

WSA: Iran's steel output up 15% in January as global production falls

Economy Desk

Global crude steel production fell in January 2026, while Iran's output grew by more than 15%, helping the country maintain its position as the world's 10th-largest steel producer, according to the World Steel Association (WSA).

The association reported that crude steel production across 69 countries reached 147.3 million tons in January, down 6.5% compared with the same month in 2025.

Iranian steelmakers produced 2.6 million tons of crude steel in January 2026, marking a 15.1% increase from January 2025, Mehr news agency reported.

China, the world's largest producer, saw output decline 13.9% to 75.3 million tons. India produced 15.1 million tons, up 10.5%, while the United States increased production by 3.3% to 7.1 million tons. South Korea produced 5.6 million tons, a 5% rise, whereas

Japan's output fell 0.5% to 6.8 million tons and Brazil's production dropped 1.4% to 2.7 million tons. Germany recorded a 15% increase to 3.1 million tons, Russia's output decreased 7.4% to 5.5 million tons, and Turkey produced 3.4 million tons, up 5.8%.

The data show that while global steel production is trending downward, Iran's sustained growth has allowed it to retain its 10th-place ranking among the world's top steel producers.

Separately, the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) said in mid-February that exports from Iran's steel value chain rose sharply in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year, which began March 21. The association reported that export value of iron and steel chain products during the period that began March 21 surpassed \$6.5 billion — the total for the whole of last year — marking a 22% increase.



IRNA

Iran-Afghanistan rail trade posts 17-fold yearly jump: RAI



IRNA

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Rail freight exchanges between Iran and Afghanistan have increased 17-fold since the start of the current Iranian year on March 21, 2025, compared with the same period last year, a senior Iranian railway official said, citing latest transport data.

"Rail exchanges between Iran and Afghanistan from the beginning of this year through Tuesday (February 24) have increased 17 times com-

pared with last year," Shahriar Naqizadeh, director general for international commerce at the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI), told IRNA.

"In the Afghanistan sector, we achieved outstanding performance this year at the newly established Shamtigh rail border crossing, registering a 17-fold increase in rail exchanges with the country compared with last year," he said. According to the official, shipments sent via

the rail link exceeded 650,000 tons as of February 24 and are projected to surpass 750,000 tons by the end of the Iranian year on March 21, 2026.

"At least 150,000 tons of these shipments were transit cargo, meaning the consignments originated in other countries and were transported through Iran to Afghanistan," Naqizadeh said.

"Our target for next year is to move 2 million tons of cargo through the Shamtigh border, which is easily achievable," he added.

Rail link opens export route eastward

Earlier, the chief executive of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways said a new gateway for exports to Afghanistan had been opened, IRNA reported.

He said 70,000 tons of cargo were transported

to Afghanistan by rail in the 10th month of the current year, rising to more than 100,000 tons in the 11th month, with a forecast exceeding 1.5 million tons of rail cargo movement for next year. Exports transported via the railway include ceramic products from Yazd, steel shipments from various companies and transit of petroleum products from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Russia to Afghanistan, according to the report. The new eastern corridor could help expand Iran's exports.

The railway chief also referred to petroleum product prices inside Afghanistan, saying the cost had been about \$1,400 per ton domestically, but rail transport reduced the price to \$935 per ton, demonstrating the impact of rail freight transportation.

Minister opens West Asia's sole thermal paper plant, textile factories in Qazvin



ISNA

Economy Desk

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Mohammad Atabak inaugurated paper, packaging, and textile yarn production factories in Qazvin on Thursday, including the largest and only active thermal paper producer in West Asia. The thermal paper production unit, with an annual capacity of 18,273 tons, is expected to create employment for 1,000 people di-

rectly and indirectly, ISNA reported.

The facility's main product is thermal paper used in point-of-sale (POS) devices, automated teller machines (ATMs), and retail cash registers, which was previously imported mainly from China and South Korea.

The paper and packaging industrial unit was established in Alborz Industrial City. According to the project's investors, once the factory reaches maximum

production capacity, it will be possible to prevent currency outflows equivalent to approximately 15 percent of the domestic market capacity for the product.

The machinery technology for the unit was supplied from China, and the foreign investors are among prominent producers in the paper and packaging industry. The inauguration of the facility aligns with policies of the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade to develop processing industries, reduce dependence on imports, and strengthen production chains in the northern Qazvin Province. Also on Thursday, a textile yarn production company with a nominal capacity of 11,850 tons per year and employment for 500 people began operations with the minister in attendance. A spinning company with a nominal capacity of 15,500 tons per year and employment for 400 people was also inaugurated by the minister and began operations.

SCI reports annual inflation rise of 47.5% in 11 months

Economy Desk

Iran's annual inflation rate continued an upward trend during the first 11 months of the current Iranian year starting March 21, rising from 33.2% at the beginning of the year to 47.5% as of February 19, according to data released by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), indicating an increase of 14.3 percentage points over the period.

Data published by the SCI and reported by ISNA

showed that annual inflation in the 11th month of the year (Jan. 21-Feb. 19) reached 47.5%, up 3.1 percentage points from the previous month.

During the 11th month, the highest annual inflation rate was recorded in the "bread and cereals" category at 90.2%, while the lowest rate was registered in the housing sector for residential rents at 34.7%.

Annual inflation refers to the percentage change in the average consumer price index

over the 12 months ending in the current month compared with the corresponding period a year earlier.

At the start of the Iranian year, covering March 21 to April 20, annual inflation was reported at 33.2%. In that first month, vegetables and legumes recorded the highest inflation rate at 59%, while oils and fats posted the lowest rate at 9.1%.

Separately, the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said on Wednesday that consumer price

inflation, based on its own calculations, stood at 46.3% for the 12 months ending in the 11th month compared with the same period a year earlier.

According to IRNA, the consumer price index for goods and services in Iran's urban areas rose to 558.1 in the 11th month, increasing 8.4% from the previous month.

The index also increased by 62.2% compared with the same month a year earlier, the report said.

