

Iron, steel exports up by 13% in first four months: *ISPA*



Economy Desk

The Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) released data on the country's steel exports for the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20, 2025), showing that the iron and steel chain product exports rose by 13 percent, equivalent to 469,000 tons. The value of chain product exports in iron and steel grew by 7 percent in the same period, reaching over \$2.3 billion, IRNA reported. Exports of billet and bloom, which had posted an 8 percent decline in the first-quarter figures, reversed course in the four-

month statistics, registering a 15 percent increase. The upward trend in exports of raw materials in the steel chain has also continued, with iron ore concentrate exports rising by 78 percent compared to the same period last year — a development that has raised concerns among steelmakers. Iran's steel exports have established steady markets across Asia — notably China and Southeast Asia — and in Africa, fueled by rising demand for construction materials. Despite facing logistical and financial constraints, the country exported over 10 million tons of steel products last year, generating revenue exceeding \$6.0 billion.

Nearly a dozen wastewater treatment plants to be launched in coming weeks: *Official*



Economy Desk

The head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company announcing that so far, 320 million cubic meters of wastewater have been allocated to industries under 78 contracts, said 11 wastewater treatment plants will be ready for operation in the coming weeks. Hashem Amini said on Monday that on August 24, coinciding with the start of Government Week in Iran, 11 wastewater treatment plants will enter into service, IRNA reported. He stated that one of the most important policies of the Ministry of Energy is to maximize the use of wastewater and replace it with raw water, a policy clearly stipulated in the law, which has also set out the necessary requirements in this regard. According to Amini, 365 cities are currently covered by wastewater services, and the access index will rise from the current 65 percent to 70 percent by the end of the Seventh Development Plan. The CEO noted that according to Clause 3 of Article 39 of the Seventh Development Plan Law, the supply and allocation of water to water-intensive industries currently using conventional water sources must be carried out through wastewater, seawater, and water recycling. He stressed that requiring industries to replace conventional water sources (surface and groundwater) with unconventional sources is essential, particularly as the country faces multiple water constraints and a sharp decline in rainfall. All stakeholders and relevant authorities, he added, must pay special attention to this issue. Referring to the operation of 324 wastewater treatment plants nationwide, Amini noted that by the end of the Seventh Development Plan, 130.9 million cubic meters of wastewater will be allocated to industries through guaranteed purchase agreements. Three wastewater treatment projects in Lavasan, northeast of Tehran, were inaugurated in Mid-July in the presence of Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi. Emphasizing the necessity of wastewater treatment, Aliabadi said, "Not a single drop should be wasted without recycling, and this treated effluent is primarily used in industrial and agricultural sectors." Tehran Province is experiencing its fifth consecutive year of low precipitation, with this year's rainfall levels being the lowest in six decades. The recorded 153 mm represents a 44% drop from the long-term average and a 33% decrease compared to last year.

Iran ranks among top five manufacturers of electrochemical supercapacitors

Economy Desk

Iran has become the fifth country to acquire the technology for designing and manufacturing electrochemical supercapacitors (ECSCs) — advanced industrial capacitors with applications in electric vehicles, elevators, and wind turbines — according to a senior official at the Academic Center for Education, Culture and Research (ACECR). The head of the Chemical Industries Research Group at the ACECR announced that the academic center has successfully designed and built an indigenous electro-

chemical supercapacitor, placing Iran among the five countries possessing the cutting-edge technology, ISNA reported. Nourali Mohammadi said that previously, the know-how for producing industrial supercapacitors was held exclusively by four countries including Canada, South Korea, China, and the United States. Highlighting the significance of the achievement, Mohammadi noted that prior to this, the industrial supercapacitor production savvy had been monopolized by the four countries, adding that a laboratory-scale pro-

TOTYPE of the product had been developed with quality comparable to that of highly advanced foreign models. The head of the research group identified applications for the product in electric vehicles, elevators, and wind turbines, adding that these supercapacitors have a physical lifespan of about 10 years and a cycle life of more than one million cycles, while releasing energy in a much shorter time than conventional batteries. Regarding the challenges of production, Mohammadi said that building an industrial supercapacitor had not been an easy task, and that



to move forward with development and enter mass production and commercialization, support from both private and public sector investors is required.

CBI kick-starts specialized banking system to boost efficiency, transparency



A view of the building of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) ● IRNA

Economy Desk

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) launched a move toward specialized banking and approved a new framework for categorizing the country's banking system, a step expected to boost efficiency, transparency, and financial discipline in Iran's banking network, Tasnim reported. In its 34th Supreme Board meeting, the CBI approved the comprehensive regulations for the establishment, operation, management, and supervision

of commercial, universal, specialized, and Qarz ol-Hasaneh Bank or Interest-Free Loan Bank (highlighting the government's use of Islamic finance tools for social development initiatives). The measure, implemented under the provisions of the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan Law, marks the beginning of a process to specialize banks and categorize them more precisely according to their mandates and operational areas, bringing an end to the era of uniform bank performance.

Experience over the past four decades has shown that the "universal banking" model in Iran has led to resource dispersion and reduced efficiency. According to CBI assessments, banks that operated across all sectors not only failed to achieve a relative advantage in any area but also allocated their resources inefficiently. Each economic sector carries unique risks. Specialized banks, with in-depth knowledge of a particular industry, will be able to assess risks more accurately and offer tailored solutions. According to the CBI governor Mohammad Reza Farzin, the Central Bank had a plan to categorize banks into specialized groups "so that each bank, by focusing on its specific field, can provide better services to the country's economy. This categorization will help reduce duplication and improve the

soundness of the banking system." Emphasizing the importance of the initiative, he said, "Specializing banks will help us better manage banking risks and channel financial resources more efficiently into the productive sectors of the economy." Under the new regulations, banks are divided into four main categories, including Commercial Banks, which essentially serve the same role as current traditional banks but under stricter regulations and a stronger supervisory framework. These institutions are responsible for mobilizing resources and allocating them as loans to individuals and legal entities. They are permitted to conduct 21 types of authorized operations, including accepting various deposits, granting loans, engaging in foreign exchange transactions, and providing electronic banking services; Universal Banks, authorized to offer a wide range of banking and financial services, including accepting various deposits, granting loans, engaging in

foreign exchange operations, issuing various guarantees and electronic cards, issuing Islamic securities, investing in financial markets, and establishing or participating in monetary and financial groups; Specialized Banks, focused on financing a specific industry or defined value chain, with significant shareholders required to be publicly listed joint-stock companies or non-governmental public institutions with relevant experience in the respective sector; And Qarz ol-Hasaneh Bank, which mobilize and allocate resources through interest-free loan contracts and have a special mission to promote social justice and assist low-income groups. This transformation not only reshapes the structure of the banking system but could also serve as a model for similar countries in the region. Iran's banking system is stepping into a new era of specialization and efficiency, the results of which are expected to become evident in the years ahead.