

Iran entry finally ready for US solar challenge

June 23 2014



Students from the Iran's Qazvin Azad Islamic University, test drive with the solar powered Havin-2 vehicle, in Qazvin on June 2, 2014

A solar car built by Iranian students has finally arrived in the United States for an international competition after a race against the clock, their spokesman told AFP on Monday.

A dozen students from the Qazvin Azad Islamic University have taken delivery of the Havin-2 after it cleared US customs to race in the

2,735-kilometre (1,700-mile) American Solar Challenge starting on July 2.

The team will compete against prestigious opponents including a team from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the race across seven US states from Austin in Texas to Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"The car arrived in the US three days ago and is now in Austin," Hassan Bahrami, the team's project manager, told AFP.

"We will make every effort to make a good finish."

The solar powered Havin-2 has a 4.5-metre (15-foot) carbon fibre chassis, with four wheels underneath a sprawling white body.

The team's entry had been uncertain as US sanctions imposed to coerce Iran into curbing its controversial nuclear drive caused unforeseen obstacles when the students tried to airfreight the car.



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Several airlines operating in Iran refused to transport the vehicle, despite a letter from the US Treasury Department confirming that the car did not require special authorisation.

"We are scientists. I am sure that our presence (in the [race](#)) will change perception, including that of Americans, towards Iran," said Bahrami, adding that he hoped the car would showcase the "scientific level of our country".

A slow thaw is taking place after decades of icy relations between Iran and the United States, which have had no diplomatic ties since the 1979 American embassy takeover in Tehran.

Bahrami denounced a Facebook post that claimed the team's visit to the United States had been cancelled.

"The team's morale is high and unaffected," he said.

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