

# Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan Sign MoU on Rail Freight Transit



Jabbar Ali Zakeri, head of Iran's Railway Authority (L) signs MoU with his Russian and Azeri counterparts, July 3, 2026.

TEHRAN — The heads of railway companies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Azerbaijan have signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding, aimed at enhancing rail freight transport.

The MoU was inked on Friday between Jabbar Ali Zakeri, Deputy Minister for Roads and Urban Development and the head of Iran's Railway Authority, Oleg Belozorov, CEO of Russian Railways and Rovshan Rustamov, head of Azerbaijan Railways.

Expressing hope for better transit connectivity between the countries, the officials also held discussions regarding the development of the western route of the North-South Corridor.

At the end of the trilateral meeting, the CEO of Russian Railways announced an agreement between Tehran, Moscow, and Baku on establishing a "digital corridor" by orchestrating data exchange systems and implementing new transport technology.

During his trip to Moscow, Za-

keri met with Dmitry Zverev, Russia's Deputy Minister of Transport to exchange views on the latest status of the Rasht-Astara Railway project and ways to strengthen the rail routes of the International North-South Transport Corridor

The meeting was also attended by Afshin Parchizadeh, deputy head of Iranian embassy in Moscow; Managing Director of Russian Railways Sergey Pavlov, as well as officials and representatives from different Russian ministries.

## Japan Weighs Resuming Iranian Oil Imports After Six Years

TOKYO (Dispatches) - Japan is considering resuming imports of Iranian crude oil for the first time in about six years, as U.S. sanctions on Iran have been temporarily eased, according to reports.

According to Reuters, Iran is holding early-stage talks with three Japanese companies on crude oil exports following an armistice negotiation with the United States. A source on the Iranian side said three Japanese buyers are considering purchasing Iranian crude, and that government officials from both countries have also begun discussions on the possibility of oil trade.

The U.S. Treasury Department issued a 60-day temporary general license on the 22nd of last month, permitting the production, delivery and sale of Iranian crude oil. As a result, Iran can export crude and receive payment in dollars until August 21.

Japan was once one of the major importers of Iranian crude, along with South Korea, India



and European countries. But it halted imports from 2019 after the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2018 and reinstated sanctions on Iran. China has since served as the largest buyer of Iranian crude.

China has been Iran's main buyer in recent years.

Any Japanese purchases would be a matter for private companies, a separate METI official said in June, but the person added it was unclear whether such deals

would proceed given shipping times and existing contracts.

The official added that cargoes would be loaded at Iran's Kharg Island and use Japanese-operated tankers.

A senior Iranian oil ministry official said that Iran's national oil company NIOC had approached traditional customers including Japan and told them that if a peace deal was concluded and sanctions were lifted, Iran would like them to resume their purchasing.

## Nicaragua, Iran Set to Expand Energy Partnership

TEHRAN — Iran and Nicaragua reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation in the oil and energy sectors during a meeting between Iran's oil minister and Nicaragua's foreign minister.

Iranian Petroleum Minister Mohsen Paknejad met Saturday with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Valdrack Ludwing Jaentschke Whitaker, who is in Tehran representing his government at ceremonies honoring the martyred leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution.

During the meeting, the two sides emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation across a range of economic sectors, with particular focus on oil and energy.

Paknejad expressed appreciation for the attendance of



the Nicaraguan delegation at the memorial ceremonies and paid tribute to the martyred leader, describing him as an exceptional figure who remained steadfast against what he called pressures imposed by global powers until the end of his life.

He said the late leader was admired not only by Muslims around the world but also by freedom-seeking non-Muslims.

The Iranian oil minister also highlighted what he described as significant investment opportunities in Iran, particularly in the energy sector. Referring to the close ties between Tehran and Managua on the international stage, Paknejad said the friendly relationship between the two countries provides a strong foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation.

## Report: Production of Thin Steel Sheets With Rounded Edges Starts

TEHARN - Saba Steel Company, a subsidiary of Mobarak Steel Holding one of Iran's largest steel producers has announced the commencement of mass production for thin steel sheets with rounded edges, developed through domestic engineering efforts.

A major production drive, expected to reduce reliance on imported products in Iran's steel industry, has been successfully implemented. Saba Steel Company, a subsidiary of Mobarak Steel Holding one of the country's largest steel producers announced the commencement of mass production for thin steel sheets with rounded edges, developed through domestic engineering efforts.

According to information shared by the company, long-standing supply challenges regarding thin steel sheets, particularly cracks occurring during bending and deep drawing processes, were addressed through localization efforts. Developed



as a result of the technical expertise of Iranian specialists and ongoing localization projects, the new product aims to offer higher formability and production quality.

While it was noted that these products were previously sourced primarily from South Korea's POSCO, the transition to domestic production aims to reduce import requirements and strengthen the domestic steel value chain. Furthermore, this development is expected to enhance the competitiveness of downstream industries

by contributing to the domestic production of high value-added steel products.

Thin steel sheets with rounded edges stand out for minimizing crack formation during bending and deep drawing processes thanks to their edge structure. Due to these characteristics, the products are anticipated to be widely used in sectors where forming capability is critical, such as automotive, home appliances, electrical equipment, metal packaging, profile manufacturing, and light industrial machinery.

## Tehran to Send Multi-Ministry Delegation to Pakistan to Expand Economic Cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Arab News) - Iran will soon send a high-level delegation led by Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni to Pakistan to expand cooperation across sectors including agriculture, industry, trade, transport, tourism and foreign affairs, Iranian state

media reported on Saturday.

The planned visit signals an effort by Tehran and Islamabad to broaden bilateral engagement beyond security cooperation and border management toward closer economic and commercial ties. Pakistan and Iran have

sought to strengthen trade and investment in recent months while also expanding cooperation in agriculture, energy, border security and religious tourism.

Islamabad has facilitated contacts and mediated talks between Tehran and Wash-

ington in recent months while simultaneously working to deepen bilateral relations with Iran, including through high-level exchanges and agreements aimed at expanding economic cooperation.

"This delegation will include senior officials from

the ministries of agriculture, industry, mining and trade, roads and urban development, foreign affairs, cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts," Iran's official IRNA news agency reported after a joint press conference between Momeni and Paki-

stan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Tehran.

"Arrangements have been made for the Iranian delegation's visit to Islamabad and we are happy that the Iranian interior minister will head the delegation," Naqvi said, according to IRNA.