Pezeshkian urges fuel savings as Iran reports rise in CNG consumption



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) attends the fourth meeting of mayors of major cities and provincial capitals in Qazvin, Iran, on November 18, 2026.
president.ir

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for more efficient fuel and energy consumption, saying the country uses at least three times the global average, as government measures to manage fuel demand have boosted daily compressed natural gas (CNG) consumption by 16-17%, an oil official said.

Pezeshkian made the remarks on Wednesday at the fourth meeting of mayors of major cities and provincial capitals, held in the northwestern province of Qazvin to discuss ways to improve fuel and energy consumption and review the performance of municipal officials, IRNA reported.

He urged mayors, officials and the public to make energy conservation a priority, citing the country's high consumption levels and the need to navigate current challenges.

Pezeshkian also stressed the importance of maintaining industrial production despite what he described as hostile actions by Iran's adversaries and the restrictions imposed on the country.

Since late February, when a US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions and facing a maritime blockade from the south. The blockade aims to reduce Iranian oil exports to zero and deplete government revenues. Iran has also been subject to decades of Western sanctions over its nuclear activities.

"Fuel and energy supplies to industries and production units should be the last option when restrictions are imposed, because if the wheels of production stop turning, unemployment and numerous other problems will follow," he said.

He also called on industrial units and businesses to improve the efficiency of their equipment and machinery in line with their actual needs and available resources to reduce costs and manage energy consumption.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar, chief executive of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company, said daily CNG consumption had risen to more than 18 million cubic meters from about 14.5 million before the introduction of new measures.

CNG consumption had been declining since 2021, falling by around 1 million to 2 million cubic meters annually, but new government policies had reversed that trend, Azimifar told reporters.

CNG consumption rises 16-17%

"With the implementation of consumption management policies and the cooperation of the public, consumption of this fuel has increased by an average of 16-17%, adding more than 3.5 million cubic meters to daily consumption," he said.

In early September, the government raised prices for gasoline purchased outside monthly quotas for the second time in less than a year and adjusted monthly allowances.

Gasoline is sold at three rates. Each vehicle receives 60 liters a month at 15,000 rials per liter, followed by another 50 liters at 30,000 rials per liter. Additional purchases are unrestricted but cost 100,000 rials per liter.

Iranian refineries produce about 110 million liters of gasoline a day, compared with average daily consumption of 135 million liters. To narrow the gap, the Oil Ministry also ordered several petrochemical plants to allocate part of their capacity to gasoline production. The move added 20 million liters to daily output, taking total production to 130 million liters.

Following two rounds of fuel price adjustments, the government has also moved to expand the conversion of vehicles to dual-fuel systems, with CNG conversion centers resuming operations.

Azimifar said that before the current government took office in August 2024, consumption of several petroleum products had been rising. Average annual growth in gasoline consumption was about 6%, while diesel consumption grew by around 4%. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) consumption was also increasing, while kerosene consumption followed a different trend because of the expansion of natural gas distribution.

Since the government took office, measures tailored to the characteristics of different petroleum products have been introduced to manage and optimize consumption, producing improvements and even negative growth in some sectors, he said. In the non-power sector, diesel consumption growth shifted from a positive 4% at the start of the government to a negative 4% last year, meaning consumption was about 8% below the baseline projected if the previous trend had continued, Azimifar said.

Gasoline consumption growth also fell to minus 3% in the seventh Iranian calendar month, which ran from Oct. 23 to Nov. 21, for the first time, compared with an earlier growth rate of 6%. This represented a 9% reduction from the projected baseline, he said.

Azimifar said the reductions had been achieved despite the conditions and restrictions facing the country, adding that public cooperation, patience and understanding of the country's circumstances had been among the main factors behind the results. He said managing energy consumption required coordination across different sectors and could not be achieved solely through policies targeting consumers. Various government bodies had responsibilities in this area, and shortcomings in some sectors in previous years had contributed to the problem.

Azimifar also stressed the role of automakers in reducing fuel consumption, saying they had repeatedly been urged to bring vehicle fuel efficiency in line with international standards.

He identified public transportation development as another essential part of fuel management, saying it was the responsibility of municipalities but that the coverage of public transport services across the country had been declining. He called for expansion of the public transport fleet.

Iran's external debt falls 6% to $4.27 billion

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Iran's external debt stood at $4.267 billion at the end of the fifth month of the current Iranian calendar year, on Aug. 22, down 6% from the start of the year on March 21, according to data released by the Statistical Center of Iran.

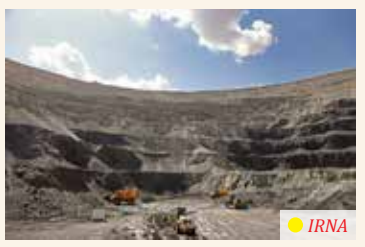
The total comprised $2.662 billion in short-term debt and $1.605 billion in medium- and long-term obligations, the center's latest report showed, ISNA reported.

External debt stood at $4.54 billion at the beginning of the Iranian year. It declined to $4.476 billion in the second month and $4.34 billion in the third month, before falling further to $4.087 billion in the fourth month.

Separately, Central Bank of Iran data showed that the country's external debt, measured as actual outstanding obligations based on original maturity, stood at $5.38 billion, equivalent to 4.57 billion euros, at the end of the sixth month of the previous Iranian calendar year, on Sept. 22, 2025.

IMIDRO says 600–700 mines revived under recovery plan

Economy Desk



IRNA

Iran has brought between 600 and 700 inactive mines back into operation in recent years under a government mine recovery plan, Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Vajihollah Jafari said on Wednesday.

Iran has about 13,000 mines, some of which are inactive for various reasons, Jafari said at a meeting of the Supreme Council of Mines in Qazvin. He cautioned, however, that a mine classified as inactive in official statistics is not necessarily completely shut down, as some operate seasonally, under extraction permits or subject to specific conditions, IRNA reported.

The recovery plan, launched several years ago, targets mines with the potential to resume operations, Jafari said. Measures to bring them back into production include providing financing, supporting investment, attracting investors and helping secure liquidity and machinery through the resources of the insurance fund. Some mines, however, cannot continue operating because their reserves have been depleted or due to other specific circumstances, he said. The Supreme Council of Mines meeting in the northwestern city of Qazvin also addressed national and provincial mining issues, including mining royalties and foreign exchange difficulties facing companies in the sector. A separate meeting was held with mineral industry representatives to discuss currency-related problems, Jafari said.

He said the industry ministry and other relevant bodies were working to coordinate efforts and remove obstacles to investment in order to revive mines and expand mining activity.

Iran ranks 15th globally among countries with significant mineral resources. Iranian officials describe mining as the backbone of industrial development and say the sector should replace oil as the country's main source of revenue.

Date association chief expects $400m in export earnings

Economy Desk

Iran expects its date exports to generate about $400 million in foreign exchange earnings this year, despite sanctions and trade restrictions that have complicated shipments, the head of the Iran Date Palm Association said on Wednesday.

The country is expected to produce about 1.35 million metric tons of dates this year, with around 70% consumed domestically and the remaining 30% exported, Mohsen Rashid Farrokhi told IRNA.

Iran, already hit by Western sanctions over its nuclear program, has been under a US naval blockade since April, following a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. The restrictions were aimed at forcing Tehran to accept Washington's terms. Washington seeks to bring Iran's trade and oil sales to zero to pressure Tehran into accepting its terms for peace.

Farrokhi said private-sector exporters had been seeking ways to overcome obstacles created by sanctions and other restrictions on exports this year, including identifying multiple border crossings for shipments.

He said reaching the projected $400 million in export earnings would require special measures and the easing of export regulations under current conditions. The association has discussed the sector's problems with government officials, the Agriculture Ministry, the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry and the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, he said, adding that officials had pledged cooperation.

Some measures to remove export barriers need to be implemented quickly, and export regulations should be adapted to conditions imposed by sanctions, he said.

Farrokhi said a problem involving customs tariffs and the formula used to calculate duties on dates had been resolved following consultations with government agencies, and the relevant resolution had been issued. He said the measure was expected to help facilitate exports. On domestic prices, he said date prices at the point of origin had not risen significantly and had increased by less than the government's reported inflation rate. While unusually high prices may be seen in destination markets, he said, the relevant authorities should intervene and monitor the situation.

He also pointed to pest infestations in date palm groves and the damage they have caused farmers. The association is working with the Agriculture Ministry to address the problem, he said.



The association would continue working with the ministry's specialized departments to tackle pest problems and support farmers, he added.