

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Iran invests \$1m on renovation of maritime fleet**

**IRNA** – Iran invested \$1 million on the construction or purchase of ships in two years since President Ebrahim Raisi took office in August 2021, according to the director of the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO). Noting that many ships have been bought to commute either in the Caspian Sea in northern Iran or in the southern Iranian waters, Ali Akbar Safaei said that some of the purchased vessels have already been delivered to Iran and some others are being transferred to the country.

**First ship carrying LPG berths at Abadan**

**TASNIM** – With the failure of cruel US sanctions against Iran and the country's success in boosting gas exports, the first consignment of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was loaded at Abadan Oil Refinery.

There are plans for selling the surplus products of the refinery at the international markets along with meeting the demands of the country, CEO of Abadan Oil Refinery Hakim Qayem said.

**Sepehr, Jofeir oil production to start soon**

**SHANA** – The Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) managing director said oil production at Sepehr and Jofeir fields in southwestern Iran could officially start during the Government Week (August 24-30). Abouzar Sharifi added a comprehensive plan has been outlined for the development and production of Sepehr and Jofeir fields in three phases.

According to him, a major part of the first phase of the two fields' development plan has been implemented and their crude oil production – around 20,000 barrels per day (bpd) – could start during the last week of August.

# Iran's Pistachios Top in the World



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

Around four years ago, Iran held its position as a leading global producer of pistachios. However, the United States has overtaken Iran in this regard through expanding the acreage of pistachio cultivation, securing its status as the top producer of this commodity worldwide. Despite Iran's slip to second place in global pistachio production, it continues to excel in pistachio exports and maintain a reputation for quality. Driven by the enlargement of pistachio orchards, the United States has increased its annual pistachio output to approximately 700,000 tons this year. A mere few years ago, its maximum production stood at 240,000 tons, when it held the top spot in pistachio production globally. The US benefits from favorable land and water resources, facilitating its expansion of pistachio cultivation. In contrast, Iran grapples with constraints in terms of water availability and suitable cultivable lands. Iran's pistachio yield for the current year stands at around 200,000 tons, with an additional 30,000 tons carried over from the preceding year, summing up to a total of 230,000 tons for the ongoing year.

Globally, the collective annual pistachio production hovers over 1.2 million tons. In this context, Iran accounts for roughly 20%, while the US commands about 58% of global pistachio production.

Mohammad Salehi, the head of the Iranian Pistachio Association, told Iran Daily that while the US consistently ranks among the world's top pistachio producers, a considerable proportion of its output is consumed domestically.

"In the previous year alone, around 270,000 tons of pistachios were consumed within the United States. This dynamic maintains a close contest between Iran and the US in terms of pistachio exports to international markets," he said. Salehi delineated the destinations for Iran's pistachio exports, pointing to the European Union nations, India, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, Russia, Central Asian nations, and particularly China as major customers. Emphasizing the unmatched quality and flavor of Iranian pistachios, he asserted that "they still captivate traditional and exclusive clientele in global markets".

Unfavorable conditions including frost during certain months and water scarcity have impacted pistachio production in Iran. These challenges not only inhibited production growth in previous years but also contributed to a



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decline in output levels. Salehi, however, commended the robust pistachio production performance in the current year, saying that last year yielded up to 115,000 tons, whereas the ongoing year is projected to yield 230,000 tons, signifying a remarkable 100% growth rate. Assessing Iran's pistachio export situation, Salehi pointed to the issue of for-

exchange obligations imposed by the government on exporters.

"These obligations have created obstacles for pistachio exporters. If the government fails to address this matter, it will significantly impact both exports and potentially lead to unwarranted reductions in pistachio prices within the country," he warned. The fulfillment of foreign

exchange obligations came to existence 2018 when the government began to issue executive instructions about it. The government's aim with this initiative is to ensure that all entrepreneurs and businesses engaged in exporting bring back their foreign currency earnings into the country. According to Salehi, repatriating foreign currency as the government

intends proves challenging due to Iran's banking sanctions in certain countries. "This has emerged as a hindrance for exporters," he complains.

Salehi also believes that the government's practice of setting a pistachio price for farmers lower than the prevailing market rate discourages exporters from purchasing and subsequently exporting the product.

## Nearly 200 NTBFs active in Iran's agricultural biotech sector: Official



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These technologies include genome-based modification and gene editing, genetic engineering, bioinformatics and meta-

(vertical agriculture, disposable bioreactors, hydroponics, aeroponics and aquaponics), seawater agriculture, desert agriculture, artificial meat, 3D printing, microalgae, blockchain

platform (digital currency), smart agriculture, drones, biological products, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, the official explained.

"By 2050, Iran's population will increase to about 100 million and the country's need for agricultural products will be about 200 million tons, while now Iran's need for agricultural products stands at 150 million tons."

Salehi-Jozani noted that until 2050, the average temperature of the Earth will increase by at least one degree and the available water resources will decrease by 30 percent as the current 100 billion cubic

meters of renewable water in the country will decrease to 70 billion cubic meters.

"The seven million hectares of saline land, the penetration rate of technology in the agricultural sector of the country is below five percent, the import of about \$3 billion of various types of agricultural technological factors of production (hybrid seeds, some chemical fertilizers, chemical pesticides, vaccines and animal medicines, advanced machines, food industry additives and starters) are among the other challenges of this sector."

Some of the technologies introduced into the field of agriculture have been used on about 205,000 hectares

of land across the country which have saved more than \$175 million annually by increasing the added value of the country's agriculture.

Technology transfer and industrial production of livestock, poultry and aquatic probiotics, technology transfer and commercial production of bio-fertilizers are based on the Trichoderma method, which is commercial and quick-yielding, the official said.

Implementation of a program-oriented approach and effectiveness instead of a process-oriented approach are the new strategies of the research insti-

tute, he noted.

Our plan is based on upstream documents, in which the goal is to double the effectiveness of the research institute over a four-year period, Salehi-Jozani said, adding that increase in production and reduction of waste are included.

He listed the formation of a network of research centers, to cooperate with the private sector and executive assistants through holding innovation and technology events as well as creating innovation centers with the management of the private sector are among other strategies of his research institute.

## Iran, 18th natural gas exporter in the world in 2022: OPEC

Iran ranked 18th among the world's exporters of natural gas in 2022, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said in its latest report, noting that natural gas producers exported 1.407 trillion cubic meters of this strategic product last year. Iran's natural gas exports in 2022 registered

a two-percent decline compared to the same period last year, OPEC added, according to Tasnim news agency. Iran exported 18.8 billion cubic meters of this product in 2022, while the country had exported over 18.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2021. With the export of 195 billion cubic meters of

gas, the United States was the largest exporter of natural gas in the world in 2022 due to the Ukraine war. Before the start of the war in Ukraine, the Russian Federation was the largest exporter of natural gas in the world, but Moscow's export of gas decreased 24 percent in 2022, reaching 184 billion cubic meters.



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