

## 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 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

## Traffic has risen under Tehran's toll system but remains over 90pc below normal: data



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.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, has hovered above \$109 a barrel in recent days, with many analysts predicting prices to surge much higher if the waterway is not unblocked soon.

Iraq's oil production, which provides most of Baghdad's revenues, has been hit especially hard by the war. Iraq's Ministry of Oil announced last month that production had fallen to 1.2 million barrels a day, down from 4.3 million barrels, amid declining crude shortage capacity due to the effective halt of exports through the strait.

## Ukraine hits oil refinery, Baltic Sea port in Russia

Moscow acknowledges oil spill at NORSI refinery, downs 19 drones in Leningrad region

AGENCIES

Ukrainian drones struck Russia's NORSI oil refinery in the central Nizhny Novgorod region overnight, Ukrainian drone forces commander Robert Brovdi said yesterday.

He said other drones had also hit the Baltic Sea port of Primorsk used by Russia's oil transport company Transneft to ship oil abroad, reports Reuters. Russia acknowledged an oil spill but insisting there was no damage.

Ukraine confirmed it staged the latest strike on the port, near the border with Finland, that plays an important role in Russia's oil exports.

Russian air defences shot down 19 drones in the Leningrad region and debris from one "damaged a section of the oil pipeline near the port of Primorsk, and the pipeline is being safely burned out," regional governor Alexander Drozdenko initially said on Telegram.

But two hours later, he wrote: "According to updated information, the oil pipeline in the area of the port of Primorsk was not damaged."



Workers install OSB boards in the places of broken windows at the site of an apartment building hit by a Russian drone strike in Odesa, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"The fuel leak occurred due to a shrapnel hit on one of the fuel tanks. The consequences have already been dealt with," he added. No casualties were reported.

Ukraine's drone forces commander Robert Brovdi said that the country's "unmanned systems forces once again struck the Transneft Primorsk port and

paid a gracious visit to Lukoil in Kstovo," referring to a refinery of Russia's second biggest oil firm in another region.

Ukraine has stepped up attacks on Russian energy infrastructure in recent weeks in a bid to reduce Moscow's earnings from oil exports, as the Middle East war pushes up prices.

## 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.