

# Pezeshkian: Diplomacy-driven economic gains to fund infrastructure, development

## Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said any economic gains resulting from improving international conditions would be invested in strengthening the country's infrastructure and financing development projects.

Speaking at a joint meeting with border management and road construction officials in West Azarbaijan Province, Pezeshkian said development should be aligned with available resources, warning that expansion without regard for existing capacities could create serious long-term challenges.

He also called for a comprehensive strate-

gy to manage water, soil and regional resources as part of efforts to restore Lake Urmia, one of the Middle East's largest salt lakes, whose shrinking water levels have raised environmental concerns for years.

"The continuation of life in this region depends on balancing resources and consumption, reforming cultivation patterns, controlling water-intensive industries and strengthening oversight," Pezeshkian said.

The president rebuked what he described as a lack of reliable data and coordinated planning among some government agencies, saying effective management

required accurate information on livestock, water resources, grazing capacity and regional development plans.

He said policymakers should assess whether crops currently being cultivated are suitable for local conditions and whether they will have viable markets in the future, arguing that sound decision-making must precede effective implementation.

Hailing efforts to reduce water consumption through improved irrigation as valuable, Pezeshkian said changing irrigation methods alone would not solve the problem if unsuitable crops continued to be grown. He said scientific assessments should



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a joint meeting with border management and road construction officials in West Azarbaijan Province on June 26, 2026.  
● president.ir

determine which crops should remain and where cultivation patterns should change. Pezeshkian added that lasting behavioral change would require government policies, financial incentives, regulations and resource allocation to work in the same direction, with the aim of preserving Lake Urmia, supporting local livelihoods and promoting sustainable regional development.



## Minister: Foreign troop withdrawal key to regional stability, global energy security



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (R) attends the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting in Gurugram, India on June 25, 2026.  
● SHANA

## Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said lasting stability in West Asia and the security of global energy supplies can only be achieved through the withdrawal of foreign forces from the region and the dismantling of US military bases.

In his address to the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting in Gurugram, India on Thursday, Paknejad elaborated on the full scope of repeated attacks on Iran's oil, gas, refining and petrochemical infrastructure that he described as a "blind war against global energy security."

"The only way to reach stability and security in West Asia, which supplies a major portion of the world's energy, is the withdrawal of foreigners from the region, the dismantling of US bases, and entrusting the security of this strategic region to regional countries," he said. His remarks come days after a landmark June 17 Memorandum of Understanding between Iran and the United States that commits Washington to lifting all sanctions on Tehran, unfreezing Iranian assets, and allowing dollar-based transactions. The minister said Iran is ready to play "an active

and constructive role" with BRICS members to achieve secure and affordable energy objectives, but warned that the global energy system is facing "challenges and growing uncertainties more than ever before" – from geopolitical risks and market volatility to climate change and investment constraints that "cannot be addressed by one or two countries alone." In his address, Paknejad detailed the consequences of the US-Israeli war, telling the assembled ministers that the "repeated attacks by aggressors on Iran's oil, gas, refining, and petrochemical infrastructure during this period were not merely an attack on one country's infrastructure, but a blind war against global energy security."

The attacks, he said, caused physical destruction to facilities, "the martyrdom and wounding of a number of oil industry personnel," widespread environmental consequences, disruption in the production of raw materials and the supply chain of essential goods needed for the lives of the Iranian people, and the loss of income and employment for thousands of families in the Persian Gulf region. "The consequences of such aggression have

now led to an energy crisis, a global increase in the price of raw materials and manufactured products, economic pressure, and increased living costs for many civilian populations," Paknejad said.

He described the attacks as a "flagrant violation of international law and specifically the United Nations Charter" that "must be condemned at every level."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the minister said Iran, as one of the world's largest oil and gas producers, has achieved its infrastructure development objectives despite years of sanctions, with annual natural gas production reaching over 280 billion cubic meters in 2025 – about 7% of global output.

He added that Iran possesses thousands of kilometers of pipelines for transporting crude, petroleum products, and natural gas, and that electricity generation capacity had exceeded 100,000 megawatts, with both fossil-fuel and non-fossil generation expanding.

## BRICS Digital Center comes online

Paknejad on Thursday also welcomed the launch of the BRICS Digital Center of Excellence (DCoE) for Smart Grid and Energy Storage, describing it as a practical platform to strengthen technical cooperation, innovation and knowledge-sharing among member states. Paknejad said the center could help advance several strategic objectives, including enhancing energy security, promoting technology transfer and capacity building, supporting energy transition efforts while maintaining affordable and reliable en-

ergy access, strengthening South-South cooperation, and creating new opportunities for energy-producing and exporting countries.

He noted that varying levels of technological development among BRICS members make the initiative particularly important, as it can help bridge technology gaps and accelerate the deployment of modern energy infrastructure across participating nations.

## Iran, India call for expanding energy ties

In a related development, Paknejad met with his Indian counterpart on the sidelines of the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting held in Gurugram, Haryana, India, on Thursday.

Iran's oil minister and India's Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stressed the importance of developing, strengthening, and enhancing bilateral cooperation in the oil and energy sectors.

During their meeting, both sides highlighted the positive relations and cooperation between the two countries.

India has historically been an important buyer of Iranian crude but suspended imports in 2019 following the re-imposition of US sanctions on the export of Iranian oil.

The two-day meeting in Gurugram, on the outskirts of New Delhi, brings together energy ministers from the expanded BRICS group, which now comprises Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates.

## Tehran, Beijing agree to pursue rail customs cooperation to boost trade



Foroud Asgari (R), head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), is seen on the sidelines of a meeting of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels on June 26, 2026.  
● IRNA

## Economy Desk

Iran and China agreed on Friday to move forward with signing a rail customs cooperation deal aimed at facilitating and expanding bilateral trade, according to state news agency IRNA.

The agreement was discussed during a bilateral meeting between the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) chief Foroud Asgari, and Zhang Baofeng, head of China's General Administration of Customs, on the sidelines of a World Customs Organization meeting.

The proposed agreement is intended to make more effective use of rail transport capacity between the two countries and

support increased trade flows.

The two sides also discussed extending special customs facilitation measures to authorized economic operators (AEOs), a program designed to simplify customs procedures for trusted businesses.

Officials reviewed plans to expand cooperation in customs training, exchange expertise between specialists, and collaborate on coordinated border management practices.

Separately, Asgari met with the head of the Asia-Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building, where he said Iran was prepared to deepen cooperation in areas including smart customs, digital transformation,

risk management, coordinated border management and Time Release Studies (TRS).

Asgari said IRICA was implementing modernization and electronic transformation programs and welcomed greater participation by Iranian customs experts in regional workshops, training courses and professional development initiatives. He also called for more virtual training and on-line capacity-building programs to broaden access for customs personnel.

The head of the regional capacity-building office expressed readiness to expand cooperation with Iran in organizing customs-related training programs, according to IRNA.

## No strategic rift...

The first message is that the Islamic Republic re-

Page 1 > m a i n s committed to the understanding on keeping the Strait open and ensuring the continuity of international shipping. However, that commitment does not mean accepting every proposed route or mechanism without review and agreement by the coastal states.

The second—and more important—message is that no technical or security mechanism in the Strait of Hormuz, however well-intentioned, can enjoy sufficient le-

gitimacy or durability without the participation, consent, and respect for the legal rights of the coastal states, particularly Iran. This is not merely a political position; it is rooted in established principles of international law and the governance of international waterways.

The third message is that Iran distinguishes between the principle of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and the way maritime traffic is managed. As a result, opposition to certain proposed routes should not be construed as

opposition to freedom of navigation or the security of global trade. Rather, it reflects Iran's insistence that implementation arrangements also align with the legal, security, and sovereignty concerns of the coastal states.

In essence, Tehran's message to the international community is that lasting security in the Strait of Hormuz can only be achieved when freedom of navigation is guaranteed alongside recognition of the sovereign rights and legal responsibilities of the coastal states.