

Iran has plans for crude sales if snapback triggered: *Paknejad*

Economy Desk

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said the country had drawn up contingency plans to maintain oil exports under any scenario that might arise from renewed international sanctions amid European powers' threat to trigger the UN snapback mechanism over Iran's nuclear program, IRIB News reported on Monday. "We are certainly not without a plan," Paknejad said, responding to the prospect of a full reimposition of UN sanctions, including those targeting crude exports. He also dismissed media speculation that Iranian oil sales had dipped following military strikes on Iranian sites by Israel and the United States in June. "Iran's oil exports continue as before", he added, rejecting recent Western media claims of a June drop in shipments as "media

hype" and "psychological warfare." His remarks come as Britain, France and Germany—the three European signatories to the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, known formally as the JCPOA— threaten they may provoke the deal's snapback clause by the end of August unless Tehran reaches a new understanding with Washington over its nuclear work. The clause, embedded in the JCPOA, allows any party to reimpose previously lifted UN sanctions should Iran be found in breach of its nuclear commitments. The 2015 accord, which also includes China and Russia, has been on life support since the United States unilaterally walked out of it in May 2018 and reinstate sweeping economic sanctions on Iran. Iran has since gradually rolled back limits on its uranium enrichment in retaliation for US hostile measures. Irani-

an and European diplomats held talks on Friday in Turkey to discuss the looming deadline, with the snapback mechanism set to expire on October 18. The meeting followed a wave of Israeli and US airstrikes targeting Iranian nuclear and military sites, including Fordow and Natanz, last month. Despite sustained pressure from the US, Iran's oil exports have rebounded sharply in recent years—from under 200,000 barrels per day in 2020 to more than 1.8mn bpd in recent months, according to ship-tracking data. Much of this crude reportedly ends up in China. The administration of US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said it aims to drive Iran's oil exports to "zero," but new figures from international monitoring firms suggest those efforts have fallen short of the mark, with Tehran continuing to pump crude under the radar.



Parliamentary panel gives conditional backing for removing rial zeros

Economy Desk

Iranian Parliament's Economic Committee has conditionally approved removing four zeros from the national currency (rial) and the possibility of changing the national currency unit, the committee's spokesman said on Monday. Hakem Mamkan, announcing the above, stated, "The Central Bank of Iran has proposed the removal of four zeros from the national currency in order to preserve its standing in international forums and to facilitate calculations and accounting within government agencies." In an interview with ISNA, the parliamentarian said that on Sunday, the parliament's committee reviewed objections raised by the Guardian Council – a body empowered to vet legislation – to the bill amending the country's Banking and Monetary Law. "The session was attended by Mohammad Reza Farzin, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran; Abbas Moradpour, Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance for Banking Affairs; and representatives from other responsible organizations," he added.

The spokesperson for Parliament's Economic Committee stated, "Considering the enactment of laws subsequent to the bill amending Article One of the Banking and Monetary Law (which pertains to the 12th government [2017-2021]), this matter has inherent objections. Nevertheless, the Economic Committee agreed with the general principle of removing four zeros from the national currency, and there are even whispers about the possibility of changing the national currency unit. Changes must now be made to the details of the bill to avoid conflict with other recently enacted laws." The lawmaker reiterated, "The Central Bank has proposed the removal of four zeros from the national currency in order to preserve the national currency's standing in international forums and to facilitate calculations and accounting within organizations; however, this matter has no relation to inflation." Mamkan added the plan also "has opponents who argue that some economic systems remove zeros from their national currency only when fundamental and infrastructural economic issues have been

resolved and stability achieved, enabling a sort of economic surgery. However, our country is grappling with inflation, and the necessary infrastructure has not been laid." Recent data indicates an increase, with the rate reaching 38.90% in April 2025, up from 37.10% in March 2025. The spokesperson concluded, "Ultimately, it was decided that the Economic Committee will conduct negotiations with the Guardian Council. If the council agrees, the changes made to the bill will be beyond the Guardian Council's objections and will not conflict with existing laws. In that case, the committee will proceed to review the Guardian Council's objections. Otherwise, the entire bill will be set aside, and the government must submit a new bill to Parliament." "The government and the Central Bank insist on this bill and the removal of four zeros from the national currency. Therefore, the Economic Committee will hold off on examining the specifics of the bill until the Guardian Council announces its opinion and the matter is resolved," he said.

Wealth fund to invest \$2.3b in solar energy push

Economy Desk

Iran's Economic Council has approved a plan for the country's sovereign wealth fund to invest \$2.3 billion in solar energy, as the government seeks to diversify its power mix and ease growing strain on the electricity grid. The funding—greenlit following approval from Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei—will be channeled through the National Development Fund (NDF) and focused largely on the construction of rooftop solar farms, with a combined capacity target of 7,000 megawatts (MW). Hamid Pourmohammadi, the head of Iran's Plan and Budget Organization, signed off on the measure and forwarded it to the Energy Ministry and the NDF for implementation. Under the plan, the NDF will cover 80% of the financing for approved projects, with private partners required to shoulder the remaining 20%. Applicants may seek funding for projects of up to 1,000 MW each, with intermediaries managing the financial and

technical aspects on behalf of the fund. Iran, which receives over 300 sunny days a year, has launched a nationwide drive to ratchet up its use of renewables, especially solar power, amid soaring demand and ageing thermal infrastructure. The country aims to add 30,000 MW of renewable capacity—mainly solar—in the next three years. Iran's total electricity generation capacity hovers around 95,000 MW, over 90% of which comes from thermal and gas-fired power stations, government figures show. Renewables account for a mere 2.1%, or around 2,000 MW, of the national energy mix. Officials had warned earlier this year that power shortages during the peak summer months could reach 25,000 MW, but recent estimates suggest that energy-saving measures have helped trim the shortfall to 14,000 MW, according to state electric utility Tavanir. The government hopes the new solar initiative will help plug that gap while reducing reliance on fossil fuels and cutting emissions.

Minister: 1,000 water, electricity projects set for inauguration by year-end

Economy Desk

Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi announced that 1,000 water and electricity projects will be inaugurated across the country by the end of the year (March 20, 2026), stating, "With the inauguration of solar power plants, 7,000 megawatts of electricity will be added to the national grid." Speaking on Monday at the inauguration ceremony of water and electricity projects in southwestern Tehran, Aliabadi stated that the inauguration of these projects will add 4,000 megawatts to the country's electricity generation capacity, IRNA reported. He noted that water and electricity projects will be inaugurated weekly until the end of the year and announced the commissioning of solar power plants, from which 7,000 megawatts of generated electricity will be integrated into the system. Aliabadi emphasized the equitable distribution of water and electricity, saying, "We will not witness these problems in the future." During the energy minister's visit to the west and southwest of Tehran Province, alongside the inauguration of electricity industry projects, a 10,000 cu-

bic meter water reservoir in Naimshahr was also inaugurated. Accordingly, supplying drinking water and emergency water storage are among the project's objectives, benefiting 250,000 residents through its social and environmental impacts. During the inauguration ceremony, Aliabadi pointed out that electricity consumption this year has been lower than last year, attributing this to public cooperation and the development of diverse projects in power generation and distribution across the country. The energy minister also stated that a critical condition ("red status") has been declared for the Mamlu Dam (in southeast of Tehran), adding that other dams in the country are also not in optimal condition. He expressed hope that with continued public cooperation, the country will overcome this situation. "The capacity of the country's water resources is limited, while it possesses abundant energy and minerals," Aliabadi said.

Optimal consumption
Emphasizing the necessity of moving towards sustainable development, the minister added, "This will be achieved through improved productivity." He stat-



ed that human resources constitute the country's main advantage, adding, "Therefore, we must place intelligent, trained, and hardworking human resources at the core of development." He stressed that the critical point is optimizing consumption, saying, "Today we are entering the fifth industrial revolution. In this context, smartification is highly important as we move into the cyber-physical era." He noted that electricity consumption will undoubtedly increase during this period, "but we must have more optimal consumption."

Regional interconnection
The minister announced that the export of Iran's electrical equipment to neighboring countries is

currently underway, expressing hope that "by commissioning development projects and expanding renewable power plants, we can earn foreign exchange revenue through electricity exports for other projects." He described electrical interconnection with neighboring countries as a policy of the ministry, noting that developing power links is on the agenda. Aliabadi stated, "Despite limited capacities, we currently have power interconnections with Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Turkey, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Iraq, and plans to connect with Oman are also on the agenda." He added that a feasibility study for interconnection with the UAE has been underway for years and is currently being pursued.

Why Iran should ...

Armenia has categorically rejected any cession, while Azerbaijan insists that control of the route is essential for seamless transit between its mainland and Nakhchivan. Armenia regards this demand as a violation of its national sovereignty and strongly opposes it. Armenia has floated a third option: leasing a transit corridor to an Armenian-American company. This remains at the discussion stage with no agreement signed. Claims of direct US or NATO involvement in the region are exaggerated and denied by Armenia itself. The reality is that Armenia will never relinquish sovereignty over its land, particularly to a neighbor like Azerbaijan. Armenia would only entertain the Armenian-American-controlled transit route under condition that Turkey opens access to the Black Sea through its own territory. Therefore, it is incorrect to suggest Armenia is turning over a 44-kilometer strip or that Azerbaijan is prepared to cut off Iran's routes. Nonetheless, Armenian authorities are under pressure, and Iran must maintain continuous engagement and support to prevent adverse geopolitical changes. Moreover, Azerbaijani claims to control all of Syunik could lead to future southern territorial grabs. Iran cannot remain indifferent. It must interact continuously with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, alerting both sides to the risks—not in an alarmist fashion, but with strategic prudence.

Tehran should not buy into rhetoric implying NATO has based forces on its borders—a belief once held about Afghanistan, which two decades of NATO presence failed to confirm in tangible results. Awareness matters more than exaggeration. There are already practical connections underway: Iran is building bridges linking its territory to Nakhchivan, partly on Iranian soil and partly in Azerbaijani hands, with the latter advancing more swiftly. Given the new dynamics in the South Caucasus, Iran should foster economic ties with Azerbaijan, Armenia and even Turkey. The goal is to establish a multilateral framework for regional economic and developmental cooperation. Still, vigilance is essential to avoid becoming geopolitically boxed in—without tipping into hyperbole. Change in the region is driven by governments, not Iran alone. Tehran cannot dictate Armenian decisions about its territory, but it can issue reasoned recommendations based on friendship and shared interests—such as ensuring any transit route is arranged in a way that does not jeopardize Iran's connectivity. As long as regional actors choose routes that do not effectively seal Iran off, confrontation is unnecessary. Indeed, broader economic collaboration with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey could help resolve many long-standing challenges. Iran's diplomatic outreach to Armenia should continue to secure vital transit paths and prevent blockages.