

# Direct Iran-Oman shipping line soon to be launched

## Economy Desk

The head of the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce said some obstacles that hindered opening bank accounts for Iranians in Oman has been resolved and businesspeople are allowed to open accounts for themselves and their companies in the Persian Gulf country, adding that a direct Iran-Oman shipping line will soon be launched.

Jamal Razeqi-Jahromi said that while Iran and Oman have maintained strong political relations over the past 70 years, trade between the two countries has not kept pace with their diplomatic ties.

Although trade volume has grown by 42% to 60% annually over the past three years, the initial trade value is so low that the goal of reaching \$5 billion in trade by 2024, as envisioned by the joint chamber, remains unmet.

Razeqi-Jahromi projected that, at best, trade between the two countries could reach \$3 billion to \$3.5 billion by the end of the year (March 20).

He emphasized that Iran-Oman trade should reach at least \$20 billion annually, warning that without achieving this target, the close political ties between the two nations would yield little economic benefit.

During the recent meeting of

Iranian and Omani ministers, a joint committee was proposed to address obstacles hindering the growth of bilateral trade.

Razeqi-Jahromi noted that trade tariffs had been a significant barrier, but this issue was resolved during the recent visit, with both sides agreeing to implement a preferential trade agreement that would reduce tariffs to zero.

He also highlighted progress in facilitating cargo transportation between the two countries.

A major challenge has been the lack of a direct and regular shipping line between Iran and Oman. The Omani side has agreed to cooperate, offering to cover 50% of the required subsidy for establishing the shipping line for six months to a year, with the remaining 50% to be covered by Iran's Trade Promotion Organization.

Razeqi-Jahromi explained that while daily shipping between the two countries is not currently economically viable due to insufficient cargo volume, the subsidy would help offset the costs of operating the line.

He added that for the past two years, Iranian producers have been advised to transfer the final 30% of their production chain to Oman, enabling them to export finished products through Oman and benefit from its zero-tariff trade agreements



with 16 countries, including the United States.

Razeqi-Jahromi acknowledged that one of the main challenges for Iranian investors in Oman has been the difficulty of opening bank accounts. While some of these issues have been re-

solved, others are still under review. Economic figures investing in Oman can now open accounts for themselves and their companies.

"The implementation of the preferential trade agreement, alongside these achievements,

could boost Iran's exports through Oman."

He also noted that last year, Oman, with a population of 5 million, attracted over 40 billion Omani rials (approximately \$140 billion) in foreign investment.

Razeqi-Jahromi concluded that

Iran and Oman have the potential for cooperation across all industries, but realizing this potential requires overcoming sanctions and addressing challenges stemming from Iran's non-membership in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

## CIT minister stresses need to expand Tehran-Riyadh relations



### Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Sattar Hashemi, met with Abdullah bin Saud Al-Anzi, the Saudi ambassador to Tehran, to discuss opportunities for bilateral cooperation, particularly in the fields of communications

and information technology. During the meeting, Hashemi emphasized the importance of expanding relations between the two countries at various levels.

Hashemi highlighted key areas for collaboration, including data transit from Iran to Saudi Arabia and from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean Sea and Africa, as well as data transit from Saudi Arabia to Iran and onward to Afghanistan, Central Asia, China, and the Caucasus region.

He described these initiatives as among the most significant topics that could be prioritized. The minister also pointed to the development of communication infrastructure, cybersecurity,

platform security, and e-governance as additional areas where the two nations could work together.

Hashemi expressed Iran's readiness to share technical and scientific expertise and to facilitate the exchange of delegations and specialists in communications and information technology. For his part, Ambassador Al-Anzi affirmed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and expressed Saudi Arabia's willingness to expand cooperation with Iran across various sectors.

The meeting underscored both countries' commitment to enhancing ties and exploring new avenues for collaboration.

## Iran's free zones council:

### Khoy eyed for joint free trade zone with Turkey

#### Economy Desk

The capacities and challenges related to developing infrastructure for the establishment of a first joint free trade zone between Iran and Turkey in the Khoy region of West Azerbaijan Province were reviewed, said Reza Masrou, the secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones of Iran. The announcement was made during a visit to the industrial zone, production units, the Razi border terminal and Khoy Airport in the north-western province.

Masrou stated that Khoy's



valuable infrastructure, including its airport, industrial zone, and border terminal, makes it a viable candidate for the creation of a joint free trade and industrial zone with Van, eastern Turkey. He added that the zone, if

established, would mark the first joint cooperation experience between Iran and Turkey and could lead to a significant transformation in the regional economy and an increase in trade exchanges between the two countries.

## Misreading Iran: How ...

As you examine the history of these groups since their inception, they have always operated as the exigencies of Palestine and Lebanon required and not when the strategic requirements of Iran necessitated. While Iran provided these groups with assistance and paid a heavy price for its principled position of support of the oppressed, not even a single instance can be found when these groups acted on behalf of Iran, or as its "proxy", according to a dictionary definition.

Iran is now capable of defending itself without a need for proxies. It has spent decades building a formidable defense infrastructure. While Iran continues to rely on its people as the most import-

ant barrier against foreign aggression and external coercion, the country's military innovations – from advanced missile technology to cutting-edge drones – have allowed it to maintain its security independently of external support. These achievements demonstrate a long-term strategy designed to ensure stability and sovereignty, irrespective of regional dynamics.

While setbacks to its allies, such as to Hezbollah, might temporarily impact Iran's influence, they do not compromise its core deterrence. This autonomy has always been central to Tehran's military posture and underscores its resilience amid external pressures.

Today, misreading and misunderstanding Iran is result of pundits grappling

with the chaos of today's world, especially in West Asia. At the heart of this chaos lies Israel's unchecked impunity, which has shattered international norms and created a dangerous precedent for states' behavior. Israel's actions in Gaza have become emblematic of this impunity. The indiscriminate bombing of hospitals, residential areas, and critical infrastructure has resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians. The blockade of humanitarian aid has left millions without food, water, medicine or even heat to keep their babies alive in the winter. Beyond Gaza, Israel's conduct continues to erode stability across the region. Routine airstrikes in Syria and Lebanon have targeted civilians, jour-

nalists, and humanitarian workers, while its use of advanced technology to weaponize communication devices exemplifies its disregard for ethical and legal norms.

This pattern of behavior, met with silence or tacit approval from powerful actors, has distorted analysts' interpretations of state behavior. In such a lawless environment, even defensive actions by nations like Iran can be misread as aggressive or desperate.

Iran's actions, far from signaling a shift toward nuclear weapons, reflect a long-standing strategy of maintaining sovereignty and stability through self-reliance. Tehran's deterrence framework remains consistent with its approach to security for its sovereign-

ty. Rather than reacting to perceived desperation as some suggest, Iran continues to act in line with its established strategic objectives.

The fixation on Iran as a potential nuclear threat also diverts attention from the broader issue of Israel's role in destabilizing the region. Its unchecked actions not only exacerbate humanitarian crises but also undermine global norms, creating an environment conducive to nuclear proliferation.

The claims of a nuclear pivot are a reflection not of Tehran's strategy but of a global order in disarray. Reframing the narrative requires confronting the real drivers of instability and reaffirming the principles of accountability and justice.