

INTERNATIONAL

WAR PICTURES

US satellite firm declares blackout

Cites Trump request

AFP, Paris

US satellite imagery company Planet Labs said Saturday it will stop publishing high resolution aerial pictures of the area involved in the Middle East war, following a request from President Donald Trump's government.

"Effective retroactively from March 9, 2026, Planet is moving to a managed access model, extending the publication delay for all new imagery within the designated AOI (area of interest), and releasing imagery on a case-by-case basis and for urgent, mission-critical requirements or in the public interest," the company said in a message to clients received by AFP.

This area was defined in a previous announcement as all of Iran and allied bases in the area, as well as Gulf states and existing conflict zones.



Smoke rises from an Israeli strike in Beirut's southern suburbs yesterday. One of Israel's strikes in Beirut killed at least four people and wounded 39 in the Jnah neighbourhood, the Lebanese health ministry said.

PHOTO: AFP

600-mile strike push
US positions lethal long-range missiles for Iran war: report

TNN, New Delhi

The United States is set to commit nearly its entire inventory of stealthy long-range JASSM-ER cruise missiles to its ongoing military campaign against Iran, significantly depleting stockpiles earmarked for other regions, according to a Bloomberg report.

Citing a person with direct knowledge of the matter, Bloomberg reported that orders were issued in late March to pull the \$1.5 billion missiles from Pacific reserves, with additional weapons from the continental US and other locations being redirected to US Central Command bases and Fairford in the United Kingdom.

After the redeployment, only about 425 JASSM-ER missiles will remain from a pre-war inventory of roughly 2,300, the report said. Around 75 more are considered "unservicable" due to damage or technical faults. The remaining operational stock would be sufficient for approximately 17 B-1B bomber missions.

The JASSM-ER, or Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile Extended Range, has a strike range exceeding 600 miles and is designed to hit targets from a distance while avoiding enemy air defences. Alongside the shorter-range JASSM, which has a range of about 250 miles, nearly two-thirds of US stockpiles have now been allocated to the Iran conflict.

The heavy use of long-range precision weapons comes as US and Israeli forces continue their air campaign launched on February 28. According to the report, more than 1,000 JASSM-ER missiles were expended in the first four weeks of the war alone.

While such weapons reduce risks to personnel by enabling stand-off strikes, their rapid consumption is straining inventories meant for potential conflicts with more advanced adversaries such as China. Replenishing these stocks could take years at current production rates.



US AIRMAN RESCUE OPERATION

What we do and don't know

CNN ONLINE

The second US serviceman whose aircraft was shot down on Iranian soil has been rescued in a bold operation which marks a clear success for the US president at a time when he is under mounting pressure to end a war.

In a triumphant post on Truth Social this morning, Donald Trump announced the second US service member of the downed F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet had been rescued. Here's what we know so far — and what we don't.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Both US service members of a US F-15 fighter jet that was downed over Iran on Friday have now been rescued. The first was rescued shortly after the crash and is receiving medical attention.

The second service member, who was a Colonel, "sustained injuries," according to Trump, however he added he will be "just fine."

As CNN's national security analyst Alex Plitsas noted, the rescue prevented the crew member becoming a "strategic bargaining chip" for Tehran. The rescue operation involved dozens of aircraft, armed with "the most lethal weapons," Trump said. No American troops were killed or wounded during the rescue, he added.

WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

We don't know the precise details of the rescue operation and where it took place. Plitsas said it may go down as "one of the most harrowing rescue operations in US military

history."

The second serviceman's exact location and identity remain unclear. Trump said the US military had been monitoring his location 24 hours a day, and "diligently planning for his rescue."

Ejecting from a military aircraft subjects aircrew to extreme forces and can result in trauma, meaning that questions remain over the nature of his injuries.

Despite many in Iran calling

including 2 Black Hawk helicopters and one military transport aircraft C-130, were hit and are now burning," it said.

Video and images released by Iranian state media and geolocated by CNN appears to show the burnt out wreckage of several aircraft in southern Esfahan province.

State media claimed Iranian forces shot down the aircraft seen in the images. In a post on Truth Social President Trump, made no



for the immediate capture of the second downed US crew member, with officials offering a reward to anyone who found and handed him over, he evaded being caught behind enemy lines for nearly two days.

WHAT IS IRAN SAYING?

Iran's state Tasnim News Agency claimed "several enemy American aircraft" were destroyed in the Isfahan region. "The invading enemy aircraft in southern Isfahan,

mention of aircraft losses, but did say no US service members were injured or killed in the operation.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR WAR?
For Trump the successful rescue operation offers some rare positive news, and the US president has called on all Americans to unite in pride over the mission. It also spares the US potential messy hostage negotiations that may have occurred if the US airman had been captured by Iran.

Iraqi ships can pass Strait of Hormuz

Iran praises the country's 'struggle' against the US as transits tick up slightly

AGENCIES

Iran has announced that Iraqi ships are free to pass the Strait of Hormuz, the latest sign of Tehran easing its stranglehold on the critical conduit for global energy supplies.

Iraq will be exempt from all restrictions in the strait, with controls only applying to "enemy countries", Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said in a statement on Saturday.

"We hold profound respect for Iraq's national sovereignty," the military command said in the statement carried by the semi-official Tasnim news agency.

"You are a nation that bears the scars of American occupation, and your struggle against the US is worthy of praise and admiration."

Iran's announcement came as US President Donald Trump reiterated his demands for Tehran to make a deal or relinquish control of the waterway, warning in a social media post that "all hell" would rain down within 48 hours otherwise.

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters rejected Trump's demand, calling his threat a "helpless, nervous, unbalanced and stupid action".

Iran has effectively blockaded the strait, which usually carries about one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies, since the US and Israel launched their war on the country on February 28, reports Al Jazeera online.

While maritime traffic has ticked up in recent weeks under a de facto toll booth system imposed by Tehran, it is still down more than 90 percent from normal levels, according to ship tracking data.

According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, there were 53 transits through the strait last week, the most since the war began, up from 36 the previous week. On Friday, a French container ship and a Japanese-owned tanker crossed the strait in the first apparent transits linked to either country since the start of the conflict.

The collapse of shipping in the waterway has thrown a wrench in global energy markets, pushing up fuel prices and prompting authorities in many countries to roll out emergency energy conservation measures.

Govt to act

FROM PAGE 12

Ahmed Khan, to formulate a new pay structure. On January 22, the National Pay Commission submitted its report to the chief adviser.

It recommended increasing salaries and allowances of government employees, with raises ranging between 100 percent and 140 percent. It proposed raising the minimum salary from Tk 8,250 to Tk 20,000 and the highest salary from Tk 78,000 to Tk 1.6 lakh. The report said around Tk 1.06 lakh crore in additional funds would be needed to implement the recommendations.

At present, the government's total expenditure for around 14 lakh government employees and 9 lakh pensioners stands at Tk 1.31 lakh crore annually.

Sources at the Finance

Division said several steps remain before the recommendations can be implemented. As part of this, a nine-member review committee was formed on February 8.

The committee will examine the reports of the National Pay Commission 2025, the Bangladesh Judicial Service Pay Commission 2025, and the Armed Forces Pay Committee 2025, and submit recommendations to the government.

However, after a new government was formed through the February 12 national election, the review committee still could not begin its work due to the lack of direction from the new administration.

After yesterday's decision, the committee will now continue its work.

Ordinance repeal

FROM PAGE 1

special committee was not formed before repealing the ordinances, questions have been raised over whether the BNP has moved away from its position on the July charter.

The Daily Star spoke to at least four meeting attendees, all of whom requested anonymity.

"Out of the 133 ordinances, around 97 or 98 may be taken up, while the rest may need more time for review. Before the election, we made it clear that the BNP would not implement anything it did not agree with," said a Standing Committee member who was at the meeting.

"People voted for us on the basis of our own commitments, not to carry out the agenda of others. We will implement what we promised, but we will not do anything we did not commit to."

This was the first meeting of the Standing Committee, presided over by party Chairman and Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, since the party returned to power following the February 12 national election.

The last meeting before this was held on January 9.

The two-hour meeting on Saturday began with a review of the government's

performance in its first 47 days, during which Standing Committee members congratulated the government and expressed satisfaction with the gradual implementation of the BNP's electoral pledges, as well as the positive public response.

Leaders noted that the launch of canal excavation, distribution of Family Cards, and the tree plantation programme were significant moves in line with the pledges.

They said people living along the canals must be involved in the excavation programme, and that people at the union and ward levels should be engaged.

They also said the Farmer Card distribution programme beginning on Pahela Baishakh was in keeping with the election manifesto.

The leaders stressed that corruption must be stopped in the country at any cost, and that the prices of essentials must be kept low, because people will not accept hardship caused by war and will expect relief in their daily lives.

Meanwhile, they expressed dissatisfaction over the large number of cases filed against BNP grassroots leaders and activists across the country

that remain pending, leaving many party members grappling with legal hassles.

One of the leaders said, "In my district, cases against top leaders have been withdrawn, but those against grassroots leaders are still pending."

Some senior leaders also said they were unhappy with how the transport and power ministries are handling the ongoing fuel crisis and road deaths, saying it has fuelled public resentment.

"During Eid, people died in road accidents, yet the minister said travel had been 'smooth', which was not appropriate. There were also long queues at filling stations, but it was still said that there was no crisis," a Standing Committee member told this correspondent.

At the meeting, leaders discussed the tension that has spread across the country over fuel oil, with BNP leaders saying the panic among the public appeared to be greater than the actual scale of the crisis.

They said this had led some people to stock up on fuel unnecessarily, while others were taking advantage of the situation through smuggling, and stressed the need for strict monitoring and legal action

against those involved.

The BNP said it welcomed criticism from the opposition if it was genuine, but accused its rivals of trying to spread propaganda and create confusion over the July charter issue.

Party leaders said the Jamaat-led II party alliance's threat of street protests was part of an unsuccessful campaign against the BNP, adding that the party had decided to closely watch the opposition's moves rather than respond directly.

Meanwhile, discussions also focused on strengthening and expanding the party's organisational and political activities, as grassroots activities have slowed in many areas since the elections and require urgent reorganisation.

After the meeting, BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said, "We will try to move towards the council as quickly as possible."

The party last held its sixth national council on March 19, 2016.

He added that Tarique convened the meeting of the Standing Committee to discuss how to keep the party active and sustain its regular operations.

Israeli strike kills 4 in Gaza

Medics say; several others injured

AFP, Gaza City

Gaza's civil defence agency and a hospital reported that an Israeli strike on a group of civilians in the Palestinian territory yesterday killed four people and wounded several others.

The attack took place before dawn in an eastern neighbourhood of Gaza City, the territory's largest urban area, according to the agency, which operates as a rescue force under Hamas.

"An Israeli airstrike before dawn killed four and wounded several," the civil defence agency reported. Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital confirmed the toll, saying the strike was carried out by an Israeli drone.

"Four martyrs and five wounded arrived at the hospital this morning after an Israeli drone fired two missiles at a group of civilians," the hospital said in a statement.

Reached for comment, the army said it was looking into the reports.