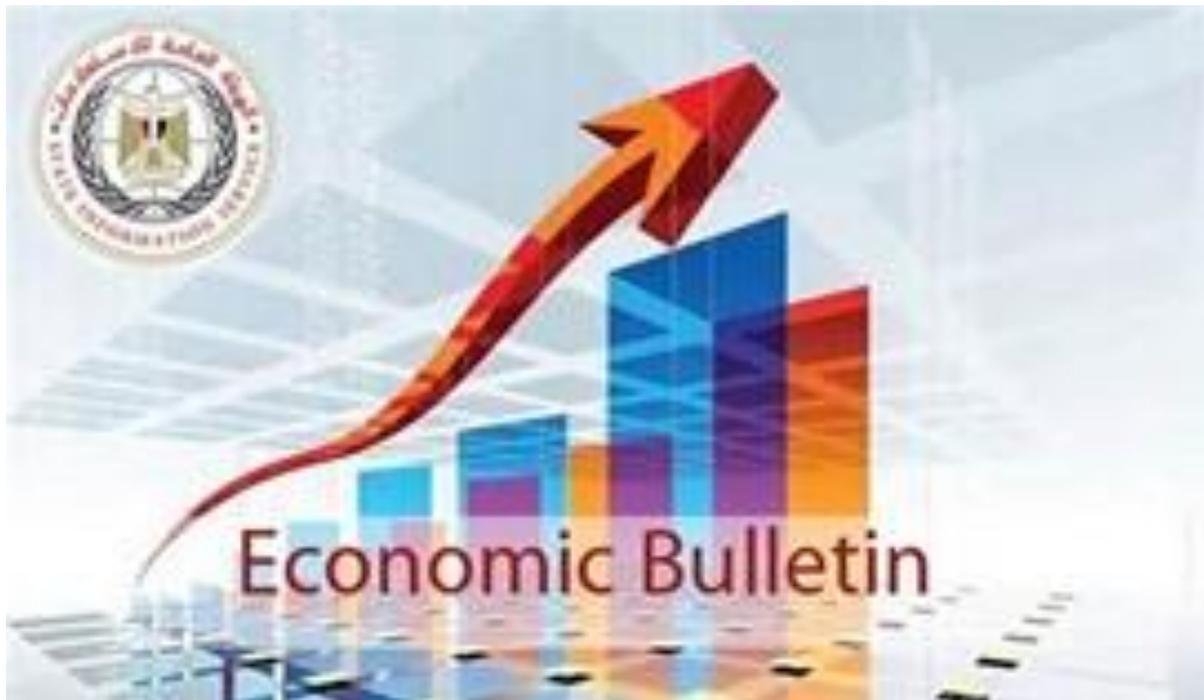


# STATE INFORMATION SERVICE

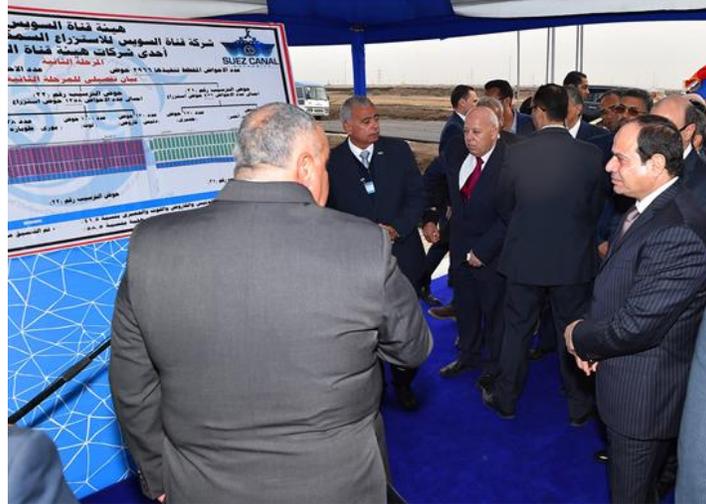


**Weekly economic Bulletin**

**(23-29 December 2017)**

**Samia Galal**

## Sisi witnesses inauguration of 2nd phase of fish farms in Suez Canal region



President Abdel Fattah El Sisi witnessed Saturday the inauguration of the second phase of the fish farms in the Suez Canal region.

The fish farms, that include 4,440 aquariums which produce 700,000 tons of fish, provide 10,000 job opportunities.

Accompanied by the Head of the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) Mohab Mamish, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi visited a new aquarium of the fish farms here and saw on the spot the fishermen while fishing.

Sisi listened to an explanation on the contents of the fish farms and the second phase of the venture where 3,106 out of 4,440 aquariums were made.

The president gathered for a photo-opportunity with the attendees who witnessed the inauguration of the second phase of fish farms that are considered the biggest in eastern the Suez Canal.

## Egyptian economy in 2017 stronger



Steps taken by the government in 2017 in implementation of the economic reform program have started to bear fruit, given economic indices in the various arenas.

The beginning of 2017 was also the start of measures taken by the government late in 2016 as part of the reform program, mainly liberating the exchange rate, applying the Value Added Tariff, reducing imports of unnecessary commodities and raising fuel prices to bring the economy back on the growth path, Minister of Planning Dr Hala el Saeed said.

The first quarter of fiscal 2017/2017 witnessed a tangible increase in economic growth rate reaching 5.2%, compared with 3.4% during the same period in the previous fiscal, due to growth reached in all the economic sectors, she said, referring to 50% in hotels and restaurants, 9.1% in construction and 6.9% in transformational industries.

Total deficit in the Gross Domestic Product reached 2% during the first quarter of fiscal 2017/2018, compared with 2.4% during the same period in the previous fiscal. Public revenues increased by 33.2% and public expenditure by 22.6%, she said.

The rate of inflation on an annual basis continued to drop reaching 31.8% in October 2017 after reaching 34.2% in July 2017 due to the increase in fuel prices on June 29, 2017 and its impact on the prices of several other commodities, she added.

She referred to the decrease in the unemployment rate during the first quarter of fiscal 2017/2018 to reach 11.9% compared to around 12.6% during the first quarter of the previous fiscal, pointing out that it is by far the best rate reached since 2009/2010 when the figure was 9.36%.

The minister noted institutional reform and developing the organizing structure of ministries and government bodies.

As for the e-government, the minister said "we are moving steadily toward turning to the e-government through implementing several programs and projects. The government purchase portal [www.etenders.gov.eg](http://www.etenders.gov.eg) was formed to serve registering local commodities and link the national databases with the aim of facilitating procedures for citizens.

## **Cabinet approves 4 petroleum cooperation agreements**



Petroleum Minister Tarek el Mullah said on Thursday the Egyptian cabinet approved four petroleum cooperation agreements and referred them to the House of Representatives for ratification.

At a press conference, the minister said two agreements were signed by the state-owned Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation and they were amendments to already-existing deals with foreign partners over concession in North Sinai maritime area and Abu Senan area in the Western Sahara.

The two others were signed by the state-owned Ganoub El Wadi Petroleum Holding Company and they are related to the tender it won as regards concession in West Gabal El Zeit and Taer El Bahr area in Suez, the minister said.

The deals aim at attracting new global investments to Egypt in the oil and gas drilling and exploration domains and consequently increasing Egypt's oil and natural gas reserves, he added.

Under the four deals, around 17 wells will be dug and 230-million-dollar investments are expected in the petroleum and natural gas domains, he said

The new deals are expected to be ratified by the parliament within the coming few months.

## **New Al Robeiki leather city coming to life**



Just beyond the outskirts of Cairo on a desert road to the Suez Canal, a new industrial zone is coming to life to modernize Egypt's leather industry, said Trade and Industry Minister Tarek Qabil on Sunday.

New Al Robeiki City will replace the centuries-old tanneries in Magra Al Ayoon in the Old Islamic Cairo.

Around 24 factories are now operational in the new city, the minister said during a tour of the city to open four new factories.

The decision to relocate the tanneries aims at developing the leather industry in Egypt and setting up a new industrial complex compatible with international standards, he added.

A board of trustees will be formed to be in charge of the city's services and maintenance works, he said, adding that it will include members from the General Authority of Industrial Development, Cairo Investment and Real Estate Company and representatives of the leather tanning chamber.

By the beginning of next year, all of the centuries-old tanneries in Magra Al Ayoon will be relocated to the new city, the minister said.

## **Investment min., EBRD sign energy project agreement worth dlr\$ 200m**



Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Dr Sahar Nasr Wednesday signed an investment agreement with Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Eric Rasmussen on promoting energy capacity at the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company (EGAS) at costs amounting to dlr\$ 200 million.

The project that will be carried out by EGAS and Egypt Gas Company, aims at raising the energy capacity of the Egyptian gas pipeline and the gas transfer infrastructure, Nasr said in statements Wednesday following the signing of the agreement.

The project aims at reducing operation costs which will eventually serve production costs in the oil sector and decrease import of energy, she said.

The bank's investments in Egypt have reached euros 2.7 billion in 52 ventures in the infrastructure, energy, sanitation and water and transportation fields. The bank has also offered technical assistance to more than 500 small and medium-sized local institutions, she added.

Rasmussen said he is very glad that the bank supports Egypt in promoting the gas infrastructure and sustainable development.

He stressed the bank's commitment to supporting its countries of operation, mainly Egypt, noting that EBRD seeks to increase the size of green economy funding to reach 40% of its annual investments within a year.

The bank contributed to enhancing renewable energy in Egypt by dlrs 500 million in 2017.

## **Planning min.: Cabinet approves unified planning law**



Minister of Planning, Follow-Up and Administrative Reform Hala el Saeed said that the cabinet approved the Unified Planning Act and referred it to the Egyptian State Council (ESC).

Following the ESC's approval, the law will be referred to the House of Representatives to endorse it.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, the minister said that the current planning law was adopted in 1972, when the political, social and economic conditions were totally different from nowadays.

There is an article in the 2014 Constitution related to the transition to decentralization and power transfer, which means moving decision-making from the national to the local levels, the minister stressed.

In 2016, the state adopted the "Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030" that charts the way towards inclusive development in the country, she added.

## **Egypt to achieve self-sufficiency of liquefied natural gas by end of 2018**



Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Tarek el Molla on Tuesday said Egypt would achieve self-sufficiency of liquefied natural gas by the end of 2018.

Addressing a meeting of the Industry Committee of the House of Representatives, Molla added that the price of gas allocated for industries may be reduced after achieving self-sufficiency.

The ministry works to create an integrated and interrelated investment system to encourage global investment, the minister said.

Meanwhile, the minister said the strategic goal of his ministry is to increase the country's gold balance as a strategic reserve at the Central Bank of Egypt, he added.

## **Egypt's bourse, banks off on Monday on occasion of New Year**



The Egyptian Exchange (EGX) and banks will be off on Monday on the occasion of the New Year.

In a statement to MENA on Wednesday, sources with the Central Bank of Egypt and the EGX said they will resume work as of Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

## **Investors on bourse list increased by 26 percent**



Minister of Investment and International Cooperation Sahar Nasr said on Tuesday that the number of new foreign investors on the bourse hit 1,150 in 2017 at an increase rate of 26 percent compared to the past year.

In her statement at the annual conference of the Stock Exchange, she added that trading on the bourse hit 292 billion pounds; the highest since 2009.

She described stories of success by the bourse as an indicator of the viability and success of the economic reform program in Egypt.