

Putin hails growing economic cooperation with Iran



Russian President Vladimir Putin (l) attends a plenary session of the 15th VTB Russia Calling! Investment Forum at the World Trade Centre in Moscow, Russia, on Dec. 4, 2024.
● GRIGORY SYSOEV/SPUTNIK

Russian President Vladimir Putin described his country's trade and economic relations with Iran as stable and reliable, stressing that the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries will definitely see an increase in the future. Putin made the remarks during a plenary session of the 15th VTB Russia Calling! Investment Forum, themed "The Future of Capital and the Capital of the Future" and held in Moscow, according to IRNA.

"Currently, good projects in the fields of logistics, energy, industrial, and security cooperation between the two countries are being implemented," Putin said while referring to Russia's growing partnership with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Russian president also said the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is currently in operation, and the volume of transportation through this corridor is gradually increasing.

He also expressed hope that Russia and Iran will sign a comprehensive strategic partnership agreement during the upcoming visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Moscow. Putin also mentioned Iran's request for observer membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and said, "Moscow welcomes Tehran's desire to interact more with this union."

Earlier on Monday, during a telephone conversation with his Iranian counterpart, Putin hailed bilateral relations between Moscow and Tehran and expressed hope that their cooperation will boost further after inking the Tehran-Moscow Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement.

The Kremlin spokesman also said on Tuesday that preparations for Pezeshkian's visit are underway, but the timing has not yet been fixed. Dmitry Peskov emphasized that Russia and Iran do not want to delay the signing of the bilateral strategic partnership agreement.

Ahead of 26th meeting of Gas Exporting Countries Forum in Iran Tehran calls on GECF members to enhance synergy

Economy Desk

Iranian Minister of Oil Mohsen Paknejad highlighted the importance of strengthening collaboration among member states of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) ahead of the group's 26th ministerial meeting.

He pointed out that the presence of energy and oil ministers from the GECF in Tehran highlights Iran's resilience, stability, and high level of security under current conditions. He also maintained that Iran, with its enormous oil and gas reserves, has consistently been a major global energy player, Shana reported.

"Despite facing relentless unilateral sanctions from the United States in recent years, Iran has maintained its role, status, and credibility in the global energy sector through robust diplomacy and unique strategic approaches. This credibility is particularly significant as global demand for reliable and sustainable energy resources continues to rise."

Paknejad also stressed that as the world transitions from fossil fuels to

cleaner energy, natural gas — with lower emissions compared to oil and coal — plays a pivotal role in this shift. "Natural gas, as a clean and dependable energy source, is a strategic asset for GECF members," he added.

The Iranian official called on GECF members, as key architects of this energy shift, to collaborate by creating regional gas hubs, investing jointly, and transferring technology and expertise.

He reaffirmed Iran's role as a founding member of the GECF, committed to proposing initiatives, aligning with other members, and defending the shared interests of gas-exporting countries.

"Iran's energy policy, especially in the gas sector, centers on expanding economic and political cooperation, fostering mutual interdependence, and promoting natural gas as a clean and secure energy source," Paknejad emphasized.

He noted that despite facing internal challenges and unilateral US sanctions, Iran has remained committed to exporting gas to countries such as



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad
● SHANA

Turkey and Iraq without leveraging it for political purposes, consistently viewing its gas resources as tools for enhancing regional and global cooperation.

The minister further stated that the establishment of organizations like OPEC and GECF is rooted in goals beyond market regulation, including increasing synergy and depoliti-

cizing energy. The 26th meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum will commence on Friday in Tehran with the participation of expert delegations.

The ministerial session of the forum will follow on Sunday, December 9, with Iran's Oil Minister chairing the meeting.

Paknejad announced that the 26th GECF Ministerial

Meeting in Tehran will primarily focus on topics such as gas trade and issues related to boosting gas production among member states.

He noted that among the 12 main GECF members, representatives from around six countries will attend at the ministerial level, while the others will participate at the deputy minister level.

Paknejad emphasized that the main members of the GECF collectively hold the world's largest gas reserves, with the eight observer members and one guest member also possessing significant gas resources.

INSTC freight train project via Iran to be piloted



Pakistan's Minister of Energy Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari (l) meets with his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Aliabadi, on the sidelines of the Third Belt & Road Ministerial Conference held in Qingdao, China, on October 24, 2024.
● APP

Pakistan's energy minister announced a trial launch of freight trains from Russia to Pakistan through Azerbaijan and Iran via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) in March 2025.

In an interview with Russia Today (RT) on Thursday, Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari stated that there is a principled and shared perspective between Pakistan and Russia, indicating that their relationship is not directed against any other country or the interests of any third party.

He emphasized that Pakistan's significant relations with Russia benefit the people of both countries, and the aim of strengthening these ties is to achieve common

goals; therefore, any external concerns are unnecessary. Leghari also pointed out that Western countries should not be worried about Pakistan's relations and cooperation with Russia, adding that, given the current global situation, the partnerships of developing countries with major international powers — especially with the BRICS countries — are inevitable. Moreover, he mentioned that both countries are working to establish direct flights between their capitals.

Israel's proxies in...

Turkey's role in the recent terror attacks on Syria has come to the forefront at a time when the Turkish public openly opposes President Erdogan's actions. Erdogan previously refused to provide military assistance to Hamas in Gaza, and his stance during the Israeli aggression on Lebanon suggested support for Israel against Hezbollah.

Furthermore, Turkish intelligence allegedly began aligning Sunni Arabs and Maronite Christian factions in Lebanon who blamed Hezbollah for Lebanon's crisis, claiming Hezbollah's involvement in the Hamas-Israel war endangered Lebanon. They argue that if Hezbollah had not forced Israeli settlers to leave the Northern areas under Israeli occupation and halted their

attacks, Israel would not have launched a ground assault on Lebanon on October 1.

Contrary to tradition, Saudi Arabia and Egypt played a relatively positive role in backing the Resistance movements against Israel. Saudi Arabia, by conditioning the start of talks with Israel on the establishment of a Palestinian state, displayed considerable courage in front of pressures from the US and Israel. Evidently, the global balance of power is changing, and efforts are being made simultaneously on both military and economic fronts to end America's oppressive hegemony. The BRICS's ongoing effort to de-dollarize their economies and introduce a new currency highlights the imminent collapse of the imperialist order. In response, the newly

elected US President Donald Trump had no option but to make empty threats of imposing 100% tariffs on the group if they chose a new currency for transactions instead of the US dollar. Meanwhile, in Syria, a joint operation by Syria, Russia, and Iran is purging terrorist groups from areas in Aleppo. According to the latest figures, over 1,600 terrorists have been killed in Syria. During the Israel-Hezbollah war in Lebanon, Israel pressured Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to close the highway connecting Syria to Lebanon, through which, it argued, Hezbollah was receiving weapons. However, despite Israeli air strikes damaging the highway, President Assad refused to close it. Diplomats in Damascus state that the US and Israel repeated-



● AL-MAYADEEN

ly promised to cooperate with President Assad's government in exchange for shutting down the highway, but Assad's steadfastness and patriotism thwarted their plans. This is why Israel and its ally, the US, now

view Assad as an obstacle and aim to punish his government through terrorists. They know that the Damascus government is firmly entrenched and cannot be overthrown by a small terrorist force.