

Agriculture output rose 19% in Q1 calendar year: Minister



● IRNA

Iran has made a major breakthrough by increasing its agriculture output by nearly a fifth in a year, said the country's agriculture minister, amid growing efforts to cut back on imports of basic goods and to increase the added value in the Iranian agriculture sector.

Mohammad Ali Nikbakht said on Sunday that Iran's agriculture output had increased by just over 19% in the calendar year to March 20 to reach a total of 131 million metric tons (mt), Press TV reported.

Nikbakht said Iran's wheat purchases from domestic farmers had reached 10.3 million mt in the past calendar year, up from nearly 4 million mt in the year to March 2023, adding that the major increase in domestic wheat supplies had allowed the government to cut annual imports from 7 million mt to 1.8 million mt over the same period.

The minister said wheat imports into Iran will further fall this calendar year with increased domestic supplies, adding that domestic wheat purchases would definitely exceed 11.5 million mt this year.

Nikbakht said Iran's exports of agrifood had also increased to reach more than \$1 billion in the past calendar year, adding that the added value in the agriculture sector had reached 0.6% in the June quarter, up from minus 4.6% in the similar quarter in 2023.

He said Iran had turned into a net exporter of certain farming products, including poultry, adding that the country had exported 8,000 mt of chicken and 50,000 mt of eggs in the seven months to late July.

Facing US sanctions that restrict its access to foreign trade, Iran has introduced policies to encourage increased activity in its manufacturing and agriculture sectors in recent years.

Experts say the measures have clearly paid off as Iran has been able to generate more hard currency from exports while boosting employment rates for its youth population.



Saudis keen on economic coop. with Iran: Deputy FM

Economic Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy says Saudi Arabia is keen on economic cooperation with Iran, stressing that a joint economic commission between the two countries will soon be held.

During a press conference on Monday, Mehdi Safari referred to his visit to Saudi Arabia in April, adding that he has invited the Saudi Minister of Investment Khalid a-Falih to visit Iran to explore the country's modern technologies, ISNA reported.

He also stated that the joint economic commission between Tehran and Riyadh will be held within the next two to three months.

Safari said, based on his meetings with Saudi officials during his visit, that Saudi Arabia is keen to collaborate with Iran in the economic and commercial sectors.

He described the recent trip to Saudi Arabia concerning economic issues as a breakthrough. The official also expressed hope that, as per the planned arrangements, there will be meetings and consultations at the level of the two countries' leaders, where discussions will focus on



Iran's deputy foreign minister for economic diplomacy, Mehdi Safari, addresses a weekly press conference of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran on July 22, 2024.
● NEGIN HEMMATZADEH/ISNA

expanding cooperation in various fields, including economic field.

Safari traveled to Riyadh in April to participate in the World Economic Forum Special Meeting with the theme of "Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy

for Development".

Also, on the sidelines of an exhibition showcasing the foreign policy achievements of the late President Ebrahim Raisi's administration on Monday, he said that the foreign exchange revenues generated by Iran's knowl-

edge-based companies have increased eight-fold.

Referring to the knowledge-based companies, "The day we started, the income was \$300 million, and today it has reached \$2.5 billion."

Safari said that in order to stabi-

lize the market, "We established 'technology homes' in 12 countries, which work as exhibitions for our knowledge-based products in different countries."

The figure is expected to reach 30 by the end of the year, he added.

Afghanistan welcomes Kandahar-Chabahar rail link

Economic Desk

The Taliban-ruling government in Afghanistan has lauded the railway link between Kandahar and Iran's Chabahar, with the head of its Chamber of Industries and Mines stating that the rail connection between the two cities brings hopeful prospects for Afghans.

According to Afghanistan National Television, Shirbaz Kamizadah emphasized the importance of investing in the country's railway sector, stating that the rail connection between Kandahar

Chabahar in the southeast of Iran brings promising news for Afghans, IRNA reported.

The route connecting Kandahar to Chabahar is a notable development for all Afghans, urging everyone to invest in and support it to help Afghanistan overcome its current challenges.

Also, CEO of Afghanistan Rail Development Consortium Mostafa Rezaei underscored the connection between Kandahar and the Iranian port city as a top priority for Afghanistan.

He said that approximately 5,000 kilometers of new railway tracks have been constructed in Afghanistan over the past three years, adding that the Chabahar to Milek railway line is set to become operational by the first half of 2025.

The official also stated that the Kandahar to Milek and Milek to Chabahar railway lines within Afghan territory could facilitate a significant portion of Afghanistan's exports to destinations beyond Iran.

As per the report from the Taliban-ruling government's Ministry of Transport, approximately 230 kilometers of railway lines are currently active throughout Afghanistan, enabling significant daily exports to other countries along these railway routes.

According to IRNA, Spokesman for the Taliban's Ministry of Commerce and Industry Abdul Salam Jawad Akhundzada has also emphasized the importance of expanding Afghanistan's exports and imports via the route from Chabahar.

Export of military hardware, services tripled in three years

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said the country's export of military products and services has been tripled over the past 33 months. In most performance indicators, Ashtiani said, the country witnessed an "enormous increase" in the 33-month period, Press TV reported.

The minister made the remarks in an address to a cabinet session on Sunday as he elaborated on the defense achievements of the late president Ebrahim Raisi's administration over the past three years.

He added that Iran's production of weapons and defense equipment and systems as well as rendering services to the Armed Forces have been increased by 2.5 times. The defense chief noted that the successful launch of Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier, simultaneous with putting three satellites into orbit, the launch of "Zoljanah" research satellite carrier, the launch of "Saman" orbital transmission system with a sub-orbital space probe, the design and manufacturing of Khorramshahr 4 and

Abu Mahdi missiles and achieving pinpoint accuracy in missile products with are among the country's defense and military achievements.

He said the manufacturing of Khordad 15 surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems, the successful test of the domestically-manufactured Merasad and Arman defense systems, the design and manufacturing of Mohajer 10 strategic drone, the successful flight test of Simorgh transport aircraft for the first time, the successful flight test of Yasin training jet air-



● TASNIM

craft and completion and launch of Dana destroyer are among other Iran's defense accomplishments. Ashtiani added that the development of detection and identification systems and hitting low-altitude targets and cruise missiles were among other measures carried out by Iran's Defense Ministry.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the armed forces self-sufficient. Iranian officials have repeatedly underlined that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its mil-

itary capabilities which are entirely meant for defense, and that Iran's defense capabilities will be never subject to negotiations. Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly called for efforts to maintain and boost Iran's defense capabilities.