Iran reports damage to over 410 water infrastructure sites to international bodies



TASNIM

Economy Desk

Iran has documented damage to more than 410 points across its drinking water infrastructure during two wars with Israel and the United States and reported the incidents to international bodies for follow-up, a senior official at the country's Energy Ministry said on Sunday.

Hasham Amini, the head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company, said attacks during the 12-day war with Israel in June 2025 and the 40-day war that began in late February damaged water supply facilities and infrastructure across the country.

He said the attacks violated international conventions and humanitarian law, arguing that civilian water supply systems should be protected from military action under international protocols and humanitarian principles, IRNA reported.

"Although international protocols, as well as the principles of ethics and humanity, dictate that no country's drinking water facilities and infrastructure should be damaged, our colleagues were able to restore the facilities to operation immediately," Amini said.

He added that these facilities were quickly brought back into operation, ensuring that the attacks did not disrupt the supply of drinking water and sanitation services to the public.

Amini said replacement equipment had been deployed to areas where desalination plants were damaged, including Qeshm Island, Sirik and other islands. In some locations, facilities were restored to operation within about 24 hours of the incidents, he added.

He said alternative water sources had also been used in Lorestan, Hormozgan, Kermanshah and Isfahan provinces to maintain supplies that met required quality standards. On Qeshm Island, other desalination plants were used to compensate for damage to one facility, he added.

Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi also addressed attacks on water and electricity infrastructure on March 22, calling on countries and international organizations to condemn them and describing the strikes as contrary to international law.

Tehran, Kabul discuss agricultural investment, border trade, Iranian minister says

Economy Desk

Iran and Afghanistan discussed expanding agricultural investment, border trade and transit cooperation, Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljeh said after meeting Afghanistan's finance minister, Mawlawi Mohammad Hassan Akhund, IRNA reported.

Akhund is also head of the Afghan side of the two countries' Joint Economic Cooperation Commission. The meeting held in Tehran reviewed current issues in bilateral economic relations.

"Trade between Iran and Afghanistan stands at $2.7 billion annually, a quarter of which is allocated to agricultural products," Nouri-Qezeljeh said, according to IRNA.

Border exchanges, customs operations, faster border crossings, higher trade volumes and imports and exports were among the issues discussed, he said.

Nouri-Qezeljeh said Afghanistan was interested in using Iran's transit capacity to reach markets in other countries and wanted to increase imports of goods into Iran and exports of goods through Iran to other countries. Iran welcomed this and was ready to expand cooperation and trade, he added.

The minister pointed to Afghanistan's climatic potential for developing agricultural and livestock activities and said Iran was ready to cooperate on training and investment.

"Some Iranian companies have also announced readiness for a deeper presence in Afghanistan's domestic production chains and to carry out part of production activities in this country," he said.

Such cooperation could help meet Afghanistan's market needs and lead to production of goods for consumption in Iran or re-export, he said. It would also involve the transfer of technology and technical knowledge and investment in technical and engineering services, he added.

Nouri-Qezeljeh declared Iran's readiness to help with alternative cultivation to poppies in Afghanistan and said Iran was ready to cooperate in mechanization, livestock farming, agronomy, plant breeding and animal breeding.

He cited Iran's transit capacities as a route for Afghanistan to access the Persian Gulf and open waters and said part of Afghan goods are already transported to neighboring countries through Iran. That trade could increase, he said, and Afghan investors could invest in a terminal and port facilities in Chabahar to raise Afghanistan's import and export trade with the world.

A special government working group on relations with Afghanistan, chaired by the first vice president and including several relevant ministers, has been formed, and investment in various sectors in Afghanistan is among the issues it is pursuing, he said.

On shared agricultural capacities, Nouri-Qezeljeh said mechanization, livestock farming and agronomy were promising areas. Goods produced in Afghanistan that Iran needs should be given priority in purchases, and Afghanistan's needs should be met from Iran's production capacity, he said.

He also cited technical and specialized cooperation in plant breeding, animal breeding, and the supply of veterinary medicines, vaccines and day-old chicks.



Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljeh (R) meets Afghanistan's finance minister, Mawlawi Mohammad Hassan Akhund in Tehran, on November 15, 2026.
IRNA

Iranian research centers are ready to train Afghan experts, he said, noting that a number of Afghan experts recently attended 10- to 15-day courses at Iranian agricultural research centers. The centers are ready to accept Afghan experts and provide specialized training based on Afghanistan's needs, he added.

On trade facilitation, he said round-the-clock customs operations, simplified border procedures, increased transit traffic and joint efforts against smuggling were necessary to increase trade. Iran is ready to reopen the Yazdan border crossing and cooperate in activating border markets, he said.

Nouri-Qezeljeh stressed the need to make the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Economic Cooperation Commission more active and said good documents for cooperation had been prepared. Finalizing and exchanging them could help increase trade, he said, expressing hope that the seventh meeting of the commission would be held in Kabul as soon as possible.

Qeshm plans aquaculture feed plant, dried-fish export hub

Economy Desk

Qeshm Island is planning new fisheries and agricultural projects, including a specialized aquaculture feed plant, its first dried-fish export hub and bell pepper cultivation involving three prospective Russian investors, the head of the Fisheries and Agriculture Department of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization said on Sunday.

Masoud Mormogouei said 38 companies were currently operating across six shrimp farming sites on the island, as the Qeshm Free Zone Organization pursued plans to expand production and support businesses in fisheries and agriculture, IRNA reported.

Mormogouei said five to six companies were also active in shrimp breeding and nursery operations. Their activities include breeding, producing shrimp larvae and providing nursery services.

He added that about six to seven companies were involved in land-based fish farming under the supervision of the organization's industries and mines department.

New aquaculture projects

The organization is preparing to establish Qeshm's first specialized aquaculture feed plant after attracting investment for a dedicated production line at Tula Industrial Park, Mormogouei said. The plant is designed to produce eight tons per work shift and is expected to become operational within two to three months, he added.

The island is also planning to establish its first dried-fish export hub, with efforts underway to prepare the necessary facilities within a month through either Bahman or Kaveh port. The hub would allow both industrial and traditional producers to make use of the island's port and commercial infrastructure, he said.

Russian investment

In the agricultural sector, Mormogouei said mushroom farming units were operating at Tula Industrial Park and three Russian investors had expressed readiness to invest in bell pepper cultivation on the island.

Preparations are underway to facilitate their entry into the island's agricultural sites within a month, he said.

Bell peppers, eggplants and other vegetables are cultivated in Minab, with part of the output earmarked for export to Russia. The plan is to use the Russian investors' involvement to expand bell pepper and other crop production at suitable agricultural sites on Qeshm, he added.

ECONOMIC LENS

Sanctions: An instrument of foreign policy or a mechanism for redistributing global power



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ANALYSIS EXCLUSIVE

In the contemporary world, economic sanctions are no longer merely an instrument for exerting pressure on governments or compelling them to alter their political behavior. Rather, they have become one of the defining components of the global architecture of power—an instrument situated at the intersection of economics, politics, and international security, reshaping the traditional boundaries between military confrontation and economic competition. At a time when economic interdependence, cross-border financial networks, and global supply chains have become undeniable features of the international system, control over the flows of capital, technology, trade, and market access can exert an influence on international relations comparable to that of military power.

From the perspective of international political economy, economic sanctions cannot be understood merely as reactions to the conduct of a particular state. In many instances, they reflect structural inequalities in the distribution of global economic power. Countries occupying dominant positions within the international financial system, payment networks, capital markets, and technological infrastructure possess greater capacity to transform other countries' economic dependencies into instruments of political pressure. In other words, the power to impose sanctions derives not simply from political decisions, but also from states' structural positions within the global economy.

Within this framework, sanctions perform two functions simultaneously: first, exerting pressure to alter the political calculations and behavior of the targeted government; and second, constraining that country's economic and strategic capabilities in regional and international affairs. This dual function raises a fundamental question: Is the ultimate objective of sanctions merely to secure political concessions, or, in certain cases, is the weakening of a rival's economic position and the reshaping of the balance of power also part of the underlying agenda?

The experience of the international system demonstrates a significant gap between the declared objectives of sanctions and their actual consequences. Comprehensive sanctions can disrupt not only trade and investment but also access to technology, financial resources, and international markets. Yet the effects of these measures do not necessarily translate into changes in political behavior. In some cases, the economic costs of sanctions are transferred to society, the private sector, and vulnerable groups, without achieving the political objectives sought by those imposing them. From this perspective, the effectiveness of sanctions cannot be measured solely by the severity of the restrictions. It must also be assessed in terms of the relationship between the costs imposed, the extent to which intended objectives are achieved, and the long-term consequences for the economic structure of the targeted country.

More importantly, sanctions operate within the global economy and generate consequences that extend well beyond bilateral relations. Financial and trade restrictions can create new avenues for commerce, regional cooperation, and the emergence of alternative economic arrangements. The expansion of non-dollar settlement mechanisms, bilateral currency agreements, and efforts to diversify trading partners are among the responses countries have adopted to restrictions arising from the sanctions regime. Nevertheless, these developments should not be interpreted as evidence that the dominance of existing financial structures is nearing an imminent end. Replacing an international financial system requires institutional trust, monetary stability, deep and liquid capital markets, and efficient payment infrastructure—conditions that cannot be established easily or in the short term.

At the same time, secondary sanctions and extraterritorial restrictions have turned economic sovereignty into a serious challenge for states. When a government can influence the economic decisions of companies and financial institutions in other countries by restricting their access to its own markets, the very notion of independent economic decision-making faces new questions. Under such circumstances, even actors that are not directly targeted by sanctions may find themselves compelled to reconsider their economic relationships in order to protect their commercial interests. This transforms sanctions from a bilateral instrument of coercion into a mechanism for exercising influence across the wider network of the global economy.

Nevertheless, economic sanctions should not be regarded as a cost-free instrument for those who impose them. Disruptions to supply chains, higher transaction costs, lost markets, and declining confidence in international financial arrangements can also undermine the economic interests of sanctioning states. Furthermore, the repeated use of sanctions may encourage countries to reduce their dependence on infrastructure controlled by dominant powers—a trend that, over the long term, could contribute to the further fragmentation of the global economic system.

Ultimately, economic sanctions must be analyzed beyond the framework of conventional foreign policy instruments and understood in the context of competition over resources, markets, technology, and positions within the hierarchy of global power. The central issue is that, in today's world, power is no longer defined solely by the ability to generate wealth. The capacity to control the channels of production, financing, exchange, and market access has also become an integral dimension of the contemporary concept of power. Accordingly, sanctions are both instruments of political pressure and potential mechanisms for redistributing opportunities, costs, and advantages within the international system.

The future of the global economy will depend, to a considerable extent, on whether competition among major powers can be managed within the framework of shared rules and economic cooperation, or whether it will increasingly move toward the securitization of trade and the instrumentalization of economic interdependence. The decisive question is no longer simply which country becomes the target of sanctions, but rather which actor has the power to determine the rules governing access to the global economy.