

UK cops quiz 6 after attack on synagogue

AFP, Manchester

Six people arrested on suspicion of "terrorism"-linked offences after a fatal car-ramming and knife attack on a UK synagogue remained in police custody yesterday, as Prime Minister Keir Starmer urged people not to take part in pro-Palestinian protests.

Two people were killed and three others seriously wounded in Thursday's attack in northwestern Manchester on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

Police shot dead assailant Jihad Al-Shamie, a 35-year-old UK citizen of Syrian descent, within minutes of the alarm being raised. Three men and three women are in custody.

The attack on Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in north Manchester was one of the worst antisemitic incidents in Europe since Israel's war on Gaza began in October, 2023.



(From leftm clock-wise) Pro-Palestinian demonstrators take part in a protest for Gaza, outside the Colosseum in Rome, Italy, yesterday; a demonstrator holds a placard featuring Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in support of Palestinians during a protest in Dublin, Ireland; a protester is taken 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 Trafalgar Square, central London.



PHOTO: STAR

After false dawns, Gazans hope Trump will end war

REUTERS

Exhausted Palestinians in Gaza clung to hopes yesterday that US President Donald Trump would keep up pressure on Israel to end a two-year-old war that has killed tens of thousands and displaced the entire population of more than two million.

Hamas' declaration that it was ready to hand over hostages and accept some terms of Trump's plan to end the conflict, while calling for more talks on several key issues was greeted with relief in the enclave, where most homes are now in ruins.

"It's happy news, it saves those who are still alive," said 32-year-old Saoud Qarneyta, reacting to Hamas' response and Trump's intervention. "This is enough. Houses have been damaged, everything has been damaged, what is left? Nothing."

Ismail Zayda, 40, a father of three, displaced from a suburb in northern Gaza City where Israel launched a full-scale ground operation last month, said: "We want President Trump to keep pushing for an end to the war, if this chance is lost, it means that Gaza City will be destroyed by Israel and we might not survive."

"Enough, two years of bombardment, death and starvation. Enough," he told Reuters on a social media chat.

Israel launched its Gaza offensive has killed more than 66,000 people.

"God willing this will be the last war. We will hopefully be done with the wars," said 59-year-old Ali Ahmad, speaking in one of the tented camps where most Palestinians now live.

The assault has destroyed much of the enclave, while aid restrictions have helped trigger a famine in parts of Gaza.

A UN Commission of Inquiry and numerous human rights experts have concluded that Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. Netanyahu's government denies this, saying it has been acting in self-defence.

"We urge all sides not to backtrack. Every

day of delay costs lives in Gaza, it is not just time wasted, lives get wasted too," said Tamer Al-Burai, a Gaza City businessman displaced with members of his family in central Gaza Strip.

After two previous ceasefires -- one near the start of the war and another earlier this year -- lasted only a few weeks, he said; "I am very optimistic this time, maybe Trump's seeking to be remembered as a man of peace, will bring us real peace this time."



Some voiced hopes of returning to their homes, but the Israeli military issued a fresh warning to Gazans yesterday to stay out of Gaza City, describing it as a "dangerous combat zone."

Gazans have faced previous false dawns during the past two years, when Trump and others declared at several points during on-off negotiations between Hamas, Israel and Arab and US mediators that a deal was close, only for war to rage on.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah, Palestinians said Hamas played its hand well

under an American ultimatum to respond by Sunday.

"Hamas' stance yesterday was very good," Iyad Safi told AFP.

"God willing, it will be for the good of the people -- the most important thing is the people's interest, that the war stops and things come to an end."

"Will it happen? Can we trust Trump? Maybe we trust Trump, but will Netanyahu abide this time? He has always sabotaged

everything and continued the war. I hope he ends it now," said Aya, 31, who was displaced with her family to Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

She added: "Maybe there is a chance the war ends at October 7, two years after it began."

He feared, however, that Israel would not abide by it once Hamas releases the hostages.

Although Trump presented his ceasefire proposal Monday, several sticking points remain. In talks with Trump, Netanyahu all but rejected the idea of Gaza being governed by the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

Protesters agree to end PoK unrest

AFP, Muzaffarabad

Protesters in Pakistan's Kashmir ended days of deadly anti-government demonstrations yesterday after reaching an agreement with the government, officials said.

A telecommunications blackout imposed by the government was gradually lifted throughout the day, an AFP journalist witnessed.

The clashes left at least six civilians and three police officers dead.

"The government has agreed to our demands, and we are thankful to it," said Shaukat Nawaz Mir, a member of the Awami Action Committee (AAC), the civil rights group that led the protest.

He confirmed the demonstration had been called off.

The agreement, signed by federal ministers and shared with the media, includes pledges to reduce the size of the cabinet and senior officials in the civil service.

The government also agreed to investigate the violence and vandalism during the protests, including deaths on both sides.

Thousands of people took to the streets of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, from Monday, demanding structural reforms as well as political and economic rights.

Russia intensifying railway strikes: Kyiv

AFP, Kyiv

The head of Ukraine's railways yesterday said that Russia was intensifying a campaign of air strikes on the network in an attempt to isolate frontline communities ahead of winter.

Ukrainian Railways CEO Oleksandr Pertsovsky also warned that Russian drone strikes were becoming more precise, complicating Kyiv's ability to fend off incoming attacks.

Russia launched drones at two passenger trains in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region on Saturday, killing one person and wounding dozens, according to Ukrainian officials.

"We clearly see the intensification of enemy attacks on the railway infrastructure," Pertsovsky told reporters, including AFP.

"There is no military purpose whatsoever," he said.

"The only purpose is to sow panic among people... that the connection will be destroyed and people will be left alone," he added.

Speaking via video call while on a train to Shostka, the station that was hit, he said there had been "40 major attacks" on railway infrastructure since August, "pretty much every other day".

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called Saturday's attack, which occurred around 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the Russian border, "savage".

He posted a video showing a mangled train carriage engulfed in flames with twisted metal and busted windows.

"The Russians could not have been unaware that they were striking civilians," he said.

Russia's army has repeatedly targeted Ukraine's railways since invading in February 2022.

In April 2022, more than 60 people waiting to evacuate the frontline city of Kramatorsk were killed when a Russian missile crashed into the busy station there.



INDONESIA SCHOOL COLLAPSE

Death toll hits 17, dozens still missing

AFP, Jakarta

The death toll in an Indonesian school collapse rose to 17 yesterday, officials said, as rescuers deployed heavy machinery to recover dozens more victims believed still buried under the rubble.

Part of the multi-storey boarding school collapsed suddenly on Monday as students gathered for afternoon prayers.

Rescuers retrieved two bodies and a body part from the rubble on Saturday, bringing the death toll to 17, National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas) operation director Yudhi Bramantyo said in a statement.

"The evacuation process is still ongoing. Debris removal is focused to the north side in an area not integrated with the main structure," Yudhi said Saturday.

Local search and rescue agency head Nanang Sigit confirmed the updated toll in a separate statement.

Earlier on Saturday, authorities said they had recovered nine bodies on Friday.

Rescuers were searching for 49 people still missing, National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB) chief Suharyanto said before prior to the retrieval of the latest bodies.

More victims could be found, said Suharyanto, who, like many Indonesians, only goes by one name, as rescuers brought heavy machinery to clear locations where the victims were believed to be buried underneath the rubble.

"After the last victim was found last night, we are focusing on a massive cleanup, with heavy equipment entering the collapsed areas," he said, as reported by broadcaster Kompas TV.



An anti-government protester waves a flag of Madagascar next to a burning barricade during a demonstration against the government in Antsirana yesterday. Supporters and opponents of Madagascar's government were called to demonstrate in the capital yesterday, as security forces erected roadblocks following more than a week of deadly unrest. Inspired by youth-led movements in Nepal and Indonesia, the protests have tapped into widespread frustration over governance, with demonstrators calling for President Andry Rajoelina to step down. PHOTO: AFP

Afghan Taliban FM to visit India for first time

AFP, Kabul

Afghanistan's Taliban foreign minister will visit India this month after the UN Security Council Committee temporarily lifted a travel ban, Kabul's foreign ministry confirmed to AFP yesterday.

Amir Khan Muttaqi will become the first senior Taliban leader to visit India since they returned to power in 2021.

The foreign ministry told AFP the minister would go to India "after the Moscow summit" on October 7, which includes representatives from China, India, Iran and Central Asian nations.

The UN Security Council Committee has granted an exemption to the travel ban on Muttaqi, who is under UN sanctions, to allow him to visit New Delhi between October 9 and 16.

India's point-person on Afghanistan Anand Prakash visited Kabul in April to discuss political and trade relations.