

Construction of Rasht-Astara railway and regional interests



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Recently, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with Vladimir Putin, confirmed the words of the Russian president about the necessity of starting the Rasht-Astara railway, saying, "This work will complete the International North-South Transportation Corridor and benefit both countries."

Transporting goods by rail has many advantages in terms of security, speed, and price compared to transport by road, and rail costs are much lower than sea and road costs.

Due to its special geopolitical situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is the link connecting Asia to Europe and Africa, and the construction of railway lines doubles the importance of Iran's transit position in the region. Completing the INSTC with the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway will not only improve Iran's transit position, but also connect the countries of the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to the Black Sea and Europe.

Annually, at least two million tons of cargo can be transported through the route, and this brings about a major change in international and regional transportation and the promotion of trade exchanges.

Also, with the launch of the rail project, the transportation of goods will be reduced by 25 days compared to the sea route, and the situation will bring a 30% reduction in overall costs.

The amount of traffic expected in the first year of operating the Rasht-Astara axis is about three million tons of cargo and 200,000 passengers, which can increase to four million tons of cargo and 500,000 passengers in the following years.

Currently, millions of tons of goods are transited from India and European countries to the Caucasus region within sixty days, which will be reduced to ten to fourteen days with the completion of the INSTC.

The construction of the Rasht-Astara railway has helped the International South-West Corridor project and the economic development of Chabahar port and facilitation of transportation from Iran to the Indian Ocean.

Considering the war in Ukraine and the insecurity in parts of the Black Sea, the use of Iran's route will be important for European countries as well.

The first stage of the route, under the name of Astara-Astara railway, was opened in April 2017, with the virtual presence of the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan. At that stage, the Astara railway line of Azerbaijan was connected to Astara of Iran, with investment by the Republic of Azerbaijan. On March 15, 2017, the final stage of the Qazvin-Rasht railway line was launched, and the event created a point of hope for the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway line.

For the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway line with a length of 165 km, the cost is estimated to be \$1 billion, and the Republic of Azerbaijan has announced its readiness to invest \$500 million. Considering Putin's interest in launching the route, we can also count on Russia's financial participation.

If the second stage of the Rasht-Astara railway line, on the Rasht-Anzali route, with a distance of 35km is launched within the next year, the strengthening of combined transportation (sea-road-rail) will not only lead to a large income generation in the country, but also economic progress in Gilan Province.

The Rasht-Astara railway is not only the axis of friendship between Iran and Azerbaijan, but it will strengthen Iran's neighborhood policy and develop relations with neighboring countries, especially Russia.

President Raeisi's order to the first vice president to speed up the implementation of the Rasht-Astara railway, which was issued after his meeting with Putin, is considered important in this regard.

The last point is that the people of Iran and the region expect the implementation of the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway to begin and end in the 13th administration and to take a big step towards strengthening the economy and neutralizing the cruel U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Iran's four-month exports to Turkey top \$2b: IRICA



IRNA

Iran exported non-oil commodities worth \$2.06 billion to Turkey in the first four months of the current Iranian year (March 21-July 22), according to the data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA). According to the IRICA data, Turkey was Iran's fourth-larg-

est export destination in the four-month period, IRNA reported.

Iran has also imported goods worth \$1.78 billion from Turkey in the four months to July 22. Turkey was Iran's second source of imports in the mentioned time span.

Increasing non-oil exports to

the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Turkey was Iran's second trade partner in the first quarter of the current year of 2022. During a webinar, held in March, on trade relations between Iran and Turkey, which

was held through cooperation between Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC), which was attended by officials from both chambers and a group of entrepreneurs, ways to develop economic relations between the

two countries were discussed. In the virtual conference, which was attended by more than 250 entrepreneurs from Iran and Turkey, the opportunities for cooperation between the two countries were examined and the two sides emphasized the development of cooperation.

Iran's TPO signs MoU with Business Russia



IRNA

Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Russian trade association Business Russia to expand trade ties between the two countries. President of TPO Alireza Peymanpak, Iran's Deputy Ambassador to Russia Abbas Maleki, Russian Ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan, and CEO of Business Russia Alexey Repik attended the

ceremony for signing the MoU via videoconference, IRNA reported.

The attendees were all in agreement that the MoU would improve the trade between Iran and Russia which has been on expansion of rail links after several visit by officials of both countries, especially at presidential level.

Business Russia is an organization which represents the interests of private non-resource businesses - local

industry leaders, according to the organization's official website.

Founded in 2001, the organization unites more than 7,000 entrepreneurs and over 400 deputies of federal and regional parliaments in Russia. The total annual revenue of companies owned or headed by Business Russia members is estimated at 2.8 trillion rubles. Business Russia is represented in all 85 regions of the Russian Federation.

Summer floods raised inflows to Iranian dams by 318mcm: Report



IRNA

A report shows that flash floods that swept through various parts of Iran in recent days significantly raised the inflows of water into dams at a time the country was facing a major drought and potential water shortages in crowded urban areas.

The report by IRNA said that some 318 million cubic meters (mcm) of water has flown into the Iranian dams and reservoirs after several days of heavy summer rains that started in late July.

The report cited Iranian Energy Ministry's figures and said that more than six billion cubic meters of flood-

water could have been stored as a result of recent rainfalls in Iran. However, it said that inflows into Iranian dams from total rains recorded since late June this year has amounted to a record of 1.288 billion cubic meters. The figures showed that some 4.727 billion cubic meters of water has also reached aquifers or other natural water storage systems such as wetlands and ponds.

Iran has seen unprecedented levels of summer precipitation this year with Energy Ministry's figures showing that rainfall reported in the country reached 14.6 millimeters in the 11 days since July 23, a fourfold increase compared with the long-run average.

The increased precipitation came at a time the water stored behind Iranian dams was at critically low levels, causing concerns about declining water supplies in large cities.

That comes as the heavy rainfall caused fatalities and destruction in dozens of towns and villages in Iran and inflicted heavy losses on the country's agricultural sector.

Defense Ministry holds exhibition on tech-based production, economy

Iran's Defense Ministry held an exhibition on its capabilities in technology-based production and economy.

The event covers such fields as transportation, health and medical equipment, security, energy, information and communication technology, cyberspace, construction and mining, industry, petrochemicals, food security and agriculture, household appliances, electronic parts, and geographic data and information, Press TV reported.

In general, 1,100 products in various fields have been put on display in the exhibition.

Iran has repeatedly voiced its readiness to provide advanced scientific and military technologies to friendly and neighboring states because it has already achieved self-sufficien-

cy and scientific capabilities in the field of military power and manufacturing state-of-the-art weaponry.

According to Iranian officials, as a result of cooperation between Iran's defense ministry and knowledge-based companies, the capacity of the ministry for production has increased by over 20 times in the past couple of years.



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