

Iran's trade balance improves by \$5.5b:

IRICA

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that the country's trade balance improved by \$5.5 billion under the current administration (from August 22, 2024, to January 4, 2025). During the period, non-oil exports totaled \$22.5 billion, reflecting a 24% rise compared to the same period the previous year. In terms of weight, non-oil exports reached 59 million tons,

an 18% increase year-on-year. The report also noted that imports during this time amounted to \$25 billion, a 4.5% decrease compared to the same period in the previous year. By weight, imports totaled 12.8 million tons, down 20.5% year-on-year. Overall, Iran's total trade volume, including both exports and imports, grew by 7% to \$47.5 billion during the incumbent

administration. By weight, trade volume increased by 8.5% to 71.8 million tons. IRICA statistics reveal that the country's trade balance improved by 69%, or \$5.5 billion, from August 22, 2023, to January 4, 2024. The report added that during the same period in the previous year, non-oil exports stood at \$18 billion, while imports totaled \$26 billion.



ISPA: Energy shortages taking heavy toll on steel output capacity



The head of the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) stated that the country's annual steel production capacity stands at 50 million tons, but due to energy shortages, only 30 million tons are being utilized. Speaking at the inauguration of the 6th National Iranian Steel Festival and Exhibition on Tuesday, Bahram Sobhani highlighted that production limitations and the failure to maximize capacity stem from energy supply challenges,

particularly shortages and disruptions in gas and electricity during various seasons. He noted that the steel industry accounts for only 5% of the country's gas consumption. If energy deficits are resolved, Iran could become the seventh steelmaker in the world by producing 36 million tons of steel annually. Sobhani emphasized the localization of the steel industry, stating that domestic companies and producers have reduced reliance on

imports by manufacturing components and equipment locally. He added that steel festivals have fostered collaboration between new technology-based firms (NTBFs) and the steel industry, resulting in over 400 memoranda of understanding worth \$1.7 billion signed so far. Also, agreements worth 70 million euros are expected to be signed between steel companies and domestic producers by late March, the ISPA head noted. Sobhani pointed out that 128 equipment manufacturing companies, half of which are NTBFs, are participating in this year's exhibition. He also unveiled the Iran National Atlas of Steel Industries, describing it as a roadmap for the country's steel supply chain. The atlas provides information on capacities, projects, and the status of production units, while also addressing optimal resource management, planning for the steel industry, and infrastructure

development. Additionally, a national platform has been launched to manage the needs and capabilities of steel producers and suppliers. The platform enables component manufacturers to assess and produce parts based on industry demands. Sobhani highlighted that despite sanctions and energy imbalances, the steel industry generates approximately \$8 billion annually in foreign exchange earnings. He stressed the need to increase the industry's share of non-oil exports to over 20 million tons, noting that steel accounts for 16% of Iran's non-oil exports and plays a significant role in the national economy. The ISPA head proposed designating January 12 as National Steel Day in the Iranian calendar, recognizing the industry's importance to the country.

\$2.5b saved through localization

Mohammad Aqajanlou, head of

the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), announced that \$2.5 billion has been saved through domestic production of parts and equipment since 2020. Speaking at the same event, Aqajanlou stated that indigenization in the steel industry has enabled the production of components using advanced technology. Plans are in place to save an additional \$800 million this year through further localization. The deputy minister of industry, mine, and trade added that a comprehensive steel industry platform, developed in collaboration with 1,430 domestic companies, has been launched. The platform includes data on 27,000 localized parts and identifies 300 strategic needs prioritized for domestic production. He emphasized that the platform has facilitated connections between steel producers and equipment manufacturers, enabling

NTBFs to enter the steel industry, reduce costs, and increase foreign exchange earnings. Aqajanlou stressed the importance of investing in engineering knowledge, technology, and domestic production to achieve sustainable development and enhance Iran's position in the global steel industry. He called for advancing green steel technologies to reduce emissions and align with global standards, noting that optimizing energy consumption is a top priority for the industry. Aqajanlou also highlighted the importance of addressing bottlenecks in the industry and fostering collaboration between producers and consumers of components and equipment. He mentioned the signing of a memorandum to improve standards in the steel sector and the implementation of major projects, such as utilizing waste energy from reduction units, which will help reduce imports in this field.

ADVERTORIAL

17 reasons why Shahab Moradi is popular

There is not always a direct relationship between reputation and popularity. Shahab Moradi is one of the most popular and influential clerics among Iranians and Farsi speakers. Contrary to many religious figures, he has been able to connect with a wide range of audiences, from the younger generation to families. The reasons for Shahab Moradi's popularity go beyond his mastery of religious teachings and are attributed to his style of interaction with the audience, personality traits, and communication methods. Tabnak's News Agency's editorial team has listed an interesting review of the popularity dimensions of this celebrity cleric:

1. Approachable and Friendly Attitude: Shahab Moradi communicates with people in a warm, simple, and relatable way, avoiding overly formal or distant tones.

2. Avoiding Judgment and Prejudice: He respects diverse opinions and beliefs, creating a safe and welcoming space for everyone, regardless of their background.

3. Effective Social Activities: From charity foundation and providing food for needy children to releasing birds into the wild, he promotes the idea that faith and spirituality should manifest in real-world actions, not just words.

4. Emphasis on Kindness and Humanity: His teachings consistently stress kindness, empathy, and mutual respect, making him a symbol of compassion in society.

5. Simplifying Complex Ethical and Religious Concepts: He explains deep and complex ideas in a straightforward, practical way that resonates with people from all walks of life.

6. Connection with Young People: By understanding the emotional and spiritual concerns of youth, including issues like relationships and identity, he has built strong trust and rapport with them. His Q&A sessions chiefly known as "Class Mojarradha" are particularly popular among university students, including both religious and secular individuals, showcasing his ability to bridge divides.

7. Flexibility and Holistic Thinking: Instead of adhering to rigid perspectives, he approaches issues with an open mind and seeks comprehensive, balanced solutions.

8. Honesty and Transparency: Shahab Moradi's sincerity in speech and behavior has earned him significant trust and credibility among his audience.

9. Use of Modern Communication Tools: He actively engages with audiences on social media and other modern platforms, ensuring his messages reach a wide

audience.

10. Focus on Family and Its Values: He emphasizes the importance of family bonds and emotional well-being, offering practical advice on maintaining healthy relationships.

11. Work Ethic and Positive Energy: His tireless efforts in various fields, from public speaking to social projects, reflect a highly energetic and passionate personality.

12. Commitment to Environmental Preservation: Actions like planting trees, and promoting eco-friendly behaviours by giving tips on watershed management, demonstrate his concern for environmental issues. His campaigns encourage community participation, such as stop-hunting, or organizing tree-planting events with his university students at Class Mojarradha that bring people together.

13. Attention to Social Issues and Real Needs: He addresses societal challenges like addiction, divorce, and mental health issues, offering both support and actionable solutions.

14. Bridging Tradition and Modernity: He seamlessly combines traditional values with modern life, presenting timeless ethical teachings in a way that feels relevant and accessible to contemporary audiences.

15. Charismatic and Likable

Personality: His polite, humble demeanor, combined with a sense of humor and genuine emotional connection, has made him a beloved figure across generations.

16. Intellectual Excellence Coupled with Humility: Shahab Moradi is highly knowledgeable in various fields, including psychology, counseling, Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), mysticism, art, and Persian literature. Despite his expertise, he never displays arrogance or elitism, which is often common among academics. This humility makes him even more respected and admired by intellectuals and ordinary people alike.

17. Inclusivity Across Diverse Audiences: One of his remarkable traits is his ability to connect with a wide range of people, from devoutly religious individuals to secular and non-religious groups. His open Q&A sessions at universities and public forums attract people from all walks of life. Many participate in his community-driven initiatives, such as environmental projects, showcasing his ability to unite people around shared values.

This list highlights not only Shahab Moradi's personal qualities but also his ability to connect deeply with society and inspire collective action.

