



In this pool photograph distributed by the Russian state agency Sputnik, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, his wife Peng Liyuan, and other foreign leaders pose for a family photo during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin, China, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Israeli forces pound Gaza City suburbs 30 Palestinians killed



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Israeli forces pounded the suburbs of Gaza City from the air and ground, destroying homes and driving more families out of the area as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security cabinet was set to discuss a plan to seize the city.

Local health authorities said Israeli gunfire and strikes killed at least 30 people yesterday, including 13 who tried to get food from near an aid site in the central Gaza Strip, and at least two in a house in Gaza City.

Residents of Sheikh Radwan, one of the largest neighborhoods of Gaza City, said the territory had been under Israeli tank shelling and airstrikes throughout Saturday and yesterday, forcing families to seek shelter in the western parts of the city.

The Israeli military has gradually escalated its operations around Gaza City over the past three weeks.

"They are crawling into the heart of the city where hundreds of thousands are sheltering, from the east, north, and south, while bombing those areas from the air and ground to scare people to leave," said Rezik Salah from Sheikh Radwan.

SCO bears 'greater responsibilities'

Says China's Xi on safeguarding regional peace, stability

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The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) security forum now bears "greater responsibility" for safeguarding regional peace and stability, as well as promoting the development and prosperity of its member states, Chinese President Xi Jinping told about 20 world leaders he hosted yesterday evening.

The ongoing SCO Summit shoulders the important mission of building consensus among all parties and stimulating momentum in cooperation, Xi was cited as telling a welcome banquet, Chinese state news agency Xinhua reported.

The two-day summit is being held in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin, reports Reuters.

The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus -- with 16 more countries affiliated as observers or "dialogue partners".

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in Tianjin yesterday with an entourage of senior politicians and business representatives.

Xi held a flurry of back-to-back bilateral meetings with leaders including Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko -- one of Putin's staunch allies -- and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his first visit to China since 2018.



Modi told Xi that India was committed to taking "forward our ties on the basis of mutual trust, dignity and sensitivity". Xi, in turn, told Modi that he hoped the two countries would recognise that they are "partners rather than rivals".

Putin and Xi Jinping discussed recent contacts between Russia and the United States, Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov told Russian media without elaborating. Xi and Putin met on the sidelines of the summit.

Putin is expected to hold talks with Erdogan and Pezeshkian about the Ukraine conflict and Tehran's nuclear programme respectively today, reports AFP.

Xi met Erdogan yesterday to discuss the situations in Gaza and Ukraine, a readout from Ankara said. Turkey has hosted three rounds of peace talks between Moscow and Kyiv this year that have failed to break the deadlock over how to end the conflict.

The Russian president needs "all the benefits of SCO as a player on the world stage and also the support of the second largest economy in the world", said Lim Tai Wei, a professor and East Asia expert at Japan's Soka University.

"Russia is also keen to win over India, and India's trade frictions with the United States presents this opportunity," Lim told AFP.

VOA PURGE Trump officials move to fire most of journo

AGENCIES

The Trump administration has moved to terminate more than 500 employees at the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), the federal body that oversees government funded broadcasters.

The majority of those fired were employees of Voice of America (VOA), the US-backed outlet that President Donald Trump has pledged to close down.

Acting CEO Kari Lake said the decision would "help reduce the federal bureaucracy, improve agency service, and save the American people more of their hard-earned money." Staff members have described the layoffs as "abhorrent", reports BBC.

VOA was set up during World War II to counter Nazi propaganda, and has become a major global media broadcaster.



Ukraine plans new strikes deep into Russia

Says Zelensky

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine plans new strikes deep into Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, after weeks of intensified attacks on Russian energy assets.

"We will continue our active operations in exactly the way needed for Ukraine's defence. The forces and resources are prepared. New deep strikes have also been planned," Zelensky said on X after meeting Ukraine's top general, Oleksandr Syrsky.

A Russian drone attack damaged four power facilities near the southern city of Odesa, leaving more than 29,000 customers without electricity yesterday morning, the region's governor and power firm DTEK said.

Hardest hit was the port city of Chornomorsk, just outside Odesa, where residential houses and administrative buildings were also damaged, said the governor of Odesa.

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Indonesia protests force U-turn on MPs' pay

President Prabowo orders military and police to act against rioters

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesian political parties have agreed to revoke a number of perks and privileges for parliamentarians, President Prabowo Subianto said yesterday, in a bid to calm anti-government protests that have left five people dead and caused the worst violence in decades in Southeast Asia's largest economy.

Protests began on Monday over what demonstrators called excessive pay and housing allowances for parliamentarians. The unrest escalated into riots on Friday after a motorcycle rideshare driver was killed during police action at a protest site.

Homes of political party members and state buildings were ransacked or set ablaze, sparking widespread concern. Investor sentiment took a hit as the protests led to a steep selloff in Indonesia's stocks and currency on Friday.

Prabowo, speaking at a news

conference at the Presidential Palace and flanked by the leaders of various political parties, said he had ordered the military and police to take stern action against rioters and looters, warning that some of the actions were indicative of "terrorism" and "treason".

"Leaders in parliament have conveyed that they will revoke a number of parliament policies, including the size of allowances for members of parliament and a moratorium on overseas work trips," Prabowo said.

"To the police and the military, I have ordered them to take action as firm as possible against the destruction of public facilities, looting at homes of individuals and economic centres, according to the laws," he added.

The protests represent the most significant challenge to Prabowo's government, which has faced little political opposition since taking office nearly a year ago.

