

Roads minister in Iraq highlights completion of Shalamcheh-Basra railway

Economy Desk

Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq called for strengthening bilateral transport cooperation between Iran and Iraq, underscoring the need for the completion of the 32-kilometer railroad connecting the Iranian border town of Shalamcheh to the Iraqi city of Basra.

Sadeq made the call in a visit to the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, where she held meetings with the neighboring country's high-ranking officials to hash out the current status of bilateral transportation ties, progress on the strategic Shalamcheh-Basra railway link, and preparations for the mass Arbāeen march, with a focus on maximizing logistical and infrastructural support for Iranian pilgrims.

"Today, discussions were held between the two countries on topics in the fields of road, rail, sea, and air transport, as well as issues related to Arbāeen and the measures that both governments should consider to facilitate the movement of Karbala pilgrims," Sadeq said on the sidelines of a meeting with Iraqi Minister of Transport, Razzaq Muhaybis al-Saadawi.

"Iraq can access the Caucasus, Cen-

tral Asia, and Russia, both by rail and road, through the development of Iran's transportation infrastructure, thereby transforming its trade with those regions. Iran, in turn, can establish land, rail, and road connections to the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf via Iraq. This reciprocal connection is in line with the key and strategic interests of both countries and enables joint participation in transit corridors," she added. Regarding transport cooperation between the two countries, the Iranian minister said the most important issue is the rail connections between Iran and Iraq, including border affairs and the Shalamcheh-Basra railway link, underlining that, "Over the past months, with serious actions by Iran and support from Iraq, we have witnessed significant progress in this project."

Sadeq said the demining of most of the Shalamcheh-Basra railway has been completed, and through support from the Iraqi government, the route will be operational before Arbāeen next year. Pointing to the Khosravi-Khannaqin border, Sadeq said, "It was decided that a joint meeting between the railway authorities of the two countries would be held to accelerate the executive operations between these two borders."

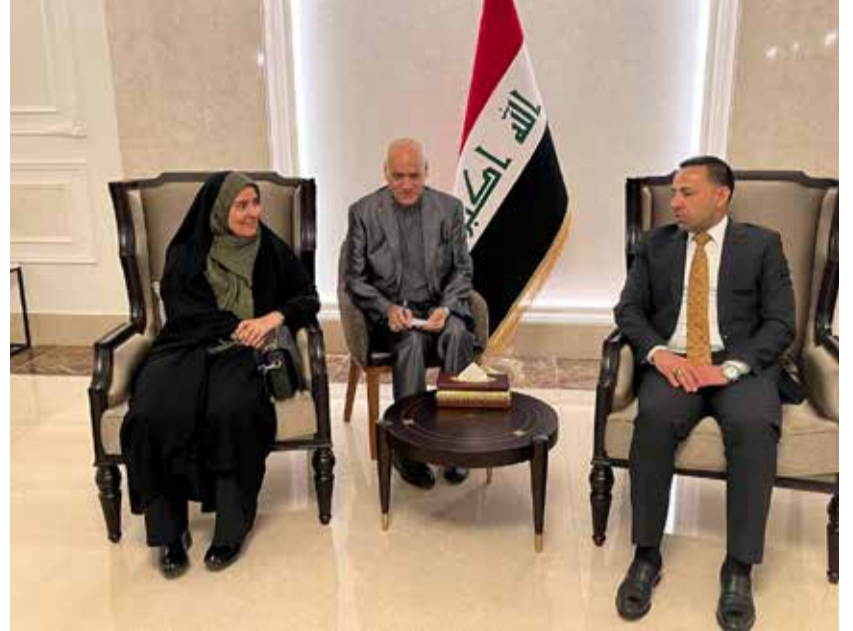


Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq meets Iraq's Deputy Transport Minister Seyyed Hazem Razi in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on May 24, 2025.
● IRNA

The Iranian minister of roads and urban development also said increasing the number of pilgrims in air travel and facilitating movement through air transport, as well as sea transport during Arbāeen, were other topics discussed.

Sadeq was welcomed on Saturday night by Iraq's Deputy Transport Minister Seyyed Hazem Razi and Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad-Kazem Al-e Sadeq upon her arrival in Baghdad. In her first stop, she visited the site, where Iran's top anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani, Iraqi resistance commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and their companions were assassinated by the US near Baghdad's International Airport in January 2020. Sadeq is also expected to meet with Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as well as the country's minister of interior.

Sadeq had previously visited Iraq in September of last year alongside Pres-



ident Masoud Pezeshkian to push forward the Shalamcheh-Basra railway initiative. That three-day visit resulted in the signing of 14 cooperation documents across various sectors, including transport.

Arbāeen marks the 40th day since the

martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the third Shia imam and the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). Every year, Muslim pilgrims from across the world, including from Iran, flock to Iraqi city of Karbala to mark Arbāeen, where the holy shrine of Imam Hossein is located.

CAO says welcomes public investments to renovate air fleet



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The head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) said the agency is capable of offering multiple investment packages in various fields, including the purchase of wide-body and light aircraft, and welcomes the presence of investors, especially small public investments, in such areas.

Hossein Pourfarzaneh was cited by IRNA as saying that to transition from govern-

ment investment to attracting public and small-scale capital, several methods are used globally, including directing capital towards the stock market, bonds, and bank investments. Pourfarzaneh underlined that such methods in Iran face risks, and especially in the stock market, people invest their capital with doubt and hesitation.

"Another method we have adopted is to receive small investments from the public

and involve them in the investment, so that they themselves can be stakeholders. In this regard, we encouraged collective investment funds and provided the necessary groundwork for them to participate and be present in the aviation sector," the official said.

"We also invited investors who were previously active in the housing sector to co-operate and participate. In this regard, we encouraged and persuaded three groups of these investors, who were mass housing developers, to enter the aviation industry," he added.

Pourfarzaneh expressed hope that through the said method and the use of people-centered systems, there would be a quantitative and qualitative improvement in the country's air fleet by the end of the year, and investments that were sometimes idle and unproductive would be funneled into the country's productive aviation cycle.

Removal of output barriers, int'l sanctions spawns constructive competition: Official

Economy Desk

The secretary-general of Iran's Home Appliances Manufacturers Association said the removal of production barriers and international sanctions leads to constructive and equal competition between domestic and foreign products.

"If sanctions are lifted and supportive policies are implemented to remove obstacles, additional costs will certainly be removed from production, and competition will become meaningful," Omid Fazelinia was quoted as saying by IRNA.

Fazelinia termed the issue of smuggled goods as detrimental to the Iranian economy and an impediment to the sound rivalry between domestic and foreign products.

"Now that we are under sanctions and economic pressures, although the entry points for similar imported goods were closed, we witnessed the entry of smuggled goods that were offered in the market without equal competition with domestic production," he said.

"Smuggled goods are sold in the



market at a lower price than Iranian goods without paying customs duties, tariffs, taxes, and current production costs," he added. "This competition, because it is not on an equal footing, is detrimental to production and the country's economy. However, with the lifting of sanctions, the import of goods will take place under equal conditions and with the payment of legal costs. No one is against competition under equal conditions."

Pointing to the woes faced by manufacturers in growing production costs, Fazelinia said, "Now, with the imbalance in energy, industrial sector investment in electricity, lack of working capital, currency fluctuations, delays in currency allocation, lack of export markets, etc., pro-

duction costs have increased."

The secretary-general of Iran's Home Appliances Manufacturers Association emphasized that the lifting of sanctions would lead to foreign investment in the country.

"With the development and strengthening of international relations and the existence of domestic capacities, we can benefit from foreign investment and the transfer of technologies in our country," Fazelinia said.

"Iran's presence in international markets and exhibitions can create conditions for introducing products and utilizing the knowledge of other countries, and provide the groundwork for improving the quantitative and qualitative aspects of production."

Iranian delegation departs Tehran to attend EAG summit in Russia

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An Iranian delegation on Sunday departed for Russia to participate in the 42nd meeting of the Eurasian Group (EAG) on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism.

Led by Deputy Minister of Economy and Head of the Financial Intelligence Unit, Hadi Khani, the delegation left Tehran for Russia to participate in the international gathering, which is slated to be held from May 26 to 30 and will bring together regional and international experts to enhance cooperation on financial security.

Holding the 4th meeting of parliaments of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member countries, a joint meeting of supervisory and

private sector's authorities entitled "Middle East North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF) under the theme of "Risk Management in Age of New Technologies", a specialized meeting on "Current Issues of Financial Security Coverage in the Eurasian Region", as well as a meeting of the Caspian Sea Neighboring Countries Working Group are among the most important programs of the EAG meeting.

"Increasing the level of regional and international interactions in the field of combating money laundering and terrorist financing, enhancing our country's position among the countries in the region and members of this institution, being aware of the latest measures and developments in

the field of combating money laundering and terrorist financing at the global level, and defending our country's effective positions and actions in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, are among the objectives of this trip," Khani said.

"At the main meeting and working groups, our country's actions and achievements in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing will be reported, and our country's determination in this fight will be shown to all."

Referring to the expansion of Iran's regional and international cooperation with member countries of the summit, Khani said, "The Iranian delegation will participate in the meeting of the Council of Heads of Financial

Intelligence Units of Central Asian countries, as well as the working group of Caspian Sea littoral states, and will consult on the exchange of experiences."

Pointing to the fourth forum of parliamentary representatives from Eurasian Economic Union member states held at this summit, he said, "Strengthening parliamentary cooperation in combating money laundering, terrorist financing, and the financing of weapons proliferation, and focusing on legislative coordination, exchange of experiences, and supporting regional policies to enhance financial security are among the most important topics of this forum."

Back on December 1, 2024, the EAG had welcomed Iran's efforts to im-



prove its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems. Established in 2004, the EAG is a FATF-style regional body comprising the nine countries of Belarus, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, with Iran being an observer member.