In Dubai, US sanctions pressure historic business ties with Iran

Dubai: With its Persian restaurants and shop signs in Farsi, Dubai had a distinctly Iranian feel. But for decades it has been a center for small-scale trade with Iran. This week, the city's downtown shops or upscale malls were bustling with goods from Iran, and in the bazaars, Iranian products such as rugs, silk and metalwork were displayed alongside goods from other countries. Dubai's continued trade with Iran is a testament to the deep economic ties between the two countries, despite the US sanctions.

Last year, 95% of Iran's $33 billion in exports flowed through the UAE, according to the Dubai-based Business Times. This year, the UAE is expected to be the largest single transit point for Iranian exports, with more than $1 billion in Iranian goods expected to pass through the UAE each month.

The US sanctions are expected to hurt the Iranian economy, but Dubai's business community is determined to find ways to continue trading with Iran. Businessmen say they are exploring new avenues to continue exporting goods to the UAE and maintaining their existing business relationships.

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