

## Police clear pro-Palestinian camps at three US universities Detain 200 people

AFP, Boston

Police detained nearly 200 people at three US universities on Saturday as they cleared pro-Palestinian encampments, in the latest campus clashes triggered by protests over Israel's offensive in Gaza.

On the East Coast, police in Boston detained about 100 people while clearing a protest camp at Northeastern University, with social media posts showing security forces in riot gear and officers loading tents onto the back of a truck.

The action was taken after some protesters resorted to "virulent anti-Semitic slurs, including 'Kill the Jews,'" Northeastern University said in a statement on social media platform X.

On the opposite side of the country, Arizona State University police arrested 69 people for trespassing after the group set up an "unauthorised encampment" on campus.



Palestinian students take lessons inside a makeshift tent camp as schools remain closed due to Israel's military offensive, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## The world has failed Gaza Host Saudi tells global economic summit

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday said the international community has failed Gaza and reiterated its call for a Palestinian state at a global economic summit.

"The situation in Gaza obviously is a catastrophe by every measure — humanitarian, but also a complete failing of the existing political system to deal with that crisis," Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said during the first day of a Saudi-hosted World Economic Forum special meeting. Only "a credible, irreversible path to a Palestinian state" will prevent the world from confronting "this same situation two, three, four years down the line," he said.

## 'Fear is controlling us' Say displaced people in Rafah as Palestinians brace for Israeli invasion

AFP, Rafah

Palestinians in Rafah told AFP they were living in "constant terror" as Israel vows to push ahead with its planned assault on the south Gaza city flooded with displaced civilians.

Most of Gaza's population is sheltering in Rafah at the very south of the territory after fleeing Israeli bombardment elsewhere.

The Israeli army insists it will carry out a ground assault to eliminate Hamas, despite an international outcry and concern for the roughly 1.5 million Palestinians sheltering in Rafah, many in tents.

"We live in constant terror and fear of repeated displacement and invasion," said Nidaa Safi, 30, who fled Israeli strikes in the north and came to Rafah with her husband and children. "We think about it all day long,"

she said on Saturday.

Even before Israeli forces begin the expected assault, they have been carrying out devastating air strikes.

An overnight strike on a house in Rafah killed a four-month-old baby, her mother, father, and two brothers, relatives and neighbours told AFP.

Hospital officials in Rafah said more than a dozen people were killed during the night.

"Every day we hear news about a Rafah invasion and that it's a certain fact, on top of the bombardments we witness and hear," Safi said. "Fear is controlling us, we don't know how to think anymore."

Her family has now decided to leave for Deir al-Balah, in centre of the Gaza Strip. Safi said they hoped to "flee Rafah before they kill us."

## China to host Hamas, Fatah for Palestinian unity talks

REUTERS, Beijing

China will host Palestinian unity talks between Hamas and its rivals Fatah, the two groups and a Beijing-based diplomat said on Friday, a notable Chinese foray into Palestinian diplomacy amid the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas, which controls Gaza, is the group whose fighters stormed into Israeli towns on October 7. Israel has sworn to annihilate Hamas in an onslaught that has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians.

## Fighting in eastern Ukraine worsens

Top general says Kyiv's troops fall back in 3 places

REUTERS, Kyiv

Fighting in eastern Ukraine has worsened, with Kyiv's troops falling back to new positions in at least three places along the front, Ukraine's top general said yesterday. Oleksandr Syrskyi said on Telegram that his troops had taken up new positions west of the villages of Berdychi, Semenivka and Novomykhailivka in order to conserve their forces. Meanwhile, Russian officials yesterday threatened the West with a "severe" response in the event that frozen Russian assets are confiscated, promising "endless" legal challenges and tit-for-tat measures. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Russia would never cede territories seized from Ukraine in exchange for the return of the frozen assets. "Our motherland is not for sale," Zakharova wrote on the Telegram. "An Russian assets must remain untouched because otherwise there will be a severe response to Western thievery." The US and its allies prohibited transactions with Russia's central bank and blocked about \$300 billion of Russian assets in the West.

## INDIA ELECTION EC asks AAP to modify its poll campaign song

TNN, New Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has asked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to modify content of its polls campaign song to comply with Advertising Codes prescribed under Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 and ECI guidelines. The ECI has specifically objected to the phrase "jail ke jawaab me hum vote denge" and the visual of a mob holding a photo of Arvind Kejriwal behind bars, stating that it casts aspersions on the Judiciary and contravenes the provisions of ECI Guidelines and Rule 6(I)(g) of Programme and Advertising Codes. Meanwhile, the AAP claimed that the EC has imposed a ban on the party's campaign song, arguing that it portrays the BJP and central investigation agencies in a negative light.



People drive past a damaged building after a tornado hit Guangzhou, in southern China's Guangdong province yesterday. At least five people were killed and 33 injured after a strong tornado hit the mega city. PHOTO: AFP

## CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER Biden takes Trump to task

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden delivered an election-year roast on Saturday night at the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner as protesters outside criticized his support for Israel's war against Hamas.

Biden used the annual black-tie event to chide his Republican rival Donald Trump for immaturity, poke fun at his own advanced age and take on the Washington press corps.

"Yes, age is an issue. I'm a grown man, running against a 6-year-old," Biden joked.

Biden, 81, later added of former President Trump, 77: "Age is the only thing we have in common. My vice president actually endorses me."

Trump reacted to the event by calling it "really bad" in a post on his Truth Social platform. "Crooked Joe was an absolute disaster! Doesn't get much worse than this!" he said.

Demonstrators holding banners outside the gathering at the Washington Hilton chanted about

journalists' deaths in Gaza. Hundreds of protesters encouraged journalists to boycott the annual event and shouted down administration officials as they entered.

Biden avoided the large protests at the front of the hotel by arriving through a back entrance, where he was greeted by smaller groups of protesters calling for a ceasefire.

At the century-old event, often referred to as Washington's "nerd prom," hundreds of journalists, politicians and celebrities rubbed elbows in a massive banquet hall. It often features friendly jabs from the president in a closing speech that takes aim at reporters and other guests in the audience. Biden offered some advice to the press corps.

"I'm sincerely not asking you to take sides. I'm asking you to rise up to the seriousness of the moment. Move past the horse race numbers and the gotcha moments and the distractions, the sideshows that have come to dominate and sensationalize our politics, and focus on what's actually at stake," Biden said.

## Ireland looking to send asylum seekers back to UK: report

AFP, Dublin

Ireland is looking to amend the law to allow the return of asylum seekers to the United Kingdom, broadcaster RTE said yesterday after an influx over the border with Northern Ireland.

Dublin's Minister of Justice Helen McEntee, who visits London today, told a parliamentary committee this week that she estimates 80 percent of those applying for asylum in the republic came over the land border with Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak told Sky News it was evidence that London's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is acting as a deterrent.





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