

Oil Prices Surge as Iran Restricts the World's Most Important Shipping Lane

- Iran has restricted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway where roughly one in five barrels of the world's oil normally passes through every day.
- Oil prices have jumped sharply in response, with Brent crude now trading above \$100 per barrel as traders worry about supply being cut off.
- US and Iranian diplomats have been in talks, and several countries including Germany are sending naval support to the region to help stabilise the situation.
- Despite the tension, stock markets in the US have continued to climb, with investors focusing on strong technology company performance.

US Stock Markets Hit Record Highs Despite Global Tensions

- The S&P 500 rose to 7,173 points, continuing a strong run driven by technology stocks and renewed confidence in the US economy.
- The Nasdaq 100 reached 27,305 and the Dow Jones climbed to 49,167, both posting modest but positive gains today.
- European markets were more cautious — Germany's DAX fell 0.47% and the UK's FTSE 100 dropped 0.55%, reflecting concerns about rising energy costs in Europe.
- A significant positive signal came from the US government dropping its investigation into Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, reducing political uncertainty around interest rates.

Key Economic Numbers to Know This Morning

S&P 500

7,173 pts
(+0.30%)

US stocks at record highs, led by technology

BRENT CRUDE OIL

\$102.75/barrel
(+0.87%)

Oil elevated due to Middle East supply concerns

GOLD

\$4,677/troy oz
(-0.45%)

Still near historic highs; geopolitical demand remains firm

US INFLATION

3.3% (March CPI)

Above target; Fed expected to hold rates steady this week

FEAR & GREED INDEX

67 (Greed)

Investor sentiment has recovered strongly from March lows

VIX VOLATILITY INDEX

~19

Moderate concern; elevated but not at panic levels

Commodities and Crypto: A Tale of Two Markets

- BRENT CRUDE \$102.75**
Oil is back above \$100 a barrel as the Strait of Hormuz disruption keeps supply tight — up 0.87% today
- WTI CRUDE \$97.52**
The US oil benchmark also climbed over 1%, driven by the same Middle East supply concerns affecting global prices
- GOLD \$4,677**
Precious metals remain near all-time highs as investors seek safety; a slight 0.45% daily dip is just a small breather
- SILVER \$74.29**
Silver pulled back 1.66% today, underperforming gold as industrial demand signals were mixed
- BITCOIN \$76,931**
Crypto markets are selling off, with Bitcoin falling 2.43% as some investors moved away from riskier assets
- ETHEREUM \$2,290**
Ethereum dropped 3.73% — the sharpest fall in today's session, reflecting broader caution in digital assets

Where Markets Stand Right Now

MARKET	SENTIMENT	KEY DRIVER	DIR
US Equities	BULLISH	Tech strength and Fed independence signal	▲
European Equities	NEUTRAL	Energy cost pressure and slower growth outlook	▼
Oil and Energy	VOLATILE	Strait of Hormuz crisis driving supply uncertainty	▲
Gold and Precious Metals	BULLISH	Safe-haven demand from Middle East tensions	↔
Cryptocurrencies	BEARISH	Risk-off sentiment; profit-taking across BTC and ETH	▼
Forex (Major Pairs)	NEUTRAL	Limited movement; USD holding steady as Fed meets	↕

A divided market — US stocks and oil are the standout movers today, while crypto pulls back and Europe stays cautious ahead of a packed week of central bank decisions and major tech earnings.