

1521

Spanish conquistadors under Hernán Cortés capture Aztec Emperor Cuauhtémoc in Tenochtitlan, marking the end of the Aztec Empire

1642

Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens discovers Mars's southern polar cap



1788

Prussia joins the Anglo-Dutch alliance to form the Triple Alliance to prevent the spread of the Russo-Swedish War of 1788-90

1942

The Manhattan Project commences under the direction of US General Leslie Groves with the aim of developing an atomic bomb

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TWEETS

01



Young people's fearless advocacy has been pivotal in the fight against the climate crisis. I'm proud to announce the 14 young leaders who will form my next @YAG-Climate Youth Advisory Group. The world needs more young voices to shape #ClimateAction.

@antonioguterres

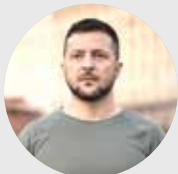
02



Had a fruitful conversation with President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev. We reviewed the progress achieved in key areas of our bilateral cooperation and reaffirmed our shared resolve to further advance the India-Uzbekistan Strategic Partnership.

@narendramodi

03



I had a long conversation with the Prime Minister of India @narendramodi. We discussed in detail all important issues - both of our bilateral cooperation and the overall diplomatic situation. I am grateful to the Prime Minister for his warm words of support for our people.

@ZelenskyyUa

04



Hey @Apple App Store, why do you refuse to put either or Grok in your "Must Have" section when is the #1 news app in the world and Grok is #5 among all apps? Are you playing politics? What gives? Inquiring minds want to know.

@elonmusk

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stance)

# 'Nothing will be left'

## Israel prepares for Gaza City battle



A Palestinian man walks towards Israeli soldiers during a raid at the Balata refugee camp east of Nablus city in the occupied West Bank

● **Hamas could have as many as 10,000 to 15,000 fighters in Gaza City**

● **Obstacles could include improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**

● **Battle warned could end up being "very similar to Stalingrad"**

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

In a dense urban landscape, with likely thousands of Hamas fighters lying in wait, taking Gaza City will be a difficult and costly slog for the Israeli army, security experts say.

On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu laid out his vision of victory in Gaza following 22 months of war --- with the military ordered to attack the last remaining Hamas strongholds in Gaza City and the central camps further south.

With a pre-war population of some 760,000, according to official figures, Gaza City was the biggest of any municipal area in the Palestinian territories.

But following the unprecedented Hamas attack on Israel in 2023 that sparked the war, its population has only swelled, with thousands of displaced people fleeing intensive military operations to the north.

**'Death trap'**

Amir Avivi, a former Israeli general and head of the Israeli Defense and Security Forum think tank, described the city as the "heart of Hamas's rule

in Gaza".

"Gaza City has always been the centre of government and also has the strongest brigade of Hamas," he said.

The first challenge for Israeli troops relates to Netanyahu's call for the evacuation of civilians -- how such a feat will be carried out remains unclear.

Unlike the rest of the Strip, where most of the population has been displaced at least once, around 300,000 residents of Gaza City have not moved since the outbreak of the conflict, according to Avivi.

Israel has already tried to push civilians further south to so-called humanitarian zones established by the military, but there is likely little space to accommodate more arrivals.

"You cannot put another one million people over there. It will be a horrible humanitarian crisis," said Michael Milshtein, an Israeli former military intelligence officer.

According to Avivi, humanitarian aid would be mainly distributed south of Gaza City in order to encourage residents to move toward future distribution sites managed by the US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF).

Up from just four currently, the GHF plans to operate 16 sites.

However, Gaza's civil defence agency says Israeli troops are firing at and killing civilians daily around the sites.

Human Rights Watch has called them a "death trap", while the UN and other groups have lashed out at what they call a militarisation of aid.

**'Stalingrad'**

According to Michael Milshtein, who heads the Pales-

tinian Studies Program at Tel Aviv University, Hamas's military wing could have as many as 10,000 to 15,000 fighters in Gaza City, many of them freshly recruited.

"It's very easy to convince a 17, 18, 19-year-old Palestinian to be a part of Al-Qassam Brigades," Milshtein told AFP, referring to Hamas's armed wing as he cited a lack of opportunities for much Gaza's population.

"While (Israel's army) prepares itself, Hamas also prepares itself for the coming warfare, if it takes place," he added, predicting that the battle could end up being "very similar to Stalingrad."

The Israeli army will encounter obstacles including a vast network of tunnels where Israeli hostages are likely being held, along with weapons depots, hiding places and combat posts.

Other obstacles could include improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the use of civilians as human shields in a dense urban maze of narrow alleys and tall buildings, according to press reports.

"It's almost impossible to go in there without creating both hostage casualties and a large humanitarian disaster," said Mairav Zonszein of the International Crisis Group.

The material destruction, she added, will be enormous.

"They will simply destroy everything, and then nothing will be left," she said.

Despite rumoured disagreements over the plan by the chief of the army Eyal Zamir, the general said his forces "will be able to conquer Gaza City, just as it did in Khan Yunis and Rafah in the south," according to a statement on Monday.

## Hamas delegation expected in Cairo to discuss Gaza truce efforts



A Palestinian man carries a wounded youth, evacuated from the site of an Israeli strike, west of Gaza City

AFP | Gaza City, Palestinian Territories

A senior Hamas delegation was due in Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials on efforts by mediators to secure an elusive ceasefire in Gaza, two Palestinian sources told AFP yesterday.

Together with Qatar and the United States, Egypt has been involved in mediation between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas that has failed to secure a breakthrough since a short-lived truce earlier this

year. Upon Egypt's invitation, the Hamas delegation led by the group's chief negotiator Khalil al-Hayya "is expected to arrive in Cairo today (Tuesday) or tomorrow morning", the source told AFP, requesting anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

The source said the delegation was scheduled to meet Egyptian officials on Wednesday to "discuss the latest developments" in "ceasefire negotiations and prisoner exchange" that would include the release of hostages held in Gaza.

## EU, UK and Japan urge action against 'famine unfolding' in Gaza



Palestinians queue to fill up on water in the sweltering heat in the Mawasi area of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

The European Union, Britain and Japan yesterday called for urgent action to stop "famine" in the Gaza Strip.

"The humanitarian suffering in Gaza has reached unimaginable levels. Famine is unfolding before our eyes," a joint statement signed by the EU's top diplomat and foreign ministers from 24 countries, including Canada and Australia.

"Urgent action is needed now to halt and reverse starvation," they said.

The ministers and EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas also demanded Israel "provide authorisation for all international NGO aid shipments and to unblock essential humanitarian actors from operating".

Seventeen European Union countries signed the statement, including France, the Netherlands and usually pro-Palestinian countries such as Ireland and Spain.

Notably absent was Germany, Israel's staunch supporter in the EU, despite its drastic move to halt the export of mil-

itary equipment to Israel last week.

Israel has until recently enjoyed broad support across the political spectrum in Germany, a country still seeking to atone for the World War II murder of more than six million Jews.

The EU struck a deal last month to increase aid access to Gaza but senior officials have said the agreement has not been implemented fully.



**UN-mandated experts have warned that Gaza is slipping into famine while international organisations have for months condemned the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on aid distribution in Gaza.**