

# Stronger trade ties sought with Arab neighbors, says business figure

## High-level trilateral talks in Baku to boost North-South corridor

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Strengthening economic and trade relations between Iran and the Arab countries in the region is of great importance, a senior Iranian business official said on Sunday, as the Shiraz International Expo opened in southern Iran.

The Expo, which runs through October 14 at the Fars International Permanent Fairground, aims “to showcase Iran’s and Fars Province’s export capacities to neighboring and Persian Gulf countries,” said Payam Bagheri, the vice president of Iran’s Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture at the opening ceremony.

“The event highlights Iran’s long-standing economic, historical, and cultural ties with the regional countries,” Bagheri added, IRNA reported. He said exports serve as “a display of the Islamic Republic’s capabilities” to regional partners attending the exhibition.

Bagheri stressed that Iran has always prioritized good

neighborliness and constructive engagement with regional states. “Given our deep historical background, we expect Iran’s trade and international relations — particularly with Arab countries — to reach a higher level,” he said.

The businessman called for greater utilization of shared capacities and cooperation to promote regional sustainable development. “Iran is rich in investment opportunities and possesses considerable potential in various fields,” Bagheri noted, adding that Arab countries have consistently been among Iran’s key trading partners.

However, he said, both sides remain capable of expanding their economic cooperation even further. Achieving this goal requires “forums and events where businesspeople can get acquainted, learn about each other’s needs and capabilities, and develop specific strategies for deeper cooperation.”

Bagheri called for improved transport, logistics, and transit infrastructure between the countries.



### Joint production for global value chains

Bagheri also underscored the importance of “joint production and investment” to integrate into global value chains, describing them as key pillars of expanding in-

ternational cooperation. “These strategies can help elevate the economic standing of Iran and its neighbors on the global stage,” he said, highlighting Fars Province’s significant export potential in agriculture, horticultural products, food industries,

oil, gas, petrochemicals, carpets, handicrafts, and tourism. He expressed hope that the Shiraz Expo would mark “the beginning of a new chapter in economic and cultural cooperation between Iran and regional countries.”

A high-level trilateral meeting between Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan will be held in Baku on today to discuss expanding transport infrastructure along the western branch of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a senior Iranian official said.

Amin Taraffo, head of the International Affairs Center at Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, said the meeting will be attended by Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd, as well as deputy prime ministers from Russia and Azerbaijan, IRNA reported.

“The one-day session, hosted by Azerbaijan’s capital, will focus on infrastructure projects that can boost development of the corridor’s western route,” Taraffo said.

“The discussions will cover all procedures needed for cross-border transit among the three countries — from facilitating movement and customs processes to increasing freight capacity.”

According to the official, the three countries aim to raise the volume of transit cargo to 15 million tons by 2030, which requires “a comprehensive roadmap” to achieve.

The INSTC is a multimodal network of sea, rail and road routes connecting India and the Persian Gulf to Russia, Central Asia and Northern Europe.

Launched in 2000 by India, Russia and Iran, the initiative seeks to create an integrated transport network that leverages the strategic positions of member countries, including Azerbaijan and Iran. The corridor is viewed as a faster and more cost-effective alternative to traditional routes such as the Suez Canal.

## Two ministries step up cooperation to promote tourism

### Cruise ship licensing to be eased to draw more visitors



Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd (L) speaks at a joint meeting with Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri on October 12, 2025.

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Iran’s Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadeq Malvajerd on Sunday emphasized the importance of closer cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts to promote tourism and preserve the country’s historical sites. She also

announced new plans to facilitate both domestic and international travel. Speaking at a joint meeting attended by officials from both ministries, Sadeq Malvajerd said the goal was “to enhance coordination and strengthen collaboration” with the tourism ministry, ILNA reported. “The missions of our two minis-

tries in the areas of historical urban fabric and tourism are defined jointly — we never view these two fields as separate,” she said.

### Developing marine tourism

Sadeq Malvajerd told ILNA on the sidelines of the meeting that the process for issuing licenses for passenger cruise ships along Iran’s coasts would be simplified.

“We are doing our utmost to accelerate investor attraction and the launch of cruise lines, and to issue the necessary permits as quickly as possible,” she said. She praised the efforts of Tourism Minister Reza Salehi Amiri, noting that his ministry has been “actively working to attract investors and establish cruise operations along the country’s shores.” Sadeq said her ministry would make every effort to expedite the approval process. “With the good cooperation established so far, we hope to take great-

er steps in the near future to facilitate domestic and international tourism,” she added, stressing that joint efforts will not only simplify travel but also “unlock barriers” in related sectors, including transport and tourism infrastructure. Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri, speaking separately to ILNA, said his ministry has prepared a five-year plan to increase tourist arrivals by 25 percent annually. “Last year (began on March 21, 2024), 7.399 million tourists entered the country. We had planned for a 25 percent growth, and this was achieved in the first two months of this year (began on March 21, 2025),” he said. “However, due to the [12-day Israeli-imposed] war, we experienced a sharp decline in the third month,” Salehi Amiri added. “Since September, we have been working to restore normal conditions and continue our growth path.”

## Iran to raise gas output by 10 mcm/day via key field projects



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A senior official at the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) announced on Sunday that the country had launched extensive plans to raise its daily natural gas production by 10 million cubic meters through the development of three major fields — Deir, Tous, and Khartang. Malek Qanavati, head of engineering and construction at ICOFC, said the initiative aims to help offset the country’s current gas imbalance and ensure stable production flows across its operational regions, IRNA reported.

The development of the three gas fields “is at the core of this plan to add 10 million cubic meters per day to national output,” Qanavati said. “These fields have a much higher level of importance compared to others.”

He noted that developing independent gas fields has become one of the company’s key priorities. “Our planning is not limited to maintaining output from existing fields,” he said, adding that medium- and long-term strategic programs have been designed to both expand new fields and address the country’s gas supply imbalance.

The ICOFC, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company, is responsible for production and development across several onshore regions and plays a major role in sustaining Iran’s natural gas output.

## Car imports rise amid domestic production fall in H1 calendar year

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Iran imported approximately 25,000 vehicles worth \$500 million in the first half of the Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), according to the latest data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), marking a noticeable upward trend compared with the same period last year.

In the first five months of the year, about 19,586 vehicles valued at \$432 million were imported, compared with 15,504 vehicles worth \$317 million during the same period last year, Tasnim reported.

The country has a large home-grown car industry, which is capable of responding to a growing domestic de-

mand for various vehicles. Iranian automotive companies produced 1.335 million vehicles in the calendar year to March 2024, making the country the 16th largest car producer in the world.

However, the government has introduced laws in recent months to ease restrictions on imports in a bid to lower prices and to create more competition in the market.

IRNA on Sunday, citing data from the Codal system, reported that domestic production by Iran’s three largest automakers — Iran Khodro, Saipa, and Pars Khodro — fell 12 percent in the first half of the year, resulting in 56,122 fewer vehicles compared with the same period last year.

Data from the system shows that from



March to September, the three companies produced a total of 404,461 vehi-

cles, down from 460,763 units in the same period last year.