Iran Approves Roadmap for Regional Energy Diplomacy



TEHRAN – **Iran has approved and issued a document and roadmap for regional energy diplomacy, with an action plan for oil and refined products, gas and petrochemicals built around specific indicators, the caretaker oil minister said.**

Hamid Bovard said that the Regional Energy Trade Steering Headquarters approved the document. The body is chaired by First Vice President Muhammad Reza Aref.

Bovard said the Oil Ministry led the drafting under Clause T of Article 44 of the Seventh Development Plan Law. The document was issued after the headquarters approved it.

The roadmap sets out an action plan covering oil, gas, refining and petrochemicals, with a set of indicators meant to keep regional energy trade efforts coordinated and in line with market developments, he said.

The indicators include private-sector participation in regional energy trade, which Bovard said is a first. They also include technical developments in regional and global energy markets, the link between energy trade and domestic issues, techno-political matters, and diplomatic and strategic marketing and market-building.

Bovard said the plan takes into account the capacity of non-state actors alongside government bodies. Developments in regional and global markets will be factored into setting and revising the action plans, he said.

Under the division of responsibilities, the Oil Ministry's planning deputy will serve as the specialized secretariat of the steering headquarters, Bovard said. The ministry's Institute for International Energy Studies will run a permanent center for working groups that monitor actions and draft flexible energy diplomacy plans.

The mechanism is intended to provide continuous monitoring, collect feedback and update plans in three- and six-month cycles to reflect changes in regional energy markets, he said.

Bovard said that for the first time in Iran, the actions of various energy sectors, involving both government and non-government players in energy trade, will be set and carried out on an ongoing basis. Feedback, reporting and the resolution of challenges will also be part of the process, he said.

As Trade Routes Shift Away From South

Imports Via Northern Sea Borders Surge 76%



TEHRAN - **Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development has announced a 76 percent increase in imports through the country's northern sea borders over the past six months, highlighting a major operational shift in the nation's trade corridors following the blockade of southern ports.**

Addressing the parliament, Farzaneh Sadegh stated that the unjust blockade imposed on Iran's southern ports forced a paradigm shift in the country's foreign trade arteries.

She emphasized that due to proactive planning and the rapid reorganization of border infrastructure, the movement of commercial goods did not halt for even a single hour.

"Despite the closure of southern ports, we witnessed a 76 percent increase in imports from northern sea borders, a 41 percent increase in road imports, and a significant rise in rail imports during the first six months of the year," Sadegh reported.

On the export front, the minister noted that shipments through northern ports grew by 10 percent, road exports increased by 9 percent, and rail exports saw a substantial 53 percent growth.

She confirmed that over 85 percent of the cargo volume previously handled by southern ports has been successfully redistributed across alternative border routes.

Addressing operational bottlenecks, Sadegh pointed out that a significant portion of the delays and long queues at border terminals stems from capacity limitations and acceptance quotas imposed by neighboring countries on the receiving end.

To overcome these hurdles, the ministry is actively pursuing "transport diplomacy" and maintaining continuous negotiations with foreign counterparts. She noted that despite U.S. and Israeli pressure on neighboring states to limit cooperation with Iran, new road transit routes have been reopened and mixed transport corridors expanded.

To ease domestic congestion and streamline processes, the government has implemented deregulation measures and customs facilitation protocols approved in October.

New initiatives include a national smart queuing system for trucks to prevent long waits at borders, a unified management dashboard for border terminals and free zones, and the continuous 24-hour operation of customs facilities.

Additionally, the country's railway company has accelerated the development of standard-gauge lines, and the Economic Council recently approved the railway connection from Marand to Cheshmeh Soraya to enhance rail links with Turkey.

Iran has faced a renewed maritime and economic blockade following the failure of the U.S.-Israeli war of aggression earlier this year.

Washington has attempted to strangle Iran's southern ports, particularly in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, in a bid to halt its exports and disrupt essential imports.

In response, Tehran has accelerated its reliance on northern borders and the Caspian Sea to sustain its economy.

Minister Discusses Expanding Transit, Trade Ties With Turkey, Pakistan on COMCEC Sidelines



TEHRAN - **Iran's Minister of Economy and Finance has held separate meetings with his Pakistani and Turkish counterparts on the sidelines of the 42nd COMCEC summit in Istanbul, discussing ways to facilitate trade, ease the transit of goods, and remove existing barriers at shared border crossings.**

In a meeting with Turkish Trade Minister Omer Bolat, the two sides discussed strengthening customs and border cooperation.

They agreed on the formation of a joint working group and regular meetings between border customs directors to address operational challenges.

The ministers also discussed the possibility of 24-hour operations at border terminals to reduce truck waiting times and speed up commercial processes.

The status of the Bazargan border crossing and Turkey's ongoing plans to modernize the facility were also reviewed.

Additionally, the two sides discussed the establishment of a joint working group for free trade and industrial zones and reviewed obstacles facing Turkish companies operating in Iran.

Separately, Madanizadeh met with Pakistani Trade Minister Jam Kamal Khan to review existing capacities for expanding bilateral trade.

The two ministers discussed practical solutions to remove transit obstacles at shared borders, including the Rimdan and Mirjaveh crossings.

They emphasized the need to strengthen border infrastructure and develop free zone capacities to facilitate the movement of goods.

The two sides also highlighted the importance of increasing trade volumes, particularly in agricultural and food products, and noted that improved border connectivity could create jobs and support development in frontier regions.

The meetings took place as part of Iran's broader efforts during the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit to explore new avenues for economic cooperation with regional partners and mitigate the effects of external economic pressures.

"We are striving to identify new routes and opportunities to develop our economic and trade relations. This will allow us to foil the plans designed against Iran's economy and successfully navigate the current situation," Madanizadeh stated, adding that repeated attempts by foreign adversaries to collapse Iran's economy have failed.

Iran has been targeted by a campaign of economic terrorism and unilateral coercive measures by successive U.S. administrations, including the Barack Obama administration in the early 2010s and Donald Trump in the late 2010s.

Pakistan, Iran Stress Expansion of Cooperation in ICT Sector

TEHRAN – **Officials from Iran and Pakistan emphasized the need to expand bilateral cooperation in information and communications technology (ICT), focusing on turning their shared capabilities into practical joint projects.**

In a meeting with Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Iranian Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi condemned U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran, particularly strikes targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Hashemi described attacks on Iran's communications and ICT infrastructure as violations of international principles and rules, stressing the importance of protecting critical infrastructure and maintaining resilient communication networks to safeguard national security and public services. He also thanked Pakistan's government and people for their supportive positions during the U.S.-Israeli war of aggression.

The two sides discussed cooperation between private-sector companies, exchanges of technical expertise and experience, joint technological projects, and closer ties between specialized institutions.

They also stressed coordination and the adoption of constructive common positions in international organizations and forums related to ICT.

Iran to Hold Exhibition for Showcasing AI Achievements



TEHRAN – **Iran's Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy Affairs Hossein Afshin has revealed the organizing an exhibition for displaying the achievements of Artificial Intelligence (AI).**

Speaking on the sidelines of organizing 2026 Technology Olympics at Pardis Technology Park on Wednesday, the vice president stated that President Pezeshkian, ministers, deputies of ministers, director generals, parliamentarians and governor generals, as decisionmakers, will take part in the exhibition and will be familiarized with the latest achievements in the field of the Artificial Intelligence (AI).

In light of the President Pezeshkian's visit to this exhibition, it has been decided that up to 40 products across various fields will be showcased, he said, adding, "The objective is to highlight the products developed by the country in the field of artificial intelligence over the past two years, and the progress achieved."

AI assistants designed for specific devices are also being showcased at this exhibition, and following the event, the second phase of AI assistant development will begin, he added.

Official: Iran-Afghanistan Trade Potential Estimated at $10bn

TEHRAN – **Iran and Afghanistan have the potential to expand their bilateral trade to around $10 billion, although actual economic exchanges are already considerably higher than official figures suggest, the head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said.**

Kamaloddin Tohid said on Wednesday that the two countries' actual trade volume stands at $3 billion to $4 billion, noting that substantial transactions, including family remittances, technical and engineering services and unregistered exchanges, are not reflected in official statistics.

Speaking at a meeting with the head of Kandahar's Chamber of Industries and Mines and Khorasan Razavi's deputy governor for economic affairs, Tohid said technical and engineering services exports from the Iranian province to Afghanistan alone could reach at least $500 million annually.

He welcomed recent measures to ease border restrictions but called for their full implementation. Cargo clearance and transfer times, which previously took up to a month, have fallen to two or three days, although further improvements are needed.

Tohid also proposed specialized trade exhibitions and permanent centers to showcase Iranian and Afghan products, while encouraging joint investment in agriculture, food processing and mining.

Kandahar Chamber head Syed Mohammad Sarwar Amani highlighted Afghanistan's dried-fruit production and mineral resources as promising areas to expand trade.

Khorasan Razavi Deputy Governor Reza Jamshidi stressed the need for transparent investment regulations and stronger border coordination to unlock bilateral trade opportunities.