

Iran Looking at Total for LNG Exports to EU



Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's petroleum minister has hinted that the country is looking into the possibility of bringing in the French energy giant Total to develop a key project to liquefy natural gas for exports to Europe.

Bijan Zanganeh told reporters that serious talks with Total were underway over the development of Phase 11 of Iran's South Pars natural gas hub.

Zanganeh added that Iran's priority for exports of gas to Europe was to proceed with liquefied natural gas (LNG).

"Our priority is to export natural gas to neighboring states through pipeline. And we believe that the best way to export gas to Europe is through LNG," he told reporters after meeting Miguel Arias Canete, the European climate action and energy commissioner, in Tehran.

Asked whether talks with Total over the development of LNG projects in Iran would continue, Zanganeh emphasized that "Iran would not reject that idea".

"Nevertheless, Iran cannot wait for investors indefinitely," he emphasized.

Last November, Total signed a basic agreement, worth \$4.8 billion to develop South Pars Phase

11 in cooperation with China's CNPC and Iran's Petropars. The deal made the French major the first Western company to seal a giant economic deal with the Islamic Republic after the lifting of the sanctions.

Phase 11 aims to produce 1.8 billion cubic feet a day of gas among other products.

Total has already announced that it would have to wait to see if the U.S. would renew sanctions waivers against Iran in June before proceeding with a final investment decision over the project in South Pars.

In early 2000, the company was negotiating with Iran over production of LNG from the same phase - a project that had been named as Pars LNG at the time. However, the plan was filed in 2011 after Total had to quit Iran as a result of international sanctions that banned investments in Iran's energy projects.

The lifting of the sanctions in early 2016 prepared the grounds for the return of international investors to the country. However, major players like Total that have high stakes in the U.S. will still have to wait for Washington to renew waivers on sanctions against investments in Iran.

OPEC, Non-OPEC States Support for Output Cuts

Elsewhere, Zanganeh said OPEC and non-OPEC member states have indicated their support for extending a crucial agreement by world's biggest producers to cut outputs.

"During these last days we received a positive signal from OPEC members and non-OPEC contributors in this agreement for cutting the production for extending this agreement for the second half of 2017," Zanganeh told reporters, according to media.

In December 2016, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reached a landmark agreement with Russia and other non-members to proceed with the plan and slash oil production by nearly 1.8 million barrels a day for six months starting January 2017.

The agreement exempted key member Iran from the plan, allowing it to increase its production by 90,000 bpd to reach pre-sanction levels of around 4 million bpd.

Nigeria and Libya were also exempted from the planned output cut due to internal conflicts which have already decreased their crude production.

The Iranian oil minister further said that the U.S. is mounting political pressure on international oil companies to dissuade them from investing in Iran's energy sector.

With 137.6 billion barrels of proven reserves, Iran has the world's fourth largest crude deposits. In terms of gas reserves, according to the 64th edition of the BP Statistical Review of World Energy released in June 2015, Iran is the world's top gas reserves holder with 33.8 trillion cubic meters.

Korean Firms Sign Power Technology Deals

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran's state-run holding company Tavanir have signed two agreements with Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) for cooperation in electrical projects using state-of-the-art technology.

Based on the agreements, the South Korean company will help Iran recover SF6 gas (sulphur hexafluoride) in the electricity industry in compliance with the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), and assist Iran in developing Building Energy Management System (BEMS) solutions in the construction industry.

Sulfur hexafluoride is an inorganic, extremely potent greenhouse gas, which is an excellent electrical insulator. It is widely used in the electricity industry. South Korea will now help Iran recover the gas, according to the Clean Development Mechanism, defined in Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol, which allows a country with an emission-reduction or emission-limitation commitment to implement an emission-reduction project in developing countries.



Iran's Tavanir signed two agreements with Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) for cooperation in electrical projects.

The other agreement would allow Iran implement BEMS in buildings to save energy. BEMS are computer-based control systems that control and monitor a building's mechanical and electrical equipment such as heating, ventilation, lighting, and power systems. They connect the building facilities to a central computer to allow control of on/off times,

temperature, humidity, etc.

In September 2016, Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mojtaba Khosrotaj said in an official visit to South Korea that Tehran and Seoul have agreed to promote bilateral trade.

He noted that Iran seeks establishment of joint research and development centers by Iranian and Korean companies.

Hungary's MOL Eyes Presence in Iran's Oil Projects: Official

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs Amir Hossein Zamaninia said Hungarian oil and gas group MOL has expressed willingness to enter into partnership with Iranian firms and join the country's oil and projects.

"Presence and partnership in natural gas export projects in Iran and construction of gas pipelines were the main areas MOL has shown interest to work in Iran," Zamaninia said in a recent meeting with MOL deputy chief executive officer, Berislav Gaso, in Tehran, according to Shana.

Noting that the company has over 70 years of experience, he said it plans to employ Enhanced Oil Re-

covery (EOR) and Improved Oil Recovery (IOR) techniques.

Iran has named 29 international firms as being eligible to bid for oil and gas projects but they have been waiting for the country to finalize the new model, known as the Iran Petroleum Contract (IPC), before they move forward.

"We expect that very soon, hopefully within a month we will have the first one to be signed," Deputy Oil Minister Rokneddin Javadi said in a conference in Paris on Saturday.

The new model has been the subject of repeated reviews amid fears that it might compromise Iran's national interests at the expense of making business with the country more flexible.

Lockheed Wins \$1.38bn F-35 Jet Contract

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Lockheed Martin Corp is being awarded a \$1.38 billion (1.07 billion pounds) defense contract for 130 F-35 Lightning II aircraft, the Pentagon has said.

The advance acquisition contract covers long-lead time materials, parts, components and work for low-rate initial production of the fighter jets for the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, non-U.S. Department of Defense participants and foreign military sales customers, the Pentagon said in a statement.

South Korea Already Working on Reducing Trade Surplus With U.S.

SEOUL (Reuters) - South Korea's finance minister said on Sunday the government was already working on downsizing its trade surplus with the United States, a reference to U.S. President Donald Trump's comments Thursday that Washington will renegotiate or scrap the free trade pact the two countries have.

Finance Minister Yoo Il-ho added in televised comments he did not expect the free trade agreement will be terminated. It has been in effect since 2012.

"If one party requests for the trade deal to be terminated, it can be ended six months following the request. But we don't feel that will happen yet," said Yoo. "We feel that there will be talks in any form to renegotiate the terms and we are preparing for them."

Yoo reiterated his previous comments that Seoul has not yet received formal requests for talks to renegotiate the free trade deal from Washington yet.

Austria, Bangladesh Looking for Boosting Trade Exchanges With Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Austrian Ambassador to Iran Friedrich Stift and Bangladeshi Commercial Attaché to Iran Mohammad Sabour Hossein have voiced Vienna's willingness to expand mutual cooperation with Tehran.

"The boosting the two countries' cooperation and diplomatic shuttles can open new chapter in Austria-Iran relations," the Austrian envoy said.

Stift reiterated that Austria has always mentioned Iran as a regional power and the two countries' ties date back to 500 years ago.

Stift reiterated that Austria has always mentioned Iran as a regional power and the two countries' ties date back to 500 years ago.

Meanwhile, Bangladeshi envoy underlined that Dhaka is resolved to deepen economic and trade relations with Tehran.

"The Bangladeshi government



will support any measure leading to the expansion of relations with Iran; Bangladesh's private sector and businessmen are willing to boost that country's trade and economic transactions with Iran," Hossein said in a meeting with a group of Iranian businessmen.

The Bangladeshi envoy reiter-

ated that his country is looking for the broadening of relations with Iran in trade, industrial, investment, training and technology transfer.

"Bangladesh is trying hard to help Dhaka-Tehran economic exchanges to reach its highest level in 2017," Hossein said.

£20.4bn into the EU pot in 2019-20, in line with a promise David Cameron made in 2012 when he negotiated the EU's seven-year budget. The European commission, however, believes the bill could come to as much as €60bn (£50bn) once the UK's contribution to EU liabilities, pensions and special funds is taken into account.

Tehran, Yerevan Ink Customs Cooperation Pact

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Tehran and Yerevan signed on Sunday an agreement to boost their cooperation in the field of customs affairs.

The cooperation pact was sealed by Head of Iran's Customs Administration Massoud Karbasian and Chairman of Armenia's State Revenue Committee Vardan Harutyunyan.

According to the agreement, the two countries will promote cooperation on custom regulations, products' value and classification, enforcing rules and transportation rules.

Both sides discussed challenges and cross-border trade opportunities and the ways to foster trade relations

Upon implementation of all provisions of the newly-signed protocol, all information, requests as well as customs and trade documents be-

tween Iran and Armenia need to be provided in accordance with national laws of both sides.

As per the agreement, every three months as well as on an annual basis, the two parties will exchange customs statistics data on bilateral trade turnover.

The cooperation pact will provide the necessary grounds for facilitating and expanding trade between Tehran and Yerevan as will also open a new chapter in trade relations, which will in turn, elevate bilateral economic ties between the two countries.

Export the Islamic Republic of Iran to Armenia amounted to \$179.103 million in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 21) and Iran's imports from Armenia during the same period stood at \$20.892 million.

EU Leaders Insist UK Pays Its Brexit Bills

LONDON (The Guardian) - EU leaders have toughened their stance on Britain paying its Brexit bills when they agreed negotiating guidelines at a special summit on Saturday.

EU diplomats have agreed unanimously that Britain must settle its bills before embarking on trade talks. The position has been set out by

EU leaders from the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, to the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, but this was the toughest statement yet from all 27 countries.

"Member states are maximalist on the budget issue, because if Britain doesn't pay, other member states will have to pay," an EU diplomat said.

Another senior diplomat said he had never seen net payers and recipients "working so closely with each other" in a wry allusion to the perennial tensions between countries that pay most into the EU budget and those that receive the biggest grants.

The UK is due to make a net payment of around