

President urges rapid activation of alternative import routes



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Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Friday directed officials to speed up the activation of alternative import channels and maximize use of neighboring countries' capacity to ensure supplies of essential goods and medicine amid restrictions on

southern port imports, state media reported.

Speaking at a meeting attended by economic authorities, the central bank governor, and other senior officials to review supplies of essential goods, pharmaceuticals, and alternative import routes, Pezeshkian stressed the importance of maintaining

market stability and preventing price fluctuations, according to IRNA.

Discussions centered on maintaining supply chains and expanding logistical, commercial and diplomatic capacities following restrictions affecting some southern entry points.

The president also called on the Foreign Ministry to strengthen economic diplomacy efforts to help secure imports and sustain supply flows.

"We must use all of the country's political, economic and regional capacities to facilitate the purchase, transport, customs clearance and entry of essential goods and medicine so that supplies reach the public without disruption," Pezeshkian said, adding that he was ready to personally coordinate with leaders of neighboring countries and regional partners to swiftly remove any barriers to their supply and transport.

Officials reviewed the latest

status of imports of essential goods, medicine and industrial inputs, as well as measures taken to establish alternative routes.

The country faces growing external economic and maritime pressure, including US restrictions targeting its shipping and oil trade through a naval blockade imposed since mid-April. US President Donald Trump imposed the sea-based embargo on Iranian ports on April 13, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace agreement after a 40-day conflict that began in late February. Iran is seeking to diversify logistics corridors to counter the restrictions.

According to reports presented by economic officials, coordination with neighboring countries has helped activate and expand capacity at several land border crossings and alternative transport corridors to facilitate imports of essential goods.

Pezeshkian instructed the Ag-

riculture Ministry to adopt "precise, continuous and forward-looking" planning to ensure that restrictions at some border crossings do not drive up the prices of essential goods and medicines.

He also emphasized the need to make greater use of northern ports, develop alternative trade routes, and tap the capacities of neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Russia, and Azerbaijan to secure essential imports, while urging the swift implementation of relevant agreements.

The president ordered the economy ministry to establish specialized task forces for different categories of goods to streamline decision-making and accelerate identification of supplier countries and import procedures.

At the meeting, officials also examined the feasibility of importing medicine and other critical goods from China through rail

routes, while emphasizing the need to strengthen combined transport infrastructure and improve resilience of supply chains.

Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati also presented a report at the meeting on the status of foreign exchange allocation and financial resources required for importing essential goods and pharmaceuticals, affirming that no impediments exist in financing these items and that necessary support will be sustained on a continuous basis. Separately, Ezzatollah Zarei, spokesperson for Iran's industry ministry, said that authorities had identified new trade corridors and were taking necessary measures through alternative routes.

"This does not mean there are no problems, but it means there is no deadlock, and with the cooperation of all stakeholders, this phase will also be overcome," Zarei said.

Iran, Kazakhstan target \$3b trade volume, pledge expanded economic cooperation



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Iran and Kazakhstan on Thursday emphasized expanding economic cooperation and raising bilateral trade volume to \$3 billion, state media reported.

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade and Kazakhstan's Minister of Trade and Integration stressed the goal during talks in Astana on the eve of the Eurasian Economic Union summit, according to IRNA. "The industrial and economic capacities of the two countries have made achieving the \$3 billion trade target feasible," Iran's Industry Minister Mohammad Atabak said. "A specialized working group will be formed to operationalize areas of cooperation at the expert level, and the specialized deputy ministries of the Industry, Mine and Trade Ministry are tasked with pursuing various branches of Iran-Kazakhstan cooperation." Atabak identified resolving banking obstacles as the key to expanding bilateral trade. "The trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union has created the groundwork for facilitating inter-bank transactions between traders of the two countries," he said. "Iran is also prepared to cooperate, where appropriate, on using barter trade capacity in areas

including steel, iron, grains, oil, sunflower, meal and various minerals," Atabak added.

The two sides agreed to expand technical and engineering services exports, establish science and technology parks, exchange industrial expertise, develop logistics and rail transport, and boost food product trade.

The meeting aimed to lay groundwork for realizing a shared commercial vision and maximizing benefits from the Eurasian Economic Union agreement, with executive actions to be pursued through a joint working group.

Atabak, who traveled to Astana to attend the 5th Eurasian Economic Forum (EEF-2026), also delivered a message from Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to the gathering, which brought together 140 representatives from more than 30 countries and 20 international organizations. In the message, Pezeshkian described Iran's active participation in Eurasian Union meetings as reflecting Tehran's serious commitment to expanding strategic relations with members of the economic bloc and called for accelerating the removal of structural barriers to realizing high trade potential.

In another part of his message, the president described cooperation with union members as a

long-term strategy for regional convergence, and citing cultural, historical and geographical commonalities, emphasized the need to fully leverage existing opportunities to create a successful model of multilateral cooperation.

The 5th Eurasian Economic Forum (EEF-2026) was held May 28-29 in Astana, under the main theme "The EAEU in the Global Digital Race: Betting on Artificial Intelligence."

On the sidelines of the forum, Atabak met with Kazakhstan's Minister of Industry and Construction, Kanat Sharlapaev, where they agreed to draft and sign bilateral memorandums of understanding to framework cooperation and facilitate implementation of industrial plans. A key focus of the talks was addressing financial challenges facing contractors and industrialists from both countries. In this regard, the sides agreed to establish necessary mechanisms to facilitate issuance of bank guarantees aimed at ensuring implementation of joint projects and supporting active companies in these sectors.

Kazakhstan's Minister of Industry and Construction welcomed the proposals and emphasized his country's readiness to provide legal and executive frameworks for more active presence of Iranian companies in Kazakhstan's industrial projects.

The meeting, considered an important step toward strengthening economic relations in the Eurasian region, concluded with emphasis on continuing expert-level consultations to finalize the memorandums.

New US aviation sanctions show anger over Iran's fast recovery: CAO

A senior Iranian aviation official dismissed Washington's latest threats against Iranian airlines, describing them as a reflection of US frustration over the rapid recovery of Iran's civil aviation sector after the US-Israeli aggression.

Hamidreza Sanei, deputy head of the Civil Aviation Organization for international affairs, said on Friday that comments by US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent about new restrictions on Iranian carriers did not amount to a formal sanctions measure, Press TV reported.

"This is the second time the Treasury Secretary has made such a claim, but no legal action, formal sanctions order, or binding decision containing the details of this matter has been seen beyond what he posted on X," Sanei said.

According to Sanei, the remarks appear to be driven more by anger over the revival of Iran's air transport sector despite extensive wartime damage than by any established legal or regulatory process.

Bessent had written on X that Washington would be "shutting down both Iranian airlines' access to landing spots, refueling, and ticket sales," though he did not identify the airlines involved or provide additional details. Iran Air has previously been designated by the US State Department, while Mahan Air is also under US sanctions.

Sanei argued that repeated threats against civilian aviation infrastructure highlight the sector's importance to the national economy, including the trans-



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port of essential goods such as medicine and automotive components, as well as meeting the travel needs of the public.

The US pressure comes as Iran's aviation sector has recovered more quickly than many observers had expected.

Iran's civilian airports sustained significant damage during the 40-day war. Mohammad Reza Rezaei-Kouchi, chairman of Parliament's Construction Committee, said in April that 10 passenger aircraft were destroyed and another 50 damaged in US-Israeli attacks on civilian airports during the conflict, which began on February 28 and ended on April 8 following a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire.

He said some of the damaged aircraft can be repaired and returned to service. Rezaei-Kouchi added that Iran is seeking compensation directly from the states it holds responsible for the attacks and is also pursuing the matter through correspondence with the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The US-Israeli military campaign also struck civilian airport infrastructure, including control towers, runways, navigation facilities, and ground

communication systems, despite such sites being protected under international humanitarian law.

Even so, within two months of the ceasefire, 21 airports — accounting for about 40% of Iran's civilian airport network — have resumed operations.

Among the facilities most heavily damaged was Tabriz International Airport, Iran's third-largest international airport by traffic. The airport reopened to flights on Wednesday after missile attacks had damaged its control tower and parts of its main runway.

Reconstruction work was carried out entirely with domestic expertise and locally manufactured aviation equipment, reflecting a broader push for self-reliance that has developed over years of sanctions.

The recovery effort was implemented in stages. Authorities first focused on airports in the eastern parts of the country, which were farthest from the conflict zone, helping restore overflight revenues from regional air corridors. Reconstruction then expanded to airports in central and western Iran.

Border tourism, security ...

This is especially significant in ethnically diverse border regions, where economic marginalization can sometimes intensify feelings of exclusion or deepen social fragmentation. In such contexts, economic resilience becomes directly connected to national cohesion and long-term stability. For this reason, maintaining economic activity and tourism infrastructure in border provinces during periods of crisis should be viewed not merely as an economic policy, but as a preventive security

strategy.

The recent use of tourism infrastructure during crisis conditions also revealed an important transformation in the function of tourism itself. Hotels, schools, eco-lodges, transportation systems, and local service networks increasingly acted as emergency support infrastructure capable of assisting population movement, temporary accommodation, and crisis coordination.

This demonstrates that tourism infrastructure in frontier regions possesses a

dual function:

economic and security-related simultaneously.

Another important dimension concerns the symbolic role of border tourism in reinforcing national integration. Cultural tourism, local heritage projects, and cross-border social interactions can strengthen perceptions of inclusion and shared national identity while reducing isolation in peripheral regions.

In many ways, border tourism operates not only as an economic activity but also

as a mechanism of "soft territorial consolidation." It connects peripheral regions more closely to national economic and cultural systems.

At the same time, the persistence of regional instability means that traditional approaches to border development may no longer be sufficient. Frontier regions today require integrated strategies combining: security management, economic resilience, local participation, digital infrastructure, transportation connectivity, and sustainable tourism development.

Without such integrated policies, repeated regional crises may gradually erode both economic stability and social cohesion in vulnerable frontier provinces.

Ultimately, one of the most important strategic lessons of recent regional tensions is that border security can no longer be understood solely through military frameworks. In the contemporary Middle East, resilient border economies and socially stable frontier communities have become essential components of national security itself.