

## SOUTH LEBANON Israeli strike kills Hezbollah commander UN urges halt to fighting

REUTERS, Beirut

An Israeli strike on southern Lebanon early yesterday killed a field commander in the heavily-armed Lebanese group Hezbollah, as the United Nations warned that shelling was spreading and urged a halt to the violence.

Hezbollah and the Israeli military have been exchanging fire across Lebanon's southern frontier in parallel with the Gaza offensive.

Early yesterday, Israeli fighter jets hit the village of al Sultaniyah and killed a field commander in Hezbollah's elite Radwan units and two others, Israeli military and Lebanese security sources said.

The Israeli military identified the commander as Ali Ahmed Hassin, and said he was responsible for executing attacks against Israelis.



Palestinians walk past damaged buildings in Khan Yunis yesterday after Israel pulled its ground forces out of the southern Gaza Strip, six months into the devastating offensive that began on October 7. PHOTO: AFP

## Saudi crown prince meets Pak premier Stresses India-Pakistan dialogue

REUTERS, Islamabad

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said dialogue was needed to resolve heightened friction between arch rivals Pakistan and India during a meeting in Riyadh with visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Sharif was making his first overseas visit since winning power in elections in February. He met with bin Salman on Sunday.

"The two sides stressed the importance of dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure peace and stability in the region," a joint statement released by Pakistan's foreign office and the Saudi government said.

The disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir is claimed in full, though ruled in part by both India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947.

Relations between India and Pakistan have worsened since a 2019 bombing of an Indian military convoy in Kashmir was traced to Pakistan-based militants.

## 'It smells like death'

Says a Palestinian mother of four as thousands return to south Gaza after Israel pulled out troops

AFP, Khan Yunis

"It smells like death," said Maha Thaer, a mother of four, as she returned to the devastated southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis on Sunday, after Israeli troops withdrew.

"We don't have a city anymore -- only rubble. There is absolutely nothing left. I could not stop myself crying as I walked through the streets," the 38-year-old told AFP.

"All the streets have been bulldozed. And the smell... I watched people digging and bringing out the bodies," said Thaer, whose home was partially destroyed.



**Much of the area is now in ruins after months of bombardment and heavy fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas.**

Soon after the Israeli army said its troops were pulling out, people began to emerge into the devastated landscape -- the residents of Khan Yunis returning to find what remained of their homes.

Nearly 400,000 people lived in Khan Yunis and its environs before October 7. Much of the area is now in ruins after months of bombardment and heavy fighting between Israeli troops and Hamas.

A straggle of men and boys riding donkey carts, bicycles and the odd pickup truck headed north out of Rafah in the far south of the Gaza Strip, where more than 1.5 million Palestinians had taken refuge from the relentless Israeli ground invasion and bombardment.

They passed the burned-out shell of the Al-Salam hospital, with almost all of the buildings around it razed to the ground.

Thaer, from the upmarket Hamad City district in the west of Khan Yunis, said she was "very shocked and sad".

"There were no walls or windows. Most of the towers were completely blown up," she said. Thaer said she would move back into her badly damaged apartment, "even though it is not suitable for living, but it is better than tents."

Her neighbours suffered a greater misfortune. "They found their homes destroyed and they don't know where they will go," she said.

Other Gazans carried a mattress on their heads in the hope they would still have four walls to put it in.

One of those who left Rafah on Sunday climbed on the top of a heap of rubble in Khan Yunis which once had been a home.

With everything around him in ruins, AFP photographs showed the man standing among smashed concrete and corrugated iron roofing. Not a single structure within sight appeared untouched by the offensive.

Other images showed large swathes of the city flattened.

## RUSSIA'S URALS Record floods triggered by melting snow

REUTERS, Moscow

Swiftly melting snow triggered the worst recorded flooding in Russia's Ural Mountains, forcing thousands of people to flee their homes as some of Europe's biggest rivers swelled to bursting point.

Russia declared an emergency in the Orenburg region near Kazakhstan after the Ural River, Europe's third longest river, swelled several metres in hours on Friday, and burst through a dam embankment in the city of Orsk.

The river, which rises in the Ural Mountains and flows into the Caspian Sea, reached dangerous levels yesterday in Orenburg, a city of 500,000 down river from Orsk, and the peak is expected there on April 10, Russia's emergency ministry said.

More than 10,400 homes across Russia have been flooded, with the Urals, Siberia, the Volga and central regions the worst hit, said the ministry.

"An increase in air temperatures, active snow melt and river openings are predicted," Russia's emergency ministry said. "More than 10,400 residential buildings remain flooded in 39 regions," it added.

## 'Unintentional' Maldivian ex-minister apologises after post linked to India flag sparks row

NDTV ONLINE

A suspended minister of the Maldives has apologised after her social media post against opposition party Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), which had a symbol resembling Ashok Chakra, sparked a row. "I would like to address a recent social media post of mine that has garnered attention and criticism. I extend my sincerest apologies for any confusion or offense caused by the content of my recent post," Mariyam Shiuna, who belongs to the same party as President of the Maldives, Mohamed Muizzu, posted on X yesterday. "It was brought to my attention that the image used in my response to the Maldivian opposition party MDP bore a resemblance to the Indian flag. I want to make it clear that this was entirely unintentional, and I sincerely regret any misunderstanding it may have caused," she added. "Maldives deeply value its relationship and, the mutual respect we share with India. In future I will be more vigilant in verifying the content I share to prevent such oversights," the former minister said. Shiuna's post had replaced a compass on an MDP poster with a symbol resembling the Ashok Chakra. The post came against the backdrop of diplomatic tensions between India and the Maldives after President Muizzu took over. The President has been insisting on the withdrawal of 80-odd Indian troops stationed in the island nation for humanitarian services. His tenure has also seen the Maldives' China outreach.

## CENSORSHIP CHARGE Brazil judge orders probe of Elon Musk

AFP, Rio De Janeiro

A Supreme Court judge in Brazil ordered an investigation Sunday of Elon Musk after the mogul criticized the magistrate and accused him of censorship for blocking social media accounts suspected of spreading disinformation. In an order seen by AFP, Judge Alexandre de Moraes accused the owner of X of "criminal instrumentalization" of the platform. The judge said "the social network X must refrain from disobeying judicial orders, including by reactivating an account that the Supreme Court ordered blocked."

Moraes threatened to punish the world's richest person with a fine equivalent to about \$20,000 for each reactivated account. In recent years Moraes has ordered the suspension of Twitter accounts suspected of spreading disinformation. "Social networks are not lands without laws," the judge wrote in capital letters in his order. Beginning Saturday evening, Musk took to X, the platform formerly known as Twitter which he purchased in 2022, to launch a series of attacks against Moraes. "This judge has brazenly and repeatedly betrayed the constitution and people of Brazil. He should resign or be impeached," the Tesla and SpaceX boss posted. As a result of Moraes threatening to impose massive fines and "cut off access" to the platform, "we will probably lose all revenue in Brazil and have to shut down our office there," Musk posted. "But principles matter more than profit," he said.



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1	966179 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 176,000 (One Hundred and Seventy Six) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Dhaka Division. (32 LSDs of 32 Upazilas)	08-April-2024; 22:00 PM 06-May-2024; 10:00 AM	213 08/04/2024
2	966180 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 184,000 (One Hundred and Eighty Four) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Chattogram Division. (64 LSDs of 64 Upazilas)	08-April-2024; 22:00 PM 06-May-2024; 10:00 AM	214 08/04/2024
3	966181 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 194,000 (One Hundred and Ninety Four) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Rajshahi Division. (31 LSDs of 31 Upazilas)	08-April-2024; 22:00 PM 06-May-2024; 10:00 AM	215 08/04/2024
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8	966192 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 178,000 (One Hundred and Seventy Eight) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Mymensingh Division. (18 LSDs of 18 Upazilas)	08-April-2024; 22:00 PM 06-May-2024; 10:00 AM	220 08/04/2024

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GD-598

**"It is quite obvious that our existing air defence capabilities in Ukraine are not sufficient and it is obvious to our partners."**  
Ukrainian President VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

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