NPC, ICT Ministry Collaborate on Education Equity, Smart Schools

NPC Managing Director Hassan Abbaszadeh

TEHRAN – **The National Petrochemical Company (NPC) has been tasked by the president to work with the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) on promoting education equity and smart schools, NPC Managing Director Hassan Abbaszadeh announced. The initiative is currently underway, with results expected in the coming months.**

Speaking Monday at the "Digital Maturity Assessment of Industries and Businesses in the Seventh Development Plan" event, Abbaszadeh said that while artificial intelligence has seen rapid adoption in advanced global industries, Iranian companies have yet to reach a sufficient level of digital maturity. He added that under the Seventh Development Plan, the Oil Ministry is required to pursue defined objectives in digital transformation and the application of new technologies to further strengthen smart infrastructure across the oil, gas, refining and petrochemical sectors.

He noted that the plan mandates the ministry to install smart mass-measurement devices throughout the production chain to enable real-time data monitoring and transmission. "This allows production, refining, and conversion data to be transferred accurately at all stages and supports more informed managerial decisions," he said.

Abbaszadeh highlighted that data collection in the petrochemical sector remains fragmented. "Many parts of the industry currently collect data in isolated systems, and there is no comprehensive integration among platforms," he said, adding that given the industry's high-risk nature, secure data transmission systems are essential.

He also pointed to the ongoing challenge of connecting industrial control systems (DCS) with IT and OT networks. "One of the major challenges we face is the fragmentation caused by privatization. After petrochemical complexes were transferred to various companies and holdings, the data and management connections among them were severed," Abbaszadeh said.

He emphasized that digital transformation could restore synergy and reduce costs by reconnecting systems and data. "The NPC is pursuing new goals aimed at unifying all elements of the industry through a fresh approach," he said. "We want to make intelligent use of the valuable data available in companies, as this data can serve as the foundation for applying artificial intelligence in decision-making."

Abbaszadeh said artificial intelligence could play a key role in identifying new markets, analyzing global trends, and guiding the development of new petrochemical units. "AI enables us to forecast the industry's future more precisely and make data-driven investment decisions so that future developments align with market demand and competitive advantages," he said.

Referring to the NPC's new cooperation with the ICT Ministry, Abbaszadeh reiterated that the petrochemical industry has been assigned to assist in achieving education equity and digitizing schools. "This initiative is being followed up and will yield valuable benefits for the country's children," he said.

President Pezeshkian Urges Swift Action to Ease Economic Pressures on Iranians

TEHRAN – **President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for the immediate revision of regulations that exacerbate economic hardships for ordinary Iranians, stressing that such policies run counter to the principles of justice, equity, and sound governance.**

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Pezeshkian said the welfare of citizens must remain the government's foremost priority and take precedence over all other projects and administrative agendas.

The president urged officials to exercise greater care and social awareness in their decision-making and ensure that every policy enacted directly contributes to improving public well-being.

Criticizing the passage of inflationary laws that burden low-income households, the president questioned the rationale behind approving measures that undermine economic stability for the most vulnerable segments of society. He reiterated that any such regulations must be promptly reviewed and amended.

Official: $128mn of Engineering Services Exported to Iraq in Six Months

TEHRAN – **Chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e Es'hagh says the country Iran exported $128 million worth of technical and engineering services to Iraq in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2025).**

Speaking in a meeting on reviewing the situation of export of technical and engineering services to Iraq, Al-e Es'hagh stated that the country had exported $4 billion worth of technical and engineering services to Iraq in previous the previous years.

Iraqi prime minister has recently announced that his country needs about $100 billion worth of foreign investment annually, he said, adding that 88 large projects in the sector of the technical and infrastructural services are at hand, so this figure indicates the high significance of technical and engineering services' sector in the country.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Al-e Es'hagh pointed to the foreign direct investment, noting that about $450 billion worth of domestic and foreign investments have been approved in the parliament, mainly in the fields of oil, gas, and other engineering disciplines.

Effective steps have been taken to export high technical and engineering services to the neighboring Iraq, the chairman underlined.

Pakistan Issues New Order to Expand Barter Trade With Iran

TEHRAN - **Pakistan has relaxed its rules for trade with Iran amid efforts to boost economic exchanges between the two neighboring countries.**

Reports on Sunday said that the Pakistani Ministry of Commerce had exempted 57 goods and products from requirements for Iran trade, including from complying with the country's Certificate of Origin (COO) rules.

Pakistani business leaders welcomed the move, saying it would promote cross-border trade with Iran and would lead to more economic growth in Pakistan, according to a report by the economic website of the Pakistan Today newspaper.

The report said that a second list of 37 additional items is waiting for the approval of the Pakistani commerce ministry to be exempted from requirements for Iran trade.

Pakistan and Iran have sought to expand their trade relations in recent years amid efforts by Iran to engage more with its neighbors to reduce the impacts of Western sanctions on its economy.

Pakistan's ambassador in Tehran also announced on Sunday that his country had revised a 2023 Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) for barter trade with Iran, Russia, and Afghanistan, as he expressed hope that the move could substantially elevate and diversify trade between Pakistan and Iran.

Muhammad Mudassir Tipu said that the revised SRO had taken into account many concerns of the business community of both Iran and Pakistan amid efforts to boost barter trade between the two neighbors.

The developments come more than two months after Iran and Pakistan agreed to more than double the value of their annual agricultural trade.

Under the agreement reached in Tehran on August 18, trade between Iran and Pakistan is planned to increase to $3 billion per year within the next two years from a current figure of $1.4 billion.

Iranian Scientists Use Oil Waste to Produce Needle Coke

TEHRAN - **An Iranian research team at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, with the support of Iran Nano and Micro Technologies Innovation Council (INIC), developed a technology for producing nanostructured high-purity needle coke by using oil waste and asphaltene as cheap and available domestic resources.**

'Developing needle coke technology from asphaltene and oil waste to manufacture graphite nanostructure electrodes' is the title of a project being implemented under the leadership of Babak Mokhtari and his colleagues at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. This project is aimed at developing a local technology for producing high-quality needle coke from domestic oil resources.

Iran's oil resources, including asphaltene and heavy refinery waste, can be a valuable alternative to imported feedstock in needle coke production; however, the complexity of the compositions of these materials and their changes in nature in thermal processes make their direct use difficult. Accordingly, the research team of this project is trying to pave the way to achieve needle coke with desirable physical and structural properties by optimizing the processing conditions, purification and modification of the chemical structure of asphaltene and petroleum wastes.

The importance of this project is not limited to the technological aspect, but also plays a key role in achieving the country's industrial self-sufficiency from an economic and strategic perspective. Domestic production of needle coke can save millions of dollars in foreign exchange annually and minimize the dependence of the steel and aluminum industries on imports. In addition, using petroleum wastes as the main feedstock, while reducing production costs, helps to optimally manage resources and reduce the environmental impacts of hydrocarbon wastes.

From a nanotechnology perspective, the focus of this project is on the development of nanostructured graphite electrodes, which have superior electrical and thermal conductivity due to the high order of graphene layers and exhibit greater structural stability at high temperatures. Using these electrodes in metal melting and refining processes increases energy efficiency, reduces material consumption, and improves the final quality of the produced steel and aluminum.

Needle coke is a high-performance carbon material with a metallic luster and silver-gray color. Its surface texture is fibrous or needle-like, with a slippery feel.

It contains small, oval-shaped pores inside. Needle coke consists of large molecular polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons with flat aromatic layers.