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## Global air travel to double by 2050

**NEW DELHI:** Global air travel is expected to more than double by 2050, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA)'s Long-Term Demand Projections (LTDP) for air travel.

The LTDP shows that under the mid-range sce-

nario, demand is forecast to reach 20.8 trillion revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs), based on a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.1pc (2024-2050) from the nine trillion RPKs seen in 2024.

A higher growth scenario would see a 3.3pc CAGR

with passenger demand reaching 21.9 trillion RPKs in 2050. A lower growth scenario would see 2.9 pc CAGR with passenger demand reaching 19.5 trillion RPKs by 2050.

The different scenarios are driven by alternative modelling of long-term

economic growth, populations, aviation fuel price trends, the global energy transition and air transport supply-side capacity development.

"The outlook for air travel is positive. People want to travel and under all our modelled scenarios, the

demand to fly is expected to more than double by mid-century. That is good news for global economic and social development because aviation growth will catalyze opportunities, including jobs, around the world. Our Long-Term De-

( Cont. on page - 2 )

## Govt asks airlines not to levy extra charges for 60pc seats in flights

**NEW DELHI:** Airlines have been directed to allocate at least 60pc of seats free of extra charges on domestic flights and ensure passengers on the same Passenger Name Record (PNR) are seated together, as part of new passenger-friendly measures

announced by the government.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has been asked to issue necessary directions to enforce these norms, aimed at addressing growing concerns over high

charges levied by airlines for seat selection and other services.

Under the new guidelines, a majority of seats must be made available without additional cost to ensure fair access for passengers. Airlines have also been instructed to seat passengers booked under the same PNR together, preferably in adjacent seats.

At present, 20 pc of the seats can be booked free of charge while the rest is paid, according to an airline official. In another move to redress the agony caused to flyers due to musical instruments or sports

( Cont. on page - 2 )

## Karnataka's long weekend to boost tourism



**MANGALURU:** A favourable combination of holidays this week is expected to give a boost to travel across Karnataka, with many people planning short trips to make the most of an extended weekend starting March 19. The break begins with Yugadi followed by Ramzan.

By taking leave on Friday, travellers can turn it into a four-day holiday and this has already led to a rise in bookings across several tourist destinations. Demand for bus tickets is increasing as people prefer to travel to their hometowns and tourist places during the long weekend. This surge ( Cont. on page - 6 )



## AI to operate 36 new flights to Europe, N America

**MUMBAI:** Air India will operate 36 additional flights to destinations in Europe and North America between March 19 and 28 amid the West Asia conflict impacting travel plans of people.

The airline said it would operate additional services on Delhi-London (Heathrow), Mumbai-London (Heathrow), Delhi-Frankfurt, Delhi-Zurich and Delhi-Toronto routes. "These flights will add 10,012 seats on the five routes, further boosting capacity

and providing more choice to travellers when travel options remain limited," it said.

These services follow Air India's recently announced capacity augmentation with 78 additional flights on nine routes. The West Asia conflict involving the US, Israel and Iran that started on Feb 28 has disrupted flight operations, and airlines have curtailed their services in the region.

IndiGo, meanwhile, it will operate 252 weekly flights to and from West Asia between March 16 and March 28. The airline's services include about 126 weekly flights to and from Saudi Arabia, 98 to and from the UAE and 28 to and from Oman during the period.

## IndiGo inks deal with Adani Airports to reward BluChip duty-free shoppers

**MUMBAI:** IndiGo has announced a partnership with Adani Group's Adani Airport Holdings (AAHL) to allow its loyalty programme members to earn IndiGo BluChips on duty-free purchases at select airports in India aimed to make airport shopping more convenient for trav-

ellers while offering rewards for their spending.

"The partnership will integrate IndiGo BluChip with the Adani platform, enabling travellers to pre-order duty-free products and collect them at the airport," both the companies announced here.

( Cont. on page - 2 )

### HOLIDAY NOTICE

Saturday, March 21, being Eid Day our offices will remain closed on that day.





## Tackle joblessness

The 2026 State of Working India report released by Azim Premji University is disturbing to say the least. According to the report, as high as 40pc of young graduates in India are unemployed, a figure that has remained largely unchanged for four decades. The report shows that unemployment among graduates aged 15 to 29 remains persistently high, with about 40pc of those aged 15 to 25 and 20pc of those aged 25 to 29 unable to find work. The report further states that graduate unemployment has "remained more or less unchanged between 35 and 40pc" from 1983 to 2023, even as the number of graduates has increased significantly over time.

Even those employed, face a shaky future as the job is not stable.

Tracking young graduate men over a year, the report finds that about half can find some form of work, but very few secure permanent salaried employment. "Among graduates, only about seven per cent find permanent salaried employment within a year," the report states.

"These numbers reflect a rather worrying scenario, where even with waiting for a year, finding a secure white-collar job is an extremely rare event," the report, titled "Youth in the labour market: Pathways from learning to earning", said. The previous edition, published in 2023, focused on social identities and labour market outcomes.

This glaring gap between education and employment comes at a critical time for the country. India's demographic advantage, driven by its large young population, is nearing its peak. The report estimates that the share of the working-age population will begin to decline after 2030. With around 367 million people aged 15 to 29, the ability to create enough jobs in the coming years will determine whether this demographic dividend translates into an economic one. Again, this happens at a time when India's economy is booming. "The extent to which this large, increasingly educated and aspirational cohort is productively absorbed into the labour market will determine whether this massive... demographic dividend translates into an economic dividend," the report notes. At the same time, financial pressures are affecting education patterns. The share of young men in education has declined from 38pc in 2017 to 34pc in late 2024, and a growing number are leaving studies to support their families. The report highlights that this reason increased from 58pc in 2017 to 72pc in 2023 among young men.

True, cheap temporary jobs are available for non-graduates in fields such as delivery boys, hotel boys, mall assistants and security guards. In the period after COVID, employment increased, but much of this growth was concentrated in agriculture. Of the 83 million jobs added between 2021-22 and 2023-24, about 40 million were in agriculture -- there is a trend reversal. Taken together, the findings point to a widening gap between rising education levels and limited job opportunities at a time when the country's demographic window is beginning to narrow.

Nevertheless, Rosa Abraham, the lead author of the report, says: So we are not at the point that education doesn't do anything; it doesn't do as much as what it did earlier. It will take time to see a discouraging effect, if at all there is one".



## UK confers Knighthood on Tata Group Chairman Chandrasekaran

**NEW DELHI:** Tata Group Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran has been conferred with honorary Knighthood by the British government in recognition of his stellar contribution to strengthening India-UK business relations.

He was presented the "Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (KBE)" at an event at the British high commissioner's residence here.

Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India, described Chandrasekaran as "an amazing



friend of the UK and an iconic figure in India's corporate world". The honour was conferred on Chandrasekaran by Cameron on behalf of the British King Charles III.

"The honorary knighthood is testament to his impact on global business

and his many contributions to advancing growth opportunities between the UK and India," the high commissioner said at the event.

Cameron said Chandrasekaran's leadership "embodies" entrepreneurial spirit, foresight, vision and aspiration, which has helped to take UK-India business relations to the next level.

In his remarks, Chandrasekaran said the honour is not only his alone but it also belongs equally to "all colleagues in the Tata Group".

## Govt asks airlines not to levy extra charges for 60pc seats in flights

( Cont. from page - 1 ) kits getting damaged during trips, the ministry said: "Carriage of sports equipment and musical instruments to be facilitated in a transparent and passenger-friendly manner, subject to applicable safety and operational regulations."

Emphasising passenger rights, the government called for strict compliance with existing norms, particularly in cases of delays, cancellations and denied boarding. Airlines must prominently display passenger rights across web-

sites, mobile applications, booking platforms and airport counters and communicate entitlements clearly, including in regional languages. Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said important directions have been issued to fur-

ther strengthen passenger facilitation measures. "60 Pc seats free of charge, assured seating together for families and clear, transparent norms for carriage of sports equipment, musical instruments and pets," he said

## IndiGo inks deal with Adani Airports to reward BluChip...

( Cont. from page - 1 ) IndiGo has announced that its IndiGo BluChip members can now earn rewards on duty-free shopping at select airports managed by AAHL. Indi-

Go customers can log in through a dedicated portal, link their membership ID and receive their earnings within 24 to 48 hours based on their spending.

Currently, participating duty-free stores are at Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Mangaluru and Lucknow airports. The programme will soon expand to Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati and the Navi Mumbai International Airport.

Under the partnership, IndiGo BluChip members will earn five BluChips for every Rs 100 spent on duty-free products booked through the Adani platform. IndiGo BluChip is IndiGo's loyalty programme which rewards frequent flyers. Under this programme, members earn BluChips on every flight based on their spending.

## Global air travel to double...

( Cont. from page - 1 ) mand report gives governments, industry, and energy suppliers a robust basis for long term planning. It underscores the need for policy frameworks to support key success enablers such as efficient infrastructure development, market access facilitation, regulatory harmonisation and an effective clean energy transition," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

The pace of growth will be uneven across regions, reflecting differences in demographics, market maturity, economic development, and connectivity potential. Under the mid-

range scenario, Asia Pacific and Africa are expected to be the fastest growing regions over 2024-2050, with CAGRs of 3.8pc and 3.6pc respectively.

Europe and North America are projected to grow more slowly, at 2.5pc and 2.8pc. The LTDP identifies the fastest growing markets as intra Africa (4.9pc), Africa-Asia Pacific (4.5pc), Asia Pacific-Middle East (3.9pc), intra-Asia Pacific (3.9pc) and Africa-North America (3.8pc), highlighting the importance of investment in aviation infrastructure and regulatory frameworks in developing regions.

### LIPSYNCH

*"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity.  
The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty."*

--- Winston Churchill

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# Govt identifies 22 vessels for safe Hormuz passage

**NEW DELHI:** The government has identified 22 India-bound vessels in the Persian Gulf region for evacuation and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Of these, 20 have been classified as critical to India's energy security.

These 20 vessels are carrying approximately 215,000 metric tonnes of liquefied natural gas (LNG), 321,000 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), and 1,676,000 tonnes of crude oil. The ships include both Indian-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels, but all are bound for India.

Co-ordination is ongoing among multiple agencies, including the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), the Directorate of Naval Operations (DNO), the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG), and the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), to facilitate the evacuation of vessels from the Persian Gulf.



Meanwhile, Additional Secretary at the (MoPSW), Rajesh Kumar Sinha, said 611 individuals aboard 22 Indian-flagged vessels operating in and around the Strait of Hormuz, including those positioned west of the key shipping routes, are safe. This comes as two Indian-flagged LPG carriers safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz and arrived in India on March 16 and 17. Carriers Shivalik and Nanda Devi, carrying approximately 92,712 metric tonnes of LPG, safely passed the Strait last week under the Indian Navy escort. Shivalik has been partially discharged at Gujarat's Mundra and is awaiting the start of ship-to-ship operations. Nanda Devi, on the other hand, has doubled-banked for ship-to-ship transfer at

Gujarat's Vadinar, with cargo operations expected to begin soon.

Crude oil carrier Jag Laadki, which the Indian Navy also escorted, reached Mundra Port last week. It was carrying approximately 81,000 metric tonnes of Murban crude oil from the UAE. The vessel narrowly escaped damage when the Fujairah terminal, where it was loading, on the eastern coast of the UAE, came under attack.

**FOREX RATES**  
As on 19th March 2026 (In rupees)

Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	92.02	93.25
British Pound	122.85	124.66
Euro	105.79	108.05
Japanese Yen	57.91	58.84
Swiss Franc (CHF)	116.5	119.12
Canadian Dollar	66.9	68.43
Australian Dollar	65.22	66.67
Norwegian Krone	9.49	9.77
Swedish Krona	9.8	10.08
New Zealand Dollar	53.65	54.87
Hong Kong Dollar	11.59	11.95
Kuwaiti Dinar	290.8926	308.4052
Singapore Dollar	71.76	73.42
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.19	24.96
U A E Dirham	24.79	25.51



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- Day 6 : Airport Transfer • Tour Ends

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# GULF FAQs

## Stranded abroad during leave? what UAE law says about your job security?

**If I go on leave and get stranded abroad amid the current regional escalation, can my employer fire me? Or is there provision for me to demand work from home despite our organisation not having such an option? Can you explain my legal rights?**

Pursuant to your queries, the provisions of the UAE employment law and the subsequent cabinet resolutions are applicable. In the UAE, if an employee does not return to work after his/her leave ends and has no valid reason for not returning to work, an employer does not have to pay an employee a salary for the days an employee is absent from work after the leave of an employee ends. This is in accordance with Article 34 of the Federal Decree by Law No. 33 of 2021 Concerning Regulating Labour Relations (the "Employment Law").

"The employee who does not return directly to work without a legitimate

reason after the end of his leave shall not be entitled to his salary for the period of absence following the end of the leave." Further, the Employment Law sets out the circumstances in which an employer may dismiss an employee without a notice period. In particular, Article 44 of the Employment Law provides



that:

"The Employer may dismiss the employee without warning, after conducting a written investigation with him, and the decision to dismiss shall be in writing and reasoned and the em-

ployer or his representative shall hand it to the employee" in certain specified cases. Among these cases, Article 44(8) of the 44(8) of the of the Employment Law states: "If the worker is absent from work without a legitimate reason or an excuse acceptable to the employer for more than 20 non-consecutive days,

or more than seven consecutive days."

Therefore, an employer may terminate the employment of an employee without a notice period if an employee is absent for the specified duration with-

out a legitimate reason. However, if an employee is stranded abroad due to extraordinary circumstances such as geopolitical developments, travel restrictions or suspension of flights, such circumstances may constitute a legitimate reason for being absent from work.

In such cases, dismissal solely based on absence from work may be challenged by an employee if an employee can demonstrate that the absence was unavoidable and properly communicated to an employer. With respect to remote working arrangements, the employment law is silent on the demand for work-from-home arrangements where an employer has not implemented such a policy.

However, in adverse circumstances the UAE Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization or any other relevant government

authority in the UAE issues notifications / advisories for remote working which apply to all employers. Nevertheless, if an employee remains willing and able to perform their duties and the nature of the role allows the work to be carried out remotely, an employee may request temporary remote work as a practical arrangement during the period they are unable to return to the UAE.

In accordance with the aforesaid provisions of the law, in the event you are stranded abroad due to circumstances beyond your control, it is advisable to promptly notify your employer; provide supporting documentation such as travel advisories issued by a relevant government authority or cancelled flights where applicable; and arrange working arrangements with your employer.

Applicable law: The Federal Decree by Law No. (33) of 2021 Concerning Regulating Labour Relations.

## Who will pay fine if the visa is not processed in time?

**I entered the UAE on a visit visa and joined a company after accepting a formal offer letter. However, the company failed to process my residency visa and did not inform me about it. As a result, I incurred a substantial overstay fine and was also marked as absconding. I am a law-abiding individual and have never faced such a situation before. I am unable to pay such a large fine. Kindly advise me on how I can regularise my residency status and request a waiver or reduction of the fine?**

An individual must exit the UAE once his/her vis-

it visa expires, unless they have legally obtained a valid UAE residency permit under the prevailing UAE law and its regulations under Article 5 (5) of the Federal Law by Decree No. (29) of 2021 Concerning Entry and Residence of Foreigners. "Leave the state upon the expiry or cancellation of his visa unless he has obtained a residence permit in the State in accordance with the provisions of this Law by Decree and its Executive Regulation." The Federal Authority for Identity, Nationality, Customs and Ports Security (ICP) may impose administrative fines for overstaying if an individual is found to

be in violation of residency requirements. This is in accordance with Article 64 of the Cabinet Resolution No. (65) of 2022 issuing the Executive Regulations of Federal Law by Decree No. (29) of 2021 Concerning Entry and Residence of Foreigners.

"The ICP shall collect a fine of not more than Dh100 for each day in which the foreigner resides in the state illegally and the calculation of the fine starts from the day following." Since your UAE residency visa was not processed due to the prospective employer's failure, you may approach the General Directorate of

Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) or the ICP and submit your offer letter,



employment documents and any correspondence showing your attempts to process an employment visa sponsored by your prospective employer. The authorities have the dis-

cretion to reduce or waive overstay fines if it is established that your overstay in

the UAE was not intentional and occurred due to the fault of a prospective employer. However, you are responsible for exiting the UAE prior to the expiry of your visit visa.

# Govt to build modern jetty at Gateway of India to help tourists

**MUMBAI:** The Maharashtra government is planning to develop a modern jetty at the Gateway of India in view of the heavy tourist footfall at the landmark monument, Ports Development Minister Nitesh Rane has said.

The state has also taken up with the Centre issues related to permissions, tariff structure and safety concerning Jetty No. 5 at the iconic waterfront in south Mumbai, Rane stated in the legislative assembly.

He was replying to a calling attention notice raised by member Ashok Patil.

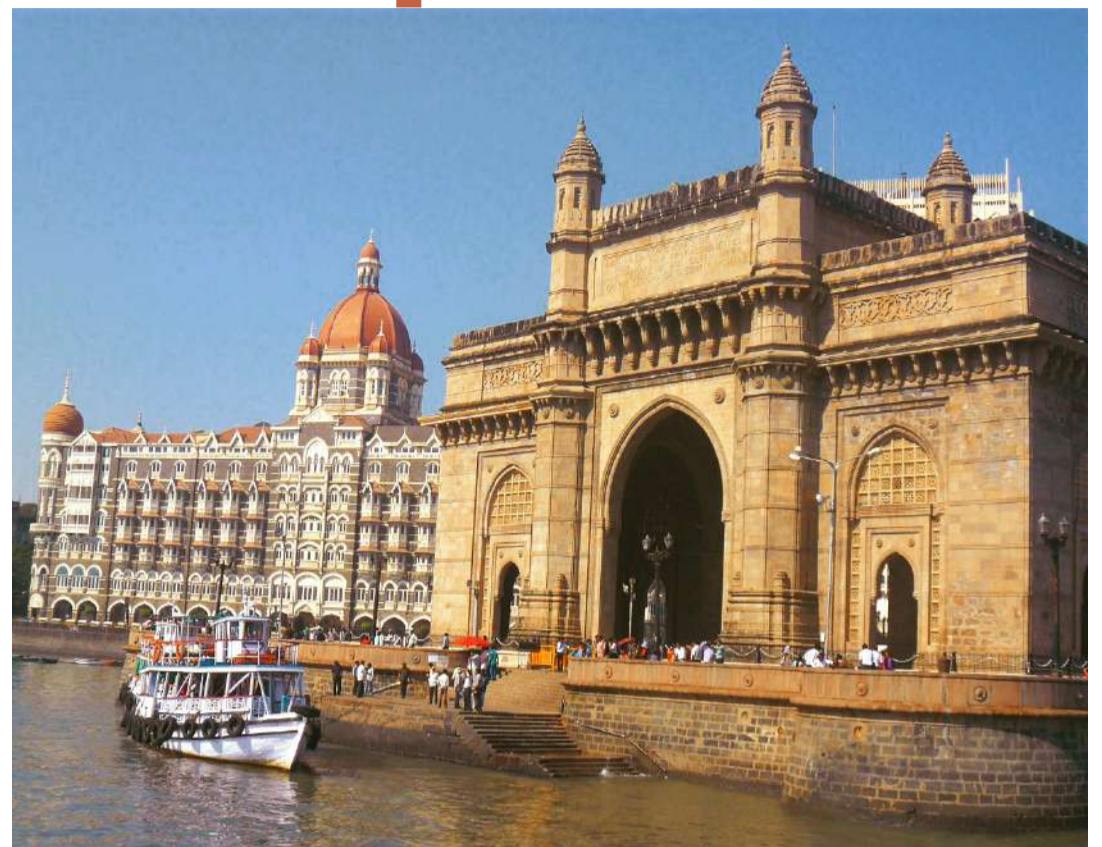
Legislators Varun Sardesai and Prakash Surve participated in the discussion.

Rane said the government aims to develop Mumbai into an international-standard tourism and maritime hub by strengthening jetty management, introducing modern boats and building marinas and passenger amenities.

Noting that the Gateway of India area witnesses heavy congestion due to high passenger movement, he said new jetty infrastructure is being planned to ease crowding and improve safety. There are five

jetties at the site, of which Jetty Nos. 1 to 4 are used by general passengers and are managed by the Mumbai Port Trust. Jetty No. 5 is proposed to be used primarily for private and larger yachts, which is expected to reduce congestion at the other jetties, he said.

Rane said there has been public dissatisfaction over the existing revenue-sharing model at Jetty No. 5, where



a majority share goes to a private entity. The state wrote to the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on Feb 16, seeking a review of the tariff structure. On improving the income of fishermen

and boat operators, the minister said the government is encouraging a shift from traditional wooden boats to modern vessels, facilitating bank loans for it, and also promoting the use of electric boats.

## Vikram Doraiswami named new Indian ambassador to China

**NEW DELHI:** India on Thursday named veteran diplomat Vikram Doraiswami, currently the high commissioner to the United Kingdom, as its next ambassador to China at a time when the two countries are engaged in the process of rebuilding their relationship.

Doraiswami is perceived as one of the ablest senior diplomats who has served as the envoy to Uzbekistan, South Korea and Bangladesh before he was sent to London in Sept 2022.

In Beijing, Doraiswami will replace Pradeep Rawat, who has played a key role in the normalisation of India-China ties since the two sides ended a more than four-year standoff in Ladakh sector of the LAC in October 2023. Since then, the two sides have revived the Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage and resumed direct flights, while India has eased restrictions on both visas and direct investments from China.

Doraiswami's first foreign posting was to the then Indian high commission in Hong Kong in



May 1994, when the territory was still controlled by the British. It was here that he learnt Mandarin at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and he was subsequently posted to the Indian mission in Beijing, where he served for nearly four years from Sept 1996. In addition to his foreign assignments, Doraiswami – a journalist-turned-diplomat – was deputed to the Prime Minister's Office in 2002 and served as private secretary to late prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Doraiswami also served in India's permanent mission to the UN in New York in 2006 and as consul general in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2009, before being appointed as the envoy to Uzbekistan in 2014. He was post-

ed as the ambassador to South Korea in 2015 and then went on to serve as the high commissioner to Bangladesh during 2020-2022. He became high commissioner to the UK in September 2022.

## Crude prices surge, stocks sink as Iran warns of energy strikes

**HONG KONG:** Oil surged more than five percent on Thursday and stocks sank as Iran carried out a series of attacks on Gulf energy facilities and warned of more following a strike on one of its key gas fields, while warnings of higher US inflation also soured the mood. After spending much of Wednesday hovering around \$100, crude soared as Tehran threatened to target regional installations in reply

## Karnataka's long weekend to boost tourism

(Cont. from page - 1) While exams are still underway for some, others in demand has resulted in a sharp rise in ticket fares, with prices for some destinations almost doubling. Travel operators say long weekends like this usually encourage short- and medium-distance trips and popular circuits in north and coastal Karnataka are already seeing increased interest, particularly among families and young groups.

While exams are still underway for some, others who have completed them are ready to make the most of the holiday break. However, the summer heat is also playing a role in shaping travel patterns. While there are several attractive tourist destinations across coastal and north Karnataka, the weather during the day is not very favourable for sightseeing.

to what it said was an Israeli hit on a site serving its massive South Pars field, which it shares with Qatar. Abu Dhabi later shut down operations at a gas facility due to falling debris from missile interceptions, while Qatar's RasLaffan site was hit, with QatarEnergy saying emergency teams had been "deployed immediately to contain the resulting fires".

Iranian state TV later said that a missile struck

the site again, which QatarEnergy said caused extensive damage.

Qatar has ordered several Iranian diplomats to leave the country.

Markets have been hammered since the US-Israel attacks on Iran on Feb 28 that sparked a wave of retaliatory strikes across the Gulf by Tehran.

West Asia conflict: Both sides ratchet up attacks on energy facilities as oil prices surge.