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China to Build $242 Billion Railway to Russia

By The Moscow Times

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China plans to build a 7,000 kilometer high-speed rail line from Moscow to Beijing at a cost of 1.5 trillion yuan ($242 billion) as Russia works to boost ties with its eastern neighbor amid Western sanctions, news agency Bloomberg reported Thursday.

The proposed route would take passengers from China's capital to Moscow via Kazakhstan in just two days, Beijing's city government said in a social media post.

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Alexander Misharin, the first deputy head of state rail monopoly Russian Railways, told Bloomberg in November that the rail link might take eight to 10 years to construct.

Moscow has taken a landmark pivot east toward China this year as the West leveled sanctions

against Russia over its meddling in Ukraine. State energy giant Gazprom signed a major $400 billion gas deal with China in May after more than a decade of negotiations, and the two countries aim to raise trade turnover to $100 billion this year.

China, for its part, has expressed an eagerness to gain access to Russian natural resources and markets. Following up on the gas deal in May, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang signed a raft of high-profile deals in Moscow in October, among them agreements on high-speed rail cooperation.

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