

Iran, Russia discuss implementation of Rasht-Astara railway



Senior officials from Iran and Russia explored the implementation and operation of Rasht-Astara railway in northern Iran.

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash met Igor Levitin, an aide to the Russian president, and Leonid Slutsky, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Russia's State Duma, in Tehran on Saturday, IRNA wrote.

They talked about implementing the strategic railway which is a key part of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

Highlighting the need for increasing the volume of transit through the Iranian soil, they stressed the significance of completing the INSTC corridor.

Bazrpash and Levitin had had another meeting in Tehran in late February.

On Thursday, Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhber described the country's relations with Russia as strategic and founded upon unchanging principles.

Mokhber made the remarks as he was speaking on the phone with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Complete implementation of all the agreements that have been clinched [between the two sides], including in the areas of trade, transit, and energy, forms the principal agenda of the bilateral ties," the Iranian official said.

Mokhber went on to review the process of the Islamic Republic's bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Russia, especially concerning the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the BRICS group of emerging economies, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tehran, Canberra can double bilateral trade: *Chamber deputy*



in the field of economy and trade.

Alireza Shamsfard told Iran Daily that the distance between Iran and Australia has caused some difficulties in the relations between the two countries in trade areas, but the main problem that has affected the commercial relations is the sanctions and especially the difficulties in financial exchanges.

He put the official trade between the two countries at around \$30 million per annum, noting that the actual figure is much higher and reaches at least \$150 million.

"A large part of Iran's trade

exchanges with Australia is carried out through third countries, which usually cannot be tracked by official statistics; for example, the United Arab Emirates is the largest re-exporter between Iran and Australia, through which most of the exchanges between Iran and Australia are carried out," Shamsfard explained.

Due to the sanctions that have been imposed on Iran, a very large part of the exchanges between the two countries, which was in the mineral sector, has decreased significantly, and our exchanges in this sector have decreased in terms of technology, machinery and minerals.

The bilateral trade potential had exceeded \$300 million in recent years, as we imported cars from

Australia, or food exchanges constituted a good amount of trade between the two countries, he stated, criticizing that due to the sanctions, we are facing problems in exchanging many goods, even exchange of products such as food, which are not directly subject to sanctions, as our money and bank transfers are facing restrictions due to sanctions.

The Iran-Australia Joint Chamber of Commerce is tasked with facilitating the commercial affairs of the two sides, the trader noted, adding that in this field, it provided favorable help, guidance and advice to businesspersons and companies interested in doing business in Australia and Iran.

"Australia is one of the leading countries in the world in the field of food products and industries including dairy products, textiles and mineral industries, and we

can use their technology in these sectors in addition to imports of final products."

Australia is among top countries in many fields, such as industrial machinery and road construction, and for example, in the field of mining machinery production, it is one of the top three countries, along with the US and Poland, Shamsfard added.

Regarding the presence of Iranian firms in Australian exhibitions, he said, "We always send invitations to participate in these exhibitions to the members along with taking measures in the field of managing affairs, obtaining visas and other related tasks, but due to the difficulty of the process, we often do not get a good reception."

Shamsfard went on to say that we almost have Iranian exhibitors at the Fine Food Australia exhibition which is annually held in September; and we do the required works for the participation of Iranian traders in the expo, which include coordinating with travel agencies and obtaining visas.

Iran-Qatar trade up 41% in two months: *Official*



Iran's commercial envoy to Qatar said the trade and economic ties between the two countries in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March to May 2024) registered a 41-percent growth compared to the same period last year.

Abbas Abdolkhani said the trade relations between the two countries stood at the trajectory of growth in the first two months of the current Iranian year, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Agricultural and food products,

aquatics, dried nuts, carpets, and construction materials were among the main products exported from Iran to Qatar in this period, he stated.

Abdolkhani stressed the need for the expansion and development of the trade and economic relations between the two countries, especially given the good political relations between the two countries. He went on to say that high-ranking officials of the two countries are determined to expand the relations in the fields of trade and

economy.

The commercial envoy pointed to the neighboring advantage and vicinity between the two countries and pointed out that the geographical proximity can reduce transport costs.

Iran possesses diverse natural resources and agricultural productions, and Qatar has a dynamic consumable market, he said, noting that it makes the two countries complementary in the development and expansion of trade and economic relations.

Iran to launch production of solar panels soon

Iran will soon launch the production line of solar panels to generate 1,800 MW of energy per year, an energy expert told IRNA.

Sima Ghaffari said on Saturday that the production of solar panels will also increase the area covered by such panels to 23,000 hectares per year.

The annual solar energy generation of Iran will increase to 2,300 MW once the production of the panels is completed, she said, without specifying the launching date.

In recent years, Iran has been work-

ing on developing its solar energy production as part of efforts to reduce gas emissions and combat air pollution.

In December, the Iranian Energy Ministry unveiled a plan for the construction of 95 renewable power plants.

The plan is aimed at removing the imbalance of electricity and power outages. The total amount of electricity generated by the power plants (11,000 MW) will be 11 times that of the electricity generated at the Bushehr Power Plant in southern Iran. The nominal electricity generation ca-

capacity of the renewable power plants in the country stands at 30,000 MW currently.

Also, Deputy Energy Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs Yazdan Rezaei announced that his ministry will set a new record in construction of power stations by the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024). Experts believe that the development of renewable power plants in the country can help remove the electricity imbalance to a great extent and also assist the stability of the power grid.

