

## **US to buy 32 metric tons of Iranian heavy water to fulfill nuclear deal terms**

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**Washington:** The US has said it would buy 32 metric tonnes of Iranian heavy water, a key component in atomic-weapons development, worth USD 8.6 million to help Tehran meet its obligations under the landmark nuclear deal signed last year.

The US does not produce heavy water on its own and so far has been buying this from Canada and India. The heavy water would be resold domestically for research and other purposes.

"The US Government, via the Department of Energy, is making a license purchase of 32 metric tonnes of heavy water from a subsidiary of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran," State Department Spokesperson Elizabeth Trudeau said.

"This heavy water will fulfil a substantial portion of the US domestic demand this year for industry and domestic research applications," she said yesterday.

Under last year's landmark nuclear deal signed between Iran, the US and five other world powers, Iran is responsible for reducing its stock of heavy water.

Noting that this material is not radioactive and does not present safety concerns, she said this transaction provides US industry with a critical product while also enabling Iran to sell some of its excess heavy water as contemplated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran's compliance with the JCPOA meant this material had already been removed from Iran, ensuring it would not be used to support the development of a nuclear weapon, Trudeau said.

"Our purchase of the heavy water means it will instead be used for critically important research in non-nuclear industrial requirements here in the US," she said.

The US expects the heavy water will be delivered to the US in the coming week, initially stored at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and then resold at commercially reasonable prices to domestic commercial and research buyers, Trudeau said.

The heavy water is used in the development, production, and sale of compounds used in chemistry, biomedical and diagnostic research, environmental analysts, and physics.

Trudeau said the US was under no obligation to purchase heavy water from Iran, nor it is obligated to do so in the future, but the JCPOA required Iran to reduce its heavy water inventory below the 130 metric tonne limit.

One way to do that was to sell the excess to countries or companies. It is possible other countries may wish to purchase that in the future.

"This was a purchase that was arranged through the Department of Energy for that. That will be a statement to the world: You want to buy heavy water from Iran, you can buy heavy water from Iran. It has been done. Even the US did it," US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in an interview to The Wall Street Journal.

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