

Iran Top Regional Electricity Producer

Iran ranks first in the region in terms of generating electricity and is ready to export 2,000 to 4,000 megawatts of electricity, said Deputy Energy Minister Mohammad Behzad.

According to a report posted on the Energy Ministry's website, he referred to a 38-percent increase in the output of the power plants across the country last year, IRNA reported.

"Efforts are underway to raise the figure to 45 percent in the next five years," he noted.

Electricity consumption shows an increase of 9.5 percent in the current Iranian year from 7.5 percent last year, Behzad said.

Some 18,000 megawatts of electricity was generated during the Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (2005-2010), he said, noting the figure will reach 25,500 megawatts during the fifth plan (2010-2015).



Turkmen Delegation To Discuss Energy Ties

A high-ranking delegation of Turkmen officials is due to visit Iran on July 20 to discuss development of the two countries' relations in the energy sector.

The delegation will be headed by Turkmenistan's Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers for Oil and Gas Baymyrat Hojamaammedow during the visit to Iran, Fars News Agency reported.

Iran has recently enhanced efforts to boost political, economic, energy and cultural ties and cooperation with the regional and neighboring countries, specially those in the Central Asia.

In a ceremony attended by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in January 2010, Iran and Turkmenistan inaugurated the second gas pipeline to transfer gas supplies from Turkmenistan to Iran.

The pipeline which passes through Dauletabad, Sarakhs and Khangiran regions will facilitate the hike in Turkmenistan's gas exports to Iran up to 20 billion cubic meters annually.

Korpeje-Kurt Kui pipeline is the other gas pipeline already used for transferring Turkmen gas to Iran.

Turkmenistan had agreed to boost the volume of its natural gas exports to Iran to 14 billion cubic meters (bcm) from the current 8 bcm following the start of operation of the new gas pipeline between the two countries.

7 Industrial Projects Almost Complete

Seven massive projects under the supervision of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) have witnessed a physical progress of 90 percent.

The total investment on the mine and mine-related industrial projects is over 14.2 trillion rials and \$1 billion, Mehr News Agency reported.

The proposed projects, which are spread all over Iran, have directly and indirectly created more than 27,000 jobs of which Hormuzgan Steel has created most of the job opportunities.

Sangan Iron Ore Concentrate project is the greatest project which has the capacity to produce 2.6 million tons annually.

The industrial and mining survey plan is among the implications for balanced and all-out development of the country and launching the projects in less developed areas of the country hints at the success of this plan.

In the first phase of the industrial and mining survey plan, some 800 industrial and mining projects will be implemented nationwide for which 300 trillion rials of credit has been designated.

Based on the announcement of Industry and Mine Bank, in the past two years that the industrial and mining survey plan has started, over 50 percent of industrial projects in different provinces has been financed and finalized.



Astrakhan, Mazandaran Ink Trade Protocol

Iran's northern province of Mazandaran and Russia's southern province of Astrakhan signed a protocol on Tuesday to boost trade ties between the two Caspian regions.

The protocol was signed by the chambers of commerce of the Iranian and Russian provinces, Fars News Agency reported.

During the meeting, Astrakhan's minister of energy, industry and natural resources called the Islamic Republic of Iran a major trade partner of Astrakhan, adding that Mazandaran has a 20-percent share in the expansion of Astrakhan's foreign trade.

"The volume of trade exchanges with Mazandaran has not decreased despite the global financial crisis," the official added. He said the two provinces enjoy a trade volume worth \$80 million, indicating an increase of 36 percent.

The minister further noted that the number of Iranian companies registered in the port city has increased by five times.

In June, Chairman of Astrakhan's State Duma said his province plans to boost cooperation with Iran's northern provinces.

"Two working groups have been set up to expand trade ties with Iran's northern provinces and the results will be announced soon," Alexander Helicano Brosovich said at the time.

'Parviz Khan' Emerging As Border Trade Center

Iraq was Iran's first trade partner in 2009, importing more than \$4 billion of commodities, of which over \$500 million pertains to consumer goods and \$300 million to technical-engineering services. Border customs of Parviz Khan has a considerable role in trade transactions between the two countries.

Enjoying over 1,400 kilometers of joint borders, cultural and religious factors have also deepened financial transactions between the two nations.

But due to negligence, such as exporting substandard commodities by few Iranian businessmen, Turkey has got the highest share in Iraq market.

Border customs of Parviz Khan (for cargo transport) and Khosravi (for passenger traveling) in Kermanshah province are considered as the most important economic passages between Iraq and Iran.

According to figures released by the Commerce Ministry, Parviz Khan is considered as the most active border custom and export hub among 50 border markets in 15 provinces. Because, the highest amount of exports to Iraq is handled through this border custom.

Parviz Khan market, which extends over 30 hectares in Qasr-e Shirin city, accounts for 48 percent of non-oil exports to Iraq. It is famous to this name due to vicinity to Parvizkhan Village in Iraq.

Members of Iran-Iraq Economic Development Taskforce recently paid a visit to Parviz Khan market to assess the level of development in the area. Iran has a huge volume of export and transit to the neighboring country, including consumer commodities such as mineral water, foodstuffs, detergents, fruits and nuts, edible oil, air conditioner, carpet and mouquette, home appliances, iron, biscuits, cookies and aquatics. Among the goods are cement and construction materials to Iraq. Over 8,000 tons of cement is exported to Iraq per day.

Speaking on the sidelines of the visit, Qasr-e Shirin Governor Bahram Teimouri told Persian daily Donya-ye Eqtessad that Parviz Khan market, with exports of commodities worth \$7 million and passage of 800 transit trucks per day, is the top export hub among all markets across the country.

He said following the second round of President Ahmadinejad and his Cabinet visit to Kermanshah province, the opera-



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tions for expanding the market to 384 hectares started. The official termed asphalt paving, expanding pavilions for vendors and accommodation sites for merchants as the underway measures.

Meanwhile, a number of businesspersons operating in Parviz Khan market, criticized over current situation of the border market.

The market, involving 2,000 traders and vendors, faces numerous problems such as fuel shortage, absence of a two-lane route, limited working hours, and negligence of respected officials to paving the market road.

According to the governor, exports through this market grew 48 and 87 percent respectively in terms of value and weight during 2009 against the same period of the year before.

Also, the secretary of taskforce empha-

sized on improving the transparency of the border trade.

Hassan Danayefar, who is the new ambassador to Iraq, referred to launching a smart commerce card as one of the ways to prevent smuggling.

This will lead to exports of quality commodities, he said. Therefore, the eligible businessmen will trade their high quality goods so as to prevent Iran's failure to join the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), he added.

Since trade rivals offer high quality commodities in Iraq, export of substandard goods will threaten the permanent presence of Iranian merchant in this market, he warned.

Danayefar continued that Iran plans to increase non-oil exports to Iraq to \$7.5 billion during the current Iranian year (to end March 2011).

He said Iraq has great economic potentials for Iran. Apart from cultural and political commonalities, Iraq has a niche consumer market, he pointed out. Excluding oil and date, they do not have any other export, he added.

Therefore great chances exist for exporting domestic products to Iraq lucrative market, he said.

Emphasizing on special potentials of Parviz Khan border market, he called the possibility to transport passengers via this market as an alternative for promoting bilateral trade.

The secretary said some measures should be done in the near future, such as launching five passenger gates, settling human forces to do passenger affairs, establishing a passenger hall and supplying the required fund, and building a good market road.

Different Routes for Gas Exports to Europe

Iran has studied eight routes to transfer gas supplies to the energy-hungry European countries. Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs Hossein Noqrehkar Shirazi said on Tuesday.

"In order not to be limited to cooperation with any given country, including Turkey, we have studied eight routes for transferring gas to Europe and conducted their feasibility studies and we are now taking the following steps," Noqrehkar Shirazi told Fars News Agency.

Stressing that only four of the said eight routes pass through Turkey, he said the other four pass through Turkey's neighbors with easier conditions.

Noqrehkar Shirazi further named Iran-Iraq-Syria-Mediterranean Sea line as one of the eight routes considered by Iran to export gas to Europe, adding that existence of gas pipelines in Iraq and Syria facilitates



Iran has the world's second-largest natural gas reserves (15 percent of the world's total).

Earlier this month, Iranian Oil Minister Seyyed Masoud Mirkazemi announced that two giant gas fields have been found in northeastern and southern Iran. "A new gas field named Foruz has been discovered 30 km to the southeast of the Kish Island (Persian Gulf) with 700 billion cubic meters of in-situ gas reserves," Mirkazemi told reporters.

Once developed, the field will produce 70 mcm of gas per day, the minister said, reminding that the figure would amount to the total volume of gas production in two phases of the giant South Pars gas field.

He continued that the second gas field has been found in Iran's northeastern province of Khorassan Razavi with 62.5 bcm of in-place gas reserves. He said the field can produce 4 mcm of gas per day after it is developed.

Iran Keen to Expand Tajik Ties

Tehran is eager to develop economic cooperation with Dushanbe, said the President's Chief of Staff Efsandiar Rahim Mashai.

Speaking during a meeting with Tajik Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi in Dushanbe, Mashai pointed out, "The Islamic Republic of Iran plays an outstanding role internationally and we (Iranian and Tajik officials) should double efforts to expand mutual economic cooperation and guarantee peace and stability in the region," Fars News Agency reported.

He said Iran will take firm step for building roads and railways in Tajik and Afghan territories.



Zarifi, for his part, said the meeting of the three Persian-speaking countries, including Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan,

will be held in August, mandating the three sides to prepare all conditions for that.

He lauded Iranians' role in promotion of his country's economy.

Zarifi termed the two countries' relations as good, lauding high position of Iran in the world politics.

Cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan could help regional peace and stability, he pointed out.

The Tajik official hoped for implementation of economic agreements between the two countries as well as rail road link between Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

Iran and Tajikistan have recently accelerated expansion of their ties and coopera-

tion and observers believe that the good achievements of their mutual cooperation, specially in energy and industrial fields, should be deemed as a result of the efforts made by the two countries' officials.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, heading a high-ranking politico-economic delegation, visited Dushanbe on January 4 on the first leg of his bi-nation tour of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to confer on further bolstering bilateral ties.

The two countries inked three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and two documents on mutual cooperation as well as a joint statement during Ahmadinejad's trip to Dushanbe.