

INTERNATIONAL

Cost to US for war on Iran is \$3.7bn in first 100 hours

AGENCIES

The US-Israeli war on Iran is estimated to have cost Washington \$3.7bn so far in its first 100 hours alone, or nearly \$900m a day, driven largely by the huge expenditure of munitions, according to new research.

An analysis by Washington-based think tank the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) underlined the colossal cost of the war, which entered its seventh day yesterday, as the US attacks Iran with stealth bombers and advanced weapons systems.

Researchers Mark Cancian and Chris Park said only a small amount of the estimated \$3.7bn cost of the war in the first 100 hours was already budgeted for, while most of the costs - \$3.5bn - were not.

That meant the Pentagon would likely need to request more funding soon to cover the unbudgeted costs, they said.



Houthi supporters hold placards of late Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during a demonstration in solidarity with Iran and Lebanon, amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran, in Sanaa, Yemen, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SCHOOL STRIKE
US probe points to likely US responsibility

REUTERS

US military investigators believe it is likely that US forces were responsible for an apparent strike on an Iranian girls' school that killed scores of children on Saturday but have not yet reached a final conclusion or completed their investigation, two US officials told Reuters.

Reuters was unable to determine more details about the investigation, including what evidence contributed to the tentative assessment, what type of munition was used, who was responsible or why the US might have struck the school.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Wednesday acknowledged the US military was investigating the incident.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military matters, did not rule out the possibility that new evidence could emerge that absolves the US of responsibility and points to another responsible party in the incident.

Reuters could not determine how much longer the investigation would last or what evidence US investigators are seeking before the assessment can be completed.

Iran now stands largely alone

Russia, China stay on sidelines, prioritise own strategic gains

REUTERS, Dubai

With its supreme leader killed and its war machine under relentless US pressure, Iran now stands largely alone - its longtime partners Russia and China offering nothing more than diplomatic condemnations and expressions of concern.

'COLD CALCULATION'

With the Strait of Hormuz already shut, the attacks have sent energy prices soaring, destabilising global markets and forcing major economies to scramble, underscoring the world's exposure to the fallout from Tehran's response to the war.

Russia and China's restraint reflects a cold calculation, analysts say: intervening as Iran faces Israel and the US would bring high costs, limited gains and unpredictable risks - burdens neither power appears willing to shoulder.

"Putin has other priorities, and chief among them is Ukraine," said Anna Borshchevskaya, a Russia expert at the Washington Institute. "It would be foolish for Russia to go into a direct military confrontation with the United States."

STARK PARADOX

China has spent years embedding itself in Middle Eastern diplomacy, while Russia has cast Iran as a pillar of its anti-Western alignment.

Yet as the conflict flared, both powers were constrained - China

by its dependence on Gulf energy and trade and by security priorities in Asia, and Russia by a grinding war in Ukraine that has sapped its capacity to shield partners and sharpened its need to preserve ties with oil-rich Gulf states. The result is a stark paradox: Iran remains strategically useful to both, but

on Venezuela alone.

China's key vulnerability remains energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, which carries some 45 percent of its oil imports. But Beijing has built strategic reserves and substantial volumes of Iranian oil already sitting in tankers or storage, experts say.



not useful enough to fight for. **CHINA ALLIANCES FOCUS ON TRADE**

Unlike the US, whose alliances rest on mutual defence obligations, China prefers partnerships built on trade, investment and arms sales, ties that stop short of dragging it into costly conflicts beyond East Asia, said Evan A Feigenbaum from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Beijing maintains ties with Iran and Gulf Sunni rivals, and in Latin America, never placed all its bets

HIGHER OIL PRICES HELP RUSSIA

Russia also sees concrete benefits: rising oil prices strengthen its war economy.

Russia does not benefit from the collapse of the Iranian regime, but it is also not tying its fate to Tehran's survival, said Borshchevskaya. Moscow is hedging, preserving flexibility, regardless of the conflict's outcome, and would build ties with any new government, even one aligned with Washington.

Iran's proxies in Iraq reluctant to join war

REUTERS, Baghdad

Iran has spent decades and billions of dollars preparing foreign proxy fighters like A J, a commander in a pro-Iranian paramilitary group in Iraq, for a moment just like this. Since the US and Israel went to war on the Islamic Republic a week ago, A J has been awaiting marching orders from Tehran.

But they have yet to come. And so as the leadership in Tehran faces a potentially existential threat, many of the fighters and militia groups the Iranians cultivated in Iraq have so far not entered the fight for them.

There has been no mass mobilization of Iran's proxies inside Iraq, one of the last redoubts of the Islamic Republic's once-formidable system of alliances stretching from Gaza, Lebanon and Syria to Yemen and Iraq.

Some pro-Iranian groups in Iraq have claimed attacks in recent days, to be sure. One group said it had fired drones at "enemy bases in Iraq and the region," and several explosions rocked the northern city of Erbil, a Kurdish stronghold that hosts a US base.

But most missile and drone attacks have come directly from Iran, Kurdish officials say.

US can't provide enough missiles for Gulf nations

Says EU commissioner

AFP, Warsaw

The United States is not in a position to provide enough missiles to the Gulf states and Ukraine to defend themselves, EU defence and space commissioner Andrius Kubilius said yesterday.

"It's very clear that after the Iranian crisis ... it became more urgent for us in Europe to ramp up production of air defence and anti-ballistic missiles," Kubilius said in Warsaw.

"Americans really will not be able to provide enough of those missiles, both for the Gulf countries, for American army itself, and also for Ukrainian needs."

Kubilius said Europe was facing a "huge challenge" in developing anti-missile defence, stressing that Ukraine's needs were "immense".

He said "for the winter season alone" Ukraine needed around 700 Patriot, PAC-2 and PAC-3 missiles, which is "more or less equal to the number of missiles that American manufacturers are capable of producing in a year".

At a joint press conference with Polish defence minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, Kubilius emphasised that "the situation (in Europe) is really critical".

"It is clear that we are going to have to develop our missile production very quickly and very urgently," he added.

Missile fire hinders Middle East rescue flights

REUTERS, Dubai

Emirati airlines resumed some flights to global cities from the war-hit Gulf yesterday, but a Lufthansa jet that was headed to the region diverted over safety fears and an Air France repatriation flight was forced to turn back due to missile fire.

The outbreak of the US-Israel war against Iran has led to flight cancellations across the Middle East, leaving airlines and governments scrambling to support thousands of stranded passengers. Shares in carriers from New Zealand to Japan have slid meanwhile, as the conflict drives up fuel prices.

Passengers have paid huge sums to get out of the Middle East, with last-minute dashes to the airport, overland trips to less impacted hubs and fighter jets at times escorting passenger planes out. Some described it as "absolute chaos".

With most airspace in the region still closed over missile and drone concerns, some people with deep pockets have turned to private jets while charter flights and limited commercial services struggle to evacuate tens of thousands of travellers.

A Lufthansa flight to Saudi capital Riyadh diverted to Cairo yesterday over safety concerns after a similar move by an Air France late on Thursday.

"(It) reflects the instability in the region and the complexity of repatriation operations," French Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot said.

Britain's first repatriation flight from Oman landed at London's Stansted Airport early yesterday after delays. Similar repatriation flights arrived or were due to arrive back in countries from Poland to Portugal.



Survival odds grim

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Earlier in March last year, eight members of a family suffered burns in a fire resulting from a gas leak in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj. Four of them died from burn wounds, highlighting the high fatality rates in fires triggered by gas explosions.

That same month in 2024, at least 32 people, including women and children, were injured after a gas cylinder caught fire due to a pipe leak in Gazipur's Kaliakoir. Fourteen of them later died from their injuries.

REASONS BEHIND HIGH FATALITY Prof Nasir Uddin, director of NIBPS, said a major reason for the high fatality rate among patients with gas-related burns is inhalation injury, meaning their airways get burnt.

Another reason is that the percentage of burns is usually much higher in such incidents, he added.

Since January last year, NIBPS has received 235 patients, who suffered burns in 60 fire incidents caused by gas leaks. The institute counted only those incidents in which at least two to 10 people were injured.

Of the 235 patients, nearly half - 117 - suffered more than 20 percent burns to their bodies, with 71 of them having 41 to 100 percent burns.

"When a patient suffers an inhalation injury along with over 20 percent burns, the scope for intervention is extremely limited.... Given our medical capability, if burns exceed 30 percent and the airway is also affected, the risk of death rises by more than 50 percent," he told

The Daily Star.

Another crucial issue is the availability of medicines and equipment. In developed countries, advanced and expensive drugs are used in burn management.

"We cannot administer those medicines here due to budget constraints," he said.

FROM JAN 2025 TO FEB 25, 2026	
BURN %	PATIENTS
1% to 20%	118
21% to 40%	45
41% to 60%	40
Over 60%	31
Others	1
TOTAL	235

Nasir further said foreign experts who visited Bangladesh after the Milestone Air crash last year recommended international-standard dressing materials, antibiotics and other essential medicines for proper treatment of burn patients.

"We have already sought additional budget allocation from the government, stressing that our institute should not be treated like other general hospitals. It should be doubled at the very least."

People overwhelm filling stations amid fear of supply crunch

FROM PAGE 1

"Hopefully, within a short time, an adequate buffer stock of fuel will be built up," the statement added.

BPC also instructed that consumers must present the original copy of the previous purchase receipt or bill when buying fuel again. Customers must collect a receipt from filling stations clearly stating the quantity, price, and purpose of the fuel purchased.

The statement further said fuel must be sold at government-fixed prices, warning that charging extra during a crisis would be a punishable offence. It added that fuel prices are usually set at the beginning of each month, and no decision has been taken so far to increase prices in the current situation.

Anindya Islam Amit, state minister for power, energy, and mineral resources, yesterday visited several filling stations in Dhaka. He told reporters that some people were trying to hoard fuel.

"But we are here to inform them that they should not be anxious about the situation, as we have adequate stock. Our scheduled fuel supply is also functioning," he said.

Officials at the BPC said the country currently has about 14 days' stock of petrol, a 27 days' supply of octane, and diesel reserves for around 11 days.

Bangladesh has around 18,000 tonnes of petrol in stock but is able to keep 37,000 tonnes. It has 28,500 tonnes of octane against a capacity of

53,000 tonnes. Condensate from local gas fields is used to produce some of these fuels. Diesel stock at depots currently stands at about 1,80,000 tonnes. Two consignments of diesel, of about 57,000 tonnes, have already arrived at ports and are awaiting unloading, BPC officials said.

On average, the country sells 12,000-13,000 tonnes of diesel a day. In recent days, however, sales have surged to over 20,000 tonnes daily due to panic buying.

Officials said stock levels remain largely unchanged over the weekend as fuel supply operations usually remain closed on Friday and Saturday. While the field-level situation may remain similar today, supply is expected to normalise from tomorrow.

They added that dealers and filling stations would receive around 10 percent less fuel than last year's demand during the same period, as current demand appears inflated due to panic buying.

About 20 percent of Bangladesh's fuel imports consist of crude oil shipped through the Strait of Hormuz, currently closed amid the war, while the remaining 80 percent of refined petroleum products are imported from China, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Even though crude oil supply has faced disruptions, there has been no major problem in fuel imports, officials said. In some cases,

shipments have been delayed, but no contracts have been cancelled so far.

LONG QUEUES

Despite the assurances, fears of a possible shortage triggered panic buying yesterday, with long queues of cars and motorcycles at filling stations in Dhaka and Chattogram.

In Tejgaon, two filling stations were overcrowded around noon, with queues causing congestion in nearby streets. Nazmul Hasan, a motorcyclist who earns a living by sharing rides, told The Daily Star that he had been waiting in queue for about an hour. "I usually need fuel worth Tk 200 to Tk 300 every day. Others may manage with less, but we [ridesharing drivers] cannot run our vehicles without fuel," he said.

This time, however, he arrived prepared to fill his tank. "I have come to know that there might be problems regarding the fuel supply amid the war in the Middle East," he said.

In Shahbagh, the line at Meghna Model Service Center stretched toward the intersection near InterContinental Dhaka. Filling stations in the Asadgate area were similarly crowded.

Another motorcyclist, Mohammad Imran, was seen waiting in a queue under Shahbagh Metro Rail Station to buy fuel from a station at least half a kilometre away. He said he had gone there after failing to get fuel at two filling stations in Motijheel.

He, too, had come to fill his tank fearing a possible shortage.

A similar situation was observed in Chattogram, where large crowds gathered at filling stations fearing possible price hikes and supply disruptions.

Several filling stations in the port city had long lines of motorcycles and cars. Many drivers were moving from one station to another.

At some filling stations, sales were restricted to Tk 100-200 worth of fuel for motorcycles and Tk 500-1,000 for cars.

Filling station workers said customer pressure had multiplied over the last three days, with many drivers trying to purchase more fuel than usual.

Prof M Shamsul Alam, energy adviser to the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, said the government must take firm action to suppress hoarding and ensure equitable distribution of fuel among all classes of consumers, specifically the marginalised populations.

It is essential for the leadership to set a public example, he said. Instead of just imposing restrictions on the general public, high-ranking officials and ministers should reduce their own vehicle use and opt for public transport to demonstrate a collective commitment to austerity during this shortage.

"Rather than leaving the situation to chance, the government must build public consensus and manage the crisis with a mentality of 'sharing what we have'," he said.