

Demand for natural gas will increase by 36%: *Minister*



The demand for natural gas will increase by 36% by 2050, according to the forecasts stipulated in the Outlook of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji said on Friday. The minister, who made the remarks during his speech at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the 7th GECF Summit of Heads of State and Government in Algiers, the capital of Algeria, added that by 2025, the share of

natural gas in the world's energy basket is expected to exceed that of coal, Shana reported.

By 2040, natural gas along with renewables may improve air quality which is to become the main source of energy in the world, he noted adding replacing traditional fuels could provide a possible and cost-effective path for energy transition. Development of the gas industry and materialization of supply and demand security in the world demand establishment of global peace and depoliticization of trade energy, Owji said.

"Geopolitical tensions and the application of any unilateral or multilateral sanctions are in

contradiction with the principles and standards of international law and jeopardize the energy security of societies."

The geopolitical and regional developments that occurred in the last two years have shown that natural gas and its international trade are still considered a vital factor in the energy security of the human societies of the world, he noted.

The minister added that despite the steps taken to achieve environmental goals and liberalization of energy markets, whenever global energy security is jeopardized, energy policymakers give priority to ensuring their country's energy security over other goals.

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji speaks at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the 7th GECF Summit of Heads of State and Government in Algiers, the capital of Algeria on March 1, 2024.
● SHANA

Iran, Russia sign comprehensive health cooperation document

Iran and Russia inked an initial document on comprehensive health cooperation between the two countries.

The agreement, signed on Friday during the 17th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission Cooperation, signifies a collaborative effort in various health-related

areas, IRNA wrote.

The agreement was signed by Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, a special aide to Iranian minister of health, and Sergei Glagolev, the Russian deputy health minister.

The accord results from extensive discussions between the two nations, covering diverse aspects

such as joint production of medicines and medical equipment, health research, integration of modern and digital technologies, medical education, academic collaboration, training health experts, and the management of both pandemic and non-pandemic diseases.

Arab musicians' songs about Gaza mirror public sympathy with Palestinians

Music has become a powerful tool for expression and solidarity in the Middle East as artists from various countries respond to the ongoing conflict in Gaza through their work. These songs, ranging in tone from defiant anthems praising Hamas to poignant ballads mourning the loss of life, are not only climbing the charts but also reigniting discussions on the Palestinian cause in Arab popular culture. Egyptian wedding singer Rudy and her songs lauding Hamas spokesman Abu Obaida have captured widespread attention, symbolizing the collective sentiment of resistance and frustration towards the support Israel receives from the US and Europe. Amidst a backdrop of devastating human tolls reported by both sides, the role of music in shaping public opinion and keeping the plight of Gaza in the global consciousness is undeniable.

From Cairo to Jordan, Arab

musicians are channeling their emotions into music that speaks volumes about the Palestinian cause. Rudy's performances at weddings have turned into venues of political expression, with her song about Abu Obaida resonating deeply among attendees. In Jordan, a collaboration among artists from different Arab nations resulted in a song dreaming of Palestinian return, garnering millions of views and sparking conversation on social media. These musical expressions reflect a broader sentiment of defiance against Israel's military actions and solidarity with the Palestinian people, underscored by recent polls indicating strong Arab support for the Palestinian cause and opposition to normalization efforts with Israel, bnnbreaking.com reported.

The surge in popularity for songs sympathizing with the Palestinians or encouraging Hamas is a testament to the significant role mu-



Musician, producer and singer Zeid Hamdan performs on stage, during an event where all proceeds go to families affected in Southern Lebanon, at Ked in Beirut, Lebanon, February 3, 2024.
● REUTERS

sic plays in shaping and reflecting public opinion. Artist such as Lebanese rapper Jaafar Touffar and Kuwaiti singer Humood Al Khuder are using their platforms to draw attention to the conflict and its wider implications. The imagery and lyrics in their work evoke powerful symbols of Palestinian resistance and resilience, from the keys to lost homes to the iconic

kuffiyah. Polls conducted in the region show a clear consensus viewing the conflict as a legitimate resistance against occupation, with a significant majority considering the US and Israel as the primary threats to regional security.

Despite the unlikely impact of their music on the political landscape or the decisions of Arab leaders, artists like Ghaliaa Chaker,

who participated in the collaborative song 'Returning' recorded in Jordan, aim to keep international attention focused on Gaza's plight. The collective effort of these musicians goes beyond entertainment or artistic expression; it is a call to action and a reminder of the ongoing human tragedy unfolding in Gaza. As Lebanese musician Zeid Hamdan aptly puts it, his performances are no longer about self-promotion but about spreading a message of urgency and solidarity. Through their art, these artists hope to ensure that the world continues to talk about and remember the situation in Gaza, keeping the flames of awareness and empathy alive.



Minister urges to introduce Iran's tourism spot during Nowruz

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ezzatollah Zarghami, addressed concerns about inadequate promotion of historical sites and tourist centers along travel routes.

Speaking at the 'Welcoming Nowruz and Blessed Ramadan' conference attended by ministry officials, Zarghami emphasized the need for improved communication and introduction of cultural and historical attractions, IRNA wrote.

Zarghami revealed an agreement with the Ministry of Roads to allocate 10 percent of roadside advertising boards to showcase tourism potentials, historical sites, and handicrafts.

He criticized the current state of information dissemination and underlined the importance of providing travelers with guidance on cultural and historical landmarks.

"As hosts to millions of domestic and foreign tourists, our goal is to help them relax and rejuvenate. Understanding how to interact with these individuals is crucial, especially during this time, which is also a period of relaxation for yourselves," Zarghami urged officials. Expressing concern about some mosques and roadside prayer spaces closing during non-prayer hours, Zarghami emphasized that these places should remain open, especially in tourist and cultural locations.

He also highlighted the significance of promoting handicraft sales during Nowruz, stating that cultural and historical sites serve as ideal places for showcasing and selling traditional crafts.

Russia and Iran negotiating oil, gas swap deals: *Novak*

Russia and Iran continue to negotiate oil and gas swap agreements, the Russian deputy prime minister announced.

"The issue is at the discussion stage as it is largely tied not only with the country with which swap is made, but also the logistics, transportation and

other issues. As we know there is a memorandum of understanding inked between Russia's Gazprom and the National Iranian Oil Company," Alexander Novak told reporters. Russian firms are still interested in participating in oil and gas projects in Iran, with the issue being devel-

oped and the conditions being analyzed, he added, according to TASS.

The parties also continue negotiating the potential creation of a joint electronic gas trading platform, Novak added.

Tehran and Moscow signed 19 cooperation documents during the closing cer-

emony of the 17th Joint Economic Commission between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation in Tehran.

The final document was signed by Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji and Alexander Novak, the commission co-chairs, and 18 others were inked by other

officials.

Iran's Deputy Oil Minister for Engineering, Research, and Technology Vahid-Reza Zeidifard and Russian Deputy Energy Minister Pavel Sorokin signed the document to cooperate in scientific and technical fields of the oil and gas industry.