

TCI launches nationwide fiber optic project for 27m subscribers

Economy Desk

Managing Director of Telecommunication Company of Iran (TCI) Mohammad Jafarpour said the fixed-line operator's large-scale project to shift from copper cable to fiber optic technology had been launched for 27 million subscribers. Speaking at a press conference on Saturday, Jafarpour said that with the implementation of the country's largest Information and Communication Technology (ICT) project, the entire copper network will be dismantled and replaced with a fiber optic network within the next five years, as reported by ISNA. Jafarpour addressed the company's new approach to the major copper-to-fiber optic transition, saying that the project will involve "converting copper

cable connections to fiber optics for 27 million subscribers, with a focus on using domestically-produced equipment." According to the official, the execution of the project is expected to create around 10,000 new jobs across various sectors. He further stated that a significant share of modem equipment will be domestically produced, which will help keep the communications and IT industry alive in the field of manufacturing and foster entrepreneurship. In the implementation phase, numerous private contractors are already working with the company. "The 'CloudMa' platform was unveiled at last year's Telecom Exhibition, and now a large volume of services has been moved to CloudMa. Today, the TCI is providing cloud comput-

ing services to many organizations," Jafarpour said. Regarding the fiber optic rollout, he noted that the company's policy and target are to expand fiber optic infrastructure in provincial capitals. Jafarpour explained that the demand for fiber optics is currently stronger in provincial centers and densely populated areas. The fiber optic design for all 31 provinces has been completed, and in several provinces, the shift from copper to fiber optics has already taken place. In subsequent phases, the transition will be carried out in high-population counties. He expressed hope that by the end of the Iranian year 1404 (began on March 20, 2025), the nationwide copper-to-fiber optic transition would begin.



Iran to launch national GPU farm for AI training by late September

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Iran's vice president for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy said the country's national GPU farm for artificial intelligence will be operational by late September, despite minor delays. Hossein Afshin told reporters on Saturday that the necessary equipment for AI infrastructure had been procured and efforts were under way to bring all GPUs online by late September, ISNA reported. "There may be a slight delay due to the country's circumstances, but the AI infrastructure — including the AI platform and AI assistant — is being pursued with determination and strength," Afshin said, noting "very positive developments" over the past year.

Iran's global/regional ranking in AI Citing scientific output, Afshin said Iran's ranking in the Nature index had improved from 33rd to 30th globally, thanks to professors, PhD students and postdoctoral researchers. He stressed that the focus was on quality over quantity of publications. Iran's regional ranking currently fluctuates between 14th and 17th, sometimes ahead of or behind Tur-



● Hossein Afshin/ISNA

key and Saudi Arabia. Afshin said the government was aiming for a "scientific leap" within one to two years. "We have no concern over this because our focus is on quality. With the activities underway at the Science Foundation, we hope to achieve a scientific leap in the next one to two years similar to that of the past decade," he said. Afshin also announced free AI training programs for around 2 million students that began in early summer. The initiative, he

said, aims to strengthen domestic human resources, with recorded courses to be made widely available by year-end. He added that quantum courses would be offered from early late September in 12 universities across 16 fields. "Education must come first, and when human resources feel they can receive all necessary training domestically and flourish, an environment will be created for them to remain in the country," Afshin said.

Solar power output surges 71% in four months: SATBA

Economy Desk

The head of Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced that in the first four months of the Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025), electricity generation from solar power plants increased by 71 percent compared to the same period last year. On Saturday, Mohsen Tarzatab said that solar power generation rose from 357 million kilowatt-hours to 610 million kilowatt-hours — marking a 71 percent increase, IRNA reported. Regarding wind power production, he noted that generation from wind farms also grew, rising from 413 million kilowatt-hours to 432 million kilowatt-hours. The deputy energy minister stated that the country's renewable energy capacity has now reached 1,868 megawatts, compared to 1,232 megawatts at the end of the first four months of last year. "Over the past year alone, 636 megawatts of new renewable capacity have come online, increasing the share of renewables in the national electricity mix to 1.9 percent," he said. Speaking about the organization's ongoing plans, Tarzatab said that in the first phase, the construction of 7,000 megawatts of renewable power plants, mostly solar, has been planned and finalized. SATBA's full focus, he stressed, "is on achieving this goal and helping reduce the electricity supply-demand imbalance



● IRNA

in the country." Emphasizing that the share of renewable energy in the national power generation mix will exceed 5 percent by the end of this year, he added that Iran has now become a major hub for renewable energy development, undergoing what he described as a "major revolution" in the sector — the results of which will gradually become evident in the coming weeks.

Iran's Palermo approval ...

The banking sector and industries dependent on foreign trade, such as petrochemicals and steel, stand to see the biggest gains. The reason is clear: with Palermo's passage, hopes have risen for improved banking ties and lower transaction risk. In recent years, many foreign banks and financial institutions, even when primary sanctions had been lifted, refused to work with Iran because it remained on the FATF blacklist. Palermo's approval marks a step towards removing that roadblock. While other bills, like the Counter-Terrorism Financing Convention (CFT), still need to be passed, the shift has already sent the message to international institutions that Iran's credit risk is easing. Foreign investors, when assessing proj-

ects in Iran, focus on two key factors: political-economic stability and the secure transfer of funds. With Palermo's approval, hopes for improvement on both counts have grown. Iranian banks can also seize this moment to kick off talks for connecting to regional financial messaging systems or even parts of SWIFT — a path that was effectively blocked without these conventions in place.

Message to global stage, FATF invitation

One of Palermo's most significant outcomes is Iran's re-entry into dialogue with international bodies. After years on the FATF blacklist and under severe banking restrictions, the group has, according to Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh, extended an official in-

itation to Iran — for the first time in six years — to start face-to-face negotiations. This invitation is a clear sign of shifting international attitudes toward Iran and recognition of the country's reform efforts. As a global standard-setter for financial transparency, the FATF assesses practical measures taken by countries, and such invitations are generally extended only to those that have already set out on the path of reform. Palermo's approval has also sent a strong political message to Iran's partner countries and trading allies: a commitment to fighting financial crimes and money laundering, and readiness to align with international financial transparency rules. The message could carry real weight in upcoming talks to improve banking and trade relations.

CFT outlook, Palermo's path

While Palermo's passage was a major step, it does not complete the FATF engagement process. The CFT still awaits approval, and without it, Iran's cooperation with the FATF will remain unfinished. The Palermo experience has shown that, with decisions grounded in national interest and today's realities, political and legal barriers can be cleared, paving the way for international engagement. Once the CFT is approved, Iran could move its FATF cooperation into a new phase and break down many of the remaining banking and financial barriers. In the current climate, passing the CFT is expected to replicate Palermo's psychological and economic effects — perhaps even more strongly — since a

major share of foreign banks and partners' concerns relate specifically to counter-terrorism financing. The FATF's invitation after six years, the boost in hopes for improved banking relations, and Iran's strengthened hand in economic talks are just part of the event's positive fallout. The road ahead — with CFT approval and the completion of international cooperation — could solidify and expand Palermo's gains. The Islamic Republic of Iran is serious about managing financial risks and economic security, and is employing both legal and political tools to meet that goal. This combination of measures, at both domestic and international levels, is painting a new picture of Iran as a responsible player in the global financial system.