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The visit of Iranian Foreign Minister, November 2009

By

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1. Official Visit of H.E. Mr. Manouchehr Mottaki, Foreign Minister of Iran to India, 13 November 2009

H.E. Mr. Manouchehr Mottaki, Foreign Minister of Iran, will be on an official visit to India from November 16-17, 2009 at the invitation of the External Affairs Minister. His visit carries forward the sequence of regular high-level contacts between India and Iran. The visit will provide an opportunity for both sides to discuss issues of mutual interest and further strengthen the civilizational and historical ties between India and Iran.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

2. India, Iran to make common cause over terror from Pakistan, 10 November 2009

NEW DELHI: In the first such high level engagement between the two countries since PM Manmohan Singh and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were re-elected, the foreign minister of Iran, Manouchehr Mottaki, will visit India next week. Mottaki, whom India had invited earlier this year, is expected to hold talks with his counterpart S M Krishna on November 16.

The visit by Mottaki, already significant because of the perception in certain quarters that India's proximity to the US has come at the cost of its relations with the largest Shia populated country, has acquired even more importance in the face of terror continuing to

emanate from Pakistan soil and of which Iran too has become a victim as was evident in the recent attack in the south-eastern province of Sistan-Balochistan near Iran's border with Pakistan. Pakistan-based Jundallah had claimed responsibility for the attack.

While Pakistan has assured Iran that it will bring the guilty to book, the fact is that only on Friday the deputy chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, whose men had died in the Sistan-Balochistan blast, accused Pakistan agencies of shielding the chief of Jundallah, a Sunni group. Brigadier General Hossein Salami said that the Jundallah leader, Abdolmalek Rigi, had been arrested a few days before the attack in Quetta but released only an hour later at the behest of "the intelligence service of our neighbouring country".

"India has the same complaint against Pakistan authorities and it provides us with a common platform to address the issue," said a senior official in South Block.

Even as Mottaki is expected to emphasise before India that Iran cannot wait indefinitely for India to join the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) peace gas pipeline (India still hasn't made up its mind over security and pricing issues), the two sides will try and finish the groundwork for Singh's visit to Iran. The visit has got delayed giving rise to the perception that Singh may not be inclined to travel to Iran at a time when the US and other western countries are trying to stop Iran from continuing with its nuclear programme. Iran's tepid response to the Mumbai attacks did not help relations too. India is home to the largest number of Shias in the world after Iran.

As for the pipeline India is not likely to make any commitment at this stage, said an official. He added that, among other things, one crucial condition for India to join the project would be making the delivery point of gas as close to the India-Pakistan border as possible.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftimesofindia.indiatimes.com%2FIndia%2FIndia-Iran-to-make-common-cause-over-terror-from-Pak%2Farticleshow%2F5213050.cms&rct=j&q=India%2CIran+to+make+common+cause+over+terror+from+pak&ei=3-96S6TGL868rAfjid31Dw&usg=AFQjCNEPINaj4vwgnMZlhqvoa3xvL0jxlQ>

3. India, Iran to discuss Pak-based terror, gas pipeline, 13 November 2009

NEW DELHI: India and Iran are expected to discuss the common threat of terrorism emanating from Pakistan and the proposed trilateral gas pipeline project when foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki undertakes a two-day visit here from Monday.

Marking the first high-level contact since re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in July, Mottaki's visit will also provide an opportunity for the two countries to discuss various other collaborative projects like development of an integrated

port-road-rail infrastructure to provide transit access to India from Chabahar to Central Asia.

During the talks between external affairs minister S M Krishna and Mottaki, the Indian side is expected to get an update on Iran's talks on its controversial nuclear programme with European interlocutors.

Mottaki, who is undertaking his second visit here since 2006, will also call on Vice President Hamid Ansari and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Terrorism from Pakistan is expected to be discussed when the two sides review the situation in the region.

Both India and Iran are victims of terrorism emanating from Pakistan which was highlighted by the bomb attack in Sistan province last month, official sources pointed out today while explaining the need to discuss the common concern.

India favours coordination of efforts with Iran against terrorism and will discuss what can be done in this regard, they said.

Source: The Times of India, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Ftimesofindia.indiatimes.com%2Findia%2FIndia-Iran-to-discuss-Pak-based-terror-gas-pipeline%2Farticleshow%2F5227589.cms&rct=j&q=india%2Ciran+discuss+terror+from+pak%2Cgas+pipeline&ei=v_x6S8W2K8-xrAef_rX1Dw&usg=AFQjCNGMfSQOiY8ZOBz-K5CoaXz2D0pSA

4. India to tell Iran of interest in pipeline, 14 November 2009

NEW DELHI: India will express its continued interest in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project when Iranian foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki visits India next week. This stand, however, has more to do with New Delhi's desire to checkmate China.

New Delhi's renewed expression of interest in the pipeline project comes in the backdrop of Iran's very public statement that China is interested in joining the project. In fact Tehran has been using the China angle to push New Delhi back to the negotiating mode. Of course Pakistan immediately embraced the idea saying it could become the Iran-Pakistan-China pipeline.

“We are interested and it is very much on the agenda,” sources said when asked about the pipeline project. The issue is expected to be taken up during bilateral discussions between external affairs minister S.M. Krishna and Mr Mottaki. Sources further said that the two sides will go into greater detail during the meeting of the joint working group on

energy that is expected to be held soon. In fact Mr Mottaki's delegation also has senior representatives from the petroleum sector.

The negotiations on the pipeline have been stuck over the issue of pricing and security. India and Iran have differences of opinion on the point of delivery of the gas and on pricing. "There are issues that need to be resolved," sources said and added that this was a project would require patience. The issue of security in particular has come into greater focus thanks to the increased instability in Pakistan and now due to Iran's own problem with Pakistan on the terror front. The pipeline is expected to go through Pakistan's troubled areas which India, especially after the Mumbai terror attacks, is not keen on.

Though these sticking points are unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, India wants to send the message across that it is still part of the IPI project and is not quitting the project.

The issue of security has also come into sharp focus for Iran which is also facing the problem of terror on its own border with Pakistan. The October incident where commanders of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps were killed in terror attacks in the province of Sistan-Balochistan near Iran's border with Pakistan.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Feconomicstimes.indiatimes.com%2Fnews%2Fpolitics%2Fnation%2FIndia-to-tell-Iran-of-interest-in-pipeline%2Farticleshow%2F5228604.cms&rct=j&q=India+to+tell+iran+of+interest+in+pipeline&ei=r_F6S4KHDtOvrAe90ckB&usg=AFQjCNF6C1EvcT3P1ngPkLg78h7MhSVLaA

5. Foreign Minister of Iran begins India visit from Monday, 15 November 2009

The energy sector is the most important factor underlining the desirability of closer Indo-Iranian relations, a senior Iranian industry official said.

Given India's energy requirements during the first decade or two of this century, Iran can be the most valuable source of energy to India," Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries & Mines (ICCIM) President Mohammad Nahavandian said, while addressing a seminar in Mumbai, business capital of India.

The seminar was organised by the All India Association of Industries (AIAI) and the World Trade Centre (WTC), PTI reported.

India still imports about 65-70 per cent of its conventional energy requirements in terms of oil and petroleum products from abroad, he said.

"Iran can be one of the major exporters of natural gas to India. Imports of natural gas could be a major contributor to power generation in India in the coming decade," Nahavandian said.

The Iranian official emphasised the need to look to "East than to West" for business development in the prevailing changed global economy.

Three years ago, Iran amended its laws to lay emphasis on privatisation, decentralisation of the public sector and encourage private investment, he said.

Earlier, FDI was limited to 40 per cent but now it is 100 per cent, he said, adding that "oil, gas, power, dairy products, mining, ceramics and stones are some of the sectors where Iran is looking for investments."

Iran is also looking for joint ventures in tourism, which is an enabler industry, he said. "Iran is looking for joint ventures in this sector, especially in health tourism. There is ample opportunity in the transportation industry," Nahavandian said.

AIAI President Vijay Kalantri said that India's total trade with Iran in the non-oil sector for 2007-08 was \$ 12.87-billion, with India's exports being \$ 1.95-billion.

India's imports excluding crude oil from Iran increased from USD 267-million in 2003-04 to USD 10.92-billion in 2007-08, he said.

India is one of the six largest non-oil export destinations of Iran, Kalantri said. Iran's imports from India are much more as it is via other countries. "If this trade is transacted directly by the two countries, then the trade would triple benefiting both countries," he said

Source: Iran Embassy, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.iran-embassy.org.in%2Fen%2Findex.php%3Foption%3Dcom_content%26view%3Darticle%26id%3D95%3Aforeign-minister-of-iran-begins-india-visit-from-monday-%26catid%3D1%3Alatest-news%26Itemid%3D50&rct=j&q=foreign+minister+of+iran+begins+india+visit+from+monday&ei=yfJ6S5WzD4bBrAev_bj1Dw&usg=AFQjCNFYLVBQe1JbhxtiwzxyJM7wm3G1g

6. Trade route to Afghanistan, terror in Pak to figure in India-Iran talks, 15 November 2009

When Iran and India sit across the table for a high-level series of talks next week, the common link of two troubled neighbours — Pakistan and Afghanistan — will dominate discussions. A new trade route to Afghanistan and the common threat of terror originating from Pakistan will come up for discussions when Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki comes for his two-day visit here starting Monday.

Mottaki, who will be the first senior leader to visit India since the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in July, will hold a series of discussions with his Indian counterparts on a variety of issues, including energy security, the proposed gas pipeline project as well as terror groups in Pakistan that are targeting both India and Iran.

India is keen to take forward discussions on the development of the Chabahar port in south Iran and an integrated railway line to Bam that would provide a direct trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

With the Zaranj-Delaram road link in Afghanistan already completed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), India is keen that the rail link from the Iranian deep sea port of Chabahar to Bam gets completed at the earliest, connecting it to the main Garland highway in Afghanistan.

Sources said the rail link and port expansion project would also be discussed at a joint working group meeting between the countries that would be convened shortly. "We are keen to see it through so that it can be used for trade with Central Asia and Afghanistan," they said.

The two sides will also discuss the proposed gas pipeline that would come through Pakistan. While India has expressed its keenness for the project, the proposed pipeline is not on the immediate horizon, given safety concerns and differences on pricing. However, the sources pointed out that both sides were working to sort out differences and were keen on the project.

Mottaki, who will call on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and will hold discussions with his Indian counterpart S M Krishna, is also expected to discuss the security situation in Pakistan that is affecting both the countries.

Source: Indian Express, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.indianexpress.com%2Fnews%2Ftrade-route-to-afghanistan-terror-in-pak-to%2F541587%2F&rct=j&q=Trade+route+to+afghanistan%2C+terror+in+pak+to+figure+in+India-Iran+talks&ei=pvV6S9GuG4v5rAfkW6n1Dw&usg=AFQjCNHVPVXINrjWN_GFRvB9PXRJihf08A

7. Pipeline, Pak on Iran table, 16 November 2009

New Delhi, Nov. 15: The stalled gas pipeline and Pakistan-exported terror will be prominent on the talks agenda when Iran foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki meets S.M. Krishna here on Monday.

Tehran is the latest victim of Pakistan-based militants, who killed 42 people including five elite Revolutionary Guard officers in an explosion in south-eastern Iran on October 18.

Mottaki will hold delegation-level talks with Krishna in the first high-level engagement between the two countries since the re-election of the Manmohan Singh government and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Mottaki will call on Singh too and is expected to renew an invitation to visit Tehran.

Mottaki's trip comes days before Singh leaves for Washington on a state visit, a coincidence that helps India underscore its policy of not linking its relations with Tehran to its ties with Washington.

The Indian side is likely to tell the Iranians that New Delhi is "serious" about the \$7 billion gas pipeline project, which will bring Iranian gas to India, and advise "patience" in resolving the price and security issues, sources said. India fears for the safety of the portion of the pipeline that will pass through Pakistan.

A joint working group of the two countries' petroleum ministry officials is expected to meet soon to take the pipeline talks forward.

Scaling up trade and investment will also be high on the agenda. India is looking at the growing Iranian market, and the West Asian country's large youth population, as an opportunity to expand and diversify its trade basket with Tehran.

Iran has accused Islamabad of shielding militants of the Pakistan-based Jundollah, which has claimed responsibility for the October 18 blast.

Source: The Telegraph, Kolkata

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.telegraphindia.com%2F1091116%2Fjsp%2Fnation%2Fstory_11745935.jsp&rct=j&q=pipeline%2Cpak+on+iran+table&ei=Pvd6S5vuNIu-rAfS86z1Dw&usg=AFQjCNGj-d3qvGIJMeyHoukoE4WJ4bOZYw

8. India, Iran Discuss Terror Emanating from Pak, Afghan, 16 November 2009

Terrorism emanating from Pakistan and Afghanistan and the danger it poses to the region was discussed by India and Iran here today with both having convergence of view on the need for concerted action against it.

The proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline was also discussed along with a host of other issues like banking and collaboration in infrastructural projects during the talks between External Affairs Minister S M Krishna and his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki here.

Mottaki, whose two-day visit here marked the first high level contact between the two countries since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected in July, also met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

During the delegation-level talks, Krishna and Mottaki exchanged views on the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan and shared concern over terrorism emanating from these countries, of which both India and Iran are victims.

Both sides noted that they have a key role in the peace and stability of the region, sources said.

Both India and Iran are concerned by the terror infrastructure in Pakistan and want it to be dismantled completely. After the Sistan blast, Iran had said its source was in Pakistan.

On Afghanistan too, India and Iran have same views, particularly with regard to the need for curtailing activities of Taliban.

While discussing energy issues, the Indian side flagged its interest in the 7.4 billion USD IPI pipeline but wanted aspects like security and pricing to be sorted out.

The two sides will be discussing such aspects in detail during the meeting of Joint Working Group on Energy to be convened soon.

Negotiations for the IPI pipeline, also called the 'peace pipeline', have been going on for over four years but the pricing and security of the project have been sticking points.

With India's concerns persisting, Pakistan and Iran have gone ahead and signed an agreement for bilateral pipeline project, saying India can join later.

Iran is one of the key sources of energy, particularly crude oil, for India.

The two countries also discussed various other collaborative projects like development of an integrated port-road-rail infrastructure to provide transit access to India from Chabahar to central Asia.

Mottaki, who is undertaking his second visit here since 2006, also called on Vice President Hamid Ansari.

Source: Outlook India, New Delhi

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.outlookindia.com%2Fitem.aspx%3F669561&rct=j&q=India,+iran+discuss+terror+emanating+from+pak,afghan&ei=kft6S8KXFZS3rAei-Kz6Dw&usg=AFQjCNEI7njsE2FQtyb7QeTgruVgVrv2DA>

9. India, Iran discuss terror from Pak; gas pipeline, 16 November 2009

New Delhi: The foreign ministers of India and Iran on Monday held wide-ranging talks in New Delhi about terrorism emanating from Pakistan while Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reportedly reiterated New Delhi's commitment to take forward the three-nation gas pipeline also involving Pakistan.

External Affairs Minister S M Krishna held delegation-level talks with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki on a range of bilateral and regional issues including energy security, trade, Iran's nuclear ambitions and enhanced collaboration in science and technology.

The volatile situation in Afghanistan and the role of Pakistan-based terrorist outfits in fomenting unrest in the region dominated the discussions, said diplomatic sources.

Iran sought greater cooperation with India in countering terrorism.

A horrific suicide attack in southeast Iran in October targeted the country's Revolutionary Guards and was blamed on Pakistan-based Jundallah, a Sunni extremist outfit which claimed responsibility. It was the first time terror outfits in Pakistan targeted Iranian territory.

As Iran and India share common interests in Afghanistan, they also discussed joint infrastructure projects like the deep sea port of Chabahar and a rail link to provide better connectivity for Afghanistan to Central Asia.

The Iranian side pressed for accelerating negotiations to resolve and address Indian concerns about the pricing of Iranian gas and the security of the pipeline, which is expected to pass through violence-prone areas of Pakistan.

Mottaki began his two-day visit on Monday by calling on Manmohan Singh, who assured him about India's commitment to taking the pipeline project forward, the sources said.

This is the first high-level engagement between the two countries since the re-election of the Manmohan Singh government and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Source: IBNLive, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=3&ved=0CBIOFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fibnlive.in.com%2Fnews%2Findia-iran-discuss-terror-from-pak-gas-pipeline%2F105356-3.html&rct=j&q=india%2Ciran+discuss+terror+from+pak%2Cgas+pipeline&ei=v_x6S8W2K8-xrAef_rX1Dw&usg=AFQjCNHaGGWWOMksxE4JMp9LWD-DUTSWew

10. Iran seeks help to combat terror on IPI gas pipeline, sources denied India pulled out of project, 16 November 2009

Notwithstanding the US pressure, India today unequivocally conveyed to Iran its commitment to participating in the 7.4 billion dollar Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project.

This reassurance was given by both Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister S M Krishna at separate meetings with visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki here.

At the delegation-level talks between the two foreign ministers, Iran sought greater cooperation with New Delhi in fighting terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Like India, Iran has also been affected by terrorism sponsored from the Pakistani soil. A horrific suicide attack in southeast Iran in October targeted the country's Revolutionary Guards and was blamed on Pakistan-based Jundallah, a Sunni extremist outfit.

The volatile situation in Afghanistan and the role of Pakistan-based terrorist outfits in fomenting unrest in the region dominated the discussions between the two sides.

Official sources said the talks were held in a free and frank atmosphere during which the two sides discussed several other issues, including energy security, trade, Iran's nuclear ambitions and enhanced collaboration in science and technology.

This was the first high-level contact between the two countries since the UPA government returned to power in New Delhi and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected as the President of Iran in June. The Iranian Minister's visit significantly came just days before Prime Minister Singh visits Washington as the first state guest of the Obama administration.

Mottaki renewed an invitation to Manmohan Singh to visit Iran. The invitation was accepted and dates of the visit would be finalised in consultations through diplomatic channels, the sources added.

On the IPI gas pipeline, the sources denied that India had ever decided to pull out of the project. "You revive something which is dead...the pipeline project is very much there," they added in reply to a question. The sources said India had certain issues with regard to the project, like security of the pipeline, pricing of gas and guarantees, and these have again been communicated to the Iranian side.

The two sides agreed to convene an early meeting of the joint working group (JWG) on energy cooperation between them at an early date to resolve issues connected with the pipeline project. An Iranian team would be visiting India soon for the purpose. As Iran and India share common interests in Afghanistan, they also discussed joint infrastructure projects like the deep sea port of Chabahar and a rail link to provide better connectivity for Afghanistan to Central Asia.

Source: The Tribune, Kolkata

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2009/20091117/nation.htm#1>

11. Delhi reaches out to lonely Tehran, may offer ISRO launch for satellite, 16 November 2009

New Delhi plans to woo Tehran with offers of greater intelligence sharing, revival of defence training and a possible launch of the latter's satellite but will remain non-committal on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.

India's objective, drafted a month after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad got a second term in July, is to engage more with Iran at a time when the West is treating it like a pariah over its nuclear programme.

"Increased isolation of Iran provides us with an opportunity... inviting the Iranian Foreign Minister to visit India at this juncture would be viewed as a big gesture by Iran," an External Affairs Ministry official was quoted as saying during an inter-ministerial strategy meet.

A fresh invitation was sent following which Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki is arriving on Monday for a two-day visit to call on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and meet counterpart S M Krishna.

While discussing terrorism emanating out of Pakistan, India will suggest greater sharing of intelligence on the movement of Lashkar-e-Toiba operatives who, according to electronic intercepts, move to Tehran or Zahidan. Last November, India had passed on "useful" information to Tehran on terrorist movement.

The issue of Indian Muslim students going to Qom for religious studies will also be taken up with Mottaki as these students are being targeted by Pakistani operatives for recruitment as militants against India.

On the agenda will be a visit by the topmost official of the Research & Analysis Wing, India's secret service, to Tehran that has been delayed because of the formation of a new government in India and revamp of the intelligence set-up in Iran.

Iran's strategy on Afghanistan — that all foreign forces should leave it within a specified time frame — will also be taken up with the emphasis that Tehran should not just be bothered about consolidating the Afghan areas adjacent to it. The second concern on Afghanistan will be addressed by inviting an Iranian delegation from the Narcotics Control Board to cooperate on plugging the movement of narcotics to the two countries.

One “big gesture” by India at the talks will be an offer to launch Iran’s commercial satellite through an ISRO vehicle for which the technical details — sent by the Iranians in July — have been sent to Indian Space Research Organisation for “assessing the nature of the satellite”.

The Mesbah, designed to travel in low earth orbit to assist in data communication over three years, was first timed for a launch by a Russian Cosmos-3 satellite-carrier but that did not happen. Last week, satellite maker Carlo Gavazzi Space Company of Italy refuted Iran’s claim that it would be launching the satellite after March 2011.

India would also use “softer defence options” to take forward their Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation that has been dormant since 2005. It is proposed to invite more Iranians for defence courses and cooperation in limited dual-use areas. But there will be polite no to Iran’s request for a joint patrolling exercise in the Gulf — an “engagement of sensitive nature”.

On the IPI pipeline, India’s stance is that the 30 million standard cubic metres of gas per day being provided by Iran was “not a big amount” and that there were issues such as its delivery point, security through Pakistan and pricing which were yet to be resolved.

Source: Indian Express, New Delhi

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.indianexpress.com%2Fnews%2FDelhi-reaches-out-to-lonely-Tehran--may-offer-ISRO-launch-for-satellite%2F541995&ret=j&q=delhi+reaches+out+to+lonely+tehran%2C+may+offer+ISRO+launch+for+satellite&ei=sAB7S9-dIc-xrAej_rX1Dw&usg=AFQjCNEeOT4KeKr4ToCC64XYhEKT4FT5og

12. Iran's foreign minister in India for pipeline talks, 17 November 2009

NEW DELHI -- Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki arrived in New Delhi Monday for talks on a stalled trans-national gas pipeline and a possible Indian prime ministerial visit to Iran, officials said.

Mottaki will meet India's Vice President Hamid Ansari, Premier Manmohan Singh and Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna on Monday during a two-day visit, an Indian foreign ministry statement said.

Talks with Indian leaders will cover "bilateral, regional and international issues," an Iranian embassy official said without elaborating.

An Indian official said talks between Krishna and Mottaki would cover the much-delayed 7.5-billion-dollar gas pipeline project that was first mooted in 1994.

The project, if completed, would carry gas from Iran to Pakistan and then India.

But India, which has a tense and occasionally openly hostile relationship with Pakistan, withdrew last year from the talks because of repeated disputes about prices and transit fees.

The Indian official declined to comment on recent domestic news reports that Mottaki could be carrying new proposals to kick-start the pipeline talks, but added both sides might discuss a visit by Singh to Tehran.

Mottaki's visit here comes as the UN's atomic watchdog is to unveil Monday its latest report on Iran's disputed nuclear drive with pressure mounting on Tehran to respond to an UN-brokered offer to end the standoff.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report will take stock of Iran's uranium enrichment activities in spite of international sanctions and detail findings from an October visit to a previously secret atomic site at Qom.

The West suspects Tehran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon under cover of its civilian nuclear energy programme. Iran vehemently denies the claims while Russia has said there is no evidence to support the accusations.

New Delhi, which twice voted against Tehran at meetings of the IAEA board, has said it is against the use of military force against Iran but added it is against the emergence of another nuclear power in its neighbourhood.

Source: China Post, Taipei

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.chinapost.com.tw%2Fasia%2FIndia%2F2009%2F11%2F17%2F233037%2FIrans-foreign.htm&rct=j&q=Iran%27s+foreign+minister+in+india+for+pipeline+talks&ei=Awl7S522FdG9rAfrhrX1Dw&usg=AFQjCNE8XPBhRpkw2HbI30YgG9AL3Aw9qw>

13. India, Iran discuss energy, transit routes, 17 November 2009

NEW DELHI: India and Iran on Monday held talks on closer cooperation in energy, transit routes to central Asia and sharing of information on militant activity in the Pakistan-Afghanistan belt.

In the first high-level talks after elections in both countries, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, in talks with visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, flagged New Delhi's interest in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.

Trilateral dialogue

They also discussed prospects of trilateral dialogue between India, Iran and Afghanistan on transit routes to central Asia, with the Iranian port of Chabahar to be the staging point for goods.

In four hours of talks with Mr. Krishna, including a luncheon in his honour, Mr. Mottaki discussed issues relating to security, pricing and guaranteed supply, and resolved to convene a meeting of the Joint Working Group to discuss the finer details of this and other energy related projects.

"Our interest in having a trilateral agreement was underlined," said informed sources about the transit route beginning from the Chabahar port.

It was planned to construct a railway line from Chabahar to Bam. From there, goods would be taken from the Afghan border town of Zaranj to Delaram on an Indian-built road to the Afghan garland highways, which provide access to several central Asian republics.

The need to add greater economic content was also recognised during delegation-level talks between the two Foreign Ministers. Both sides touched upon increasing contacts in the banking sector, civil aviation cooperation, double taxation avoidance agreement, bilateral investment protection agreement and civil aviation cooperation.

Mr. Mottaki renewed an invitation to Dr. Singh to visit Tehran, and it was agreed to work out the details through diplomatic channels.

LNG deal

India also raised the issue of the implementation of the Liquefied Natural Gas deal signed in 2005 for the supply of five million tonnes per annum of gas.

New Delhi maintained that as far as it was concerned, the agreement was signed and reopening it to accommodate Tehran's desire for higher rates was unacceptable.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehindu.com%2F2009%2F11%2F17%2Fstories%2F2009111760081000.htm&rct=j&q=india+iran+discuss+energy+transit+routes&ei=7wZ7S8PEGcuxrAff5731Dw&usg=AFQjCNE-RFR6EUWERDMYEy9nEwiuw13MwQ>

14. India, Iran strike the right chord on energy security, trade & technology, 17 November 2009

New Delhi: In the first high-level visit to India by an Iranian official in the second tenure of the UPA government, and also the first after re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, both sides had discussions on a range of bilateral and regional issues including energy security, trade, Iran's nuclear ambitions and enhanced collaboration in science and technology.

According to officials, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reportedly reiterated commitment to take forward the three-nation gas pipeline also involving Pakistan.

External affairs minister SM Krishna held delegation-level talks with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki, where several issues including the volatile situation in Afghanistan and the role of Pakistan-based terrorist outfits in fomenting unrest in the region dominated the discussions, said diplomatic sources.

The much-delayed \$7.5-billion gas pipeline project that was first mooted in 1994 was discussed. The project, if completed, would carry gas from Iran to Pakistan and then India. But India, due to tense relationship with Pakistan, withdrew last year from the talks because of repeated disputes about prices and transit fees.

Also, as both countries share common interests in Afghanistan, they also discussed joint infrastructure projects like the deep-sea port of Chabahar and a rail link to provide better connectivity for Afghanistan to Central Asia. The Iranian side pressed for accelerating negotiations to resolve and address Indian concerns about the pricing of Iranian gas and the security of the pipeline, which is expected to pass through violence-prone areas of Pakistan. Mottaki's visit is taking place at the invitation of foreign minister Krishna and within the framework of the regular high-level contacts between the two capitals.

Source: The Financial Express, New Delhi

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.financialexpress.com%2Fnews%2FIndia-iran-strike-the-right-chord-on-energy-security-trade-%26-technology%2F542261%2F&rct=j&q=india%2Ciran+strike+the+right+chord+on+energy+security%2C+trade+and+technology&ei=CPh6S9TzGMG8rAe23uj1Dw&usg=AFQjCNFeIdTFJSc4cHbBeXg8dWnIqz1A3Q>

18. Door open for India to join IPI gas pipeline: Iran, 17 November 2009

Iran said the 'door was open' for India to join the ambitious Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline but indicated that it could not wait indefinitely and the structure of the project could change in the future.

Iran has in place a bilateral arrangement with Pakistan on the gas pipeline and both the countries have begun work on the project, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said.

"We have a bilateral arrangement with Pakistan and the door is open for our Indian friends. That (IPI) will be a reality...but I am not sure about the future," he said in an interaction at the Indian Council of World Affairs.

Mottaki claimed that more than 100 km of the pipeline has already been laid on the Iranian side and the Pakistani side has also "started action" on its side of the border.

"But when you consider this pipeline bilaterally, there is a definite capacity. If we make commitments with other partners, with other pipelines, to other regions, in such a case may be in the future the structure of the project may change. I do hope to have Indian participation as soon as possible," he said.

Mottaki said the issue was discussed during his interactions with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and External Affairs Minister S M Krishna yesterday.

"During our negotiations, there were some questions and concerns and they needed some more consideration on this project," he said.

Source: Indian Express, New Delhi

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=4&ved=0CA0QFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.indianexpress.com%2Fnews%2Fdoor-open-for-india-to-join-ipi-gas-pipeline%2F542759%2F&rct=j&q=door+open+for+india+on+gas+pipeline%3Airan+minister&ei=DAJ7S4v7DIy1rAfvpO31Dw&usg=AFQjCNEGzeihGgQZvAQzGXoVF2Qs4EjhVQ>

19. Iran wants nuclear fuel swap to take place on its own soil, 17 November 2009

New Delhi: In the clearest statement to date of Tehran's attitude to the U.S.-backed proposal for a nuclear fuel swap as a step towards building trust with Washington, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki has said his government will take a positive view of the plan provided the exchange of enriched uranium takes place "inside Iran."

Mr. Mottaki told *Hindu The* in an exclusive interview on Monday that Iran is not keen to send its own nuclear fuel out of the country before the fuel it is to receive for the Tehran Research Reactor (TRR) arrives on its territory.

Under the original proposal made last month by the U.S. and its partners, Iran is supposed to ship 1200 kilos of 3.5 per cent low enriched uranium (LEU) to Russia, where it would be further enriched to 20 per cent. The 20 per cent LEU would then be sent to France for fabrication into fuel rods. Eventually, the rods would be shipped to Iran for use in the TRR, which produces medical isotopes.

Mr. Mottaki said Iran was in the process of “sending and receiving” suggestions to the other side. “With a positive view regarding the essence and nature of the proposal, we are reviewing the possibility of exchanging this fuel inside Iran.”

Asked whether the insistence on exchange “inside Iran” meant the TRR fuel must come first, Mr. Mottaki replied: “Well, if there is going to be any exchange of fuel inside Iran, this must mean one side of the fuel exists in Iran and the other side should come, the 20 per cent.”

The U.S. says its main interest in the original proposal of Iran shipping out virtually its entire stockpile of LEU is to “buy time,” since the fuel would no longer be available for weaponization should Tehran choose to “break out” of the NPT.

Source: The Hindu, Chennai

<http://www.hindu.com/2009/11/17/stories/2009111757740100.htm>

20. No India launch of Iran satellite, 17 November 2009

India says it has no plans to launch an Iranian satellite, a move which would have angered the United States.

"We received a letter from the Iranians to launch a satellite for them some months ago. We don't plan to give them a response," top Indian officials said.

Any such launch would be a sensitive issue given that Western nations view with concern Iran's missile programme.

The remarks from Delhi came as Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki wound up a two-day visit to India.

Iran launched its first domestically-made satellite into orbit in February, insisting its intentions were peaceful. Western governments voiced concerns the technology used could lead to ballistic missile development.

Any assistance by India in launching Iranian satellites could raise American concerns - the Bush administration, for instance, was dead set against an Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.

India is also more than aware that Iran's nuclear programme is the subject of great international controversy.

'Common perception'

Delhi, however, gave due importance to Mr Mottaki's visit by granting him a meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday.

Mr Mottaki, no stranger to India having been a student here, held discussions on a range of issues. He also briefed Indian officials on the current state of play in negotiations relating to what Tehran says is a purely civil nuclear programme - Western governments suspect otherwise.

India and Iran seem to have forged increasingly common ground on the threat of militancy emanating from Pakistan following the 18 October killings of 30 members of Iran's elite revolutionary guards in the province of Sistan, which borders Baluchistan in Pakistan.

"The two sides also took the opportunity for a detailed exchange of views on important regional and international issues, including the threat of terrorism confronting the two countries," a statement from India's Ministry of External Affairs said, without referring to Pakistan by name.

The Iranian foreign minister also discussed growing insecurity in Afghanistan. The two countries have had a long history of working together in Afghanistan, having propped up the Northern Alliance, along with the Russians, in the 1990s.

"We have a common perception with the Iranians about what is going on in Afghanistan. Where we differ is on the presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan. The Iranians see this as a big problem," Indian officials, who preferred anonymity, said on Tuesday.

Gas talks

Little progress seems to have been made on resuming a stalled dialogue on bringing a gas pipeline from Iran through Pakistan into India. "The issue did come up in the discussions, and we will discuss it further," the officials added.

India has long had security concerns about the pipeline passing through Pakistani territory and Tehran has taken an increasingly tough line on negotiations after Delhi voted against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency back in September 2005.

After the Indian vote, Iran also cancelled a \$21bn deal to supply 7.5 million tonnes of liquefied natural gas by ship to India annually. That deal remains stalled.

In 2007, India's then foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, travelled to Tehran to make amends for the vote against Iran, telling President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that while India was no Venezuela, it would remain independent in its foreign policy decisions.

Mr Mottaki flew out of Delhi on Tuesday.

Source: BBC News, London

http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fnews.bbc.co.uk%2F2%2Fhi%2F8363867.stm&rct=j&q=no+india+launch+of+iran+satellite&ei=4Qd7S6CqNIa1rAfFusz1Dw&usg=AFQjCNExo_Nr9wuP3kvUns9iN_tSidMNSw

21. Door open for India on gas pipeline: Iran minister, 18 November 2009

NEW DELHI: Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki on Tuesday said that the door would remain open for India to join the Iran-India-Pakistan friendship pipeline project but indicated that the state of affairs could not continue for an indefinite period.

‘I think India is desirous to join the project. The road is open for the joining of Indian friends,’ said the Iranian Foreign Minister at the Indian Council for World Affairs.

India, which is far from convinced about the viability of the project, has conveyed to the Iranian side that New Delhi continues to have serious issues on security with the gas project in the backdrop of the deteriorating security situation in Pakistan.

Mr Mottaki, who also discussed the IPI project with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, said, ‘Our Indian friends during negotiations have questions and they need more consideration on project.’ Mr Mottaki held bilateral discussions with external affairs minister SM Krishna on Monday where both sides discussed a variety of issues, including the IPI project.

Iran and Pakistan have already signed a bilateral agreement on the project with Iran starting the construction of the pipeline. Mr Mottaki claimed that over 100 km of the pipeline project has already been constructed in Iran. He further maintained that Pakistan had also started construction of the project.

While saying Iran was keen to have India on board, the Iranian Foreign Minister also maintained that the structure of the pipeline project would change in relation to the countries involved. This is not the first time that Iran has raised the possibility of

including other countries in the pipeline project. Earlier, Iran had indicated that China could be invited to join the pipeline project.

“If we make commitment with other partners, then maybe in future the stretch of the project might change... I do hope to have Indian friends as soon as possible,” he added.

With the security condition deteriorating in Pakistan and post Mumbai terror attacks, India is not keen on advancing negotiations on the pipeline project or in getting into an energy project with Pakistan. But at the same time India wants to remain engaged with Iran on the energy front. A restive Iran has continued to say that it cannot wait indefinitely for India.

Source: The Economic Times, New Delhi

<http://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&source=web&ct=res&cd=1&ved=0CAcQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Feconomictimes.indiatimes.com%2Fnews%2Fpolitics%2Fnation%2FDoor-open-for-India-on-gas-pipeline-Iran-minister%2Farticleshow%2F5241718.cms&rct=j&q=door+open+for+india+on+gas+pipeline%3Airan+minister&ei=DAJ7S4v7DIy1rAfvpO31Dw&usg=AFQjCNEIErbLFXEr03ypPd8Tq0RDDKICTA>

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