

First cargo train from Russia arrives at Aprin in boost to INSTC corridor

Economy Desk

Iran received the first block train from Russia at the Aprin dry port near Tehran on Saturday, a development officials said could strengthen trade ties with Moscow and expand regular rail traffic linking Iran, Russia and Central Asian neighbors. The train, carrying 62 forty-foot containers of paper, pulp and related products destined for customers in Iran and Iraq, began its journey about 900 km north of Moscow. It crossed Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan before entering Iran through the Incheh-Burun border crossing, reaching Aprin in 12 days, IRNA reported. Oleg Polyev, CEO of the Russian Railway Logistics told the inauguration ceremony that the arrival marked the start of a new freight route, saying, "We will make every effort to expand it."

He said Aprin terminal sits at a key junction of transport corridors and could play "a promising role" in future trade flows. Polyev recalled that in 2002, the first Moscow-Bandar Abbas train required far more time and higher costs. "Today, thanks to efforts by companies and authorities in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Iran, the route has been reduced to 15 days and costs have been cut in half," he said. Iranian officials said the new service supports growth of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), designed to connect Russia to the Persian Gulf and South Asia.

Emerging logistics hub

Morteza Jafari, deputy head for commerce and operations at Iran's state railway, said Aprin could become a major regional logistics hub.

"Aprin is a very important point and can turn into a regional transport center. We hope to achieve this with private sector capacity," he said. Jafari said development of the north-south corridor has accelerated since 2022, noting that early trains on the route faced long delays and high tariffs that discouraged shippers. "Now, on average, one train runs every 10 days," he said. He added that the train reaching Aprin on Saturday covered the 6,500-km distance in about 10 days, compared to roughly 15 days to reach Bandar Abbas via southern Iran, while alternative maritime routes can take 45 days.

New investment agreements ahead

Jafari said several new investment agreements at Aprin dry port will be signed within the



The photo shows an Iranian cargo train arriving from Russia at a station in southwestern Tehran, Iran on November 8, 2025.

● IRNA

next month, with a goal of reaching the capacity to receive one train per day by year-end. He told IRNA on the sidelines of the ceremony that since the first train from China arrived at

Aprin in June, 30 trains have entered the facility. "We are coordinating to expand these services, and where rail access is not available, cargo will be moved by truck," he said,

adding that Iran is working with neighboring Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and regional states to position itself as a hub for exports, imports and transit.

Design of light passenger planes initiated to amplify domestic air links: CAO

Economy Desk

Iran is moving into the design phase for two new light passenger aircraft, a senior aviation official said, as the country seeks to expand short-haul connectivity between its many small airports following the rollout and initial test authorization of its domestically built cargo plane, Simorgh. Hossein Pourfarzaneh, head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), said Iranian technical teams have begun designing regional passenger aircraft intended for short-distance routes, IRNA reported. The deputy roads and urban development minister said the country's geographic size and large number of small airports require 20-seat aircraft to link smaller cities to the national network while maintaining the option for international flights. Pourfarzaneh said the initiative is part of the government's Seventh Development Plan, which identifies aerospace as one of its strategic "driver industries." The plan



A view of the Iranian Simorgh cargo aircraft

● IRNA

centers on two parallel efforts: expanding air transport capabilities and developing a fully domestic aircraft manufacturing base. He said improving the air transport sector requires simultaneous development of fleet capacity, airport infrastructure, support and maintenance industries, and skilled human resources. Moreover, domestic aircraft production is being advanced to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers. In recent years, Iranian institutions including the Defense Ministry have carried out

programs to produce civilian aircraft. One earlier effort was the Iran-140, launched in cooperation with Ukraine's Antonov. After the partnership ended, Iranian engineers continued the project using domestic expertise. Pourfarzaneh said Iran now ranks among advanced countries in aerospace technologies across both civilian and military domains. The Simorgh cargo aircraft, designed for transport missions, is one outcome of these efforts. Simorgh has completed factory-level testing and recently received a permit for flight testing. During its flight test campaign, engineers will compare actual performance with earlier simulation data and make any necessary design adjustments. After that phase, the aircraft will enter type certification procedures before moving to commercial production. Iran entered the aviation sector in 1937, at a time when aviation was still in early development in many countries, he added.

IMIDRO targets \$30b mining investment to raise output, exports under SDP

Economy Desk

The Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development & Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said the country aims to achieve a 13% growth in its mining sector under the Seventh Development Plan (SDP), outlining a \$30-billion-investment program to complete mining projects, expand infrastructure, and secure energy supplies. IMIDRO officials said that if the targets are met, the sector could generate an additional \$15 billion in foreign exchange revenue, IRNA reported. In the steel industry, Iran plans to expand capacity to 9.5 million tons of concentrate, 15.5 million tons of pellets, 15.1 million tons of sponge

iron, 1.8 million tons of billets, 10.5 million tons of steel sheets, and 750,000 tons of rebar and coils. For copper, the program aims to produce up to 2.8 million tons of concentrate and 280,000 tons of cathode copper. In aluminum, plans include establishing a one-million-ton alumina powder capacity, developing petroleum coke capacity, and activating Guinea's bauxite mines. IMIDRO also set a target to produce 3,290 kilograms of gold bullion under the new plan. Officials have emphasized that the investments are part of Iran's broader strategy to strengthen domestic mining production, develop value chains, and increase export revenue, high-



● IRNA

lighting the sector as a key driver of economic growth.

Fars, Uzbekistan sign farming deal to enhance livestock food security



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Economy Desk

Iran's Fars Province has signed a cross-border farming agreement with Uzbekistan, aiming to cultivate 35,000 hectares of Uzbek farmland to support domestic livestock feed production and ease pressure on local water resources, a provincial official said. Ahad Behjat Haqiqi, head of Fars Agricultural Organization, said, "In the recent visit of the governor general of Fars and his accompanying economic delegation to Surkhandarya region in Uzbekistan, a memorandum of understanding on cross-border cultivation of agricultural products was signed," IRIB reported. The visit, led by Fars Governor General Hossein Ali Amiri, was part of Iran's active economic and cultural diplomacy with neighboring countries, and the delegation remained in Uzbekistan until today. The official added, "As part of the agreement, sections of Surkhandarya's agri-

cultural land will be used to produce fodder crops, particularly forage corn, to supply a portion of the southern Fars Province's livestock feed needs, reduce pressure on the province's water resources, and take an effective step toward ensuring national food security." Haqiqi emphasized the strategic importance of the initiative, saying, "Cross-border agriculture is no longer an option; it is a strategic necessity to achieve food security and reduce pressure on domestic natural resources." He noted that the project is expected to provide stable access to animal feed while fostering opportunities for exports and creating new economic cooperation chains between Fars and Uzbekistan. "In the next phase, planning for the development of agricultural exports and scientific and technological cooperation in the agricultural sector between Fars and Surkhandarya is on the agenda," Haqiqi said.

Crude pretexts and ...

He has since shared several posts saying that he has ordered the Department of Defense — rebranded by his administration as the Department of War — to "prepare for possible action." What goes unmentioned here is that terror groups such as Boko Haram and a local ISIS affiliate have killed far more Muslims than Christians in Nigeria over the past decade. Iraq, home to resistance groups including the Popular Mobilization Forces, has likewise faced fresh warnings. US Defense Sec-

retary Pete Hegseth recently threatened that if these groups respond to upcoming US operations in areas near Iraq, they would be targeted. Among the states threatened by Washington, Iraq stands fourth in the world for proven oil reserves. Iran, which holds the world's third-largest oil reserves, has faced even harsher treatment. In June, the US and its regional proxy, Israel, carried out strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, military sites and a number of civilian targets.

One of the civilian targets was a session of Iran's Supreme National Security Council attended by the heads of the three branches of power, though none of the officials present were harmed. It is evident that the Israeli strike in Tehran was aimed at toppling the Islamic Republic; had it succeeded, Iran could have been plunged into a chaotic disintegration. What precisely is driving senior figures in the Trump administration and the president himself remains unclear. But in recent weeks, Trump has exerted heavy pressure on buyers

of Iranian and Russian oil — China and India — to force them into halting purchases. Removing both countries' barrels from the global market would certainly push up prices and unsettle financial systems and economies around the world — a scenario Washington ostensibly wishes to avoid. From this perspective, US leverage over states with major petroleum reserves may appear to offer a swift, if unstable, remedy. Throughout both his first and second presidential campaigns, Trump pledged to end America's "endless wars." Yet he now ap-

pears increasingly inclined toward military methods, almost with a sense of obsession. A president with Trump's disposition, going through a second term free from the pressure of re-election, could prove particularly dangerous. Just on Thursday, his Republican allies in the Senate blocked a resolution that would have barred the administration from attacking Venezuela without congressional approval. This raises the question of whether the next flight path of US warplanes will lie somewhere further south.