













# Hamas says 'ready for ceasefire' as Israel presses Gaza campaign

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: A senior Hamas official said on Friday (Nov 15) that the group is "ready for a ceasefire" in Gaza, urging United States President-elect Donald Trump to "pressure" Israel as it continued to pound the Palestinian territory.

It comes nearly a week after Qatar, which hosts much of the Palestinian group's political bureau, announced it was suspending its role as a mediator in the war and urging all parties to show "seriousness".

"Hamas is ready to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip if a ceasefire proposal is presented and on the condition that it is respected" by Israel, Doha-based Hamas political bureau member Bassem Naim told AFP.

"We call on the US administration and Trump to pressure the Israeli government to end the aggression," Hamas informed the mediators that it is in favour

of any proposal submitted to it that would lead to a definitive ceasefire and military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, allowing the return of displaced people, a serious deal for a prisoner exchange, the entry of humanitarian aid and reconstruction," Naim added.

The demands are the same ones Hamas has made in successive rounds of ceasefire negotiations since the start of the war.

On Saturday, Qatar announced it was suspending its role as a mediator in indirect talks towards a ceasefire and hostage release deal in the Gaza war that has ground on for more than a year.

"Qatar would resume those efforts... when the parties show their willingness and seriousness," Doha's foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari said in a statement. Friday's announcement by Hamas came as Israel continued to strike Gaza, with



Police officers examine the damaged neonatal intensive care unit after a fire broke out at the Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in Jhansi district, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

# 10 newborns killed, 16 critical in hospital fire in India's Uttar Pradesh

**Monitoring Desk**  
UTTAR PRADESH: A fire at the neonatal unit of an Indian hospital killed 10 newborns, authorities said on Saturday, with another 16 clinging to life after a blaze blamed on a faulty oxygen machine.

Building fires are common in India due to shoddy construction and a routine disregard for safety regulations. The fire broke out at about 10:30pm (5pm GMT) on Friday night at the Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in Jhansi, around 450 kilometres south of the capital New Delhi.

Footage from the scene showed charred beds and walls inside the ward as a crowd of anguished families waited outside.

"My child has gone forever," one mother wailed as she clutched her head in

# Gaza aid access 'at a low point', UN official says

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: Aid access in Gaza is at a low point with deliveries to parts of the besieged north of the enclave all but impossible, a UN humanitarian official said on Friday (Nov 15).

The remarks run counter to a US assessment earlier this week that Israel is not currently impeding humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip, avoiding restrictions on US military aid. Israel has said it has worked hard to assist the humanitarian needs in Gaza.

"From our perspective, on all indicators you can possibly think of in a humanitarian response, all of them are going in the

# Elon Musk met Iran's UN ambassador, NYT says

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK: Elon Musk, the tech billionaire closely allied with US president-elect Donald Trump, met Iran's ambassador to the United Nations in a bid to defuse tensions between Tehran and Washington, The New York Times reported.

The newspaper quoted anonymous Iranian sources as describing the meeting between the world's richest person and Ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani as "positive".

# Former Taiwan president Tsai to visit Canada next week

**Monitoring Desk**  
TAIPEI: Former Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen is planning to visit Canada next week, two diplomatic sources told Reuters, in a highly watched visit for a senior Taiwan politician who has become a symbol of the island's defiance against China's military threat.

Canada, like most countries, has no official diplomatic ties with Chinese-claimed Taiwan, but the economic and political exchanges between the two sides have increased as Beijing ratchets up military threats against the democratic island.

# Fire kills 10 people in Spanish retirement home

**Monitoring Desk**  
VILLAFRANCA EBRO: Ten people were killed after a fire broke out in a retirement home in the northern Spanish town of Villafraanca de Ebro early on Friday, authorities said.

The blaze started in one of the rooms, Fernando Beltran, the regional government's top official in Aragon region, told reporters.

All the victims were elderly people living in the Jardines de Villafraanca residence, a care home for people with mental health issues, Aragon regional

president Jorge Azcon told reporters.

One person was in a "critical condition" and another in a "serious condition", Azcon said.

The fire started at around 5am (0400 GMT) and it took about two hours for firefighters to extinguish it, a spokesperson for the regional government said.

Firefighter chief Eduardo Sanchez told reporters the fire was contained to the room where it started and that the fatalities were caused by smoke inhalation.



Daughter of the late killed civil rights leader Malcolm X, Ilyasah Shabazz, speaks alongside attorney Ben Crump and legal team during a news conference to announce a lawsuit against government agencies and the New York City Police Department for the alleged assassination and concealment of evidence surrounding Malcolm X's murder in New York City.

# Ukraine slams Scholz after first call with Putin in two years

**Monitoring Desk**  
BERLIN: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Germany's Olaf Scholz on Friday of playing into the hands of Russian President Vladimir Putin after the chancellor spoke by phone to the Kremlin chief for the first time in almost two years.

In the call, Scholz "condemned Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and called on President Putin to end it and withdraw troops", the chancellor's spokesman Steffen Hebestreit said.

The German leader "urged Russia to show willingness to negotiate with Ukraine with the aim of achieving a just and

# Spy world vexed by Trump choice of Gabbard as US intelligence chief

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: President-elect Donald Trump's choice of Tulsi Gabbard as US intelligence chief has sent shockwaves through the national security establishment, adding to concerns that the sprawling intelligence community will become increasingly politicized.

Trump's nomination of Gabbard, a former Democratic congresswoman who lacks deep intelligence experience and is seen as soft on Russia and Syria, is among several high-level picks that suggest he may be prioritizing personal allegiance over competence as he assembles his second-term team. Among the risks, say current and former intelligence officials and independent experts.

# Malcolm X's family sues US law enforcement agencies over his assassination

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW YORK CITY: The family of Malcolm X, a militant civil-rights leader who was assassinated almost 60 years ago, filed a \$100-million federal lawsuit on Friday that accuses the FBI, CIA and New York Police Department of allowing his murder to be carried out.

The lawsuit, brought by Malcolm X's daughter Ilyasah Shabazz and other family members, alleges the law-enforcement agencies concealed evidence that they had known of the plot to kill him but did nothing to stop it.

"We believe that they all conspired to assassinate Malcolm X, one of the greatest thought leaders of the 20th century," Ben

# All primary schools shut in New Delhi due to smog

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: India's government banned non-essential construction in New Delhi, the world's most polluted capital, and urged residents to avoid burning coal for heating, to combat worsening air quality that has disrupted flights and obscured the Taj Mahal.

The new measures, which include sprinkling water with dust suppressants on roads, as well as mechanised sweeping that would help settle dust, will come into effect from Friday morning. Delhi's Chief Minister Atishi, who uses only one name, also directed all primary schools to shift to online classes.



Pro-Palestinian protesters hold a demonstration in front of the City Hall in Orlando, Florida, a cop tries to extinguish flames after a man set himself on fire during a protest near the White House in Washington, DC.

# Trump is already testing Congress and daring Republicans to oppose him

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: After a resounding election victory, delivering what President-elect Donald Trump and Republicans call a "mandate" to govern, an uneasy political question is emerging: Will there be any room for dissent in the US Congress?

Trump is laying down a gauntlet even before taking office challenging the Senate, in particular, to dare defy him over the nominations of Matt Gaetz, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and other controversial choices for his

# China seeks to build Moon base with lunar bricks

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: China is seeking to push forward in its quest to build the first lunar base, launching an in-space experiment to test whether the base's bricks could be made from the Moon's own soil. A cargo rocket carrying brick samples blasted off on Friday for the Tiangong space station, part of Beijing's mission to put humans on the Moon by 2030 and build a permanent base there by 2035. "China launched the cargo craft Tianzhou-8 from the Wenchang satellite launch centre."

# Philippines braces for typhoon Man-yi as Usagi weakens

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: Typhoon Usagi weakened sharply on Friday after bearing down on the Philippines' northern towns, blowing away houses in its path as authorities brace for another storm that could hit the capital Manila over the weekend.

Usagi, known locally as Ofel, intensified into a super typhoon as it made landfall in the town of Baggao in Cagayan province on Thursday afternoon. Philippine meteorological agency Pag-asa said that Usagi has since weakened and is now headed towards Taiwan.

Usagi is the 15th cyclone to hit the Philippines

# Schools empty as smog persists in New Delhi

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Residents in India's capital again woke under a blanket of choking smog on Friday, a day after authorities closed primary schools and imposed measures aimed at alleviating the annual crisis.

New Delhi and the surrounding metropolitan area, home to more than 30 million people, consistently top world rankings for air pollution in winter.

The smog is blamed for thousands of premature deaths every year and is an annual source of misery for residents, with various piecemeal government initiatives failing to measurably address the problem.

# Iran backs Lebanon in ceasefire talks, seeks end to 'problems'

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Iran will back any decision taken by Lebanon in talks to secure a ceasefire with Israel, a senior Iranian official said on Friday (Nov 15), signalling Tehran wants to see an end to a conflict that has dealt heavy blows to its Lebanese ally Hezbollah.

Israel launched airstrikes in the Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs of Beirut, flattening buildings for a fourth consecutive day. Israel has stepped up its bombardment of the area this week, an escalation that has coincided with signs of movement in US-led diplomacy towards a ceasefire. Two senior Lebanese political sources told Reuters that the US ambassador to Lebanon had presented a draft ceasefire proposal to Lebanon's parliament speaker Nabih Berri the previous day. Berri is endorsed by Hezbollah to negotiate and met the senior Iranian official Ali Larjani on Friday.

Asked at a news conference whether he had come to Beirut to undermine the US truce plan, Larjani said: "We are not looking to sabotage anything. We are after a solution to the problems."

"We support in all circumstances the Lebanese government. Those who are disrupting are Netanyahu and his people," Larjani added, referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Hezbollah was founded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards in 1982, and has been armed and financed by Tehran.

One major sticking point is Israel's demand to retain freedom to act should Hezbollah violate any agreement - a demand Lebanon has rejected.

Israel launched its offensive against Hezbollah after almost a year of cross-border hostilities ignited by the Gaza war, declaring it wanted to secure the return home of tens of thousands of people forced to evacuate from northern Israel.

# Chinese and Philippine forces again avoid a clash in a fiercely disputed shoal under a rare deal

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: The Philippine navy transported food and other supplies to a territorial ship outpost in a shoal in the South China Sea without any confrontation with Chinese forces guarding the disputed area, officials said Friday.

The Philippine delivery of supplies and military personnel on Thursday to the Second Thomas Shoal was the third such trip that did not lead to any confrontation since July, when both sides signed a rare deal to stop an alarming spike in violent confrontations.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines continues to uphold its mandate of safeguarding Philippine sovereignty and ensuring the welfare of its stationed personnel in the West Philippine Sea," military

# Call for judicial coalition of 'most vulnerable countries' to push for climate finance

**Monitoring Desk**  
BAKU: A panel discussion organised at the Pakistan Pavilion on Thursday — on the sidelines of the COP29 summit — underscored the importance of the judiciary in the quest for climate justice, arguing the judicial bodies can help address the urgent environmental challenges with socioeconomic and developmental challenges, particularly in the Global South.

The session, titled 'Judicial Pathways Towards Climate Justice: Judicial Approaches for Addressing Climate Change Through Global Analysis' featured Supreme Court judges Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Ayesha Malik, as well as Lahore High Court judge Jawwad Hassan and Senator Sherry Rehman, alongside other climate experts.

The panel, which featured prominent judges and legal experts from around the world, explored how judicial systems could play a pivotal role in advancing climate justice.

Speaking at the event, Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam emphasised the need for



An official of the fire brigade speaks to the media near the retirement home that caught fire.

