

## Iran holds air exercises, launches ships

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BANDAR ABBAS, Iran, June 1 (UPI) -- The Iranian air force has launched a large military exercise dubbed "Thunder 88" over its regional waters, official media indicated Monday.

Iranian TV said the Air Force carried out maneuvers using various types of combat aircraft, a move that coincided with the Defense Ministry's launching of three new submarines and 18 speedboats at the port of Bandar Abbas, the Kuwait news agency KUNA reported.

Officials said the exercises are meant to enhance the Iranian Air Force's capabilities and to train them to safeguard navy ships.

Iran's Mehr news agency said the Bandar Abbas ceremony was attended by Army Commander Ataollah Salehi and Defense Minister Mostafa-Mohammad Najjar, KUNA reported.