

NIGC: Sweet gas output set record four times in as many months

Economy Desk

The CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) emphasized that gas production in the country has broken records four times since the beginning of the incumbent administration. Saeid Tavakoli stated on Sunday that more than 872 million cubic meters of gas are currently produced and injected into the network daily, Shana reported. He added that, through collaborative efforts and expert management decisions, many parts of the network have been operating and providing services beyond their designed capacity for an extended period.

Addressing gas supply shortages, Tavakoli said that during cold seasons, consumption paradigm worldwide shift in favor of the household sector. Industries and power plants, which can use alternative or secondary fuels, must demonstrate flexibility in such situations.

ICOFC daily gas output rises

The CEO of the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) announced that the company has increased daily gas production from onshore fields by 10 million cubic meters (mcm) while crude oil production increased by 13,000 barrels over the past four months. Peyman Imani, during a media tour of

the Varavi Gas Pressure Boosting Station in the southern province of Fars on Monday, noted that the commissioning of the Varavi station, which has a normal operational capacity of 7 million cubic meters per day, can be increased to 9 million cubic meters.

Other achievements that Imani highlighted include the completion and installation of wellhead facilities at six gas well locations in the Dalgan, Aghar, Tang Bijar, Dey, and Khanjiran fields, the construction of access roads to the Khartang gas field wells, and the repair and preparation of the Sarajeh Qom storage well No. 2.

He also pointed out the company's progress in crude oil production, including the commissioning of the Khash Oil Field with a daily output of 10,000 barrels, the activation of three wells in the Dehloran Oil Field producing 3,000 barrels per day, and the startup of four wells in the Khash Oil Field. A crude oil pipeline from the Khash field to consumption hubs has also been established.

Imani mentioned that the development of 16 gas fields, including Halgan, Eram, Pazan, Gordan, Aghar, and Tang Bijar, is underway with the involvement of private contractors and investors.

He confirmed that the company has exceeded its gas production targets by over 103% this year and last year.



However, he cautioned that without consumption control, increased production alone cannot resolve energy shortages.

Gas consumption for three sectors up 20%

The spokesperson for the NIGC said Sunday that gas consumption in the residential, commercial, and small-scale

industrial sectors increased by 20% compared to the same day last year. Hassan Mousavi noted that 643 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas were allocated to these sectors.

He added that 871 mcm of sweet gas were delivered to the national network Sunday, with 74% allocated to residential, commercial, and small-scale industrial consumers.

Following a cold snap and forecasts of further temperature drops, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, and other officials urged the public to participate in the "2 Degrees Less" campaign. Through video and written messages, they called for optimal energy use and cooperation in ensuring sufficient winter fuel supplies.

Iranian delegation to settle truckers' dispute in Turkey



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Esmail Baghaei, the spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry, said that a delegation from the country would head to Turkey to solve the problems that Ankara created for Iranian truck drivers at its border crossing. During a press conference on Monday, Baghaei added that the problem is not political but rather technical and that the relevant authorities, mainly from the transportation and fuel supply sectors, are addressing the issue, according to Mehr news agency.

"We, and Turkey, have been trying to solve this issue over the past few days, given that cargo transportation is important for both countries," he stated. Following Turkey's decision to scrap the tax exemption on fuel for transit truck drivers, over 1,000 trucks have been stuck at the Bazargan border crossing since December 8 and remain so to this day. Prior to the implementation of this recent policy change, 300 trucks would cross the Bazargan border daily. The revocation of the fuel tax

exemption for transit truck drivers means that Iranian trucks must pay a tax equivalent to their fuel tank capacity upon entering Turkey, which could increase transit costs by up to 50% for Iranian transporters and render cross-border trade economically unfeasible.

MP: We will not allow any disrespect

In an interview on Monday, a member of the Iranian Parliament's presiding board maintained that Iran has always been open to interaction and dialogue with its neighboring countries but stressed that the interaction must be based on mutual respect. "We will not allow our drivers to be disrespected, and we will reserve the right to a fitting response on this issue," Mojtaba Yousefi maintained. "Iran has always supported neighboring countries in times of crisis, and creating such disputes will have serious consequences for the merchants and economic activists of both countries."

The Iranian MP also criticized the performance of the country's various ministries, saying, "Some truck drivers have faced problems crossing into Turkey or registering their purchased trucks due to the inaction of the Ministry of Commerce. In such circumstances, it is expected that the Foreign Ministry and other relevant authorities will seriously address the drivers' problems."

Yousefi also complained about the coverage of the news by some media outlets and the statements of some officials. "Some media outlets seek to polarize every issue, but they have been silent on the truck drivers' problems," he added. "I tell the officials of the Ministry of Commerce and the media outlets that only seek to attract followers: Doesn't the truck drivers' halt in subzero temperatures deserve enough attention for you to take action or even react?" Yousefi called on the relevant authorities to seriously pursue this issue and emphasized that consulates must protect national interests and support invest-

tors, tourists, and pilgrims. He announced that Parliament is seriously pursuing the amendment of the Iran's transportation law and reinforcement of the government's support for the livelihood of drivers, including their supplemental health insurance, "which will be raised in the parliament soon."

Selective reciprocity

According to reports on Turkish media, this decision was made by the Turkish government based on the principle of reciprocity. As such, truck drivers must pay 28 lira per liter of fuel tank capacity (whether full or empty), or approximately 60 to 80 million tomans per tank. The implementation of the law requiring the payment of customs tax based on vehicle fuel tank capacity in Iran was adopted to prevent fuel smuggling, given that diesel fuel prices in Iran are significantly lower than in Turkey. Meanwhile, Turkey continues to exempt Iranian passenger buses from similar taxes, ostensibly to preserve its tourism industry. This selective policy exposes Ankara's prioritization of tourism revenues over equitable trade relations. The Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization (RMTO) and the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) told Mehr that this issue is not within their jurisdiction. Some of the truck drivers stuck at the Bazargan border crossing have stated that they have been waiting for over a week in harsh weather conditions and without necessary facilities, and their situation remains unclear.

Tehran-Riyadh talks on AI cooperation underway



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Iran's deputy minister of communications said negotiations with Saudi Arabia to collaborate on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and information technology are underway.

Mohammad Mohsen Sadr expressed hope that by exchanging resources and assigning a share of the projects in Saudi Arabia to Iranian experts, we can put a stop to the migration of specialized forces, according to IRNA. He emphasized the importance of privatizing the economy and the key role of the private sector in various projects during a meeting with a group of private sector activists on Monday. The deputy minister also reported on the progress of IT diplomacy with other countries and the export of Information Technology and Communications (ICT) technical services. Sadr stated that investing in the field of information technology can give rise to employment opportunities. Announcing his ministry's support for startups and innovation funds, he also called

Iranian Deputy Minister Mohammad Mohsen Sadr (L) meets with Mohammed bin Saud Al-Tamimi, the head of the Communications, Space, and Technology Commission (CST) of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on the sidelines of the Saudi Arabia Internet Governance Forum (Saudi IGF), which took place from December 15-19, 2024. ito.gov.ir

on the private sector to get on board and cooperate in this field. "The Ministry of Communications is ready to back up the private sector in the field of infrastructure," he added. The head of the Information Technology Organization of Iran listed plans such as the Smart Government and Government Cloud as important programs of the ministry. Sadr maintained that efforts have been made to centralize AI processing infrastructure and prevent parallel work between executive bodies. Stressing that the digital transformation plan is of special importance to President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, he noted that the entry of various industries into this field leads to the growth of the country's digital economy.