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PTI announces nationwide protest campaign on Saturday

Imran picks Omar Ayub as PTI's candidate for prime minister, Mian Aslam Iqbal as Punjab CM

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a significant development, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has officially nominated former provincial minister Aslam Iqbal as its candidate for the chief minister position in Punjab. This announcement came from PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, signalling PTI's intent to solidify its leadership in the province. Speaking to the media on Thursday, Barrister Gohar also disclosed that PTI has put forward Salar Khan Kakar as its candidate for the chief minister position in Balochistan. Moreover, the PTI has announced its plans for a nationwide protest scheduled for Saturday. "We will protest peacefully all over Pakistan on Saturday," Barrister Gohar added. Emphasizing the peaceful nature of the protest, the PTI leader asserted that the demonstration aims to convey a strong message against what the party perceives as electoral irregularities, particularly the alleged theft of 80 seats. "According to records, the PTI has won 180 seats. Nobody has the right to form a government with a fake mandate," he insisted, adding that in the protest, they will give the message that 80 of their seats have been stolen. "The protest will be peaceful, and there should be no arrests," Barrister Gohar asserted.

Addressing concerns over potential power-sharing arrangements, Barrister Gohar firmly stated that PTI will not engage in any such agreements with parties like the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). Furthermore, Barrister Gohar affirmed Omar Ayub as the PTI's candidate for the prime ministerial position, reiterating the party's commitment to public service-oriented politics rather than pursuing power-sharing arrangements. He also claimed that the PTI was not going ahead with any alliance with the Perverz Khattak-led PTI-P.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet, in Islamabad.

Cabinet approves Syed Tariq's appointment as PBM MD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved the appointment of Syed Tariq Muhammad Hassan as Managing Director of Pakistan Baitul Maal (PBM). The decision was taken on the recommendation of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Security, according to a press release issued by the Prime Minister House Media Wing. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar presided over the cabinet meeting.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce, the cabinet approved the transit/transfer of vehicle spare parts and new tires used by the Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Afghanistan from Karachi Port to Kabul. It was informed that such imports and their

Gas bomb: Caretaker gov raises tariff by 67%, effective from Feb 1

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: In a move that has stirred public outcry, the caretaker government has greenlit a 67% increase in gas prices, effectively burdening consumers with higher costs of living starting from February 1. The decision, approved in a meeting of the federal cabinet led by caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, follows the recommendation of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to raise gas prices by a staggering 67%. This sharp hike in rates will apply to both protected and non-protected customers, translating to a surge of Rs100 and Rs300 per MMBTU (million British thermal units), respectively. Notably, while the in-

crease will apply to consumption charges, there will be no increase in fixed charges for both categories of consumers. However, bulk gas consumers will bear the brunt of a significant surge, facing a whopping increase of Rs900 per MMBTU. Furthermore, the CNG sector is set to face its own set of challenges, with prices anticipated to surge by Rs170 per MMBTU. Collectively, these price hikes are expected to impose an additional burden of Rs204 billion on all consumers. The decision has sparked widespread criticism, with many decriing the government's imposition of further financial strain on an already beleaguered populace. As citizens brace for the impact of increased gas prices on their household budgets, concerns mount over the potential escalation of inflationary pressures across the economy. As the caretaker government drops a gas bomb on consumers within just days of its departure, it is also expected to raise the price of petroleum products as per the fortnightly adjustments. The possibility of an increase in petrol and diesel prices today is being considered due to fluctuations in global oil prices. Following a hike of Rs13.55 per liter in petrol prices from February 1, authorities are now contemplating an increase in the price of high-speed diesel.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf addressing the troops onboard PN ship during exercise SEASPART 2024

Naval Chief oversees conduct of Exercise Seaspark 2024

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Thursday visited naval ships at sea, creeks areas on the coastal belt of Sindh and coastal areas of Balochistan to oversee the conduct of Exercise Seaspark 2024 and meet the deployed troops in the exercise. Exercise Seaspark 2024 is a major maritime exercise of Pakistan Navy (PN) which is regularly conducted after every two years on two force concept i.e. Blue Force (own force) and Orange Force (enemy force).

elements of PN to undertake complex operations, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. During the operations at sea, the PN warships and aircraft also detected Indian Navy ships, submarines and aircraft, attempting to covertly observe the exercise and interpret PN war plans. Accordingly, necessary safeguards were taken by the PN. During the visit of Maritime Headquarters at Karachi, the Chief of the Naval Staff was given a briefing by the Orange and Blue Naval Force Commanders on the conduct of operations by the respective forces. Thereafter, the Naval Chief visited Keeti Bandar Post and Battalion Headquarters of Pak Marines at Shah Bandar where he was briefed on combat readiness for defence of Creeks areas which constitutes the South Eastern maritime boundary with India. During the visit, the Naval Chief interacted with the troops deployed in difficult marshy areas and appreciated their devotion and high morale. Later on, the Naval Chief also visited Jinnah Naval Base at Ormara and naval ships operating at sea. During the visits, the CNS expressed his satisfaction on the professional excellence, high morale and perpetual readiness of the Pakistan Navy to ensure impregnable maritime defence of motherland and reaffirmed its resolve to safeguard national maritime interests.

Shehbaz apprises Nawaz of progress in talks with allies over formation of gov

LAHORE (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif apprised three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Thursday about the progress in the negotiations with the allies, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the centre. Shehbaz Sharif called on the PML-N supremo at Jati Umra. On this occasion, both leaders discussed the latest political position of JUI-F supremo Maulana Fazlur Rehman. A meeting of PML-N bigwigs was also held under the chairmanship of Nawaz Sharif. During the meeting, consultation was held on the possible names of the Punjab cabinet. The possible names of the Punjab assembly speaker and deputy speaker were also considered. The consultations were also held regarding the inclusion of allies in the provincial cabinet and their possible ministries in Punjab. In the meeting, Ishaq Dar, while giving a briefing on the joint meeting of the coordination committees of the PML-N and PPP, said, "There has been progress in matters regarding government formation, while the third meeting of the coordination committees will be held on Friday."



QUETTA: A delegation of teachers led by Master Abdul Karim meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Section 144 imposed in Hub

Monitoring Desk QUETTA (APP): The Balochistan government imposed Article 144 on Thursday following a clash between workers of two political parties in the Industrial Town area of Hub. Hub District Deputy Commissioner Munir Ahmed Musani requested the Department of Home Affairs and Tribal Affairs to impose Section 144 to prevent further clashes. Two political workers were killed and 13 injured as a result of firing by rival political parties at the RO office on the main RCD road during the recounting of votes. The Department of Home Affairs and Tribal Affairs has issued a notification to enforce Section 144 in the district to maintain peace in the district bordering Karachi on the request of the DC Hub.

Imran Khan was ousted on Gen Bajwa's directives: Fazlur Rehman

Monitoring Desk ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Emir Maulana Fazlur Rehman said Thursday that the no-confidence motion that ousted former prime minister Imran Khan was tabled on the directives of ex-army chief General (retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa. In an interview on a private news channel, Fazl, who was the chief of the multi-party alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) responsible for removing Khan, said: "I was personally against the no-confidence move [...] but if I had said no despite insistence of other parties, then an impression would've been given that I 'saved' the PTI founder." The PDM removed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in April 2022 and led by Shehbaz Sharif, the multi-party alliance ruled the country for 16 months before handing over the reins to the caretaker set-up. At first, Khan insisted that the US had him removed — a claim that the Joe Biden administration vehemently rejected. However, the ex-prime minister later shifted the blame to Gen Bajwa. In an interview in February last year, Khan, citing an apparent conversation of the retired general with a journalist, said General Bajwa had "accepted and clarified that he was behind our government's ouster". After he became the first prime minister to be ousted via a no-trust motion, Khan continued a tirade against the establishment; however, politicians also said that the ex-army chief was involved in the PTI's ouster.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali

Election process in Pakistan is its internal matter : FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign Office (FO) has said election process in Pakistan is its internal matter. "We have welcomed foreign observers and Commonwealth observers. We discharge our constitutional obligations forcefully. Political leaders are being targeted in Occupied Kashmir. Pakistan wants Kashmir issue is resolved as per aspirations of people of Kashmir in accordance with UN resolutions, this was said by Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch here in weekly press briefing Thursday. She mentioned that Pakistan welcomed foreign observers, including a group from the Commonwealth, demonstrating the country's commitment to transparency in the electoral process. She said Pakistan takes its constitutional obliga-

tions seriously. It is the right of Pakistanis to enjoy freedoms and democracy. She said any step that Pakistan takes in this regard is in conformity with its own constitutional obligations and not influenced by external advice. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch pointed out that the interim report of Commonwealth observer group also highlighted the transparency and participatory nature of the general elections. When asked about the budget announced by the Indian government for illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson said pouring in money in the occupied territory can neither absolve the occupying power from its responsibilities nor can it legitimize its illegal occupation. She said Jammu and Kashmir is one of the oldest unresolved disputes. It has been on the agenda of the UN Security Council since 1948.

AJK ECP issues arrest warrants of Ali Amin

MUZAFFARABAD (Online): Azad Kashmir Election Commission has issued arrest warrants of former minister for Kashmir affairs and nominated Chief Minister KP Ali Amin Gandapur. Petition on violation of election code in AJK general election 2021 by Ali Amin Gandapur was filed against him. Deputy Commissioner (DC) DI Khan has been ordered to present Ali Amin Gandapur in Azad Kashmir as he has not appeared despite being summoned by election commission repeatedly. Ali Amin Gandapur was arrested and presented on February 28.

Achakzai urges public reject calls for disruption from losing candidates

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Balochistan Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai on Thursday urged the public to reject calls of agitation by the unsuccessful candidates and parties of elections, instead, he encouraged citizens to keep their role in efforts to promote national development and prosperity. Minister Achakzai emphasized that creating chaos and blocking roads is not a solution to existing problems. He characterized such actions as attempts by "rejected individuals" to mask their disappointment with the electoral outcome. He advised those with genuine concerns to seek legal recourse rather than resorting to disruptive protests. Furthermore, the Minister appealed to individuals blocking roads to consider the impact on ordinary citizens. He urged them to demonstrate peacefully on the side of the road, allowing for unimpeded traffic flow, if their intentions are truly focused on public well-being.

ANP rejects alliance with PTI, citing electoral rigging

PESHAWAR (INP): After Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), the Awami National Party (ANP) has also declined to forge an alliance with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). ANP leader Mian Ifikhar Hussain stated that the party's position stemmed from the belief that supporting PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resulted in ANP's loss of seats. He explained that given these circumstances, negotiations with PTI were deemed inappropriate by the ANP.



QUETTA: Members of Four-Party Alliance are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, outside DC Office in Quetta.

Independent MPs from Balochistan unite to join party for province's dev

QUETTA (INP): Newly-elected independent candidates from Balochistan convened a consultative meeting and unanimously decided to join a political party together. During the meeting, the newly-elected MPs, including Wali Noorzai, Maulvi Noorullah, Liaqat Lehri, Bakht Muhammad Kakar, and Asfandyar Kakar, participated, while Abdul Khaliq Achakzai joined via video link. The MPs of the Balochistan Assembly resolved to adopt a unified stance for the development and prosperity of the province, affirming their collective commitment to representing the people of the province in the Balochistan Assembly. Sources said that these MPs are in contact with the provincial leaderships of the PML-N, PPP and JUI.

Ombudsman Punjab plays vital role in by providing justice to the people: Baligh

Independent Report
LAHORE: Ombudsman Punjab, Major (Rtd) Azam Suleman met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, the Ombudsman Punjab Major (Rtd) Azam Suleman informed the Governor Punjab about various steps taken to provide speedy justice to the petitioners.
Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the office of Ombudsman Punjab is an easy and effective means of providing cheap and quick justice to the people. He said that he appreciates the Ombudsman Punjab and his team for the good work. Governor Punjab said that the office of Ombudsman Punjab is playing an important role in the improvement of the system by providing justice to the people. He lauded the Ombudsman Punjab office for redressing the grievance of the complainants in a short period of time. Governor Punjab further said that initiatives such as digitization of the Ombudsman Punjab office and mobile app for resolving the problems of overseas Pakistanis are commendable. Ombudsman Punjab Major (ret) Azam Suleman said that research and development wing has been established in the office of the Ombudsman. He said that the ombudsman Punjab received a record number of 35,139 applications in the last year and all of them were disposed of.



LAHORE: Ombudsman Punjab, Major (Rtd) Azam Suleman meeting with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

NACTA delegation, DG Info KP discuss media role in peace

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member delegation from National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) on Thursday met with Director General Information and Public Relations here at his office and discussed matters relating to the role of Information Dept in promotion of peace in the province. The role of media, especially the Radio in providing timely and accurate information to the general public was also discussed in detail.
DG Information KP, Muhammad Imran said the media has played a pivotal and responsible role in maintaining lasting peace in the province. To further improve its capacity and sphere, the Information Dept has established FM radios in the far-flung areas of the newly merged districts from where transmission in local and Pashto languages was continued. He said the role of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in promoting national harmony and cohesion was of the prime importance adding that the Radio Dept was endeavoring to render its services in a best possible manner in this connection.
He said ten radio stations of the department were proving credible information to the public besides informing them regarding their responsibilities.

Health Deptt issues working days for MTI hospitals

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Department issued a declaration of days for working in MTI hospitals on Thursday with the approval of Health Advisor Dr. Riaz Anwar.
The days were approved in light of MTI Policy Board recommendations, according to the official letters. "Working days will be implemented at MTI Hospitals and its affiliated colleges," according to the notification issued in this connection by the health department KP.

Fire erupts in residential house in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): A fire suddenly broke out in the house of a person, namely Faheem Khan, in Yousafabad Dir Colony here Thursday, said an official of the Rescue 1122. He disclosed that the fire erupted due to a short circuit, and as soon as the information was received, the fire vehicle of Rescue 1122 reached the accident site and started extinguishing the fire; however, no casualties were reported as a result.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting of the steering committee on Power department at CM Secretariat.

KP govt signs MoU for digital skills training

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Higher Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Cultural Communication Center on Thursday to increase the skilled workforce in the province.
The signing ceremony of the memorandum took place at the Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad, says a handout.
In addition to the provincial ministers Dr. Amir Abdullah, Dr. Najibullah, and Dr. Qasim Jan, relevant officials of the provincial government also participated.
The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, participated in the ceremony via video link. According to the memorandum of understanding, two hundred thousand students from the province's public colleges will be trained in various fields of digital skills.
Students receiving training in digital skills will also be provided employment opportunities in domestic and international markets.
Syed Arshad Hussain Shah said that the memorandum of understanding between the provincial government and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Cultural Communication Center is a major success for the current provincial government. Chief Minister said that this partnership will prove to be crucial in fulfilling the requirements of digital skills in the province.

Court dismisses bail petitions of two co-accused in Gujrat development projects case

LAHORE (INP): An accountability court on Thursday dismissed bail petitions of two co-accused in a case of alleged corruption in Gujrat's development projects against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. The court dismissed bail petitions of co-accused, Muhammad Khan Bhatti, former principal secretary to chief minister, and Asif Mehmood.
Accountability Court Judge Zubair Shahzad Kiyani heard bail petitions filed by the accused and announced the verdict on completion of arguments by the defence counsel and prosecution. The National Accountability Bureau had filed a reference against Parvez Elahi and 13 others on the charges of "misusing authority and receiving kickbacks" in Gujrat's development projects. The bureau had accused the former chief minister and others of receiving Rs1.2 billion as kickbacks in 116 development projects.

Two minor sisters burn to death as hut catches fire

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): Two minor sisters burn to death while another girl sustained injuries as hut of wood caught fire in Basti Goram Pitafi chowk on Thursday. According to Rescue officials, three minor girls including two sisters were present into their house when suddenly fire erupted in hut made with wood near Basti Goram Pitafi chowk Mondka road. As a result, seven-year-old Hijab d/o Ansar and 8-year-old Nayab d/o Ansar burn alive while 8-year-old Fatima d/o Abid sustained serious.

Over 10,000 students to get eco-friendly electric bikes in Punjab: Minister

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad Thursday said that his government has inaugurated a landmark project to distribute over 10,000 electric bikes among students from various educational institutions where such students in Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Rawalpindi will be the primary beneficiaries of this initiative.
Around 7,000 electric bikes would be allocated to male students, while 3,000 will be designated for female students, he said while talking to a Private news channel.
He said that these students must have a driving license while such an eco-friendly initiative will reduce environmental pollution, adding, that electric two-wheelers will offer long-term financial advantages to these students and would overcome their financial expenditures.
The launch of electric bikes can overcome the problems of exertion and would not take much time to reach their destinations, he added.



LAHORE: The pilgrims of Hajj are being guided with all possible efforts by the Ministry of Religious Affairs on the styles of medical camp and training camp in Haji Camp.

ATC orders to seize property of PTI leaders declared POs

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has ordered to seize the property of PTI leaders who have been declared proclaimed offenders. Court has ordered to seize their moveable and immovable properties. Under this order 2 residential plots and one bank account of former provincial minister Mian Aslam Iqbal, 5 agriculture lands in Swati Enterprises and properties in US and Dubai of former federal minister Azam Swati Decision has been taken to arrest 9 newly elected members of assembly including Ali Amin Gandapur involved.
and 3 agriculture land, one residential property, 2 vehicles and 35 horses of Ali Amin Gandapur 2 residential properties, 3 bank accounts and 2 vehicles of Andeeb Abbas will be seized. Order has been issued to seize 2 agriculture lands, 2 residential properties, 5 bank accounts, one vehicle 3 plots flats, 51 percent shares in Swati Enterprises and properties in US and Dubai of former federal minister Azam Swati Decision has been taken to arrest 9 newly elected members of assembly including Ali Amin Gandapur involved.

International News

At least 11 civilians, including children, killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon

BEIRUT (Online): At least 11 people, including children, have been killed in Israeli strikes on villages in southern Lebanon, according to a report.
A hospital director and three Lebanese security sources told Reuters that 11 people, including six children, were killed during strikes the Israeli military carried out against villages across southern Lebanon on Wednesday.
The Tel Aviv regime said in a statement that it had responded to an earlier rocket attack conducted by the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement that killed an Israeli trooper. The resistance group, however, did not announce any operations on Wednesday.
Initial reports had said four civilians were killed in the strikes.
Hezbollah and Israel have been trading near daily cross-border fire since the occupying regime waged a deadly war on Gaza on October 7.
Hezbollah, whose constant rocket fire has prompted tens of thousands of Israeli settlers to flee from the northern areas of the occupied territories, says its operations are meant to support Gaza's resistance.
Two security sources said that a woman and her two children had been killed in an Israeli strike on the village of al-Sawana on Wednesday.
Another strike on a building in Nabatieh claimed the lives of four more children, three women and a man, according to the director of the town's hospital, Hassan Wazni, and three other security sources. Wazni further said that seven people were also wounded in the strikes.
Sources also said that four Hezbollah fighters were also killed in separate strikes.
Hezbollah has warned it would expand the anti-Israel front in the south if the occupying regime escalated its acts of aggression against the Lebanese territory and the Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip.
The resistance group has vowed to keep up its retaliatory operations as long as the usurping entity continues its aggression against Gaza, which has so far killed more than 28,500 Palestinians, mostly women and children.



PARIS: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy arrives for the verdict on his appeal in the so-called 'Bygmalion' case over illegal campaign financing.

Netherlands joins coalition to supply Ukraine with advanced drones

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The Netherlands is joining a military coalition with allies including Britain that will supply Ukraine with advanced drone technology and bolster its offensive capabilities in the war against Russia, the Dutch defence minister said.
The pledge from the Netherlands comes in addition to F-16 fighter jets, artillery, ammunition and air defence systems provided by the Dutch to Kyiv.
For the Netherlands, there may be additional costs on top of 2 billion euros earmarked already for 2024, Dutch Defence Minister Kasja Ollongren told Reuters in an interview ahead of two days of NATO defence minister meetings in Brussels starting on Wednesday.
"We know of course that drones are very important in this war," Ollongren said. "That's why we are joining the drone coalition that Ukraine has started together with Latvia."

Thailand warns of high pollution in capital, officials to work from home

BANGKOK (Internews): Thai authorities warned that pollution levels in Bangkok and surrounding provinces had hit unhealthy levels on Thursday, ordering government employees in the capital to work from home for the next two days and urging others to do the same.
Air pollution is caused by a combination of crop-related burning, industrial pollution and heavy traffic, and a smoky haze covered the Bangkok's skyline. Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin told reporters that crop burning was the main culprit behind the spike, but added that around quarter of the pollution was from vehicles, a factor "we can control". Swiss air quality tracking website IQAir said the level of fine inhalable particles in the city was 15 times higher than the recommended level by the World Health Organization, making it the world's 8th most polluted city on Thursday.



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi meets with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to discuss the latest developments in the Gaza Strip amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, at the Itihadiya presidential palace in Cairo, Egypt.

Hezbollah says Israel will 'pay price' after deadly day

BEIRUT (Internews): Hezbollah said on Thursday Israel would pay "the price" for killing 10 people including five children in southern Lebanon, the deadliest day for Lebanese civilians in four months of hostilities across the Lebanese-Israeli border.
An Israeli strike killed seven people in the city of Nabatieh late on Wednesday, including three children, sources in Lebanon said. It followed an earlier attack that killed a woman and her two children in the village of al-Sawana at the border.
"The enemy will pay the price for these crimes," Hezbollah politician Hassan Fadlallah told media. "The resistance will continue to practice its legitimate right to defend its people."
Several of the armed Lebanese group's fighters were also killed in separate strikes on Wednesday, including on Nabatieh, according to the group and security sources.
Asked about the Nabatieh strike, a spokesperson for the Israeli army

Putin says Europe greens capitalising on climate fears

MOSCOW (Internews): Russian President Vladimir Putin criticised the green movement in Europe for capitalising on peoples' fears about climate change, while questioning Germany's commitment to phasing out coal.
Long demonized by Germany's Green party, which leads some of the government's top ministries, coal was due to be phased out by 2030, but Russia's conflict with Ukraine and gas export curbs brought coal back into favour.

UNRWA funding freezes risk 'aiding' deaths in Gaza: Saudi official

Monitoring Desk
RIYADH: Freezing funds to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees risks "aiding" the deaths of civilians in Gaza, the head of Saudi Arabia's humanitarian agency told AFP on Tuesday.
Several countries—including the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan—have suspended funding to the UNRWA agency in response to Israeli allegations that some of its staff members participated in the October 7 attack by Hamas militants.
Last week, as its war against Hamas entered a fifth month, Israel's military also said troops had uncovered a Hamas tunnel under UNRWA's evacuated Gaza City headquarters.
The UN has sacked the 12 UNRWA staff members accused by Israel of involvement in the October 7 attack and said the tunnel claim should be investigated once the conflict is over.

1 dead, children among 21 injured in Super Bowl parade shooting in US

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: One person was killed and children were among the 21 injured after a mass shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory rally on Wednesday triggered panic among huge crowds of fans.
Shots rang out moments after jubilant Chiefs players addressed a vast, cheering crowd, sending shocked fans and VIPs fleeing in a tragic end to what had been a joyous morning of celebrating the NFL champions.
Police said three people had been taken into custody after the attack near Kansas City's Union Station, but the motive behind the shooting was still under investigation.
Fire department chief Ross Grundyson told a press conference that many

of the victims had sustained "life-threatening injuries."
A local DJ, Lisa Lopez, was killed in the assault, her radio station said. "This senseless act from her family and this KC Community," KKKFI posted on its Facebook page, referring to Kansas City.
Children's Mercy Hospital said it was treating 12 people—11 of them children, nine for gunshot wounds—after the shooting. A hospital spokesman said all were expected to recover.
Paul Contreras, who was at the rally with his three daughters, said he tackled and disarmed one of the suspected shooters before the police arrived. "I got the right angle on him and I hit him from behind."

Special counsel urges US Supreme Court to rebuff Trump in immunity fight

WASHINGTON (Internews): The special counsel prosecuting Donald Trump on federal charges involving the former president's efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss urged the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday to reject Trump's bid to further delay trial proceedings as he presses his claim of immunity.
"The nation has a compelling interest in seeing the charges brought to trial," Special Counsel Jack Smith said in his filing to the justices, adding that "the public interest in a prompt trial is at its zenith where, as here, a former president is charged with conspiring to subvert the electoral process so that he could remain in office." Smith's filing responded to a request by Trump's lawyers on Monday to put on hold a decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit rejecting the claim of presidential immunity from prosecution.
If the justices do not immediately reject Trump's request, Smith asked that they take up the case and hear it on a fast-track basis.
Smith said Trump's criminal charges reflect an alleged effort to "perpetuate himself in power and prevent the lawful winner of the 2020 presidential election from taking office." The charged crimes strike at the heart of our democracy. "A president's alleged criminal scheme to overturn an election and thwart the peaceful transfer of power to his successor should be the last place to recognize a novel form of absolute immunity from federal criminal law," Smith added.
Trump's lawyers asked the justices to halt the trial proceedings pending their bid for the full slate of judges on the D.C. Circuit to reconsider the case, and, if necessary, an appeal to the Supreme Court.

Democrats pick up seat in US House as Suozzi wins in New York

NEW YORK (Internews): Democratic former congressman Tom Suozzi won a special U.S. House of Representatives election in New York on Tuesday, narrowing an already razor-thin Republican majority that has struggled to pass legislation. The seat became available after the House took the extraordinary step of expelling Republican George Santos, whose dizzying array of lies about his biography led to his indictment on fraud charges.

