

1602

United Dutch East Indian Company (VOC) is formed and granted a monopoly on all Dutch sea-borne trade with Asia

1800

Alessandro Volta reports his discovery of the electric battery in a letter to Joseph Banks, president of the Royal Society of London



1815

Napoleon Bonaparte enters Paris after his escape from Elba and begins his 100-day rule

1854

Republican Party is formally organized in Ripon, Wisconsin



Filipinos fleeing the war in the Middle East disembark from a government chartered flight from Dubai at Villamor Air Base in Pasay, Metro Manila

## Tanker hit off UAE near Hormuz Strait

AFP | Dubai, United Arab Emirates

A projectile hit a tanker off the coast of the east coast of the United Arab Emirates, causing a fire and leaving the captain missing, officials and maritime monitors said yesterday.

The UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO), a naval monitor, said it received a report at 2300 GMT on Wednesday that "a vessel has been hit by an unknown projectile which has resulted in a fire on board" off the UAE port of Khor Fakkan in the Gulf of Oman.

At a meeting of the International Maritime Organization in London later on Thursday, the delegate from Palau identified the vessel as a chemical tanker flagged to that country, the Parimal.

He said 15 crew members were rescued by a Cook Islands-flagged tanker. "However, the master is missing," he added.

Marine intelligence journal Lloyd's List said the Parimal was part of the "shadow fleet" of unregulated vessels under international sanctions.



TOP  
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TWEETS

01



I have two clear messages:

First, to the United States & Israel:

It's high time to end this war that is risking to get out of control, causing immense suffering on civilians, with dramatic effects on the global economy & potentially tragic consequences, especially for the least developed countries.

Second, my message to Iran:

Stop attacking your neighbors, they were never parties to the conflict.

The Security Council has condemned these attacks, has ordered them to stop, as it has order to open the Strait of Hormuz.

The prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz causes enormous pain for so many people around the world who have nothing to do with this conflict.

It's time for the force of the law to prevail over the law of the force.

It's time for diplomacy to prevail over war.

@antonioguterres

02



Conveyed advance Eid wishes to my brother, His Majesty King Abdullah II, the King of Jordan, over phone. We expressed concern at the evolving situation in West Asia and highlighted the need for dialogue and diplomacy for the early restoration of peace, security and stability in the region. Attacks on energy infrastructure in West Asia are condemnable and can lead to avoidable escalation. India and Jordan stand in support of unhindered transit of goods and energy. Deeply appreciated Jordan's efforts in facilitating the safe return of Indians stranded in the region.

@narendramodi

### Trump says told Netanyahu not to attack Iran gas fields

# Saudi warns military actions

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the Gulf states would accept... blackmail, and escalation will be met with escalation: Saudi foreign minister

#### Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has not ruled out military action in response to repeated missile and drone attacks from Iran, Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said yesterday.

Speaking to reporters following a meeting in Riyadh of foreign ministers from the region, Prince Faisal said that Iran "tries to pressure its neighbours" with attacks.

"The kingdom is not going to succumb to pressure, and on the contrary, this pressure will backfire... and certainly, as we have stated quite clearly, we have reserved the right to take military actions if deemed necessary," he said.

Saudi Arabia reported more Iranian attacks on Wednesday, as the foreign minister hosted his counterparts from about a dozen Arab and Islamic countries for talks on the fallout from the Middle East war.

Several strong blasts were heard in the Saudi capital on Wednesday, according to AFP journalists, while the defence ministry said it had intercepted ballistic missiles.

"The targeting of Riyadh while a number of diplomats are meeting... I think that's the clearest signal of how Iran feels about diplomacy," Prince Faisal said.

"It doesn't believe in talking to its neighbours." The Saudi foreign minister

condemned the repeated "targeting of civilian sites" across the Gulf, dismissing Iran's justification that it was targeting US interests in the region as "weak".

"Neither Saudi Arabia nor the Gulf states would accept... blackmail, and escalation will be met with escalation," he said.

A joint statement from the foreign ministers' meeting in Riyadh condemned "the deliberate use of ballistic mis-

siles and drones targeting residential areas and civilian infrastructure, including oil facilities, desalination plants, airports, residential facilities and diplomatic missions".

The ministers "affirmed that such attacks cannot be justified under any circumstances and reiterated the right of states to defend themselves", the statement added, calling on Iran to "immediately cease its attacks" and de-escalate tensions.

## Casualty figures from across the region

The figures are based on numbers released by governments, militaries, health authorities and rescue organisations in the affected countries.

#### Iran

Iran's government has not released an updated overall casualty toll in recent days.

However, The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) said on March 17 that at least 3,114 people had been killed, including 1,354 civilians -- among them at least 207 children -- as well as 1,138 military personnel and 622 people whose status had not been classified.

#### Israel

Israeli emergency services and authorities say Iranian missile fire has killed 14 people

since the start of the war, including 13 Israelis -- among them four minors -- and one Filipino caregiver.

Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency service, said around 250 people have been injured since Iran began firing missiles at the country in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes.

The Israeli military has separately announced the deaths of two personnel in combat in southern Lebanon.

#### Lebanon

Lebanon's health ministry said on March 18 that 968 people had been killed and 2,432 wounded since the start of the fighting, including 116 children, 77 women and 775 men.

The ministry said the toll also included 40 healthcare workers. Hezbollah has not announced

its losses.

#### The Gulf

Authorities in Gulf states and the US Central Command (CENTCOM) have reported 28 people killed -- 15 of them civilians -- since the start of the Iranian attacks.

The rest of those killed were military or security personnel, including seven US service members.

Kuwait's military and health ministry have reported six deaths: two soldiers, two border guards and two civilians, one of them an 11-year-old girl.

The United Arab Emirates' defence ministry has reported eight deaths: six civilians and two military personnel who died as a result of a helicopter crash blamed on a technical malfunction.

#### Saudi Arabia

Bahrain's interior ministry has also logged two civilian deaths.

Oman's maritime security centre reported the death of a mariner at sea and two other people in a drone attack on an industrial area. Qatar's interior ministry, meanwhile, has reported 16 injuries and no fatalities. CENTCOM has confirmed six US service personnel killed in Kuwait and one killed in Saudi Arabia.

#### Iraq

Armed groups and officials have said at least 64 people have been killed in Iraq since the start of the war, according to an AFP tally based on their announcements.

France said an Iranian drone killed a French soldier in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

The US military said a refueling aircraft crashed in western Iraq, killing all six crew members, in an incident not caused by hostile or friendly fire.

#### Jordan

In Jordan, security officials said 29 people have been injured by falling debris from Iranian missiles and drones in various parts of the kingdom.

No deaths have been recorded so far.

#### US injuries across Mideast

The US on Monday said around 200 of its military personnel have been injured in seven countries across the Middle East since the start of the war.

Ten were categorised as seriously wounded and over 180 have already returned to duty, CENTCOM said.

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)