

Iran's oil sales surge past pre-war levels

Economy Desk

Iran's oil exports have bounced back to surpass pre-war levels, data from analytics firm Kpler show, as regional producers have scaled back production due to difficulties exporting the commodity through the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. According to Kpler, since the outbreak of the US-Israeli war against Iran on February 28,

nine tankers have loaded Iranian oil and departed the Persian Gulf, mostly heading towards China, which has been identified by tracking firms as the main buyer of Iranian barrels over the past few years. Data indicate that tankers have been loading an average of 2.1 million barrels of Iranian crude oil per day, exceeding Iran's daily exports of 2 million barrels in early February and before the conflict

flared up. At least 13.7 million barrels of Iranian oil have made their way from the narrow waterway to China since the start of the war, according to figures obtained from ship-tracking companies, Tasnim News Agency wrote. While major shipping companies have halted operations in the region, tankers linked to Iran continue to sail through the strait.

The increase in Iranian oil loadings comes despite vessels being hesitant to navigate the Strait of Hormuz, an artery through which 20% of the world's oil passes.

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has targeted at least 15 vessels since the start of the conflict for ignoring warnings about the waterway's closure.

The IRGC says passage through the strait is unsafe due to crossfire between parties involved in the conflict.

The Wall Street Journal has reported that Iran is exporting more oil than it did before the war, demonstrating that Tehran maintains control over this strategic waterway. Meanwhile, Persian Gulf oil producers, ranging from Saudi Arabia to Iraq, have reduced their output and are trying to find alternative routes other than the Strait of Hormuz.

Disruptions to oil flow in the conduit have led to a sudden surge in prices, with oil fluctuating between \$80 and \$120 per barrel during wartime, now hovering around \$100 per barrel.

Furthermore, according to a report by JP Morgan, if the Strait of Hormuz were to be blocked for two weeks, the Persian Gulf's oil supply could fall to around 3.8mn barrels per day.



● SHANA

Ports serve only civilians, shipping association denies US claims



● MEHR

Economy Desk

Iran's national shipping association has rejected US allegations regarding the military use of commercial ports, stating that the logistics industry operates strictly in accordance with international maritime regulations to serve civilians.

The Shipping Association of Iran (SAOI) on Thursday denied claims made by US Central Command (CENTCOM) that Iranian naval vessels were hiding in commercial ports. The association asserted that Iran's logistics and maritime activities are focused on civilian services and aim to maintain the sustainable flow of goods transport.

"We consider any military use of this industry to be in violation of interna-

tional laws," the statement added. Separately, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, the senior spokesman for the Iranian Armed Forces, dismissed the CENTCOM allegations in a television interview as "false and unrealistic."

Shekarchi emphasized that none of the country's military vessels are present in commercial or economic ports.

He also warned that Iran is fully prepared to deliver a "decisive reciprocal response within the framework of legitimate defense" should any operational threat be posed against Iranian ports.

Tensions have escalated into open war since Feb. 28, when the US and the Zionist regime launched widespread strikes on Tehran, killing several senior officials.

Minister warns attacks on Iranian monuments threaten humanity's shared heritage

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, on Friday condemned attacks targeting residential areas, cultural centers, and historic sites across Iran, saying damage to such locations threatens not only the nation's identity but also humanity's shared heritage.

In a note published on the government portal dolat.ir, Salehi-Amiri described assaults on Iran's cultural landmarks, including nationally registered and UNESCO-recognized sites, as moments in history that test not just a nation, but the global community's commitment to international norms protecting cultural heritage.

heritage is widely defined in the humanities and international law as the "organized memory of humanity," connecting generations through shared historical experience and identity. Every historic building, archaeological site, and cultural fabric constitutes a living record of human civilization, he said.

Salehi-Amiri noted that the international community developed legal frameworks after the destruction of cultural heritage during wars in the 20th century to protect such assets. These conventions were designed to ensure that cultural landmarks, particularly globally recognized ones, are preserved even during periods of conflict.

"However, what we see today highlights a widening gap between these

lapsing under the weight of power?" Iran, he said, is one of the world's oldest civilizations, with a history spanning millennia. "It is one of the oldest centers of culture, knowledge, and art in human civilization, and it cannot remain indifferent when its cultural heritage, which forms part of humanity's shared legacy, is threatened," Salehi-Amiri wrote.

UNESCO silence criticized

Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, reinforced Salehi-Amiri's warnings, condemning the attacks and criticizing the silence of global organizations, including UNESCO.

In a message on X (formerly Twitter), Araghchi wrote, "Israel is bombing Iranian historic sites, some dating back to the 14th century, including several listed as UNESCO World Heritage. A regime less than a century old cannot respect civilizations as ancient as ours. Where is UNESCO? Its silence in the face of such aggression is unacceptable."

He stressed that the protection of cultural heritage is part of humanity's shared memory and responsibility. "This is a serious test for international institutions in fulfilling their duty to safeguard human civilization," Araghchi added.

Salehi-Amiri concluded by urging Iranians, including those living abroad, to actively defend the country's cultural legacy, stressing that safeguarding heritage is both a national duty and a global commitment.

"The protection of cultural heritage is not only a national duty but a global responsibility to safeguard civilization and humanity," he wrote. "If the heritage of human civilization becomes a casualty of power conflicts, what will ultimately be lost is part of the world's moral memory."



Broken glass and decorative fragments cover the floor of a mirror hall inside the Golestan Palace in Tehran after nearby explosions damaged the historic complex in Tehran, following recent American-Israeli strikes on Iran, in March 2026.

● IRNA

"Attacking cultural and historical sites is, in essence, an attack on humanity's historical memory," Salehi-Amiri wrote. "Such actions risk severing the link between past and future and depriving future generations of access to part of the human civilizational narrative." The minister emphasized that cultural

legal commitments and the realities of power politics in the international system," Salehi-Amiri wrote. "When cultural centers, historical sites, and even educational spaces become targets, a fundamental question arises: is the international order still governed by shared rules, or are those rules col-

Strikes on Sanandaj damages historical sites

Arts & Culture Desk

Several landmark historical buildings in the western Iranian city of Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, have sustained damage following recent attacks blamed on the United States and the Israeli regime, the provincial cultural heritage authority said on Friday.

Pouya Talebnia, director-general of Kurdistan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said shockwaves from explosions struck parts of the historic core of Sanandaj, damaging prominent sites including the Asef Vaziri Mansion known as the Kurdish House, the Salar Saeed Mansion Archaeological Museum, and the Khosroabad Mansion, ILNA reported.

"The blast waves inflicted 'extensive' harm on sections of these historic structures," Talebnia said, describing the sites as emblematic monuments of the region's architectural heritage.

According to the official, parts of the buildings' intricate decorative features were affected, including mirrorwork, carved plaster ornaments, wooden doors and windows, traditional orsi lattice frames and inscribed entrance portals. Walls and interior architectural elements also suffered structural damage. Talebnia added that several registered heritage buildings located within Sanandaj's historic fabric were also hit due to their proximity to the impact zone. Among the affected properties are the historic Malek Tajar building, the shrine of Imamzadeh Pir Omar, as well as the Motawassel, Mojtabehi and Amin al-Eslam houses.

Specialist teams from the provincial heritage authority have begun field inspections and technical monitoring to document the extent of the damage. The process, Talebnia said, will produce a precise and "scientific" record of the losses inflicted on the city's cultural landmarks.



Debris is scattered inside the Asef Vaziri Mansion, known as the Kurdish House, after US-Israel attacks on Sanandaj, western Iran, in this undated handout image released in March 2026.

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