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# Iran: Economic News

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## **IRAN PUSHES PERSIAN PIPELINE AS EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVE TO RUSSIAN GAS**

/APRIL 1/Eurasianet/<http://www.eurasianet.org>

Iran's proposed Persian pipeline could be the perfect alternative to Europe's reliance on Russian gas, Iranian Oil Minister Gholam Hossein Nozari says.

Nozari said that negotiations with European partners were underway and that Syria, Iran and Iraq should sign a cooperation agreement to realize the project, the Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported on April 1. "In accordance with a project being developed, Iranian gas will be supplied to European countries via Iraq, Syria and the Mediterranean Sea, and further onto Greece and Italy," Nozari said April 1 during a visit to Syria.

Iran has the potential to rival Russia as a gas exporter, if it meets its stated goal of tripling production to 475 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year by 2020. The Persian pipeline would use existing infrastructure, the I-Gas 9 pipeline, to transport the fuel as far as the Turkish border. The I-Gas 9 pipeline has the capacity to carry 40 bcm of gas annually. Iranian officials say the country has 28 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves.

## **German firms in talks with Iran over supply routes to Afghanistan**

/APRIL 1/IRNA/

Two private German logistic companies are involved in talks with Iran, seeking alternative non-military supply routes to Afghanistan, a German Army spokesman told IRNA here Wednesday.

Both companies which have been transporting food and fuel destined for German NATO troops in Afghanistan, have been in contact with Iran and have been trying to find alternative transportation routes, the German official said.

He stressed neither NATO nor the German government were involved in any contractual talks whatsoever but were merely "monitoring" the situation. The spokesman confirmed that the Defense Committee of the German Parliament had debated the issue last week.

NATO convoys, travelling through Pakistan, have increasingly come under attack by Taliban and al-Qaeda forces.

The western military has presently deployed around 55,000 troops in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which is by far NATO's largest mission outside Europe.

The ISAF mission was mandated by the United Nations in December 2001 in the wake of the overthrow of the Taliban.

The largest troop contingents come from the US with 23,220 followed by Britain with 8,910 and Germany with 3,500.

## **Ahmadinejad sees brighter future for Iran-Kazakh ties**

/APRIL 6/IRNA/

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Astana on Monday assessed that Iran-Kazakhstan ties have a bright future noting that bilateral relations can be further developed through consensus and planning.

According to a report posted on the Presidential Office website, Ahmadinejad and his Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazabayev described the opportunities and facilities in both countries as beneficial for them and the region.

"Although Iran's ties with Kazakhstan are not longstanding, they are rooted in culture and national interests," he said, adding that bilateral ties have followed a growing trend in the past 18 years.

Referring to various areas of cooperation, he said that both Tehran and Astana underline the need for developing ties in the fields of energy, transportation and joint investment in agriculture and confronting global crisis.

Stating that Kazakhstan's status is growing in the world, he added that Iran will support its independence and progress. Nazarbayev, for his part, described Ahmadinejad's first official visit to the country as a historical event and said that implementation of the agreements reached by the two countries will mark a new chapter in the expansion of bilateral ties. He further underlined that Tehran and Astana have great potentials for upgrading commercial exchanges.

#### **Ahmadinejad: Iran, Kazakhstan to broaden cooperation**

/APRIL 7/IRNA/

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday that ties between Iran and Kazakhstan are very promising and expansion of cooperation between the two sides will result in regional development.

President Ahmadinejad made the remarks on the second day of his official visit to Kazakhstan in a meeting with Kazakh Premier Karim Massimov on Tuesday.

At the meeting, President Ahmadinejad underlined the need to further uphold existing level of mutual as well as regional cooperation.

"If the world were free of threats from bullying powers, we would remain committed to broadening all-out ties with other countries. Now that such threats exist, expansion and deepening of such ties seems inevitable," he said.

The two sides should spare no efforts to help prepare infrastructure grounds for such development, he said.

To attain the goal, both sides should help broaden cooperation in various fields such as transportation, finance and monetary sectors as well as joint investment, said the Iranian president.

Iran and Kazakhstan share common views on regional and international developments, he said adding that the two sides are able to bolster and broaden mutual ties to this effect.

Kazakh premier, for his part, voiced readiness to implement agreements signed between the two countries and said the visit by Iranian president to Kazakhstan will leave remarkable impacts on ties between the two countries.

#### **Omid satellite accomplished all missions successfully**

/APRIL 8/IRNA/

Omid (Hope) satellite which was placed into orbit last year by home-made rocket accomplished all its missions successfully, said head of Iran's Aerospace Organization.

According to a report by Public Relations Department of Communications and Information Technology Ministry, Reza Taqipour added that it carried out 130 orders sent to it from the earth

Launch of the satellite is considered a great achievement for Iran because few countries have so far managed to design, build and send satellite to space, he noted.

Stating that the satellite had made communications with ground stations in different points of the world, Taqipour added that the infrastructure for directing and handling satellites has been built in Iran.

Construction of remote evaluation satellites is also on the agenda in continuance of aerospace activities, he said.