

# Iran taps East-West corridor with first major rail shipment from China

## Economy Desk

The first rail shipment of auto parts and raw materials for Iran's car factories on Saturday entered the northeastern Sarakhs Special Economic Zone from China through the East-West rail corridor. Mohammadreza Rajabi-Moqadam, CEO of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone, made the announcement and said the Sarakhs rail route "will not only significantly reduce shipping and demurrage costs but also cut delivery times from around 50 days to 15 days," IRNA reported. "In recent months, the advantages of the Sarakhs rail route had been emphasized. It was ultimately decided that raw materials for car factories would be transported from China to Sarakhs and then dispatched to their final destinations," the official added. The CEO stressed that expanding the use of the East-West corridor and participating in international initiatives such as

China's "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" demonstrates Iran's considerable capacity to generate foreign exchange revenue from freight and transit. It also contributes to the solidification of the country's role in regional economic and political dynamics.

## Environmental, economic benefits

He further outlined the environmental and economic benefits, noting that increased rail transit leads to lower fuel consumption, reduced road congestion, and improved transport safety. Rajabi-Moqadam underlined the strategic role of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone in the future of the country's transport sector, stating that with the arrival of the first shipment from China, rail transit in the zone has become operational. He emphasized that goods should not be allowed to accumulate in the country's main ports, adding, "The Sarakhs Special Economic Zone can become



Officials at the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone await the arrival of the first all-rail shipment of auto parts and raw materials for Iran's car factories, on August 23, 2025.

● IRNA

the future of logistics in eastern and northeastern Iran." He also announced the completion of the zone's logistics phases, noting that the first and second stages of the project — covering over 200 hectares — have been finalized. These in-

clude both broad and standard gauge railway lines, loading and unloading platforms, fuel tanks, and discharge facilities with a capacity of one million tons. Rajabi-Moqadam referred to the recent incident in Bandar Abbas as a serious warning,

stressing that cargo should not be stockpiled in the main ports. He said the Sarakhs zone, along with other aligned border entry zones, can serve as a fundamental solution for expanding the country's transit and transport capacity.

## Tehran, Muscat after boosting cooperation in construction sector: TPO



● MOJ

## Economy Desk

Iran and Oman reviewed ways to expand cooperation in the construction industry during the "Iran Investment Opportunities in Oman" event held in Tehran on Saturday. Organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) and the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, the meeting brought together trade officials from both countries, the head of Iran's Trade Center in Oman, as well as a number of investors and construction industry stakeholders, Tasnim reported. The deputy for International Business at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran highlighted the strong trade relations between Iran and Oman, noting that Oman "has always been a business partner for Iran in the field of

trade." Amir Roshanbakhsh added that current trade ties with Oman involve both opportunities and challenges, and addressing them could help elevate bilateral commercial relations. He said Oman's proximity to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has fueled interest in expanding its construction industry, stressing that Iran could play a role in Oman's progress through "technical and engineering services in the construction sector" as well as supplying construction materials and goods. "Currently, infrastructure projects such as water and wastewater systems and stormwater collection are underway, and there is considerable potential for Iranian companies to cooperate in this field," he said. Roshanbakhsh empha-

sized that while Iran has significant capacity in producing construction materials, logistical limitations remain a challenge that could undermine its competitive advantage in Oman. He voiced the TPO's readiness to hold discussions with Omani counterparts to help resolve these issues. The TPO official also referred to legal challenges faced by the private sector in collecting claims, suggesting that a joint task force or committee between the two countries to assess the credibility and reputation of companies could help address such problems. Roshanbakhsh concluded by declaring the organization's readiness to establish a joint committee to overcome trade barriers and strengthen bilateral cooperation. Meanwhile, Masoud Taherimehr, Iran's first commercial attaché in Muscat and head of the Persian Gulf Office at the TPO, stressed the need "for Iranian companies to be present in assessing investment opportunities in Oman's construction sector."

## Iran's nano exports to 50 countries surged past \$145m

## Economy Desk

Iran's exports of high-tech and knowledge-based products, particularly in the field of nanotechnology, resumed an upward trend after a period of decline, according to figures and statistical data reviewed by ISNA.

Export data for Iranian calendar year 1402 (began on March 20, 2023) show not only an increase in the volume of nano exports but also greater diversification of international destinations, signaling Iran's growing position in the global knowledge-based economy.

The achievement comes as the export of high-tech and knowledge-based products, especially nanotechnology, has become a key indicator of scientific and economic development for countries, and that Iran, relying on domestic capacities and technological capabilities, has sought to expand its share of international markets in the strategic sector. The review of the export trend of Iran-made nano products indicates that after a downturn, the trajectory has turned positive again, with growth recorded both in export volume and in the diversity of destinations.

## Nano exports climbed 32% last year

According to ISNA, statistical reviews show that following a decline in the Iranian calendar years of 1398 (2019) and 1399 (2020), exports of nano products have risen steadily in recent years. The more than 100% growth in 1402 was largely due to the addition of industrial carbon black and related byproducts, total-



ing about \$54 million. Excluding carbon black, nano product exports still grew by around 32% last year (1404). The share of exports in Iran's overall nano market also increased last year after several years of decline. In 1402, more than \$145 million worth of Iran-made nano products were exported to 50 countries worldwide. Construction, nanomaterials, electronics and optics, and chemicals were the four industrial sectors with the highest nano exports. In terms of market diversity, construction, textiles, and equipment topped the list, with exports to 21, 20, and 18 target countries respectively. Iraq was a consistent export destination across almost all industrial sectors—except for nanomaterials, energy, and agriculture — for most Iran-made nano products. In the construction sector, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Georgia were the top destinations. For nanomaterials, India, Pakistan, and the UAE ranked first. In chemicals, China and India were the leading markets, while in optoelectronics and agriculture, exports had the least diversity, reaching only two countries. In addition, Iran exported more than \$1 million worth of nano equipment in 1402 to developed countries such as Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, South Korea, and Germany.

## ICT in talks with neighbors on exporting messaging apps



## Economy Desk

Iran's deputy minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) announced progress in negotiations with neighboring countries on exporting Iranian messaging apps, stressing that authorities remain committed to supporting and enhancing such platforms.

In an interview with ILNA, Mohammad Mohsen Sadr responded to a question on plans to support domestic messengers by saying that the main responsibility for liaising with foreign countries on the export of Iranian messaging apps lies with the Ministry's Deputy for Technology, Innovation and International Affairs.

The head of the Information Technology Organization, while emphasizing that officials are also committed to continuing support and upgrading these messengers, said, "We have also presented the capabilities of domestic messaging apps in discussions with various parties, and several countries have expressed interest in using this capacity."

Sadr added that the negotiations "are progressing well," noting that documents have been exchanged and online meetings have been held, raising hopes that the talks will lead to concrete results. The deputy ICT minister underlined that Iranian messengers are domestically developed products, and their export represents a promising step in the field of technology exports.

## Revenue generation

Regarding the amount of the revenue the export of Iranian messengers could generate for the country, Sadr said the exact foreign currency earnings have not been calculated.

He explained that in the process of exporting such platforms, technical know-how is transferred, and follow-up support and development must be provided by Iranian companies.

The official stressed that the path to revenue generation is a long-term one, since these exports are knowledge-based and rooted in innovation and technology.

## Talks with Europe ...

At present, the US has shown little appetite for talks, and with Washington dragging its feet, dialogue with Europe could prove useful. Re-establishing contact with Europeans would be constructive, and the upcoming talks in Vienna on August 26, represent a positive step.

Page 1 >

Equally, receiving the IAEA's deputy director general in Tehran on August 11 was another constructive gesture. Although no access was granted, discussions did take place, potentially laying the groundwork for future cooperation between Iran and the agency. In the parliamentary resolution passed after the 12-day war to sus-

pend cooperation with the IAEA, a clause left the final outcome subject to the Supreme National Security Council's decision. This means that Iran can still maintain a form of cooperation with the agency—striking a balance between the parliamentary resolution and the need to ease international pressure stemming from the

snapback threat.

The very fact that Tehran has already taken steps before the Europeans' deadline could serve as a foothold to address further issues. But when it comes to ensuring that Europe will not go through with snapback or abandon it entirely, expectations should remain cautious; these negotiations alone may

not be enough to settle the matter.

In the past two weeks, US President Donald Trump has been deeply preoccupied with the future of the Ukraine-Russia war, effectively pushing Iran off his radar. In this sense, renewed talks with Europe might offer an opening to bring the issue back onto the diplomatic agenda.