

Imports of second-hand cars allowed for all Iranians: Spokesman



Economic Desk

The imports of 2019 model cars and above, compliant with current European standards, have been authorized for all Iranians, as announced by the government spokesman.

On the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Ali Bahadori Jahromi stated that the move represents a major effort aimed at tackling monopoly in the domestic automotive industry, ISNA reported.

The decree allows real entities both inside and outside the county to import vehicles, he said.

This bill has been approved by Parliament, Jahromi said.

In last July, the Guardian Council, the Iranian government body responsible for signing parliament bills into law, approved a Parliament law that allows unlimited imports of brand-new and second-hand cars into the country amid efforts by the government to contain rampant prices of the domestically-produced cars.

Iran's top legislative body, at the time, endorsed a legislation ratified in June, 2023, which allowed the government to lift restrictions on imports of cars into Iran.

The legislation is based on a bill submitted by the Iranian government to Parliament in last April, which asked for removal of bans on car imports to help contain car prices in the country and to respond to soaring demand for cars.

Iran has relied on increased domestic manufacturing of cars instead of imports to meet a growing demand in the country amid sanctions that have caused a change in import priorities.

According to Iran's Industry Minister Abbas Aliabadi, car output in the country will reach 1.7 million units in the current calendar year which ends on March 20, 2025. Aliabadi said on last Monday that Iranian automotive companies had produced a total of 1.335 million cars in the calendar year to March 2024.

He said the steady rise in domestic car manufacturing has allowed Iran to move up to 16th from 18th in two years in the global ranking of countries based on the number of cars produced annually.



Iran-Russia gas supply deal 'masterpiece' in energy diplomacy: Owji

Economic Desk

Iran's oil minister has praised the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Tehran and Moscow on the supply of Russian gas to Iran as a "masterpiece" in the field of energy diplomacy, which could lead to an economic revolution and energy security in the region.

"The masterpiece of energy diplomacy lies in the signing of the agreement on the transfer of the Russian gas to the Islamic Republic, which could lead to an economic revolution and energy security for neighboring countries in the region through Iran,"

Javad Owji said on the sidelines of the weekly cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

On June 26, a memorandum of understanding on Russian gas transfer to Iran was signed during a ceremony attended by the Iranian oil minister and the special envoy of the Russian Federation and CEO of Russia's energy giant Gazprom, Alexey Miller. Upon turning into a contract and potential implementation, the agreement will reportedly enable Iran to import gas from Russia and supply it to Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Addressing the cabinet meeting,

the oil minister provided new details of the agreement, which will transform "Iran into a gas supply hub in the region."

"Currently, the total production of Sweet Gas from the country's 23 refineries is around 850 million cubic meters per day. By implementing this plan, 300 million cubic meters of gas will be imported from Russia daily," he said, adding that Russia has also agreed to cover the expenses of constructing this pipeline, as they excel in building pipelines on the seabed.

"Additionally, the transit gas pipeline from north to south via Iran is a significant development that

has not been seen in Iran's history, with annual financial transactions of 10 to 12 billion dollars," Oil Ministry's SHANA news service quoted Owji as saying.

The construction of this pipeline will not only guarantee a steady supply of domestic gas but also will significantly enhance the capacity and reliability of the country's gas exports, he said.

The oil minister stated that the 30-year contract, viewed as the pinnacle of the government's regional diplomacy, positions Iran as a gas supply hub, leading to a substantial increase in commercial transactions, economic and political security of the country.

Russia has been facing an oversupply of natural gas since early 2022 when its exports to Europe came under sanctions due to the war in Ukraine.

Iran sits on the world's second-largest gas reserves after Russia. US sanctions have hindered Iran's access to technology and slowed the development of its gas exports.

Gazprom has seen its gas supplies to Europe, once the source of two-thirds of its gas sales revenue, plummeting to post-Soviet lows over the conflict in Ukraine. Last year, it incurred losses of almost \$7 billion, its first annual loss since 1999.

France in political ...

Macron's plea seems to exclude the far-right and some

parts of the far-left present in the NUPES coalition. In essence, Macron seeks an alliance between the moderate left and his centrist supporters to secure a parliamentary majority. However, so far, the French president has failed to forge a political union among the groups. Now, about 10 days after the elections, the nation is still in a state of uncertainty as the first session of the National Assembly looms.

Adding to the turmoil is the resignation of moderate Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, which Macron has accepted while urging him to remain as a caretaker until a new government can be formed. However, it is unclear when and under what circumstances this new government will emerge.

What further fuels the French people's concern about this unstable political situation is the upcoming global sporting event—the Olympic Games in Paris, which

are set to begin in just eight days.

At present, there is no clear prospect that this limbo will be resolved by the Olympics' opening ceremony or even in the coming weeks. The left-wing coalition, having secured the most seats in parliament, believes it is entitled to have the prime minister chosen from among its ranks.

On the other hand, the far-right, buoyed by its significant achievement of securing 143 seats, remains a force to be reckoned with and will not accept being sidelined from the governing coalition.

Macron has stated that the time to appoint a new prime minister will come when the political forces reach an agreement to form a parliamentary majority—a demand that does not seem easily achievable. An alliance between the right and left appears unlikely.

The expected option is a coalition between the left and Macron's centrists, but even this hinges on political talks and understandings regarding the selection

of the prime minister—whether from the left or Macron's party. Moreover, Macron has a clear disagreement with parts of the NUPES coalition, particularly the far-left La France Insoumise, and has asked them to exclude the radicals. However, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of this far-left party, has already expressed his readiness to become prime minister.

What keeps France's future shrouded in uncertainty is that even if a coalition is formed to secure a majority in the parliament, it will likely not lead to a strong government. Such a government would constantly be on the brink of collapse due to the fragile coalition dynamics. Macron is going through tough times and may face even harder days ahead. According to The New York Times, Macron appears deeply isolated. After seven years in office, he has failed to establish a robust centrist party. The right-wing and left-wing parties, which seemed outdated when he came to power in 2017, have regained their strength.

Iran's non-oil exports topped 7% in Q1 calendar year

Iran's export of non-oil goods in the first three months of the Iranian year (began on March 20) reached \$13.5 billion, registering a 7.1% growth compared to the same period last year. According to the statistics released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the country's export of oil- and non-oil goods from March 21 to June 22, 2024 hit \$21.5 billion and \$25.5 billion, respectively, showing an 18.6% increase compared to the

last year's corresponding period, Mehr News Agency reported.

Also, the customs (non-oil) exports in the first three months of the previous Iranian calendar year (March 21 to June 22, 2023) hit \$12.6 billion, with the figure reaching \$13.5 billion in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 to June 22, 2024), which indicates a 7.1% growth compared to the same period last year, the report added.

Iran imported \$14.3 billion worth of products in the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year, showing a 1.4% increase compared to the last year's corresponding period.

The balance of trade in the first three months of the previous and current Iranian calendar year reached \$7.4 billion and \$11.2 billion, respectively, indicating a 51.3% growth compared to the last year's corresponding period.

