

**Hezbollah denies any members in Kuwait after arrest of 16 alleged affiliates**

Beirut, Lebanon

Hezbollah on Tuesday denied it had any members in Kuwait a day after the Gulf country announced the arrest of 14 Kuwaitis and two Lebanese nationals allegedly affiliated with the group over a “sabotage plot”.

“Hezbollah categorically denies the allegations and accusations issued by the Kuwaiti interior ministry,” the Iran-backed Lebanese militant group said in a statement, calling the allegations “baseless” and adding: “There are no Hezbollah cells, members or networks in Kuwait.”

**Iraq seeks Hormuz passage**

Iraq said it was in contact with Iran to try to arrange passage for some of its oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz.

“Communications are underway with the relevant authorities to authorise the passage of certain oil tankers to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, in order that we can resume our exports,” Oil Minister Hayan Abdel Ghani told local TV station al-Sharqiya

**One killed in Abu Dhabi**

Falling debris from a missile intercept killed one person in the Emirati capital of Abu Dhabi and injured two medical staff in Kuwait, authorities said.

Qatar said it had intercepted a missile attack after an AFP journalist reported hearing several explosions in Doha.

In Dubai, an AFP journalist heard three explosions after authorities warned residents of United Arab Emirates’ most populous city to “immediately seek a safe place” over “potential missile threats”.

**Oil prices jump**

The price of oil jumped three percent amid new Iranian attacks in the Middle East war and as several countries pushed back against US President Donald Trump’s demand that they help secure the key Strait of Hormuz.

At around 1115 GMT, international benchmark Brent crude was at \$103.18 a barrel while West Texas Intermediate was at \$96.36.

**Tanker struck by ‘unknown projectile’ near Oman: UK maritime agency**

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

An “unknown projectile” struck a tanker off the coast of Oman, a UK maritime agency said Tuesday, noting there were no reported injuries.

“A Tanker has reported being struck by an unknown projectile whilst at anchor,” UK Maritime Trade Operations said in a post on X.

“Minor structural damage reported. No injuries to crew.”



Indian vessel ‘Nanda Devi’ carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) arrives at Vadinar Port in the Jamnagar district of Gujarat state yesterday after Iran allowed it to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, a key energy corridor that remains disrupted by the Middle East war. Indian-flagged tankers ‘Shivalik’ and ‘Nanda Devi’, carrying around 92,700 metric tonnes of LPG, had reached ports in Gujarat state, marking a rare exception in commercial passage through the chokepoint.

**UAE’s oil industrial zone of Fujairah was also hit yesterday, sparking a fire but causing no injuries**

Israel says **Larijani killed**

● Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Larijani was “eliminated last night”

● Larijani, 68, has been described as a “true insider” in Iran

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Israel said Tuesday it had killed Iran’s powerful national security chief, Ali Larijani, in what would be a huge blow to the Islamic republic more than two weeks into the war engulfing the Middle East.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said Larijani was “eliminated last night”, although this has not been confirmed by Iran.

It comes less than three weeks after US-Israeli strikes on February 28 killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader since 1989, triggering a regional war with global repercussions.

Larijani, 68, has been described as a “true insider” in Iran, close to the late ayatollah and central to the republic’s nuclear policy and strategic diplomacy over decades.

After the war broke out, he

became even more powerful. While the new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, has not been seen in public since he was appointed to replace his slain father, Larijani was seen walking with crowds at a pro-government rally last week in Tehran.

The reported assassination comes as strikes shook countries across the Middle East on Tuesday, from Gulf nations to Iraq, Lebanon and Iran.

An AFP reporter had earlier Tuesday reported blasts in Tehran, after a night of heavy bombardment mixed with thunder and rain.

**Targeting leaders**

Israel also said Tuesday it had killed Gholamreza Soleimani, head of the Basij paramilitary force of Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, in a strike on Monday in Tehran.

And it said it had targeted Akram al-Ajouri, head of the military wing of the group Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in a strike in Iran, though he was not confirmed dead.

Israel has since the October 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas pursued what analysts have described as a policy of decapitation, targeting the leaders of its enemies, including Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon, as well as top leaders in Gaza.

**Larijani’s accounts post note as Israel says killed him**

Tehran, Iran

The official social media profiles of Iran’s security chief Ali Larijani posted a handwritten note on Tuesday, shortly after Israel said it had killed him.

Tehran has not confirmed Larijani’s death, nor did the post address the claim.

The social media post was a tribute to the 84 Iranian sailors who were killed when their frigate was sunk by a US submarine in the Indian

Ocean earlier this month.

The note, which did not include the date it was written, was published on Larijani’s accounts on X and Telegram.

“The martyrdom of the brave men of the Navy of the Army of the Islamic Republic aboard the Dena is part of the sacrifices of the valiant nation that has emerged at this juncture of struggle against international oppressors,” said Larijani’s note, which was written in black ink.

**The whereabouts of Iran’s new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, is the subject of much speculation, and US President Donald Trump said Monday that “we don’t know... if he’s dead or not”.**



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted an area in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut

**Senior US counterterrorism official resigns to protest Iran war**

AFP | Washington, United States

A senior US counterterrorism official resigned on Tuesday to protest the US-Israeli war against Iran and said the Islamic Republic posed no imminent threat to the United States.

“I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran,” Joseph Kent, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), said in his resignation letter to President Donald Trump.

Kent -- a former member of the Green Beret special forces who served multiple combat tours -- said “Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby.”

Kent, 45, who was appointed to head the NCTC by Trump, is the first senior US official to resign from his administration to protest the war against Iran.

Kent’s wife, Shannon, also served in the military and was killed in a

suicide bombing in Syria in 2019. “As a veteran who deployed to combat 11 times and as a Gold Star husband who lost my beloved wife Shannon in a war manufactured by Israel, I cannot support sending the next generation off to fight and die in a war that serves no benefit to the American people nor justifies the cost of American lives,” Kent wrote. As head of the Virginia-based NCTC, Kent worked under Tulsi Gabbard, the director of national intelligence, analyzing and coordinating the US response to terrorist threats and serving as the principal counterterrorism adviser to the president.

“Until June of 2025, you understood that the wars in the Middle East were a trap that robbed America of the precious lives of our patriots and depleted the wealth and prosperity of our nation,” Kent said in his letter to Trump, which he posted on X.

“Early in this administration, high-ranking Is-

raeli officials and influential members of the American media deployed a misinformation campaign that wholly undermined your America First platform and sowed pro-war sentiments to encourage a war with Iran,” he said.

“This echo chamber was used to deceive you into believing that Iran posed an imminent threat to the United States, and that should you strike now, there was a clear path to a swift victory,” he said. “This was a lie and is the same tactic the Israelis used to draw us into the disastrous Iraq war that cost our nation the lives of thousands of our best men and women,” Kent said.

“I cannot support sending the next generation off to fight and die in a war that serves no benefit to the American people nor justifies the cost of American lives,” he added.

After leaving the US Army, Kent served as a paramilitary officer in the Central Intelligence Agency. He ran twice unsuccessfully -- in 2022 and 2024 -- as a Trump-endorsed Republican for a seat in the US House of Representatives from Washington state.

