India and Iran reiterate their commitment for early operationalization of Chabahar Port Shri Nitin Gadkari returns from a two day visit to Teheran

Posted On: 07 AUG 2017 6:07PM by PIB Bhubaneshwar

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Shipping and Road Transport & Highways returned to India yesterday after a two day visit to Tehran. He was there to represent the Indian Government at the inauguration and oath taking ceremony of HE Dr. Hassan Rouhani as the President of Iran for a second term, on 5th August, 2017.

In an interaction with Dr. Rouhani, Shri Gadkari conveyed the Indian Prime Minister's greetings and best wishes for a successful tenure to him. He also handed over the letter of felicitations from Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi extending an invitation to the President of Iran to visit India.

Shri Gadkari later held wide ranging discussions on many issues including India's cooperation in the development of Chabahar Port and proposed rail link between Chabahar & Zahedan. In the meetings, both sides positively assessed the progress in implementation of the decisions taken during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to Iran last year, including the progress of Chabahar Port. Both sides reiterated their commitment to complete and operationalize the Port at the earliest.

Shri Gadkari called on the first Vice President Dr. E. Jahangiri and highlighted the issue of activation of contract of Chabahar Port development and conveyed to him that India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) has finalized procurement of critical equipments such as Rail Mounted Gantry Crane (RMGC), and is close to finalizing orders relating to Rubber Tyre Mobile Crane (RTMC), MT Container Handlers(MTCH), Truck and Tractor Trailers Containers and related equipments. He also conveyed India's readiness to aid Iran in taking up operations in Chabahar Port during the interim period between the actual activation of contract. He requested the Iranian side for an early submission of loan application for Chabahar Port Development to EXIM Bank of India so that the contract agreement between the two countries can be activated. It may be recalled that the Iranian side had requested India to provide upto 150 million dollar credit and had made it a condition for activation of the Chabahar Port contract. The application for loan to EXIM Bank of India is still awaited.

Later Shri Gadkari met Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, the Iranian Minister for Roads and Urban Development, and conveyed to him the latest update on procurement of equipment for the two terminals - multipurpose and container - that are covered under Chabahar Port Agreement. He also requested Dr Akhoundi that in the interest of supporting operations of Chabahar Port, the Iranian side should consider waiving off the condition of submission of loan application as it was taking time. The Iranian side assured that the application shall be presented to EXIM Bank of India early.

The Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Act (FIPPA) application was also presented by the MD, IPGL to the Iranian authorities in the presence of Shri Gadkari and Dr Akhoundi . India has opened an office of IPGL in Teheran.

In his meeting with Dr Abbas Akhoundi Shri Gadkari stressed upon the need for marketing of the Chabahar Port to attract cargo. He said, Iran and India should jointly organize a workshop at Chabahar for this purpose at an early date. Shri Gadkari also emphasized the need to develop rail connectivity from Chabahar to Zahedan, and said that the MoU with India in this regard may be extended. The issue of ratification of the trilateral Transit Agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan was also discussed. While India and Afghanistan have the agreement, Iran is yet to do the same.

Besides the Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari , the Indian delegation comprised of Dr. Alok Srivastava, Special Secretary, Ministry of Shipping, Shri Saurabh Kumar, Indian Ambassador to Iran, Shri Deepak Mittal, Joint Secretary(PAI), MEA and Shri Raj Gopal Sharma, OSD to Shri Gadkari.

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