

## 《Rouhani welcomes stronger ties with China》

Chinese President Xi Jinping has met his Iranian counterpart on Saturday in Tehran. Xi Jinping is the first leader to visit Iran since its international sanctions were lifted on January 16.

The two countries have signed a strategic cooperation agreement as a way to boost the diplomatic and economic engagement.

The first Chinese president to visit Iran in 14 years. Xi Jinping was warmly welcomed by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in meeting in Sa'dabad Palace in northern Tehran.



*TEHRAN, Jan. 23, 2016 (Xinhua) -- Chinese President Xi Jinping (R front) attends a grand welcome ceremony before talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (L front) in Tehran, Iran, Jan. 23, 2016. (Xinhua/Wang Ye)*

To start this historic visit, Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of 16 accords, including a strategic cooperation agreement. The two countries established diplomatic ties in 1971, and their relationship has since enjoyed sound and steady development.

China has been Iran's biggest trading partner. Their two-way trade started from tens of millions of US dollars in the 1970s --- but it jumped to more than \$51 billion in 2014. And according to Rouhani, this will increase to \$600 billion in the next 10 years.

This state visit has made China and Iran's friendship go further. In the press conference, Rouhani welcomed stronger ties with China, especially in what he termed as "Post-Sanction era."

Hassan Rouhani said:"We are happy that President Xi visited Iran after the lifting of sanctions. Iran and China have agreed on forming strategic relations as reflected in a 25-year comprehensive document."

Xi Jinping, meanwhile, said China seeks strategic ties with Iran, especially in the energy market.

"We have agreed to lift our ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership and will issue a joint declaration,"

"We will take this as an opportunity to boost high-level exchanges and interactions at all levels,"

"We will increase mutual political trust, deepen understanding and enhance mutual support on issues concerning each nation's core interests," said Xi.

But this does not end here. As the two will also fight against regional terrorism hand by hand.

Xi Jinping is due to meet Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei before concluding his five-day, three-nation Middle East tour that started in Saudi Arabia, followed by Egypt.

