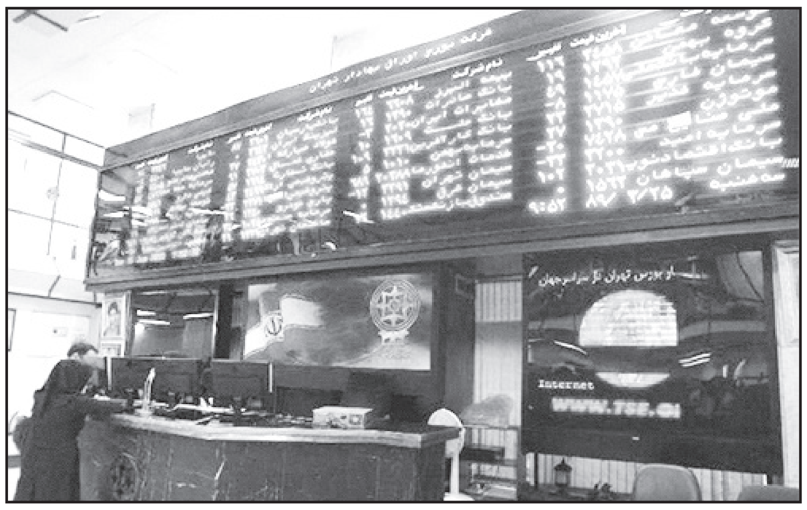
IME Weekly Trade Exceeds $300mn



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - **The Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) announced that around $317.5mn of various commodities weighting over 724,718 tons were traded in its domestic trading and exports halls in the past working week (July01-06).**

The IME said that over 302,213 tons of various oil and petrochemical products, including 129,841 tons of bitumen, 60,946 tons of polymer products, 71,370 tons of VB feed stock, 15,500 tons of lube cut-oil, 21,920 tons of chemical products, 1,100 tons of sulfur, 506 slaps wax and 30 tons of argon with the total value of $140mln were traded in its domestic and exports halls during the last week.

Moreover, 103,864 tons of various commodities, including 52,190 tons of feed barley, 39,500 of wheat, 10,800 tons of sugar, 324,500 day old chicks and 1,050 tons of maize with total worth of $33.3mln were traded by the customers in the agricultural trading hall of IME in last week.

Also, 316,006 tons of metal and mineral products, including, 195,433 tons of steel products, 110,000 tons of iron ore, 5,260 tons of copper, 5,260 tons of aluminum, 140 tons of molybdenum concentrate, 3 tons of precious metal concentrates, 50 CERATO make cars as well as 24.8 kg gold bullion with the total value of $143.6mln were traded in the IME domestic and exports halls in the last week.

Iran to Launch Direct Marine Route to Qatar

TEHRAN (FNA) - **Iran's Valfajr Shipping Company is planning to establish a direct marine route from the Iranian port of Bushehr to Qatar in the next two weeks.**

The move is aimed at "expansion of non-oil trade" to the Persian Gulf Arab state, Abolqasem Mohammadzadeh, an official with Bushehr Ports and Maritime Organization said.

Mohammadzadeh added that his institution will use refrigerated containers for shipments to Qatar.Iran has been exporting food to Qatar via Dhow boats and planes after Saudi Arabia and its allies cut all links with the gas-rich country over Doha's alleged support for terrorism. Qatar denies the accusations.

Venezuelan Crude Sales to U.S. Fall to Lowest in 14 Years

HOUSTON (Reuters) - **Venezuelan crude exports to the United States fell to 491,340 barrels per day (bpd) in June, the lowest monthly level since early 2003, because of fewer sales by state-run PDVSA to its unit Citgo Petroleum, according Reuters data.**

Venezuela's crude production has sharply decreased since 2012 amid a lack of investment and payment delays to oil service companies, affecting exports to PDVSA's customers, including those in the United States. PDVSA and its joint ventures sent 29 crude cargoes to the United States last month versus 42 cargoes in May, a 29 percent fall in the shipped volumes. Compared with exports in June 2016, the decrease was 25 percent. The main U.S. recipient of Venezuelan crude last month was refining firm Valero Energy. Sales to Citgo Petroleum declined almost 66 percent versus May to 68,400 bpd in June. PDVSA's low production and frequent refinery woes have forced the company this year to increase its own crude and products imports amid cash flow problems that have led to delayed payments to suppliers and creditors. The Venezuelan firm earlier this week awarded companies including Rosneft, Lukoil, Elemento Services and Helsinge several tenders to buy over 15 million barrels of fuels and components for the second half of 2017. Venezuelan crude sales to the United States recovered temporarily in April to 741,000 bpd, but they started declining again in May. The average for the first half of 2017 was 650,685 bpd, almost 8 percent less than the same period of last year.

UK Factories, Builders Cut Output, Clouding Growth Outlook

LONDON (Bloomberg) - **UK factories and construction firms unexpectedly cut output in May, casting doubt over the performance of the economy in the second quarter.**

Manufacturing fell 0.2 percent from April as vehicle production posted the biggest drop in more than a year, the Office for National Statistics has said. Total industrial production declined 0.1 percent. Building output shrank by 1.2 percent.

There was also disappointing news on trade, as the deficit widened more than expected to 3.1 billion pounds ($4 billion). Imports of goods rose 3.9 percent, far outstripping a 0.9 gain in exports.

The figures raise questions about the extent of any pickup in the economy after growth slumped to 0.2 percent in the first three months of the year. It strengthens the case for the Bank of England to refrain from raising interest rates, despite surging inflation.

The pound fell and was at $1.2909 as of 11:05 a.m. London time, down 0.5 percent on the day.

Political instability, the start of Brexit talks and the strain on consumers from the rising cost of living are weighing on the prospects for investment and consumer spending, with recent PMI surveys pointing to a loss of momentum going into the second half. Economists surveyed by Bloomberg last month saw growth accelerating to 0.4 percent between April and June.

The latest figures underline just how reliant Britain is on its giant services sector, itself coming under pressure from the fall in real incomes.

Italy's Eusider Signs Iran Ferrosilicon Deal

TEHRAN (Press TV) - **Italy's service center and trader company Eusider says it has signed a long-term agency agreement with the biggest ferrosilicon producer in Iran.**

The exclusive distribution agreement with Iran Ferroalloys Industries Company would give Eusider "the right space to market" Iranian ferroalloys, the company said.

Through the agreement, "we will add value to our clients as we will be able to offer on regular basis different quality grade materials," Platts quoted the company as saying.

Iran Ferroalloys Industries Company, based in Azna in Lorestan province, is the first and the biggest Iranian ferrosilicon producer founded in 1987. Ferrosilicon's main application is in steel production.

According to its website, the company has three furnaces with an annual capacity to produce 60,000 million tons of 75% ferrosilicon.

Eusider's announcement came just after Italy said it would sign a deal worth 1.2 billion euros next week to build a high-speed railway between the Iranian cities of Arak and Qom.

Renato Mazzoncini, CEO of Italy's state railway company Ferrovie dello Stato (FS), will visit Tehran on July 11 to finalize the construction of the 135-kilometer line.

Italy has traditionally had close economic ties with Iran and the two countries have signed initial deals worth up to 17 billion euros in the wake of a nuclear deal which saw sanctions lifted on the Islamic Republic in January 2016.

Italian steel firm Danieli has signed commercial agreements worth up to $5.7 billion with Iran, including a joint venture, called Persian Metallics, worth $2 billion.

Steel is a strategic commodity for Iran, which is also the Middle East's biggest carmaker. It is fundamental to the Iranian society with its massive oil and gas industry, transportation network, water supply, urban centers and mammoth construction.

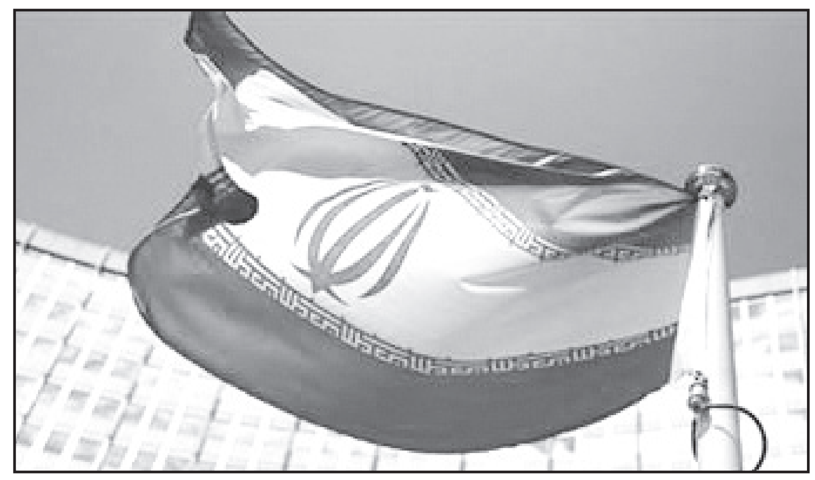
Steel was Iran's largest export item after oil, gas and petrochemicals last year, partly because of the slump in domestic construction.

The country has been boosting steel production, targeting an output plateau of 55 million tons per year by 2015.

Currently, the nation produces 16 million tons, which is one percent of the world total. A statement on the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO)'s website says exports are expected to hit 20-25 million tons by 2025.

Iran's biggest mill is Mobarakeh Steel Company which produces 7.2 million tons of steel per year.

$60bn Annual Foreign Investment Targeted in 6th Plan



BOJNOURD (Dispatches) - **Deputy Head of the Plan, Budget and Audit Committee of Parliament Hadi Qavami says $60 billion investment is to be annually absorbed in the course of the Sixth Five-Year Economic Development Plan (2016-21).**

In a meeting with a group of provincial officials, Qavami said 'To attain eight percent economic growth rate as is envisaged by the Sixth Plan, $60 billion foreign investment is annually needed."

Iran hopes to secure large investments into its unexplored and underdeveloped natural gas sector.

Following the nuclear deal and implementation of the landmark international agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) many foreign companies are eager to invest in Iran.

Iranian, German Carmakers to Jointly Produce Cars

TEHRAN (IRNA) - **Germany's Volkswagen and Iran's car manufacturer Mammut Khodro are planning to launch a new joint production line to make cars in the near future.**

Talking to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) on Saturday, deputy minister of industry and trade for industries affairs, Mohsen Salehi-Nia, said the preliminary measures have been taken to launch the joint production line for the new car.

Salehi-Nia added that no agreement has been inked so far regarding the issue, but once the deal signed between representatives of the two sides, the agreement could be considered as one of the achievements made by the Islamic Republic following the nuclear deal and implementation of the landmark international agreement, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

On July 4, Volkswagen announced that the company will begin the sale of vehicles in Iran in August.

Initially, Volkswagen's Tiguan and Passat models are to be imported under a contract concluded with the Iranian automotive company Mammut Khodro.

The Volkswagen brand will thus again have a presence in the Iranian market after more than 17 years, and is systematically developing further worldwide market potential.

'By returning to Iran, the Volkswagen brand is filling in another blank spot on the global automotive map. We are thus strengthening our international presence still further. At the same time, we are taking our very latest models with premium features to our Iranian customers', Anders Sundt Jensen, project manager for the Iranian market at Volkswagen, said.

G-20 Forges Trade Compromise as U.S. Tariff Threat Lingers

NEW YORK (Bloomberg) - **World leaders reached a compromise on trade at the Group of 20 summit as officials agreed to fight protectionism while tacitly recognizing U.S. President Donald Trump's concerns about excess steel capacity and what he says are unfair trade practices.**

Hours after the agreement was struck early on Saturday, the final statement nonetheless left the U.S. isolated on climate change, according to officials from three G-20 countries. At the same time, the statement refers to the use of "trade defense instruments," leaving the shadow of tariffs hanging over the world.

Talks ran into a major rift over global economic policy on Friday as Trump, who spent much of his election campaign complaining about "unfair" trade hurting the U.S., held firm to his America First doctrine. G-20 officials are concerned about a trade war over steel as Trump gears up for a decision on whether to impose punitive tariffs amid ongoing complaints about dumping on global markets.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the summit's host, said Friday that leaders need to find a common solution to steel overproduction, otherwise the risk of "bilateral actions" increases. In its communique, the G-20 pledged renewed efforts to combat excess capacity in the steel industry, according to a leaked copy of the text.

Trump's administration is weighing whether to impose tariffs, quotas or a combination of both on steel imports under national security grounds through Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, even though only a fraction of U.S. steel is used for defense.