

Iran to press ahead with 20,000-MW nuclear power plan despite attacks

Economy Desk

Iran will continue work on its plan to generate 20,000 megawatts of nuclear power, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) said on Sunday, describing attacks on sensitive nuclear and industrial facilities as war crimes. “Our construction projects did not stop even during the war, and they will not stop,” Mohammad Eslami said at the international conference “Ecocide: the Silent War Crime” in Tehran, warning of the environmental consequences of strikes on nuclear and industrial facilities. The AEOI has included the 20,000-MW nuclear power target for the year 2041 in its strategic document and the national development plan. According to Eslami in 2024, implementation had begun following site selection and the launch of activities by construction and operation companies, with projects at different stages of progress. The organization is also required to accelerate nuclear power development and meet the quantitative targets for clean energy production within the specified timeframe, including a target of 3,000 MW under Iran’s seventh development plan. Referring to the environmental benefits of Iran’s only nuclear power plant, Bushehr, Eslami

said that the 1,000-MW facility had prevented the release of about 90 million metric tons of carbon into the atmosphere to date. “Based on assessments by the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO), the Bushehr nuclear power plant ranks among the world’s top 10 in terms of safety and efficiency,” he said. The plant produces no emissions, Eslami said, and has a very high level of safety. He added that such performance and achievements should not be halted but replicated. “We will continue implementing the 20,000-MW nuclear power plan with strength,” he said. Eslami also referred to attacks on Iran’s nuclear and non-nuclear facilities during the US-Israeli war that began in late February. He said the strikes had targeted not only nuclear facilities, where an attack could have far-reaching consequences, but also oil refineries, petrochemical complexes and irradiation centers served by the AEOI to support public health and food safety. Eslami said the attacks had targeted facilities that use radioactive sources in various industries. An irradiation system contained 17 radioactive sources, while petrochemical companies used 117 such sources. Many of the country’s

large, advanced industries rely on precision instruments based on nuclear technology for safety and measurement, he added. Steel factories also contained 146 nuclear source packages. He also mentioned research systems and scientific centers at Sharif University of Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology and Shahid Beheshti University. Eslami criticized the attackers for disregarding the human and environmental consequences of their actions, saying the strikes demonstrated their distance from humanity and indifference to human life. Turning to the applications of nuclear technology in health care, he said the technology had brought profound changes to people’s lives. Without it, many diseases, particularly cancer, would be more difficult to diagnose, he said, adding that nuclear technology provides services in both diagnosis and treatment. “How can a country that has developed and acquired this technology be asked to abandon it simply because a bullying



power demands it?” Eslami said. He also criticized what he described as a double standard in nuclear policy, referring to US plans to expand its own nuclear power capacity. The US has reached agreements and made plans to increase the number of its nuclear power plants, Eslami said, adding that the US president had ordered a fourfold increase in the country’s nuclear power capacity in 2025. “How can a country that has imposed the greatest pressure and restrictions on Iran put the development of its own nuclear

industry on the agenda while preventing Iran from accessing the same technology?” he said. Iran has faced Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear program.

Iran plans sterile-mosquito project

In a separate development on Sunday, the AEOI and Iran’s Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education signed an agreement to develop insect sterilization technology to control the invasive Aedes mosquito and combat dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika.

Under the agreement, the two sides will draw on the country’s scientific, research and technological capabilities to establish a facility for mass-rearing sterile male Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and conduct pilot and field studies to assess the technology’s effectiveness, ISNA reported. The AEOI will also cooperate in providing gamma or X-ray irradiation equipment, training personnel in irradiation technology, supplying specialists in irradiation and dosimetry, and ensuring the performance and maintenance of the equipment delivered under the agreement.

Tehran, Ashgabat discuss rail, road cooperation, new border route

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Iran and Turkmenistan have agreed to advance a road project linking Gamdagh and Etrek, with construction expected to begin within the next one to two months, Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq said, as the two countries seek to expand transport cooperation and follow up on previous agreements. Sadeq, speaking about the outcome of her recent two-day visit to Turkmenistan, said the trip was aimed at reviewing previous understandings and following up on their implementation. Her ministry is responsible for pursuing the work of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Commission, she said, according to IRNA. During a meeting with the head of Turkmenistan’s side of the joint commission, the two sides reviewed earlier agreements and understandings and made progress on



several areas of cooperation, Sadeq said. Rail transport and border terminals, particularly those serving rail traffic, were among the main areas of progress, she said, adding that closer cooperation was important given Turkmenistan’s role in moving cargo entering Iran. On road transport, Sadeq said the construction of the Gamdagh-Etrek road had been put on the agenda to address existing problems and facilitate travel. Under an agreement between the two sides, construction is expected to begin within the next one to two months. An Iranian company with the capacity to carry out the project

has been selected as the contractor, she said. The road will be built on Turkmenistan’s territory and is expected to ease travel for Iranian truck drivers and improve road links between the two countries. The Turkmen side also considers the route necessary for developing its road network, she added. Energy cooperation was another topic discussed during the visit, with agreements reached that she hoped would yield results in the near future. Sadeq said regional talks also covered trilateral cooperation between Iran, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, as well as coordination among Iran, Turkmenistan and Russia.

Iran-Afghanistan trade deals exceed \$400 million at Kabul exhibition

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Iranian companies have signed contracts worth more than \$400 million at Afghanistan’s fifth Abu Hanifa International Exhibition in Kabul, the head of the Iran-Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said. Mahmoud Seyadat told IRNA in an exclusive interview on Saturday that a shift toward joint investment and production could significantly expand economic cooperation between the two countries. Seyadat said that the exhibition was particularly significant because of the level of participation by businesspeople and the presence of official Iranian delegations. For the first time, a delegation from Iran’s Chamber of Commerce attended the event, including members of its board of directors and more than 50 businesspeople active in various sectors, he said. Seyadat identified a change in the approach to bilateral economic cooperation as one of the main features of this year’s exhibition. While previous interactions had



largely focused on exports, businesspeople are now paying greater attention to joint investment, technology and knowledge transfer, and participation in domestic production in Afghanistan, he said. Support for production and investment in Afghanistan has created conditions for greater participation by domestic businesspeople and foreign investors, Seyadat said. Iranian companies can therefore expand their exports while establishing a more lasting and effective presence in the Afghan market through participation in production projects and joint investments. Seyadat said the Iranian government needed to support the expansion of economic ties with Afghanistan.

Measures should include backing investment in the country, expanding exports of technical and engineering services, activating the export guarantee fund and introducing incentives for exporters, he said. Another important issue in developing trade with Afghanistan was enabling export transactions to be settled in rials and establishing an appropriate mechanism for importing Afghan-made products into Iran, he said. Implementing these measures could facilitate trade, reduce barriers and help establish more sustainable economic relations between the two countries. Seyadat said Afghanistan, despite difficulties stemming from nearly five decades of internal and

external wars, was pursuing reconstruction and development. Many Afghan businesspeople who had been living abroad had returned and were active in various economic sectors, he said. Despite existing challenges, economic activity and reconstruction in Afghanistan were continuing, while support for production and investment was creating new opportunities to expand regional cooperation, he added. Seyadat also pointed to border restrictions and closures involving Pakistan, saying the current circumstances could create greater opportunities for Iran to enter the Afghan market. He said Iran was expected to play a more prominent role in meeting Afghanistan’s economic needs. To capitalize on this opportunity, border problems must be resolved quickly, truck movements facilitated, and the transit and export capacity of border crossings expanded, Seyadat said. If obstacles are removed and agreed measures implemented, Iran’s exports to Afghanistan could increase to \$10 billion, he added.