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## IRAN DELAY FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR TAJIK RAIL LINK

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New Europe, February 05, 2012 Speaking at a meeting in Dushanbe, Tajik Minister of Transport Nizom Hakimov said that Iranian firm Metro has delayed the feasibility study for construction of a Tajik stretch of a rail link that will connect Kashgar (China) and Herat (Afghanistan), Asia-Plus reported. It should be noted that the 392 kilometre rail link will connect Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China that will boost trade, increase exports, and ease transit costs in the region, as well as expand passenger traffic. The minister said that so far Iranian specialists have submitted only the preliminary reports on separate sections of the Tajik stretch, while they should have submitted the final report. It was recalled that an agreement on conducting the feasibility study was signed in October 2010 and the Iranian company assured to conduct the feasibility study in eight months. Iran had provided \$1 million as financial aid for construction of the Tajik stretch of the railroad in no-strings aid to Tajikistan for conducting the feasibility study. A total length of this section, the most complex section is from the town of Vahdat to Karamyk (Kyrgyz border), is 270 kilometers long. Around \$8-10 million is required for construction of one kilometer of this section, as part of complex relief. The project also includes construction of 16 kilometers of tunnels and 47 bridges. Vladimir Sobkalov, the first deputy head of Tajik Railways, had said earlier that the feasibility study for construction of a Tajik stretch of the Kashgar-Herat railroad is expected to be completed by May this year. Meantime at a recent meeting in Dushanbe, Tajik Minister of Economic Development and Trade Sharif Rahimzoda said that the situation that is currently emerging around Iran cannot gravely affect Tajikistans economy.

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Kaynak/Source: