

NIOC: 12% of Iran's crude processing allocated to private sector under partnership model



Economy Desk

A senior National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) official announced on Sunday that 12% of the country's crude oil processing capacity had been allocated to the private and non-governmental sector through rapid-deployment modular refinery projects — known as "skid-mounted" units — under a public-private partnership (PPP) model. Amir Moqiseh, the director of investment and business at NIOC, told SHANA that crude processing unit contracts used to be signed under traditional engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) agreements, which typically spanned three years but often took more than five years to complete. He cited the Central Processing and Export Terminal (CPE) and

at the South Azadegan joint oil field and the central processing facility of Ahvaz as examples. Under the new PPP framework, skid-mounted processing facilities can be built in less than two years, Moqiseh said. These contracts have a 10-year duration, and state entities are required by law to assign eligible projects to private investors through public-private partnership arrangements, he added. "In the first phase, public-private partnership contracts for processing 115,000 barrels per day of crude oil from four oilfields were awarded to private investors," according to the official. "In the second phase, six additional contracts totaling \$1.671 billion were signed for processing 315,000 barrels per day from six other oilfields." In total, 430,000 barrels per day of crude processing capacity has been allocated through skid-mounted PPP contracts — 190,000 bpd dedicated to production enhancement and 240,000 bpd to production maintenance and oil quality upgrading, he said. "With the implementation of skid-mounted refinery projects under the PPP model, 12% of the country's crude oil processing is now carried out by the private and non-governmental sector," Moqiseh said.

Moqiseh also noted that NIOC has signed PPP-based guaranteed-service purchase agreements with six private companies for the supply of 20 land-based drilling rigs, each with 2,000 horsepower. Under the contracts, the companies are required to procure the new rigs from abroad within six months.

Iran eyes \$1b exports to Kuwait in case of trade barriers removal: Joint chamber



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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE



Iran's exports to Kuwait have reached \$400 million annually and could climb to \$1 billion within less than three years if trade barriers are removed, said Abazar Barari, secretary-general of the Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce.

Speaking to Iran Daily, Barari noted that Kuwait currently imports between \$350 billion and \$400 billion worth of goods annually from around the world and that Iran could significantly expand its share in the market.

"Given the high commercial capacities between Iran and Kuwait, if trade obstacles are lifted, Iran's exports to Kuwait could reach \$1 billion in under three years," Barari said.

He explained that Kuwait, as a small-population oil-rich nation, relies heavily on imports to meet domestic demand and has virtually no exportable surplus. "Kuwait has a high per capita income, and

its population relies on imported goods for daily needs." Barari highlighted longstanding trade ties between the two countries, which deepened after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and Iran's support for the emirate during the crisis. "Since then, bilateral trade has consistently grown," he said.

Trade balance

Over the three past decades, the trade balance has favored Iran. Exports from Kuwait to Iran have remained minimal — typically under \$10 million per year — and have largely consisted of used machinery and second-hand foreign vehicles. Despite current momentum, Barari cautioned that Iran's exports to Kuwait are unlikely to surpass the \$400 million mark by the end of the current Iranian year (began on March 21) due to ongoing trade restrictions linked to anti-Iran sanctions and logistical challenges.

Iran has been under Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program, with the oil and energy sectors hit the hardest.

"The volume of trade between the two countries has never matched their actual potential," he said, adding that Iran's exports to Kuwait have fallen short of expected levels.

Export obstacles

The primary obstacle, according to

Barari, is transportation logistics. Iranian goods bound for Kuwait follow a combined land-sea route as cargo is trucked to the southern ports of Khorramshahr or Bushehr and then shipped via small vessels to Kuwait. This multimodal process increases shipping costs.

Moreover, most vessels traveling from Iran to Kuwait operate on a one-way basis, returning empty due to the lack of Kuwaiti exports to Iran, further driving up transport expenses.

"Land transport is generally cheaper, but direct overland trade routes between Iran and Kuwait have not yet been established," Barari said. He noted that both countries are however taking steps to establish a land trade route, which, once operational, could increase bilateral trade volumes.

Another barrier, he said, is Kuwait's strict visa policies for Iranian businesspeople and citizens. "On-the-ground presence of Iranian traders in Kuwait is essential for market development and expanding exports," he stressed.

Barari emphasized that Kuwait's market favors high-quality products. "Iranian exporters must pay serious attention to product quality and ensure adequate oversight before shipments are dispatched," he said.

IAC reports undisrupted handling of 3.4m passengers despite US-Israeli threats



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Iranian airports handled 3,437,300 passengers during the ninth month of the current Iranian year (November 22 to December 21), marking a year-on-year increase, according to Iran's Airports and Air Navigation Company (IAC), despite claims of disruption in air services due to US-Israeli threats of aggression against the country.

In a report released Sunday by IRNA, the company said the figure includes traffic at 48 state-owned and 12 non-state-owned airports across the country.

During the same period, a total of 30,958 aircraft movements — landings and takeoffs — were recorded nationwide, reflecting a 3% rise compared to

the corresponding month last year. Of these, 26,605 flights occurred at airports operated by the Airports and Air Navigation Company, also up 3% year-on-year. Passenger traffic at these state-run airports reached 2,947,626, unchanged from the same period in the previous year.

Additionally, 34,114 metric tons of accompanied baggage and postal cargo were transported through the country's airports during the month, an increase of more than 3% compared to the same timeframe last year.

Mehrabad International Airport in Tehran ranked as the busiest airport in the country during the month, recording 9,893 flight movements and handling 1,098,087 departing and arriving passengers.

Tehran to expand intercity rail transport with four new railbus corridors



Economy Desk

Tehran Province is advancing a series of short-term initiatives to boost intercity rail transport, including completing rail lines to Parand and Varamin, establishing seven new intercity stops, overhauling train fleets, launching a suburban rail company, and deploying railbuses across four interprovincial corridors, a senior provincial official said.

Kamal Mirjafarian, the deputy coordinator for civil affairs at Tehran Province, told ISNA that while intercity rail development falls under the mandate of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Company, the governorate is actively pursuing these measures based on provincial needs. He noted that leveraging existing rail capacity for intercity transport is part of the government's current agenda, with four railbus

corridors stretching from Tehran now under active development.

"These rail capacities will be used to operate railbuses," Mirjafarian said, detailing the four corridors. The first runs from Tehran toward Hashtgerd, with a branch line extending to Baghshan, Shahriar, and Malard. The second extends from Tehran through Robat Karim and Parand, ultimately reaching Hamedan in the west of the country.

The third corridor connects Tehran to Qom in central Iran and will serve both interprovincial and railbus traffic. The fourth heads southeast toward Varamin and Garmar. Currently, around six million intercity trips are made annually by rail in the province. "With the completion of infrastructure — rails, stations, and additional trains — this capacity could increase manyfold," he said.