

Iran's non-oil exports up 7.6% to \$13.5b in three months: IRICA



Iran's non-oil exports rose by 7.6% in the quarter to late June compared to the same period last year, according to figures announced by the head of the country's customs office (IRICA).

IRICA chief Mohammad Rezvani Far told the Iranian state TV that exports of non-oil goods and commodities from the country had reached \$13.5 billion in the three months to June 20, Press TV reported.

Rezvani Far said shipments in the aforementioned period had increased by 5.6% in volume terms compared to the same quarter in 2023 to reach 38 million metric tons (mt). Exports of petrochemicals accounted for nearly 9% of the shipments at 15.6 million mt worth \$6.2 billion over the period, he said.

China was the biggest purchaser of Iranian goods in April-June with some \$3.56 billion worth of items, followed by Iraq at \$3 billion and the United Arab Emirates at \$1.9 billion, said the IRICA chief. Imports into Iran rose 1.4% in value terms year on year in the three months to late June to hit \$14.3 billion, said Rezvani Far, adding that the shipments had increased by 7.8% in volume terms to reach 9.4 million mt.

Basic goods, which include a list of 25 items subsidized by the Iranian government, accounted for 32% or \$4.6 billion worth of imports into the country over the June quarter, he said.

The UAE, the main re-exporting hub in the Persian Gulf, was the largest supplier of goods and commodities to Iran over the three months to late June with \$4.5 billion worth of exports, followed by China at \$3.9 billion and Turkey at \$1.8 billion, the official underlined. Iran's total trade in the June quarter, including its oil exports of more than \$12 billion, reached nearly \$40 billion, Rezvani Far said, adding that the country had a trade deficit of 0.8 billion over the period without considering its oil exports.

Turkmenistan to sell gas to Iraq via swaps with Iran

Turkmenistan signed a swap deal with Iran under which Ashgabat will sell 10 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas a year to Iraq, the Turkmen government announced on Wednesday.

Iran, which lies between Turkmenistan and Iraq, has its own substantial gas reserves, and under the swap deal Tehran will supply gas to Baghdad in exchange for receiving the same volumes from Ashgabat, as reported by Reuters. Iranian companies will build a new gas pipeline with a length of 125 kilometers and three gas compressor stations on the territory of Turkmenistan to boost annual gas imports in that direction to 40 bcm.

This will be achieved by expanding capacity in the Dauletabad-Sarakhs-Khangiran directions and through Chaloyuk Gas Metering Station. Iran and Turkmenistan are two major global gas suppliers. Cooperation between the two countries stalled for a period in the last decade over disputes on settlement of Iran's energy arrears to Turkmenistan.

Iran can take advantage of the situation where it can buy gas from the extensive regional hydrocarbon reserves and sell it to poten-



tial clients and thus establish itself as a strong gas hub of the region.

By importing gas from Russia, Turkmenistan and Qatar, Iran can

receive some 100 billion cubic meters a year of gas and sell it to such

countries as Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.

Over 30% rise expected for saffron production in Iran: *Official*



By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

Gholamreza Miri, the vice chairman of Iran's National Saffron Council (NSC) said that the country is expected to produce 30-50% more saffron during the current Iranian year (to end in March 20, 2025).

Last year, between 300 and 350 tons of saffron were harvested from the cultivation fields across the country, he told Iran Daily adding that some statistics released by the

Agriculture Ministry show lower production figures, which seem not to include the production of all farms.

According to official statistics, 127,000 hectares of land are allocated to the cultivation of saffron in Iran, but the figures do not include all the lands under saffron cultivation across the country.

"Usually, from each hectare of saffron fields, in the previous years, about 6 kilograms of saffron was harvested on average, but due to drought and lack of water, the figure has dropped

to 3-3.5 kilograms," Miri said, expressing optimism about a growth in production for the current year, thanks to the notable precipitations during March, April and May.

According to him, in some years, due to the proper condition of cultivation and the favorable precipitation, the record amount of saffron harvest from each hectare in Iran has reached 30 to 40 kilograms.

Most of the country's saffron farms are located in provinces and areas with low rainfall, such as South Khorasan, and therefore

droughts lead to insufficient water to reach the farms, Miri stated.

"As figures indicate, Iran exported a sum of 221 tons of saffron to 67 countries during the year to March 19," he noted.

Talking on the price of the product, Miri said it depends on the quality of the harvested saffron, which is currently purchased from farmers from 65 million to 105 million tomans (\$1,000) to 105 million tomans (\$1,700) per kilo.

"Iran is the largest producer and exporter of saffron in the world, he noted adding that some countries

including India, Afghanistan, and Spain are considered our rivals, but the presence of some problems such as sanctions has created some barriers to the export of Iranian saffron," he said, adding that as a result, some rivals take advantage of the opportunity to export Iranian saffron under their own brands. Surveys show that every month at least 10 tons of saffron products are smuggled out of our country and sold in

the world market, Miri criticized.

According to the Iranian official, saffron is used in various industries such as pharmaceutical industries, cosmetics and food industries.



Voter turnout crucial ...

The most prominent official position held by Jalili was Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council in pres-



ident Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government. He is now a member of the Expediency Council and the Leader's representative on the Supreme National Security Council.

On the other side, Pezeshkian is the representative of change-seekers in Iran. Critics of Raisi's government, including reformists, moderates, and even some conservatives, are looking forward to his success in the election. As emphasized in his recent two debates, Pezeshkian does not consid-

er Raisi's government as ultimately successful and believes that Jalili gaining power will worsen the country's internal and external situation. Pezeshkian positions himself as inclined towards engaging with the world and resolving the nuclear issue to lift sanctions. Regarding internal matters, he claims to have a more open approach compared to his rival. He has explicitly stated his opposition to the morality police and restrictions on internet access.

Pezeshkian, who has been a member of Parliament for several consecutive terms, previously served as the Minister of Health in the reformist government of president Mohammad Khatami. He is also a cardiac surgeon.

Previously, in elections with less than 50% voter turnout, the conservative faction often came out on top. However, in the first round of this election on July 8, despite a relatively low turnout of 40%, the reformist candidate succeeded

in obtaining the most votes, although his percentage did not meet the necessary threshold for a first-round victory. Now, Pezeshkian and his supporters hope that in the second round, a percentage of those who did not participate in the first round will come to the polls. Jalili and his supporters also hope to add the three million votes of Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, another conservative candidate from the first round, to Jalili's tally. Qalibaf has announced his

support for Jalili in a statement. However, it does not seem that all of Qalibaf's votes will go to Jalili, and political experts believe that some of these votes will instead go to Pezeshkian. Therefore, it seems that voter turnout in the second round of the election will be a determining factor in the election's outcome. According to expert assessments, relatively low turnout will benefit Jalili, while relatively high turnout will favor Pezeshkian.