

Iran-Iraq customs ink fresh accords to ease trade bottlenecks

Economy Desk

Iran and Iraq signed a number of customs agreements in Tehran on Monday aimed at cutting red tape and boosting cross-border trade. Officials said the deals represent the most senior customs engagement between the two neighbors to date. They are designed to update freight flows, harmonize tariffs and remove barriers that businesses say have long slowed trade. The accords were reached during a visit by an Iraqi delegation led by chairman of the Border Ports Commission Lieutenant General Omar Adnan Al-Waeli, who met Foroud Asgari, Iran's deputy economy minister and head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). Iraq, which controls 21 official border crossings and serves as a regional transit hub, is central to Iran's export push. Easing bureaucratic choke points could

speed Iranian access to Iraqi and Persian Gulf markets. The two sides also agreed to draft a trilateral memorandum with Kuwait to facilitate the movement of goods and passengers, officials said. They discussed allowing more temporary vehicle entry under the "Carnet de Passages" system and simplifying transit procedures for heavy machinery. Business grievances featured prominently in the talks. Traders complained about import licensing concentrated in Baghdad, sudden bans on shipments, and inconsistent tariffs between the central government and the Kurdistan region. Iran pressed for an end to what it called the monopoly over manifest processing by a single company, and urged inspection agencies to be stationed at border posts to align product standards. "We expect border trade and the passage of lorries and passengers to move with greater speed and ease,"



An Iraqi delegation led by chairman of the Border Ports Commission Lieutenant General Omar Adnan Al-Waeli (5th L), meets Foroud Asgari (5th R), Iran's deputy economy minister and IRICA chief in Tehran on September 8, 2025. ● IRNA

Asgari said, pointing to what he called a shared vision between Tehran and Baghdad.

Thamer Qassem Daoud, director general of Iraq's General Customs Authority, said the scale of the frontier required

regular coordination and pledged that Baghdad was ready to step up enforcement of the new undertakings.

Iran knows how to neutralize sanctions

Blowback from sanctions to work against Europe, West

By Mousa Ahmadi
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OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

In recent days, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom—the three European powers known collectively as the European Troika—have triggered the so-called "snapback" mechanism against Iran. Reports indicate that in the coming days, all previous United Nations sanctions are expected to be reinstated, including restrictions on the sale of oil and energy. For Iran, however, economic and financial curbs, especially those tied to oil sales, are nothing new. For more than 45 years, Western powers—led by the United States—have consistently sought to place Iran under economic pressure and tighten the screws in order to advance their own

agendas. Yet over these decades, Iran has learned how to manage its economy and national affairs under the toughest sanction regimes. The country has repeatedly found ways to get around restrictions and push through the challenges. Since the first term of Donald Trump, when sanctions were dramatically escalated and Washington attempted to drive Iranian oil exports down to zero, Iran has faced sweeping international barriers in energy sales. In recent months as well, despite repeated US efforts to block oil exports, Iran has managed to maintain its oil revenues. This clearly shows that the Islamic Republic has mastered the art of neutralizing sanctions and can continue selling its oil even under intense restrictions. Another point worth noting is Iran's place as a major global supplier of oil and energy. Its capacity

cannot simply be brushed aside. Any attempt by adversaries to curb Iranian oil sales will inevitably disrupt international markets, and the blowback will directly hit the very powers—especially the United States—that are driving these measures. As mentioned, Iran has already been living under heavy American sanctions for years. The activation of the snapback mechanism therefore cannot significantly alter its current situation or create overwhelming financial and economic pressure. What has emerged instead is an attempt by certain actors to whip up a negative psychological climate, magnifying the potential fallout of the mechanism and stirring public anxiety. Yet as Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has emphasized, those who sow despair among the people and undermine national cohesion are, in effect, serving the enemy's interests.

The goal of adversaries is to use the snapback mechanism and sanctions as tools to apply more pressure on Iran and to wring out further concessions. Naturally, the imposition of any sanction comes with consequences. But Iran has repeatedly proven over the years that it can withstand such measures while continuing on a path of development and progress. The world has seen with its own eyes Iran's scientific and technological advances across diverse fields despite mounting restrictions. For this reason, the continuation of sanctions and hostile policies against Iran will ultimately work against Europe and the wider West. It would be in their own interest to change tack and pursue cooperation and constructive engagement with Tehran rather than persisting with policies that harm themselves as much as anyone else.

South Korea eyes expanded trade ties with Iran regardless of bans



Economy Desk

Yoon Kyung Park, consul-general of the South Korean Embassy in Iran, said South Korean companies can engage in reciprocal activities in Iran under humanitarian regulations regardless of sanctions, adding that efforts are underway to expand and make use of these opportunities. Speaking Monday in Shiraz during a meeting with Mohammad Sadegh Hamidian Jahromi, head of the Fars Chamber of Commerce, Park noted that despite a decline in bilateral trade over the past decade, South Korea's private sector still views the Iranian market as highly attractive and full of potential. Hamidian also highlighted promising areas for cooperation, particularly in medical equipment, dental tools, pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical raw materials, and agricultural chemicals, which he said could be exchanged outside the framework of sanctions. He added that Iran has long exported medicinal plants, mineral raw materials, and some petrochemical products to South Korea, and despite political tensions, Tehran remains interested in expanding trade with Seoul in compliance with international regulations. Hamidian stressed the need to facilitate the entry of humanitarian goods through the embassy, while also working toward reciprocal trade missions and closer ties between private-sector actors, especially in the medical field. He underlined that strengthening Iran-South Korea relations would require drawing lessons from past cooperation while charting new paths forward, and said the Chamber of Commerce is ready to play its part in broadening exchanges. "We expect South Korea — a country whose products can be found in virtually every Iranian household — to increase its cooperation and trade with Iran," Hamidian said. For his part, Park expressed appreciation for the widespread use of South Korean goods in Iran, saying he was pleased and honored by the trust of Iranian consumers. He added that bilateral trade could even surpass past levels, with Seoul eager to revive commercial ties and implement measures to address financial obstacles. Iran's foreign trade has faced significant disruption due to US sanctions reimposed following Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement seven years ago. Among the most notable consequences was Iran's inability to access \$6 billion in oil revenues frozen in South Korean banks. However, in September 2023, the funds were formally transferred to Qatar under a US-Iran prisoner exchange deal, allowing Tehran access to the assets for humanitarian purposes.

Turkmenistan poised to boost transport with Iran's northern ports

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Mammet Akhmedov, Turkmenistan's minister of transport, announced his country's readiness to enhance cooperation with northern Iranian ports through transport infrastructure links during his visit to Iran at the head of an official delegation. Speaking Monday morning in Sari during a meeting with the Governor-General of Mazandaran Province, Mehdi Younesi, and the head of Iran's Railway Company, Akhmedov said the existing maritime and rail facilities in northern Iran — particularly Amirabad Port — make it possible to expand trade exchanges and cargo transit between Iran and Turkmenistan along the North-South Corridor. He noted that Iran and Turkmenistan already enjoy strong economic and trade relations, adding that transport infrastructure, especially in northern Iran, provides a valuable opportunity to further expand these

ties. "During our trip to Iran, we plan to inspect transport infrastructure across several provinces in order to draft new strategies to increase economic exchanges between the two countries by making full use of these facilities," he said. The minister described Amirabad Port as one of the most important hubs for improving and upgrading trade exchanges and cargo transport between Iran and Turkmenistan, voicing hope that, with coordination from Iranian officials, use of transport infrastructure, including rail networks, would increase. Amirabad Port is Iran's largest port on the Caspian Sea. It is designed in three phases, but only the first

Turkmenistan's Minister of Transport Mammet Akhmedov (R) meets Governor-General of Mazandaran Province Mehdi Younesi (L) in Sari, Iran, on September 8, 2025. ● IRNA



phase has been fully completed as of 2023. The port is connected to Iran's national railway system, with 15 berths and an annual capacity of 7.5 million tons, and forms part of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). The main agenda of the Turkmen delegation includes inspecting

northern Iran's railway lines, reviewing border projects, and assessing existing capacities to strengthen bilateral cooperation. Akhmedov also toured on Sunday Tehran's Aprin Dry Port, where he was briefed on investments made and the logistics activities underway at the facility.