

Iran to start up five petchem plants by end of March

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Five petrochemical projects are expected to start up in Iran by the end of March 2017, the head of National Petrochemical Co. is quoted by the countrys Mehr News agency as saying.

By mid-February, the second phase of the Kavian Petrochemical complex which will be able to produce 1 million metric tons/year (MMt/y) of ethylene and the second phase of Morvarid Petrochemical which produces ethylene and ethylene glycol (EG) will become operational. The Takhte Jamshid and Entekhab petrochemical complexes, which each produce 250,000 metric tons/year of styrene derivatives, will also go onstream, said NPC head and Iranian deputy oil minister Marzieh Shahdaei. The second phase of Pardis Petrochemical, which specializes in ammonia and urea, will be completed by the end of March.

Separately, three units at the Bushehr Petrochemical complex will become operational next year. The Bushehr complex, which is able to produce 1.65 MMt/y of methanol; 1 MMt/y of olefins; 550,000 metric tons/year of EG; 300,000 metric tons/year of light and heavy polymers; and 300,000 metric tons/year of acetic acid, is funded by Chinese financiers. The Marjan methanol plant, also known as the 7th Methanol Project, will also start up next year.

Iran's petrochemical capacity currently stands at 64 MMt/y and plans are in place to boost this figure by 40 MMt/y over the next five years, to exceed 100 MMt/y. By 2026, the annual installed petrochemical capacity is planned to reach 140 million metric tons, Shahdaei was quoted by Mehr as saying.

Shahdaei also confirmed earlier reports that Iran had signed memoranda of understanding (MoU) with Total and Linde, and said that the agreements should pave the way for contracts in about one year. Plans call for signing MoUs with two other international petrochemical firms, Shahdaei said but she did not provide details.

Iran exported 10 million metric tons of petrochemicals, worth \$9 billion, in the first 10 months of the current fiscal year that will end 31 March. The lion's share of outbound petrochemical consignments went to Asia, Europe, and South America, Shahdaei was separately quoted by Iran's Financial Tribune as saying. Exports of petrochemicals increased in volume terms compared with the same period of the previous year, but declined in value.

According to Shahdaei, Iran has a 38% market share of petrochemicals in the Middle East but produces only 4.8% of the world's petrochemicals despite having some of the largest crude oil and natural gas reserves.

Source Vanguard