

# PSO Overhauling Port Structures

By Sadeq Dehqan



Photo by Ali Hassanpour

The 16th Conference of Marine Organizations was held in Chahbahar Free Trade Zone on Wednesday.

The traditional structure of Iranian ports should be reformed to comply with global standards, observed managing director of Port and Shipping Organization (PSO), Ali Taheri.

Speaking at the 16th Conference of Marine Organizations in Chahbahar Free Trade Zone, he described this as one of the main objectives of the PSO.

The official added that conducting free trade, removing barriers and easing rules and regulations are of high importance. Iranian ports, he said, should keep pace with global economic developments.

"We are going to prepare necessary infrastructures for improving the role of our ports in global trade," he said.

"Once a bill on preventing oil pollution in the high seas, which was submitted by the government to the Parliament, goes into effect, we can prosecute those who violate the law," he noted.

Deputy chairman of National Iranian Tanker

Company (NITC) for technical affairs, Jamal Miahit told the same gathering that NITC has 40 oil tankers with a capacity of 7.5 million tons, noting that the company is the fourth largest in the world.

"14 oil tankers will be added to NITC fleet to increase its capacity to 11 million tons in the year to March 2010."

He noted that NITC capacity will reach 14 million tons in 2011, adding the company would rank first in terms of possessing giant towboats.

Managing director of Bonyad Shipping Company, Ali Safar Ali for his part, said that development of the shipping fleet needs huge funds, adding the government should convince banks to extend loans to marine organizations. "Presently we use the facilities of foreign banks to implement projects," he said.

Addressing the same conference, managing director of Valfajr Shipping Company said that vessels owned by his company have seating ca-

pacities for 2,000 passengers, adding the figure will increase by 20 percent until next March.

Director of National Oceanology Center recalled that April 29 has been designated as National Persian Gulf Day, adding preliminary steps have been taken to print a publication named Persian Gulf.

Director of PSO's Department for Human Resources Saeed Jafari said that 18 vessels will be added to the country's commercial shipping fleet.

"Presently foreigners make up 20 percent of the crew of Iranian vessels and this is not a positive point for us.

"Improving the scientific and professional level of marine crew will help us send specialized workers abroad," he said.

PSO has earmarked over 1,600 billion rials to install marine and telecommunication equipment in the ports. According to PSO figures, 20 trillion rials have been allocated for implementing port projects.

## News in Brief

### Bonds for Rebuilding Old Structures

Tehran City Council on Tuesday approved the issuance of participation bonds worth 7,000 billion rials to renovate and rebuild dilapidated structures in Tehran.

The decision was taken at the 96th meeting of Tehran City Council which was attended by minister of communication and information technology, heads of provincial city councils, members of Tehran City Council, members of the Secretariat of Provincial High Councils and deputy heads of municipalities.

According to the Persian daily 'Hamshahri', under the new plan, the budget for Tehran's Renovation Organization during March 2008-2009 will be 27,000 billion rials.

According to Chairman of Tehran City Council Mehdi Chamran, the Renovation Organization will prepare a report for the Council on the executive plans for participation bonds.

Under the plan, profits from the participation bonds will be calculated daily and based on the lending rates approved by the government for the current year. Those who purchase the bonds can collect the profits every three months.

Repayments have been guaranteed by the Renovation Organization. Tehran Municipality has also announced that it will undertake the repayments if the organization fails to do so on time.

### Multi-Purpose Lanka Project Launched

The Uma Oya Multi-Purpose Irrigation Development Project was inaugurated Tuesday jointly by the Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, Iranian Commerce Minister Masoud Mirkazemi and Deputy Energy Minister for water affairs Rasoul Zargar at Wellawaya.

According to Daily Mirror, the project, which is being implemented with \$540 million financial assistance provided by the Iranian government, is expected to generate 150 megawatts, provide water to 12,000 hectares of land for cultivation and drinking water to Uva-Wellawaya and part of the southern province in Sri Lanka.

Under the project titled 'Jayogaya', two reservoirs will be constructed at Puhulpola and Dyraba near Welimada blocking Uma Oya. From Puhul Oya reservoir a 23-kilometer underground tunnel will be constructed to bring water down to Galbokkawa where the underground power station that will add 150 megawatts to the National Grid will be built.

### Foreign Loans For Housing Sector

To expand mass building operations and housing construction, negotiations have been held with some foreign banks on extending loans to the sector, head of the Association of Real Estate Developers Mojtaba Bigdeli announced, ISNA wrote.

"We have so far been in talks with a number of banks in Switzerland, Germany and southern Europe," he said, adding that they are ready to extend loans for housing projects.

He hoped that the Central Bank of Iran would cooperate with the housing sector in this respect.

The official noted that the price hikes in the housing market has been unprecedented since the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, adding the government allocated lands for building more than one million residential units in the year to March 2009.

## 3 Oil Wells Drilled in South

Management Planning Department of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) has announced that drilling operations for three oil wells in the southern part of the country ended 30 days ahead of schedule.



According to PIN, the company said in a statement that drilling operations of Aghajari development well took only 186 days, Bibi-Hakimeh well 145 days and Jofeir-3 well 194 days.

In drilling and related services, NIDC, a subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company, enjoys state-of-the-art equipment and skilled manpower and expertise.

Since its inception, NIDC has been responsible for exploration, development and delineation drilling of all oil and gas wells.

At present NIDC owns and operates 54 offshore and onshore oil and gas drilling rigs with 10,000 qualified and experienced personnel.

## Drought Cuts Agro Output

The target for agricultural production in the current Iranian year to March 2009 may not materialize, warned deputy agricultural jihad minister for industries and infrastructural affairs, Farid Ejlali.

He told MNA, "Because of the drought this year, the goal of 107 million tons of agricultural produce may not be achieved."

The official added that the shortfall may also affect plans to attain self-sufficiency in agro products.

Currently 86 billion cubic meters of water needed for farming is being supplied from wells, springs, surface waters, aqueducts and dams, he pointed out.

"Given that we are facing drought conditions this year in Iran, we have concentrated our efforts and policies on conserving water," Ejlali explained.

"To date, water was mostly regarded as a means to generate electricity, but we should change this mindset," he said.

## Exemplary Workers Introduced

Oil revenues should be spent on investment and increasing production, said minister of labor and social affairs on the eve of International Labor Day (May 1).

Speaking at a gathering of exemplary workers in Tehran on the occasion of Labor Week, Mohammad Jahromi explained that higher production would have a positive impact on public welfare and eradication of poverty, IRNA wrote.

He termed invention, innovation and job creation as the most important features of manpower that could help ensure public welfare.

More and more workers have been named by their units as exemplary in recent years, minister said, adding that this indicates significant growth in the number of skilled workers in industrial units.

He added that about 69 percent of these workers are creative persons. Jahromi referred to promoting the works, removing the problems of workers and removing the obstacles to production as the main policies of the ministry.

## Fighting Corruption A Top Priority

High on the agenda of the Islamic system is the fight against corruption, declared head of State Inspectorate Organization (SIO) on Wednesday.

Hojjatolislam Mohammad Niazi told IRNA that the failure to fight economic and financial corruption will only undermine the Islamic system. "For the same reason, measures are in place to fight the phenomenon."

According to him, the SIO has identified 50 areas in the economic structure and has notified relevant organizations to take necessary measures to deal with shortcomings and prevent corruption.

He said that about eight years ago, the leader issued an eight-point decree urging officialdom and the people to launch an all-out campaign to confront and uproot corruption. "Under Article 5 of the decree, supervision is an important factor for the three branches of the government in the fight against corruption."