

## Iran voices ‘doubts’ over durability of truce: report

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Iran is highly doubtful that Israel will maintain the ceasefire that ended an air war between the two countries, Iranian armed forces Chief of Staff told Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman yesterday, according to Iranian semi-official Tasnim news agency.

"Since we have complete doubts about the enemy's (Israel) adherence to its commitments, including the ceasefire, we are prepared to give it a strong response if it repeats the aggression," Abdolrahim Mousavi said.

UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi said Iran likely will be able to begin to produce enriched uranium "in a matter of months," despite damage

IAEA chief warns Tehran can enrich uranium for a bomb within months

to several nuclear facilities from US and Israeli attacks, CBS News said Saturday.

Israel launched a bombing campaign on Iranian nuclear and military sites on June 13. The United States subsequently bombed three key facilities used for Tehran's atomic program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says the extent of the damage to the nuclear sites is "serious," but the details are unknown. US President Donald Trump insisted Iran's nuclear program had been set back "decades."

But Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said "some is still standing."

"They can have, you know, in a matter of weeks, I would say, a few cascades of centrifuges spinning and producing enriched uranium, or less than that," Grossi said Friday, according to a transcript of the interview released Saturday.

Another key question is whether Iran was able to relocate some or all of its estimated 408.6 kilo (900-pound) stockpile of highly enriched uranium before the attacks.

Meanwhile, Iranian judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir said yesterday that Israel's attack on the Evin Prison in Tehran on June 23 killed 71 people, reports Reuters.

## Trump's tax-cut, spending bill clears first Senate hurdle

REUTERS, Washington

The Republican controlled US Senate narrowly advanced President Donald Trump's, sweeping tax-cut and spending bill on Saturday, during a marathon weekend session marked by political drama, division and lengthy delays as Democrats sought to slow the legislation's path to passage.

Lawmakers voted 51-49 to open debate on the 940-page megabill, with two of Trump's fellow Republicans joining Democrats to oppose the legislation that would fund the president's top immigration, border, tax-cut and military priorities. Trump on social media hailed the "great victory" for his "great, big, beautiful bill."

After hours of delay, during which Republican leaders and Vice President JD Vance worked behind closed doors to persuade last-minute holdouts to support the measure, Democrats demanded that the megabill first be read aloud in the chamber - a task that could delay the start of the debate until yesterday afternoon.

Democrats say the bill's tax cuts would disproportionately benefit the wealthy at the expense of social programs for lower income Americans.

"Senate Republicans are scrambling to pass a radical bill, released to the public in the dead of night, praying the American people don't realize what's in it," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said on the Senate floor.

"Democrats are going to force this chamber to read it from start to finish," he said. Once the bill has been read, lawmakers will begin up to 20 hours of debate on the legislation. That will be followed by a marathon amendment session, known as a "vote-a-rama," before the Senate votes on passage. Lawmakers said they hoped to complete work on the bill today.



Mourners react near the body of a Palestinian child killed in an Israeli strike on a house late at night, according to Gaza's health ministry, during a funeral at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## ‘Make deal in Gaza, get hostages back’

Trump steps up pressure for ceasefire; 17 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes across the enclave

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The Israeli military ordered Palestinians to evacuate areas in northern Gaza yesterday before intensified fighting against Hamas, as US President Donald Trump called for an end to the war amid renewed efforts to broker a ceasefire.

"Make the deal in Gaza, get the hostages back," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform early yesterday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to hold talks later in the day on the progress of Israel's offensive. A senior security

- Israel orders evacuations in northern Gaza
- Hamas ready to resume talks, willing to release hostages

official said the military will tell him the campaign is close to reaching its objectives, and warn that expanding fighting to new areas in Gaza may endanger the remaining Israeli hostages.

But in a statement posted on X and text messages sent to many residents, the military urged people in northern parts of the enclave to head south towards the Al-Mawasi area in Khan Younis, which Israel designated as a humanitarian area. Palestinian and UN officials say nowhere in



Gaza is safe.

The evacuation order covered the Jabalia area and most Gaza City districts. Medics and residents said the Israeli army's bombardments escalated in the early hours in Jabalia, destroying several houses and killing at least 12 people.

In Khan Younis in the south, five people were killed in an airstrike on a tent encampment near Mawasi, medics said.

The escalation comes as Arab mediators, Egypt and Qatar, backed by the United States, begin a new ceasefire effort to halt the 20-month-old conflict and secure the release of Israeli and foreign hostages still being held by Hamas.

Interest in resolving the Gaza conflict has heightened in the wake of US and Israeli bombings of

Iran's nuclear facilities.

A Hamas official told Reuters the group had informed the mediators it was ready to resume ceasefire talks, but reaffirmed the group's outstanding demands that any deal must end the war and secure an Israeli withdrawal from the coastal territory.

Hamas has said it is willing to free remaining hostages in Gaza, 20 of whom are believed to still be alive, only in a deal that will end the war. Israel says it can only end it if Hamas is disarmed and dismantled. Hamas refuses to lay down its arms.

Israel's military assault has killed over 56,000, displaced almost the entire 2.3 million population and plunged the enclave into a humanitarian crisis.

## AIR INDIA CRASH Sabotage angle also being probed

Says India minister

NDTV ONLINE

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AARB) is probing from all angles, including sabotage, the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad that killed 274 people on board and on the ground last month, Indian Minister of State (MoS) For Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said.

Mohol also said the black box of the Air India flight AI 171 that has been recovered is in AARB's custody and will not be outside the country for a thorough assessment.

The MoS was in conversation with NDTV's Jitendra Dixit at the Pune chapter of the Emerging Business Conclave when he made the remarks.

"It was an unfortunate incident. The AARB has begun a full probe... It is being probed from all angles, including any possible sabotage. The CCTV footage are being reviewed and all angles are being assessed... several agencies are working on it," he said.

On June 12, London-bound AI 171 crashed seconds after taking off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Airport. Only one of the 242 passengers and crew members onboard survived the crash.

## Wave of Russian strikes hits Ukraine; 12 hurt

### Ukraine F-16 pilot killed while repelling air attack

AFP, Kyiv

Fresh Russian strikes targeting Ukrainian regions in the night of Saturday to yesterday wounded at least 12 people, according to the war-torn country's authorities, calling on Western allies for increased military support.

Talks on ending the fighting between the two sides are at an impasse, with Kyiv accusing Moscow, which occupies nearly one-fifth of Ukraine's territory, of wanting the war to drag on.

In the night the Russian army launched 477 drones and 60 missiles of various types, according to the Ukrainian air force, which said it had intercepted 475 and 39 of those respectively.

The strikes led to "six impacts", the air force said, without giving further details. Besides the civilian casualties, a fighter pilot was killed in the night after his F-16 jet was damaged in mid-air "without him having the time to eject", according to an air force statement.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky signed decree on plan to withdraw Ukraine from anti-landmine treaty.

Pointing to the Russian bombardment, he argued it showed that his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin "has long decided to pursue this war, despite the international community's calls for peace".

## Israeli strikes on south Lebanon kill three people

### Hezbollah warns its patience wearing thin

AFP, Beirut

Israeli strikes killed three people in southern Lebanon later on Saturday despite a ceasefire in force there, authorities said, with Iran-backed Hezbollah suggesting its patience for the "ongoing aggression" was wearing thin.

The Lebanese health ministry said an "Israeli enemy" drone strike on a car in Kunin, south Lebanon, killed one man and wounded another person.

The Israeli military said the strike "eliminated the terrorist Hassan M u h a m m a d Hammoudi", who it said was responsible for anti-tank missile attacks on Israeli territory during the recent war.

In a second statement later on Saturday, the health ministry said a strike on a motorcycle in Mahrouna, near Tyre, resulted in "two martyrs and wounded one person", with one of the dead a woman.

The Israeli military said it carried out a strike Saturday that "eliminated the terrorist Abbas Al-Hassan Wahbi in the area of Mahrouna in southern Lebanon.

The IDF statement said Wahbi was a Hezbollah intelligence official "involved in efforts to rebuild Hezbollah and weapons transfers."

"These activities constitute a blatant violation of the understandings between Israel and Lebanon," it said.

The attacks came a day after Lebanon blamed Israel for strikes that killed a woman and wounded 25 others.



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## France bans smoking on beaches, parks

AFP, Paris

Anyone who lights up on a beach or in a public park in France will be breaking the law under new rules aimed at protecting children from the dangers of passive smoking.

Bus shelters and areas in the immediate vicinity of libraries, swimming pools and schools will also be affected by the ban, which came into force yesterday after its publication in the official government gazette on Saturday.

The rule is being imposed one week before the beginning of the school holidays in France in a clear bid to immediately protect children from smoke on the beach.

However, to the disappointment of some anti-tobacco activists, the ban does not cover the terraces of bars and restaurants where many French still happily light up.

They are also unhappy that the ban does not apply to electronic cigarettes.



A protester kneels in front of Serbian riot police during clashes on Saturday evening, after tens of thousands gathered in central Belgrade to issue an 'ultimatum' to the populist government, demanding early elections following months of student-led strikes across the country.

PHOTO: AFP