

## Iranian envoy hails 'win-win' Iran-Russia gas deal

Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali described the Iran-Russia gas transfer as a win-win deal. In an interview with IRNA which was published on Sunday, Jalali said that the landmark project would benefit both sides.

In the past, there were some speculations that Tehran and Moscow were rivals when it came to energy, the diplomat said. Jalali went on to say that, however, when policies are adopted based on mutual interests, they will turn into lasting policies. The Iranian envoy also called the Iran-Russia gas deal a mega-project.

Russia ranked first from March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024, in terms of making investments in Iran, Jalali underlined. To finalize the deal on gas transfer, the two countries held intense talks, he added.

On June 26, an MoU on Russian gas transfer to Iran was signed during a ceremony attended by the high-ranking officials of the two countries. "A strategic memorandum has been signed with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC)", a statement by Gazprom said, adding "the parties proceed from developing long-term mutually beneficial cooperation going forward".

Iran's Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji said the signing of the memorandum will yield favorable changes in the energy balance in the region, where Iran will be fully ready to receive gas from Russia with its infrastructure and gas transmission lines.

The gas agreement, he added, will bring about a revolution in the energy and industrial ecosystem of the region.

# Iran-EAEU free trade deal soon to be launched

The deputy head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) said the free trade agreement (FTA) between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will be launched soon. Mohammad Sadeq Qannadzeh stated that the FTA is under review by the Iranian Parliament and will be put to a vote in the near future, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Speaking in a news conference of an event entitled "Introducing Iran Investment Opportunities," the deputy chief of the

organization said once the FTA is ratified, more than 87 percent of the tariff code between the two sides will be reduced to zero level, he added.

Qannadzeh went on to say that the launch of the Free Trade Agreement with neighboring Pakistan and also the launch of an FTA with the Sultanate of Oman has been put on the agenda.

He put the number of Iran's commercial envoys stationed in various countries at 22, adding that the organization is



dispatching 11 other envoys to foreign countries in line with strengthening ties in the fields

of trade and economy. In the first year of the administration of President Masoud

Pezeshkian, the number of commercial envoys will reach 60, he added.

## De facto economic chief steps in



By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writer

### PERSPECTIVE

Ali Tayebnia, former Iranian minister, was ap-

pointed as the chief advisor of newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian yesterday. Tayebnia joined Pezeshkian's campaign team during the recent presidential race and helped bolster his economic platform. He played an active role on the campaign trail and

came out strongly against statements made by Pezeshkian's main rival, Saeed Jalili. Rumors had it that he was poised to become the first vice president, but after Mohammad-Reza Aref took the position, Tayebnia welcomed the appointment in a video message, saying that "I was not ready" for the top post due to "personal reasons". However, he emphasized that he would stand by Pezeshkian's side "until the very last day" and would do his utmost to ensure the "success and victory" of the upcoming government.

The now 64-year-old Tayebnia was once the youngest minister during former president Hassan Rouhani's first term from 2013 to 2017. He made his way into the cabinet with the highest vote of confidence (274 votes)

in the history of the Islamic Republic up to that point to take the helm of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance. The four-year term was one of the most important and, according to some, the most successful period of his career, as he managed to remarkably bring down inflation and liquidity rates.

He and other members of Rouhani's economic team promised to implement a comprehensive program to curb the 35% inflation rate by adopting austerity measures and reducing it to single digits.

Tayebnia strongly opposed government intervention in the economy and advocated for the privatization of various economic sectors. He was also against cash handouts and believed that subsidies could not fundamentally com-

bat poverty and inequality in Iran's economy.

During the recent election campaign, one of Tayebnia's economic plans was to grant more tax concessions to businesses. He suggested that the tax exemption ceiling for self-employed individuals and owners of small businesses be tripled and doubled for salaried employees.

Now, with his appointment as the top advisor to President Pezeshkian, which is a position outside the cabinet, Tayebnia seems to have more leeway to steer Iran's sanction-hit economy to salvation as the unofficial "economic commander" of the Pezeshkian government. Tayebnia, however, believes that overcoming challenges gripping Iran's economy will only be possible through a coordinated and collective effort.

## Iran eyes becoming a petrochemical power

More than 70 domestic and foreign companies and their representatives are attending the Iran Petrochemical Forum (IPF) in Tehran, which is held under the motto of "clean technology" with the aim of exploring new horizons for sustainable development in the petrochemical industry.

The National Petrochemical Company (NPC)'s planning and development director Hassan Abbaszadeh told the two-day forum's inauguration on Sunday that the effective participation and support of the private and public sector in holding the forum promises a better future, Press TV wrote.

Petrochemistry is deemed as a strategic industry, the continued development of which can extricate the Iranian economy from the choking grip of sanctions. For decades, the United States has imposed waves after waves of sanctions on Iran's oil and gas industry in order to choke off the country's main source of revenues. The steps have crippled

crude exports at times but not sales of fuel and petrochemicals, which have boomed in recent years.

Iran exported petrochemicals and petroleum products worth almost \$20 billion in 2020, twice the value of its crude exports.

While the sanctions apply to petrochemicals as well, sales of petrochemical products are more difficult to trace. Crude can be identified as Iranian by its grade and other features, while big oil tankers are more easily tracked via satellite.

The NPC is a subsidiary to the Iranian Petroleum Ministry which is owned by the government. In recent years, it has been increasingly shifting to the private sector in order to offset the volatile market for crude oil exports.

According to NPC Managing Director Morteza Shahmirzaee, there are nearly 75 petrochemical complexes in the country with an annual capacity of 95 million tons, which is expected to increase to 140 million tons



in 2025. They produce 550 grades of petrochemical products which are set to grow with new investment.

The sector now represents the highest added value in Iran's oil industry value-chain, further solidifying its strategic importance. It accounts for 30 percent

of its non-oil exports. Hence, a rapid expansion of the country's petrochemical industry is currently underway.

Under the general policies of sea-centered development outlined by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the coasts of the Per-

sian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are the focus of Iran's petrochemical expansion plans.

Several important and strategic projects are being worked on across Asaluyeh, Siraf, Kangan, the Parsian Energy Intensive Industrial Special Economic Zone of Lamerd, which will transform the industry and diversify the petrochemical products portfolio, besides bringing about economic growth and employment in the region.

The Mokran Petrochemical Complex (MPC) will come online by the end of the current Persian year in March 2025. That will make Chabahar in southeasternmost corner of Iran the country's third petrochemical of Iran after Mahshahr and Asaluyeh.

Shahmirzaee says internalizing the needs of the petrochemical industry and relying on domestic power is key to its growth and development.

The country is already all but self-sufficient in producing catalysts for the petroleum sector,

as well as plastic and chemical industries. "Iran's petrochemical industry relies on the power and expertise of Iranian and local knowledge in the path of development and progress," he said.

In Iran, refinery and petrochemical catalysts are a major part of consumption. These catalysts play a crucial role in enhancing efficiency, reducing production costs, and improving product quality in the petrochemical industry.

Russia and Venezuela are extensively using Iran-made catalysts. In December 2022, Shahmirzaee said Chabahar in southeasternmost corner of Iran the country's third petrochemical of Iran after Mahshahr and Asaluyeh.

Russian energy companies have been increasingly shifting their focus to petrochemicals in a drive to capitalize on the fast-growing sector and offset the volatile market for crude oil exports.