

Two tankers attacked in Gulf of Oman

Iran says the attacks on Japanese and Norwegian vessels were suspicious, calls for regional dialogue

REUTERS
DUBAI

Two oil tankers were attacked and left adrift on Thursday in the Gulf of Oman, driving up oil prices and stoking fears of a new confrontation between Iran and the U.S.

The White House said U.S. President Donald Trump had been briefed on the issue, after Washington accused Tehran of being behind a similar incident on May 12 when four tankers were attacked in the same area, a vital oil shipping route.

Iran is responsible: U.S. Later on Thursday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Iran of being behind the attacks, and said the U.S. was taking the case to the UN Security Council.

"It is the assessment of the United States that the Islamic Republic of Iran is responsible for the attacks," he told reporters.

"This is based on intelligence, the weapons used, the level of expertise needed to execute the operation, recent similar Iranian attacks on shipping, and the fact that no proxy group operating in the area has the resources and proficiency to act with such a high degree of sophistication," he said.

Russia was quick to urge caution, saying no one should rush to conclusions about the incident or use it to put pressure on Tehran, which has denied the U.S. accusations.

The crew of the Norwegian-owned *Front Altair* abandoned ship in waters between the Gulf Arab states and Iran after a blast that a source said might have been from a magnetic mine. The ship was ablaze, sending a huge plume of smoke into

Past incidents

1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war: The two sides sought to disrupt each other's oil exports, in what was known as the "Tanker War"

July 1988: U.S. warship *Vincennes* shot down an Iranian airliner, killing all 290 aboard, in what Washington said was an accident and Tehran said was a deliberate attack

July 2010: Japanese oil tanker *M. Star* was attacked in the Strait by a militant group called *Abdullah Azzam Brigades*, linked to the al-Qaeda

January 2012: Iran threatened to block the Strait in retaliation for U.S. and European sanctions

May 2015: Iranian ships seized a container ship in the Strait and fired shots at a Singapore-flagged tanker

July 2018: President Hassan Rouhani hinted that Iran could disrupt oil trade through the Strait in response to U.S. calls to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero

May 2019: Four vessels - including two Saudi oil tankers - were attacked off the UAE coast near Fujairah, one of the world's largest bunkering hubs, just outside the Strait of Hormuz

Strait on the brink

Explosions that damaged two tankers south of the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday came a month after four vessels were targeted in 'sabotage attacks' off the coast of the UAE

Facts about the Hormuz Strait

• Lies between Oman and Iran

• Links the Gulf, in the north, with the Gulf of Oman to the south and the Arabian Sea beyond

• Just 33-km wide at its narrowest point, with the shipping lane just 3-km wide in either direction

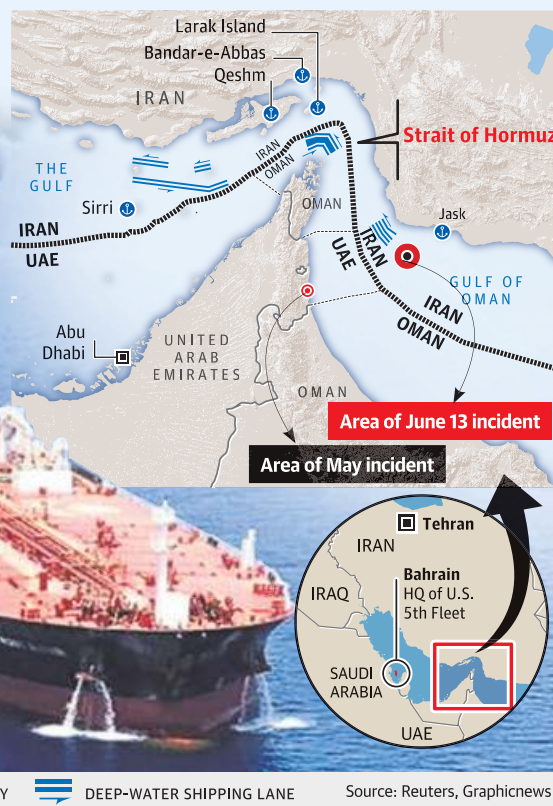
Why is the Strait important?

• Almost a fifth of the world's oil passes through the Strait - some 17.2 million barrels per day

• Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UAE, Kuwait and Iraq export most of their crude via the Strait

• Qatar, the world's biggest liquefied natural gas exporter, sends almost all of its LNG through the Strait

• The U.S. Fifth Fleet is tasked with protecting commercial shipping in the area



IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS NAVAL BASES MARITIME BOUNDARY DEEP-WATER SHIPPING LANE Source: Reuters, Graphicnews

The air. The crew were picked up by a passing ship and handed to an Iranian rescue boat.

The second ship, a Japanese-owned tanker, was hit by a suspected torpedo, the firm that chartered the ship said. Its crew were also picked up safely.

The Bahrain-based U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet said it had assisted the two tankers after receiving distress calls.

Tensions have risen in the region since the U.S. pulled out of a deal between Iran and global powers that aimed to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Message from Trump Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was visiting Tehran when Thursday's attacks occurred, carried a message for Iran from Mr. Trump, who has demanded

that the Islamic Republic curb its military programmes and its influence in West Asia. Mr. Abe, whose country was a big importer of Iranian oil until Washington ratcheted up sanctions, urged all sides not to let tensions in the area escalate.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described Thursday's incidents as "suspicious" on Twitter, noting they occurred during

Mr. Abe's Tehran visit. He called for regional dialogue.

Iran also said it would not respond to Mr. Trump's overture, the substance of which was not made public. The Arab League said some parties were "trying to instigate fires in the region", without naming a particular party.

Oman and the UAE, which have coastlines on the Gulf of Oman, did not immediately issue any public comment.

Sajid Javid certifies U.S. request to extradite Julian Assange

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Britain's Home Secretary Sajid Javid said on Thursday that he had certified the U.S. request to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on espionage grounds in a procedural move that opens the way for a court battle.

The U.S. Justice Department confirmed on Tuesday that it had submitted a formal extradition request. Mr. Javid said he signed it on Wednesday.

The final decision on whether Mr. Assange can be extradited will rest with the



Julian Assange. • REUTERS

courts. The next hearing in the case is on Friday.

50-week sentence

Mr. Assange is now serving a 50-week sentence in jail for skipping bail when he entered the Ecuadorean Em-

bassy in 2012. "There's an extradition request from the U.S. that is before the courts tomorrow but yesterday I... certified it," said Mr. Javid. "I want to see justice done at all times and we've got a legitimate extradition request, so I've signed it, but the... decision is now with the courts."

If basic criteria are met, the Home Secretary must certify a valid extradition request from the U.S. before the courts make a decision on whether the person can be extradited. The Secretary then decides whether to order an extradition.

Hope Modi will carry out discussed reforms: U.S.

Commerce Secretary says PM had been told GSP decision would be on hold until end of election

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had told Prime Minister Narendra Modi in early May that the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) would hold off on making a final decision on India's eligibility for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme until after the general election.

Mr. Ross had also discussed reforms with the Prime Minister and hoped Mr. Modi would follow through on those.

While it would hold off on making a final decision until after the elections, the

USTR's "substantive concerns" needed to be addressed to avoid a negative decision, Mr. Ross had told Mr. Modi and "others in the government" when he visited New Delhi. "They were not addressed unfortunately," Mr. Ross told delegates at the U.S.-India Business Council India Ideas Summit in Washington on Thursday.

No adequate assurances

India's eligibility for the GSP programme was withdrawn earlier this month because, as per President Donald Trump, India had not provided adequate assurances



U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. • AFP

to the U.S. on "equitable and reasonable" market access.

"While there, I spent an hour with Prime Minister Modi, a week before the election results were finalised. I

hope that now that he has received this strong re-election mandate, he will carry through on the reforms he and I discussed," Mr. Ross said of his visit to New Delhi in early May, as part of the Trade Winds Business Forum and Mission.

Trade protection

He drew comparisons between the U.S.'s and India's levels of trade protection, saying the U.S. was the least protectionist among major countries and had a trade deficit to prove it. "The U.S. has zero tariffs on 61% of the total value of our total im-

port," Mr. Ross said. "India's average applied tariff rate at 13.8% remains the highest of any major world economy."

Mr. Ross went on to cite examples of high Indian tariff rates, including in autos, alcoholic beverages and motorcycles, reiterating some of the public messaging he had delivered in New Delhi.

Mr. Ross said the U.S. is India's largest export destination, while India remained the U.S.'s 13th-largest export market despite its large population and this imbalance is "due importantly to overly restrictive market access barriers."

ELSEWHERE



Johnson wins first-round Tory leadership vote

LONDON Boris Johnson topped the ballot by a landslide on Thursday in a first-round vote for a leader to replace British Prime Minister Theresa May. Mr. Johnson secured more than twice the number of votes won by his nearest challenger as three of the 10 candidates were eliminated from the race. The seven candidates go through to Tuesday's second round, when contenders will need the votes of 33 of the 313 Conservative MPs. AFP

Ties with U.S. getting worse and worse: Putin

MOSCOW President Vladimir Putin said relations between Moscow and Washington were getting worse and worse, noting in an interview published on Thursday that the current administration had imposed dozens of sanctions on Russia. He made his gloomy assessment ahead of a G20 summit later in June at which he might meet U.S. President Donald Trump. REUTERS

'We need better safeguards for privacy'

India, U.S. can lead in effort: Pichai

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

India and the U.S. share enough values in common to lead on standardising privacy frameworks, according to Google CEO Sundar Pichai.

If standardisation is done across the world, it could significantly enhance digital trade, Mr. Pichai said.

"The free flow of information is essential for digital trade and we have all seen the benefits of it... We need better safeguards around user privacy. I think, [and] rightfully so, users are increasingly concerned about it," Mr. Pichai said. "It is an important moment to create standardised frameworks both for users to have choice and total transparency and for companies to be accountable as well."

India and the U.S. have "reasonably aligned" notions around a free and open Internet, have both safeguarded principles of free expression, and therefore have enough shared values to lead in privacy frameworks, he said.

Mr. Pichai's remarks were



Google chief Sundar Pichai. • AP

made during a U.S.-India Business Council's (USIBC) India Ideas Summit in Washington. Mr. Pichai was there to receive a Global Leadership Award from USIBC. Nasdaq President and CEO Adena Friedman was also an award recipient.

On how he sees Google in India, Mr. Pichai said: "We took a very long term view of our investments there," adding that Google was "very excited" and "proud" to be part of India's growth story. "Android literally powers all phones in India and we deeply care about making phones cheaper every year, so that more people can afford it and access it."

Turkey rejects U.S. ultimatum on missile deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ANKARA

Turkey's Defence Minister on Thursday described as "inappropriate" an ultimatum from the U.S. urging Ankara to abandon its purchase of a Russian missile defence system.

Acting U.S. Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan last week sent a letter telling Turkey that it had to renounce the S-400 system by July 31, or Turkish pilots training on the F-35 fighter jet programme would be expelled from the U.S.

In a phone call, Defence Minister Hulusi Akar told Mr. Shanahan that the letter's wording was "inappropriate and not in line with the spirit of (NATO)", according to a statement.

"No one can give Turkey an ultimatum," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavuşoglu told reporters on Thursday. Mr. Cavuşoglu repeated an offer to set up a joint working group to resolve U.S. concerns, saying President Donald Trump looked favourably on the idea but that it was rejected by "some institutions" in the U.S.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR 24X7 PAID PHARMACY

Tender No. JIPPharma/24x7 paid Pharmacy/2019/01 Dated : Dt:14.06.19

The Director, JIPMER Puducherry invites sealed tenders in Two Bid System (Technical bid and Financial bid) from reputed, branded eligible and qualified Chain of Pharmacies / Authorized Dealers / Distributors / Chemists for opening and running of 24x7 Paid Pharmacy in the premises of JIPMER Hospital for supply of Medicines / Surgical Consumables / Implants and Medical Devices etc. to patients, at maximum discount from Maximum retail Price (MRP).

The Tender notice, Documents can be downloaded from the Website of JIPMER www.jipmer.edu.in and also from <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> (Central Public Procurement Portal) The cost of tender document Rs 1180/-(Inclusive of 18% GST) has to be remitted through SBI Collect (link available in our website) and copy of receipt has to be submitted along with bid.

Date of Download the Tender Documents : 14.06.2019
Last Date of Submission of Tender : 12.07.2019 up to 12.00 Noon
Pre bid meeting : 28.06.2019 at 2.30PM

DIRECTOR