

Netanyahu will run in the next elections: Likud party

AFP | Jerusalem, Undefined

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will seek re-election in Israel's upcoming national vote, his Likud party announced Wednesday, after US President Donald Trump publicly questioned whether the 76-year-old would run.

Netanyahu, who is Israel's longest-serving prime minister, has led his country through three years of war, and is currently on trial for corruption.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu will run in the next elections

and, God Willing, he will win," the party said on Telegram.

The declaration came after Trump told ABC News he was uncertain about Netanyahu's intentions.

"I don't know, he's had an amazing career. Does he want to continue?," Trump said. "Because, you know he's a wartime prime minister."

Netanyahu had previously said he would stand for re-election in the vote, scheduled to be held by late October. He has served as prime minister for nearly two decades across multiple terms.



Power luncheon



This picture taken on Tuesday and released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) yesterday shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (2nd R) and his wife Ri Sol Ju (R), along with China's President Xi Jinping (2nd L) and his wife Peng Liyuan (L), sharing a luncheon at the Kumsusan State Guest House in Pyongyang. President Xi Jinping concluded a visit to North Korea on Tuesday, after meetings with Kim Jong Un that the Chinese leader said reached an "important consensus" on building ties.

Sri Lanka says spy chief 'directed' Easter bombings

AFP | Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's public security minister told parliament yesterday the nation's ex-intelligence chief directed the 2019 Easter Sunday attack, in the first official statement linking him directly to the bombings that killed 279 people.



Major General Suresh Sallay

Minister Ananda Wijepala said Major General Suresh Sallay, who was arrested in February on accusations of "aiding and abetting" the attack, had identified a Catholic church to be bombed.

Sri Lanka's worst single terror attack against civilians involved bombings against three upmarket hotels in the capital, two Roman Catholic churches and an evangelical Protestant church outside Colombo.

"Investigations have re-

vealed that Retired Major General Tuan Suresh Sallay conspired with and strategically directed Islamic extremists until they carried out the attacks," Wijepala said.

"Just three weeks prior to the attack, Sallay met Muslim men to obtain details of the location and the congregation," the minister added.

Sallay, through his lawyer, has denied any involvement.

Pakistan says killed 26 militants in strikes along Afghanistan border



A Taliban personnel stands guard as Afghan men gather to offer funeral prayers for Pakistani airstrike victims at Mani village in Spera district, Khost province

Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistani airstrikes killed 26 militants in Afghanistan border areas, Pakistan's government said on Wednesday.

"In the aftermath of recent terrorist incidents in Pakistan.... precise and calibrated

strikes were carried out along Pakistan Afghanistan border areas on hideouts and safe havens," Pakistan's information minister Attaullah Tarar posted on X, adding 26 militants linked to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) group were killed.

UN says boy was shot dead at rally for Afghan women

Kabul, Afghanistan

The United Nations said Wednesday a boy was shot dead during a women's rights rally in Afghanistan's Herat city a day earlier, when witnesses told AFP security forces dispersed protesters with live fire.

Police have denied that any weapons were used during Tuesday's demonstration by dozens of men, in response to the Taliban government's morality police detaining women for not wearing the body-cloaking chador or burqa.

Trump says Iran will have to 'pay the price'



'Taken too long to negotiate'

● The Apache helicopter is the second crewed aircraft that Washington has confirmed was shot down by Iran during the war, following the loss of an F-15 fighter plane in April.

AFP | Washington, United States

US Central Command (CENTCOM), which oversees American forces in the Middle East, said on X that it had "struck Iranian air defense, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites near the Strait of Hormuz with precision munitions from US Air Force and Navy fighter jets".

Trump's social media post, in which he asserted that the Iranian military has been "completely defeated," came after the United States and Iran exchanged fire, straining a ceasefire that took effect in April.

"The Bully of the Middle East is DEAD!!! They've taken too long to negotiate a deal that would have been great for them, now they will have to pay the price!!!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Separately, Trump told Fox News journalist Trey Yingst in a phone interview that because peace talks have failed to make progress, he is getting closer to targeting Iran's power plants and bridges.

"I may keep going," Trump was quoted by Fox as saying. "They had a chance to sign a deal and survive."

It marked a contrast with his comments to reporters on Tuesday that negotiations on an en-

during settlement to end the war were in their "final throes," and could be wrapped up in "two or three days."

In another social post on Wednesday, Trump praised the US blockade of Iranian shipping calling it "the most successful" in history while labeling it a "steel wall."

He claimed that the blockade had halted Iranian business and prevented it from paying military wages, while still allowing other countries to export "lots of oil."

Late on Tuesday, US forces said they carried out strikes against Iran in retaliation for the downing of an American helicopter on Monday, with explosions reported by Iranian media along its southern coast.

US Central Command later said that the US Air Force and Navy had command and control, defense and surveillance stations.