

Tehran, Beijing Set to Enhance Economic Ties



SHENYANG, China (Dispatches) - A delegation from Iran-China Friendship Association has discussed avenues to expand economic, scientific and cultural cooperation with local officials of the province.

Following the visit made by a delegation from Iran-China Friendship Association's to Beijing, Iran's scientific, cultural and economic cooperation with China's Liaoning province was discussed at a seminar in Shenyang, the capital of the province.

At the seminar, officials of the Liaoning and Shenyang Friendship Association, the Provincial Commerce Department, the Liaoning Medical and Polytechnic Universities heads, the executives of Brilliance Automotive and several other companies were

present.

In the meeting, they discussed scientific, cultural and commercial cooperation, including the establishing links between the universities of Liaoning province and Shahid Beheshti University, as well as Imam Khomeini International University and the possibility of student placement between these universities.

Cooperation between Liaoning province and Alborz province as well as the establishment of twin cities between the two provinces were also discussed.

At the seminar, representatives of commercial companies also emphasized grounds for expansion of mutual cooperation to meet both sides' interests at the Iranian marketplace.

Representatives of the Brilliance Automotive Company also emphasized on strengthening the market presence in Iran.

Also, member of the Iran-China Friendship Association group visited Shenyang University of Medical Sciences in Liaoning province, to view its history of cooperation with Iran and the presence of Iranian students in the 1980s, along with presence of over 40 Iranian students currently studying at this university, and ways to strengthen the scientific relationship with the university.

The delegation also met with the Vice President of the People's Congress of Liaoning province. During the meeting, the Chinese official cited ties between China's provinces, including Liaoning province with Iran winning support of the central Chinese government, pointing out that Liaoning province has reinforced relations with Iran since previous years. During the past two years, several delegations have traveled to Iran and have been in direct contact with the Iranian provinces, including Alborz.

Beijing has largely defied Washington sanctions on Iran by continuing to import oil from the country even after the administration of President Donald Trump ended exemptions given to China for buying Iran's crude in May, data provided by China's customs authorities attested in last month.

vice comes less than a year after delegates from Qatar visited Bushehr to discuss possibilities for more imports and passenger visits from Iran. Authorities said in October that there was a need for a 200-400 TEU (20-foot equivalent units) freight service between ports of Bushehr and Hamad. The Grand Ferry, a roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) ship built in western France in 1983, is 144 meters long and 26 meters wide. It has remained docked at the Port of Bushehr since June 19 when it arrived to start preparations for the new service. The ship is planned to carry out two trips a week between Bushehr and Hamad ports which sit over 400 kilometers apart on northern and southern tips of the Persian Gulf.

First Shipping Service to Connect Iran's Bushehr to Qatar's Hamed Port

TEHRAN (Press TV) - Iranian authorities say a first shipping service to Qatar is ready to start in the coming days amid efforts to bolster trade ties with the Persian Gulf country which has suffered from a blockade by neighboring Arab states.

The top local maritime official in the Iranian port of Bushehr said that a large vessel named Grand Ferry will start sailing from the port to Qatar's Hamad Port on August 24.

Siavosh Arjmandzadeh said that the shipping service will provide cargo transportation for pallets and various types of containers, including those meant for refrigerated transport.

"Given the high costs of the air transport, it is expected that the Grand Ferry ... could open a new horizon for trade relations

between Iran and Qatar," said Arjmandzadeh.

Iran has offered a major lifeline to Qatar since the country was sanctioned by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and others over a diplomatic dispute in June 2017. The gas-rich country of 2.7 million people is mostly dependent on imports for most of its food needs.

Arjmandzadeh said that the new shipping service to Qatar could "significantly" increase Iran's exports to the Arab country while it could open a new chapter in tourism activities.

He said that the Grand Ferry, equipped with 500 beds and 1,200 seats in 250 rooms, would soon accommodate passenger transport between Iran and Qatar.

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Customs Duties 30% Less for Chabahr Port

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's deputy Commerce Minister Hossein Modarress Khiabani has said that merchants and businesspeople who use Shahid Beheshti area of the port of Chabahar will enjoy a 30-percent discount in their customs duties, adding that Tehran is determined to encourage port operations in the Southeastern port.

The official said on Thursday that the government was doing follow-ups on a promise to grant a 30-percent discount on customs duties for cargoes unloaded at Shahid Beheshti area of the port of Chabahar.

Hossein Modarress Khiabani said that the government had also made it mandatory for two major state-run companies to unload and transport their import cargoes via the facilities at Shahid Beheshti area rather than their traditional destination at Imam Khomeini Port in southwest Iran.

The measures come amid reports that Iran has expedited efforts to increase activity in Chabahar after India, a major partner for the development of the port city, said it was unhappy with the slow progress



made to turn the port into a major shipping and trade hub in the region.

India has signed major agreements with Iran to build two terminals at Shahid Beheshti area and a railway connecting Chabahar to the city of Zahedan near the Afghan border as it seeks easier trade access to Afghanistan and countries in the central Asia region.

The development programs, however, hit a snag last year after the US imposed a new round of sanc-

tions on Iran over the country's nuclear activities.

Iran's transportation minister said earlier this month that Tehran had accelerated construction activities at its section of Chabahar-Zahedan railway.

Measures adopted for increased port operations at Chabahar also come a week after Iranian authorities denied media reports that they were seeking to replace Russia with India in the development plans for the port.

Flights Between Mashad, Herat Resumed



MASHAD (Dispatches) - Flights between the city of Mashad in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Herat of Afghanistan resumed by Kish Airlines on Friday.

Director General of Khorasan Razavi Airports Mohammad Baqer Qasemzadeh said that sharing cultural, political, religious and economic commonalities between the two cities along with the increasing demand for travel on

this route, a two-way flight from Mashad - Herat resumed by Kish Air Airlines.

The flight will be conducted every Friday, he said.

Foreign flights from Shahid Hasheminejad International Airport are now conducted to Istanbul, Kuwait, Muscat, Doha, Dubai, Sharjah, Baghdad, Nasiriyah, Basra, Najaf, Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Dushanbe, Herat and Kandahar.

25 Projects to Be Inaugurated in 9 Iranian Airports

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Managing-Director of Iran Airports Company Siavash Amir Mokri said on Friday that 9 airports of the country will hold ceremonies during the national week of government in the country in the last week of August to mark inauguration of 25 development projects.

In a news conference at Tabriz International Airport, Amir Mokri said, "57 other development projects will be inaugurated in 36 airports of the country, and construction of these projects will begin in the near future."

He further noted that these 25 development projects would be inaugurated during the Government Week in Ardabil, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad, Mehrabad, Urmia, Shiraz, Bushehr and Zanjan airports.

Qatar May Be Losing Top Spot as World's Biggest LNG Exporter

NEW YORK (CNBC) - Qatar will lose its title as the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) within the next year, as Australia ramps up production on a slew of multi-billion dollar export projects.

"Australia and Qatar continued to jostle for the title of the world's largest LNG exporter over the first five months of 2019," the Australian government said in a recent report.

Australia exported more LNG than Qatar in November 2018 and April 2019. But now, the U.S Energy Information Administration (EIA) says Australia is on track to consistently export more LNG than Qatar, as recently commissioned projects such as Wheat-

stone, Ichthys, and Prelude ramp up production.

Prelude, Royal Dutch Shell's floating LNG facility in a remote field northeast of Broome in Western Australia, shipped its first LNG cargo to customers in Asia in June.

The landmark facility, capable of holding 175 Olympic-sized swimming pools of LNG in its storage tanks alone, was the last of eight new LNG projects that came online in Australia between 2012 and 2018.

The new facilities have pushed Australia's export capacity from 2.6 billion cubic feet per day (bcf/d) in 2011 to more than 11.4 bcf/d in 2019. The EIA says Australia has already surpassed Qatar in LNG production capacity.

China Threatens New Tariffs If Trump Escalates Trade War

SHANGHAI (NY Times) — China said it would impose tariffs on \$75 billion in American-made goods if President Trump carries through on his promise to escalate his trade war with Beijing, in a sign that neither side is ready to back down from an economic conflict that has already cast a shadow over global growth prospects.

China's plans to retaliate, which were announced late on Friday in Beijing, include putting tariffs on American agricultural products, crude oil and cars.

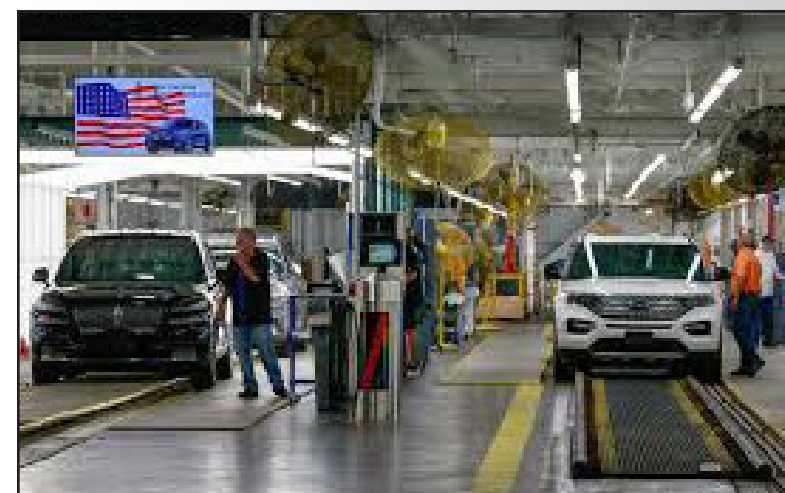
The news was likely to unnerve investors who worry that the trade war between the world's two largest economies will drag down global growth. Markets fell on the news in afternoon trading in Europe, and Wall Street opened lower. It also comes at a time of growing ner-

vousness in the United States over the economy, which shows signs of becoming a liability for Mr. Trump as he seeks re-election.

"I think China's trying to show that, cooperation or fight, it is ready to do both and it is not going to be pressured into an unfavorable trade deal," said Andy Mok, a trade and geopolitics specialist at the Center for China and Globalization in Beijing.

Mr. Mok said that China's willingness to impose a tariff on imports of crude oil from the United States, even though China needs a lot of imported oil, shows Beijing's determination. "One way you show your seriousness in a negotiation is to show you're willing to incur costs," he said.

The State Council Tariff Commission in Beijing said that the tariffs were a response to Mr.



Trump's threat to impose new tariffs by Sept. 1. Mr. Trump had initially said he would impose 10 percent tariffs on \$300 billion in Chinese-made goods on that date, essentially targeting everything that the United States buys from China that has

not already been hit by previous rounds of tariffs. He later delayed more than half of the latest round of tariffs until Dec. 15 to avoid hitting American pocketbooks during the holiday shopping season, and he canceled another one-tenth of it.