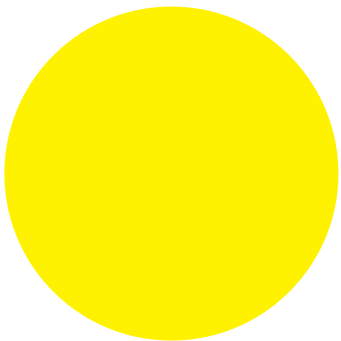


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Pulsing arteries amid flames

Chronicle of resilience, strategy, technological advancement in Iran's oil industry

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OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

In the landscape of modern warfare, energy is far more than a mere economic sector; it is the throbbing pulse of national life, the backbone of public stability, and the primary target in destabilization efforts. In recent years, amidst escalating regional tensions—from high-pressure, short-term campaigns to the sustained conflicts across the Persian Gulf—the clear objective of the adversaries (the US and the Zionist regime) was to inflict a total, paralyzing shock upon Iran's energy artery. They aimed to cripple upstream facilities, shut down fuel production and refining chains, block every drop of oil export, and sever the return of foreign exchange revenues to the nation's economic cycle. However, the field reality of what unfolded shattered all the

calculations of their war rooms. Contrary to the initial goals of these aggressors, these direct and imposed threats not only failed to lead to collapse but instead sparked an unprecedented surge in cohesion, solidarity, and collective responsibility across the entire family of the oil industry. It forged a deep bond between the field worker in the facilities of Asaluyeh and Kharg, the control room engineer, the research laboratory scientist, and the energy command staff.

Field strategy and leadership: When helmsman stood in fire
The astonishing stability of critical facilities during those inflammatory days was no accident. The oil industry required a strategic mind and field command capable of balancing three fundamental pillars: protecting human life and health, ensuring non-stop production, and rapidly countering crisis scenarios. In this critical juncture, the leadership of Oil Minister Mohsen

Paknejad was both pivotal and exemplary. In a climate where threats against strategic centers had reached their zenith, his approach was not to manage from behind closed doors, but to command from the front lines. His direct and timely presence in the damaged zones sent a clear signal of stability and courage, both to the operational workforce and to international markets. This brave presence and field management ignited a wave of organizational courage and sacrifice; so much so that at the peak of the tensions, a deluge of written, voluntary requests flowed to the Minister's office from operational and administrative staff, demanding immediate deployment to the front-line operational zones, particularly Kharg Island and the offshore facilities of the Persian Gulf. Such a spirit demonstrated how leadership rooted in mutual trust and self-sacrifice could transform crushing threats into the great capital of national cohesion.

Quantitative track record of resilience: Tangible realities in four pillars
The response of the oil industry's workforce to the enemy's attacks was not merely epic; this resistance manifested in precise numbers and operational records across the four main companies: Upstream (NIOC): Despite heavy sanctions and sabotage operations in international waterways, production capacity was stabilized through the rapid reconfiguration of wells and gathering stations. International sources and credible OPEC data indicate that crude oil production was sustained at levels exceeding 3.7 million barrels per day. Projects to increase production capacity were aggressively pursued by bringing new wells and separation/processing units online, turning the dream of a total halt to Iran's oil exports into a mirage. Gas (NIGC): The greatest test of resilience occurred here. Despite critical facilities in South Pars being targeted, unprecedented restoration records were set. Damaged sections were stabilized and

recovered by the efforts of local personnel in less than two weeks. The national gas network not only remained intact, but gas refineries, relying on a daily nominal capacity of over 900 million cubic meters, maintained a stable flow for urban, power plant, and industrial sectors. Refining and Distribution: The enemy sought to trigger a gasoline famine and paralyze public transport. Yet, through the expansion and upgrading of processing units, the country's crude oil and condensate refining capacity reached the 2.4 million barrels per day mark. Stable gasoline production was maintained at 110 million liters per day, peaking at 121–127 million liters per day with blending capacities to fully meet the record-breaking consumption triggered by the crisis. Simultaneously, refinery diesel (gas oil) production saw significant growth, practically eliminating the country's dependence on imports of this strategic fuel during peak demand seasons. Petrochemicals: Standing firm against feedstock fluctuations and export disruptions, this sec-

tor remained the pioneer in value creation and foreign exchange protection. Installed nominal capacity, through the commissioning of value-chain projects, stands on the threshold of exceeding 105 million tons per year, ensuring the engine of non-oil revenue generation never dimmed even at the peak of the conflict.

Leaping from crisis management to pinnacle of science
The greatest marvel of Iran's oil industry resilience was that it did not settle for traditional maintenance. Right in the heart of the most intense pressures, it took a historic step across the frontiers of global technology. At a time when access to Western catalysts and licensors was blocked by the most severe obstacles, the elite researchers of the oil industry succeeded in creating and introducing a completely indigenous and unique technical know-how: The AQP process for desulfurization of fuel oil.