

Lebanon PM says scale of war recovery beyond state's capacity

AFP | Beirut

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said yesterday that rebuilding regions destroyed in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war was beyond the state's capacity, calling for funding as he visited the heavily damaged south.

"I am aware of the magnitude of the crisis" including the destruction, displacement and loss of livelihoods, Salam said in Nabatieh, a major southern city hit hard by Israeli airstrikes.

"But the scale of the needs exceeds the capacities of the Lebanese state and its ability to bear these burdens alone," Salam added. "We still need significant funding" for reconstruction, the prime minister said.

New islands appear after Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano erupts

AFP | Jakarta

Two new islands have emerged in the waters surrounding Mount Anak Krakatau following a major eruption last month that grounded flights for days, the Head of Indonesia's Volcano Monitoring Agency said yesterday.

The islands were spotted in satellite images of the water-filled caldera in which Anak Krakatau stands, Rita Susilawati of the PVMBG Centre for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation told said.

Lula, Bolsonaro trade scandal fire in final scramble for votes

AFP | Brasilia

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his election rival Flavio Bolsonaro are leaving no controversy unturned in their last-ditch efforts to discredit each other and win over voters ahead of Sunday's nail-biter election.

A campaign dominated by scandals and insults has done little to ease the deep political polarization in Latin America's biggest economy, one of the last major leftist bastions in the region.

The tight race pits Lula, 80, against the son of former far-right president Jair Bolsonaro, a close ally of Donald Trump who has backed a wave of victorious right-wing candidates in Latin America.

Pilot in flydubai attack says 'could not let all those people die'

Injured captain recounts cockpit attack details

Modi hails pilot for averting disaster

AFP | Dubai

An Indian pilot attacked by his co-pilot aboard a flight from the UAE to Israel said yesterday that he "could not let all those people die", in his first public remarks after he helped stop the plane from crashing.

His actions on Wednesday helped avert disaster when he managed to open the cockpit door despite suffering injuries, allowing passengers and crew to take control of the plane and make an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia.

The co-pilot has been returned to the United Arab Emirates, where the incident is under investigation to determine any "terrorist activity or intent".

The mostly Israeli passengers on the flight have been flown back to Israel on a replacement plane.

Flydubai captain Smit Machchhar told Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a call from his hospital bed that he knew he had to act quickly, saying his opening the cockpit door was a "last push" to get help.

"I had suffered so many injuries that I had collapsed. At that



A video grab shows Smit Machchhar (L) and Narendra Modi (R) during their call

time, I could feel that the aircraft was going down. I knew this was the last push, that the door was right there," he said.

"I was being hit even then, but I just opened the door and everyone came in."

Machchhar, who has 17 years of aviation experience -- 11 as a captain -- described the moment he realised the plane was going down while he was lying injured.

He told Modi that during the ordeal, he had recited a Hindu devotional prayer dedicated to the deity Hanuman.

UAE official says attack 'terrorist act' as he praises pilot

A senior UAE official said yesterday that the incident aboard a flydubai flight to Israel this week was a "terrorist act," praising the captain who helped stop the plane from crashing after he was attacked by his co-pilot.

Presidential adviser Anwar Gargash said on X that Smit Machchhar, an Indian nation-

al, was a "true hero" and deserved "every appreciation."

"In confronting a serious terrorist act and a potential disaster, he embodied the true meaning of courage and responsibility," Gargash said.

"Vigilance and caution remain essential in the face of the dangers of extremism and terrorism," Gargash said.

"I know God himself saved me," he said.

He said years of aviation experience allowed him to understand what was happening even while he was wounded.

'Kill me, kill me'

The circumstances of the confrontation are under investigation, but the co-pilot allegedly attacked Machchhar, leaving him wounded and triggering a struggle for control of the aircraft.

Passengers described rushing the cockpit and a fight for control after the plane suddenly plummeted -- losing around

17,000 feet of altitude in the span of a minute, according to the Flightradar24 website.

Modi said Machchhar's actions helped save many lives and avert "a great tragedy".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier also credited Machchhar, as well as the flight's passengers, with averting catastrophe.

US President Donald Trump warned on Thursday that if Iran was found to be linked to the attack the country would be "hit very hard". Netanyahu has said the suspect had undergone "Islamic radical indoctrination".

Netanyahu warns 'very heavy price' if any power behind incident

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned yesterday that Israel would impose a "very heavy price" on any power behind the flydubai incident, without offering evidence that any country was responsible.

"As time passes, the picture is

becoming clearer: The attacker underwent Islamist radicalisation. He came to crash the plane with all passengers on board," Netanyahu said in a statement.

"We are investigating whether he was sent, and whoever sent him will pay a very heavy

price," Netanyahu said of the co-pilot assailant.

Netanyahu did not identify any country as a potential culprit but for years has been quick to point the finger at Iran, which Israel and the United States attacked in February.



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SMIT MACHCHHAR

"The attacker, he calls out to the aircrew, 'Kill me, kill me'," Netanyahu told US media, adding it was "clear he was suicidal".

The Israeli leader identified the co-pilot as an Omani national and said Israel would check how he had been cleared to work on flights to the country.

"We have constraints that say that you can't have pilots from countries that don't have diplomatic relations with Israel. Obviously he was able to go through that," Netanyahu told Fox News.

Flydubai has suspended flights to and from Israel since the attack, leaving some Israelis stranded in the UAE.

Israel's flag carrier El Al is planning replacement flights to bring them home but was forced to cancel them yesterday, saying Emirati authorities had not given landing permission.

New clashes erupt as protests disrupt over 560 French schools

AFP | Paris

French high school students yesterday lit fires and hurled projectiles at police who responded by firing tear gas, as new clashes erupted nationwide in an escalating protest movement demanding better conditions in education.

The government says that the pupils in their mid-to-late-teens studying in lycees have every right to air grievances but has condemned violence which has included a policeman being chased, kicked and beaten by a group of youths.

The movement, which began in the Paris region in September and rapidly spread nationwide, has seen teenage pupils at lycees in their final years of schooling block access to buildings and



A protestor throws a stop sign into a fire as protesting students carry out blockading action near the Kerichen high school in Brest

clash with police.

Almost 400 schools were shut yesterday with education dis-

rupted at least 564 high schools out of the 3,700 in the country, according to the education min-

istry.

The students say their school hours are excessively long, conditions inadequate including overheated classrooms, and that there are too many staff absences.

"For a whole year, we didn't have a science teacher. We don't have any textbooks," said Simon, a 15-year-old who declined to give his surname outside the Turgot high school in central Paris.

"And still, we're the lucky ones. It's even worse in the suburbs."

'Intolerable'

In the western city of Brest, police used tear gas at the Kerichen high school as pupils hurled projectiles at security forces.

Meanwhile Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said images from

the eastern city of Belfort showing a group of youths encircle a lone policeman and kick him to the ground were of a "rare violence and intolerable".

A 17-year-old high school student was arrested over the incident. The policeman lost consciousness but his condition was not a cause for concern, said Nunez.

In Paris yesterday, fire damaged the entrances of two high schools -- Leonard de Vinci in the south of the city and Gaston-Bachelard in the southeast -- with the fire brigade called to extinguish the blazes, an AFP photographer said.

Students have accused police of using excessive force and causing injuries by regularly firing tear gas canisters to disperse the protests.