

Syria's power programme is on schedule

Syria has more than doubled its electricity output since 1977, keeping it on target for a planned fourfold increase by 1990. Output for 1980 was 4,020 million kWh, and is expected to rise steadily during the next five years to meet estimated needs of 7,826 million kWh in 1985. By 1990, when all 5,400 villages are planned to be connected to the electricity grid, use is targeted at 20,622 million kWh (MEED 13:2:81).

The Damascus daily Syria Times reports that the Electricity Ministry is preparing tender documents for the construction of a new power station near Damascus. Tenders for the two by 150-MW station had been expected to go out in August or September 1980 (Syria, MEED Special Report, March 1980, page 20). However, the two by 170-MW Baniyas power station, being built by Italy's *Gruppo Industrie Elettromeccaniche*

per Impianti all'Esero (GIE), should be completed by the end of 1981, as planned. The station's cost appears to have risen to £Syr 700 million (\$176 million) from the original \$140 million estimate.

Operational tests on a new 64-MW unit at the Qattinah power station should start later in March, Electricity Minister Ahmad Yousef said in February. The minister added that electricity transformer stations — at Adra, Latakia, Shaikh Miskin, Fairouza, Idlib, Baniyas and Aleppo — will be completed in two years. They are believed to be part of an order for 20 such stations placed with East Germany's *VEB Starkstrom-Anlagenbau*.

Syrian officials also announced that in 1980 366 villages were connected to the electricity supply, bringing the total to 1,947. The Electricity Ministry's 1981 budget is set at £Syr 1,400 (\$353 million).

SYRIA

Baathist anniversary marked

The government has announced further projects to commemorate the 18th anniversary of the Baath party's rule (MEED 13:3:81). Schemes include:

□ **Tartous governorate:** Construction of 100 homes at Ajamieh at a cost of £Syr 11 million (\$2.7 million); construction of 120 homes at Safita (£Syr 17 million — \$4.2 million); construction of a further 200 homes (£Syr 18 million — \$4.5 million), and completion of 170 homes at Ajamieh (£Syr 20 million — \$5 million);

□ **Aleppo governorate:** Opening of electricity generating and water pumping stations for 118 villages between the Euphrates river and Manbej (MEED 6:2:81);

□ **Hama governorate:** Opening of an electricity generating station and drinking water supply system for Al-Salamiye, and

□ **Raqqa governorate:** Start of construction of 40,000 workers' homes at Raqqa and water supply network for five nearby villages.

Tartous-Crete cable opens

The new coaxial cable between Syria and Crete was opened on 10 March in Tartous by Communications Minister Raafat Kurdi. The 65 km cable — which has 480 circuits — was designed to link the two countries. The cable is operated by the Syrian Telephone and Telegraph Company of France, a subsidiary of the French company Alcatel.

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links between Syria and Europe in particular, and between Europe and the eastern Arab countries in general.

The *Public Telecommunication Establishment* has announced plans to install 174,500 new lines between 1981 and the end of 1983. Syria has 263,900 lines, compared with 54,900 in 1963.

IN BRIEF

○ The wife of one of President Asad's most prominent critics was shot dead at her home in the West German town of Aachen on 17 March. Issam al-Attar is regarded as the chief leader-in-exile of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic fundamentalist movement seeking the downfall of the Asad government. He was not at home when three gunmen killed his wife, Banen, as she opened the door.

○ Japan's *Mitsubishi Motors Corporation* has won a 2,000 million yen (\$9.7 million) order for 410 large trucks and tractors. Client is the state-owned *Foreign Trade Organisation for Machinery & Equipment (Aftomachine)*. In July 1980, Mitsubishi won a 3,500 million yen (\$17 million) contract from Aftomachine for 540 trucks and buses.

○ The Ibn Hani Meridien hotel in Latakia was opened on 11 March by Tourism Minister - George Radwan. The 300-room hotel, operated by *Meridien Hotels* — an affiliate of *Air France* — cost £Syr 200 million (\$50 million). Meridien hotels plans to open its next Syrian hotel at Palmyra on 4 April (MEED 27:2:81, Travel).

○ A total of 8 million fish fingers were produced locally in 1980.

TUNISIA

Farm machinery scheme goes ahead

A new company, *Complexe Mecanique de Tunisie (CMT)*, has been set up under

law 74 74 to manage a TD 47 million (\$117.9 million) farm machinery scheme (MEED 4 4 80).

CMT's head, Slaheddine Pacha, says proposals for siting the factory in a "decentralised, interior zone" will be submitted to the government soon. Local consultant *Tunisie Consult* has been examining several possible sites. Project studies by *Banque de Developpement Economique de Tunisie* are being updated; negotiations with West German technical partner *Kloekner Humboldt Deutz* will start soon.

A contract for the scheme could be signed "before the end of April," Pacha says. This would enable the original timetable to be kept. Factory construction is planned to start in 1982, with the first tractors to be produced the following year. The complex will eventually produce 2,200 tractors, 6,000 diesel engines, 100 combine harvesters and 700 small farm machines a year.

The scheme will create 1,000 jobs and save considerable foreign exchange, as about 1,800 tractors are imported annually. It will also entail considerable local subcontracting (60 per cent for tractors) and speed up the development of an integrated local mechanical industry, Pacha says.

Work to start on fertiliser complex

Site work is to start in June on a TD 45 million (\$112.9 million) fertiliser complex near the Gafsa phosphate mines in the south. The scheme is to be managed by the newly created *Industrie Chimique de Gafsa (ICG)*.

The complex will comprise a 400,000-ton-a-year triple superphosphate plant, a 500-ton-a-day phosphoric acid plant and a 1,500-ton-a-day sulphuric acid plant. Studies are being done by ICG, *Industries Chimiques Maghrebines* and *Societe Industrielle d'Acide Phosphorique & d'Engrais*.

ICG expects to invite international equipment supply tenders in June. This is Tunisia's first non-turnkey fertiliser scheme.

IN BRIEF

○ Telephone transmission equipment contracts valued at about TD 20 million (\$50.2 million) will be awarded soon, Transport & Communications Ministry officials say. Swedish, French, Japanese and UK firms are reported to be among bidders in an eight-lot restricted tender invited in December 1980. The tender is thought to be linked with telephone exchange contracts awarded in 1980 to France's *CIT-Alcatel* and Sweden's *L M Ericsson* (MEED 24:10:80, 1:8:80; 27:6:80).

○ Foreign exchange earnings from tourism rose to TD 250 million (\$627.4 million) in 1980 from TD 205 million (\$514.4 million) in 1979, according to Office National du Tourisme & du Thermalisme estimates. The number of tourists is estimated to have risen by 18 per cent to 1.6 million. Algeria topped