

Indian Firms Seek Stake in Iran's South Azadegan Field



NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Indian oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday that Indian companies seek a stake in Iran's South Azadegan field.

Speaking alongside his Iranian counterpart Bijan Zangeneh at a conference in New Delhi, Pradhan added that Indian firms would raise their oil purchases from Iran in 2018-19.

For his part, Zangeneh said Iran hoped to continue to export 2.1 to 2.2 million barrels per day beginning around April and to sell 500,000 bpd to India in the next fiscal year.

Russian Zarubezhneft to Take Part in Development of Iran's Oil Field

TEHRAN (Shana) - Gostaresh Iranian Oil And Gas Industries Development Company (IDRO-Oil) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Russia's Zarubezhneft for carrying out studies on Iran's Susangerd oilfield.

Following the signing of the document, IDRO-Oil managing director said his company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) for carrying out studies on the field.

IDRO-Oil has signed this deal with the Russian company and Austria's Hot Engineering as advisor for providing master development plant (MDP) of the project.

Given the measures taken so far for developing the project, IDRO-Oil will probably submit the result of its studies to NIOC by March, said Nasrollah Zarei. He further emphasized the ne-



cessity of attracting investors and selecting a reliable foreign partner, adding, the company has held talks with numerous companies which have led to signature of the MoU with the Russian company.

According to Zarei, based on the talks between IDRO-Oil and Zarubezhneft, a joint specialized task force will be set up at the earliest possible time, and in the event of a final agreement between the two companies,

they will engage in negotiations with NIOC for signing a final contract.

Susangerd oil field, located 45 km off the southwestern city of Ahwaz, is among the newly-discovered oilfields in Iran and according to preliminary estimates, will have the capacity of producing 30,000 b/d of crude oil.

Zarei also said that an investment of \$900m will be needed for developing the field.

China Warns It May Retaliate If U.S. Imposes Metal Tariffs



BEIJING (Bloomberg) - China said proposed U.S. tariffs on imported steel and aluminum products are groundless and that it reserves the right to retaliate if they are imposed.

The U.S. recommendations which have been unveiled by the Commerce Department, aren't consistent with the facts, Wang Hejun, chief of the trade remedy and investigation bureau at

China's Ministry of Commerce, said in a statement posted on its website.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said the U.S. may impose quotas on imports of aluminum and steel, including a tariff of at least 24 percent on steel imports from all countries. While it's the strongest indication yet that President Donald Trump's administration is ready to take action

on its protectionist agenda, Ross said "it wouldn't surprise us" if the measures were challenged. The U.S. already has excessive protections on domestic iron and steel products, according to Wang.

"If the final decision impacts China's interests, China will certainly take necessary measures to protect its own rights," Wang said.

American steel companies and steelworker unions have been pushing Trump to follow through on his promise to protect the industry. China's trade partners have complained for years that its industry unfairly benefits from state subsidies, and dumps its products at below-market prices. While China only accounts for about 1 percent of U.S. steel imports, it could challenge U.S. action at the World Trade Organization, a process that could take years.

Iran Eyeing Iraqi Flour Market Via Russia Wheat Deal

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iran is negotiating a wheat import deal with Russia that would allow it to increase flour exports to neighboring Iraq, the secretary general of the Iran Federation of Food Industry Associations said on Saturday.

The deal would involve importing around 100,000 tonnes of Russian wheat per month for private millers who would then produce flour for export.

Kaveh Zargarani said talks were ongoing and he expected the deal to be finalized in a couple of months. "Last week we were in Moscow to negotiate about it and after we are done we will start in a few months," Zargarani said.

IMF Warns Trump's Tax Overhaul Could Fuel a Global 'Race to Bottom'

NEW YORK (Bloomberg) - IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said the Trump administration's \$1.5 trillion tax cut could prompt other nations to follow suit, fueling a "race to the bottom" that risks hemming in public spending.

While the impact of the package passed by Congress in December is only just beginning to be understood, its effects are likely to include increased consumption and "hopefully the payment of higher wages," Lagarde said on a panel at the Munich Security Conference in Germany on Friday. It also will fuel inflation, she said.

"What we are beginning to see already and what is of concern is the beginning of a race to the bottom, where many other policy makers around the world are saying: 'Well, if you're going to cut tax and you're going to have sweet deals with your corporates, I'm going to do the same thing,'" Lagarde said.

The IMF chief's blunt assessment follows an unusually public disagreement between the fund and President Donald Trump's administration last fall over an IMF paper arguing that developed nations can share prosperity more evenly, without sacrificing growth, by shifting the income-tax burden onto the rich.

Competitive tax cuts risk holding back governments in spending on anything from defense and infrastructure to health and education, Lagarde said.

"You need public money," she said. "The race to the bottom is not conducive to those investments and to helping prepare the workforce and our societies for this new economy of tomorrow."

IME Weekly Trade Exceeds Over \$460mn

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) announced on Saturday that over \$460 million of various commodities weighting around 848,675 tons were traded in its domestic trading and exports halls in the past working week (February 8-15) which in volume and value experienced a growth of 78% and 46%, respectively.

The IME said that over, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor, 415,796 MT of various products worth close to \$225 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 296,234 tons of steel products, 110,000 tons of iron ore, 3,670 tons of copper, 1,640 tons of aluminum, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates, 190 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 50 tons of zinc ingot, 50 CERATO made cars as well as 4,000 tons of cement were traded.

Moreover, IME said that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of, 351,484 tons of different commodities with the total value of



\$199.7 million were traded.

On this trading floor, more than 194,307 tons of bitumen, 62,233 tons of polymer products, 44,250 tons of VB feed stock as well as 17,000 tons of lubricant oil, 25,018 tons of chemical products, 7,064 tons of sulfur, 600 tons of insulation and 1,012 tons of heavy paraffin wax were traded.

And also, on the agricultural trading floor of IME, 77,293 tons of various commodities worth over \$22.4 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 63,850 tons of wheat, 483,100 day old chicks, 6,360 tons of maize, 2,500 tons of crude vegetable oil as well as 4,100 tons of sugar were traded by customers.

It is worth noting that during this week; the side market of IME witnessed trading of 1,558 tons of frozen meat, 1,364 tons of polyester threads A, B and WP, 30 tons of metal waste, 100 tons of ferrosilicium, as well as 50 tons of used locomotive engine oil.

Global Community Favors Fair Taxation: INTA Chief

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Chairman of Iran's National Tax Administration (INTA) Seyyed Kamel Taqavinejad has said that the international community favors fair taxation and more tax payments by the rich.

Taqavinejad, who attended in the 1st International Conference on Tax Cooperation in New York, told Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) that following Addis Ababa Summit in 2015, 17 goals for sustainable development envisaged for the summit.

"The summit discussed findings of international organizations in line with taxation reform schemes in countries," he said.

He further noted that the global community also stresses the need for raising share of taxes in Gross Domestic Product to 15 per-

cent. This is while the ratio of tax to GDP stands at eight and it is expected to reach 11 by the end of the Sixth Vision Plan.

Another issue dealt with during the event was the need for people to declare their real incomes, he said.

As to Iran's taxation system, Taqavinejad said that INTA has adopted suitable strategies including transparency, justice, reaching out the less advantaged areas, implementing health reform scheme and promoting rural and urban infrastructures in line with administering fair taxation.

In response to a question on whether cutting down taxes will increase investment, he said that the countries participating in the UN meeting underlined fair taxation, as the poor should pay less tax and the rich should pay more.

Noting that tax revenues exceeded oil revenues for the first time in Iran in 2016, as the ratio of tax incomes to oil revenues stood at 15 percent, he said that efforts are underway to rid the economy of oil revenues.

The chief tax collector further stated that his organization is seeking to promote public confidence and increase incentives and allowances for production, exports and employment sectors.

For the same reason agriculture is exempted from taxation and less advantaged areas enjoy higher tax allowances, he said.

Taqavinejad underlined that INTA is determined to prevent tax evasion, saying that it has identified 300,000 new taxpayers in a bid to expand 'net of taxation', which will help reduce pressure on current taxpayers.