

Tehran, Yerevan seek to boost regional trade through transport links

Economy Desk

Iran and Armenia discussed expanding cross-border road transport cooperation as the two neighbors seek to strengthen regional trade and transport connectivity.

The discussions took place during a meeting between Armenia's deputy minister of territorial administration and infrastructure and the head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, where the two sides exchanged views on ways to expand bilateral cooperation in international road transport as part of efforts to advance transport diplomacy and regional trade, according to IRNA.

The meeting, attended by representatives from Iran's Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, and the Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, underscored both sides' commitment

to strengthening transit infrastructure and removing existing obstacles.

Reza Akbari, head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, said that following a transport meeting held in Armenia last month and subsequent ministerial-level negotiations, the two sides have prepared a draft comprehensive memorandum of understanding. "The draft focuses on developing infrastructure, removing obstacles to cross-border traffic, reducing or eliminating road tolls, and increasing the capacity to accommodate transit fleets in the two countries," he said.

Akbari, who also serves as Iran's deputy roads minister, said that, given the strong potential for Iran's trade with neighboring countries, "the establishment of parallel transport corridors in the region and the full activation of the Iran-Armenia-Georgia corridor could significantly increase

trade flows and play a decisive role in the regional supply chain." Armenian Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Kristine Ghalechyan welcomed broader economic and transport cooperation with Iran and said infrastructure projects were making progress. "Transit infrastructure development is on the right track, and these measures will help reduce problems facing drivers, facilitate the movement of transit fleets and improve border logistics," she said.

Referring to previous technical meetings between senior officials from the two countries, she said another expert-level meeting would be held in the near future to examine proposals included in the draft memorandum of understanding and practical measures for expanding bilateral cooperation, with the outcome of the talks to be communicated through diplomatic channels.



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Iran's gas exports to Turkey rise 34% in H1 2026: Eurostat



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Iran's natural gas exports to Turkey rose 34% in the first half of 2026 up from a year earlier, according to data released by the European Union's statistical office.

Eurostat data, cited by Tasnim news agency, showed Iran exported 4.53 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas to Turkey in the first six months of 2026, up from 3.38 bcm a year earlier, even as the country came under

US-Israeli attacks beginning in late February.

Israeli air strikes in March damaged several gas-processing facilities along the coast of Bushehr Province. Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said in June that Iran had restored about 30 million cubic meters of gas-processing capacity lost during the 40-day war.

The country has remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks on Iran in late February, particularly tar-

geting civilians and infrastructure during the 40-day conflict. After a pause of several weeks, attacks on Iran's infrastructure resumed on July 11.

Iran's high-pressure natural gas transmission network measured about 41,000 kilometers as of May 2025, making it the world's fourth-largest by network length and the largest in the Middle East.

According to the latest Statistical Review of World Energy published by the Energy Institute last

week, Iran exported 15.4 bcm of natural gas via pipeline in 2025.

The figures, cited by Tasnim, showed Iran exported about 15 bcm of pipeline gas in 2024.

Iran, which holds the world's second-largest natural gas reserves after Russia at around 34 trillion cubic meters, exported 7.4 bcm of gas to Turkey and 7.5 bcm to Iraq in 2025, its two largest export markets. The country also exported 0.5 bcm of natural gas to the former Soviet republics during the year.

Tehran opens furniture export exhibition as industry targets overseas markets

Economy Desk

Iran opened its 35th International Specialized Export Exhibition of the Furniture Industry on Thursday, with about 100 domestic companies exhibiting products, technologies and innovations in the furniture and interior decoration sectors.

The four-day exhibition, held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, was inaugurated in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, trade unions, industry associations, manufacturers, exporters and other representatives of Iran's furniture industry, according to IRNA.

Hossein Norouzi, head of the exhibition's organizing committee, said Iran's furniture industry has reached a stage where it can meet domestic demand while expanding its presence in regional and international



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markets.

"This exhibition provides a valuable opportunity to present those capabilities to business partners and target markets," he said. Norouzi said participation by about 100 manufacturing and specialized companies reflected the industry's dynamism and production capacity.

"The exhibition is not merely a venue for displaying products, but also a platform

for expanding business cooperation, exchanging expertise, building professional networks and promoting exports," he said. Side events would include specialized seminars, initiatives to strengthen cooperation between industry and universities, and presentations on new technologies, according to him.

"One of our main goals is to create opportunities for meaningful interaction among manufacturers, designers, academics, investors and exporters so that Iran's furniture industry can strengthen its position in global markets through innovation, quality and design," he said.

"We hope the exhibition will help stimulate business activity, create new economic opportunities, pave the way for commercial agreements, expand exports and further showcase the capabilities of Iran's furniture industry," he added.

Customs chiefs sign Iran-Azerbaijan cooperation deal on trade, transit

Economy Desk

Iran and Azerbaijan signed a memorandum of understanding on Thursday to expand customs cooperation and agreed on new measures aimed at facilitating bilateral trade and transit.

The agreement was signed at the northwestern Bileh Savar border crossing by the heads of the two countries' customs administrations, who also discussed obstacles to trade and transit and approved new measures to remove bottlenecks and accelerate the movement of commercial and transit goods, IRNA reported.

Foroud Asgari, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration, said inadequate infrastructure remained one of the main obstacles to expanding trade and transit between the two countries.

"The completion of bridges under construction at the Astara and Nakhchivan border crossings by the Republic of Azerbaijan will strengthen infrastructure, boost trade and facilitate the movement of trucks," he said. Asgari, who serves as Iran's deputy economy minister, said President Masoud Pezeshkian had shown particular interest in expanding trade with Azerbaijan and had repeatedly stressed the importance of strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

"The main obstacle to expanding trade between the two neighbors is border congestion and barriers to



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Foroud Asgari, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (2nd R), and Shahin Baghirov (2nd L), chairman of Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee, sign a memorandum of understanding at the Bileh Savar border crossing in Ardabil Province, Iran, on July 30, 2026.

IRNA

the smooth movement of trucks," he said, emphasizing the need for closer cooperation to resolve the issue.

Shahin Baghirov, chairman of Azerbaijan's State Customs Committee, said trade between Iran and Azerbaijan was important and that both sides shared a positive outlook.

"Holding these meetings is very important and will have a highly positive impact on resolving problems and removing obstacles," he said.

Baghirov also welcomed the establishment of a 24-hour online communication channel with his Iranian counterpart to enable the immediate resolution of customs-related issues. The two customs chiefs signed the customs cooperation memorandum at the end of the meeting to facilitate and speed up customs procedures for commercial goods and transit cargo.

China leads development ...

Advancing global governance through Chinese proposal

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As a responsible major country, China is committed to serving as a provider of international public goods. Since President Xi Jinping put forward the "Global AI Governance Initiative," China has taken a series of practical steps to follow through on its implementation. These include releasing the Inclusive AI Capacity-Building Action Plan and the "AI+" International Cooperation Initiative, while facilitating the establishment in Shanghai of the World AI Cooperation Organization, which is open to all countries and focuses on helping Global South nations strengthen their innovation, application and governance capacities.

At this year's World Artificial Intelligence Conference, President Xi Jinping announced that over the next five years China will provide 5,000 AI training opportunities for developing countries, establish international AI application cooperation centers for ASEAN, the Arab League, the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS countries, and implement the "Mazu" intelligent meteorological early warning initiative in 30 countries.

These concrete measures fully reflect China's open and cooperative spirit, its global vision and international outlook, while presenting Chinese wisdom and solutions to the international community.

President Xi Jinping noted that the development of artificial intelligence should not be a solo performance by any single country, but rather a symphony of global cooperation. The Iranian people are hardworking, talented and rich in intellectual resources, with enormous potential for AI development.

Looking ahead, China stands ready to join hands with countries around the world, including Iran, to address common challenges and share opportunities. China will continue contributing its wisdom and strength to advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and to ensure that artificial intelligence becomes a powerful force for the progress of human civilization.