

Shades of Iran's gas supremacy over Qatar

Economy Desk

ANALYSIS

For several years, Iran has been ahead of Qatar in extracting gas from the South Pars field.

However, experts believe that Qatar's recent decision to take certain actions in this field may reduce Iran's opportunities, and if this issue is overlooked, Iran may lose its advantage. The South Pars gas field, known

as the South Pars/North Dome Gas-Condensate field in Qatar, is one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, shared between Iran and Qatar. This vast gas field is located in the Persian Gulf, at a great depth,

and holds a significant portion of the world's gas reserves. The South Pars gas field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, with 3,700 square kilometers in Iranian waters and 6,000 square kilometers in

Qatari territory. Gas extraction from this field is crucial for both countries, as each relies on it to meet their domestic energy needs and export to global markets. Until a few years ago, Iran lagged behind Qatar in

gas extraction from this field. Qatar had been able to exploit the field more extensively due to its access to more modern technologies and significant investments in the oil and gas industry.

Iran's gas production surpassed Qatar's. In the early 2000s, Qatar launched massive projects to extract liquefied natural gas (LNG) with the help of international companies and large investments, resulting in a significant increase in its gas exports. However, from the mid-2010s, Iran was able to gradually increase its production by implementing various phases of the South Pars development and adopting new technologies in the gas industry. In recent years, with the inauguration of new phases of South Pars, Iran has managed to bring its gas production from this field on par with, and even surpass, Qatar's.

The Iranian section of the South Pars field holds 14 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, along with 18 billion barrels of gas condensates, accounting for approximately 7.5% of the world's total gas reserves and nearly half of Iran's gas reserves. The Qatari section of the field holds 36 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, with the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimating that 26

trillion cubic meters of gas can be extracted from this section.

Iran's success in overtaking Qatar can be attributed to the implementation of various phases of the South Pars development, domestic investments, and regional and international cooperation. Over the past few years, Iran has successfully completed various phases of this field's development, including the exploitation of new wells, installation of drilling platforms, and development of gas transmission infrastructure.

Advances in domestic technologies and production increase

Due to international sanctions and restrictions on foreign companies entering Iran, the country was forced to rely on its internal resources and capabilities. This led to the advancement of domestic technologies and increased production, as well as the use of new domestic technologies to enhance efficiency.

This field, which supplies over 40% of Iran's gas reserves, is of vital importance to the country's economy. Especially under economic sanctions and international restrictions, Iran's ability to utilize this vast natural resource has been a crucial lever for meeting domestic energy needs and increasing exports. The development of the South Pars gas field in Iran has been carried out in stages, based on the implementation of various phases.

Each phase of the field's development in-

cludes drilling new wells, installing gas extraction platforms, and constructing transmission lines to refineries. Over the past two decades, Iran has significantly increased its gas production capacity by implementing over 20 phases of the South Pars project. Due to restrictions and sanctions, Iran has been forced to develop domestic technologies for drilling and gas extraction by domestic companies.

Iran's self-sufficiency in South Pars projects

Iran's self-sufficiency in South Pars projects has enabled the country to continue these projects without relying on foreign companies. By utilizing advanced drilling technologies and improving wells productivity, Iran has increased gas production from each well. These measures have led to an increase in natural gas and gas condensate production from the South Pars field. The construction and operation of new refineries near the South Pars field have enabled Iran to quickly process and distribute the extracted gas for domestic consumption or export. These refineries have the capacity to process gas for various uses, including electricity generation, petrochemical industries, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports. The South Pars field is not only an important source of energy for Iran but also plays a significant role in the exports of the country's gas and gas condensate. By expanding the gas transmission network to cities and villages, access to natural gas as a clean and affordable fuel has increased throughout the country. Iran has also sought to develop its export infrastructure to find new regional and international markets for its gas.

Eyes on distant markets

In addition to exporting gas through pipe-



◀ An engineer at work on the jacket installation of the A platform of Phase 11 of the South Pars gas field on August 16, 2024. The jacket of the A platform of Phase 11, weighing around 4000 tons and 77 meters high, is one of the largest marine structures in the country, whose construction began in June 2024 and will be transferred to its location in the South Pars common gas field in the Persian Gulf in the coming months.

● MOHSEN MIRZAEI/SHANA