

# Dispute over Arash shared gas field could be resolved via talks: *Businessman*

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A member of Energy and Environment Commission of Tehran Chamber of Commerce who is also the vice president of Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce believes that dispute over Arash joint gas field could be resolved within the framework of regional diplomatic talks and negotiations.

In the field of border disputes, due to the effects of political issues as well as the difficulty of solving such problems through negotiation, accusations have been an unfavorable routine among Middle Eastern countries, Arash Nikpey told Iran Daily.

Should basic diplomatic dialogue not be formed between the parties, we will witness small and serious disputes, he warned.

Arash gas field is located in the shallow waters of Iran, part of which is shared with the Saudi Arabian-Kuwaiti neutral zone, Nikpey explained.

Referring to the discovery of the gas field in 1967, he stated Arash field is very important due to its location and reserves as estimates show that the field could produce one billion cubic feet of gas per day, which is equivalent to 84,000 barrels of natural gas condensate per day.

In recent years, with reference to results of seismic surveys conducted by Shell company, Kuwait

has drawn a new boundary line, based on such demarcation, it claims that the entire reserves of Arash gas field are located in the Arabian part of the gas field, Nikpey noted adding that the latter border line is not accepted by Iran. Also, in 2022, an agreement was signed between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to share the resources of the Arash gas field, following which, the Kuwaiti oil minister claimed that his country and Saudi Arabia have exclusive rights to the Arash oil and gas field, but this issue was denied by the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran which affected the political and economic relations of the parties.

Talking on bilateral trade, Nikpey said the Iran-Kuwait trade has been estimated at \$200 million in recent four years, which is not a considerable figure.

He explained about the capacity of economic relations between the two countries, saying achieving the target of one-billion-dollar in economic exchanges is not far, but attaining this goal needs requirements, in which political relations and issuing visas should be considered.

According to Nikpey, holding economic exhibitions in both countries with the attendance of traders of both sides as well as holding business-to-business meetings will have a great impact on improving the level of



economic relations. Currently, due to some obstacles in the trade between the two countries, part of exchanges is carried out through luggage trade, which is a risky type of trade, he added. Sanctions have affected the Iran-Kuwait trade, which has caused problems in the field of transferring currency along

with the instability of foreign exchange rate and uncertainty in keeping the international market for traders, Nikpey noted. He went on to say that due to some restrictions caused by sanctions, Iranian businessmen cannot export their goods to some markets uninterrupted, which causes them to lose their markets.

Referring to the inauguration of the new government in Iran, he said, "The presidency of Masoud Pezeshkian has an interactive approach in relations which will definitely leave positive effects on trade ties between Iran and other countries."

Iran's considerations to join FATF is also one of the trade barriers for Iranian business per-

sons, the senior trader added. Describing the issue of FATF as very important and vital, Nikpey stated that if the West lifts all sanctions today, we will face problems due to the lack of relationship between Iranian banks and global lenders, so we cannot take advantage of the positive effects of lifting sanctions in the economic field.

## Indian operator office of Chabahar Port opened in Tehran



The office of India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), which implements the development and equipping of Chabahar port, was opened in Tehran with the presence of the ambassador of India to Iran and the CEO of India Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL).

IPGCFZ is subsidiary of IPGL of Mumbai, under the administrative control of India's Ministry of Shipping.

In the ceremony on Saturday, the IPGCFZ office was inaugurated in the presence of India's Ambassador to Iran Rudra Gaurav Shresth along with IPGL Managing Director Sunil Mukundan.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Indian envoy stated that the opening of the office in Tehran three months after the signing of the long-term con-

tract for the development of Chabahar Port shows India's seriousness as well as its commitment to the implementation of the contract.

"The implementation of the contract is a win-win game for India and Iran, as it provides India with access to Central Asia and Eurasia through the territory of a friendly country Iran, and it also enables Iran to achieve a rich transit income with strengthening its connection with the Indian economy, which is the fastest-growing economy in the world," he noted.

The ambassador expressed his hope that the strong cooperation between his country and Iran in Chabahar Port within the framework of the long-term agreement will turn the southern port into a shining symbol of bilateral cooperation.

Also addressing the ceremony, IPGL CEO said that IPGCFZ will increase the number its staff from 40 people to more than 160 ones as the current trend shows that the number of loaded and unloaded cargos is expected to increase to 100,000 TEU per annum, which currently stands at 64,000 TEU per annum.

Iran and India on May 13 signed a long-term deal to operate the Shahid-Beheshti Port Terminal in Chabahar in the presence of their ministers, a major step to make the southeastern city a regional trade transit and connectivity hub.

The Indian delegation to Iran was led by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, while Minister for Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad

Bazrpash was present from the Iranian side.

During his visit to Tehran, Bazrpash and Sonowal oversaw the signing of a new 10-year contract between the Ports & Maritime Organization of Iran (PMO) and IPGL.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Bazrpash said Iran is a land of transit opportunities as the development of Chabahar Port with access to rail and road routes can help India to access the market of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Turkey, Azerbaijan and even Russia. Under the contract, IPGL will commit to further equipping and operating the port for the duration of the contract. At the end of the 10-year period, both sides would further extend their cooperation in Chabahar. IPGL will invest approximately \$120 million in equipping the port. India has also offered an IN credit window equivalent to \$250 million, for mutually identified projects aimed at improving Chabahar-related infrastructure.

Chabahar Port is an Iran-India flagship project that serves as an important transit port for trade with Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, which are landlocked countries. India has been a key player in the development and operation of Chabahar Port.

The Indian government has invested in the port's infrastructure and has been involved in upgrading its facilities to make it a viable transit route for Indian goods bound for Afghanistan and Central Asia.

## Netanyahu's anger at ...

The formation of a new government in Iran has been a protracted process, resulting in a delay in conveying a strong interactive message to the world. The current policies are still being executed within the framework set by the outgoing government. Expediting cabinet formation and empowering the new diplomatic team to vigorously pursue its plans and initiatives are crucial steps toward achieving the desired engagement.

However, based on Pezeshkian's stance during and after the election, the engagement policy seeks to strike a balance in foreign relations and advance Iran's national goals and interests. This engagement does not mean a shift toward a Western-oriented approach, abandoning the previous "Look East" policy.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that sanctions have inflicted considerable harm on Iran's economy, requiring swift remedial actions from the new government's diplomatic apparatus.

Both Europe and the US have expressed their welcome for Iran's adoption of a dialogue-based approach. Their somewhat muted response to Pezeshkian's victory can be attributed to their anticipation of the new government's actions, coupled with the US pre-election phase. They acknowledge that safeguarding their interests in West Asia demands support for a dialogue policy with Iran.

Despite the challenges faced by Pezeshkian's government, there are grounds for optimism regarding the world's positive response to Iran's interactive discourse. Pezeshkian's determination to forge ahead on this path cannot be deterred by Netanyahu's opposition.

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