

Blast kills six at Lebanon arms depot

REUTERS, Beirut

The Lebanese army said on Saturday that six soldiers were killed and others wounded in an explosion while they were inspecting a weapons depot and dismantling its contents in the southern city of Tyre.

An investigation was underway to determine the cause of the blast, the army added in a statement.

Security sources told Reuters that the explosion was caused by "remnants of the Israeli war" in the coastal city.

Israel dealt major blows to Lebanon's militant group Hezbollah in an offensive last year - the climax of a conflict that began in October 2023 when the group opened fire at Israeli positions on the frontier in support of its Palestinian ally Hamas at the start of the Gaza war.

A US brokered ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel in November ended that conflict.



A protester is carried away by police officers at a "Lift The Ban" demonstration in support of the proscribed group Palestine Action, calling for the recently imposed ban to be lifted, in Parliament Square, central London yesterday. London's Metropolitan Police said officers had arrested at least 150 people for supporting Palestine Action at a protest.

PHOTO: AFP

Muslim states must unite against Israel's Gaza plan

Says Turkey

REUTERS, Ankara

Muslim nations must act in unison and rally international opposition against Israel's plan to take control of Gaza City, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said yesterday after talks in Egypt.

Regional powers Egypt and Turkey both condemned the plan on Friday. Ankara has said it marked a new phase in what it called Israel's genocidal and expansionist policies, while calling for global measures to stop the plan's implementation.

Israel rejects such description of its actions in Gaza.

Speaking at a joint press conference in El Alamein with his Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty, after also meeting Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Fidan said the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation had been called to an emergency meeting.

Fidan said Israel's policy aimed to force Palestinians out of their lands through hunger and that it aimed to permanently invade Gaza, adding there was no justifiable excuse for nations to continue supporting Israel.

11 more die of starvation in Gaza

Israeli strikes kill 38 people, including 21 aid seekers; Israel to evacuate half of Gaza population by Oct 7 from Gaza City

AGENCIES

A further 11 deaths resulting from malnutrition have been reported in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

That brings the total number of malnutrition-related deaths to 212, including 98 children.

At least 38 people have also been killed and 491 injured as a result of Israeli military activity over the past 24 hours, the health ministry said.

Deaths continue to rise amid reports that a deadline of 7 October 2025 has been set for residents to evacuate Gaza City following the announcement of a controversial Israeli plan to take control of the area.

The new plan, approved by the Israeli security cabinet and detailed on Friday, lists five "principles" for ending the war in Gaza, with one being "taking security control of the territory".

Reports in Israeli media say the plan initially focuses on taking full control of Gaza City, relocating its estimated one million residents further south.

The plan has been met with criticism from world leaders as well as fierce opposition from some within Israel, including from military officials and the families of hostages still being held in Gaza who fear for their safety.

Israel has rejected criticism, with Defence Minister Israel Katz saying condemnation would "not



weaken our resolve".

The US has been less critical, with Donald Trump saying earlier in the week that it was "pretty much up to Israel" whether to fully occupy the Gaza Strip.

Israeli media reports that the government has set a two-month deadline before a military siege of Gaza City to begin on 7 October 2025, the two-year anniversary of the beginning of the war.

Within those two months, Israel plans to forcibly displace the estimated one million Palestinians living in Gaza City, roughly half the number of people living in the entirety of the territory.

Gaza City is the capital of the Gaza Strip. Its pre-war population was estimated at around 600,000 people, but that number has grown significantly throughout the war as Israel's military campaign has pushed Palestinians into the city.

Many living there now have already been displaced multiple times through the war and are living in tents or the ruins of buildings that have been partially destroyed by Israeli air strikes.

Israeli media reports that the military would move the population towards al-Mawasi, a vast tent encampment in the south of Gaza, already home to thousands of Palestinians suffering from an absence of basic facilities and sanitation.

The plan is being widely condemned by humanitarian agencies and indeed many of Israel's allies for its potential to add untold human suffering onto the shoulders of an already exhausted and beleaguered people.

Gaza's health ministry yesterday said that 21 people had been killed trying to get aid in the last 24 hours.

Trump may use military against drug cartels: report

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump is moving to target Latin American drug cartels with the military, US media said Friday, after Washington designated several narcotics trafficking groups as "terrorist" organizations earlier this year.

The New York Times reported that Trump has directed the Pentagon to use military force against cartels deemed terrorist organizations.

The United States designated Venezuela's Tren de Aragua, Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel and six other drug trafficking groups with Latin American roots as terror groups in February.

But the Mexican foreign ministry stressed that Mexico "would not accept the participation of US military forces on our territory."

Trump's administration has since added another Venezuelan gang, the Cartel of the Suns, which has allegedly shipped hundreds of tons of narcotics into the United States over two decades.

The United States accuses Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro of leading that cartel - an allegation Caracas has rejected as a "ridiculous smokescreen."

India claims shooting down 6 Pak jets in May

REUTERS, New Delhi

India shot down five Pakistani fighter jets and one other military aircraft during clashes in May, India's air force chief said yesterday, the first such statement by the country months after its worst military conflict in decades with its neighbour.

Most of the Pakistani aircraft were downed by India's Russian-made S-400 surface-to-air missile system, Indian Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said at an event in Bengaluru. He cited electronic tracking data as confirmation of the strikes.

"We have at least five fighters confirmed killed, and one large aircraft," he said, adding that the large aircraft, which could be a surveillance plane, was shot down at a distance of 300 km (186 miles). Singh did not mention the type of fighter jets that were downed, but said that airstrikes also hit an additional surveillance plane and "a few F-16" fighters that were parked in hangars at two air bases in southeastern Pakistan.

In a post on X, Pakistan's defence minister accused India of dishonesty.

"If the truth is in question, let both sides open their aircraft inventories to independent verification - though we suspect this would lay bare the reality India seeks to obscure," he said.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond for a request for comment on Saturday.

Pakistan has claimed that it shot down six Indian aircraft during the clashes, including a French-made Rafale fighter. India has acknowledged some losses but denied losing six aircraft.

Nagasaki bell rings 80 years after nuclear tragedy

AFP, Nagasaki

Twin cathedral bells rang in unison yesterday in Japan's Nagasaki for the first time since the atomic bombing of the city 80 years ago, commemorating the moment of horror.

On August 9, 1945, at 11:02 am, three days after a nuclear attack on Hiroshima, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki.

After heavy downpours in the morning, the rain stopped shortly before a moment of silence and ceremony in which Nagasaki mayor Shiro Suzuki urged the world to "stop armed conflicts immediately".

"Eighty years have passed, and who could have imagined that the world would become like this?"

"A crisis that could threaten the survival of humanity, such as a nuclear war, is looming over each and every one of us living on this planet."

About 74,000 people were killed in the southwestern port city, on top of the 140,000 killed in Hiroshima.

Days later, on August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered, marking the end of World War II.

Historians have debated whether the bombings ultimately saved lives by bringing an end to the conflict and averting a ground invasion.

But those calculations meant little to survivors, many of whom battled decades of physical and psychological trauma, as well as the stigma that often came with being a hibakusha.

Ninety-three-year-old survivor Hiroshi Nishioka, who was just three kilometres (1.8 miles) from the spot where the bomb exploded, told ceremony attendees of the horror he witnessed as a young teenager.



PLASTIC POLLUTION TREATY UN talks hit obstacles

AFP, Geneva

Talks on forging a groundbreaking treaty to combat the scourge of plastic pollution were floundering yesterday, with progress slow and countries wildly at odds on what the proposed agreement should cover.

The negotiations, which opened on Tuesday, have four working days left to strike a legally-binding instrument that would tackle the growing problem choking the environment.

But in a blunt mid-way assessment, the talks chair warned the 184 countries gathered at the United Nations in Geneva that progress so far was well off track.

Some countries called for areas where countries are far from agreement to be ditched completely for the sake of expediency. Others slammed the brinkmanship and said insistence on consensus could not be used as justification for sinking the more ambitious elements of the treaty.

"Progress made has not been sufficient," Ecuadoran diplomat Luis Vayas Valdivieso told delegates in a frank summary as country delegations gathered in the assembly hall to take stock.

Countries have reconvened at the UN in Geneva after the failure of the supposedly fifth and final round of talks in Busan, South Korea in 2024.

After four days of talks, the draft text has ballooned from 22 to 35 pages - with the number of brackets in the text going up near five-fold to almost 1,500 as countries insert conflicting ideas.

More than 400 million tonnes of plastic are produced globally each year, half of which is for single-use items.

Plastic production is set to triple by 2060.



US President Donald Trump (C), Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev (L) and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan shake hands after signing an agreement in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on Friday. Trump said that Armenia and Azerbaijan were committed to a permanent peace as he hosted a White House summit with the leaders of the two South Caucasus nations, which have fought for decades.

PHOTO: AFP

Teen shooter wounds 3 in Times Square

AFP, New York

A 17-year-old boy opened fire and wounded three people in New York City's heavily toured Times Square early yesterday, the New York Police Department said.

The shooting occurred around 1:20 am (0520 GMT) following a "verbal altercation", an NYPD spokesperson told AFP without giving further details.

An 18-year-old woman's neck was grazed, while a 19-year-old man and a 65-year-old man's lower limbs were injured, police said.

None of the injuries was considered to be life-threatening.

The three victims were taken to New York City's Bellevue Hospital, where they were determined to be in stable condition.

"The perpetrator has been taken into police custody, and a firearm has been recovered," the NYPD spokesperson added.