

# Minister: Azadegan output exceeds 230,000 bpd as development push continues

## Economy Desk

Iran's oil production at the Azadegan oilfield has risen to more than 230,000 barrels per day with further increases planned once new contracts are finalized, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Wednesday, as Tehran presses ahead with the development of shared hydrocarbon fields.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting in Tehran, Paknejad gave an update on the southern section of the Azadegan oilfield, which Iran shares with Iraq, IRNA reported.

He stressed that work at Azadegan has continued without interruption, even though the contracts are not yet finalized.

"Our colleagues have never halted activities at the Azadegan field. Even without finalized contracts, they have relied on existing legal provisions, including Article 12 of the Law on Removing Barriers to Competitive Production, to keep development moving forward," he said. He said drilling operations have continued and surface facilities have also been expanded.

"As a result of these measures, production at the Azadegan field has risen above 230,000 barrels per day. Once the new contracts are finalized, this upward trend will accelerate, with higher output pursued in line with the project's timelines," Paknejad said.

He explained that the field is now being developed as an integrated project, effectively setting aside the division between South and North Azadegan.

According to Paknejad, a specific mechanism has been defined for developing the field and the related contract has been signed and is undergoing final reviews.

"The process is underway in collaboration with the National Development Fund (NDF) and the Planning and Budget Organization, and will be finalized in the near future, paving the way for faster field development," he said.

The government has outlined a plan to boost crude oil production by 250,000 barrels per day (bpd), supported by \$3 billion in funding. The initiative — officially named the "emergency plan" for a crude oil production leap — is the NDF's first direct involvement in major energy projects. It comes amid ongoing Western sanctions, which have sharply limited access to foreign investment, making domestic resources and the NDF's financial capacity critical for advancing key infrastructure efforts.

Iran does not publish detailed crude export figures due to US sanctions, which officials say require confidentiality. International Energy Agency (IEA) figures showed that Iranian oil production had reached 3.5 million bpd in November. On Wednesday, the minister said development of other shared fields was also



A view of Azadegan oilfield in Khuzestan, southwest of Iran  
● IRNA

continuing "with seriousness." Commenting on the South Pars gas field, he said in-field drilling and rigging operations are ongoing, while efforts to advance the pressure-boosting project

continue, aimed at establishing a stable mechanism for securing financial resources.

"At the same time, in other shared fields, including the Yadavaran field

and the North and South Yaran fields, development processes are underway without interruption, and plans to increase recovery and enhance production capacity are continuing," he said.

## SATBA says renewable capacity to top 4,000 MW in late Jan., eyes 11,000 MW by summer



## Economy Desk

Iran's renewable power generation capacity will surpass 4,000 megawatts by late January, while construction of 11,000 MW of renewable power plants is planned by the peak of next summer, an official at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) said on Wednesday. Speaking to Tasnim, Hamid Reza Bahmanabadi, the head of SATBA's investment group, said that renew-

ables development had become the main strategy of the Energy Ministry to address the country's growing electricity deficit.

Bahmanabadi added that due to the worsening electricity supply-demand mismatch over the past two years, the country would face an estimated power shortfall of between 17,000 and 20,000 MW next year.

"Based on these assessments, the construction of renewable power plants has been placed on the agenda

as the Energy Ministry's main solution," he said.

Referring to provincial capacity, Bahmanabadi said Bushehr Province, due to its favorable potential, had so far commissioned around 38 MW of solar farms in different areas.

"Licenses have been issued or contracts are being finalized for about 1,360 MW of solar projects in the province, and some of these power plants are under construction," he said.

"It is expected that around 500 MW of this capacity will come online by the peak of next summer's electricity demand," he added, as he called it encouraging news for the stability of the power grid at both provincial and national levels.

Bahmanabadi said that nationwide, a total of 3,165 MW of renewable power plants had been built so far, noting that on average about 100 MW was added each week.

According to SATBA, 318 renewable power plants are active in Iran's elec-

tricity market.

Within Iran's renewable energy mix, solar power represents 66%, grid-connected distributed generation plants account for 15%, and wind farms make up 14%. Small hydroelectric plants contribute 4%, while biomass and expansion turbine plants each account for 1%. Renewables still account for only 3.2% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity of around 97,909 MW.

## Call for investment

Elsewhere in his remarks, the SATBA official invited investors and interested parties to step into the sector.

"Investment in clean energy is an attractive and economically viable path, and SATBA has provided various capacities to financially support investors," Bahmanabadi said.

He said these supports are offered in two forms, foreign-currency and rial-denominated facilities, noting that foreign-currency loans were provided from the National Development Fund

at an interest rate of 8.5%, while part of the required equipment for power plants was also supplied through this mechanism.

He added that the country's overall target for a five-year horizon was to reach 30,000 MW of green power capacity, with plans to realize 11,000 MW of this capacity by the peak of next year.

Separately, IRNA reported that eastern Iran would be equipped with two new wind parks through private sector investment amounting to more than \$500 million.

IRNA said construction work on two power stations, with a combined capacity of around 700 MW, began on Wednesday in Mil-e Nader, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

With increased investment, the capacity of the two farms will rise to around 1,000 MW, and the injection of their generated electricity into the national grid will greatly enhance power stability in the southeastern province.

## UN Security Council ...

At the same time, these meetings are not purely symbolic or devoid of impact. Their real consequences manifest primarily at the political and diplomatic level. Each time Iran's file is raised in the Security Council, even without an executive outcome, it sends a signal to the international community that Iran continues to be viewed as an "unresolved security case." This atmosphere can indirectly influence the behavior of some governments, economic relations, and even the calculations of regional actors.

The core function of these meetings is gradual, attritional pressure rather than a decisive strike. The United States and certain Western countries use the Security Council as a platform to pile up political pressure, that may remain rhetorical today but could be converted into harder measures if international power balances shift. More importantly, the continuation of this trend risks pulling Iran's nuclear file out of its technical and legal track and deeper into the arena of great-power geopolitical rivalry, where decisions are shaped less by international law than by political trade-offs.

## How does the rift among permanent members of the Security Council affect its effectiveness in managing Iran's file?

The Security Council no longer enjoys the structural cohesion it once had in past decades. Deep disagreements between China and Russia on one side and Western countries on the other have effectively pushed the Council into a state of decision-making paralysis, unable to generate consensus, pass new resolutions, or exert coordinated and effective pressure on Iran. The Security Council has become less a crisis-resolution mechanism and more a mirror of geopolitical competition among great powers. Iran is no longer merely a "nuclear file," but part of a broader East-West equation, in which every decision on Iran is filtered through the strategic calculations of China and Russia vis-à-vis the West. For this reason, the December 23 meeting should not be viewed as a legal turning point, but rather as a political signal of a shifting global balance of power. The meeting was less a sign of Western strength than of its limitations, demonstrating that the West's capacity to forge broad-based consensus against Iran has significantly declined. Automatic

alignment no longer exists, nor is it possible to convert political pressure into binding decisions without Eastern backing.

This does not mean that Western pressure tools have vanished entirely. The West can still act outside the Security Council through unilateral sanctions or political and media pressure.

## Looking ahead, which pathways for a political resolution of Iran's nuclear crisis appear more plausible?

The future of Iran's nuclear file depends on political will and regional and international developments and can be summarized in four main frameworks.

First, a limited, step-by-step agreement. In the short term, the likely path is a phased deal that tackles urgent issues, such as setting clear limits on nuclear activity, and offering modest economic relief. Its purpose is managing the file, not delivering a final resolution.

Second, diplomacy with a new formula. A full revival of past frameworks seems unlikely; instead, a mix of nuclear commitments, confidence-building

measures, and updated monitoring could provide relative stability and predictability, rather than a comprehensive deal.

Third, managing the case at the technical level. With divisions in the Security Council, Iran's nuclear file may shift toward the IAEA, while the Council's role diminishes. This path relies on sustaining technical channels, minimum transparency, and avoiding renewed securitization.

Fourth, continuation of the gray zone. Without sufficient political will, the likely outcome is a controlled stalemate, neither a lasting deal nor a full crisis. This scenario means sustained pressure and sporadic talks, piling up political and economic costs without resolving the core issue.

In the near term, a limited and phased agreement appears more plausible than the other options, given the high costs of prolonged deadlock for all sides and the still-wide political distance separating them from a comprehensive deal. Ultimately, the fate of Iran's nuclear file hinges above all on one factor: keeping diplomatic channels open and preventing the issue from being reduced to a mere arena of geopolitical rivalry.