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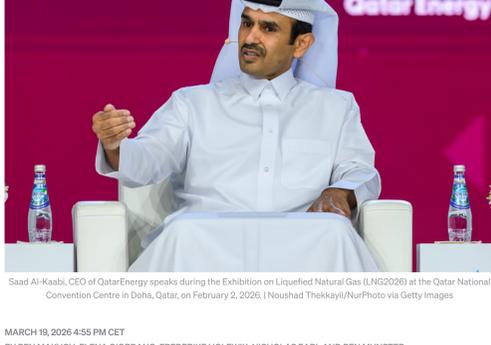
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# Italy, Belgium set to lose gas supply after world's biggest LNG plant bombed

Damage to a major gas production facility could take five years to repair, QatarEnergy's CEO told Reuters.

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Saad Al-Kaabi, CEO of QatarEnergy speaks during the Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG2020) at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar, on February 2, 2020. | Noushad Thekkayil/NurPhoto via Getty Images

MARCH 19, 2025 4:55 PM CET BY BEN MAKUCH, ELENA GIORDANO, FREDERIKE HOLEWIK, NICHOLAS EARL AND BEN MUNSTER

BRUSSELS — Europe's insistence that it doesn't face an energy supply crisis took a blow Thursday when Qatar warned it would have to scrap contracts with Italy and Belgium following a massive Iranian attack.

QatarEnergy CEO Saad al-Kaabi **told Reuters on Thursday** it would have to cancel long-term liquefied natural gas supply contracts for up to five years after an Iranian ballistic missile knocked out a significant share of its production capacity in the Persian Gulf.

The state-owned company, which produces a fifth of the world's LNG, said the damage could impact deliveries to Italy, Belgium, South Korea and China.

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"These are long-term contracts that we have to declare force majeure," al-Kaabi said.

On Wednesday Iran bombed the Ras Laffan gas plant in Qatar. The ballistic missile attack, which followed an **Israeli attack** on Iran's South Pars gas field, caused "sizeable fires and extensive further damage," QatarEnergy **said** in a post on X.

The strikes damaged two of Qatar's 14 liquefied natural gas trains and one gas-to-liquids facility, QatarEnergy said Thursday. The outages will remove around 12.8 million tons of LNG annually from the market, roughly 17 percent of Qatar's total export capacity and around 3 percent of global supply, for an estimated three to five years.

The strikes mark a major escalation in regional tensions. Qatar's LNG plant had already been offline following a previous drone strike, but the latest damage is expected to significantly prolong the disruption.

Gas markets reacted sharply on Thursday, with European futures jumping as much as 35 percent to more than double pre-conflict levels, underscoring the risk of a prolonged supply shock.

The outage leaves major buyers in Europe and Asia scrambling to replace lost volumes, raising concerns over energy security and the potential for sustained price pressure as competition for alternative LNG cargoes intensifies.

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## Nothing to see here

Earlier on Thursday German Energy Minister Katherina Reiche had downplayed the impact of the war, saying: "What we in Europe don't have is a physical bottleneck." She insisted the EU's gas supplies are still flowing from Norway, the U.S., Kazakhstan and other countries.

But Reiche said while she doesn't believe the current situation is as serious as the 2022 shock following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, "the current situation is also causing us concern," and that it's critical for Europe to continue to "monitor this crisis and make careful decisions."

Her comments came as EU leaders met for high-level talks in Brussels on Thursday, with energy one of the top issues.

In 2022 Germany depended on Russia for more than half of its gas, but now relies on Norway and the Netherlands for the majority, importing some LNG from the U.S. It is not dependent on Qatari LNG.

Other EU countries including Poland, Italy and Belgium depend on the Middle East country for a larger percentages of their LNG.

Poland said Thursday its gas supplies "are secured," adding Qatari LNG only accounts for 10 percent of the country's total gas supply. "[T]his volume can be gradually supplemented with supplies from other sources, if necessary," said Grzegorz Laguna, a spokesperson for Poland's Ministry of Energy.

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"Deliveries for March are being made, and there is currently no information indicating any significant risks to meeting current demand for natural gas, including the continued restrictions on supplies from Qatar," he added.

The U.K. government and regulators also played down fears of a supply shock. "The U.K. has very strong energy reserves from a diverse range of sources," said Energy Minister Michael Shanks on Tuesday. But the country has just two days' worth of gas supplies currently in storage, **according to reports** based on National Gas data.

U.K. Green Party leader Zack Polanski has demanded the government freeze bills in July, when the cap is set to jump hundreds of pounds. Chancellor Rachel Reeves insists support should be "targeted" **only at the poorest families**, wanting to avoid a rerun of the eye-watering sums spent by the last government to protect all households and businesses after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

India and China's reliance on disrupted Middle East gas supplies has already caused price hikes and questions about **European gas reserves**.

"Geopolitics continue shaping gas and LNG markets, and despite the industry's large scale, it lacks flexibility to absorb major disruptions, creating market volatility," said Kristy Kenzie, head of LNG strategy and market development at Wood Mackenzie. "How the industry responds to this event will vary, but we expect buyers to prioritise LNG supply security with a renewed focus on diversity."

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