

Sukhoi Near Deal to Sell Superjet 100s to Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran says Russia's plane maker Sukhoi Civil Aircraft Company is moving closer to a deal to sell its Superjet 100 aircraft to the country.

Maqsoud As'adi Samani, the secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines, was quoted by the domestic media as saying that Sukhoi had already started technical talks to obtain a license from the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to sell the planes to Iran.

"The manufacturer of Sukhoi Superjet 100 is following procedures to receive due OFAC permits to enter Iran's market," As'adi Samani was quoted as saying by Mehr News Agency.

"Chances of SSJ-100 depend on the confirmation of Iran Civil Aviation Organization regarding the airworthiness of the aircraft as well as the OFAC license," Mehr News Agency quoted him as saying in a report that was also carried by the English-language newspaper the Financial Tribune.

The 108-seat twin-engine SSJ-100 is among Iran's options for renovation of its fleet of regional jets, alongside Japan's Mitsubishi Regional Jet and Brazil's Embraer.

Russia's media reported in December of last year that Sukhoi had sealed a basic deal with an unnamed Iranian company to study the projected sales of its SSJ-100s.

Interfax news agency quoted an anonymous Russia aviation official as confirming the development. The official added, however, that the agreement was still not binding.

Hossein Alaei, the head of Iran's Aseman Airlines, had earlier said his company was negotiating with Sukhoi as well as several other leading global plane makers to renovate its fleet.

Alaei added that Sukhoi had carried out trial flights of its Superjet 100 in Tehran in December 2016 - what he said had been carried out at the invitation of Aseman Airlines.

Iran to Receive 2nd Airbus Soon

France's Ambassador to Tehran

François Sénémaud has announced that his country will deliver the second Airbus passenger plane to Iran in the near future.

"An Airbus plane has been delivered to Iran and we will send other planes soon too," Sénémaud said, addressing an international car exhibition in Tehran.

He also expressed the hope that relations between Tehran and Paris would further expand.

On January 12, the first Airbus 'A321' landed at Tehran Mehrabad Airport and joined Iranian air fleet.

The aircraft was officially delivered to Iran Air by Airbus in a ceremony held in Toulouse.

Airbus Chief Executive Fabrice Bregier announced that with the delivery of the aircraft, cooperation between Iran Air and Airbus officially started, and said, "We hope with delivery of the aircraft, expansion of economic cooperation with Iran will continue more rapidly."

Iran Air officials say the plane will be used for domestic flights.

Iran to Sue Total If Gas Field Information Leakage Confirmed: Oil Minister

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said the country will definitely sue Total if the French energy giant is proved to have leaked secret information about Iran's South Pars gas field to Qatar.

Speaking at a television talk show on Tuesday night, Zanganeh said Iran has given information to Total about only two out of the 30 phases of the South Pars gas field.

Total is negotiating with Iran on cooperation in development of the gas field, which is located in the Persian Gulf along the maritime border between Iran and Qatar.

If it is confirmed that Total has leaked information to Qataris, Iran will file a lawsuit and Total will have to pay compensation, Zanganeh stressed.

On February 9, chief executive of the French oil major said Total plans to make a final investment decision on a \$2 billion gas project in Iran by the summer, but the decision hinges on the renewal of U.S. sanctions waivers.



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Patrick Pouyanne said South Pars 11 will be among a couple of projects to be approved by the company to start by the summer, if nothing is modified regarding the sanctions.

Total was the first Western energy company to sign a major

deal with Tehran after the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear agreement between Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the U.S., Britain, France and Germany).

Peugeot Sees Trump's Iran Stance Boosting Market Lead



PSA Middle East chief Jean-Christophe Quemard (R) and Iran Khodro CEO Hashem Yekezare in a ceremony to sign a cooperation agreement between the two companies held in Tehran in 2016.

PARIS (Reuters) - France's PSA Group is pushing ahead with an Iranian plant investment and production ramp-up in the face of a hardened U.S. stance against Tehran under President Donald

Trump that could play to the carmaker's advantage, a senior executive said.

The group's Peugeot brand is about to begin production with local partner Iran Khodro, while PSA is also preparing to hold on to it."

invest more than 100 million euros (\$106 million) in a new Citroen plant with partner SAIPA, PSA Middle East chief Jean-Christophe Quemard said.

Peugeot returned to Iran last year after an international nuclear deal and has reclaimed its place as the country's top-selling car brand with a 32 percent market share last year, according to IHS Automotive data.

The carmaker inked a 400 million euro (\$424 million) Peugeot production agreement last June and a 300 million deal for Citroen four months later.

The renewed pressure from Washington will probably extend PSA's lead as rivals hold back from re-entering Iran, Quemard told the press call from a Tehran automotive conference.

"This is our opportunity to accelerate," he said. "It will become even harder for American companies to operate, that's for sure. We've opened up a lead and we plan to hold on to it."

Japan, Iran Ink Banking MoU

EHRAN (Fars) - The Central Bank of Iran has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan's Financial Services Agency (JFSA) in a bid to facilitate the interactions between the two countries' accredited banks.

"An MoU was signed between CBI and JFSA to pave the way for sharing banking experiences between the two countries," JFSA Director General for International Affairs Massatu Kanda said.

Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Iran Farshad Heydari said that Tehran and Tokyo enjoy good cooperation in the field of training manpower.

The Japanese government expressed willingness to allocate \$6.9 billion

to fund five projects in Iran to further expand bilateral relations between the two countries.

"Tokyo is going to continue its assistance of up to 40 billion Japanese Yen annually for the next four years starting in 2017," the Japanese embassy in Tehran said on a press release.

The embassy noted that the allocation of the aid was confirmed in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016 and will be extended through international organizations and UN bodies.

The projects include a contribution of one million dollars through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to restore Lake Oroumiyeh, approximately

two million dollars in humanitarian aid assistance for the Afghan refugees through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) program, around \$1.9 million funneled through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to be used on border controls, fighting drugs, customs cooperation and money laundering, \$500,000 to promote integration of industries in Chabahar port city in the Persian Gulf through a program to be implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and finally \$1.5 million in donated funds funneled through the International Committee of the Red Cross for emergency activities in Iran.

China Agrees to Invest \$3.6bn in Development of Iran's Oil Refinery

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Tehran and Beijing has signed a contract worth \$3.6 billion for the latter's investment in Masjed Soleiman oil refinery in Southern Iran.

The agreement was signed between Managing Director of Masjed Soleiman Petrochemical Complex Yousef Davoudi and representative of Wuhan Company.

Iran has signed three MoUs Austrian, Dutch and Chinese companies at the presence of

Iranian Labor Minister Ali Rabiye to develop Iran's industries.



will arrive in Japan by the end of this week.

The refinery is Iran's first gas condensate refining facility.

Meanwhile, Persian Gulf Star Refinery exported its second naphtha consignment to Japan in late January 2017.

The first naphtha consignment

of the facility was destined to the United Arab Emirates.

The second consignment, weighing 280,000 tons of the item,

National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) (17.9%).

Once fully operational, the refinery would produce 36 ml/d of high-octane gasoline and 14 ml/d of gasoil. Other products include 4 ml/d of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), 3 ml/d of jet fuel and 130 tons a day of sulfur.

After the project's first phase becomes fully operational, other phases will come online each after 6 months.

South Pars Refineries Back to Normal Operation



TEHRAN (Shana) - All the refining facilities that process the hydrocarbons recovered from different phases of the supergiant South Pars Gas Field are back to normal and are operating at maximum capacity after a heavy rain that fell earlier this week.

Managing director of South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) Masoud Hassani said all the refineries at the complex were back to normal operation only 24 hours after an unprecedented rain in the region on Monday.

The complex supplies 401 million standard cubic meters of gas per day.

The rain shower in Assalouyeh, southern Iran, reduced production

of gas from the complex by 30 million cubic meters, 8% of the facility's total output, which was put back to normal one day after the rainfall.

Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zanganeh extended his gratitude to operators of the complex for fixing the technical glitches caused by the rainfall.

Norway Eyes Boosting Fishery Cooperation with Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Norwegian Fishery Minister Per Sandberg in a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Norway Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh on Wednesday hailed expansion of Tehran-Oslo cooperation in fish farming and the related areas.

"My visit to Iran in October was positive and I assessed Iran as a country with great capacities in the field of fishery for broadening

relations," Sandberg said during the meeting in the Norwegian capital on Wednesday.

The Norwegian foreign minister pointed to the extension of financial credit by the Norwegian credit institutes as an appropriate opportunity for fishery companies of Norway to implement joint venture projects with Iranian companies.

Habibollahzadeh, also pointed to a great joint venture in fish farming

area in the Sixth Development Plan of Iran, and said, "Tehran is ready to develop cooperation with Norway in the field of fishery and aqua culture."

The Iranian envoy pointed to vast coastlines in Northern and Southern parts of Iran, and said, "Joint venture for manufacturing special equipment to grow fish and conduct related research are among grounds for bilateral cooperation."