

NIOC to Sell Oil on IRENEX Weekly



TEHRAN (Shana) - Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh has said the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had planned to offer crude oil on the Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on a weekly basis.

Zangeneh said it might take time for the offers to become routine in the IRENEX but the Iranian Ministry of Petroleum would persist in selling oil to the private sector through IRENEX.

He also said that backdoor as well as overt talks were ongoing for selling crude oil to foreign customers.

CEO: 3 Airplanes to Join Iran Air's Fleet by Year-End



CEO of Iran Air Farzaneh Sharafbafi

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - CEO of Iran Air Farzaneh Sharafbafi has said by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019), three airplanes will be added to the national flag-carrier airline's fleet.

Speaking to the Iran domestic media, Sharafbafi pointed to the Iran Air's plans to develop its fleet of aircraft and said in line with efforts to provide

better services for the people, three airplanes will join the fleet by the end of the current year.

The three planes are planned to be imported from some Western countries, she said without providing more details on the issue.

Currently, Iran Air has 29 airplanes operating flights in the country, which would rise to 32 after the addition of

the three planes.

Earlier in December, head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) Ali Abedzadeh highlighted the country's need for at least 500 civil airplanes and said the CAO is trying to facilitate importing such aircraft.

Abedzadeh told Tasnim that the number of planes in Iran's civilian air fleet is not sufficient and therefore, flights cannot be operated to all cities of the country.

He also said that some airlines have voiced intention for buying airplanes and the CAO is working to facilitate importing the aircraft.

The aviation official went on to say that given Iran's huge market, the country needs 500 new airplanes.

The re-imposed U.S. sanctions have hit Iran's aircraft industry alongside other important sectors. ATR, a French-Italian manufacturer, delivered five new commercial aircraft to Iran in August before the start of the sanctions.

Boeing and its European rival Airbus have lost billions of dollars in aircraft deals with Iranian airlines due to the embargoes.

Austria, Iran to Expand Energy Cooperation

TEHRAN (FNA) - Austrian Ambassador to Iran Stefan Scholz has said that Vienna will cooperate with Tehran for constructing green energies ecological centers, to further develop cooperation on renewable energies between the two countries.

Iran is known as a driving force in the Middle East region, Scholz said, speaking in a joint meeting held between Iran and Austria in the field of renewable energies in Tehran.

He added, "The country's tendency for moving towards renewable energies has caused Iran to be known as a regional hub."

"Iran has taken giant stride towards the development of renewable energies, energy productivity and development of



Austrian Ambassador to Iran Stefan Scholz

environmental technologies," the Austrian diplomat reiterated.

The ambassador pointed to the policy of Iran for diversifying its energy document and said,

"Iran enjoys high potentials and capabilities in the field of hydrocarbon, so that Iran's tendency to move towards renewable energies has introduced the country as a regional hub."

He placed special emphasis that clean energies have been turned into a potential part in bilateral cooperation between Iran and Austria, adding, "Accordingly, we are after constructing green energy ecological center in the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Austria is trying to help strengthen Iran in this field in order to turn technical standards into the regional interactions, the ambassador added.

CBI to Introduce Company for Facilitating INSTEX



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced that it will soon name a company in the country for facilitating cooperation with the European Union based on its financial mechanism for trade with Iran known as the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX).

In a statement released on Saturday, the CBI's public relations department said although INSTEX is much less than what had been pledged by the EU to save the 2015 nuclear deal after the U.S. withdrawal, Iran will soon introduce a corresponding company to demonstrate its intention to interact.

The establishment process of the company is underway and it will be introduced for cooperation with Europe, the statement read.

The CBI also welcomed a Friday decision by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to extend the deadline for

Iran until June 2019 to strengthen its anti-money laundering legislation, suspending counter-measures against Iran for another 4 months.

Last October, the global watchdog had given Iran until February to complete reforms or face consequences.

"The FATF decided at its meeting this week to continue the suspension of counter-measures," it said in a statement on Friday.

On February 4, Council of the European Union issued a conclusion on the Islamic Republic, urging Iran to "adopt and implement the necessary legislation pursuant to its commitments under the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Action Plan."

The EU also voiced readiness to "continue cooperation with Iran in these areas, including by providing technical assistance for the implementation of the FATF Action Plan."

No IMF in Turkey's Future: Erdoğan

ANKARA (Hrriayt) - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will never have a role in the future of the Turkish economy, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said, also criticizing the main opposition party on the issue.

"When we came to power in 2002, Turkey's debts stood at \$23.5 billion," Erdoğan said Feb. 21 at a local election rally in the western province of Denizli.

"I told the IMF chair in Davos at the time 'You are not the prime minister of Turkey, I am. You do not have a job to run Turkey, take your money and leave the rest.' He was sent away as the IMF chair, your brother here became

the president. Now we have no debts to the IMF," Erdoğan said, claiming that main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu would not have such a stance if he was in power.

"Now, Mr. Kemal says we would apply to the IMF. This is what he would do," Erdoğan said.

Erdoğan also claimed that the strategy and candidates of the opposition alliance for the March 31 local elections have been shaped by FETÖ and the PKK.

"A quadruple gang was put up against the People's Alliance. It's remotely controlled by Qandil and Pennsylvania," Erdoğan said.

Iran's Medical Equipment Being Exported to 40 Countries

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The chairman of the Association of Medical Equipment Exporters Reza Kompani has said Iranian medical equipment is exported to 40 countries of the world.

Iran exported \$ 24 million worth of goods officially from customs, equivalent to 680 tons.

Kompani while referring to the need to support knowledge-based companies in the field of medical equipment and noted, "As of February 11, medical equipment manufacturers faced problems in importing raw materials, which undermined their production and power."

"On the other hand, we were faced with a drop in exports, but since the beginning of the year, we had 18 million euros registration for export of medical supplies."

He noted that Iran's medical equipment is currently exported to 40 countries, which are being exported in different ways. Some of the target countries have requested Iranian products with the Iranian brand, some have requested the launch of a product line in their country, and some countries also produce goods in accordance with the order and supply with a different branded.

The official added, "Western European countries, Germany and Italy are among the destinations for medical equipment in Iran."

EU Farming 'Under Threat', Needs Big Budget: Macron

PARIS (Reuters) - European Union agriculture is being threatened by internal divisions and rival trading blocs, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Saturday, calling for a large budget to defend EU goals on food quality and environmental protection.

France is the EU's biggest agricultural producer and the main beneficiary of the bloc's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which is due to be renegotiated this year in the midst of Britain's planned withdrawal from the 28-country group.

"European agriculture has always

been a given, it is today under threat," Macron said in a speech at the annual Paris farm show, citing the EU's reliance on imported soybean protein for livestock feed or Russia's rise as a massive cereal exporter.

"No farmer or consumer wants to be subjected to the diktat of non-European countries," he added.

Agriculture is a frequent flashpoint in international trade negotiations, notably in areas such as food safety standards and genetically modified technology, and Macron reaffirmed France's "red line" that farming products should be

kept out of trade talks with the United States.

The European Commission has also proposed leaving agriculture out of EU-U.S. discussions, at odds with the position of Washington, which is threatening punitive tariffs on European cars.

France wants the EU to assert its vision of agriculture by pushing for changes to World Trade Organization rules covering the sector, as well as to food standards under the United Nations' Codex Alimentarius, Macron said.

Chinese App Beats U.S. Tech Giants Apple, Amazon

MOSCOW (RT) - The world's two most innovative companies this year are both from Asia, with Chinese tech platform Meituan Dianping unseating 2018 champion and Silicon Valley giant Apple, according to ratings by U.S. business magazine Fast Company.

While Washington keeps saying that Beijing is stealing its technology and uses this mantra to justify the ongoing trade war, the Chinese "transactional super app" claimed top spot among 50 of the most innovative companies in the world. It is the first time that a non-U.S. company has emerged on top since Fast Company started running the rankings in 2008.

In its "definitive list of who matters in 2019," Fast Company gave the crown to Beijing-based Meituan

Dianping, which was making its debut in the ratings. The app-based service expedites the booking and delivery of services such as hotel stays, movie tickets, and food.

The Chinese platform was followed by Singapore-based Grab, which forced American rival Uber out of the region in 2018 and acquired its local operations. The company now not only includes ride-hailing, ride-sharing services, food delivery and travel booking, but also offers its 130 million users financial services and will soon add healthcare services. Grab hit \$1 billion in revenue last year and is likely to expand further after it managed to attract more than \$3 billion in fresh funding.