



ONE climber is dead after falling down a steep gorge in Alaska's Denali National Park



Weather table with columns for location, temperature, and weather conditions.

09 Hamas weighs latest Israeli ceasefire offer

Comes as Egyptian mediators wrap up visit to Israel; a deal will avert planned Israeli ground offensive into southern Gaza's Rafah for now

GAZA STRIP

HAMAS said on Saturday that it was reviewing a new Israeli proposal for a cease-fire in Gaza, as Egypt intensified efforts to broker a deal to end the months-long war and stave off a planned Israeli ground offensive into Rafah.

Senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya gave no details of Israel's offer, but said it was in response to a proposal from Hamas two weeks ago. Negotiations earlier this month centred on a six-week cease-fire proposal and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages in exchange for freeing Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Hamas' statement came hours after a high-level Egyptian delegation wrapped up a visit to Israel where it discussed a "new vision" for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, according to an Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss the developments. It wasn't immediately clear whether Israel's new proposal was directly related to Friday's visit by Egyptian mediators.

The discussions between Egyptian and Israeli officials focused on the first stage of a multi-phase plan that would include a limited exchange of hostages held by Hamas for Palestinian prisoners, and the return of a significant number of displaced Palestinians to their homes in northern Gaza "with



Palestinian children stand amid the debris of a house destroyed by overnight Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday | AFP

International pressure for Hamas and Israel to reach an agreement on a cease-fire and avert a possible Israeli attack on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge after fleeing fighting elsewhere in the territory.

Israel has been insisting for months it plans a ground offensive into Rafah, on the border with Egypt, where it says many remaining Hamas militants are holed up, despite calls for restraint from the international community including Israel's staunchest ally, the US.

Egypt has cautioned an offensive into Rafah could have "catastrophic consequences" on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, where famine is feared, as well as on regional peace and security.

There has been growing international pressure for Hamas and Israel to reach an agreement on a cease-fire and avert a possible Israeli attack on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge after fleeing fighting elsewhere in the territory.



TOLL SO FAR 36,016

UN probes staffers over Hamas links

UN investigators are looking into allegations against 14 of the 19 staffers from the UN relief agency for Palestinians who Israel claims were involved in the October 7 attack by Hamas militants that spurred the latest war in Gaza, a spokesman said Friday. The UN's internal watchdog the Office of Internal Oversight Services is carrying out the probe following Israel's initial allegations in January

UK weighs deploying troops in Gaza to help deliver humanitarian aid

LONDON

BRITISH troops may be tasked with delivering aid to Gaza from an offshore pier now under construction by the US military, the BBC reported on Saturday. British government officials declined to comment on the report.

According to the BBC, the British government is considering deploying troops to drive the trucks that will carry aid from the pier along a floating causeway to the shore.

No decision has been made and the proposal hasn't yet reached Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the BBC reported, citing unidentified government sources.

The report comes after a senior US military official said on Thursday that there would be no American 'boots on the ground' and another nation would provide the personnel to drive the delivery trucks to the shore. The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss details

not yet made public, declined to identify the third party.

Britain is already providing logistical support for construction of the pier, including a Royal Navy ship that will house hundreds of US soldiers and sailors working on the project.

In addition, British military planners have been embedded at US Central Command in Florida and in Cyprus, where aid will be screened before shipment to Gaza, for several weeks, the UK Ministry of Defence said on Friday.

The UK Hydrographic Office has also shared analysis of the Gaza shoreline with the US to aid in construction of the pier.

"It is critical we establish more routes for vital humanitarian aid to reach the people of Gaza, and the UK continues to take a leading role in the delivery of support in coordination with the US and our international allies and partners," British Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said in a statement.

MID-AIR SCARE

Emergency slide falls off Delta Air Lines' Boeing 767 jet

NEW YORK

AN emergency slide fell off a Delta Air Lines jetliner shortly after takeoff Friday from New York, and pilots who felt a vibration in the plane circled back to land safely at New York's John F Kennedy International Airport.

Delta said that after takeoff the pilots got an alert about the emergency slide on the plane's right side and heard an unusual sound coming from that area of the Boeing 767 jet, which is listed as having been manufactured in 1990.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said the crew reported a vibration.

Pilots declared an emergency so the flight could be routed quickly back to the airport, and the plane landed and taxied to a gate under its own power, according to the airline.

There were 176 passengers, two pilots and five flight attendants on board the flight, which was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles.

Delta said the plane was removed from service.

"As nothing is more important than the safety of our customers and people, Delta flight crews enacted their extensive training and followed procedures to return to JFK," the airline said in a statement.



China launches 1st Hangor-class submarine built for Pakistan

China has launched the first of the eight Hangor-class submarines to be built for its all-weather ally Pakistan to provide it with state-of-the-art warships, adding a new dimension to their growing bilateral military cooperation

\$4-5 billion estimated cost for 8 vessels

DISPLACEMENT 2,800 tons

LENGTH 76 metres

Propulsion FOUR CHD620 DIESEL ENGINES

PAK TO MAKE FOUR VESSELS Out of the total eight vessels, four are to be built by Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group in China, while the remaining four are being built at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works under the 'Transfer of Technology' agreement

STATE-OF-THE-ART WEAPONS The submarines have advanced stealth features and are to be fitted with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors. As per sources, they can engage targets at stand-off ranges

Ukraine claims it hit 2 Russian oil refineries



Emergency services personnel work to extinguish a fire in Ivano-Frankivsk region of Ukraine on Saturday, following Russian overnight attacks | AFP

KYIV

UKRAINIAN drones hit two Russian oil refineries and a military airfield in a large-scale overnight attack, a Ukrainian defence source said.

The source said Ukraine hit "key technological facilities" at two refineries in the southern Krasnodar region. Russian officials had earlier reported a fire at a refinery in the town of Slavyansk-on-Kuban and state media said the facility had partially halted production.

Kyiv has hit several oil refineries in western Russia in recent months, despite reports of concern in Washington that the strikes could be seen as escalatory and might drive up global oil prices.

Ukraine also fired more than 60 drones at southern Russia overnight, Moscow said, in one of its largest overnight drone

attacks in recent months.

Russia also launched a "massive" missile strike at Ukraine overnight, damaging four power plants in the latest barrage targeting the country's energy supply, officials in Kyiv said on Saturday. "Thirty-four Russian missiles overnight. We managed to shoot down some of them. But the world has every opportunity to help (us) shoot down every missile and every drone," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

He called on Kyiv's Western partners to supply more air defence systems to protect his country's skies, as the air force said it shot down 21 of 34 incoming missiles. Moscow has launched some of its biggest ever strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities in recent months, knocking out a significant chunk of production, and triggering blackouts.

20 Cambodian soldiers killed in blast at army base

PHNOM PENH

TWENTY Cambodian soldiers have been killed in an ammunition explosion at an army base, Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Saturday.

The blast at around 2.45 pm

(local time) at the army base in Kampong Speu province to the west of the capital also wounded several soldiers, according to the PM, with the army saying that an entire truck of munitions had exploded.

"I am deeply shocked to re-

ceive the news of the ammunition explosion incident," Hun Manet said in a statement on Facebook, expressing his "deepest condolences" to the families of those killed.

Pictures on social media showed a destroyed one-storey

building wreathed in smoke, with residents of a nearby village also sharing images online of broken windows. Other images showed what appeared to be civilians with cuts and gashes being treated in hospital.

AFP

Fulton buys Republic, 1st US bank to fail this yr

WASHINGTON

THE Federal Deposit Insurance Corp said on Friday it had seized the Philadelphia-based Republic First Bank, which did business as Republic Bank and had roughly \$6 billion in assets and \$4 billion in deposits as of January 31.

Fulton Bank, which is based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, agreed to assume substantially all of the failed bank's deposits and buy essentially all of its assets, the agency said.

Republic Bank's 32 branches will reopen as branches of Fulton Bank as early as Saturday. Republic First Bank depositors can access their funds via checks or ATMs as early as Friday night, the FDIC said.

The bank's failure is expected to cost the depositor insurance fund \$667 million. The lender is the first FDIC-insured institution to fail in the US this year. The last bank failure was in November. In a strong economy an average of only four or five banks close each year.

Rising interest rates and falling commercial real estate values, especially for office buildings grappling with surging vacancy rates following the pandemic, have heightened the financial risks for many regional and community banks. Outstanding loans backed by properties that have lost value make them a challenge to refinance.

Last month, an investor group including Steven Mnuchin, who served as US Treasury secretary during the Trump administration, agreed to pump more than \$1 billion to rescue New York Community Bancorp, which has been hammered by weakness in commercial real estate and growing pains resulting from its buyout of a distressed bank.

Month after US bridge collapse, 2 bodies missing

BALTIMORE

A wooden cross is laden with Miguel Luna's personal belongings—is construction uniform and work boots, a family photo, the flag of his native El Salvador—but his body remains missing after the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

More than a month has passed since six members of a roadwork crew plunged to their deaths when a container ship lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns. Four bodies have been recovered, but Luna and another worker, Jose Mynor Lopez, have not been found.

They were all Latino immigrants who came to the United States from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. They were fathers and husbands, brothers and grandfathers. They shared a common dream and a determination to achieve it. In an effort to honour their lives and their work, Baltimore County's close-knit Latino community has constructed an elaborate memorial near the south end of the bridge.

Five-Star Business Finance Limited advertisement containing public auction notices with details on property, bidding, and terms.

