

# Tehran, Madrid Discuss Promotion of Business Exchanges



Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif, left, and Spanish minister of industry, trade, and tourism Maria Reyes Maroto discussed and exchanged views on economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

TEHRAN (IFP) - Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif has held talks with Spain's Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism Maria Reyes Maroto, who also co-chairs the Iran-Spain Joint Economic Cooperation Commission.

In the meeting, the two sides discussed mutual cooperation in economic and trade areas.

During the discussions, Zarif touched upon the great potential in both countries for bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the domain of trade exchanges as well as collaboration in the areas of oil and gas, agriculture, tourism infrastructure as well as air and

sea transportation.

He underlined the need to improve and upgrade relations in those domains by removing the existing barriers and setting objectives to reach a status proportionate to the potentialities of both sides.

The Spanish minister, in turn, highlighted the significance of Tehran-Madrid relations, saying Spain is interested in boosting economic and trade ties with Iran within the framework of a roadmap for bilateral cooperation.

She expressed hope that a new era of economic cooperation will begin when the coronavirus crisis ends.

## Iran-Armenia Trade Exchanges to Exceed \$1bn



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Chairman of Iran-Armenia Joint Chamber of Commerce Hervik Yarjanian said on Saturday the countries are planning to considerably increase the level of their trade volume by setting up free trade zones at their common borders.

"Meghri free trade zone will be opened soon in Aras region in North-western Iran which can boost the volume of trade between Iran and Armenia up to \$1 billion," Yarjanian said.

The official pointed out that the two countries can boost their trade exchanges to \$1.2 billion in less than a year.

In late January, Iran's Economy

Minister Farhad Dejpasand said the current annual trade volume of \$300 million between Iran and Armenia can grow to \$1 billion given the export and import capacity of the two countries.

Iran and Armenia can increase their annual trade of \$300 billion to \$1 billion with the capacity of exports and imports that exist between the two nations, Dejpasand said in a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Vahan Kerobyan, and stressed the need for developing communication and financial infrastructures of the two countries.

## Iranian Petrochemical Group Mulls New Development Projects

TEHRAN (Shana) -- The CEO of Iranian Investment Petrochemical Group (IIPG) Rasoul Ashrafpour has said the company is planning to start manufacturing two new ethylene oxide and ethylene propylene diene monomer projects with the aim of completing the value chain.

According to IIPG, Ashrafpour said "Considering the move of the Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PG-PIC) towards development of complementary industries, the

oxide project with a production capacity of 68,000 tons per year, and said the project will be fed by ethylene and it will be completed with €110 million of investment in 36 months.

Ashrafpour also stated that the other project, an ethylene-propylene diene monomer plant, will also be financed by the group as one of its other development projects, adding the capacity of this project will be 50,000 tons per year, and it will be fed by ethylene and propyl-



products of these industries are strategic and value-creating and prevent exit of hard currency from the country."

He added the feedstock of the mentioned projects will be provided through PG-PIC subsidiaries and finally these projects will pave the way for promotion of the value chain and development of complementary industries in the industry.

The CEO of IIPG underlined construction of the ethylene

ene with an investment volume of €154 million.

He said: "Completing the value chain, preventing the sale of raw materials, developing complementary industries, preventing the import of certain items, creating sustainable employment in less developed regions of the country and developing diverse and strategic products are the main goals of implementing the two new projects."

## Amazon Wins Court Fight in Blow to EU Tax Crusade

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The United States technology giant Amazon has won big in court in the latest development in its long-running battle with the European Union.

Ironically, the victory came in an EU court, where the company and EU member Luxembourg had jointly appealed an earlier ruling that they had entered into an illegal tax arrangement.

Judges from the bloc's General Court ordered the EU to rescind a demand for 215 million pounds (US\$302 million) in back-taxes in what The Telegraph newspaper called "an embarrassing defeat".

But the court said Luxembourg, which is one of the four official capitals of the EU, had not given "selective advantage" to Amazon, which had located its European headquarters there.

The judges said the European Commission the bloc's executive branch failed to prove "to the requisite legal standard that there was an undue reduction of the tax burden of a European subsidiary of the Amazon group".

## Major World Refineries Eye Iran Oil, Condensates



LONDON (Dispatches) — A breakthrough in negotiations to revive the nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) between Iran and western countries could eventually bring some 2 million b/d of Iranian oil back to the market.

The rival producers and traders have been eyeing how the competitive landscape may shift if sanctions are lifted on Iranian oil sales.

Most experts expect an agreement on the deal (JCPOA) to be reached within months, if not weeks, which could eventually bring some 2 million b/d of Iranian oil back to the market.

Much of Iran's production is of heavier grades and condensate, and a relaxation of the sanctions will put pressure on the likes of neighboring Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Oman, and even Texas frackers.

Refineries worldwide, meanwhile, will likely cheer the extra availability of Iranian crude.

The refining hubs of Asia -- China, India, South Korea, Japan and Singapore -- have regularly processed Iranian grades, as the high sulfur content and heavy or medium density fit the diet of these complex plants.

European refineries, especially those in Turkey, France, Italy, Spain and Greece, are also likely to return to purchasing Iranian oil once the sanctions are removed, as the additional volumes figure to be price-advantaged from Brent-linked crudes from the Mediterranean.

Some of Iran's heavy sour grades compete directly with crudes such as Saudi Arabia's Arab Heavy, Arab Light and Arab Medium; Iraq's Basrah Light, Basrah Medium and Basrah Heavy; Russia's Urals; the UAE's Upper Zakum; Oman Crude Blend; Kuwait Export Crude; Venezuela's Mesa 30 and Merey 16; and Mexico's Mata, among others.

Iran also produces and exports ultra-sweet low sulfur oil or condensates, especially from South Pars, which is similar to condensates produced by Norway, Qatar, the U.S. and Australia.

Iranian crude and condensate exports were averaging as high as 2.90 million b/d in early May 2018, when U.S. under the Trump administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal.

Since then, exports have fallen to below 1 million b/d in some months, though volumes have now rebounded somewhat as the indirect nuclear deal negotiations launched in April, with China a particularly eager buyer at discounted prices, according to market sources.

S&P Global Platts Analytics forecasts Iran's crude and condensate exports will grow from about 800,000 b/d in April to 1.4 million b/d in December and 2.0 million b/d by July 2022, on expectations a deal can be reached to offer full sanctions relief by September.

Global crude prices have staged an impressive rally, recovering to pre-COVID levels. However, many U.S. Gulf Coast crude differentials and regional spreads are yet to normalize, raising the question if the 2020 demand shock and ongoing infrastructure buildout will have a permanent impact on relative prices.

## Golestan's First Aquatic Shipment Arrives in China



GORGAN, Golestan (Dispatches)

- Director-General of Golestan Veterinary Gholamreza Mehrabi said on Saturday the first shrimp consignment of Golestan province weighing 19,500 arrived in Ningbo Port, China.

Mehrabi said 194,500 kilograms of shrimp was exported from Golestan to China, UAE and Oman last year.

Before the outbreak of COVID19, China, Vietnam, UAE, Hong Kong, Oman and Spain were destinations for Golestan shrimp.

Earlier, head of Iran's Fisheries Organization Nabiollah Khoon Mirzaei said that shrimp farming rate in Iran will increase to 52000 tons by the end of the last Iranian calendar year (to end March 19th, 2020).

According to government estimates, Iran exported some 22,000 tonnes of shrimp, worth of around \$150 million, in the year ending

March 2018.

Iran aims to meet a target of 60,000 tonnes of shrimp production by 2021 by expanding the farms in southern regions like Sistan and Baluchestan as well as those along the coast of the Caspian Sea.

**Official: \$32mn Worth of Goods Exported From Malayer**

Head of Malayer Customs Office Naser Torkashvand also said \$32 million worth of goods were exported through Malayer customs to 26 countries last year (ending on 20 March).

Torkashvand said the exported goods weighed 27,000 tons and shows no significant change in weight compared with the same period last year.

The value of the exported materials has grown by 39%, he added.

## U.S. Capital Running Out of Gas, Even as Colonial Pipeline Recovers



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Washington was running out of gasoline, even as the country's largest fuel pipeline network ramped up deliveries following a cyberattack and U.S. officials assured motorists that supplies would return to normal soon.

The six-day Colonial Pipeline shutdown was the most disruptive cyberattack on record. Widespread panic buying continued two days after the pipeline network restarted, leaving filling stations across the U.S. Southeast out of gas.

With more Americans taking road trips as pandemic restrictions ease, pump prices are at their highest in years. The average national gasoline price has

climbed to almost \$3.04, the most expensive since October 2014, the American Automobile Association said.

As politicians discussed legislation to improve cyber defenses, more gasoline stations shut down in the capital city of the world's largest oil-consuming nation.

On Friday gas station outages in Washington climbed to 88% from 79% the day before, tracking firm GasBuddy said. President Joe Biden assured motorists supplies should start returning to normal by this weekend.

Colonial Pipeline announced late Thursday it had restarted its entire pipeline system linking refineries on the Gulf Coast to markets along the eastern seaboard.