

# Mazandaran kicks off infrastructure projects with new major investment deals

## Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian inaugurated several infrastructure and health projects in Mazandaran Province on Wednesday while signing investment deals worth more than 40 trillion tomans (\$242 million) aimed at developing the northern region.

Pezeshkian arrived in Sari on Wednesday for a two-day visit during which important development and service projects across the province are being inaugurated. The initiatives encompass a range of significant environmental, medical, infrastructure, and economic plans for Mazandaran.

Key highlights of the visit include the opening of two national projects in waste management and energy: the Eastern Mazandaran Waste Processing Plant and the Sari Waste-to-Energy Plant. Moreover, 21 health sector projects and a broader set of medical initiatives in the province were launched during a ceremony on Wednesday evening. The simultaneous commencement of major water and electricity projects in Mazandaran was also announced by presidential order.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses investors and economic actors in Sari, northern province of Mazandaran, on February 25, 2026. [president.ir](#)

According to ISNA, the Sari Waste-to-Energy Plant, a flagship waste management project for the province, has the capacity to process 450 tons of waste per day and is expected to play a critical role in managing waste. Phases one and two of the project, under a contract signed in 2012, have now been fully completed. Key milestones achieved include the delivery of all imported equipment to the site, provision of vital infrastructure

including water, electricity, and access roads, significant progress in civil construction, ignition of furnaces one and two, and the commencement of waste reception after 13 years. With the plant now operational, long-standing waste management challenges in the provincial capital are expected to be significantly reduced, marking an effective step toward environmental protection and improved quality of urban services

in Mazandaran. Abdolreza Dadbod, deputy for coordination of urban affairs at the Mazandaran Governorate, said at the Wednesday evening ceremony, "The Eastern Mazandaran Province Waste Processing Plant uses the latest recycling methods and converts waste into usable materials for the agricultural sector. This plant, after being in construction for several decades, is the first complete waste management facility in the province, and three

counties will benefit from its services." During the visit, the president is also scheduled to hold meetings with investors, economic actors, and elites from the province's political, cultural, and social spheres. In a meeting with investors and economic actors in Mazandaran, Pezeshkian highlighted the province's regional connectivity potential. He stated that the transportation corridor stretching

from northern Iran toward Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia, and Azerbaijan constitutes an important economic artery.

He added that domestically, the development of rail corridors and public transportation, in cooperation with the Parliament and through attracting investors, is on the agenda to reduce transportation costs and facilitate economic activity.

## Investment agreements signed

With the president and the governor of Mazandaran in attendance, eight major investment projects in the province were formally signed. The projects, representing a total investment of more than 40 trillion tomans (\$242 million), are expected to create employment for over 9,000 people and support the development of various industries, including agriculture, steel, tourism, and education. The signed initiatives span the sectors of agriculture, steel, tourism, wood and paper industries, and waste management, with the overarching goal of promoting economic development and generating sustainable employment in the province.

## Iran revises oil-for-goods mechanism, eyes FX unification



## Economy Desk

Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Quezeljeh said on Wednesday the government proposed a revised oil-for-goods mechanism under which importers of essential commodities would receive crude only after delivering shipments, tightening control over barter trade used to secure staple imports. Speaking after a cabinet meeting, Nouri-Quezeljeh said the new barter formula was intended to secure steady imports of staple goods amid tighter external payment channels. Under the proposal, importers must first deliver the agreed cargo before being introduced to receive oil equivalent, reversing the previous sequence in which crude was allocated upfront, IRNA reported. The adjustment shifts performance risk onto the delivery stage and anchors crude entitlement to verified imports. In practice, it prioritizes physical supply of essential goods and reduces the likelihood of delays in procurement cycles. The oil leg remains centrally managed, while importers recover working capital through crude allocation after fulfillment. Nouri-Quezeljeh added that a wheat subsidy package would be announced within days, as parallel policy steps gradually steer the currency market toward a single exchange rate. Under a new policy, all foreign currency transactions are now centralized in a single trading hall with a negotiated rate closely aligned with market prices. The policy shifts foreign currency allocation from the beginning of the supply chain to direct subsidy transfers at the consumer end. "If changes occur in prices, essential goods will also be covered. This was anticipated in advance, and for this reason, with the president's emphasis, necessary measures have been considered to manage potential differences and changes," he said. In separate remarks on Sunday, Nouri-Quezeljeh said markets have seen no supply shortages since the launch of the major government economic program two months ago, rejecting earlier predictions of deficits. He said that despite heavy demand, work discipline had been maintained and visible satisfaction was now evident among lower-income groups.

## Iran-Turkey trade hits \$13b as balance favors Ankara despite positive outlook

### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Trade between Iran and Turkey reached about \$13 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year, which began on March 21,



Jalal Ebrahimi

with the balance favoring Turkey by nearly \$3 billion, Jalal Ebrahimi, head of the Iran-Turkey Economy and Trade House, said in an interview with Iran Daily. Ebrahimi said that despite challenges, the outlook for commercial ties between the two countries remains positive as trade grew 13% in the 10-month period. Iran's exports to Turkey totaled \$5.66 billion in the timespan, accounting for 12.5% of Tehran's total exports, he said. During the same period, Turkey's exports to Iran topped \$7.92 billion, meaning Turkey exported \$2.921 billion more to Iran than it received.

Regarding trade prospects through the end of the Iranian year on March 21, 2026, Ebrahimi said no significant change in trade figures is expected due to the approaching Nowruz holidays and regional conditions. He added that 77% of Iran's exports to Turkey consist of commodities such as gas, fertilizer, aluminum, copper, rail and marine industry products, and steel products. Conversely, 72% of Turkey's exports to Iran comprise gold, food industry products, machinery, auto parts, and grains. "Excluding oil, condensates, and gas, the trade balance decisively favors Turkey because it holds a stronger

industrial position," Ebrahimi said. He explained that Turkey has modernized its factories using European technology and has increased both production and re-exports.

Turkey maintains its export flows even when facing domestic product shortages by sourcing goods from abroad, thereby retaining its customers, he said. "For example, when Iran halted tomato exports to control its domestic market, Turkish suppliers sourced tomatoes from other origins and captured Iran's regional markets."

### Suitcase exports phenomenon

A portion of current exports is conducted through informal "suitcase trade" that is not registered in official statistics, Ebrahimi said. "The phenomenon could be controlled by activating the capacity of free trade zones such as Maku and Aras (in northwestern Iran), but these opportunities have unfortunately not been sufficiently utilized."

### Turkey's strategic view

Turkey has placed politics in the service of its economy, Ebrahimi said, recalling a statement by former Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoglu, "Wherever there is a Turkish trader, we will open a consulate or trade representation there." As a result, Turkey maintains economic counselors in most countries worldwide, whereas Iran had such representations only in neighboring countries until recently. Ebrahimi pointed to a period of successful trade with Turkey during the tenure of an effective economic counselor at Iran's embassy in Ankara, when Iranian exports to Turkey rose to \$15 billion. He did not specify the exact period he



was referring to. However, trade data show that Iranian exports to Turkey have reached around \$15 billion at certain points, including in 2012 before the tightening of oil sanctions, and again in 2022 amid a surge in global energy prices.

"This demonstrates how crucial the presence and expertise of active trade counselors can be," he said. Regarding significant capacities to increase exports to Turkey, Ebrahimi said that beyond petrochemical products, Iran could export processed industries and tree-based products such as dates and figs, which Turkey repackages and re-exports to Europe. Iran also has strong potential to export oil byproducts such as grease and industrial oils to Turkey.

"Turkey is currently facing a crisis in its textile industry, with more than 350,000 small and large units closing due to rising production costs and wages," Ebrahimi said. Purchasing power has declined amid persistently high inflation in Turkey — official data show annual consumer price inflation running well into the double digits in recent years — although Ebrahimi did not cite a specific figure. "Nevertheless, Turkey has continued to perform successfully in tourism, with revenues projected to reach \$62 billion in 2026," he added.

## Audit watchdog warns of rising gas flaring despite recovery drive

The Supreme Audit Court of Iran (SAC) has warned of surging gas flaring at the country's oil and gas fields, saying the wasteful practice was costing billions of dollars each year. The oversight body said in a report that, based on its estimates, more than 56 million cubic meters (mcm) per day of gas were burned off through flare stacks at oil and gas facilities during the first half of the current Persian year, from March 21 to September 22, 2025, Tasnim News Agency reported on Wednesday.

"The lost volumes amount to about \$6bn a year in value," the organization added. The SAC, which is affiliated with parliament and tasked with ensuring the proper implementation of financial and budgetary laws and safeguarding public funds, urged the government to speed up measures to curb flaring.

The report comes after Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on November 2 that his ministry had been able to collect 9.34 mcm per day of flare gas. Under Iran's Seventh Development Plan (SDP), the Oil Ministry is required to save around 44 mcm daily by 2029.

Iran has rolled out a comprehensive program to put an end to flaring. In early November, the Oil Ministry signed 12 contracts with local companies to gather associated petroleum gas (APG) from nine oilfields run by the National Iranian South Oil Co. (NISOC), the country's largest crude producer. The ministry described the initiative as the "largest flare gas recovery project in the country's history." Under the plan, 32 flares will be extinguished over 18 months, saving 8.35 mcm of gas per day. APG is a by-product generated during crude oil extraction, but in the absence of the necessary equipment it is burned via flare stacks. Flaring also occurs at gas fields due to a lack of infrastructure such as compressors or insufficient refining capacity.



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