



TOP 4 TWEETS

01



In a world moving toward greater fragmentation & sharper power competition, international law is indispensable. Without it, instability spreads, mistrust deepens & conflicts spiral out of control. This applies everywhere – and it applies urgently to the conflict in the Middle East.

@antonioguterres

02



Good discussion with General Grynke-wich, @NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe. As war in Ukraine continues and Russian defence industry produces at scale, Europe must do more to boost investment, ramp up production capacity and increase speed.

We need an innovative industry to produce both high-end complex systems and cheaper new technologies. To this end, we can learn from Ukraine's expertise and experience.

In an increasingly complex security environment, a strong relationship between the EU and NATO is central to European security.

@vonderleyen

03



No amount of fraud is too big or too small. If you're defrauding the taxpayer, you ought to go to prison, and anybody who's helping you ought to go to prison too.

@VP

Nine vessels turned back in 48 hours

AFP | Washington, United States

The US military said yesterday that it successfully stopped nine vessels from sailing out of Iranian ports during the first 48 hours of a naval blockade against the Islamic republic.

"Nine vessels have complied with direction from US forces to turn around and return toward an Iranian port or coastal area," US Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for American troops in the Middle East, said in a post on X.

"No vessels have made it

past US forces," CENTCOM said.

However, maritime tracking data appeared to contradict the US assertion.

Tracking data from Tuesday indicated at least three ships sailing from Iranian ports crossed the Strait of Hormuz, though some vessels taking the route later turned back.

The three ships were among at least seven Iran-linked vessels that passed through the strait after Washington's blockade came into effect at 1400 GMT on Monday, according to maritime data provider Kpler.



An aerial photograph shows a destroyed statue of the late Syrian president Hafez al-Assad, as a long line of Iraqi diesel-tanker trucks line up along the Tartus-Baniyas highway waiting to unload their cargo at the Banyias port refinery on the Mediterranean Sea

Sri Lanka repatriates 238 stranded Iranian sailors: minister

AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has repatriated 238 Iranian sailors stranded in the South Asian country after one of their warships was torpedoed by a US submarine, a minister said yesterday.

Deputy Defence Minister Aruna Jayasekara said 32 sailors rescued from the IRIS Dena -- a

frigate attacked on March 4 just off Sri Lanka -- and another 206 from the IRIS Bushehr left on Tuesday.

"A few sailors from the IRIS Bushehr are staying back to operate the vessel, but 206 joined those rescued from the IRIS Dena and returned home last night in a chartered aircraft," Jayasekara said.

Official sources said 15 Iranian sailors will remain in Sri Lanka to operate the IRIS Bushehr, which is anchored off Trincomalee in the northeast of the island.

The attack on the IRIS Dena brought the Middle East conflict into the Indian Ocean, killing 104 sailors in the early days of the US and Israeli war against Iran.

Israel army chief orders 'Hezbollah kill zone'

Israel's military chief of staff said he had ordered areas south of Lebanon's Litani Riv-

er to be turned into a Hezbollah "kill zone" as troops pressed a major offensive there.

Shuttle diplomacy

Pakistani delegation arrived in Tehran bearing a new message from Washington, with President Donald Trump indicating talks could resume this week.

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran's military threatened yesterday to shut down Red Sea trade unless the United States lifted its naval blockade on Tehran's ports, saying the ceasefire was at risk.

US Vice President JD Vance, who led last weekend's abortive talks, said the Islamic republic was being offered a "grand bargain" to end the six-week war and address the decades-old

Speaking to the New York Post, Trump said a new round of talks could take place in Pakistan "over the next two days", while telling Fox Business the war was "very close to being over".

dispute over Tehran's nuclear programme.

But for now, both sides seemed intent on keeping up the pressure.

Speaking to the New York Post

on Tuesday, Trump said a new round of talks could take place in Pakistan "over the next two days", while telling Fox Business the war was "very close to being over".

A senior US official told AFP there was "continued engagement between the US and Iran to reach a deal", but denied reports Trump's administration had consented in principle to lengthen

the truce.

On the Iranian side, a foreign ministry spokesman said "several messages" had been exchanged via Islamabad since talks wrapped up on Sunday.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi welcomed in Tehran yesterday a Pakistani delegation led by army chief Asim Munir that Iranian state television said was to relay a new US message and discuss a second round of talks.

Starmer says 'won't yield' to Trump's Mideast war threats

AFP | London, United Kingdom

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer yesterday said he would not "yield" to pressure to join the Iran war after US President Donald Trump threatened to scrap a UK trade deal.

"We're not going to get dragged into this war. It is not our war," Starmer told parliament.

"I'm not going to change my mind. I'm not going to yield. It is not in our national

interest to join this war," the Labour leader added.

In a phone interview with Sky News, Trump threatened to alter an agreement struck with Britain that limits the impact of his US tariffs blitz.

Trump, who has repeatedly slammed Starmer's policies, said strains in the relationship with the NATO ally would "not at all" negatively affect King Charles III's state visit to the United States this month.

In reference to the royal trip, Starmer told parliament that the two nations' "long standing bonds... are far greater than anyone who occupies any particular office at any particular time".

London and Washington concluded a trade agreement last year capping US tariffs at 10 percent on most British manufactured goods.

In return, the UK agreed

to open its markets further to American ethanol and beef, sparking concerns in the country. At the time, it was an advantageous agreement for London, which benefited from the lowest tariffs granted by the US.

This advantage has, however, been weakened since the US Supreme Court struck down some tariffs and Washington retaliated by imposing a temporary 10-percent tariff on almost all of its imports pending a new tariff regime by July.

No 'exit plan'

While Trump praised his good relationship with Starmer at the time of the agreement, ties have since deteriorated, particularly over the war in the Middle East.

Starmer angered Trump by refusing to allow British bases to be used for the US's initial strikes on Iran last month.

He later agreed to a US request to use two British military bases for a "specific and limited defensive purpose".

"It's a relationship where when we asked them for help, they were not there," Trump told Sky News.

"When we needed them, they were not there. When we didn't need them, they were not there. They still aren't there," he insisted.

Starmer's Labour government, which has sought to build bridges with Trump since his return to the White House in January 2025, has recently hardened its rhetoric toward its historic ally.

Finance Minister Rachel Reeves on Tuesday hit out at the "folly" of Trump launching a war with Iran "without a clear exit plan".

Starmer told parliament on Monday that Trump was wrong

to threaten to destroy Iranian "civilisation", while on Sunday Health Minister Wes Streeting criticised Trump's language as "incendiary, provocative, outrageous".

Against this backdrop, Reeves was to see US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington on Wednesday as part of an International Monetary Fund meeting to

detail the economic impact of the conflict.



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