

## LEBANON BORDER Iran warns Israel of 'obliterating' war

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday warned that "all Resistance Fronts", a grouping of Iran and its regional allies, would confront Israel if it attacks Lebanon.

The comment from Iran's mission to New York comes with fears of a wider regional war involving Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement. The two sides have engaged in near daily exchanges of fire since the offensive on Gaza began.

In a post on social media platform X, the Iranian mission said it "deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime's propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon".

But, it added, "should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an obliterating war will ensue. All options, incl. the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table."



Palestinians run for cover during an Israeli drone attack in western Rafah yesterday. Witnesses in the southern Gaza City reported dead and wounded after a new incursion by Israeli troops.

PHOTO: AFP

## US military destroys seven drones, vehicle in Yemen

AFP, Washington

American forces destroyed seven drones and a control station vehicle in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen over 24 hours, the US military said Friday.

The strikes were carried out because the drones and the vehicle "presented an imminent threat to US coalition forces, and merchant vessels in the region," the US Central Command said in a statement on social media platform X.

The Iran-backed Houthis have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023.

On Friday, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed responsibility for attacks on four vessels, including a "direct hit" on the Delonix tanker in the Red Sea after an operation involving a number of ballistic missiles.

# Thousands displaced as Israel pummels north Gaza

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Explosions, air strikes and gunfire rattled northern Gaza yesterday, the third day of an Israeli military operation that has uprooted tens of thousands of Palestinians and compounded what the UN called "unbearable" living conditions in the territory.

An AFP correspondent reported ongoing explosions from the Shujaiya area near Gaza City, with a resident saying bodies were visible on the streets.

Israel's military yesterday said its operations were continuing in Shujaiya where fighting "above and below the ground" left a "large number" of Hamas fighters dead.

A resurgence of fighting in the area comes months after Israel had declared the command structure of Hamas dismantled in northern Gaza.

Last Sunday Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the "intense phase" of the offensive was winding down after almost nine months, but experts see

a potentially prolonged next phase.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 37,834 people, also mostly civilians, according to data from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. It reported at least 69 deaths over the previous 48 hours.

▶ Israeli forces continue  
pounding Shujaiya area

▶ Death toll in enclave rises to  
37,834

Mohammed Harara, 30, said he and his family, young and old, felt as though they would become part of that toll.

He said they fled from their home in Shujaiya with nothing, "due to the bombardment by Israeli planes, tanks and drones" that they barely survived.

"We couldn't carry anything from the

house. We left the food, flour, canned goods, mattresses, and blankets," Harara said.

Israel's military on Friday said it was conducting "targeted raids" backed by air strikes against Hamas in the Shujaiya area.

The United Nations humanitarian agency OCHA estimated that "about 60,000 to 80,000 people were displaced" from the area this week.

AFP TV images yesterday showed men moving belongings on a donkey cart. Some people were pushed in wheelchairs. Children walked with backpacks past piles of dusty debris.

"I saw a tank in front of the Shuhada mosque firing" at targets, said Abdelkarreem al Mamluk. "There were martyrs in the street."

Elsewhere in the coastal territory, the civil defence agency yesterday said four bodies were pulled from an apartment after an Israeli strike in the central region.

Further south, in the Rafah area, witnesses reported dead and wounded after a new incursion by Israeli troops.

## Far right scents power as France braces for polls

AFP, Paris

A divided France braced for high-stakes parliamentary elections that could see the anti-immigrant and eurosceptic party of Marine Le Pen sweep to power in a historic first.

The candidates ended their frantic three-week campaigns at midnight Friday, with political activity banned until the first round of voting today.

Yesterday, voting began in France's overseas territories that span the globe, with residents of the tiny archipelago of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, located off the coast of Canada, casting their ballots from 1000 GMT.

They will be followed by voters in France's islands in the Caribbean and the South American territory of French Guiana. Voting will later start in territories in the Pacific and then in the Indian Ocean before it gets underway on the mainland today.

Most polls show that Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) is on course to win the largest number of seats in the 577-member National Assembly, parliament's lower house, although it remains unclear if the party will secure an outright majority.

## UK GENERAL ELECTION Sunak slams racist slur by Farage party campaigner

REUTERS, Stockton on Tees

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said on Friday evening he was hurt and angry that a supporter of Nigel Farage's right-wing Reform UK party had been recorded making a racial slur about him, saying it was too important for him not to speak out.

Britain's first ethnic-minority prime minister, Sunak was responding to comments broadcast by Channel 4 News, by a man named as Andrew Parker calling Sunak a "\*\*\*\*king Paki" - a British racial slur for people of South Asian descent.

Sunak, currently campaigning for a July 4 national election that his Conservative Party is tipped to lose after 14 years in power, was born in the southern English port city of Southampton to Hindu parents of Punjabi Indian descent.

"My two daughters have to see and hear Reform people who campaign for Nigel Farage calling me an effing Paki. It hurts and it makes me angry, and I think he has some questions to answer," Sunak told reporters. "I don't repeat those words lightly, I do so deliberately because this is too important not to call out clearly for what it is," he added.

## ACC probe into Benazir

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apply to the court for an executive magistrate to inspect Benazir's four flats in Gulshan. The unit intends to compile an inventory of the contents inside these flats, which are reportedly part of Benazir's vast wealth. The ACC will then seek the court's guidance on managing these assets.

The former IGP's family resided in these four flats, which are currently locked as the family is believed to be abroad.

As part of the investigation, the ACC summoned Benazir on June 6, and his wife and daughters on June 9 for questioning, but they did not appear. However, no travel bans have been issued against them by the ACC.

They were again summoned on

June 23 and 24. Instead of appearing, they submitted the written statement through their lawyer on June 20. According to various sources, the family remains abroad.

Along with allegations of corruption and substantial illegal wealth accumulation, Benazir is also accused of concealing his police identity in his passport. Despite holding high positions within the police force, he obtained a passport as a private employee, violating government employment and passport regulations.

This was discovered during a renewal attempt, which led the passport office to halt the process. At the time, Benazir was the director general of the Rapid Action Battalion,

and managed to resolve the issue using his influence.

The ACC has found seven passports belonging to Benazir and his family members.

On June 25, the commission interrogated eight officials from the passport office regarding Benazir's passport forgery.

On March 31, allegations of illegal wealth acquisition by Benazir and his family published in a national daily prompted the ACC to launch an investigation after verifying the claims.

It began the probe, led by Deputy Director Hafizul Islam, on April 22. The team also includes a three-member special investigation team from the ACC headquarters.

## Faisal bought savings certificate

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post of assistant tax commissioner, first bought a savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh in his name on November 12, 2020.

Four days later, a savings certificate worth Tk 5 lakh was bought in his wife Afsana Jesmin's name.

On January 10, 2021, two savings certificates worth Tk 10 lakh and Tk 20 lakh respectively were brought in his father-in-law Ahmed Ali's name.

Three weeks later, another savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh was purchased in the name of Faisal's relative, Khondaker Hafizur Rahman. Ten days later, he bought another saving certificate worth Tk 10 lakh in Rahman's name.

On February 2, 2021, Faisal bought another savings certificate worth Tk 30 lakh in the name of his brother Quazi Khalid Hasan.

On December 26, he bought

another savings certificate worth Tk 29 lakh in his brother-in-law Aftab Ali's name.

The Dhaka court directed the authorities concerned to freeze 87 bank accounts of Faisal, his wife and relatives.

It also asked them to ensure that the properties cannot be transferred to another part by Faisal and his family and that the money cannot be laundered.

The ACC informed the court that Faisal opened many bank accounts in his relatives' names to hide his illicit earnings. Among these, the ACC found specific transaction details for 87 bank accounts.

According to ACC documents, Faisal and his II relatives conducted transactions worth crores through 87 accounts across 19 banks and 1 non-bank financial institution.

The largest volume of transactions

amounting to Tk 11.57 crore was found in the account of his father-in-law, a retired bank officer. Ali has eight bank accounts.

Faisal's mother-in-law Momtaz Begum, a housewife, has ten bank accounts and transactions amounting to Tk 7 crore were spotted in these accounts.

Faisal has six accounts, which had transactions amounting to Tk 5.21 crore. His wife, who is also a housewife, has five bank accounts where transactions worth Tk 2.25 crore took place.

The ACC also found Faisal and his wife had bought a five-katha plot from the Jolshiri Housing Project in Khilgaon, while his wife bought another five-katha plot for Tk 75 lakh from East West Development. His father-in-law purchased a flat for Tk 1 crore from Rupayan Housing Estate in the city's Ramna area.

says 10,000 patients need evacuating from Gaza for treatment.

Wateridge said one of her own UNRWA colleagues, Abdullah, had to wait for two months before being evacuated in April. He was injured in a strike and had his legs amputated in late February.

Since then, he had spent weeks in the devastated Al Shifa hospital - once Gaza's largest medical complex - when it was under siege.

## 7 held after woman raped

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9:30pm, a group of six people, led by a man named Abul Kashem Suman, abducted them.

They took the two to a secluded area and demanded a ransom of Tk 70,000 from the husband. When he left to fetch the money, he contacted the National Emergency Service "999".

ACMuttajul said police immediately went to the area after receiving the information. The kidnappers kept changing their location, realising the police were after them.

Police finally rescued the victim around 4:00am but the kidnappers

fled.

After talking to the woman, the police learned that she had been raped.

Quoting the woman, the AC said four of the accused raped her.

Law enforcers conducted raids at various locations and arrested seven individuals yesterday, including the main accused, Suman.

During primary interrogation, Suman claimed that the woman was previously known to him.

The AC said the arrestees would be produced before a Dhaka court today with a remand petition.

## Vinicius comes alive for Brazil

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LaLiga Champions League double.

"Today I played a game that is compatible to the level of the player I am," Vinicius told reporters.

"I always say that I never play for myself, I play for the team, for Brazil, for my country. I always try to do the best things, but it's not always possible.

"Today I played a great match. I know I can improve a lot and I will do to help Brazil. We want to put Brazil in the place we deserve," he said.

After their disappointing opener, Brazil were initially struggling against another defensive opponent and

almost lost their composure when Lucas Paqueta badly missed a penalty halfway through the first half.

But instead, they were rescued by Vinicius, who took charge and was all over the field, striking twice and creating another chance that allowed Savinho to score, helping Brazil to go to the break with a comfortable 3-0 lead.

That was more than enough for a Brazil that were playing under huge pressure with the hopes of 215 million compatriots on their shoulders.

Dorival was pleased with Vinicius's exploits and said the best of Brazil is yet to come.

## Black money holders

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road to kleptocracy,"

Iftekharuzzaman added. The provision is unethical and insulting to honest taxpayers, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

"I don't know who will benefit from such a move. But certainly, they are powerful and they are people in high positions. The interest of the country has certainly not been considered here."

## Panama court acquits 28 in 'Panama Papers' trial

AFP, Panama City

A Panamanian court on Friday acquitted 28 people charged with money laundering in connection with the now-defunct law firm Mossack Fonseca, the epicenter of the "Panama Papers" international tax evasion scandal.

Among those acquitted were the firm's founders, Jurgen Mossack and Ramon Fonseca, the latter of whom died in May in a Panamanian hospital.

During the trial, which was held in Panama City in April, the prosecution asked for 12 years in prison for the duo, the maximum sentence for money laundering.

However, Judge Balois Marquinez

acquitted the pair and 26 others after finding that evidence taken from the law firm's servers had not been gathered in line with due process, raising doubts about its "authenticity and integrity," a court statement said.

The judge also ruled that "the rest of the evidence was not sufficient and conclusive to determine the criminal responsibility of the defendants," the court statement said.

Leaked documents from Mossack Fonseca in 2016 revealed how many of the world's wealthy stashed assets in offshore companies, triggering scores of investigations around the globe.

Those implicated included former British premier David Cameron, Russian President Vladimir Putin,

football star Lionel Messi, Argentina's then president Mauricio Macri and Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar, to name but a few.

Panamanian prosecutors had alleged that Mossack and Fonseca helped create opaque companies in which executives of the German multinational Siemens deposited millions of euros outside the company's official accounts.

They were also charged with helping divert money from a massive fraud in Argentina.

"Justice has been done, we are extremely satisfied with the ruling handed down by the judge," Guillermina McDonald, lawyer for Mossack and other defendants, told AFP.

## Gaza civilians

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camps to landfill sites.

Now, appeals to the Israeli authorities for access to the landfill sites were frequently denied, she said. And lacking fuel meant even when access was granted, trucks could not go in to clear out the mess.

Wateridge said food insecurity in the territory was having a visible effect on the population. "When I see my colleagues, my friends

here, they're visibly unrecognisable because having such unsustainable access to food for so long, you start to age, you look unhealthy, your skin changes colour," she said.

Thursday saw the first medical evacuations from Gaza into neighbouring Egypt since the Rafah border crossing was closed in early May, when Israeli forces took over the Palestinian side.

The World Health Organization