MAKKAH: Arab and Muslim leaders began gathering in the holy city of Makkah yesterday for three summits, as host Saudi Arabia seeks to rally support against Iran after a series of attacks that have sparked fears of a regional conflagration. On the eve of the talks, Riyadh blasted what it called Iranian “interference” across the region and demanded “firmness” over attacks on Gulf oil tankers and pipelines.

That call came just hours after hawkish US National Security Advisor John Bolton said Iran was almost certainly behind the sabotage of four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, off the UAE coast. Iran-aligned Yemeni rebels meanwhile have stepped up drone attacks on the kingdom - one of which resulted in the temporary shutdown of a major oil pipeline.

Saudi Arabia, a staunch US ally, geared up to host leaders from across the Arab and Muslim world for emergency Gulf and Arab summits and a meeting of heads of state from Islamic nations. Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Sudan's new military leader Gen Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-

The vessels were attacked using “naval mines” and at least one of them was damaged in a mysterious sabotage attack off the coast of the emirate of Fujairah on May 12. The US defense department has escalated its war of words between Tehran and Washington, as the US military buildup in the region has grown since US President Donald Trump's administration reimposed sanctions against Iran after Washington unilaterally pulled out of a multi-lateral 2015 nuclear accord signed with the Islamic republic. But Trump appeared to soften his hawkish tone towards Tehran, saying during a visit to Japan on Monday that his government does not seek “regime change”.

Qatar PM in Saudi on first visit since Gulf crisis

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Thani also arrived in Jeddah yesterday, Doha's highest-ranking official to visit the kingdom since the start of a two-year-old Saudi-led boycott. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have enforced the economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar since June 2017, including bans on shipping, trade, direct flights, overflight and land crossings. The alliance accuses Doha of supporting Islamist movements and backing Iran - claims Qatar rejects. Large banners and flags decorated the streets of Makkah, Islam's holiest city, to welcome the leaders. The summits coincide with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah coincides with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when