JERUSALEM – Israel’s prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Friday he had decided to ship $315 million from Qatar to Gaza’s Hamas rulers, in part over concerns that the money would strengthen the political influence of extreme Islamist group Hamas.

Netanyahu, who had previously ruled out shipping aid to the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, said the funds would be used to upgrade water and sanitation infrastructure and open new industries in the coastal territory.

“Today, after careful and deep deliberation, we decided to send $315 million to the Gaza Strip,” Netanyahu said in Jerusalem. “This is a result of our close relationship with Qatar and our shared interest in stability.”

The money would be used for infrastructure projects, such as water and sanitation networks, said Netanyahu, who has been under pressure to do more to aid the Gazans and to improve relations with the Gulf state.

Netanyahu has been accused by critics of being too close to Qatar, which is seen by some as a symbol of anti-Israel sentiment.

Israel-Gaza relations have improved in recent years, with the two sides agreeing to a truce in 2014 and opening a border crossing in 2015. However, relations have deteriorated in recent months, with Israel carrying out a series of strikes on Hamas targets in Gaza in response to rocket attacks.

Netanyahu also announced that he had decided to open a new industrial zone in the Gaza Strip, which would be used to build new factories and create jobs.

He said the money would also be used to support the construction of new homes and schools in the Gaza Strip, and to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Netanyahu’s decision to send aid to the Gaza Strip comes as part of efforts to improve relations with the Gulf states, which have been trying to distance themselves from Iran.

The United States has also been pushing for greater cooperation between Israel and the Gulf states, in part as part of a broader strategy to isolate Iran.

However, the move has been criticized by some in Israel, who argue that it could be seen as rewarding the Hamas government and potentially encouraging its continued use of violence.

Israel and Hamas have been at war since 2008, with dozens of people killed in incidents on both sides.

Netanyahu’s decision comes as Israel is gearing up for a general election, which is scheduled for March 2020.

The election is expected to be a key test of the government’s ability to deal with the ongoing crisis in Gaza, as well as the larger issue of the future of the Palestinian territories.

The move by Netanyahu is likely to be viewed as a sign of the Israeli government’s willingness to engage with the Palestinian territories, despite ongoing tensions.

Israel has long been at odds with the Palestinian Authority and its leadership, and has been criticized by some for its refusal to extend recognition to the Palestinian leadership.

However, the move by Netanyahu is likely to be seen as a step towards reconciliation with the Palestinian territories, and could potentially open the door to a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

Meanwhile, the situation in the Gaza Strip remains tense, with ongoing disputes between Israel and Hamas, as well as the broader issue of the future of the Palestinian territories.

International

Tajikistan Keen on Promoting Trade with Pakistan

PAMIR–A Tajik official has said the country was keen to promote bilateral trade with Pakistan, pointing out that both countries have huge untapped potential in the trade, joint ventures and investment fields. This was said by the Tajik Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Khudobek B. Madirov, during a meeting with the newly appointed Pakistani Ambassador to Tajikistan, Syed Ghulam Abbas Shah.

According to Madirov, the two countries have been working hard to boost bilateral trade and investments. He said that Pakistan was an important trading partner for Tajikistan, and that the two countries had the potential to further expand their trade relationship.

In this regard, Madirov said that the two countries needed to establish a Joint Commission for Trade Cooperation to facilitate the exchange of goods and services.

He also highlighted the need to promote joint ventures and investments in key sectors such as energy, agriculture, and tourism.

Madirov said that the Tajik government was interested in importing Pakistani goods and services, especially in sectors such as clothing, textiles, and food products.

He added that Pakistan could offer Tajikistan a wide range of competitively priced goods, which could further help to boost the two countries’ trade.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani Ambassador said that his country was keen to promote trade and investment with Tajikistan. He said that Pakistan had a lot to offer Tajikistan in terms of investment opportunities, especially in sectors such as agriculture, energy, and tourism.

He also highlighted the need to establish a Joint Economic Committee to facilitate the exchange of goods and services between the two countries.

Madirov and Shah also discussed the need to promote cultural exchanges and tourism between the two countries, which could further help to boost trade and investment.

The two ambassadors said that their countries would continue to work closely to promote bilateral trade and investment, and that they would be holding regular meetings to discuss the progress of their initiatives.

Pakistan and Tajikistan have a long history of trade and investment, and both countries have a lot to offer each other in terms of goods and services.

However, the two countries have faced challenges in recent years, with limited trade due to various factors, including transportation costs and political tensions.

Nevertheless, both countries remain committed to boosting their trade and investment relationship, and are taking steps to overcome these challenges.

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