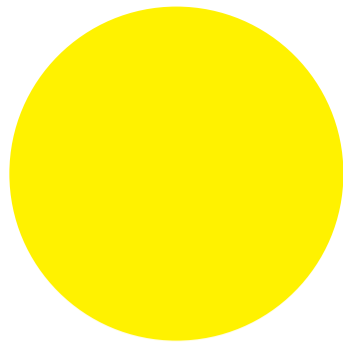


Iran's oil sales surge past pre-war levels



# Iran Daily

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## Third Leader vows vengeance for blood of martyrs

Regional countries should close US bases: *Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei*

### Iranians March Under Fire

### Millions brave bombardments to mark International Quds Day



The combo shows Iranians in Tehran (L) and Isfahan rally to mark International Quds Day on March 13, 2026 amid an ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran.

#### International Desk

Iranians in their millions poured into the streets nationwide to commemorate International Quds Day, a major annual event aimed at expressing solidarity with the Palestinian cause and condemning Israeli atrocities in Palestine. The event, which falls on the last Friday of the fasting month of Ramadan, this year coincided with an all-out US-Israeli war on Iran which broke out on February 28. In the capital Tehran, enemy

warplanes carried out airstrikes as people were marching toward the iconic Enghelab Square, causing casualties. The aggression has claimed over 1,300 Iranian lives and left more than 10,000 injured, with a significant number of deaths being children. The demonstrators, chanting slogans and waving Iranian and Palestinian flags, renewed their allegiance to Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, who was declared as Iran's new Leader on March 9 by the As-

sembly of Experts to succeed his father, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in an airstrike on his residence in Tehran during the first day of the US-Israeli offensive. They held portraits of the new Leader, signaling their support for his leadership and commitment to the ideals of the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In Tehran's Enghelab Square, participants chanted "God is Great" in response to explosions that were heard during the rally. The atmosphere of defiance and

solidarity was palpable, with people pledging their loyalty to the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and his vision for the liberation of Palestine. Top officials attended the demonstrations, with President Masoud Pezeshkian seen walking alone on the street, without any security escort. Speaking at the rally in Tehran, Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani rebuked US President Donald Trump for his failure to understand the re-

solve of the Iranian people. "The Iranian people are a determined and capable nation, and the more pressure Trump applies, the stronger our will becomes," Larijani said. Responding to a question about Israeli attacks on Quds Day participants, Larijani said that such actions were driven by "fear and desperation," adding that air raids laid bare the Israeli regime's weakening position. International Quds Day was first proposed by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979, who desig-

nated the last Friday of Ramadan as a day of global solidarity with the Palestinians. The initiative is aimed at preventing the Palestinian cause from being forgotten amid other global issues. Over the years, Quds Day has become a symbol of resistance against the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, with rallies held in numerous countries worldwide, including across West Asia, North Africa, and in Western nations like the US, the UK, France, and Germany.

## Looming cyber warfare

By Sajad Abedi  
Political affairs expert

PERSPECTIVE  
EXCLUSIVE

In recent decades, cyber warfare has emerged as one of the most critical global security challenges. However, this kind of war is no longer confined to the boundaries of simple, classic cyberattacks. With technological advancements and the vast ex-

pansion of the internet, "Cyber Warfare 1+" has transformed into a more advanced and sophisticated form. This evolution, known as Advanced Cyber Warfare (ACW), reflects a fundamental shift in the structures, objectives, and tools utilized within cyberspace.

#### 1. Concept of ACW

ACW refers to the strategic use of cutting-edge technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and big data analytics within the cyber domain. This generation of

warfare is no longer limited to attacking computer systems or information networks; it is gravitating toward strikes that exploit automated systems, the Internet of Things (IoT), and even the smart infrastructures of cities and industries.

For instance, an advanced cyber-attack could leverage AI to identify user behavioral patterns and then employ "intelligent phishing" to extract sensitive data. Similarly, an assault on industrial control systems could lead to

disruptions in energy production or water distribution.

#### 2. Accelerants of cyber warfare evolution

Several key factors play a role in the advancement of cyber warfare: Technological progress: AI, machine learning, and big data tools have enabled the execution of complex attacks.

Expansion of IoT: The increasing number of internet-connected devices has created more vulnerabilities within systems.

Growing digital dependency: From banks to transportation and medical systems, everything now depends on the digital realm. Shift in attack objectives: Today, the goal is often not just data theft, but the destruction of systems, economic disruption, and even threats to national security.

#### 3. Real-world examples of ACW

A prominent example is Stuxnet. Discovered in 2010, this virus was specifically designed to sab-

otage nuclear process control systems in Iran. Stuxnet exploited several security flaws in Windows and industrial control systems to disrupt their operations. Another example is the evolution of Ransomware, which is now conducted through sophisticated phishing and network penetration aided by AI. For instance, the WannaCry virus in 2017 utilized a Windows security vulnerability to spread globally, affecting over 200 countries.

# Third Leader vows vengeance for blood of martyrs

Regional countries should close US bases: **Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei**



Iran's third Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei releases his first message on March 12, 2026.  
IRNA

## International Desk

Iran's third Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei said in his first message on Thursday that Iran would not forgo taking vengeance for the blood of those killed in the recent US-Israeli aggression.

He said the vengeance will not solely be related to the martyrdom of the former Leader, but every member of the nation martyred in the war, particularly children, his official website reported. The US and Israel initiated a joint aggression on Iran on February 28, that has so far taken the lives hundreds of Iranians, including the former leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Ayatollah Khamenei also assured that Iran will either extract compensation from its enemies for

the damage they have caused, or it will destroy the enemies' assets to an equivalent degree.

Referring to the importance of the people's position, Ayatollah Khamenei called for maintaining unity and the nation's effective presence on the scene, both in streets gatherings and in social, political, educational, cultural, and security arenas.

Ayatollah Khamenei also extend his heartfelt gratitude to the fighters of the Resistance Front in the region. He said that Iran considers the countries of the Resistance Front as its best friends and an inseparable part of the values of the Islamic Revolution.

## American pledge of security nothing but lie

Ayatollah Khamenei also ad-

ressed the leaders of regional countries, stressing that Iran has consistently maintained constructive relations with all of them, but adversaries have gradually established military and financial bases in some of these states to secure their dominance over the region.

He noted that during the recent aggression, some of these military bases were used against Iran.

"We have not committed aggression against those countries themselves; rather, we have specifically targeted those bases," he said, adding that Iran will inevitably continue this course of action. The new Leader urged those countries to clearly state their position regarding the aggression on Iran and close those bases as soon as possible, as they should

now realize that "America's claim of establishing security and peace was nothing but a lie."

Ayatollah Khamenei later expressed gratitude to the country's Armed Forces for their defense against the aggressive front in the current war, highlighting that the nation expects a continued effective and strong response.

He stressed that the option of blocking the Strait of Hormuz should definitely remain on the table, noting that studies have been conducted on the possibility of opening other fronts where the enemy has little experience and would be particularly vulnerable.

He added that in line with preserving national interests, these fronts could be activated if the state of war continues.

## New wave of Iran's strikes targets Israel, American positions in region

Resistance forces down US refueling aircraft in Iraq

### International Desk

Iran's Armed Forces on Friday launched fresh strikes on the American and Israeli positions on the 14th day of the joint aggression against Iran, targeting their important military sites. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said in separate statements it launched at least two rounds of missile and drone attacks on the US bases in the regional countries as well as the Israel's military sites in the occupied territories.

missiles and drones struck Israeli military positions in Tel Aviv, Eilat, and West Al-Quds as well as the US targets in Bahrain and the city of Erbil in Iraq's Kurdistan region.

Iran's Army also said in a statement on Friday that it targeted the headquarters of Israel's defense forces in the occupied territories with suicide drones.

### US refueling aircraft crash

Meanwhile, a US Boeing KC-130 refueling aircraft crashed after it was targeted by the resistance forces

aircraft crashed in western Iraq while the second one landed safely in Israel. Iran's attacks come as the two allies continued their aggression against Iran on Friday, targeting several cities across the country.

### Attacks on non-military sites

Iran's Red Crescent Society on Friday published its latest report on attacks on non-military sites across the country.

The head of the organization Pirhossein Kolivand said that more than 24,500 civilian sites, including 19,755 residential buildings, have been damaged since the beginning of the aggression.

The US and Israeli armed forces began their aggression against Iran on February 28 by attacking 30 targets across the capital Tehran, killing several senior Iranian officials including the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Since then, Iranian Armed Forces have decisively retaliated against the strikes by launching barrages of missile and drones against the Israeli-occupied territories as well as US bases in region.

The aggression against Iran has caused a sharp increase in oil and gas prices with the economists and global banks warning that the issue could exert further inflationary pressure on the global economy and change the predictions for the global economic growth, The Guardian reported.

in Iraq. The US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed the crash, saying that its four crew members were killed in the incident.

Earlier, CENTCOM had announced in a statement that it is aware of the loss of a US KC-135 refueling aircraft.

"The incident occurred in friendly airspace during Operation Epic Fury, and rescue efforts are ongoing," it said.

It said that two aircraft were involved in the incident. One of the



TASNIM

The attacks were carried out during the 43rd and 44th waves of the True Promise 4 Operation. During the 44th wave of the operation, the IRGC forces pounded the Israeli positions in the northern occupied territories, including Kiryat Shmona, Haifa, and Hadera. The US Navy's Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and several other US bases in the region were also targeted by the IRGC missiles and drones. The operation followed the 43rd phase, when Kheibar Shekan

## Iran seeks no regional instability, responds to attacks: Pezeshkian

Strait of Hormuz tensions direct result of US destabilizing actions: **UN Envoy**



Narendra Modi

Masoud Pezeshkian

### International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran does not seek to create instability in the region despite recent attacks on its infrastructure.

In a phone call with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he affirmed that Iran has responded to attacks by targeting US bases in regional countries, asserting this action is based on the right to self-defense, president.ir reported. "Iran has not initiated the conflict and has no desire to continue it," he said.

Modi expressed deep concern over the escalating tensions in the Middle East, emphasizing that New Delhi will exert maximum effort to play a role in diplomacy. He stressed that escalation benefits no party.

The exchange comes as tensions in the region have sharply increased following a joint opera-

tion by the United States and Israel against Iran, which began on February 28. Iran has retaliated by striking targets in Israel and at US bases in regional countries, maintaining that these strikes are not directed at the host nations but rather at facilities linked to the United States.

### No safe passage for hostile countries' vessels

The conflict has significantly impacted regional stability, particularly affecting oil prices and trade, as well as transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi confirmed in an interview with AFP that Iran has allowed some ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz but that countries participating in attacks against Iran should not expect safe passage.

Takht Ravanchi also denied claims by US President Donald

Trump regarding Iran's alleged mining of the Strait of Hormuz. "We want to ensure that war is not imposed on us again," Takht Ravanchi added.

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeed Iravani, also emphasized Iran's commitment to the principle of freedom of navigation, but stated that the ongoing tensions in the region, particularly in the Strait of Hormuz, are a direct result of the destabilizing actions of the United States, not Iran's lawful exercise of its right of self-defense. Meanwhile, Mohsen Milani, a professor at South Florida University, said in a tweet that Iran is at least twice older than many western states and will withstand such adversities.

"Iran will endure - an ancient and vibrant civilization that has repeatedly survived devastating foreign attacks and risen again," he stressed.

## Looming cyber warfare

Another example is the evolution of ransomware, which is now conducted through sophisticated phishing and network penetration aided by AI. For instance, the WannaCry virus in 2017 utilized a Windows security vulnerability to spread globally, affecting over 200 countries.

### 4. Security challenges in ACW

This new era of conflict faces serious security hurdles: Stealth tactics: Modern attacks often use AI and big data to remain hidden, making detection extremely difficult.

Attack velocity: Cyberattacks can occur in seconds, leaving defense systems with no time to react.

Anonymous enemy: Many attacks are launched by unknown groups or state actors, making attribution difficult.

Lack of global coordination: While cyber warfare is global, there are no strong, mandatory international regulations to govern it.

ACW is no longer a science fiction concept; it is a reality taking shape in the invisible shadows of the digital world. Built upon AI, machine learning, and IoT, it threatens not

only information systems but also economic, social, and national security. In this battlefield, digital adversaries range from hacking groups to state organizations and even autonomous entities. This reality proves that cybersecurity is no longer just the responsibility of technical teams, but a multidimensional challenge requiring cooperation between the public, private, and civil sectors. To counter this, a dynamic new approach to digital security must be adopted. Using AI for cyber defense, creating self-healing systems, and increasing public

awareness are top priorities. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for international laws to prevent cross-border cyberattacks.

Ultimately, ACW demonstrates that the digital world is becoming a battlefield. However, this challenge presents not only a threat but also an opportunity for technological evolution, enhancing security, and building a smart, resilient society. The future of digital security lies in human hands. If acted with intelligence and cooperation, this challenge could be turned into an opportunity for progress.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Minab school to get national heritage status

### Iranica Desk

The Shajareh Tayyebeh Elementary School in Minab, Hormozgan Province, is set to be registered on Iran's National Heritage List as a "Sacred Defense Site-Event," announced the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Ali Darabi added that the complex will be transformed into a student martyrs memorial site-museum to honor the memory of the martyred students.

According to IRNA, Darabi emphasized the historical and symbolic significance of the school, stating,

"The Shajareh Tayyebeh School will be registered as a historical document and a clear testament to war crimes against defenseless people."

Highlighting the importance of registering sites that narrate pivotal events in Iran's contemporary history, he added, "The registration of this school is a step toward safeguarding the historical memory of the Iranian nation and conveying the truth of the imposed war's events to future generations."

Darabi also announced a formal proposal to the Ministry of Education and the Foundation for the Preservation of Relics and Values of



Holy Defense. "We have expressed our readiness to not only register this school as a historical document

but also to facilitate its conversion into a 'Student Martyrs Memorial Site-Museum' — a cultural and

educational space that can recount the innocence of the students and the depth of the tragedy that occurred here," he noted.

Reflecting on the human and cultural dimensions of the incident, he emphasized, "What happened at the Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab is a shocking example of a flagrant violation of human principles and international rules during wartime."

He further noted, "The registration and introduction of this historical site, beyond honoring the martyred students, is an effort to document and accurately narrate this tragedy for the global public. It allows the

aware and responsible international community to understand how innocent students fell victim to one of the most brutal manifestations of war violence."

"Safeguarding such sites is not only part of the national duty to preserve the country's historical heritage but also a cultural and civilizational responsibility to record the truth and pass it on to future generations," he noted.

The Shajareh Tayyebeh School was targeted on the first day of the US-Israel conflict against Iran, resulting in the martyrdom of 168 schoolgirls and the injury of several others.

## Urgent mission to save Iran's collective historical treasures

### Iranica Desk

To understand the anxiety of heritage guardians, one must possess a heart that quickens at the sight of stone plinths, magnificent muqarnas, and the turquoise tilework of ancient monuments. One must pause before intricate stucco, dazzling mirror-work, and the dance of light through stained-glass Orsi windows to truly grasp the depth of devotion to ancestral legacy — a heritage that forms the core of a nation's identity and historical memory.

Yet today, as the shadow of the US-Zionist imposed war looms over the region and the face of cities begins to wither, concern for the fate of historical buildings, sites, and urban fabrics is felt more acutely than ever. War, a brutal phenomenon indifferent to cultural values, has always posed a grave threat to historical monuments — treasures that belong not just

to one nation, but to the collective heritage of humanity, chn.ir wrote. Iran's history, however, proves that this land has endured countless crises, wars, and upheavals, yet its civilizational legacy remains standing. From historical invasions to socio-political transformations, many of Iran's most precious works have weathered the storms of time. But this historical resilience does not diminish the current fears of the country's heritage custodians.

Recent days have brought reports of damage to several of Iran's landmarks. Foremost among these is the damage to parts of the Golestan Palace, the capital's only UNESCO World Heritage site, which suffered losses following an airstrike on the Arg Square. Subsequent reports detailed damage to other historical structures in Tehran, including the old Parliament building (Senate Building), the Old Gendarmerie Building,

and several other protected sites. In the historic city of Isfahan, damage has been reported to sections of Abbasi Jaame Mosque in Imam Square, as well as the Chehel Sotoun Palace Museum and the Safavid State Quarter (Doulatkhaneh) — each representing a pillar of Iran's architectural and artistic identity. Furthermore, in Khorramabad, reports indicate strikes near the perimeter of Falak-ol-Aflak Castle, resulting in damage to the structures and surrounding areas of this iconic symbol of western Iran. In response to these events, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has dispatched official letters to UNESCO, calling for the international community's urgent intervention to safeguard Iran's civilizational heritage. These letters emphasize that international bodies must send a clear message of their commitment to protecting shared human heritage during crises — a vital step to

prevent an irreparable catastrophe for global culture and history.

Simultaneously, the official UNESCO website released a report recently expressing concern over the protection of education, culture, media, and the environment amid escalating conflicts in the Middle East. UNESCO has shared the geographical coordinates of all World Heritage sites, national tentative lists, and specially protected

zones with the conflicting parties to prevent further damage.

Alongside these diplomatic efforts, the installation of the Blue Shield has been prioritized. According to officials, this emblem has already been placed on 114 historical monuments across 29 World Heritage files in Iran.

However, a critical question remains among experts and the public: Can this international em-

blem truly protect Iran's treasures from the ravages of war? The answer thus far is somber; despite the "Blue Shield," sites like Abbasi Jaame Mosque, Chehel Sotoun, and the Falak-ol-Aflak perimeter have not remained immune to harm.

Heritage experts believe that safeguarding Iran's civilizational legacy in these critical times requires more than just symbols; it demands serious action from international institutions. These monuments are not merely part of the Iranian identity — they are the cultural memory of all humanity. In such circumstances, it is expected that UNESCO and other responsible global organizations place the safeguarding of Iran's civilizational heritage — as an integral part of our shared human legacy — at the top of their agenda. Such decisive action could prevent a nation's historical memory from suffering irreparable scars in the fires of war.



chn.ir

## Qalenoee hits back at Trump over Team Melli's safety at World Cup



IRNA

### Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Qalenoee said "no one has the authority" to leave his team out of this summer's FIFA World Cup, which will be cohosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Qalenoee made the remarks in response to U.S. President Donald Trump, who cast doubt on Team Melli's safety at the global showpiece on Thursday.

Iran is scheduled to kick off its Group G campaign against New Zealand at the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, California, on June 16, before facing Belgium at the same arena five days later.

The final round of the group fixtures will see Iran take on Egypt in Seattle, Washington, on June 26.

The U.S. president, writing on Truth Social, said that Team Melli would be "welcome to The World Cup", but he doesn't believe "it is appropriate that they be there, for their own life and safety."

"Thank you for your attention to this matter," concluded Trump, who made

the comments amid an ongoing conflict between Iran and a U.S.-Israeli coalition. The United States and Israel started a war campaign against Iran on February 28, assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several top Iranian military commanders on the first day of airstrikes in Tehran.

Iran responded with widespread missile and drone attacks against Israel and U.S. bases in the region.

"The World Cup is a historic and international event organized by FIFA, not by any single nation," Qalenoee wrote on Instagram later on Thursday.

"Iran's national team, led by the valiant sons of the country, earned its place among the first teams to qualify for this prestigious tournament through a series of decisive victories.

Undoubtedly, no one has the authority to exclude Iran from the World Cup; if any country is to be expelled, it should be the one that merely carries the title of "host" but fails to guarantee the

safety and security of the participating teams," added the Iranian coach.

This was the latest twist in the controversy swirling around Team Melli's World Cup seventh participation at the flagship international football event.

Iranian Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali and Mahdi Taj, the chairman of the Iranian Football Federation, had hinted at the country boycotting the tournament in recent days.

"This corrupt regime has martyred our leader and thousands of our people," Donyamali said on Wednesday.

"Given the evil acts they have committed against Iran, imposing two wars on us in eight, nine months, I think our players will not be safe in the United States and the conditions are simply not there for the team to take part in the tournament," added the Iranian official.

The Guardian reported last week that FIFA chief Gianni Infantino has warned Taj against boycotting the tournament, as the Iranian federation could face punishment by the international governing body of the sport.

Iran's women's national team became the focal point of a political and media storm during the AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia last week, with foreign governments and outlets amplifying claims that the players would face execution upon returning home after remaining silent during the national anthem before their first game against South Korea. Iranian officials denied all the allegations, emphasizing that no punitive measures awaited the players.

However, six players and one technical staff member applied for asylum, with Australia's Home Affairs approving their requests, while the rest of the squad departed Sydney for Malaysia, then Turkey, on their way back to Iran.

## Iran not to attend Asian Weightlifting Ch'ships

### Sports Desk

Iran will not participate at April's Asian Weightlifting Championships in Ahmedabad, India, men's national coach Ali Jabbari confirmed.

All Iranian national teams have canceled their training camps in recent days due to the U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iranian soil.

"Currently, the national teams' camps are suspended, and we are waiting for the final decision by the Ministry of Sport and the Weightlifting Federation. We are in touch with all weightlifters, and some of them are following their training at home to remain fit," Jabbari told Mehr News Agency on Friday.

Regarding the team's future plans, Jabbari said: "Given the circumstances, we

will definitely not take part at the Asian Championships in April. Even before the war began, we had decided either not to compete or send a limited squad to Ahmedabad, as we have important competitions ahead of us later in the year such as the World Championships and the Asian Games. But now, with the circumstances, they will not be sent at all."

The United States and Israel started a war campaign against Iran on February 28, assassinating Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and several top Iranian military commanders on the first day of airstrikes in Tehran.

Iran responded with widespread missile and drone attacks against Israel and U.S. bases in the region.



MNA

## 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.

● IRNA