

Ministry unveils major customs overhaul, targets smart systems

Economy Desk

Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh announced on Sunday the launch of a comprehensive plan to modernize and digitize the country's customs network, including the installation of new high-speed X-ray systems, the creation of joint border customs with neighboring countries, and the involvement of foreign private firms in trade-related projects.

Madanizadeh said the ministry has prioritized customs modernization as a key component of its structural reform agenda following President Masoud Pezeshkian's directive to overhaul the country's customs system, Tasnim news agency reported. The program aims to enhance transparency, cut clearance times, and improve efficiency in cross-border trade operations.

According to the minister, broad initiatives have begun in several areas — including the renewal of X-ray scanning equipment, the digitalization of customs procedures, and the establishment of joint customs offices with neighboring countries.

"In this framework, the transfer of some trade-related projects to foreign private companies — including

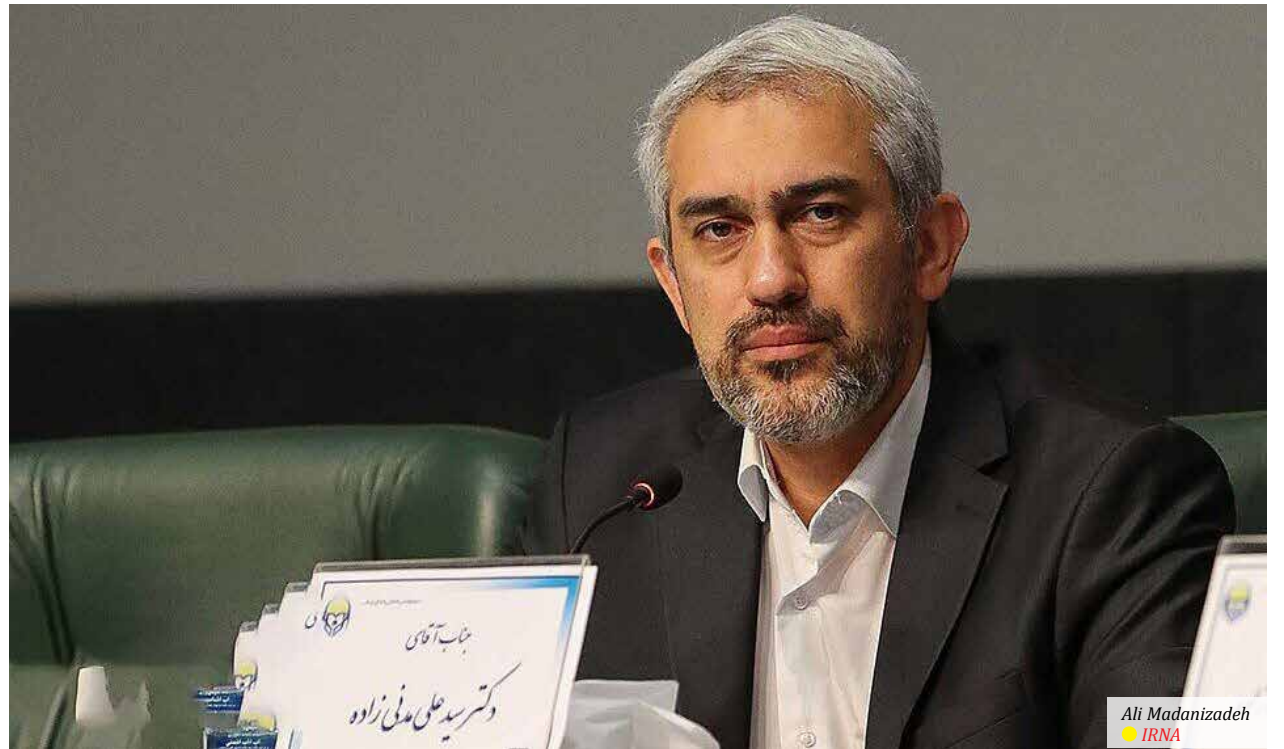
Chinese firms — is on the agenda," Madanizadeh said. "The goal is to upgrade technology, accelerate clearance procedures, and reduce logistics costs."

He added that under government resolutions, customs clearance operations will be centralized at 15 major customs offices nationwide. "By the end of the Seventh Development Plan (2029), 10 high-speed smart X-ray systems will be purchased through foreign financing and another 10 will be supplied domestically," he said.

Joint border customs expansion

Plans are also underway to establish joint customs posts with Pakistan in Chabahar, with Turkey in Maku, and with Azerbaijan in Aras, the minister noted, describing the initiative as "a turning point in the transformation of Iran's customs system and the facilitation of foreign trade."

Under the ministry's equity-oriented growth program, the customs overhaul is seen as a central pillar of structural economic reform. The initiative aims to reduce administrative corruption, improve trade facilitation indicators, attract investment to border regions, and ensure fairer access to trade infrastructure, Tasnim wrote.



Ali Madanizadeh
IRNA

The deployment of new high-speed X-ray machines, equipped with automatic detection and precision imaging, is expected to significantly short-

en cargo inspection times by allowing trucks to be screened without prolonged stops.

The enhanced inspection systems will

also strengthen border security and curb smuggling while supporting export growth and regional economic development.

'Far Iran' expo promotes knowledge-based economy with 80 products



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The "Far Iran" (dignity of Iran) exhibition opened in Tehran on Sunday with the unveiling of 80 domestically developed, high-tech products in an event attended by Vice President for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy Hossein Afshin.

The four-day exhibition, held at the Tehran International Fairgrounds, aims to highlight the achievements of Iranian knowledge-based companies and innovators and to demonstrate their growing role in building a knowledge-driven economy, Mehr news agency reported. Officials said the exhibition will be organized annually to

showcase the economic and social impact of technological innovation.

At a press conference on Saturday, Afshin described the event as "a manifestation of the nation's knowledge, creativity, and determination to advance a knowledge-based economy."

He said products on display were selected through a rigorous evaluation process based on three main criteria: technological capability, industrial performance and regulatory approval, and measurable economic and social impact.

"Since the beginning of this year (March 21), around 428 products entered the evaluation process, and 80 were qualified for official introduction," he said.

Of these, "about 30 are in health and pharmaceuticals, 28 in oil and related industries, 11 in the electricity sector, 10 in artificial intelligence and software, five in agriculture, and nearly eight in areas such as water, textiles, automotive, mining, and laboratory equipment," Afshin added.

Afshin said the introduction

of these products into domestic markets could save the country an estimated \$1.35 billion annually in foreign currency.

"The economic impact of this initiative goes beyond lower prices; by localizing production, it will expand public access to a wider range of more affordable products," he said. The vice president also noted that "many of the showcased products have no foreign equivalents and are entirely indigenous, developed by young Iranian innovators."

Afshin said the government's goal is to enable these products not only to meet domestic needs but also to enter regional markets. "To that end, we have prepared special support packages for export promotion and market expansion," he added.

Organizers said only fully licensed and certified products were presented this year, reflecting a new emphasis on verified quality and regulatory compliance. The unveiling of new technological products will now be scheduled each year in November and December.

NIGC to extend gas deal with Turkey, says ready to supply Pakistan

Economy Desk

The CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said the Islamic Republic plans to extend its natural gas export contract with Turkey and is ready to begin supplies to Pakistan once the necessary infrastructure is in place in the neighboring country.

"The gas export agreement with Turkey will definitely be renewed," Saeed Tavakoli told ILNA. "Iran is also prepared to export gas to Pakistan."

Tavakoli described the regional gas market as increasingly volatile and short-term in nature. "The regional gas market has become very situational, short-term, and time-consuming," he said. "On one hand, US LNG production has increased, while export restrictions have been imposed on some producers. On the other, most of the region's available gas has already been allocated."

He said Iran continues to push for long-term energy contracts with its partners. "Our focus and follow-up on long-term agreements will continue, and naturally, renewing the Turkish contract is among our top priorities," he added.

The current gas export agreement between Iran and Turkey is due to expire in 2026. Tavakoli



IRNA

expressed hope that the two sides would finalize an extension "for several more years" before that date.

He also noted that Turkey remains a committed buyer. "Turkey is definitely interested in Iranian gas," he said, adding that discussions are ongoing. "The volume, mechanism, and other details will be determined through negotiations."

On exports to Pakistan, Tavakoli said Iran has the capacity and readiness to deliver gas but stressed that "it depends on Pakistan to prepare the required infrastructure."

Regarding gas imports, he said talks are continuing with Turkmenistan and Russia, emphasizing that "continuity is the key principle in our energy diplomacy, and we expect positive outcomes."

Turkey has long sourced natural gas from Iran and, as of March, began receiving Turkmen gas through swap arrangements via Iranian territory. The deal provides for the delivery of 1.3 billion cubic meters of Turkmen gas to Turkey by the end of this year. Murat Kalay, secretary-general of Turkey's Petroleum and Natural Gas Platform Association (PETFORM), said last month that Ankara currently receives gas both from Iran and through the Turkmen swap, with negotiations for a new term underway.

Oguzhan Akyener, president of the Turkey Energy Strategies and Policies Research Center (TESPAM), noted on October 8 that Turkey's gas demand has declined during the summer months, as has Iran's domestic consumption, allowing for continued gas shipments under existing agreements.

Khaf-Herat railway emerges as key transit route linking Asia to Afghanistan

Economy Desk

Freight from Turkey, Turkmenistan, India, the UAE, Russia, and even the US has been transported to Afghanistan via the Khaf-Herat railway, an Iranian route that is fast emerging as a key regional transit corridor, a senior transport official said on Sunday.

"Cargo from these countries has passed through this railway, and even goods from the US have reached Afghanistan via this route," Jaber Zakeri, Iran's deputy min-

ister of roads and urban development told ILNA.

According to the official, the volume of cargo transported along the railway between Iran and Afghanistan in east of the country hit a record 63,000 tons last month, with the figure expected to reach 100,000 tons by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20, 2026).

He attributed the rising transit to growing interest from Afghan shippers and India's government, which is seeking to use the corridor for its exports and transit trade

through the southeastern port of Chabahar.

"To meet this growing demand, we have instructed Iranian logistics companies to prioritize resolving existing operational issues," he said. "We are addressing these problems one by one."

The deputy minister said Afghanistan's railway authority has welcomed the route and shown strong interest in boosting freight movement. "The Afghan railway has approved this corridor and is keen to increase cargo transport, and Iran's rail-

way organization is following up closely," he added.

Zakeri also noted that construction work is advancing on the Afghan side of the route. "I hope that within a month, another 43 kilometers will be added to the Herat railway. The project is now 90% complete," he said, adding that Afghanistan has pledged to finish the remaining section from Rahzanak toward Herat within the next month. Once complete, only one more station — currently under construction — will remain before full connectivity.

He pointed out that an industrial zone located near the next station will serve as a key cargo hub. "The strength of this route is that an industrial city lies adjacent to the next station, which will significantly boost freight traffic once it is linked to the rail network," Zakeri said. The expansion comes as Iran exported its first diesel shipment to Afghanistan via the Khaf-Herat railway last Sunday, establishing the first fuel trade corridor between the two countries and marking a new phase in bilateral economic and trade cooperation.