

Iran signs fuel deal with Afghanistan: Iran to export oil to Afghanistan

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(NNI): Iran's Petroleum Ministry and Afghanistan's Ministry of Industries and Commerce signed an agreement for Iran's one million tons annual exports of oil products to Afghanistan. According to the IRNA, based on the articles of the signed agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran's oil minister and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's industries and commerce minister, such oil products as oil gas, jet gas, and gasoline would be exported to Afghanistan. Managing Director of National Iranian Refining and Distribution of Oil Products Company Ali-Reza Zeighami said in a press conference after the signing of the contract, "60 to 70 percent of this consignment would be oil gas, 20 to 30 percent of it would be gasoline, and the remaining 10 to 20 percents jet gas, and their prices, too, would be in accordance with the international prices of these products, each year, respectively." He reiterated, "Keeping in mind the quantity of these products' consumption inside the country, the excess amount of them would be exported and we hope as of next (Iranian) year (beginning on March 20th, 2012) when the Shazand Refinery would begin production the excess amount of that refinery's products, in addition to those of Tehran, Tabriz, Bandar Abbas, and Isfahan refineries would be exported." Zeighami said that the annual exports of the oil products of the Petroleum Ministry is 200,000 tons currently, adding, "After implementation of this agreement, that volume would be increased to over one million tons." The managing director of the National Iranian Refining and Oil Products Distribution Company said, "We used to export oil gas to Afghanistan in the past, but as of next year Iran's exports of gasoline and jet gas to that country, too, would begin." The Islamic Republic of Iran, which was long dependent on imported gasoline for 30 to 40 percent of its consumption, started exporting the fuel as of earlier this year. In April, trade sources said Iran had signed a deal to sell gasoline to neighboring Iraq but that the rare cargo did not mean the Iran had become a net exporter and free from its dependence on gasoline imports. Shipping data in November showed Iran's October gasoline imports increased over 21 percent to 63,279 barrels per day from 51,986 bpd in September.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday that Iran would become a gasoline exporter by 2013, despite the west's imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic. The United States, Britain and Canada announced new measures against Iran's energy and financial sectors in November and the European Union is considering a ban — already imposed by the United States — on imports of Iranian oil. The interesting point to note is that the US has not been a major importer of the Iranian oil for decades.

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