

Iranian oil tanker hit by two blasts in Red Sea



Tehran, October 11 (RHC)-- Two separate explosions, possibly caused by missile attacks, have hit an Iranian oil tanker operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) near the Saudi port city of Jeddah, in what Tehran calls a "dangerous adventure." The incident took place some 60 miles from Jeddah early Friday, according to a statement by the NITC.

The explosions hit the vessel's hull, causing heavy damages to the vessel's two main tanks, which has resulted in an oil spill in the Red Sea. The spill is currently stopped, according to officials.

Technical experts are currently investigating the cause of the explosion. They believe it was a "terrorist attack," unnamed sources told the Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA). The statement by NITC said the SABITI tanker was hit by two separate explosions at 5:00 and 5:20 am Friday, probably after being struck by missiles.

It said the crew members are currently safe and none of them has been harmed in the explosions. The tanker is currently in a stable condition, the statement added.

The NITC later dismissed the reports that the vessel had caught fire, according to the Iranian Ministry of Petroleum's official news agency SHANA.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman later described the attack as “a dangerous adventure”, warning that all the responsibilities fall on those behind it.

“The investigations conducted by the National Iranian Tanker Company indicate the Iranian tanker has sustained damages after being targeted twice, at half-hourly intervals, from a place near its shipping route in the east of the Red Sea,” Abbas Mousavi said Friday.

He expressed concern about the maritime pollution caused by the massive oil spill in the region after damages inflicted on the vessel's tanks, and said, “All the responsibilities for the act, including the extensive environmental pollution in the region, fall on those behind the dangerous adventure.”

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