SNSC official says gas swap, North-South Corridor to shatter 'US illusion of pressuring Iran'



Ali Bagheri
ISNA

Economy Desk

The transfer of Russian gas to Iran and the North-South Corridor are strategic projects that dispel the illusion held by some powers, including the United States, that they can put the Islamic Republic under pressure, Ali Bagheri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said, according to ISNA.

He described the two projects as economic assets that Iran could use to promote development at home and across the region, as well as enhance security.

"Iran made proper use of the potential of the Strait of Hormuz to advance its national interests in the period following the Third Imposed War. These two projects are geoeconomic assets that can be effectively used to strengthen security and develop the country," Bagheri said.

The US and Israel launched a 40-day war against Iran in late February. Days after the war began, Iran shut the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global energy chokepoint through which about 20% of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas passed daily. Disruptions to traffic through the waterway pushed oil prices from about $70 a barrel to above $100. Iran remains in a state of war, with its southern ports also under a US blockade. The restrictions have targeted Iran's oil exports and maritime trade.

One of the two projects cited by Bagheri is the International North-South Transport Corridor, whose western section includes the Rasht-Astara railway. Iran and Russia signed an agreement on May 18, 2023, to jointly build the 162-km railway, the missing rail link in the corridor's western section.

On Wednesday, the two sides signed an agreement to hand over a further 37 km of the railway project to Russia's Caspian Service, bringing the total length of the route assigned to the company to 162 km.

The handover is part of ongoing efforts to complete the railway, a key component of the North-South corridor.

The two countries are also nearing a final agreement on gas swaps.

Under a 30-year agreement signed by the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) and Russian energy giant Gazprom in 2024, Iran is expected to receive up to 55 billion cubic meters of gas annually through a planned pipeline that Russia intends to build across the Caspian Sea.

Iranian officials have said the supplies would help address domestic gas shortages, support sustainable growth in export capacity and strengthen the country's position as a regional gas hub.

Iran holds the world's second-largest natural gas reserves after Russia, estimated at about 34 trillion cubic meters.

Iran-India trade rises 46% in first eight months, driven by surge in Indian imports

Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and India rose 46% year-on-year to $1.83 billion in the first eight months of 2026, driven mainly by a sharp increase in Indian imports from Iran, according to figures from India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry cited by Eqtesad-e Moaser.

Bilateral trade totaled $1.25 billion in the same period last year, the ministry's figures showed.

Indian exports to Iran fell 16% to $730 million in January-August 2026, down from $870 million a year earlier. In contrast, India's imports from Iran surged 291% to $1.1 billion, compared with $380 million in the same period of 2025.

Iran imports $560 million in rice from India in eight months

Official Indian data show that rice imports from India continued despite tensions in the Strait of Hormuz and transport restrictions in the Persian Gulf since the 40-day US-Israeli war began in late February.

Iran imported $560 million worth of rice from India in



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January-August 2026, a figure broadly unchanged from the same period last year. More than $170 million of those imports came in July and August.

Iran imported a total of $747 million worth of rice from India in 2025. Based on the import trend in recent months, the value of rice imports from India is expected to exceed last year's total in 2026.

Oil was also India's largest import from Iran in the first eight months of 2026. India bought $707 million worth of Iranian oil during the period, with the shipments recorded in April and May. No further oil shipments from Iran to India were recorded in the following months.

TPO official urges higher-value exports, stronger corridors in China ties

Economy Desk

Iran and China should prioritize expanding exports of higher value-added goods and strengthening trade corridors as two strategic areas for deepening bilateral economic and trade cooperation, a senior Iranian trade official said on Thursday.

Abdolsadeh Neisy, director general of the East Asia, Subcontinent and Oceania Office at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, made the remarks at the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference in China, calling for a sustainable and balanced partnership based on mutual interests.

"Iran's approach to cooperation with China is not simply about increasing the volume of trade, but about building a partnership that leads to expanded trade, investment development and an effective presence of businesses from both countries in regional and international markets," he said.

The conference was held on the sidelines of the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) and organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran in cooperation with Iranian commercial counselors based in Shanghai and Beijing, IRNA reported.

It brought together officials, senior executives, investors, traders, entrepreneurs and business representatives from both countries to discuss opportunities for economic, trade and investment cooperation.

Neisy said Iran's abundant natural resources, diverse production capabilities, large domestic market, access to neighboring countries and strategic geographical position offered considerable potential for expanding bilateral trade and joint investment.

He identified higher value-added exports as the first strategic priority, saying Iran aimed to move away from exporting raw and semi-processed materials toward goods that generate greater added value, export earnings and employment.

He pointed to opportunities for cooperation with Chinese partners in food industries, processed agricultural products, petrochemicals, mining, construction materials, industrial



Abdolsadeh Neisy, director general of the East Asia, Subcontinent and Oceania Office at the TPO, addresses the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference in China on November 5, 2026.
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goods and other manufactured products. Such cooperation could help complete supply chains, expand export-oriented production and increase the presence of Iranian goods in China and other regional markets, while improving product quality, strengthening domestic production and enhancing economic competitiveness, he said.

Turning to the second priority, Neisy called for stronger trade corridors linking Iran and China, highlighting the role of international transport routes in shaping global commerce.

Iran's geographical position enables it to serve as an effective link connecting East and West, as well as North and South, he said.

He described trade corridors as more than routes for transporting goods, saying they could also support trade expansion, logistics services, regional distribution centers and lasting economic partnerships.

Neisy also highlighted the potential of existing regional transport links, including trade connections between Iran, China and third countries, to expand regional commerce and strengthen international supply chains.

Iranian businesses eye ...

"China is opening its door ever wider, and Chinese-style modernization bears an even more distinct hallmark of openness," he said.

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Gabonese President Nguema, Austrian Prime Minister Stocker and a representative of the United Nations Development Programme, Administrator Decroix, also attended the opening ceremony and delivered speeches.

More than 50 ministerial-level and senior officials from over 30 countries, regions and international organizations were also present, alongside diplomatic envoys, representatives of international organizations in China, officials from Chinese provincial-level administrations and central government ministries, and representatives of multinational companies, think tanks and chambers of commerce.

Iran seeks to expand exports to China

Iran is participating in the expo through the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), with at least six pavilions showcasing the country's petrochemical, food and agricultural products, and handicrafts.

Amir Hashemi, CEO of Iran Trade Development Center in China, told Iran Daily that the CIIE provides countries with an opportunity to showcase their export capabilities and establish business connections with the Chinese market.

"Each country has the opportunity to set up a pavilion to showcase its export capabilities through targeted marketing and B2B and C2C engagement, with the aim of expanding its access to the Chinese market," he said.

Iranian businesspeople are using the event to explore opportunities to enter both China's online and physical markets, as well as pursue investment and joint projects, Hashemi said.

He added that participants from Iran represent a range of sectors, including petrochemicals, handicrafts, creative and cultural industries, science and technology.

According to Hashemi, Iran's participation in the expo over the years has helped businesses improve the country's export performance in the Chinese market through initiatives coordinated by the TPO and create more favorable conditions for non-oil exports.

Launched in 2018, the CIIE is the world's first national-level expo dedicated to imports. Its main components include the Country Exhibition, the Enterprise and Business Exhibition, and the Hongqiao International Economic Forum, as well as a range of supporting events and



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people-to-people exchanges.

Proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the expo is part of China's efforts to advance high-standard opening-up and provide greater access to its domestic market for international businesses.

For the first time, the Report on Capacity for Exporting to China will be released during this year's expo, with the aim of helping countries turn opportunities in the Chinese market into tangible development gains.

The event will also feature 23 themed forums, including the launch and international seminar of the World Openness Report 2026, along with 80 supporting events.

The ninth CIIE will run through November 10.

> Iran takes part in the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) with pavilions showcasing its petrochemical, agricultural, food and handicraft industries, seeking to expand exports and explore investment opportunities