

AEOI: Two 5,000-MW nuclear plants planned with capital market financing

Economy Desk

Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) chief Mohammad Eslami announced on Thursday that construction plans for two nuclear power plants, each with a capacity of about 5,000 megawatts, have begun and are currently in the implementation stage. Eslami said the initiative would strengthen the country's energy infrastructure while creating new long-term opportunities for capital market participation in national projects, as reported by IRIB. He added that plans were under way to finance nuclear power plant development projects through the capital market. Referring to the organization's capital market strategy, Eslami said

nuclear power plant development projects had been defined and formulated within completed planning frameworks, execution sites had been selected, and related corporate structures had been established. The newly created companies were designed to raise capital, he said. As projects gradually advance and conditions for attracting resources materialize, offering project shares in the capital market would be considered — an approach that could enable faster financing and more effective implementation of the plans, he added. In early November, the AEOI chief said construction of four power plants in Bushehr and four additional plants in other parts of the coun-

try had been placed on the agenda with cooperation from the Russian government, with the Iranian government expected to later announce their specific locations. Iran's only operating nuclear power plant, built by Russia in the southern province of Bushehr, was first connected to the national electricity grid on September 3, 2011, and entered commercial operation in September 2013. The reactor has a net generating capacity of about 915 megawatts, or roughly 1,000 MW.

Satellite image shows the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, in Bushehr Province, Iran, on May 26, 2025. ● REUTERS



Iran oil supply disruptions unlikely despite US escalation: *Kepler*



Economy Desk

Oil prices have gained strongly over the last few days as tensions between the US and Iran escalated, but analysts at Kepler see little probability of supply disruptions from Iran, the key West Asian producer. On Thursday, Brent oil futures for March rose to \$68.75 a barrel, trading as high as

\$70.35 a barrel this session, its highest since late September. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 2.1% to \$64.52 a barrel having earlier topped \$65 a barrel also a four-month high. US President Donald Trump has increased pressure on Tehran over its nuclear program with the arrival of a US naval group in the region.

Analysts at Kepler Cheuvreux said in a note dated January 29, "Trump aims to achieve one goal — a nuclear deal with Iran and nothing else," and thus they see little probability of Iranian supply disruptions despite the deployment of a US naval 'armada' in the region, investing.com wrote. "We would largely rule out a broad US bombing campaign against Iran, as quite simply, its strategic purpose is unclear," said Kepler, as Trump's primary objective remains the "dismantling of Iran's nuclear program," not state change per se. However, the bank said pressure could instead focus on the

seizure of Iranian tankers outside the Persian Gulf. According to the analysis, a disruption of the Strait of Hormuz remains a very remote scenario as seen in June. This is a red line Iran would not cross, not least because China, its oil customer, it wrote. "We have been there before (June 2025). Oil price could continue to rise short-term, but it will be short lived (matter of couple of weeks in our view). Brent was very close to \$60/bbl in December before a series of events occurred," Kepler said. "We would advise investors to tactically sell the oil&gas sector on any oil price strength from here."

Envoy touts INSTC as optimal Eurasian trade route, urges deeper Russia economic ties

Economy Desk

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) represents the best, most cost-effective and shortest route for Eurasia, especially Russia, to access global markets, Iran's ambassador to Moscow said. Kazem Jalali, referring to Iran's efforts to develop cargo transportation and particularly increase container capacity, stated the corridor reduces the 17,000-kilometer route from Mumbai, India to the Suez Canal and Stockholm to 7,000 kilometers, IRNA reported. "The Russian gas transit project through Iran is another important bilateral cooperation plan between the two countries," he

said, emphasizing acceleration and preparation for implementation of the project. Jalali noted Russia's nearly \$300 billion annual import volume from world countries and the substantial capacities available for Iran's private sector. He added that Iran and Russia's private sectors have experienced 100 years of communication disruption and lack mutual awareness of each other's capacities, with the cause of severed natural relations between the two nations being the October 17, 1917 Soviet revolution, which led to this communication gap and mutual unfamiliarity. "We must understand Russia and its economic capacities better than before and set targets

accordingly," he said. Jalali stated that Iran's Embassy is pursuing strengthened economic diplomacy in Russia, particularly facilitating Iranian private sector entry into Russia's petrochemical sector, and expressed the Embassy's readiness to assist, support and facilitate expanded cooperation between the government and private sectors of both countries in this field. In the same meeting, Mehdi Heydari, deputy economy minister and head of Iran's Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance, said the groundwork for cooperation between Iran and Russia has been prepared in more than 200 petrochemical projects.

31 cloud fertilization ops across Iran's watersheds since November

Economy Desk

Iran's Ministry of Energy announced that 31 cloud seeding operations have been carried out in the country's watersheds since the start of the current water year on November 22. The operations began concurrently with the arrival of the first precipitation system into the country and continued across various water basins, utilizing both drones and aircraft, IRNA reported. A total of 16 operations were conducted using drones while 15 operations employed aircraft, according to the ministry's report. Drone-based operations included six missions in the Zayandehrud and Koohrang watersheds, eight missions in South Khorasan Province's watershed, and two missions in the watersheds



of Fars and Bushehr provinces. Aircraft operations comprised seven operational flights in the northwest watershed and Lake Urmia, three operational flights in the Central Alborz watershed covering Tehran, Qazvin and Alborz provinces, three operational flights in the northeast watershed encompassing Khorasan Razavi and North Khorasan provinces, and three operational flights in the south-

west watershed including Isfahan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, and Khuzestan provinces. Persistent drought has created severe challenges for meeting Iran's water needs, further contributing to the 35% drop in dam inflows. According to Ministry of Energy, the cost of producing 1,000 cubic meters of water through cloud seeding ranges from \$15 to \$22.

Turkey's mediation bid ...

Turkish officials have emphasized their opposition to any foreign intervention in Iran. Page 1 >

To what extent can this stance by Ankara build trust in Tehran?

This has been a constant principle of Turkey's foreign policy from the past to the present, and Iran has full confidence and trust in Turkey on such matters.

What are Turkey's biggest constraints in trying to prevent further escalation between Iran and the United States?

The greatest constraint on Turkey's success lies in the excessive demands of the United States. Moreover, in the realm of foreign policy between Iran and the United States, there is no inherent tension. The reality is that tough and time-consuming negotiations are underway between Iran and the United States, while Washington refuses to moderate its unreasonable positions. Therefore, tension in the sense of developments spi-

raling into a major war between Iran and the United States has not been and is not being observed. Also, Turkey certainly lacks the capacity to persuade the United States to moderate its positions. If it had such capacity, it would have tried to get Washington to adjust its stance toward Turkey itself. When Turkey intervened in Syria, it expected at least minimal US support, but that support did not materialize. The situation is the same today.

If talks were to take shape in the manner proposed by Turkey, how would you assess the chances of success of such a process?

Whether this process takes shape or not is not important. In either scenario, as long as the United States is unwilling to change its excessive positions and its foreign policy remains hostage to the racist current of the occupying regime of Israel, it will be the same story all over again, and there will be no hope

for a clear and beneficial outcome.

What were the objectives of Araghchi's visit, and what outcomes can be expected?

This trip had been planned in advance, but its coincidence with President Erdoğan's interest in intervening and creating a trilateral discourse increased its significance. Iran and Turkey always have numerous issues on their agenda. Naturally, this proposal would also be discussed. President Erdoğan has proposed that these talks be held at the presidential level, which in itself constitutes an obstacle that could either derail the plan altogether or render it unsuccessful. Alternatively, if Araghchi is able to break it down into two tracks — one at the foreign ministers' level, with Erdoğan's presence — and if the results prove encouraging and US positions are moderated, then it would be possible to bank on a trilateral negotiation framework in Turkey.