

# Iran’s exports to Kazakhstan outpace imports in Q1 calendar year



**Economy Desk**  
Nasrin Pabarja, Iran’s commercial attaché in Kazakhstan, announced

that Iranian exports to Kazakhstan exceeded imports during the first three months of the current Persian calendar year, which started

on March 21, 2025. Pabarja noted Kazakhstan’s strong position among Iran’s target export markets, saying that in spring, Iran exported over \$53 million worth of goods, weighing more than 96,000 tons, to Kazakhstan. In return, Iran imported \$9 million in goods, with a total weight of 28,000 tons, from its northern neighbor, which mainly included sunflower seeds, corn, barley, and livestock products. According to Pabarja, Iran’s export basket to Kazakhstan is far more diverse than its import list, with 400 export items compared to 19 imports. Exports included \$23 million in agricultural products, \$22 million in industrial goods, \$5 million in petrochemicals, and more than \$3 million in mining and mineral products. She emphasized the strategic significance of Iran and Kazakhstan’s shared Caspian Sea border, which facilitates maritime trade, and

pointed to the robust road and rail links between the two countries as key enablers of deeper economic integration. Pabarja also pointed to the role of 37 customs offices in bilateral trade, noting that the provinces of Mazandaran, Golestan, Khorasan, West Azerbaijan, Tehran, and Markazi hold the largest share. “Considering sulfur shipments from Kazakhstan that pass through Iran’s Incheh Borun border crossing in Golestan Province and then through Razi in West Azerbaijan on their way to Turkey, these provinces play a vital role in transit trade,” she said, adding that the Amirabad and Anzali ports on the Caspian Sea recorded the highest maritime activity between the two countries. Pabarja also pointed to logistics expansion, joint investments in industry and energy, oil swap projects, grain trade and re-exports, and meat supply as key factors to boost bilateral trade.

As one of Central Asia’s largest economies, Kazakhstan is seen as a strategic partner for Iran in developing regional ties and connecting to global markets. Both Iran and Kazakhstan are members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which allows preferential trade and tariff reductions. Despite international pressure and sanctions on Iran, Kazakhstan continues to pursue stronger economic relations with Tehran, leveraging regional assets such as the Caspian Sea, railway links, and road networks. For its part, Iran has sought to counter sanctions by deepening trade with neighbors through the EEU framework. Iran’s exports to Kazakhstan include petrochemicals, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, and industrial machinery, while imports from Kazakhstan largely consist of grains, metals, minerals, and agricultural products.

## IMIDRO chief signals openness to Indian investment

**Economy Desk**  
Mohammad Aghajanolou, chairman of Iran’s state-run Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), announced the country’s readiness to host Indian investment across a range of mining and industrial projects, signaling a push to deepen bilateral economic cooperation. Speaking at a meeting with Indian investors on Sunday, Aghajanolou announced that the organization would put 300 exploration licenses up for tender. “Qualified companies will be able to take over mines through a legal auction process, and alongside them establish processing plants,” he said. Aghajanolou highlighted opportunities in IMIDRO’s southern economic zones, which he described as offering strong advantages in

production, exports and logistical benefits over inland sites. He also cited investment in the Halegan and Shahini gas fields as a key potential energy supply source for mining projects. The Halegan and Shahini gas fields are two relatively new and strategically important natural gas reserves located in Iran’s southern Fars Province. These fields are part of Iran’s broader push to expand domestic energy production especially for industrial sectors like steel and petrochemicals. The IMIDRO chief noted that cooperation between Iran and India could expand into alumina and coal, stressing that Iran’s mining and metals exports already stood at \$14 billion. “Iran’s mining and metals sector is ready to attract foreign investment, and there are many opportunities for broader cooperation



between Iran and India,” he said. Amir-Noujan Younesian, IMIDRO’s director of investment and economics, later said Indian firms could play a role in new industrial projects in Iran, including seamless pipe production, alumina plants,

and solar power stations. India already has several strategic projects in Iran, most prominently the development of Chabahar Port and related infrastructure in the southeast, where New Delhi has pledged \$250 million in credit.

## Iran-Turkey rail cooperation bill referred to Expediency Council for arbitration



**Economy Desk**  
A draft framework agreement on rail transport cooperation between Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and Turkey’s Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure was sent to the Expediency Council, after dispute between parliament and the Constitutional Council. The bill, first approved by parliament in February, was rejected by the Constitutional Council over clause (3-4) of Article 4, which states that the Iranian side, in handling cross-border transport, must employ “qualified staff” at border exchange stations. The Constitutional Council objected to the wording and returned the bill to parliament for revision. However, in Sunday’s open session, lawmakers reiterated their previous stance and referred the case to the Expediency Council for final arbitration. The Constitutional Council is an oversight body in the Islamic Republic tasked with reviewing legislation to ensure its compatibility with Islamic law and the constitution. When disputes between the council and parliament cannot be resolved, the matter is passed on to the Expediency Council. The “Framework Agreement on Rail Transport Cooperation” is considered a key document in strengthening regional connectivity. It is designed to enhance rail links, facilitate the transit of goods and passengers, and upgrade border infrastructure between Iran and Turkey. According to parliamentary reports, the agreement covers areas such as establishing a legal framework for joint operation of border rail lines, coordination on rail infrastructure, technical standards, and safety protocols, facilitating the passage of trains through border crossings under both nations’ regulations, and expanding rail capacity along transit corridors between Iran, Turkey, and Europe. Turkey, as a gateway to Europe, and Iran, as a bridge to Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, play complementary roles in regional transport. The agreement is expected to bolster both the North-South and East-West corridors, cutting transport costs and speeding up transit flows.

## Iran-Georgia trade ...

One of the main drivers of this surge in trade has been the strengthening of Iran’s domestic production and the expansion of industrial exports. A rise in non-oil exports, particularly in the industrial and petrochemical sectors, has helped boost the overall value of exports even more sharply than their physical volume. At the same time, efforts have been made to cut back on the weight of imported goods while pushing up

their overall value, reflecting a shift toward importing higher value-added products and reducing or phasing out bulk imports of intermediate or basic goods. In other words, the focus in recent years has been on production-oriented imports. Industrial and petrochemical capacities, which stand as two of Iran’s largest export sectors, played a central role in this transformation. Together, they recorded a near 28% rise in value while their tonnage

increased by 27%, underscoring the stronger contribution of high-value exports. When it comes to Iran’s exports to Georgia in 2024, several key product categories stand out. Ceramic tiles and flooring, valued at more than \$20 million, accounted for 80% of Georgia’s imports in that sector. Rolled steel bars and rods followed, worth \$11.3 million, meeting nearly 75% of Georgia’s demand in that category.

Other notable export items included steel bars at \$11.1 million, bare steel wires at \$6.2 million, and steel billets worth about \$5.1 million. On the import side, Iran’s purchases from Georgia in 2024 were mainly agricultural. Georgia served as a key supplier of fruits and vegetables, particularly apples, peaches, plums, and a range of produce such as tomatoes and bell peppers — products for which it has long been known in the Iranian market.



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