

Ministry says 3,000 industrial units damaged in 40-day war

Economy Desk

About 3,000 small, medium and large industrial units in Iran were damaged during the 40-day US-Israeli war, which began in late February, though the final scale of losses has yet to be determined as assessments and self-reporting by companies continue, Industry Ministry spokesperson Ezzatollah Zarei said. "A fund under the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade has been designated as a war damage compensation fund to accelerate support and compensation payments to affected units," Zarei said, according to Tasnim news agency. He said a headquarters for the reconstruction of major industries had been established, with companies including Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel prioritized for a rapid return to production because of their broad

impact on the market.

The two industrial complexes were hit several times in April during the enemy strikes.

"The ministry's main priority is preserving production and employment," Zarei said, adding that the ministry was working to prevent production stoppages by securing raw materials, facilitating imports and supporting supply chains.

He said the war had negatively affected supply chains and made imports of raw materials more difficult than before.

"A total of 2,570 goods needed for production have been prioritized for import so industrial units can secure the raw materials they need," he said.

Tehran telecom losses estimated at \$11.4b

In a separate report carried by ISNA, Tehran Telecommunications Director General Alireza

Lotfi said serious damage had been inflicted on equipment at two telecommunications centers in Tehran Province during the war, with losses to the province's telecommunications infrastructure estimated at 2 trillion tomans, equivalent to about \$11.4 million.

Speaking at a press conference on Saturday marking World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, Lotfi said the level of damage in Tehran Province caused major problems at two centers and severely damaged telecommunications equipment. He said fiber-optic-connected sections had been quickly replaced, but around 7,000 failures remained at damaged centers and broader repairs were still needed. Authorities were working to restore local services affecting 30,000 subscribers as quickly as possible. The "Montazeri" telecommuni-



cations center in Rey city and the "Mohsenian" center in Tehran's Shadabad district, serving more than 70,000 subscribers, suffered the heaviest damage during the war, he said.

Lotfi said the Montazeri center had been completely destroyed and required a full overhaul, adding that 18,000 failures had been registered, of which 7,000 had so far been repaired.



CAO reopens Ahvaz, Mahshahr airports after postwar safety checks

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Flights at Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province have resumed after approval from the Civil Aviation Organization (CAO), with flight numbers set to gradually increase in the coming days, Khuzestan Airports Director General Mehdi Razaz said on Saturday, according to ISNA.

"With the approval of the Civil Aviation Organization, flights at Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports resumed operations with four flights, and based on the plans made, the number of flights will gradually increase," Razaz said.

He said the first Tehran-Ahvaz flight had successfully landed earlier on Saturday at Ahvaz international airport, and that a flight from Mashhad was also scheduled to arrive later in the day.

"Necessary permits for other flights and the arrangement of their traffic conditions will gradually be issued and announced by the Civil Aviation Organization," he added.

"In line with the organization's broader plans to revive and develop the country's aviation industry after the war, and given changing conditions and improvements in infrastructure, Ahvaz and Mahshahr airports have reopened after security and safety evaluations and in full coordination with relevant authorities," IRNA quoted the CAO as saying.

The reopening marks a significant step toward restoring air links and facilitating passenger travel in the region. A number of airports in central, western and eastern parts of the country have already returned to operation, while many domestic and international flights operated by Iranian airlines are currently underway.

Seven Iranian airports were targeted during the 40-day US-Israeli war, with attacks focusing more on tourism, passenger and cargo infrastructure than on military facilities.

Iran Air, the national carrier of the Islamic Republic of Iran, resumed domestic flights on April 25 after a 55-day suspension, with its first service operating between Tehran and Mashhad.

International flights also resumed in late April, beginning with an Iran Air Hajj flight to Medina, with services to three destinations on the first day.

Iranian authorities said additional airports across the country would gradually return to operation following further security and safety assessments.

Caviar exports near \$8m in 42 global markets despite challenges

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Iran's caviar exports have risen steadily, reaching nearly \$8 million annually and expanding to 42 countries worldwide, the secretary-general of Iran's Union of Aquatic Production and Trade told Iran Daily.

Ali-Akbar Khodaei said Iran's caviar export revenues climbed from \$3.188 million in

2023 to around \$6 million in 2024, adding that official figures for 2025 had not yet been released but estimates suggested exports reached between \$7.8 million and \$8 million by March 2026.

Khodaei said caviar export volumes also increased, with shipments rising to 7,130 kilograms in the 10-month period from March 20, 2025 to January 19, 2026, from 6,200 kilograms in the same period a year earlier, marking a 14% increase.

He said exports dropped to zero after February this year because flight suspensions after disrupted shipments, most of which are transported by air.

Khodaei said exporters quickly shifted to alternative routes, sending cargo overland to neighboring countries before forwarding shipments to global destinations through other flights. He added that flights had now largely resumed and the problem had been mostly resolved. International flights departing from Iran, which



were halted after the start of the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in late February.

He said Europe accounted for the largest share of Iran's export markets, alongside neighboring Arab countries, other Asian states and African markets.

Khodaei said prolonged wartime conditions posed a threat to exports, but added that Iranian exporters would seek to turn the challenge into an opportunity by expanding marketing efforts, accessing new markets and developing alternative export routes. He said exporters hoped to rapidly offset any losses in neighboring Arab markets, particularly the United Arab Emirates, while expanding sales in new destinations.

Khodaei said Iran was seeking to direct more exports toward Russia, Turkey, African countries and Southeast Asia to create new markets.

On the quality and reputation of Iranian caviar, Khodaei said the beluga sturgeon was the world's largest and most valuable sturgeon species and the source of beluga caviar, regarded as the world's finest caviar. He said the species' main habitat was the Caspian Sea and that

Iran had long been recognized as a producer of the world's best caviar.

He added that almost all caviar currently available on the market was sourced from farmed sturgeon, and said Iran continued to supply premium-quality caviar globally through the farming of Caspian sturgeon species.

Khodaei said global demand for Iranian caviar remained strong and that more countries were joining the list of buyers each year.

He also said that, in addition to official customs and border exports, several tons of caviar leave Iran annually through passenger transport.

Khodaei said caviar production and exports were expected to continue growing due to heavy investment in sturgeon farming over recent years. He said sturgeon require around 10 years to mature before producing roe, adding that earlier investments were now beginning to yield results as more fish stocks reached production age.

Khodaei said the number of sturgeon herds at Iranian farms was increasing annually, leading to exponential growth in both production and exports.

Another 25 ships transit Hormuz under IRGC oversight

Economy Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Saturday that 25 vessels, including oil tankers, container ships and other commercial vessels, passed through the Strait of Hormuz over the past 24 hours after obtaining permission and under the security coordination of the force.

In a statement carried by IRNA, the IRGC Navy said its "smart control" of the Strait of Hormuz remained firmly in place despite insecurity created by US aggression in the strategic waterway.

US President Donald Trump imposed the so-called naval blockade on Iran's ports in mid-April, aiming to pressure Tehran into a peace agreement after a 40-day conflict that began in late February. Despite a partial decline in oil exports, the embargo has failed to halt Iranian oil flows, with the Islamic Republic continuing to export crude, according to data cited in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) monthly oil market report and tanker tracking data.

The 25 tankers were among a small number of supertankers that exited the Persian Gulf this month through a transit route designated by Iran.

The IRGC said on Friday that it had also coordinated the transit of another 35 ships through



the Strait of Hormuz during the previous 24 hours.

Iran has administered transit through the Strait of Hormuz since the early days of the unprovoked US-Israeli aggression on the country that began on February 28.

According to a recent Reuters report, the IRGC plays a central role in a new multi-layered transit system that gives preference to ships linked to allies such as China and Russia, while other vessels may require government-to-government arrangements or payments to pass.

The Reuters report said the IRGC reviews affiliation documents supplied by ship owners or operators and may physically inspect vessels during the process.

"The affiliation check is to identify if the vessel has any connection to the US or Israel," a European shipping source told Reuters.

According to documents sent to shipping industry sources by Iran's Persian Gulf Strait Authority, the IRGC requires ship owners to disclose details including cargo value, flag, origin and destination, registered owner and

manager, and the nationalities of crew members.

Other countries have adopted different arrangements. India, which imports about 90% of its oil needs and around half of its gas consumption, much of it passing through Hormuz, uses its embassy in Tehran to coordinate with Iranian authorities, including the IRGC and the Iranian navy, according to an Indian shipping ministry official cited by Reuters.

Shipping data from LSEG and Kpler showed on Wednesday that the South Korean-flagged VLCC Universal Winner, carrying 2 million barrels of Kuwaiti crude, exited the strait after two Chinese tankers departed, with the vessel heading to Ulsan in South Korea, according to Kpler and Reuters.

A South Korean Foreign Ministry official told reporters the transit was coordinated with Iran and other countries to ensure the vessel's safety, adding that Tehran had informed Seoul's embassy that one South Korean vessel would be allowed to pass through the strategic waterway.