

Iran Launches Three Key Pipeline Projects



TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iranian Minister of Petroleum Bijan Zangeneh in a virtual ceremony on Monday officially launched three major pipelines for the transfer of petroleum products.

The projects are the 26-inch Shazand-Qom-Rey pipeline for the transfer of petroleum products with a length of 293 km and a capacity of 300,000 barrels per day; the 20-inch Naein-Kashan-Rey pipeline with a length of 420 km and a capacity of 204,000 barrels per day of petroleum products; and the 14-inch Tabriz-Khoy-Urmia pipeline with a length of 220 km from Tabriz to Urmia with a total capacity of 65,000 barrels per day.

Investment in Shazand-Qom-Rey pipeline project was 2,500 billion Iranian rials, Naein-Kashan-Rey pipeline project 5,040 billion Iranian rials and 84.5 million euros and Tabriz-Khoy-Urmia project cost 2,100 billion Iranian rials.

Increasing product transfer capacity by 300,000 barrels per day on the route from Shazand to Rey and 4.3 million cubic meters of excavation are among the measures taken in the Shazand-Qom-Rey pipeline project. The contractor of the project, whose contract was in the form of EPC, was the Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters and its consultant was Tarh Andishan Consulting Engineers.

The transfer of diesel, kerosene and gasoline produced in the Persian Gulf Star, Bandar Abbas and the Ati Hormuz refineries to Naein and Kashan and from there to Tehran has been one

of the objectives of construction of the Naein-Kashan-Rey pipeline.

Construction of 10 fixed and movable roof tanks with a total capacity of 300,000 cubic meters in Naein is one of the side projects of this project. In addition, a new pump house was built in Kashan under this project and the existing Naein pump house was expanded.

Preparation and installation of three electric pumps, construction of a 240-cubic-meter relief tank, construction of administrative and industrial buildings in Khoy and Urmia terminals, construction of 8-inch pipeline of the old line of Urmia, construction of 24 km of 10-inch Salmas-Khoy pipeline and intermediate facilities, implementation of 260 km of fiber optic cable, construction of additional facilities of Tabriz-Khoy-Urmia pipeline have been some of the measures taken in implementation of Tabriz-Khoy-Urmia pipeline project.

In this project, the type of contract of which is EPC, 2,100 billion Iranian rials was invested and one of the benefits of its implementation is the elimination of the traffic of 500 tankers, which in addition to economic savings, also brings environmental benefits.

Iran Fully Self-Sufficient in Pipeline Construction

The CEO of the National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company Saeed Sattari Naeini said:

"We have become completely self-sufficient in construction and implementation of crude oil and petroleum products transmission pipelines under the most difficult economic conditions and sanctions."

The official said the company is currently working on 1,000 km of pipelines as well as 15 pressure stations and pump houses.

'Export of Petroleum Products Quadrupled'

Addressing a virtual ceremony to launch 3 major pipelines for the transfer of petroleum products, Zangeneh said the country's export of petroleum products saw a 4-fold increase since 2013.

The minister said that the administration had carried out great work in the field of refining, distribution and export of petroleum products, adding that the country's refining capacity has increased from 1,800,000 barrels per day in 2013 to the current figure of 2,200,000 barrels per day.

"The daily production of gasoline in the country has increased from less than 50 million liters to 107 million liters and the daily production of diesel has increased from 94 million liters to 113 million liters in [the calendar year of] 1398 (which ended on March 2020)," he said.

Referring to the quality of processed products, Zangeneh said: "The quality of the produced items has increased sharply in recent years; production of Euro-4 and 5 gasoline was zero in [the calendar year of] 1391 (ended on March 2013) and reached more than 76 million liters in 1398. Daily production of Euro quality diesel also increased from 6 million liters per day in early 1392 to 45 million liters in 1398."

He noted that the export of petroleum products has also quadrupled due to the increase in gas supply and the increase in refining production capacity, adding that the export of petroleum products has increased from 5.9 million tons per day in 1391 to 23 million tons in 1398.

Iran Sets 14% Rise in Hand-Woven Carpet Export



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Head of Iran National Carpet Center Farahnaz Rafe' has said that the coun-

try's export of hand-woven carpet has increased by 14 percent compared to last year.

"Iran has seen an increase of 14% in the export of hand-woven carpet," Rafe' said at the 23rd Handwoven Carpet Exhibition in Isfahan, adding, "The quality of Iranian carpet is second to none in the world of carpets."

She asked the domestic centers for contributing to procuring the necessary raw material, noting that this will make Iran independent in the field.

Rafe' noted that in 2019, the entire exported handwoven carpets in the world were worth 800 million dollars, 73 million dollars of which was the share of Iran.

The 23rd Handwoven Carpet Exhibition kicked off in Isfahan on Sunday.

After Denver Engine Failure

Boeing 777s Grounded Around World

LONDON (Dispatches) - Boeing has urged airlines to ground 120 of its 777 type aircraft after the engine on a United Airlines flight caught fire and fell apart over Denver.

The manufacturer said airlines using planes with the same engine type should suspend operations until full inspections could

be carried out, after the United plane was forced to make an emergency landing having scattered debris over residential areas below.

The engine on flight 328 from Denver to Honolulu failed shortly after takeoff on Saturday, with 231 passengers and 10 crew on board. Pilots issued

a mayday call and returned to Denver. Police expressed astonishment that no one had been killed or injured on the ground after large pieces of debris landed near houses and in public parks. The entire front casing of the engine appeared to have landed in front of a house in Broomfield, Colorado.

Tehran, Seoul Reach Deal on Transfer of Iranian Assets

TEHRAN (IFP) - Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Abdolnasser Hemmati and the South Korean ambassador to Tehran on Monday reached a deal on how to transfer and use part of the Iranian assets in South Korean banks.

The two sides reached the deal in a meeting held upon the request of the South Korean embassy.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed on the transfer of Iranian assets to its desired destinations, and the Central Bank informed Seoul of the amount of money it wants to be transferred and the destination banks.

The South Korean ambassador said his country is prepared to take all the measures required for enabling Iran to use all its assets in South Korea.

"There is no limit and restriction in that regard," the diplomat said.

Hemmati, in turn, welcomed the change in Seoul's approach, and said, "Although Iran welcomes the change in other countries' approach and the expansion of collaborations, the Central Bank will continue its legal procedures to demand compensation from South Korean banks which refused to co-



The Central Bank of Iran said it has reached an agreement with South Korea on the release of frozen Iranian assets in the East Asian country.

operate with Iran in the past few years."

"The South Korean side needs to make a lot of efforts to erase this negative record," he added.

Since 2019 when then U.S. President Donald Trump ended the U.S. sanctions waivers for South Korea to buy Iran's oil, Tehran and Seoul have been at loggerheads over the latter's blocking of some seven billion dollars of Iran's cash assets.

Korea was one of the main purchasers of Iran's oil after the nu-

clear agreement. It also turned into the largest buyer of Iran's oil derivatives and gas at the same time. However, after souring the ties, they lost access to Iran's oil and also the country's large market for their products.

Earlier, the South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister visited Iran and held talks with the country's top officials. His visit raised hopes that after the end of Trump's era Tehran and Seoul could mend ties again.

'Swiss Companies Vying for Investment in Iran'

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Switzerland's Ambassador to Tehran Markus Leitner in a meeting with Iranian Vice President Muhammad Baqer Nobakht expressed his country's enthusiasm for trade cooperation and investment in Iran.

Markus Leitner said Swiss companies seek to invest in Iran and called for the removal of customs-related obstacles to promote trade with the Islamic Re-

public.

In spite of the U.S. sanctions, several Swiss companies are willing to make an investment in Iran, Leitner added.

For his part, the Iranian vice president, Nobakht, hailed the recent negotiations between the presidents of the two countries as a sign of mutual trust.

Nobakht, who is also head of the Plan and Budget Organiza-

tion, praised Switzerland for maintaining good and logical relations with Iran.

In a telephone conversation with his Swiss counterpart last week, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hailed the historical and deep ties between the two states, stressing that it is necessary to develop and deepen the relations within the framework of a joint cooperation roadmap.

Iraq Walks Away From \$2bn Upfront Oil Deal With China

BAGHDAD (Bloomberg) - Iraq has decided against signing an oil-supply deal with a Chinese state company that would've seen the cash-strapped Arab nation get about \$2 billion upfront, according to its oil minister.

Baghdad opted not to go ahead with the contract after oil prices rose in recent months, Ihsan Abdul Jabbar said in an interview with BBC Arabic.

Iraq, whose economy is reeling after last year's crash in crude prices, in November asked oil traders to bid for a five-year supply deal. Baghdad proposed delivering 4 million barrels a month, or about 130,000 barrels a day, with the buyer paying upfront for one year of supply.

China's Zhenhua Oil Co., a subsidiary of defense contractor



Iraqi Oil Minister Ihsan Abdul Jabbar

Norinco, won the bid, Bloomberg reported in December.

Prepayment deals are rare in the oil world and this was meant to improve Iraq's financial situation. While the government is still strug-

gling, its position has improved because oil prices have soared 62% since the start of November to around \$63 a barrel, largely thanks to the roll-out of coronavirus vaccines.

Gold Rebounds Despite Higher Bond Yields

LONDON (Reuters) - Gold prices bounced back on Monday from a more than seven-month low hit in the previous session, shrugging off a jump in bond yields as investors opted for the precious metal as a hedge against rising inflation. Spot gold rose 1% to \$1,800.26 an ounce by 1321 GMT, having fallen to \$1,759.29 on Friday for its lowest since July.

2. U.S. gold futures gained 1.1% to \$1,797.80.

"The market is playing the inflation outlook story and gold is rising as a hedge against it," said Quantitative Commodity Research analyst Peter Fertig, adding that gold's future is now dependent on the speed at which inflation rises.

"However, higher bond yields are negative for gold, but they are also lending support to the dollar, offsetting some gains in the precious metal."

The dollar gained in early European trading as bond yields were boosted by expectations of faster economic growth on the back of expected fiscal aid.

A \$1.9 trillion U.S. stimulus package is widely expected to pass by the end of the week, raising hopes of speedy economic recovery but at the cost of rising inflation.

Investors are also eyeing the testimony of U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on the Semiannual Monetary Report to Congress on Tuesday.

The Fed and other leading central banks have pinned their hopes on ultra low interest rates to get the economy out of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Higher yields and lower interest rates increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion.