

HUNGER CRISIS

Emaciated children seen at Gaza hospitals

REUTERS, Rafah

Two Palestinian toddlers with sunken eyes and emaciated faces, one in a yellow cardigan and the other in a striped top, were lying side by side on a bed in a Gaza clinic, their thin, bony legs protruding from diapers that looked too big for them.

This was the scene on Monday at Al-Awda health centre in Rafah, southern Gaza, where nurse Daa Al-Shaer said children suffering from malnutrition and from a range of diseases were arriving in unprecedented numbers.

"We will face a large number of patients who suffer from this, which is malnutrition," she said.

The toddler in the yellow cardigan, Ahmed Qannan, weighed 6 kg (13.2 lb), half of his pre-war body weight, according to his aunt, Israa Kalakh, who was by his side. "His situation worsens each day. God protect us from what is coming," she told Reuters.



Gaza's Health Ministry said on Sunday that 15 children had died of malnutrition or dehydration at Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahiya, northern Gaza, the part of the enclave where the lack of food is most extreme.

"The unofficial numbers can unfortunately be expected to be higher," said World Health Organization spokesperson Christian Lindmeier.

Reuters obtained video filmed on Saturday at Kamal Adwan, showing a woman, Anwar Abdulnabi, weeping over the body of her daughter Mila, a toddler, who had just died in her bed.

"My daughter, my beautiful daughter, my gentle daughter has passed away," cried Abdulnabi. She later said through her tears that Mila had been suffering from calcium and potassium deficiencies.



Palestinian children wait to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen amid shortages of food supplies in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

No Indian troops in Maldives after May 10

President Muizzu says after military deal with China

AGENCIES

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu yesterday declared that Indian military personnel will not be present in the island nation after May 10.

"There will be no Indian troops in the country come May 10. Not in uniform and not in civilian clothing. The Indian military will not be residing in this country in any form of clothing. I state this with confidence," he said, on a day when his country signed an



agreement with China to receive free military aid, reports NDTV.

The Maldives has signed the "military assistance" deal with China after ordering Indian troops deployed in the small but strategically placed archipelago to leave, officials said yesterday.

Some 89 Indian military personnel in the country will be gone by May 10 after having been previously ordered out by pro-China President Mohamed Muizzu, who came to power

last year on an anti-Indian platform.

The Maldivian defence ministry said they signed an "agreement on China's provision of military assistance" with Beijing late Monday, saying the agreement was "gratis", or without payment or charge, but giving no further details.

The defence ministry said the deal was to foster "stronger bilateral ties", in a post on social media platform X.

India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean and its influence in the Maldives, a chain of 1,192 tiny coral islands stretching around 800 kilometres (500 miles) across the equator, as well as in neighbouring Sri Lanka.

Iran executed 834 people last year

Highest since 2015, says rights groups

AFP, Paris

Iran executed at least 834 people last year, the highest number since 2015, as capital punishment in the Islamic republic surged to a "staggering" level, human rights groups said yesterday. The number of executions, which Iran has always carried out by hanging in recent years, was up some 43 percent on 2022. It marked only the second time in two decades that more than 800 executions were recorded in a year, after 972 executions in 2015, Norway-based Iran Human Rights (IHR) and Paris-based Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM) said in the joint report. The groups accused Iran of using the death penalty to spread fear during its crackdown on protests sparked by the September 2022 death in police custody of Mahsa Amini. "Instilling societal fear is the regime's only way to hold on to power, and the death penalty is its most important instrument," said IHR director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam in the report, which described the figure of 834 as a "staggering total". Iran has executed nine men in cases linked to attacks on security forces during the 2022 protests — two in 2022, six in 2023 and one so far in 2024 — according to the rights groups.

WORLD'S RICHEST MAN

Bezos dethrones Musk

AFP, Washington



Amazon founder Jeff Bezos took back his spot as the world's richest man on Monday, dethroning Elon Musk on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Bezos' net worth stands at USD200 billion,

according to the tracker, surpassing the Tesla chief's USD198 billion. Musk, who also heads X (formerly Twitter) and SpaceX, has seen his riches fall by more than USD30 billion. Bezos, who no longer runs Amazon, has meanwhile benefited from the e-commerce giant's rising stock price. Even after recently selling off USD8.5 billion in stocks he remains the company's largest shareholder.

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