

# Azerbaijan vows retaliation for deadly strike on civilians

Azerbaijan says 12 civilians killed by shelling in Ganja, accuses Armenia

● More than 40 were wounded in the missile attack

AFP | Washington

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev vowed yesterday to take revenge on Armenia after a missile strike killed 12 sleeping people in the city of Ganja, a dramatic escalation in the conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The early hours attack, which also saw a strike on the nearby strategic city of Mingcevir, came hours after Azerbaijani forces shelled Stepanakert, the capital of the ethnic Armenian separatist region.

The explosions in Ganja levelled a row of houses and left at least 40 people injured in an attack Aliyev described as "a war crime".

He said his army would "take revenge on the battlefield" and promised to capture Karabakh by driving out Armenian forces "like dogs".

## 'Our pain is deep'

As the sun rose over the devastation in Ganja, Mayil Shakhnazarov, 36, said it was impossible to identify some of those killed.

"What can we say? Our pain is deep. Really deep," he told AFP.

The seeming tit-for-tat attacks further undermine international efforts to calm a resurgence of fighting between Christian Ar-



Rescue teams work at a site hit by a strike

menians and Muslim Azerbaijanis and avoid drawing regional powers Russia and Turkey into a conflict that has killed hundreds of people.

An AFP team in Ganja saw rows of houses in Ganja turned to rubble by the strike, which shattered walls and ripped roofs off buildings in the surrounding streets.

People ran outside in shock and tears, stumbling through dark muddy alleys in their slippers, some wearing bathroom robes and pyjamas.

## 'Everything shattered'

The EU condemned the strike on Ganja and said a ceasefire

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Reporters in Ganja saw rows of houses turned to rubble by the shelling, and a rescue team remove black bags containing body parts from the scene. The strike shattered the walls and ripped the roofs off buildings in the surrounding streets

agreed between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Moscow last week "must be fully respected without delay".

"The European Union deplores the strikes on the Azerbaijani city of Ganja during the night of 16-17 October resulting in civilian loss of life and serious injury," said a spokesperson for EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell.

"All targeting of civilians and civilian installations by either party must stop."

The attack came six days after a missile struck another residential part of the city of more than 300,000 people, killing 10 civilians and leaving many on edge.

## India's DGCA warns travel agents to refund flyers



Representational image of a flight landing

AFP | Washington

Indian government warned travel agents not to delay giving refunds to passengers in cases where the money has been paid back by airlines to them. Also in such cases, agents have been directed not to give travel vouchers for future use to passengers.

If agents still resort to these malpractices, then the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will initiate action against them for violation of the Supreme Court's October 1, 2020, judgment on re-refunds for flights cancelled during the pandemic, say officials.

The regulator on Friday issued an order saying that as per the SC directives, "it is the obligation of travel agents to immediately transfer refund to passenger once the same is received by such travel agent from airlines. Withholding of such refunded amount, by travel agents, in any manner whatsoever, would amount to gross and blatant violation SC directions."

The DGCA notes that "in certain cases airlines have already refunded fare amount to travel agent(s) but travel agents(s) are withholding the said refund amount and are not re-

For those who made bookings prior to lockdown for a period up till May 24, the refund would be governed by the credit shell scheme and the incentives thereunder

INDIA'S SUPREME COURT

funding the same to the passengers.... certain travel agents though have received the refund from airline but instead of refunding it to passengers, are issuing vouchers to such passengers on their own and thus indirectly withholding the refund amount with them."

While travel agents do not directly come under the DGCA, it can report violation of SC order and initiate action for contempt of court against the ones flouting the same. To avoid this situation, the regulator has asked travel agents and all other stakeholders to strictly comply with the Supreme Court's October 1, 2020 judgment on airfare refunds. The apex court directed DGCA to ensure strict compliance of its directions.

## Republican Senator appears to mock Kamala Harris' name at Trump rally



Kamala Harris speaks during the Democratic National Convention

AFP | Washington

Republican US Senator David Perdue appeared to mock Kamala Harris at a rally for President Donald Trump in the battleground state of Georgia on Friday, repeatedly mispronouncing the vice presidential nominee's name.

Harris, a US senator from California, is the daughter of immigrants from India and Jamaica. Former Vice President Joe Biden named Harris as his running mate in August, making her the first Black woman and first Asian American to join a major party's presidential ticket.

She has said her name should be pronounced "com-ma-la."

Perdue, who is in a closely fought battle for re-election to the senate against Democrat Jon Ossoff, spoke ahead of Trump in the central Georgia city of Macon on Friday evening.

Video of his speech shows Perdue repeatedly making exaggerated attempts to pronounce the name before saying, "I don't know, whatever." The crowd responds with laughter.

Ossoff tweeted that Perdue would not have mocked a fellow senator who was male or white.

Sabrina Singh, a spokeswoman for Harris, took to Twitter on Friday to respond. "Well that is incredibly racist," she wrote.

## Trump slams Republican critic who warned of November 'bloodbath'

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday attacked a long-time congressional critic who warned this week that his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and authoritarian leaders could cause a "Republican bloodbath in the Senate" in the Nov. 3 elections.

US Senator Ben Sasse is the least effective of the 53 Republican senators, Trump wrote on Twitter, calling him "a liability to the Republican Party, and an embarrassment to the Great State of Nebraska. Other than that, he's just a wonderful guy."

Sasse criticized Trump in a town hall with constituents on Wednesday, and questioned whether the president would ultimately drive the country further to the left.

Trump "kisses dictators" and has "flirted with white supremacists," according to a transcript of the virtual town hall. Trump's leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic has not been "reasonable, or responsible, or right," Sasse said.

He added that Trump refused to take the coronavirus seriously for months and had treated it



US President Donald Trump takes a swing with a bat in the grand foyer of the White House (file photo)

like a news cycle rather than a multi-year public health challenge.

Sasse is a frequent critic of Trump, and said before the 2016 election he would not endorse him. However, he has voted in line with Trump's positions in Congress nearly 87% of the time, according to a tally of votes through Sept. 24 by the

**87**  
per cent of the time Sasse has voted in line with Trump's positions in Congress

fivethirtyeight.com website. Senate Republicans are battling to keep their 53-47 majority in the election. Recent polling by Reuters/Ipsos shows Democratic challenger Mark Kelly pulling far ahead of Republican incumbent Martha McSally in Arizona, one of 10 states where Republican incumbents are vulnerable to being un-seated.