

Mohsen Paknejad
SHANA

US energy cooperation 'possible' amid nuclear talks: Oil minister

Economy Desk

Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Friday that cooperation between Iran and the United States in the oil and gas sector is possible as nuclear negotiations continue. "Everything is possible," Paknejad said when asked about the likelihood of collaboration between Tehran and Washington in the energy field. According to a report by Tas-

nim news agency, the minister noted that it remains uncertain whether such cooperation would be implemented immediately. "It is not clear whether Tehran-Washington oil and gas cooperation will become operational now or not," he said. Hamid Qanbari, deputy for economic diplomacy at Iran's Foreign Ministry, previously outlined the scope of discussions during a meeting at the Iran Chamber of Commerce.

"Common interests in oil and gas fields, shared fields, mining investments, and even buying airplanes are included in the text of negotiations with the United States," Qanbari said on Sunday. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that Tehran and Washington agreed on "a set of guiding principles" to move forward in nuclear negotiations after the two sides concluded a second

round of talks in Geneva. The United States, which has deployed aircraft carriers and warships to the region, has threatened Iran with military action if no agreement is reached. Iran has declared its conditions and vowed not to bow to what it calls excessive demands, including the US push for zero uranium enrichment. Tehran has also said it will respond forcefully to any aggression.

TPO: Non-oil exports to Qatar rise as trade balance turns positive

Economy Desk

Iran's non-oil exports to Qatar rose significantly in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year while imports declined, shifting the bilateral trade balance in Tehran's favor, a senior official at Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) said. Abdolamir Rabihavi, director general of the TPO's West Asia Office, announced details of trade exchanges between Iran and Qatar for the 10-month period, reporting growth in exports and an improved trade balance. According to IRNA on Thursday, in the first 10 months of the Iranian calendar year beginning March 21, Iran's non-oil exports to Qatar increased in both weight and value compared with the same period last year, reaching about 580,000 tons worth more than \$122 million. "Last year during the same period, 432,000 tons of goods worth \$113 million were exported to Qatar, which shows that Iran's exports to Qatar have increased by about

34% in weight and about 8% in value," Rabihavi said. "Review of exported goods shows that the bulk of Iran's exports still includes agricultural products, foodstuffs, construction materials and some mineral items," he added. "Items such as eggs, tomatoes, watermelon, industrial powdered milk, flooring, dried fruits, cement, clinker and construction stones have a significant share of the export basket, indicating Iran's role in supplying part of Qatar's import needs."

Imports from Qatar decline As for the imports, Rabihavi said, "Iran's imports from Qatar in the first 10 months of the current year have been lower in volume and value compared to exports." "Total imports from Qatar in this period are estimated at about 101,000 tons worth approximately \$111 million; while this figure was 145,000 tons worth \$175 million in the same period last year." "Imports from Qatar have decreased by about 30% in weight and about 37% in value," he noted.

He said imported items have included industrial raw materials, animal and poultry feed, industrial parts and equipment, and chemical materials, indicating that Qatar mostly acts as a re-export hub for certain goods and its share in Iran's import supply chain is not very high. Rabihavi said Iran's trade balance with Qatar in the first 10 months of this year was positive and in Iran's favor, adding that the surplus is estimated at about \$11 million, while in the same period last year the balance was negative at about \$62 million to Iran's detriment. "The volume of indirect trade between the two countries is conducted through third countries such as the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates," he said. "Goods such as iron and steel billets and bitumen are transferred through these routes; trade in these items is estimated at about \$200 million, which indicates hidden and expandable capacities in trade relations between Tehran and Doha."



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Russia casts completion of Bushehr units 2, 3 as priority despite challenges

Economy Desk

Russia's Rosatom said on Thursday that construction of units 2 and 3 at Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant will remain a priority and will be completed successfully despite ongoing challenges. Director General Alexey Likhachev told reporters that building the additional units at the plant in Iran would stay on the company's priority list and that the project would be completed successfully sooner or later. 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. Meanwhile, Russia's Energy Minister Sergei Tsvilov said Wednesday at a press conference on the final day of the 19th Joint Commission on Economic and Trade Cooperation between the two countries that Russia is "seriously cooperating with the Iranian government and has many projects in various locations; currently, units 2 and 3 of the Bushehr nuclear power plant are under construction." "Besides units 2 and 3 of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, we are examining new plant

A view of Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant in southern Bushehr Province
IRNA

units," Tsvilov added. Mohammad Eslami, vice president and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said during a visit last Saturday to the construction site in Bushehr that cumulative physical progress on the project has reached 18%. He added that design, engineering and equipment manufacturing in workshops, as well as executive operations at the project site, are currently being carried out simultaneously. He noted that about 5,600 personnel from Iranian contractors are actively working at the site and expressed hope that, based on the revised schedule, the units would be commissioned in phases in the first year following completion of Iran's Seventh Development Plan. Each of units 2 and 3 is being

built with a generation capacity of 1,057 megawatts of electricity. Separately, according to IRNA, citing TASS, Likhachev said on Thursday that Rosatom has also developed plans to strengthen security at the Bushehr nuclear power plant in response to rising regional tensions. He said that, with confidence and based on results, it could be stated that following negotiations by Russian President Vladimir Putin with world leaders, the plant was one of the safest locations during the Israeli-imposed 12-day war against Iran. He added that although some workers — particularly family members and children — were evacuated from the site, similar contingency plans had been prepared in advance.

Chamber head pushes for direct trade with Riyadh, floats joint initiatives

Economy Desk

Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture chief Samad Hassanzadeh called for establishing direct trade relations with Saudi Arabia, proposing reciprocal trade delegations and a dedicated Iranian exhibition in the kingdom. According to ILNA on Friday, Hassanzadeh made the remarks during a meeting with Sheikh Saleh Kamel, president of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and head of the Federation of Saudi Chambers of Com-

merce, on the sidelines of the 41st General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber in Mecca. Hassanzadeh pointed to the current indirect trade between Iran and Saudi Arabia and urged replacing it with direct commercial exchanges. He highlighted Iran's capabilities in the food industry, noting that Iranian products are exported to various countries worldwide based on global standards. "At present, Iran does not have direct trade with Saudi Arabia. Therefore, we request that the groundwork for direct exchanges between the two countries be fa-

cilitated," Hassanzadeh said. Referring to past trade routes, he suggested enabling Iranian products to reach Saudi Arabia via Dammam Port, the nearest maritime route for bilateral commerce. Hassanzadeh also proposed organizing a dedicated exhibition to showcase Iran's commercial capacities in Saudi Arabia, timed to coincide with the dispatch of a Saudi trade delegation to Iran. He invited Kamel to visit Iran to familiarize himself with available business opportunities and recommended that a Saudi trade delegation travel to Iran.



In response, Kamel welcomed the proposals put forward by the Iranian chamber chief, emphasizing that establishing direct trade be-

tween Iran and Saudi Arabia is an important matter that he would raise and follow up with senior officials in his country.

Hassanzadeh also welcomed the proposal for exchanging trade delegations and holding a dedicated Iranian exhibition in Saudi Arabia, describing it as an opportunity to facilitate bilateral negotiations between economic actors from both countries. Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture chief Samad Hassanzadeh (R) meets Sheikh Saleh Kamel, president of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and head of the Federation of Saudi Chambers of Commerce, in Mecca on February 19, 2026.