

Gulf Cooperation Council Backs Lebanon



The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) welcomed Lebanon's government decision to restrict weapon possession in Beirut exclusively to legitimate state forces, describing it as an important step toward strengthening state authority.

The Lebanese cabinet on Thursday directed security agencies to enforce a strict state monopoly on arms in the capital, Beirut, following a recent escalation of Israeli strikes

across the country, including the capital itself.

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said at the conclusion of a cabinet meeting that the army and internal security forces had been instructed to "immediately begin reinforcing the full imposition of state authority over Beirut Governorate and to monopolize weapons in the hands of legitimate authorities alone."

Information Minister Paul Morcos noted that the decision faced objections from two min-

isters affiliated with Hezbollah during the cabinet session. The move comes after Lebanon previously announced a ban on Hezbollah's military activities earlier in March. However, the Iran-backed group, which remains represented in both parliament and the cabinet, has continued its operations despite government directives.

On Wednesday, Israel launched its most extensive wave of strikes since the latest phase of the conflict began on March 2, resulting in more than 200 deaths, according to

reports. Lebanon's health ministry says the overall death toll has exceeded 1,700 in just over a month.

Following the strikes, Prime Minister Salam said Lebanon would submit an "urgent complaint" to the United Nations Security Council, condemning what he called a "dangerous escalation in defiance of all regional and international efforts to stop the war in the region."

Minister Morcos added that the government is continuing diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire, especially after statements from the United States and Israel suggesting their truce with Iran does not extend to Lebanon.

Major Strikes on Saudi Oil Infrastructure Cause Production Losses



An official source at Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Energy said that several major energy facilities across the Kingdom have recently been subjected to multiple attacks, affecting production, transportation, refining, petrochemical operations, and the electricity sector in Riyadh, the Eastern Province, and Yanbu Industrial City.

The source said the incidents resulted in the death of one Saudi national working in industrial security at a national energy company, while seven other Saudi employees were injured. The attacks also caused disruptions to operations at several critical energy installations.

Among the affected infrastructure was a pumping station on the East-West Pipeline, which led to a loss of approximately 700,000 barrels per day

in throughput. The pipeline is considered a key route for supplying global energy markets.

Production facilities were also impacted, including the Manifa field, which saw output reduced by around 300,000 barrels per day. Earlier disruptions at the Khurais facility had already lowered production by a similar amount, bringing the total reduction in the Kingdom's production capacity to approximately 600,000 barrels per day.

Refining operations were also affected, with facilities including SATORP in Jubail, the Ras Tanura refinery, SAMREF in Yanbu, and the Riyadh refinery reporting disruptions that impacted refined product exports. In addition, processing facilities in Ju'aymah experienced fires, affecting exports of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas liquids.

Airfares Surge Across Dubai Routes



Airfares from Dubai have surged sharply in recent weeks due to rising travel demand, higher jet fuel costs, and limited seat availability, according to aviation experts, with prices expected to remain elevated in the coming months.

Passengers departing from the UAE are already experiencing significant increases, with last-minute ticket prices climbing far above levels seen just two months ago.

A return flight from Dubai to Mumbai for travel this week is currently priced at around Dh4,230, compared to about Dh730 less than 60 days ago. Similarly, fares to London have risen sharply to Dh4,380, up from Dh1,209 previously.

Other long-haul destinations have also recorded steep increases, including Barcelona at Dh6,380, Lisbon at Dh3,667, San Francisco at Dh7,140, and New York at Dh7,770.

Even bookings made about a week in advance remain expensive, with Dubai-Mumbai fares around Dh1,560 and Dubai-London approximately Dh3,400, indicating sustained

pressure on pricing.

Travel planned between April 18 and 25 shows slightly lower fares compared to last-minute tickets, but prices remain high overall. During this period, Dubai-Delhi is priced at Dh2,731, Dubai-London at Dh3,400, and Dubai-Barcelona at around Dh5,940.

Industry experts say the combination of strong demand, constrained capacity, and higher operational costs is likely to keep airfares elevated in the near term.

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Japan Condemns Attacks on Saudi Energy Facilities



The Embassy of Japan in Saudi Arabia strongly condemned recent attacks targeting the Kingdom's energy facilities, which resulted in the death of one Saudi national working for an energy company and injuries to seven others.

In a statement, the embassy expressed its "deepest condolences" to the family of the deceased and conveyed "sincere sympathies" to those injured in the incident.

The statement also denounced the damage caused to key energy infrastructure, warning that such attacks

could further worsen pressures on the already strained global energy market.

"We deplore that these attacks damaged important energy facilities in the Kingdom and could potentially add to negative impact on the already strained energy market in the world. We appeal that such attacks on civilian energy facilities should never be repeated by any party," the embassy said.

The attacks also disrupted several operational activities at major facilities within the Kingdom's energy sector, according to the statement.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer Visits Doha



The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Keir Starmer, held discussions with His Highness the Amir of Qatar during an official meeting at Lusail Palace, focusing on the latest regional and international developments.

The talks took place at Lusail Palace, where both sides reviewed key issues of mutual concern and exchanged views

on strengthening bilateral relations between the United Kingdom and Qatar.

Earlier upon his arrival in Doha, the British Prime Minister and his accompanying delegation were received at Doha International Airport by Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al-Khulaifi, alongside the British Ambassador to Qatar, H.E. Neerav Patel.

Qatar and India Discuss Energy Security

Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs, Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, met in Doha with India's Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, to discuss developments in global energy markets and the impact of regional conflicts on energy security.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the implications of ongoing regional tensions on the global energy



industry and explored ways to ensure the stability and se-

curity of energy supplies worldwide.

The Qatari minister reaffirmed Qatar's commitment to remain a reliable global energy supplier and expressed his country's interest in further strengthening energy cooper-

ation with India.

Both ministers welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached on April 8, stressing the importance of swiftly removing any disruptions to global energy flows and returning to normal market conditions.

They also emphasized the need to safeguard freedom of navigation, ensure uninterrupted global trade, and protect the resilience of international supply chains.