

CEO: NIOC to Sign \$14bn Deals in South Pars by Yearend



TEHRAN – The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) managing director Mohsen Khojastehmehr has announced nearly \$14 billion contracts for developing oil and gas fields will be signed and a project for boosting pressure in the South Pars (SP) gas field will start by the end of this winter. Speaking in a Channel 1 TV program on the 45th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, Khojastehmehr added several private-sector contractors will help carry out the pressure-boosting project in the joint South Pars field.

According to the official, production from the South Pars field, which accounts for 70 percent of Iran's gas output, has exceeded 700 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d).

"We are active in exploration, development, production, transmission, and export operations in almost all provinces of the country," continued the CEO of NIOC.

He underlined a Maximum Efficient Rate (MER) strategy for the oil and gas industry is paid due attention in an effort to sustain pro-

duction in the future.

NIOC is currently producing one billion cubic meters per day (bcm/d), mainly used by the household and commercial sectors and the rest by power plants and industries, Khojastehmehr explained.

Since the 13th administration took office in August 2021, the company has made every effort to increase production, pointed out the deputy oil minister, adding the country's oil output has increased 60 percent under the incumbent administration, tripling crude oil and gas condensate exports when compared to the figures in the previous government.

He said the exploration operations have helped discover seven oil and gas reservoirs and add 2.5 billion barrels of crude oil equivalent to the country's reserves.

Khojastehmehr also pointed to a \$21 billion investment for completing partly-finished projects and implementing new oil projects.

He described the exploitation of SP Phase 11 as a great achievement, referring to the inauguration of Phase 14 as another success of domestic industry.

Tehran, Moscow Keen to Promote Agricultural Cooperation

TEHRAN – Head of the Iran Veterinary Organization (IVO) Mojtaba Norouzi held a talk with head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision (Rosselkhozadzor) Sergei Dankvert in Moscow to discuss bilateral ties and issues of mutual interest.

The two officials stressed expanding cooperation in the fields of agriculture and veterinary medicine.

The Iranian side called for boost-

ing mutual cooperation and removing trade barriers in the way of the export of Iranian fishery and dairy products to Russia.

During the meeting, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked between the two sides in the fields of veterinary quarantine, plant protection and expansion of cooperation between the two countries in import and export.

An expert-level technical meeting was recently held between the

deputy head of the Iran Veterinary Organization and Deputy Head of the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Konstantin Savenkov in line with removing the problems ahead of exporting Iran's dairy and aquatic products to the Russian Federation.

It was agreed that officials of the two sides will hold online technical briefing sessions in the coming weeks to settle the existing issues.

Goldman: UK Economy Suffering 'Long-Term' Cost of Brexit

LONODN (Market Watch) - The UK economy is now 5% worse off than it would have been had it never left the European Union due to a slump in trade and investment since the Brexit referendum in June 2016, according to a new study by Goldman Sachs.

This slowdown has seen the UK's GDP per capita stagnate since COVID-19, having increased just 4% since the 2016 referendum, compared to an 8% increase in the eurozone and a 15% increase in the U.S., said a team at Goldman led by chief European economist Sven Jari Stehn.

At the same time, the UK has experienced much higher inflation than in rival advanced economies, with the country's consumer prices up by 31% since 2016, versus rises of 27% in the U.S. and 24% in the eurozone.

Goldman Sachs' study compared the UK's post-Brexit economy to a hypothetical model of one that never left the EU, with that underperformance blamed on the trade drop, lowered investment and labor market impacts of the decision to leave the EU.

UK trade volumes — total imports and exports — are roughly 15% lower than in comparable countries, due to higher trade barriers with the EU and the resulting shift in supply chains.

Britain's exports of goods to both the EU and the rest of the world have fallen sharply since Brexit, even as its services exports, which account for 40% of the country's total exports, have remained roughly on course, the report said.



Investment in the UK has also stalled since Brexit, as a result of uncertainty in the years immediately following the referendum

alongside a pullback by hard hit companies. Overall investment is 5% lower than if Britain had never left the EU.

Official: 2,500 Electric Cars to Hit Iranian Roads by Yearend

TEHRAN – The director of electric cars' project at Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Karimi Sanjari said 2,500 electric cars will be imported into the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (to end March 20, 2024).

It is predicted that 2,500 electric cars will join the public transportation fleet before the end of the current year, Sanjari added.

He went on to say that 600 electric vehicles have so far been cleared from the country's customs offices while there are another 600 cars at the customs offices which will be cleared in the future.

Sanjari further pointed out that two electric car models will hit the domestic car market next year (to start March 21, 2024), YJC reported. Some 12 public and private sector car manufacturers will embark on importing electric vehicles into the country, he continued.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official pointed to the battery needed for charging the electric vehicles and added that two major companies will make huge investments on manufacturing batteries for electric cars.

PBO Chief: Iran World's 19th Largest Economy

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) Davood Manzour has said the country is the 19th largest economy in the world with a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1.81 trillion (according to the Purchasing Power Parities (PPP)).

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, Davood Manzour put the gross domestic product of the country at \$1.81 trillion.

He went on to say that Iran's GDP will reach \$2.5 trillion within the next five years, IMENA news agency reported.

On November 27, 2023, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) reported a 7.1 percent hike in Iran's GDP between June and August, almost half of which was due to the energy



sector growth.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest report put Iran's economic growth in 2023 at 5.4%.

In a report on the World Economic Outlook, which is published

once every three months, the international monetary body said that Iran registered a 5.4% economic growth in 2023, showing a considerable increase compared to a year earlier.

IRICA: Iranian Firms Export Over \$24bn of Non-Oil Products



TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) has reported that over 100 Iranian companies exported 60.24

million tons of non-oil products, valued at \$24.302 billion, to foreign companies in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year

(started March 21, 2023).

In this period, 53 and 60 percent of the country's total non-exports in weight and value were conducted by the 100 domestic exporters respectively

Fifty-seven of these companies are active in the petrochemical, oil and gas fields, IRICA added.

According to the report, 113 million tons of goods, valued at \$40.472 billion, were exported from the country between March 21, 2023 and January 22, 2024.

Also, 32.683 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$54.359 billion, were imported into the country in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year.

China to Finance Persian Gulf Bridge Construction

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki said on Monday that the Persian Gulf Bridge will be constructed on Qeshm Island using China's financing scheme.

Abdolmaleki put the estimated cost needed for the completion of the construction operation of the bridge at \$700 million.

A part of the bridge will also be constructed using the finan-

cial resources through the bartering of oil, he added.

Speaking on the sidelines of a conference on Iran's Sea-based Economy, he pointed to the latest situation of the construction of the Persian Gulf Bridge and said all the feasibility studies have been conducted.

A part of the financial resources for constructing the bridge will be provided by the Qeshm Free Zone Organization while another part will be pro-

vided through the bartering of oil, the secretary added.

According to the scheduled program, the construction operation of the bridge will become operational within the next three years.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Abdolmaleki pointed to the negotiation with the Chinese contractors and added that a number of contractors have voiced their readiness to finance the project.

Gold Drops as Traders Eye U.S. CPI Data for Fed Cues

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Gold prices slipped on Monday as the dollar edged up as investors looked toward U.S. inflation data that could offer insight into the Federal Reserve's interest rate cut plans.

Spot gold was down 0.5% to \$2,014.70 per ounce at 9:28 a.m. ET (1428 GMT). U.S. gold futures also fell 0.5% to \$2,028.60 per ounce.

The dollar index, opens new tab was up 0.1%, making greenback-priced bullion more expensive for overseas buyers.

Jim Wyckoff, senior analyst at Kitco Metal, said interest rate cuts will probably be pushed to the second half of the year as U.S. economic data has been too

strong lately to see a rate cut by May. He added there is limited buying interest in gold due to the recent rally in the stock market.

"We are expecting some cooling inflation and if we don't get it, it will put some pressure on prices," he said.

The Reuters poll for U.S. January CPI projects a 0.2% monthly rise while core CPI is expected up 0.3%.

The U.S. CPI data is due on Tuesday, followed by U.S. retail sales data on Thursday and producer price index (PPI) data on Friday, while markets also await comments from at least seven Fed officials this week.

Last week, several Fed policymakers, including Chair Jerome

Powell said they would wait to cut rates until they were more confident that inflation would fall to 2%.

Traders see about a 62% chance of a rate cut in May, according to the CME Fedwatch tool, opens new tab.

Pending Fed rate cuts, strong physical demand and official sector buying are projected to lift prices to an average of \$2,200/ounce next quarter, said Bart Melek, head of commodity strategies at TD Securities in a note.

Spot platinum gained 0.9% to \$879.13 per ounce, while palladium climbed 3.3% to \$887.07, and silver was down 0.2% to \$22.55 per ounce.