

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.

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.



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

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.



Filling stations swamped amid supply scare

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The government sought to reassure the public that fuel imports are continuing as scheduled and shipments are arriving regularly.

At the same time, fuel is being transported from the main installations to depots across the country by rail wagons and tankers.

"Hopefully, within a short time, an adequate buffer stock of fuel will be built up in the country," 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 due to anxiety.

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

Officials at BPC said the country currently has about 14 days' stock of

petrol and 27 days' supply of octane, while diesel reserves stand at around 11 days.

According to the latest data, Bangladesh has around 18,000 tonnes of petrol in stock out of a storage capacity of 37,000 tonnes, and 28,500 tonnes of octane out of 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 diesel consignments carrying a combined 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 per 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 petrol pumps 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

ports in China, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

As a result, although crude oil supply has faced disruptions, there has been no major problem with refined oil 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 in Dhaka and Chattogram yesterday, with long queues of private cars and motorcycles at petrol pumps across both cities.

At several stations, lines of vehicles stretched beyond the premises and spilled onto nearby roads.

In the Tejgaon area, two filling stations were overcrowded at noon, with queues spilling onto adjacent streets and causing traffic congestion.

Nazmul Hasan, a motorcyclist who earns by sharing rides, told The Daily Star that he had been waiting in line for about an hour to refuel at a pump near Southern Automobiles Limited in Tejgaon.

He said he joined the queue from an alley and had slowly moved closer to the dispenser.

"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 completely.

"I have come to know that there might be problems regarding the fuel

supply amid the war in the Middle East," he said, expressing concern about what would happen if he ran out of fuel in the coming days, as his livelihood depends entirely on driving.

In Shahbagh, the line at Meghna Model Service Center stretched toward the intersection near InterContinental Dhaka. Pumps 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 pump at least 500 metres away.

He said he had come there after failing to get fuel at two pumps in Motijheel.

He, too, had come to fill his tank fearing a possible shortage. "If a crisis happens, the crowds at pumps will only grow," he said.

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

Visits to several petrol pumps in the port city found long lines of motorcycles and private cars, with many drivers moving from one station to another due to limited supplies.

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

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

Survival odds grim in gas fires

FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in March last year, eight members of the same family suffered burns in a fire resulting from a gas leak in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj area. Later, four of them died from burn wounds, highlighting the high fatality rate 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.

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."