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GLOBAL WEATHER

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# Gazans flee again as fresh fighting breaks out in north, central areas

Over 1,000 Hamas fighters taking treatment in Turkish hospitals, says President Erdogan



Palestinians carry their belongings as they flee Gaza Strip on May 13 | AFP

## GAZA CITY

ISRAEL battled Hamas in Gaza on Monday, including in far-southern Rafah, despite US warnings against a full-scale invasion of the crowded city and of the threat of post-war "anarchy" across the Palestinian territory.

Clashes also raged in northern and central Gaza as Israel marked a sombre Memorial Day, which is followed by Independence Day from Monday night, more than seven months into the war sparked by Hamas's October 7 attack.

Israelis marked a moment's silence and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that "our war of independence is not over yet. It continues even today... We are determined to win this struggle." Thousands fled northern Gaza on Monday as renewed shelling pounded areas where Israel says Hamas militants have re-

grouped, despite having announced them cleared months ago. "The army dropped leaflets and sent a message on mobile phones warning everyone to leave Jabalia," said Umm Odai Nassar, after reaching Gaza City from nearby Jabalia refugee camp in the far north of the Gaza Strip.

She is one among many Palestinians who had remained in northern Gaza despite the vast devastation to civilian infrastructure inflicted during the early months of Israel's military campaign against Hamas in the territory.

In Ankara, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that "more than 1,000 members" of Hamas were being treated in Turkish hospitals. "So many Hamas members have been killed. The whole of the West is attacking them with all sorts of arms and munitions," he said. "Calling Hamas ... a ter-

rorist organisation would be cruel," he said. Israel said on Saturday it was operating again in the Jabalia camp to counter Hamas attempts to reestablish its military capabilities in the area. The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said its latest estimate showed about 250,000 people living in north Gaza.

"This is not the first time we have been displaced. Every time we try to return and settle, there is an invasion operation, and the army with its airplanes and tanks bombard the houses and kills people," Nassar said.

The return to intense fighting in the north comes at the same time as Israel presses its military campaign in the south, in the eastern section of Rafah city. Mahmud al-Barsh, a 33-year-old from Jabalia, said he feels the lives of Gazans "have become like that of cat and mouse." *AP*

Robotaxi unit of Amazon probed after injuring two motorists

## DETROIT

Amazon's self-driving robotaxi unit is being investigated by the US government's highway safety agency after two of its vehicles braked suddenly and were rear-ended by motorcyclists. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in documents posted on its website Monday it will evaluate the automated driving system developed by Zoox.

Both crashes involved Toyota Highlander SUVs with autonomous driving technology. They happened during the daytime hours, and the motorcyclists suffered minor injuries. In both cases, the agency confirmed that each of the Amazon vehicles was operating in autonomous mode leading up to the crashes.

The agency said the probe will focus on the performance of the company's automated driving system during the crashes, as well as how it behaves in crosswalks around pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

In a statement, Zoox said it is committed to working with NHTSA to answer its questions. "Transparency and collaboration with regulators is of utmost importance," the company said.

Zoox said the vehicles had human safety drivers on board. Zoox reported the crashes under an order to automated vehicle companies issued in 2021.

Amazon acquired Zoox in June of 2020 for a price that analysts pegged at over \$1 billion. In 2023 the Foster City, California, company said one of its funky-looking four-person shuttles autonomously carried employees on public roads on a 1.6 km route between two Zoox buildings.

The company has launched a shuttle service exclusively for its employees. Analysts say they expect Amazon to use the Zoox system for deliveries. Zoox shuttles don't have a steering wheel or pedals. *AP*

## Ukraine locked in fierce battles in 2 areas: Zelenskyy

### KYIV

UKRAINIAN troops are locked in intense battles with the advancing Russian army in two border areas, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while the death toll from a Russian apartment building collapse blamed on Ukrainian shelling rose to 15.

Zelenskyy said 'fierce battles' are taking place near the border in eastern and northeastern Ukraine as outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian soldiers try to push back a significant Russian ground offensive.

"Defensive battles are ongoing, fierce battles, on a large part of our border area," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address on Sunday.

The Kremlin's forces are aiming to exploit Ukrainian weaknesses before a big batch of new military aid for Kyiv from the US and European partners arrives on the battlefield in the coming weeks and months, analysts said. That makes this period a window of opportunity for Moscow and one of the

most dangerous for Kyiv in the two-year war, they said. The new Russian push in the northeastern Kharkiv region, along with the ongoing drive into the eastern Donetsk region, come after months when the about 1,000-km frontline barely budged.

In the meantime, both sides have used long-range strikes in what largely became a war of attrition.

The Kharkiv incursion may be an attempt to create a 'buffer zone' to protect Belgorod, an adjacent Russian border region battered by Ukrainian attacks.

Russian emergency services on Monday finished clearing the rubble in the region's capital city of Belgorod, where a section of a residential building collapsed following what authorities said was Ukrainian shelling. Fifteen bodies were pulled from the rubble, Belgorod regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said, and 27 other people were wounded. Another three people in the city of Belgorod were killed by shelling late Sunday, he said. *AP*

Shoigu sacked; Belousov new Russian def min

### MOSCOW

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin has replaced Sergei Shoigu as defence minister in a Cabinet shakeup that comes as he begins his fifth term in office. In line with Russian law, the entire Russian Cabinet resigned on Tuesday following Putin's glittering inauguration in the Kremlin, and most members have been widely expected to keep their jobs, while Shoigu's fate had appeared uncertain. Putin signed a decree on Sunday appointing Shoigu as secretary of Russia's Security Council, the Kremlin said. The appointment was announced shortly after Putin proposed Andrei Belousov to become the country's defense minister in place of Shoigu. Belousov's candidacy will need to be approved by Russia's upper house in parliament, the Federation Council. It reported that Putin introduced proposals for other Cabinet positions as well but Shoigu is the only minister on that list who is being replaced. *AP*

## Total PoK strike over soaring prices enters fourth day, govt allocates fund

### ISLAMABAD

THE situation remained tense in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as the total strike against high prices of wheat flour and inflated electricity bills and taxes entered its fourth day on Monday, forcing the Pakistan government to allocate Rs 23 billion for immediate release to the region after the negotiations between the protesters and the regional government ended in a deadlock.

Ruffled by the unexpected protest and its sensitivity, Prime Minister Sharif chaired a special meeting here on Monday which was

attended by PoK "prime minister" Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, local ministers, and top political leadership, the PM's Office said in a statement. The region witnessed clashes on Saturday between the police and activists of a rights movement, leaving at least one police officer dead and injuring over 100 people, mostly policemen. A complete strike has also been observed in the territory since Friday, bringing life to a halt. PoK "prime minister" Haq announced a reduction in electricity tariff soon after the meeting chaired by Sharif concluded. The residents have been advocating for affordable electricity and flour subsidies for the past few days, Haq said, adding that no one can ignore the necessity of accessible electricity and affordable bread.

He also announced a reduction in bread prices. The protest is led by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), which has traders at the forefront in most parts of the region, who have been seeking the provision of electricity as per hydropower generation cost in the region, subsidised wheat flour and an end to the privileges of the elite class. A long march led by the JAAC left for Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, on Monday.

The movement announced its march on Muzaffarabad after the talks between the JAAC core committee and Chief Secretary of the region Dawood Bareach ended in a stalemate. A protest leader from Rawalakot accused the government of resorting to evasive tactics. Protestors have already staged sit-ins, closing Kohala' Muzaffarabad Road at several locations, the Dawn newspaper reported. *PTI*

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