keen to "start operational cooperation in areas such as developing native Large Language Models (LLMs), creating joint AI platforms in the agriculture sector, and establishing innovation centers to apply artificial intelligence across various fields."

The minister also stressed the importance of securing critical data infrastructure



Iran's Communications and Information Technology Minister Sattar Hashemi (L) meets India's Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasad in New Delhi on February 18, 2026.

change programs can accelerate technology development in both countries and help strengthen digital infrastructure and improve data security," he added.

According to the report, Hashemi traveled to New Delhi as part of a technology diplomacy program and to attend the global "AI Impact 2026" summit, aiming to present Iran's capabilities in artificial intelligence and pursue bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this field.

The India AI Impact Summit 2026, attended by more than 110 countries, 30 international organizations, and 45 ministerial-level delegations, is being held from Feb. 16 to 20, at the Bharat Mandapam convention center in New Delhi.