

Bushehr nuclear plant ranks among world's top 10 facilities for third straight year: *AEOI*

Economy Desk

Iran's only nuclear power plant has been ranked among the world's top 10 facilities for the third consecutive year, receiving a perfect score of 100 out of 100 for safety and efficiency, according to the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Mohammad Eslami.

The assessment was conducted by inspectors and specialists from the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) following visits to various nuclear plants around the world, Eslami said, according to Press TV on Monday.

He said the ranking was not self-declared but was based on an on-site evaluation of the plant's processes, environment, personnel and operations.

The Bushehr nuclear power plant plays a key role in supplying the country's electricity. The facility has a net generating capacity of 915 megawatts and produces approximately six to seven terawatt-hours of electricity annually, according to official figures.

The plant's first unit was built with Russian cooperation and was designed to generate

1,000 megawatts of electricity. So far, it has produced a cumulative 80 million megawatt-hours of nuclear-generated electricity that has been injected into Iran's national power grid.

According to Tasnim news agency, the Bushehr nuclear power plant has a capacity of 1,020 megawatts and accounts for 1% of Iran's total electricity generation capacity. In total, thermal power plants — including combined-cycle, simple-cycle gas and steam facilities — with an installed capacity of 78,617 megawatts account for 78.4% of the country's installed electricity generation capacity. Their share of Iran's actual electricity production is around 90%. Hydropower plants, with an installed capacity of 12,131 megawatts, account for 12.1% of the country's electricity generation capacity. Distributed generation facilities, with a capacity of 2,923 megawatts, represent 2.9%; small hydropower plants, with 113.8 megawatts, account for 0.1%; renewable energy plants, with an installed capacity of 5,101 megawatts, make up 5.1%; and diesel power plants, with a capacity of 408 megawatts, account for 0.4% of the country's electricity generation capacity.



ISOICO dry-docks 13 vessels for repair, refurbishment since March

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The Iran Shipbuilding and Offshore Industries Complex (ISOICO) has placed 13 small and medium-sized vessels into dry dock for repair, refurbishment and operational readiness since the start of the Iranian year on March 21, the state news agency IRNA reported on Monday.

Vahid Sedaqat, head of ISOICO's small vessels group and acting head of its medium vessels group, said six vessels remain in dry dock, while seven have been launched back into the water after undergoing repair and refurbishment.

The vessels include four tugboats, four barges, three fuel supply ves-

sels, one landing craft and one supply boat, all of which have been prepared and made operational under the complex's production and repair programs, according to Sedaqat. He added that based on the planned schedule, next week two more small and medium-sized vessels will enter dry dock, while three vessels will be re-floated.

"This trend demonstrates the continuation of the complex's operational activities in the field of vessel repair and maintenance," he said, highlighting ISOICO's strive to provide the repair services required by the country's maritime industry in the shortest possible time by utilizing the expertise of its technical work-

force and its industrial infrastructure.

Sedaqat said results-oriented performance was the primary benchmark in production and technical activities, adding that the delivery of repaired vessels in accordance with technical standards ensured the continued flow of production and operations in the country's maritime industry.

ISOICO, Iran's largest and most advanced maritime industrial complex, operates in the design, construction and repair of various vessels and offshore structures and has the capability to refurbish and repair ocean-going vessels, commercial ships, tankers, service vessels, drilling platforms and offshore facilities.

FM spox Baqaei ...

Such circumstances are not entirely consistent with the spirit that underpins international sporting competitions and may ultimately affect the quality of participation by the teams involved. They also have the potential to create non-sporting pressures on Iran's national team and contribute to unequal conditions in the lead-up to the tournament.

Could these circumstances create psychological pressure and lead to an uneven playing field?

The cumulative effect of these alleged measures and restrictions could influence the team's state of mind and overall preparedness. From this perspective, such conditions may increase psychological pressure and create a degree of inequality compared with other participating teams. If the situation continues, there is a risk that it will be perceived as creating an uneven competitive environment—an issue that warrants attention and management by the relevant authorities.

Through these actions, the United States is seeking to ensure that our national team enters the World Cup under pressure. At the same time, our players remain highly motivated to achieve success and to bring joy to the people of Iran.

What is your broader view of the national team's situation under these circumstances?

Despite all the challenges and restrictions that have been raised, the importance of national support for sports teams becomes even more evident.

The players and coaching staff of the national team will enter the tournament under particularly sensitive circumstances. Nevertheless, they are expected to remain focused on their technical capabilities and deliver a performance that reflects their abilities.

Participation in a competition of this magnitude is not merely a sporting matter. It also carries symbolic significance and can serve as a reflection of determination, unity and collective effort.

How important is national support under these conditions?

Under circumstances such as these, national support plays a crucial role in strengthening morale and enhancing players' motivation.

Regardless of the challenges and potential restrictions involved, emphasizing solidarity, encouragement and support for the national team can make a meaningful contribution to improving its performance in the competitions ahead.

How do you see the role of Iran's Embassy during the national team's stay in Mexico, and what challenges do you anticipate going forward?

During the national team's trip to Mexico, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran provided the necessary support under his diplomatic responsibilities, helping the team overcome a number of operational obstacles and administrative challenges so that it could carry out its activities in more stable and less stressful conditions.

At the same time, there are concerns

that the scope of potential obstruction may not be limited to these instances alone. As the process continues, we may witness additional challenges, including actions by tournament officials or even institutions responsible for immigration matters.

What measures can be taken to address such circumstances?

Any potential actions by the other side are considered foreseeable. There is a view that American policymakers and decision-makers may seek to use all available means to create distractions or impose non-sporting pressures to affect Iran's national team as it prepares for the competition.

Such developments could be seen as an attempt to introduce non-sporting considerations into the competitive environment, making the start of the tournament more difficult for the Iranian team.

If such conditions emerge, the responsibility of national institutions and the broader public to strengthen unity and support the team will become even more important.

Under those circumstances, members of the coaching staff and the players themselves will be expected to remain fully aware of the situation while maintaining their focus on preparation and technical performance. They should enter the competition with even greater motivation. Pursuing sporting objectives in such an environment may present additional challenges. Ultimately, however, the decisive factors will be the team's resolve and the players' technical abilities.

IFO releases 800,000 juvenile sturgeon into natural habitats under stock restoration program

Economy Desk

Iran's Fisheries Organization has released 800,000 juvenile sturgeon into natural habitats since the start of the current Iranian year starting on March 21 as part of its national stock restoration program, a senior official at the organization said. Mahmoud Qobadi, director general of the organization's Office for the Restoration and Protection of Aquatic Genetic Resources, said, "The release program will continue through the end of the breeding season."

According to IRNA, stock restoration programs along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea are carried out with the participation of specialized centers in the three northern provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan, where millions of juvenile sturgeon produced through artificial breeding are released into natural habitats each year.

Qobadi said restoring sturgeon stocks has become one of the country's most important national strategies for protecting biodiversity, preserving genetic resources and reviving the natural populations of these valuable species in the Caspian Sea. Stressing that stock restoration extends far beyond the production and release of juvenile fish, he said broodstock management, the preservation of genetic diversity, the prevention of genetic deterioration in fish populations, the monitoring of release

outcomes, and the protection of natural habitats were all integral components of effective stock restoration programs.

He said that last year a total of 1,943,692 juvenile sturgeon were released into rivers and natural habitats connected to the Caspian Sea.

Of that total, 961,792 juvenile fish were released in Gilan Province, 433,400 in Mazandaran Province and 548,500 in Golestan Province, he said.

Qobadi explained that the country's stock restoration programs aim to strengthen natural populations, increase the likelihood that broodstock will return to their spawning rivers, and preserve the genetic resources of these valuable species.

Discussing the global significance of sturgeon, he said, "Sturgeon, as one of the most valuable aquatic genetic resources in Iran and the world, have experienced a significant decline in their natural populations in recent decades due to factors such as habitat destruction, environmental pollution, illegal fishing and climate change." "Therefore, their protection and stock restoration are among the priorities of the Iran Fisheries Organization," he added.

Following the agreement among the Caspian littoral states to halt commercial sturgeon fishing in order to restore natural stocks, stock restoration and artificial breeding programs have become the

most important tools for protecting these valuable species. Within this framework, Iran has continuously pursued genetic conservation, breeding and the release of juvenile sturgeon, he added.

Qobadi said the expansion of sturgeon farming in recent years has helped meet part of market demand and reduce pressure on wild populations. He added that linking stock restoration with the development of sustainable aquaculture is one of the most effective long-term approaches to conserving these valuable species.

The country's caviar exports have risen steadily, reaching nearly \$8 million annually and expanding to 42 countries worldwide today, according to the secretary-general of Iran's Union of Aquatic Production and Trade.

Ali-Akbar Khodaei, in an interview with Iran Daily last month, said that Iran's caviar export revenues increased from \$3.188 million in 2023 to around \$6 million in 2024. He added that official figures for 2025 had not yet been released, but estimates indicated exports reached between \$7.8 million and \$8 million by March 2026.

Khodaei also said export volumes increased, with shipments rising to 7,130 kilograms during the 10-month period from March 20, 2025, to Jan. 19, 2026, compared with 6,200 kilograms in the corresponding period a year earlier, representing a 14% increase.