

# Chabahar; the cross point between two strategic development documents

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istan and Baluchistan's native investors, local, provincial and national officials and foreign guests from Oman, Turkey and Pakistan attended the event.

Everyone at the conference was well aware that Chabahar had significant and excellent capacities in Iran's economy so much so that even Abdolrahim Kordi, Managing Director of Chabahar Free Zone, described this region as the cross point of two strategic development documents of Iran, "Development of the Makoran Shores" and "East Development Corridor ": "This port is the point of convergence of these two major development projects, namely East Development Corridor and the Makoran Shores Development Megaproject. Chabahar is the representative of development of the

East and the driver of the development of this less developed part of the Iran »

He pointed to the historical events of Chabahar, "Chabahar Free Zone was established in 1993 to carry out the East Corridor Development document and to facilitate investment" He said that during these years, they tried to make investment in Chabahar easier: "The total of contracts concluded for investment in the last three years in the Chabahar Free Zone are more than contracts concluded in the prior last 10 years. The registration process of firms in the Chabahar Free Zone will take place within 48 hours, assuming the documents are ready.

Today globally, transport costs determine the location of production and investment projects. Chabahar is the optimal, most cost-effective and a secure point for connecting two global population centers, owing that to being an oceanic port and being located in proximity of major maritime and international routes with more than 3 billion population, the Indian Ocean area with more than 2 billion people, and the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus to Eastern Europe with more than 800 million people. "Kordi also called Chabahar an opportunity to reduce the pressure of the cruel US sanctions against the Iranian nation: "Chabahar is the only point from Iran that can provide help us cope with economic sanctions, by providing various facilities for the country's economy."

At the conference, Abdul Ghafour Irannejad, the Member of Parliament from Chabahar, Nikshahr, Konarak and Qasreqand, talked about the transport infrastructure of this region. "Chabahar has a decent position in the world," he said, "but over the past years, there has been no plans regarding infrastructure of transportation, and so far it has no freeway. goods entering into the Chabahar port should be sent to the country using trucks, and our current infrastructure struggle to cope with"

Allocation of 200 billion Tomans to the Chabahar-Zahedan transit road

The other speaker was Alim Yarmohammadi, a member of the Civil Service Commission of parliament who pointed out the unbalanced development of Chabahar; that in his words, created many problems. "The uneven development of Chabahar has caused a lot of problems, with the

launch of the first phase and the rise of traffic of trucks, we have a 400 to 500 percent rise in Chabahar transit road accidents," he said. After the follow-up, 200 billion Tomans were allocated to the development of the Chabahar-Zahedan transit road by the Ministry of Roads; some pieces have been started and some are in the process of concluding the contract and starting construction".

He mentioned the resource constraints and said, "The development of the Chabahar transit road needs the help of investors. We hope that we will be able to construct and develop this transit axis in the participatory form and new investment contracts".

The development of the Chabahar Road Network is an important issue that was raised many times in the conference this time by the governor of Sistan and Baluchestan. "With the aim of proper development of the hinterland infrastructure of the railways and roads of Chabahar and developing the economic and transit capacities of the port, the government, in a bill, requested the withdrawal of one billion dollars from the National Development Fund for the development and completion of the Chabahar railway and highway," said Ahmad Ali Mohehbati."

Chabahar; a Natural greenhouse

After the opening of specialized summits, the Sistan and Baluchestan investment opportunities conference was held. One of them was the Agricultural and Fisheries Specialist Conference, headed by Mohammad Ali Tahmasebi, Minister of Agriculture's Deputy of horticulture affairs, with a focus on attracting domestic and foreign investors active in this area. Tahmasebi noted at this summit that the construction of greenhouses in Chabahar, according to him, Chabahar has the best conditions for the construction of a greenhouse. Both the sun and the temperature are good, the weather and the fertile soil and the convenient and fast access to consumer markets are great which are the most important parameters needed for investment.

He compared Chabahar with other countries: "During a survey we did, we found cities in Spain, Netherlands and Turkey that are greenhouse poles of world, each have 30 to 40 thousand hectares of greenhouses, but the sunshine and the temperature of Chabahar is much better for creating a greenhouse in comparison"

Another specialized summit was the power and energy panel that discussed the policies of ministry of Energy's projects which are under construction for securing water and power in the area. The meeting tried to open the discuss and exchange ideas about investment opportunities created in conjunction with solar power plants, and water and new international approaches and securing funding for infrastructure. The third specialized panel was the Trade, Shipping and Transit Panel. The purpose of this summit was to discussing the appropriate transportation system in which the Chabahar ports investment opportunities, the eastern corridor of Iran opportunities, the role of Chabahar, the world economic blocks and the strategic development of Chabahar were discussed.

Significant entry of foreign tourists

Another specialized panel was tourism. Mohammad Reza Rostami, Deputy of Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries of High Council of Free Zones said in the panel "The arrival of foreign tourists to

Chabahar raised from one thousand and 325 persons last year to three thousand and 280 people in the first 9 months of this year which is a remarkable change". He pointed to the existence of suitable accommodation facilities for tourists in Chabahar and said: "There are 22 residences in Chabahar for the provision of services to tourists, 4 of which are hotels, and these 4 hotels have 225 rooms and 640 beds to service tourists. The existing capacity of residences of Chabahar is 1,480 beds in 554 rooms".

Chabahar; a global connecting hub

The Sistan and Baluchestan Investment Opportunities Summit held in Chabahar over the past two days, it provided an opportunity to attract attention again to this sensitive area. To the extent that Jalal Sadatyan, a former ambassador to the United Kingdom, in an interview with Invest, referred to the development of the infrastructure of the only Iranian oceanic region with international capacities, said: "We need to know that Iran has a good geopolitical position, it's a connecting point of west and east north to south and vice versa. In the distant past, the Silk Road that was passing Iran, was the point of connection between the West and the East civilizations, and today too, we still enjoy this geopolitical position. Iran, in a way, is a strategic center in world, and as a result, its coastal areas, from the Persian Gulf and Makoran and Chabahar Shores, can best meet the needs of the northern countries to connect to the rest of world and the East and the West. Countries like India and China are interested to have presence in Chabahar and are focusing on the development of this region, as Iran has been trying to make the best use of this region for many years by establishing a free trade zone, attracting foreign capital and developing Chabahar's infrastructure. The national railroad was started at the time of former president, Mr. Hashemi, it has been able to connect Central Asia to the Gulf, the Oman Sea and the Indian Ocean, if the infrastructure is completed, and we can improve our relations with neighboring countries".

He believes that we have not been using the full capacities of ECO countries in practice: "at first, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey were the three countries of ECO, they increased to 10 countries now. We have used very little of the capacities of these countries in practice, and the added 7 countries have good capacities"

According to him, Chabahar can be a global point of connection. "If we assume that there are some problems with the Persian Gulf, Chabahar has no problems so far, the continental ships can congregate at this port and import or export the best products. We focus more on production; this region is an excellent point of connection and production point in terms of water availability and international shipping status. All these countries, mainly the countries of the region, can use their capacities jointly by building multinational corporations in Chabahar"

He also pointed to strategies for turning Chabahar into the golden gates of the development of the Makoran shore and developing the eastern corridor: "The current use of this region is solely for the fishing and traditional practices of people living in these areas. Even If they could to process sea products and then export them, they will have value added. In regard to production, I also

mentioned that, instead of exporting crude oil, small refineries could be deployed throughout these regions and exported refinery products. To what extent can mineral products be developed? Oil products, including petrochemicals, diesel fuel and bitumen fuel products, which include a wide range of products that face barriers, and their production costs and competition, have a higher price. Chabahar is a safer and more convenient area for Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to connect to Europe and the Far East. Since Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are completely surrounded by land and have no access to the sea, they can bring their own products to this area and turn their products into ”partnerships and investments

