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Cyberattack Forces Iran Steel Company to Halt Production

By Associated Press on June 27, 2022

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The state-owned **Khuzestan Steel Company** said experts had determined the plant had to stop work until further notice "due to technical problems" following "cyberattacks." The company's website was down on Monday.

The company's CEO, Amin Ebrahimi, claimed that Khuzestan Steel managed to thwart the cyberattack and prevent structural damage to production lines that would impact supply chains and customers.

"Fortunately with time and awareness, the attack was unsuccessful," the semiofficial Mehr news agency quoted Ebrahimi as saying, adding that he expected the company's website to be restored and everything to return to "normal" by the end of Monday.

A local news channel, Jamaran, reported that the attack failed because the factory happened to be non-operational at the time due to an electricity outage.

The company did not blame any specific group for the assault, which constitutes just the latest example of an attack targeting the country's services that has embarrassed authorities in recent

weeks. In a major incident last year, a [cyberattack on Iran's fuel distribution](#) paralyzed gas stations across the country, leading to long lines of angry motorists.

[Train stations in Iran have been hit](#) with fake delay messages. Surveillance cameras in the country have been hacked. State-run websites have been disrupted. Footage showing abuse in the country's notorious Evin prison has [leaked out](#).

Iran has previously accused the United States and Israel for cyberattacks that have crippled the country's infrastructure.

Iran disconnected much of its government infrastructure from the internet after the [Stuxnet computer virus](#) — widely believed to be a joint U.S.-Israeli creation — disrupted thousands of Iranian centrifuges in the country's nuclear sites in the late 2000s.

Khuzestan Steel Company, based in Ahvaz in the oil-rich southwestern Khuzestan province, has a monopoly on steel production in Iran along with two other major state-owned firms.

Founded before Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the company for decades afterward had some production lines supplied by German, Italian and Japanese companies. Service has been continuous except during catastrophic Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, when Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein sent his army across the border.

However, crushing sanctions on Iran over its nuclear program has forced the company to reduce its dependence on foreign parts.

The government considers steel a crucial sector. Iran is the leading producer of steel in the Middle East and among the top 10 in the world, according to the World Steel Association. Its iron ore mines provide raw materials for domestic production and are exported to dozens of countries, including Italy, China and the United Arab Emirates.

Iran's crude steel production, however, was only 2.3 million tons last month, the WSA said. Its concurrent drop in exports has been largely attributed to sanctions-hit Russia flooding Iran's Chinese buyers with discounted steel after losing access to Western markets amid the war on Ukraine.

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