

# Iran to Boost LPG, Propane, Butane Exports in South Pars



TEHRAN - The engineering director of the South Pars Gas Complex Seyyed Mehdi Shafiei Motahar has said that the preparations for equipping the LPG export jetty for the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) in South Pars have been put on the agenda, adding that with its completion, the export of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), propane and butane in this complex will accelerate.

Shafiei Motahar said: "With the presence of a group of managers and experts of the Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company, preparations were made to equip the export jetty for LPG, propane and butane for NIGC in South Pars region."

He added: "In the visit and specialized meeting, which was attended by the special representative of the international affairs department of NIGC, experts of the special region and the National Petrochemical Company (NPC), the most important solutions and specialized cases for the start of equipping the export jetty of NIGC were presented and reviewed."

The engineering director of South Pars Gas Complex stated:

"Feasibility cases and roadmap for equipping and constructing a new LPG pipeline, in line with the timely export of products and reducing the time required for berthing and loading the vessels, were presented and compiled by the engineering management of South Pars Gas Complex."

Shafiei noted: "By speeding up the operation of equipping this export jetty, export of strategic items from South Pars Gas Complex will accelerate in the near future and bring prosperity to the country's economy."

### Iran Ups Oil Prices for Asia

Iran has raised the official selling price (OSP) of its Light crude oil grade for Asian buyers, a report says.

An industry source with knowledge of the matter said on Wednesday that Iran had set its crude oil price \$2 a barrel above the Oman/Dubai average for March, 20 cents higher from the previous month.

The raise comes as optimism over Chinese demand. Analysts expect China's oil imports to hit a record high in 2023 to meet increased demand for transportation fuel and as new refineries come on

stream.

The mark is also watching the fallout from Russia's plans to cut oil production by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd), equating to about 5% of its output, in March after the West imposed price caps on Russian oil and oil products.

Russia is part of the OPEC+ producer group comprising the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and allies, which agreed in October to cut oil production targets by 2 million bpd until the end of 2023.

A Feb. 19 note by Goldman Sachs analysts said future oil supply shortages are likely to drive prices toward \$100 a barrel by the end of the year.

On Monday, oil prices rose over 1%, with Brent crude settling up \$1.07 at \$84.07 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate crude (WTI) for March rose 85 cents at \$77.19.

China is the biggest importer of Iranian crude, supported by a fleet of as many as 180 elderly tankers.

On Tuesday, Government spokesman Ehsan Khandouzi said one of the most immediate achievements of President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to China this month was ensuring China's energy security and guaranteeing energy markets for Iran, which will positively impact the Iranian economy.

Khandouzi added the two sides finalized agreements on eight projects to be implemented in Iran. The spokesman refused to provide further details due to a mutual confidentiality agreement signed between the two sides.

The majority of trade exchanges with China is carried out in yuan, Khandouzi said, adding Beijing has welcome the use of local currencies instead of dollars and euros.

## Transactions With Africa Grow 22%

TEHRAN - Iran's trade with African countries reached 2.33 million tons worth \$1.18 billion in 10 months.

Trade between Iran and African countries reached 2.33 million tons worth \$1.18 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2022-Jan. 20), registering a 14.82% and a 22.39% rise in

tonnage and value year-on-year, respectively.

South Africa with 541,082 tons (up 10.18%) worth \$293.63 million (up 33.82%) was the main trade partner during the period. It was followed by Mozambique with 349,305 tons worth \$189.17 million and Ghana with 287,747 tons (down 44.43%) worth \$152.62 million

(down 51.92%), Financial Tribune reported.

Data released by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration show Iran exported 2.24 million tons of goods worth \$1.1 billion to the African continent during the period, registering a 13.47% and an 18.91% increase in terms of weight and value, respectively.

## Iraq to Allow Trade With China in Yuan - State Media

DUBAI (Reuters) - Iraq's central bank said on Wednesday it planned to allow trade from China to be settled directly in yuan for the first time, in an attempt to improve access to foreign currency.

The central bank has been taking urgent steps to compensate for a dollar shortage in local markets, which prompted the cabinet to approve a currency revaluation earlier this month.

"It is the first time imports would be financed from China in yuan, as Iraqi imports from China have been financed in (U.S.) dollars only," the government's economic adviser, Mudhir Salih, told Reuters on Wednesday.

The move is the latest sign of the yuan's growing role on the international stage as China gradually opens up its financial markets and some countries



look to diversify their currency exposures.

The central bank could, as part of its plan, boost the balances of Iraqi banks that have accounts with Chinese banks in yuan, it said in a statement.

Another option would be to boost local banks' balances via the central bank's accounts with JP Morgan and Devel-

opment Bank of Singapore (DBS), it added.

The first option would depend on the central bank's yuan reserves, while the other would use the bank's U.S. dollar reserves at JP Morgan and DBS. The two banks would convert the dollars to yuan and pay the final beneficiary in China, Salih explained.

## CEO: NPC Self-Sufficient in Petrochemical Catalysts

TEHRAN - The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Morteza Shahmirzaei said on Wednesday that Iran is not worried about the supply of catalysts now because Iranian researchers have moved towards localization of the items and the risk of stopping production is not due to the lack of catalysts.

Shahmirzaei added that one of the important and valuable strategies of the administration and the Ministry of Petroleum is to localize the needs of the petrochemical industry, stating that the localization of technical savvy and catalysts will lead to the boom in production, economic development and job creation.

Emphasizing on the use of all available capacities of the country in order to implement the localization strategy, he added: "According to the comprehensive catalyst document, there is still a long way to go until the complete localization of the catalysts needed by the petrochemical industry."

The Deputy Minister of Petroleum for Petrochemical Affairs stated: "Fortunately, the issue of



sanctions on Iran's petrochemical industry, especially in the access to technologies sector, has led researchers and experts to acquire many technologies such as the production of catalysts."

Shahmirzaei clarified: "There is no concern about the supply of catalysts in Iran, because Iranian researchers have moved towards their domestication, and there is no risk of production stoppage due to the lack of catalysts, and Iran has even become an exporter of catalysts."

The NPC CEO continued: "With

the activation of energy diplomacy in the field of the petrochemical industry, many negotiations and discussions were conducted with officials of neighboring countries and other countries in different parts of the world and studies have been conducted on the capacity of different countries."

He also said: "After several rounds of negotiations and discussions with several countries, including Russia, a list of products and equipment needed by a northern neighbor was provided to us, and their export is underway."

## Saffron Exports Rise 55% in 10 Months

TEHRAN - Head of Iranian agriculture ministry's department for medicinal herbs Hussein Zeinali has said that the country has reported a major increase in its saffron exports in the 10 months to late January amid better government support for farmers and exporters.

Hossein Zeinali said that Iran had exported some 178 metric tons of saffron worth \$173 million in the 10 calendar months to January 20.

Zeinali said the figure was an increase of 55.62% compared with the same previous period.

He said the increase in Iran's saffron exports was a result of better government support for the sector in the form of guaranteed purchases from farmers and discounts on loans given to exporters.



The official said that the cultivation area for saffron in Iran had expanded in the year to March 2022 to reach nearly 122,000 hectares.

Zeinali said a total of 326 saffron processing and packaging units are currently operating in

Iran with a total capacity of 596 metric tons per year, adding that more than a half of those factories are based in the eastern Khorasan Razavi province where much of the country's saffron crop is grown.

## G-20 Finance Chiefs to Tackle Global Economic Threats

BENGALURU, India (AP) - Top financial leaders from the Group of 20 leading economies are gathering in the south Indian technology hub of Bengaluru this week to tackle myriad challenges to global growth and stability, including stubbornly high inflation and surging debt.

India is hosting the G-20 financial conclave for the first time in 20 years. Later in the year it will convene its first summit of G-20 economies. The meetings offer the world's second most populous country a chance to showcase its ascent as an economic power and its status as a champion of developing nations.

This week's gathering of finance ministers and central bank governors takes place just a year after Russia, Ukraine war, setting off a cascade of shocks to the world economy, chief among them decades-high inflation. India is among the countries treading lightly between the Western nations and Russia, eager to claim more global sway but wary of becoming embroiled in antagonisms as its economy benefits from purchases of discounted Russian crude oil.

"India has a growing leadership role globally," Information Minister Anurag Thakur, said Wednesday, reiterating Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stance that "today's era is not of war. Dialogues and discussions are the only way forward."

As host of more than 200 G-20 meetings in 28 cities leading up to the summit in November, Modi is expected to use that role to burnish India's stature as a leader in fighting climate change and to act as a bridge between the interests of industrialized nations and developing ones.

It's an urgent priority, given the growing importance of emerging economies to global growth: the International Monetary Fund estimates that India and China alone will contribute more than half of global economic growth this year, with other Asian countries contributing another quarter of that expansion with annual growth rates of 6% to 7%.

India's economy is forecast to expand at a 6.1% annual rate this year after growing 6.8% last year, the IMF said in a report issued Monday.

## Asian Shares Decline Following Wall Street Tumble

TOKYO (AP) - Asian shares declined Wednesday after stocks tumbled on Wall Street as worries persist about higher interest rates and their tightening squeeze on the global economy.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 dipped 1.4% in morning trading to 27,100.51. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.3% to 7,312.50. South Korea's Kospi dropped 1.6% to 2,420.93. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.1% to 20,500.35,

while the Shanghai Composite shed 0.1% to 3,302.23.

New Zealand's central bank raised its benchmark interest rate by a half-point to 4.75% to try to wrestle down inflation. The increase, which can raise the borrowing costs for consumers on everything from credit cards to mortgages, comes despite widespread economic pain from a devastating cyclone.

Higher rates hurt investment prices and raise the risk of a recession by slowing business investment and consumer spending.

U.S. employment and consumer spending have weathered higher interest rates well, but a report Tuesday showed sales of previously occupied homes slowed to their slowest pace in more than a decade.

The mixed signals leave investors wondering if the Fed will ease back on rate hikes or resume a more aggressive stance.