



\$100 million will be provided by the United States to repair Chernobyl dome after Russian attack

Weather table with columns for location, temperature, and weather conditions.

TRUMP WARNS IRAN BETTER 'GET SMART SOON' ACCEPT PROPOSED NUCLEAR DEAL

Tehran signals defiance amid stalled negotiations as rial plunges and economic strain deepens

TEHRAN

US President Donald Trump warned Tehran on Wednesday that it should "get smart soon" and capitulate to Washington's demands for tight controls on its nuclear programme...



Israeli tanks and military vehicles standing along the road between destroyed houses in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel. Lebanon's army said an Israeli strike killed a soldier and another person in the south, despite a truce | AFP

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.

And the Pentagon's chief financial officer released a detail Democrats have been demanding, saying the war has cost an estimated \$25 billion and counting. However, US press reports suggested Trump has already decided to reject Iran's latest proposed deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

The news sent oil prices higher once again. At around 1335 GMT, a barrel of Brent 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 until Tehran is forced to dismantle its nuclear programme.

Iran can't get their act together... They better get smart soon," Trump posted on his social media platform, above a mocked-up picture of himself totting a rifle in front of explosions wrecking a desert fortress and the slogan: "No more Mr Nice Guy."

US may extend Iran blockade The United States could extend its naval blockade of Iran for months more, oil executives were told in a meeting with Donald Trump, a White House official said on Wednesday.

Participants at a White House meeting, which took place Tuesday and was first reported by Axios, discussed "the steps President Trump has taken to alleviate global oil markets and steps we could take to continue the current blockade for months if needed and minimise impact on American consumers," said the official, speaking on condition

of anonymity. On Wednesday, the Iranian rial fell to historic lows against the dollar, while Tehran residents speaking to AFP journalists in Paris reported a sense of despair.

"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 architect told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. 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".



ISRAELI STRIKES KILL DOZENS IN LEBANON

BEIRUT: Israeli airstrikes across southern Lebanon have killed more than 20 people over two days, even as a fragile ceasefire holds. The Lebanese army reported wounded troops, marking the first such incident since the truce. Joseph Aoun condemned the attacks and insisted Israel must fully implement the ceasefire before talks.

IRAN'S URANIUM LIKELY STILL AT ISFAHAN: IAEA

Most of Iran's highly enriched uranium likely remains at the Isfahan nuclear complex, despite airstrikes during last year's war, said Rafael Grossi. Satellite images show damage but suggest material may still be stored in tunnels. Inspections have not resumed since the conflict.

Protocol breached, private talk with Charles revealed

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.



Britain's King Charles III toasts with President Donald Trump | AP

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

In Britain, you see, 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 wade 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 those closed meetings, for those to be sort of kept private," said Craig Prescott, an expert on constitutional law and the monarchy at Royal Holloway, University of London.

There had been a fair amount of jitters before the king's trip to the United States, which comes amid Trump's very public frustration with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer over his failure to support US actions in the Iran war.

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