

Blockade more effective than war, claims Trump

Putin cautions Trump on Iran conflict; Ukraine consequences ahead

TEHRAN

US President Donald Trump has rejected Iran's latest proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, saying Washington will continue its naval blockade, which he has described as "more effective than bombing", according to Axios, even as he discussed the escalating conflict with Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call on Wednesday.

The two leaders spoke for over 90 minutes, discussing the Iran conflict and Ukraine, with Moscow providing support for diplomatic efforts. Putin also floated a temporary ceasefire in Ukraine during Victory Day celebrations while warning of wider consequences if fighting escalates.

Trump warned Tehran on Wednesday that it should "get smart soon" and capitulate to Washington's demands for tight controls on its missile programme, as the US naval blockade tightened pressure on Iran's economy.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said congressional Democrats are "the biggest adversary we face" as he parried questioning from lawmakers on Wednesday for the first time since the launch of the war against Iran. The Pentagon's chief financial officer also said the war has cost an estimated \$25 billion and counting.

The news sent oil prices higher once again. At around 1355 GMT, a barrel of Brent



Israeli tanks and military vehicles standing along the road near destroyed houses in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel. [AP]

crude for June delivery was up 5.16 per cent at \$117, its highest level since the fragile ceasefire between the United States and Iran came into effect on April 8.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, Trump intends to pursue the blockade of Iranian ports and limit Tehran's access to the global financial system. "Iran can't get their act together... They better get smart," Trump posted on his social media platform, above a nocked-up picture of himself toting a rifle in front of explosions wrecking a desert for troops and the slogan: "No more Mr Nice Guy."

US may extend Iran blockade

The United States could keep the naval blockade in place for months, oil executives were told in a meeting with Donald Trump, as Washington weighs

ways to sustain pressure while limiting impact on consumers. Participants at a White House meeting, which took place on Tuesday and was first reported by Axios, discussed "the steps President Trump has taken to alleviate global oil markets and the steps we could take to continue the current blockade for months if needed and minimise impact on 'Every time in recent years that negotiations have taken place, the economic situation of the people has only gotten worse. Sanctions have either started or intensified,' a 52-year-old oil chief told AP, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Iran warns war not over

An Iranian army spokesman told state TV on Tuesday that "we do not consider the war to be over", saying Tehran had "no trust in America". AP

Trump breaks royal protocol by touching King Charles's shoulder

LONDON

In the world of diplomatic faux pas, it could have been a lot worse. At Tuesday's state dinner honouring King Charles III and Queen Camilla, Donald Trump said that during a private meeting earlier in the day the British monarch had agreed with him that Iran should never be allowed to have nuclear weapons.

"We're doing a little West Asia work right now and we're doing very well," Trump told the outgoing monarch. "We have militarily defeated that particular opponent, and we're never going to let that opponent have a nuclear weapon."

While many Britons would agree with the president's sentiment, the comment triggered mild consternation among pundits.

In Britain, you can't touch the king, this just isn't done. By convention, people aren't supposed to relay private conversations with the monarch.

That is partly because the king has to remain above the political fray but also because the sovereign doesn't have the ability to make into a public debate and correct the record if he's misquoted.

"Generally, as a matter of protocol, I think I would expect discussions between heads of state to be sort of behind the scenes, in closed meetings, for those to be sort of kept private," said Gary Prescott, an expert in constitutional law and the monarchy at Royal Holloway University of London.

There had been a fair amount of flitters before the king's trip to the United States, which comes amid Trump's very public frustration with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to support US actions in the Iran war.

WAR WATCH

Feedbank Financial Services Ltd - Auction Notice

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Lot No.	Property Description	Estimate	Reserve Price
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CAUTION

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EAST COAST RAILWAY

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