

Tehran Hosting Asia-Pacific Urban Confab

► Compiled by Ghanbar Naderi

The 2nd Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) will be held in Tehran under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on May 12-14.

The event has been organized in collaboration with Iranian Inc. for Contemporary International Conferences and Fairs (IICIC) with the participation of Asia-Pacific ministers of housing and urban development, representatives from United Nations specialized agencies, UN Habitat, regional organizations, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations.

According to IRNA, Turkish Minister of Public Works and Housing, Faruk Nafiz Ozak, heading a 15-member delegation, is expected to attend the regional meeting.

Ozak's visit is taking place at the invitation of Iran's Minister of Housing and Urban Development Mohammad Saeedikia. During his stay in Tehran, the Turkish minister will discuss issues of mutual interest with several Iranian officials, including his counterpart, on the sidelines of the confab.

The conference will also provide Iran a good opportunity to exchange views with other participating delegations on the problems of urban development.

The 1st Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on housing and urban development was held in New Delhi, India, on December 13-16, 2006.

Ministers of housing from 70 countries in the Asia-Pacific region gathered in the Indian capital at the region's first high-level meeting to tackle housing problems.

Like its predecessor in New Delhi, the Tehran conference is also aimed at galvanizing government action and political commitment at the regional level to produce a new vision of what the region's urban landscape will look like in the next 15 years. It is thus expected to capitalize on opportunities of rapid economic growth by engaging in creative dialogue to implement effective and sustainable urbanization policies.

Despite its economic growth and many dynamic economies in a rapidly urbanizing re-



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gion, over two-thirds of the developing world's population living in overcrowded conditions reside in Asia.

UN Habitat research shows that overcrowding and poor ventilation is directly related to the rates of illness, child mortality, crime and other anti-social behavior.

By 2020, Asia will be home to 12 of the world's largest cities with populations of over 20 million. Despite impressive growth in China and India in the last decade, to cite two recent examples of UN Habitat research, neither country has been able to bridge the gap between rich and poor, whether in the countryside or in cities.

Ministers in Tehran will seek to develop a uniform mechanism for monitoring and reporting progress in the Asia-Pacific region on the Millennium Development Goals, espe-

cially on halving the number of people without access to clean water and sanitation by the year 2015.

The Tehran and New Delhi conferences follow closely in the footsteps of two similar regional conferences in Latin America (MINURVI) and in Africa (AMCHUD).

Some of the key outputs include a work program to discuss progress on socially inclusive housing and urban policies by learning from best practices, pro-poor policies and rights-based legislation.

Other key points include the development of a regional mechanism for monitoring progress on the Millennium Development Goals, fostering new partnerships to support the implementation of goals and the Habitat Agenda, and drawing up a global blueprint for equitable shelter and sustainable cities.

News in Brief

Pineapple Melon Harvested in Chabahar

For the first time in the country, pineapple melon was harvested from Bahokalat, Chabahar in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, announced director general of Chabahar Agricultural Jihad Department.

The crop was planted in an area of 100 hectares, Dadrahman Bameri told Iran Daily's Sadeq Dehqan. This variety of watermelon, which is commonly known as Crimson Sweet, used to be cultivated in European countries, he pointed out.

Last year, it was planted in an area of five hectares in Bahokalat on a trial basis, he added noting that drip irrigation method is used in cultivation.

"Pineapple melon is very juicy and useful for those suffering from kidney and liver disorders. It grows to a maximum weight of 17 kilograms," he said.

Iran-Afghan Rail Project Progressing

Groundwork for the third sector of the railroad linking Khaf in south Khorasan province to Herat in Afghanistan will be completed by March 2009 at a cost of \$75 million, announced an executive of overseas projects of Road and Transport Ministry Javad Tavakoli.

He told Fars News Agency that the railroad, which extends 191 km, begins in the city of Khaf, South Khorasan province, adding that the 76-kilometer first and second phases of the railroad which run from Khaf to the Afghan border are under construction.

Executive operation of the third phase of project in Afghanistan has shown a physical progress of 45 percent.

Plan to Develop Anzali FTZ

Establishing free trade zones is an important strategy for achieving development goals, observed managing director of Anzali Free Trade Zone, Kamal Firouzabadi.

According to the Persian daily 'Iran', he noted that infrastructures such as airports, ports and service institutions should be established in the zones, adding domestic and foreign investments are attracted on the basis of these capacities.

He said that Anzali Port, which has a long history, is located on the North-South corridor, adding it is near Caspian Sea ports with easy access to the Commonwealth of Independent States and the consumer market of the capital Tehran.

Firouzabadi added that 90 percent of the 3,200 hectares of land in Anzali Free Trade Zone belong to the public and private sectors, adding this is the main challenge facing decision-making entities of the region. "The problem would be resolved gradually," he noted.



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International Tender: 163/TKM/59841

Tender Subject	Open to prequalified contractors only for purchasing gear & pinion
Bid Bond	Ability to submit €1,000 as bank guarantee
Brief Description	Parts for western high speed gears single reduction model 4108 & 4105 Type 4105 Serial No. 3036 Gear/Shaft Assy L.S. P/N 12-35
Issuing Authority	Tehran Oil Refining Company Procurement Dept.
Closing Date	10 days after advertisement
Contact Details	Tehran Oil Refining Co. (MPD) Qom Road, Rey City, Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 18735/4173 Post Code: 1879913111 Tel. No: 0098-21-55901021/51 Ext.: 4012 Fax No: 009821-55932474 & 55209349 Email: talebi@tehranrefinery.ir

Public Relations Dept., Tehran Oil Refining Company

Resolving Workers' Housing Problems Crucial

Workers constitute 30 percent of the country's population and resolving the problems of this stratum will have a major impact on the society.

At present, housing is the major challenge faced by workers. Experts contend that providing workers with residential units plays an important role in increasing productivity.

Labor and Social Affairs Ministry signed an agreement with the Housing and Urban Development Ministry

last June to construct 100,000 residential units nationwide. It was the second plan implemented by the two ministries in this respect.

The first one, implemented prior to the Mehr Scheme, envisaged building houses for workers living in cities with a population of less than 50,000, the Persian daily 'Iran' reported.

Labor Ministry officials announced that the first agreement was successfully implemented.

Mehr Scheme which is aimed at constructing housing units for the vulnerable strata, provides another opportunity for the government to solve the housing problem of workers.

The agreement signed between labor and housing ministries within the framework of Mehr Scheme underlined greater supervision of the sector.

Based on figures, more than 432,000 workers do not own a residential unit and the figure is increasing.

\$107m for Dayyer Oilfield

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's special representative has allocated over \$107 million through buyback funding for the development of Dayyer oilfield in Bushehr province.

According to Fars News Agency, conditions for exploration and development are based on Article 127 of the Constitution and comply with the framework of the Fourth Five-Year Economic Develop-

ment Plan (2005-2010).

Also the Budget Law for March 2007-8 and the law on taking maximum advantage of domestic technical and engineering capacities in implementing industrial projects and creating a base for exporting services were also taken into consideration.

Dayyer block lies in the Persian Gulf, to the north and northwest of the South Pars oilfield. The South Pars field is

a gas condensate field located in the Persian Gulf. It is the largest gas field in the world, shared by Iran and Qatar.

Field total reserves are estimated to be around 1,900 tcf (53.8 tcm) gas in place and 56 billion barrels of condensate in place.

With in place reserves equivalent to 400 billion barrels of oil, the field comprises the world's biggest hydrocarbon accumulation.