

Iran, Kazakhstan emphasize \$3b trade target, port development

Trilateral railway agreement finalized with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Economy Desk

The roads ministers of Iran and Kazakhstan emphasized achieving the targeted \$3 billion trade volume, highlighting the necessity of developing Iranian ports and increasing commercial traffic through diversification of transportation routes. Separately, during a trilateral meeting between the heads of railways of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, a joint railway cooperation agreement concerning sponge iron exports and transit was finalized. Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq, who was accompanying First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref to the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries during a visit to Awaza, Turkmenistan – held talks with her Kazakh counterpart Nurlan Sauranbayev on Wednesday. At the meeting, held to strengthen transportation cooperation and formulate a joint roadmap, the Iranian minister highlighted the importance of transit development and joint infrastructure projects. Sadeq stressed the necessity of pursuing the roadmap for the eastern route of the North-South Transport Corridor.

The route developed with Kazakhstan as the focal point and in cooperation with Russia, Turkmenistan, and Iran, whose related document had previously been signed by the deputy ministers of transport of the respective countries. During the meeting, the two sides examined the necessity of strengthening all modes of transport between Iran and Kazakhstan and emphasized the importance of formulating a comprehensive five-year transportation cooperation document. The proposal was put forward by the Iranian side and welcomed by the minister of transport of Kazakhstan. In another part of the meeting, the parties agreed to utilize the capacities of the Caspian Sea to boost transportation cooperation. The Kazakh minister of transport proposed cooperation in projects similar to the Caspian Sea Bridge with the Republic of Azerbaijan. Regarding bilateral trade, achieving the targeted \$3 billion trade volume was a central topic of the discussions. The two sides emphasized the necessity of developing Iranian ports and increasing commercial traffic through diversification of transportation routes. It was also agreed to hold multilateral meetings with



the participation of neighboring countries to develop logistical cooperation on routes leading to the Caucasus and Europe. Concluding the meeting, the ministers agreed to form a joint committee to draft cooperation documents and a comprehensive roadmap before President Masoud Pezeshkian's upcoming visit to Astana.

Development of border projects with Azerbaijan
During a meeting on Tuesday between Iran's minister of roads and urban development and the first deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan, the two sides agreed to undertake a field visit to Astara to assess the latest status of joint border projects. Sadeq, during an official meet-

ing with Shahin Mustafayev, and chairman of the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between the two countries, emphasized the development of economic and executive cooperation, particularly in the area of joint border projects. Held within the framework of the joint commission for economic cooperation between Iran and

Azerbaijan, the meeting involved discussions on the latest status of joint projects in border regions. The two sides stressed the necessity of accelerating the implementation of joint border projects, including the Astara Border Terminal and the border bridges under construction.

Sponge iron exports focus of trilateral deal
On the sidelines of the international summit in Awaza, a joint railway cooperation agreement concerning sponge iron exports and transit was finalized during a trilateral meeting of the heads of railways of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The meeting was participated by the Iranian vice president, minister of roads and urban development, and Jabbarali Zakeri, CEO of the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the meeting, the parties emphasized the necessity of expanding railway cooperation and increasing the volume of international freight between the three countries. It was also agreed that a trilateral memorandum of understanding between Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan would be signed to facilitate traffic and remove existing obstacles at border crossing points along transit corridors.

'Technology diplomacy': Iran launches fiber optic plant in Venezuela



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Iran's ICT Minister Sattar Hashemi (R) and the governor of La Guaira state, José Alejandro Terán, are seen at the signing ceremony of an agreement on the establishment of a fiber optic factory in Venezuela, in September 2024. ● PRODU

An Iranian fiber optic factory has commenced operations in Venezuela as part of expanding the "technology diplomacy" initiative, announced the minister of information and communications technology (ICT). During a joint meeting with members of the Plan and Budget and Accounts Committee of the Parliament on Tuesday, Sattar Hashemi highlighted the "technology diplomacy" program as one of the priorities of the ministry, adding that over the past year alone, actions have been taken to export technology to countries in the Horn of Africa, Latin America, and Russia, IRNA reported. He expressed hope that exports in this sector would increase tenfold within the program's horizon. The ICT minister pointed to agreements reached with Venezuela, announcing,

"Based on these agreements, the Iranian fiber optic factory established in that country has recently been launched and has started its production." Hashemi added that Iranian knowledge-based companies have also become active in Venezuela's communications infrastructure. The Iranian fiber optic factory in Venezuela was launched with a \$10 million investment. Designed to address Venezuela's domestic demand, the plant also aims to position itself as a regional export hub for telecommunications equipment across Latin America.

Pakistan's market offering Iran 'unparalleled' export opportunity: Diplomat

Economy Desk

An experienced diplomat in economic, trade, and investment affairs with Pakistan stated that the country, with a population exceeding 240 million and a young demographic profile, offers Iran's South Khorasan Province an unparalleled opportunity to expand exports as one of the region's largest markets. Zahra Qadianlou, speaking at the specialized online meeting "Trade Relations with Pakistan: Opportunities, Requirements, and Solutions" at the South Khorasan Foreign Ministry representative office on Wednesday, noted that the diversity of exportable products — from food industries to agricultural and petrochemical goods — combined with geographical proximity and transportation facilities, creates potential for expanding trade relations and attracting joint investments for South Khorasan, IRNA reported. "The presence of advanced technologies from East and West in Pakistan has given the country a special position in the region's political, economic, and geographical affairs," the diplomat emphasized. Highlighting the positive Iran-Pakistan relationship, which makes the two countries' markets complementary, Qadianlou explained, "Iran is primarily an importer of raw materials and essential goods like sugar, rice, and meat, while Pakistan is a producer of many agricultural products, including mangoes and bananas, which are less commonly found in Iran." She reported that Pakistan's economic growth reached 2.6% this year, driven by loan settlements and extensive investments, adding that the



country's economic and investment situation has progressed significantly over the past two years. Referring to recent Iran-Pakistan agreements on fresh meat imports, Qadianlou stated, "The entry of Pakistani fresh meat into the Iranian market via Karachi port and rapid transportation via refrigerated trucks has enabled the supply of this product to meet Iranian market needs." She further noted that proposals have been made to Iran's Agriculture Ministry to shift focus towards importing agricultural products from Pakistan — due to proximity and high quality — instead of longer routes like Latin America. "Although Pakistan's market offers abundant opportunities for imports," Qadianlou clarified, "overall, the country possesses significant potential for exports and economic cooperation with regional nations, including Iran."

Imports from Iran
Qadianlou detailed the neighboring country's diverse imports from Iran, including palm oil, legumes, tea imported from Kenya, spices, milk and dairy products (including whey pow-

der and industrial powdered milk), as well as dried fruits and nuts such as almonds and pistachios. Regarding imported petroleum products, she said, "Pakistan primarily imports crude oil, but liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is a major Iranian export to Pakistan, with over one hundred trucks carrying this product dispatched daily." The county also imports raw cotton, synthetic silk yarn, and synthetic fibers. In petrochemicals, their main imports include plastic granules and pharmaceutical raw materials. Chemical fertilizers are imported annually through tenders, in which Iran participates indirectly via Oman. Qadianlou acknowledged Pakistan's infrastructural challenges, "High energy prices, especially petrol priced at nearly USD 1 per liter, have led to limitations for energy-intensive industries, making operations economically unviable for many companies." "Nevertheless," she concluded, "over 100 Pakistani companies have invested in the Chabahar Free Zone in petrochemicals, food industries, and agricultural processing, demonstrating a serious commitment to developing economic cooperation between the two countries."