

Miankaleh petchem never had environmental permit: **Official**

Social Desk

In a recent statement, the Director General of the Environmental Assessment Office of Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE), Saeed Karimi, categorically denied the issuance of any environmental permit to Miankaleh petrochemical.

He challenged any claimants to produce such a permit, which he said must come with a signature, hologram, and an embossed seal, IRNA reported.

Karimi was addressing the status of the Miankaleh petrochemical project, which has been under scrutiny since March 2021. The project's environmental assessment report was submitted to the DoE and subsequently reviewed by the organization's environmental assessment office. The project manager was notified of necessary amendments on several occasions.

Despite the convening of the environmental assessment committee three times, the DoE ultimately did not approve the project's implementation. Karimi dismissed any claims of permit issuance as false.

He further revealed that the Miankaleh petrochemical project was removed from the agenda after relevant institutions intervened. He reported recent developments indicating the commencement of the project's execution, including fencing around the project area and possible concrete pouring operations.

In response, the DoE corresponded with the Director



● IRNA

General of the DoE's provincial branch in Mazandaran, asserting the project's lack of an environmental assessment permit and urging necessary legal measures to halt it. The city and provincial administrations subsequently pursued legal follow-up with the project manager and relevant institutions.

Karimi also referenced a 2020 government resolution on the construction of a propylene park, which may have influenced the investor's decision to launch the project. The DoE has corresponded with the presidency to cancel articles 4 and 5 of this resolution.

The DoE's opposition to the petrochemical project in the Miankaleh area is rooted in the region's ecological sensitivity, which includes a wildlife sanctuary and a wetland. Karimi emphasized that land exploitation should align with a region's ecological potential, as stipulated in the sixth paragraph of the policies announced by the Leader in the field of the environment.

Karimi also noted that the project contradicts the province's land development program and the integrated beach management plan. He stressed that the



● YJC

Miankaleh petrochemical project lacks environmental justification due to these factors.

Regarding the land allocated for the project, Karimi stated that the Land Affairs Organization of Iran provided the land to the investor, but sought to reclaim it after the environmental permit was not issued.

Karimi dismissed claims that the petrochemical plant's construction would create 300 jobs in the region, arguing that other projects, such as tourism, could generate more employment. He also questioned the project's economic justification, given that its product is intended to be transported to Damghan, Semnan Province, by pipeline.

Finally, Karimi warned of the potential environmental damage if the project's required desalination

sludge enters the Caspian Sea, a closed ecosystem.

Why Miankaleh petchem should not proceed?

Mehdi Esmaili Bidhendi, an environmental expert, expressed his concerns about new constructions at Miankaleh petrochemical project, saying, "These projects are primarily caused by a flawed perception of development and progress, rather than a lack of supervision," IMNA reported.

The expert went on to say, "Considering the sensitivity of the environment and the fact that this area is a wildlife sanctuary, Miankaleh petrochemical should not proceed with this project, as it lacks both an environmental permit and violates regulations."

He further added, "The investor's insistence on this petrochemical project

is based on the argument of creating employment in this province. However, it is important to note that Mazandaran currently bears the 21st highest unemployment rate in the country. In the province of Mazandaran, 52 percent of the workforce is engaged in the service sector, while 30 percent work in the industry sector. This data underscores the vast potential of this province in the service sector."

Responding to the General Inspection Office of Iran's endorsement of the Miankaleh petrochemical project, the environmental expert raised a valid concern, stating, "If the DoE, which is responsible for this area opposes the implementation of this project, how can the inspection organization claim that there are no issues with it?"

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Iran to inaugurate second mega-hospital later this week



● ISNA

Social Desk

In a significant stride towards bolstering the nation's healthcare infrastructure, the Minister of Health, Bahram Einollahi, announced the inauguration of the state-of-the-art Ghadir mega-hospital later this week on Friday.

The grand opening, scheduled to coincide with Eid al-Ghadir, will be graced by the presence of the president at the Shohada-e Tajrish hospital complex, ISNA reported.

Einollahi elucidated that the establishment of me-

ga-hospitals is a cornerstone of the Ministry of Health's strategic policies. The objective behind these colossal healthcare facilities is to offer patients a comprehensive suite of specialized and sub-specialized medical services under one roof, thereby eliminating the need for multiple visits to different centers.

In line with this approach, the country's second large-scale hospital, named Ghadir, will be unveiled by the president at the Shohada-e Tajrish hospital complex on the auspicious day of Eid

al-Ghadir Kham.

Einollahi, citing the Ministry of Health's announcement, revealed that Ghadir mega-hospital boasts an impressive capacity of 821 beds, 68 emergency beds, and 24 operating rooms. The hospital is fully equipped with all requisite medical apparatuses, ensuring a high standard of patient care.

The Minister of Health further highlighted that Ghadir mega-hospital is outfitted with a cutting-edge emergency heliport, capable of coordinating with the Civil Aviation Organization and the country's emergency services. This facility will enable swift aerial transportation of patients to the hospital, significantly reducing response times in critical situations.

In a symbolic gesture, the inaugural flight from Ghadir mega-hospital's heliport will take place on the opening day, in collaboration with Tehran medical emergency organization.

Official update on the state of Iran's drought



● ISNA

Social Desk

The Director of Iran's National Center for Climate and Drought Crisis Management, Ahad Vazifeh, has issued a stark warning about the country's escalating drought crisis, citing land subsidence and desertification as key concerns.

Vazifeh revealed that a decade-long analysis of rainfall patterns indicates that Iran has been grappling with a persistent drought, with precipitation levels falling significantly short of the country's requirements, ISNA reported.

The official noted that the majority of the coun-

try's regions failed to receive their expected share of rainfall over the past year. Repercussions of this shortfall, he explained, are still evident in the environment.

Historically, adequate rainfall has facilitated the replenishment of underground water reserves, a process that has been severely disrupted over the past three years due to the ongoing drought.

Vazifeh also provided an overview of the country's rainfall patterns over the past year, comparing them to the 30-year average. He highlighted that several provinces, including northern Fars, Bushehr, Yazd, western

Isfahan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Kordostan, Western Azarbaijan, and Lorestan, have received their long-term average rainfall to a significant extent.

However, he emphasized that some provinces, such as Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad and Bushehr have recorded even more rainfall than the annual average over the past one to three years. The southern region of Sistan and Baluchistan and the eastern part of Hormozgan have also experienced favorable conditions, largely due to torrential rains in July and August.

NEWS IN BRIEF

There's a link between climate change and shrinking human brain

Science Alert - A new study suggests a link between past climate changes and a drop in the size of the human brain - an adaptive response that emerges in an analysis of climate records and human remains over a 50,000-year period.

The research by cognitive scientist Jeff Morgan Stibel from the Natural History Museum in California adds to our understanding of how humans develop and adapt in response to environmental stress.

"Given recent global warming trends, it is critical to understand the impact of climate change, if any, on human brain size and ultimately human behavior," Stibel writes in his published paper.

The study looked at how the brain size of 298 Homo specimens changed over the last 50,000 years in relation to natural records of global temperature, humidity, and rainfall. When the climate got warmer, the average brain size grew significantly smaller than when it was cooler.

Activists plug holes on 10 Spanish golf courses in water protest



● GETTY IMAGES

The Guardian - Climate activists in Spain have filled in holes on 10 golf courses to draw attention to the huge amounts of water the "elitist leisure pursuit" uses as a nationwide drought continues in the first heatwave of the year.

Members of Extinction Rebellion (XR) revealed their latest direct-action campaign in a video released on Sunday, saying they had targeted courses in locations including Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, the Basque country, Navarra and Ibiza. Footage showed activists plugging holes with soil and planting seedlings alongside signs reading: "Drought alert. Golf course closed for climate justice." In a statement, XR said it had carried out the action to "denounce the wasting of water by golf in the midst of one of the worst droughts in history". It said golf courses in Spain used more water than the cities of Madrid and Barcelona combined, with each hole requiring more than 100,000 liters of water a day to maintain the greens.