



# Will the sabotage at the Natanz nuclear facility harm both Iran's nuclear program and the JCPOA?



ANI

Mon, 19 April, 2021, 8:36 am · 5-min read



Representative Image

By John Solomou

Nicosia [Cyprus], April 19 (ANI): A day after the Iranian government unveiled its new uranium enrichment centrifuges in the Natanz nuclear plant, on April 11 the facility was sabotaged by an explosion causing damage both to the central power and the emergency power cable as well as to an unknown number of centrifuges in the facility.

Although the Israeli government did not officially admit that it carried out the sabotage, it is apparent that Israel decided to take matters into its own hands and effectively slow down the Iranian nuclear efforts.

Another possible target of the sabotage was to scuttle the talks carried out in Vienna aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The meeting in Vienna involves senior diplomats from Iran, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia, under the chairmanship of the European Union. US officials are staying

## TRENDING

Watch: Railway Official Runs Towards Train And Saves Child Fallen On Tracks in Mumbai

News18 · 2-min read



Two Sisters 'Divorced' for Failing 'Virginity Test' in Maharashtra are Fighting Back with FIR

News18 · 2-min read



Ask The Doctor: COVID-19 Is Airborne, But Here's How You Can Still Protect Yourself Against The Virus

News18 · 4-min read



Kerala father says he murdered daughter, fled as he was unable to kill himself

The News Minute · 3-min read



Maskless Duo That Misbehaved With Delhi Cops Now Arrested

The Quint · 3-min read





Sign in



The talks between Iran and the US are indirect, as Iran insisted that sanctions should be lifted before the agreement is renewed, while the US wants Iran to agree on the JCPOA and then lift sanctions. The diplomats of the five powers are trying to find a way out of this problem.

It is not the first time that the Natanz uranium enrichment facility has been sabotaged. In 2007 in a joint Israeli-US cyberattack, a malicious computer virus called Stuxnet was inserted in the plant's systems and destroyed a big number of centrifuges.

Also, in July 2020 there was an explosion in the facility damaging an unspecified number of centrifuges, while last November Iran's chief nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed by a gun operated by artificial intelligence. Tehran blamed Israel for all these attacks.

It is recalled that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said that he would never allow Tehran to obtain nuclear weapons.

Israeli public radio, citing unnamed intelligence sources, reported that the explosion at Natanz was a sabotage operation carried out by the Mossad spy agency. As there was press speculation that the attack had received the green light from the Biden Administration, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki emphatically stressed: "The US was not involved in any manner" and added: "We have nothing to add to speculation about causes or the impacts."

Reacting to the incident, Ali-Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, described the blackout as "nuclear terrorism."

Iranian Government Spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday that the sabotage act in Natanz was aimed at preventing constructive diplomacy, adding that Iran was committed to reciprocate proportionally in appropriate time.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi on Friday, speaking after a meeting in Paphos, Cyprus, with his Greek and Greek Cypriot counterpart and a UAE senior official convened to discuss stability in the region, repeated that Israel would do



confirmed that Iran was now producing uranium enriched to 60 per cent purity.

This means that Tehran, although it insists that it does not want to build an atomic bomb, is now closer to the 90 per cent level required for use in a nuclear weapon.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency criteria, it would take Tehran 322 days to produce the amount of 60 per cent enriched uranium needed to make one nuclear bomb.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday that the announcement on uranium enrichment "calls into question Iran's seriousness with regard to the nuclear talks".

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who is under strong criticism from Iranian hardliners and the Revolutionary Guards for not responding to the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and the two latest attacks on Natanz, apparently wants to avoid a harsh response that could endanger the JCPOA talks and the lifting of the crippling US sanctions.

After the sabotage, some Iranian media and hardliners in the parliament demanded that Rouhani pull out of the Vienna negotiations.

Intelligence Analysis expert Dr Ardavan Khoshnood, points out: "Once the US has rejoined the JCPOA, Iran will likely consider itself free to carry out more spirited attacks on Israel and Israeli interests, either directly or through its proxy Shiite militias in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq or Yemen."

As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed not to see the JCPOA deal revived, it is not surprising that many people believe that the aim of the sabotage at Natanz was twofold: One was to delay as much as possible Tehran's plans to build a nuclear weapon and secondly, by heightening tension in the region, to disrupt the talks in Vienna, especially if Iran retaliates against Israel.

Mark Fitzpatrick, former head of the Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Policy Program, in an interview with Mehr News Agency said: "Israel does not trust diplomacy to resolve the stop of Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability and

Our goal is to create a safe and engaging place for users to connect over interests and passions. In order to improve our community experience, we are temporarily suspending article commenting.

LATEST STORIES



News18

What to do If You Are in Isolation at Home or Looking After Someone Who is: BMC's Full List of Mumbai on Saturday recorded 8,811 new cases and 51 fatalities, taking the city's case tally to 5,71,018 and the death toll to 12,301.

a day ago



News18

Kate Middleton's Necklace at Prince Philip's Funeral Had a Special Connection with Princess Diana Photos of the Duchess show Kate Middleton wearing pieces of jewellery with her solemn, all-black attire: dangling pearl earrings and a four-row pearl choker at Prince Phillip's...

a day ago



Firstpost

Manmohan Singh pens letter to Narendra Modi on COVID-19 crisis, suggests five measures to tackle One of the key suggestions that Singh gave in his letter was that the government should indicate how this expected to supply will be distributed across states based on a...

a day ago



News18

Won't Allow Afghan Soil for Proxy Conflict, Want Good Ties: Taliban Spokesperson Assures India Taliban's political spokesperson Muhammad Naeem Wardak said the US has breached the Doha agreement and delayed the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

a day ago



The Quint

6 States Under Maha Railways Scanner: What Passengers Need to Know Maharashtra has declared six states, including Delhi and the NCR region, as places of "sensitive origin".

13 hours ago

News18

Ex-MMA Star Ben Askren Apologises to "the World" After Knockout Loss to YouTube star-turned Boxer Jake Paul

Ben Askren said he "let the world down" after a first-round