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## **AZERBAIJAN, RUSSIA DISCUSS RAILWAY TRANSIT TARIFFS**

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Heads of Azerbaijani and Russian railway agencies, Javid Gurbanov and Oleg Belozerov, discussed development of transportation and the tariffs on the Samur-Akhalkalaki and Samur-Astara routes, Azerbaijan Railways CJSC said in a message Feb. 22.

The sides met at the "Strategic Partnership 1520: Central Europe business forum held in Vienna.

Further development of the western part of the North-South international transport corridor, issues of freight and passenger transit via the Samur-Astara and Samur-Akhalkalaki routes, tariff terms and other topics were discussed during the meeting, the message said.

Gurbanov said North-South is among the priority international transport projects for Azerbaijan.

"Azerbaijani side has carried out its obligations in the shortest time. Construction of a railway station and an unloading terminal on a 35-hectare area in Iranian Astara is almost finished," the message said.

Commissioning of the Astara (Azerbaijan)-Astara (Iran) international railway is expected in the next few months. The first six-car test train from Russia has been recently sent via the line.

The International North-South Transport Corridor is meant to connect Northern Europe with Southeast Asia. It will serve as a link connecting the railways of Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia. At an initial stage, it is planned to transport 5 million tons of cargo per year through the corridor and over 10 million tons of cargo in the future.

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