



Syrian soldiers killed in Islamic State group attack on military barracks this week, an oppn war monitor said

GLOBAL WEATHER
Beijing 9 -6 SNY Los Angeles 18 8 SNY
Colombo 32 -23 TDS Melbourne -22 -11 SN
Dhaka 27 16 SNY Moscow -11 -11 SN
Dubai 27 16 SNY New York 3 1 LC
Houston 23 16 LC Singapore 31 25 TDS
Istanbul 8 7 LR Toronto 1 -1 SN
London 16 11 SNY Washington 11 2 SNY

Indonesian ex-general Subianto leads polls

JAKARTA

DEFENCE Minister Prabowo Subianto, an ex-general linked to past human rights atrocities, claimed victory in Indonesia's presidential election on Wednesday based on unofficial tallies.

The 72-year-old candidate, who was once banned by the United States from entering for two decades due to his human rights record, told thousands of supporters in a sports stadium in the capital, Jakarta, that the victory, according to an early, unofficial 'quick count,' was 'the victory of all Indonesians.'

Subianto was an army general during the brutal period of the Suharto dictatorship that ended just over 25 years ago. He served as a special forces commander in a unit linked to torture and disappearances, allegations that he vehemently denies.

According to the unofficial tallies conducted by Indonesian polling agencies, Subianto had been given 57 per cent and 59 per cent of votes, with more than 80 per cent of the vote counted in polling places sampled.

The quick counts are based on the actual vote count at a sample of polling stations across Indonesia. The laborious official count may not be finished for up to a month, but quick counts have provided an accurate picture of the results of all four presidential elections held in Indonesia since it began direct voting in 2004.

'We are grateful for the quick count results,' he said in the speech, broadcast on national television. 'We should not be arrogant, we should not be humble, this victory must be a victory for all Indonesian people.'

To avoid a runoff against his rivals, Subianto needs more than 50% of all votes cast and at least 20% in each of the country's provinces. AP

Hamas joins Cairo truce talks on Day 2

4 killed as Israel launches Lebanon strikes, stoking fears of an escalating conflict in the region



A picture taken from Rafah shows smoke billowing over Khan Yunis in the distance following Israeli bombardment on the southern Gaza Strip | (R) Activists from Amnesty International hold placards with statements made by civilians living in Rafah during a silent vigil outside the gates of Downing Street in central London | PICS: AFP

GAZA STRIP

NEGOTIATIONS to pause the Israel-Hamas war headed into a second day in Cairo on Wednesday, as Israel launched a series of deadly strikes on Lebanon, stoking fears of an escalating conflict in the region.

Mediators in Egypt were racing to secure a ceasefire and free the remaining hostages before Israel proceeds with a full-scale ground incursion into the Gaza Strip's crowded far-southern city of Rafah.

A Hamas source said a delegation was headed to Cairo to meet Egyptian and Qatari mediators, after Israeli negotiators held talks with the mediators on Tuesday.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas urged Hamas to 'quickly complete a prisoner deal, to spare our Palestinian people from the calamity of another catastrophic event.'

WHO says Gaza hospitals are completely overwhelmed

GENEVA: The World Health Organization lamented on Wednesday that fewer than half of its requested aid-delivery missions in Gaza have been approved by Israel, stressing the need to reach and resupply devastated hospitals across the territory. 'Hospitals are completely overwhelmed and overflowing and undersupplied,' said Rik Peepker, the WHO's representative for the occupied Palestinian territories.

CIA Director William Burns had joined Tuesday's talks with David Barnea, head of Israel's Mossad intelligence service, which Egyptian media said had been mostly 'positive'.

US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby described the negotiations as 'constructive and moving in the right direction'.

Israel launched strikes on Lebanon hours after fire from Lebanon wounded multiple people in northern Israel, according to medics.

The strikes in south Lebanon killed four civilians including two children and wounded nine other people, a Lebanese security source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

mas-Israel war on October 7, more than 240 people have been killed in Lebanon, most of them Hezbollah fighters but also including over 30 civilians. Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has traded near-daily fire with Israeli troops since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, with tens of thousands displaced on both sides of the border.

Rafah fears

The potential for mass civilian casualties in Rafah has triggered urgent appeals, even from close allies, for Israel to hold off sending troops into the last major population centre they have yet to enter during the war. Rafah, where more than 1.4 million Palestinians are trapped, is the main entry point for desperately needed relief supplies and UN agencies have warned of a humanitarian disaster if an assault goes ahead.

Blasts hit gas pipeline in Iran; official calls it act of sabotage

DUBAI

EXPLOSIONS struck a natural gas pipeline in Iran early on Wednesday, with an official blaming the blasts on a 'sabotage and terrorist action' in the country as tensions remain high in the Middle East amid Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Details were scarce, though the blasts hit a natural gas pipeline running from Iran's western Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province up north to cities on the Caspian Sea. The roughly 1,270-kilometer (790-mile) pipeline begins in Asaluyeh, a hub for Iran's offshore South Pars gas field.

Saeed Aghli, the manager of Iran's gas network control centre, told Iranian state television that a 'sabotage and terrorist' action caused explosions along several areas of the line.

There are no known insurgent groups operating in that province, home to the Bakhtiari, a branch of Iran's Lur ethnic group. Aghli did not name any suspects in the blasts.

In the past, Arab separatists in southwestern Iran have claimed attacks against oil pipelines. However, attacks against such infrastructure are rare elsewhere. Iran has faced low-level separatist unrest from Kurds in its northwest, the Baluch in its east and Arabs in its southwest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. However, tensions have risen in recent years as Iran faces an economy hobbled by international sanctions over its nuclear programme. The country has faced years of mass demonstrations, most recently in 2022 over the death of Mahsa Amini after her arrest allegedly over how she wore her mandatory headscarf. AP

WAR WATCH ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 129
GAZA TOLL SO FAR 28,576

Spain and Ireland have asked the European Union to 'urgently' examine whether Israel is complying with its human rights obligations in Gaza under an accord that links rights to trade ties

Palestinians have begun evacuating the main hospital in Khan Yunis, according to videos shared by medics on Wednesday. Weeks of heavy fighting had isolated the medical facility and claimed the lives of several people inside it.

ERDOGAN IN EGYPT

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in the Egyptian capital on Wednesday on his first visit since 2012, sealing a thaw in ties between the regional heavyweights. Erdogan had said he would discuss with Egyptian President Sisi efforts to halt the bloodshed

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