

Iran's Mineral Product Exports to Neighboring Countries Hit \$1.4bn



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran has exported 8,500,000 tons of mineral products worth more than \$1.4 billion to Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan in an 8-month period.

Statistics on Iraq shows 5,713,000 tons minerals worth \$798mn were exported by Iran to the Arab country which is regarded as 50% of the

total amount.

Meanwhile, Turkey absorbed 512,000 tons products worth \$393mn and Afghanistan imported 2,275,000 tons mineral products worth \$291mn.

Reviewing the foreign trade performance in the mineral industries reveals that 1,063,000 tons

of goods in this sector have been distributed in Iraq, Turkey and Afghanistan and with a monthly value of \$5 million.

In December, the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) announced that the mining industrial sector made up more than one fifth of country's total export share in the last local calendar year (March 21, 2018- March 20, 2019), 5% higher than the preceding year.

According to IMIDRO, mining sector accounted for 16 percent of total exports share in the local calendar year of 1396 (March 21, 2017- March 20, 2018), the rate of which hit 21 percent in the last year (ended March 20, 2019).

More than \$9.2 billion worth of mineral products was exported from the country in the last year, the report added.

WASP: Iran's Steel Output Up 50%

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - World Steel Association (WSA) reported on Wednesday that Iran's steel output has increased by 46.7% in the past 12 months, indicating a stunning jump 20 times bigger than the world average growth of 2.1% in the same period.

"Iran's steel production has grown

by 46.7% which is 20 times more than the world average of 2.1%," World Steel Association said.

The WSA said that Iran has produced 2,895,000 tons of crude steel in January 2020 that shows a 46.7% growth compared to its previous year's production in the same month which was 1,971,000 tons.

All the 64 steel-producing countries in the world have produced 154,436,000 tons of crude steel, which shows a 2.1 growth compared to January 2019 when the output was 151,228,000 tons.

China, India, Japan, the U.S., and Russia are respectively the biggest steel producers in the world.

Shale Decline Inevitable as Oil Prices Crash

MOSCOW (RT) - The U.S. shale industry continues to show signs of slowing down, with production declining in major shale basins outside of the Permian.

Financing stress has plagued the shale sector for quite some time, but investors continue to bail on oil and gas stocks. The FT points out that the energy sector is now underperforming the S&P 500 "by the biggest margin since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941." In other words, it has been nearly 80 years since U.S. oil and gas stocks have performed so badly relative to the rest of the market.

The pressure is starting to have an impact on drilling and production.

The latest EIA Drilling Productivity Report shows that production in all major shale basins outside of the Permian have started to decline, and even the Permian's expected growth for March is a fraction of the growth rates seen during the heady days of 2018.

Even still, the effects of the coronavirus have likely not yet filtered through to the production data. Shifts in drilling activity and rig counts often take several months



after a major change in prices, so there could be another dip in the months ahead. With WTI drifting back down to \$50 per barrel, many shale companies are in unprofitable territory.

Drillers are "highly susceptible to price signals," as JBC Energy put it in report in mid-February. The firm cut its shale supply growth forecast to 760,000 bpd in 2020, down 120,000 bpd previously. "The currently suppressed price environment, which is not expected to disappear anytime soon, makes it more difficult for completion rates to achieve their previously expected recovery," the firm said.

OPEC+'s perennial problem of trying to balance the oil market continues, but after years of battling U.S. shale, the problem is no longer about the Permian or the Bakken. "Over the past five years, U.S. oil output growth has been the main disruptor of OPEC's market balancing," Standard Chartered wrote in a note. "That is not the case in 2020; demand is the main driver of imbalances, while U.S. output growth is slowing."

Standard Chartered put U.S. shale growth at 0.6 million barrels per day (mb/d) this year, and 0.55 mb/d in 2021, "both less than half 2019's growth of 1.237 mb/d."

IOTC Ends Monopoly of Building Key Oil Industry Equipment

TEHRAN (Shana) - The CEO of Iranian Oil Terminals Company Abbas Asadrouz has announced construction of the NQ900 electric actuator and automatic sampler controller by local experts.

Asadrouz stated the country could save up to Rls. 80 billion by localizing the items with the cooperation of local knowledge-based companies.

The technical experts of the Iranian Oil Terminals Company at Assaluyeh Gas Condensate Terminal, using theoretical savvy and practical skills, have successfully designed and built the items.

The automatic sampler is used to measure the amount of products sent to refinery phases and



plays a key role in measuring the quality of shipments.

The NQ900 electric actuator is widely used in the oil, gas and

petrochemical industries to open and close industrial valves and it was exclusively produced by British and American companies.

Pakistani, Iranian Merchants After Boosting Trade



KARACHI (Fars) - Businessmen from Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture held several meetings with officials and traders of Pakistani port city of Karachi where the two sides urged their respective governments to ease banking relations to enhance bilateral trade.

A delegation of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture led by its President Masoud Khansari visited Pakistani port city of Karachi and met with officials of local trade bodies. Consul General of Iran in Karachi Ahmad Mohammadi was also present during the meetings.

The delegation held important meetings with the officials of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Korangi Association of Trade and In-

dustrial (KATI).

The two sides during the meetings discussed ways to boost trade and business cooperation between Iran and Pakistan.

Noting the close cultural, religious and historical ties between Iran and Pakistan they expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of bilateral economic ties despite immense potential.

They said that both countries should take practical steps to remove impediments in the bilateral trade which could help the two sides to take the bilateral trade volume from \$ 5 billion to \$ 10 billion in the future.

Officials from both chambers of commerce called upon the governments of Iran and Pakistan to take effective measures to resume banking relations between the two countries.

During the meetings, the two sides discussed barter trade and discussed ways to implement it.

Hong Kong Plans \$15bn Spending to Support Economy

WASHINGTON (CNBC) - The Hong Kong government has announced 120 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$15.4 billion) worth of measures to support its economy, which has been dragged down by pro-democracy protests and the new coronavirus outbreak.

That planned spending would result in "an all-time high" fiscal deficit of 139.1 billion Hong Kong dollars, or around 4.8% of gross domestic product, Hong Kong's Financial Secretary Paul Chan said in his budget speech on Wednesday.

"Since January 2020, Hong Kong has come under the threat posed by the novel coronavirus outbreak, which further dealt a blow to the economy. We must take decisive measures to tackle the situation," he said, according to an official translation of his Cantonese speech.

Chan outlined measures to help businesses, workers and households weather additional economic challenges posed by the virus outbreak. They include:

- Low-interest loans for small- and medium-sized enterprises, with government guarantee
- A reduction in profits tax by 100%, subject to a ceiling to \$20,000
- Cash payout of 10,000 Hong Kong dollars to permanent residents age 18 and above

But the financial secretary warned that "one-off relief measures" may have to be "progressively reduced" in the coming years as the government's expenditure is growing larger.

The planned deficit for the coming financial year starting in April is much larger than the \$37.8 billion fiscal shortfall expected in the current financial year — the Hong Kong government's first deficit in 15 years.

"The deficits are mainly caused by the fact that government revenue cannot keep up with drastic increases in government expenditure, especially recurrent expenditure," said the financial secretary.

He explained that Hong Kong's fiscal reserves of about 1 trillion Hong Kong dollars have allowed the government "to roll out special measures amid the prevailing economic downturn, such as paying out cash." But over the longer term, the government must grow the economy and find new sources of revenue, he added.

Global Shares Start to Stabilize After Rout

LONDON (Dispatches) - Trading in global financial markets paused for breath on Wednesday afternoon, after days of sharp losses spurred by fears about the coronavirus.

In morning trade in New York, the main U.S. indexes were up about 1%, regaining ground after steep falls on Tuesday.

In Europe, London's FTSE 100 index and other major bourses had pared their losses and were mostly flat.

Earlier, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong closed 0.8% and 0.7% lower re-

spectively.

The signs of stabilization come despite ongoing warnings from firms of supply chain disruption and slowdown caused by the deadly virus, which has spread to more than 30 countries.

Factory production continues to lag, travel restrictions remain in place and consumers in some countries are staying at home.

The virus is likely to reduce global growth in the first three months of this year by almost 1%, Moody's Analytics estimates.

However, it warned that if the out-

break was not contained as expected, it could trigger recessions in the U.S. and elsewhere.

"The coronavirus has been a body blow to the Chinese economy, which now threatens to take out the entire global economy," chief economist Mark Zandi said.

Share markets have faced days of turmoil, with the FTSE 100 hitting a 12-month low on Tuesday and the main US indexes losing more than 3% overnight.

Miner Rio Tinto also lost 1.8% after it warned the disease could hit its operations in the next six months.

