

Hezbollah says clashed with Israeli troops north of Lebanon's Litani river

AFP | Beirut

Hezbollah said its fighters clashed with Israeli forces in a town north of the Litani river yesterday, a day after Israel's military said it was expanding its ground operations.

In a statement, the Iran-backed group said its fighters "clashed with the enemy forces at point-blank range" with light and medium weapons in the town of Zawtar Al-Sharqiyah, on the edge of an Israeli-declared "yellow line" in south Lebanon where its troops have been operating.

Since early Tuesday, the group had said its fighters had faced Israeli troops entering the town, which holds strategic importance due to its proximity to the major southern city of Nabatieh, just six kilometers (four miles) away.

Israel's army yesterday renewed an evacuation warning for Nabatieh city after issuing a similar order a day earlier, saying it would act "forcefully" against Hezbollah which it accuses of violating the ceasefire.



A Lebanese soldier stands on the rubble of a residential building hit the previous day by an Israeli strike near the southern town of Burj al-Shamali

Iran says 'low' possibility of return to war with US

Revolutionary Guards says forces on alert as supreme leader warns against hosting US bases

Modi warns of dangers as heatwave grips India

AFP | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned of the dangers of "extreme heat" gripping the world's most populous country yesterday, with troops battling forest fires and local authorities reporting deaths from heatstroke.

International air-quality monitoring platform AQI recorded that the top 45 hottest cities in the world were all in India at midday yesterday, all above 43°C.

"Different parts of India are witnessing soaring temperatures, and the challenges that come with it," Modi said.

"This heat is harsh on all of us, and I urge you all to take as many precautions as possible," he said in a statement issued by his office.

Extreme heat can lead to dehydration that thickens the blood and, in particularly severe cases, causes organs to shut down.

Ignoring warning signs "can quickly turn dangerous and may even lead to heatstroke," Modi added.

"Children, the elderly and those working outdoors are especially vulnerable during extreme heat."

● Ceasefire violations accusations continue

● Internet partially restored in Iran

AFP | Washington

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said yesterday that a return to war with the United States was unlikely, while warning that the Islamic republic was prepared to respond to any further military action.

The statement came a day after Iran accused the United States of violating the ceasefire in place since April and said it was prepared to respond following recent exchanges of fire since the truce took effect.

In Lebanon, where a truce has done little to halt hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, Israeli strikes killed 31 people on Tuesday, according to Lebanon's

health ministry.

The regional conflict escalated in late February following US and Israeli strikes on Iran, expanding across multiple fronts and contributing to volatility in global energy markets.

Mohammad Akbarzadeh, deputy political chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy, said that while the likelihood of renewed conflict was low, Iranian armed forces remained on alert.

He warned that Iran's military would respond forcefully to any attack, according to remarks carried by the Tasnim news agency.

Tehran's intelligence ministry said the United States and Israel continued efforts to undermine the Islamic republic and destabilise the country.

The ministry said it believed weapons, ammunition and communication devices, including Starlink satellite internet terminals, could be smuggled into Iran to support sabotage activities and fuel unrest.

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Despite ongoing ceasefire talks, Tehran's intelligence ministry fears that Western entities are trying to smuggle Starlink satellite internet terminals into the country to fuel internal unrest and support sabotage activities

Oil prices fall

Iran and the United States have for weeks exchanged warnings and diplomatic messages while negotiations continued through mediation efforts led by Pakistan.

With no agreement reached, major points of contention remain, including the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran imposed restrictions on shipping through the strait during the conflict, while the United States responded with measures targeting Iranian ports.

Yesterday, the Revolutionary Guards navy said vessels would be required to comply with Iranian maritime directives while transiting the waterway.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Tuesday that a peace agreement remained possible and that the Strait of Hormuz would eventually reopen.

Oil prices, which remain above pre-conflict levels, fell yesterday amid renewed expectations of progress in US-Iran talks, with Brent crude dropping five percent to \$94.61 a barrel.

Concerns over renewed fighting

Iranian authorities partially restored global internet access

on Tuesday after a three-month shutdown.

"I do feel better now because I finally can use my favourite applications," said Hana, a 20-year-old student in Tehran who gave only her first name.

"At the same time, I have this concern that war might resume any minute and just cut me off again from my friends."

Amir, a 27-year-old software developer in Tehran, also said he remained concerned about renewed fighting.

"I feel like nothing is certain yet, even though the ceasefire is still ongoing and there is news of a possible agreement. But the daily question is, will there be missile strikes tonight?"

There have been incidents during the ceasefire, including overnight Monday to Tuesday, when the US military said it carried out what it described as self-defence strikes while providing limited details. Iran's foreign ministry accused Washington of violating the ceasefire.

Duterte's ICC trial to start November 30: judge

AFP | The Hague

Former Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte will face a crimes against humanity trial at the International Criminal Court from November 30, the presiding judge said yesterday.

Duterte faces three counts of

crimes against humanity, with prosecutors alleging his involvement in at least 76 murders between 2013 and 2018 during his so-called "war on drugs".

The 81-year-old will be the first Asian former head of state to face trial at the ICC, which prosecutes individuals for the world's worst crimes such as

war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Prosecutors had sought the November 30 start and they expect to call between 60 and 70 witnesses during the trial.

"I am prepared to accede to the prosecution's request" said presiding judge Joanna Korner.

She did however order a further assessment of Duterte's fitness to stand trial before proceedings begin.

The defence, led by British barrister Peter Haynes after a reshuffle, had urged judges not to set a date for trial, arguing that Duterte's health needed to be assessed.



Rodrigo Duterte