

## Iran to welcome first private gas stations in January

**Next month Iran will follow through with the partial privatization of the fuel retailing sector.**

Some 26 Iranian companies with license to operate gas stations will begin their activities in January 2017, marking a new era for the country's fuel retailing business.

"A total of 26 domestic companies have obtained the license to operate gas stations in Iran. They are expected to begin operations in a month," said Mohammad Reza Mazloumi, the commercial director of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC), according to the Financial Tribune.

Mazloumi also informed that a number of other domestic companies were being evaluated for eligibility or had submitted requests. Although no foreign companies have presented a formal request to operate in Iran to date, Mazloumi said that all requests would be considered.

The head of the National Private Gas Station Owners Guild has welcomed the move by the Iranian administration stressing that private investment will air the construction of new stations and would improve overall services.

Iran currently has around 3,600 gas stations servicing some 79 million inhabitants, a far lower ratio of fuel station per person than in the UK (one station for every 7,500) or the U.S. (1 for every 2,600), according to data from the NIOPDC.