

BEIRUT (AFP) – Lawmakers in the Lebanese parliament have failed for the 20th time to pick new president, resulting in the continuation of the presidential power vacuum that has hit the Arab country for over nine months.
“Speaker of the House Nabih Berri postponed ... the presidential election session to April 2 due to lack of quorum,” Berri’s office said.

Hearts have desires, likes and dislikes and so try to approach them through their desires and likes, for if it is forced to feel, the heart becomes blind.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

Army Hits Terrorists' Strongholds Across Syria



The file photo shows members of the Syrian army in the northwestern city of Aleppo.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – The Syrian army has carried out a series of military operations against terrorists' strongholds in different parts of the Arab country, killing scores of them and destroying their weapons.

An army unit on Thursday ward off a terrorist attempt against a school in Aleppo Province, killing

a number of terrorists and injuring others, military sources told the Syrian news agency, SANA.

The army soldiers reportedly clashed with terrorists in the surrounding area of the school.

Meanwhile, the army destroyed a vehicle belonging to terrorists and killed all terrorists on board in Tran-

je village in Quneitra Province, said a military source. The army soldiers also inflicted heavy losses on terrorists during intensive operations in the southwestern province.

According to sources, 12 terrorist ringleaders were confirmed dead in clashes with army soldiers in Qudna village in the Quneitra countryside.

Abu Usama al-Nu'imi, the leader of the terrorist group calling itself al-Jaish al-Aual, was among those confirmed dead in the battle.

Many terrorists were also killed and injured and several vehicles belonging to them were destroyed during a special army operation against the terrorists' stronghold in Tisia town near the Syria-Jordan border on Thursday.

In Homs Province, units of the army and armed forces launched heavy strikes against terrorists' hideouts in the eastern part of the province, inflicting heavy losses on the terrorists.

A military source said units of the army and armed forces killed a number of terrorist groups' members and destroyed their arms in Masaada and al-Bergouthia in Homs province.

Meanwhile, an army unit targeted ISIL terrorists and killed a number of the terrorist group's members in Rahoum village in the eastern countryside of Homs.

Syria has been gripped by deadly violence since March 2011. The violence fueled by ISIL Takfiri groups has reportedly been supported by the Western powers and their regional allies - especially Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

According to the UN, more than 220,000 people have been killed and one million wounded during the four-year conflict in Syria.

UAE to Expel 63 Shia Lebanese Nationals

ABU DHABI (Press TV) – The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is to expel within 24 hours 70 mostly-Shia Lebanese nationals, Lebanon's foreign minister says.

“The ministry of foreign affairs was informed by the Lebanese embassy in the Emirates that 70 Lebanese will be deported by the authorities in the next 24 hours,” Gebran Bassil said on Friday. Sixty-three of those to be deported are Shias.

The UAE deported dozens of Lebanese Shias in 2009, saying they had had links with the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah. In 2010, 125 Lebanese were deported and the only explanation the Lebanese Foreign Ministry could receive from the UAE over the matter was that the move had been taken “for security reasons.”

It was reported last year that the Emirati government had

listed 82 organizations, including Hezbollah's affiliates in the Persian Gulf, as “terrorists.”

“Some of the most prominent groups on the US list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations are included on the UAE list, so Washington will likely view that as a positive and encouraging development...,” David Weinberg, a senior fellow at Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, has said.

The Israeli regime, Washington's strongest ally, launched wars on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006. About 1,200 Lebanese, most of them civilians, were killed in the 33-Day War of 2006. On both occasions, however, Hezbollah resistance fighters defeated the Israeli forces and Tel Aviv was forced to retreat without achieving any of its objectives.

Taliban Attack Leaves 14 Dead in Central Afghanistan



Suspected Taliban militants during exercises along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border

KABUL (AP) – At least 14 people have been killed during an attack carried out by Taliban militants in Afghanistan's central province of Ghazni, an official says.

The militants, armed with machineguns and RPG launchers, opened fire on a group of local police who were stationed at a checkpoint in the Dih Yak district early Friday morning, said spokesman for the provincial governor of Ghazni, Shafiq Nang.

The attack triggered an hour-long shootout, leaving at least seven policemen and seven Taliban militants dead.

Five members of the police force, a group consisting of volunteers from a local village, were wounded during the attack.

The incident marks the latest in a series of militant attacks on Afghan security forces in the country.

On Thursday, seven policemen were killed during an ambush carried out by the Taliban militants in Afghanistan's northern province of Kunduz.

Four police officers were killed after gunmen attacked a security check post in the Syagurd district in Parwan Province, north of the capital, Kabul, on Wednesday night, according to official reports.

More than 5,000 policemen were killed by militants in Afghanistan in 2014.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror.

Although the US-led invasion removed the Taliban from power, insecurity remains rampant in the country.

The US-led combat mission in Afghanistan ended on December 31, 2014. However, at least 13,000 foreign forces, mainly from the United States, will remain in Afghanistan in what is said to be a support mission.

Pre-Vote Polls: Netanyahu's Party Behind Rival

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) – Recently published opinion surveys suggest that Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ruling Likud Party will be four seats behind the opposition Zionist Union coalition.

A poll released by the Yediot Aharot newspaper on Friday showed that the Zionist Union coalition, an alliance of the Labor party, led by Isaac Herzog, and former Minister for Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni's Hatnua party, would win 26 of the 120 parliament seats.

The ruling party is expected to win 22 seats, while The Joint List, a newly formed Arab alliance, would come in third place, winning 13 seats, according to the poll.

The newspaper added that the poll had a margin of error of 2.5 percentage points.

Another poll, which was jointly published by the Jerusalem Post and Maariv, showed a four-seat difference between the two leading parties, with the Zionist Union gaining 25 seats and Likud 21.

The survey also showed The Joint List would win 13 seats.

The polls come as Israelis prepare to take part in parliamentary elections on March 17.

On March 12, Netanyahu acknowledged that his right-wing Likud party was at risk of losing in the vote.

Last week, tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Tel Aviv to voice their anger at Netanyahu's policies, calling on him to step down ahead of the parliamentary elections.

He has been under pressure lately facing growing criticism for his handling of domestic politics and also a controversial anti-Iran speech he made at the US Congress on March 3.

During his speech, Netanyahu warned Washington against negotiating “a very bad deal” with Iran over its nuclear energy program.

US President Barack Obama later said there was “nothing new” in Netanyahu's speech.

War-Stricken Gazans Urge Greater Medical Assistance

GAZA STRIP (Press TV) – Palestinians have taken to the streets in Gaza to mark the 47th anniversary of the Palestinian Wounded Persons Day, slamming the global community for turning a blind eye to the lack of medication to treat those wounded in the Zionist regime's 50-day war, Press TV reports.

On Thursday, hundreds of Gazans rallied from the Palestinian Legislative Council building toward the United Nations office, calling for more medical assistance to those injured in the regime's latest aggression against the besieged coastal sliver last summer.

“The world has been watching in silence while the Zionist enemy was killing and wounding Palestinians. We are alive but we feel like the living dead because Egypt keeps the Rafah crossing closed and prevents us from receiving medical care abroad,” a wounded Palestinian protester said.

Last October, Egypt sealed the border crossing after briefly reopening it, claiming security concerns. It has opened it intermittently since.

The annual march also paid tribute to tens of thousands of Palestinians who were injured during Israel's bloody military offensives over the past years. “This rally is the least we can do to express our gratitude to the victims of Zionist attacks. Tens of thousands of Palestinians were wounded in Israeli wars and we must highlight their suffering and make sure they are not forgotten,” said Ahmad al-Modallal from the Palestinian resistance movement Islamic Jihad.

“Local and international bodies must help these people in order to bring some sort of normality to their lives,” he added.

The occupying regime unleashed attacks on the Palestinian territory in early July 2014 and later expanded its military campaign with a ground invasion of Gaza. The war ended in late August that year. Nearly 2,200 Palestinians lost their lives and some 11,000 were injured in the attacks. Gaza Health officials say the victims included 578 children and nearly 260 women.

The Gaza Strip has been under a crippling Israeli siege since 2007. The blockade, which has cut off the territory from the outside world, has led to an economic and humanitarian crisis in the densely-populated enclave.

The Zionist regime not only defies international calls to lift the brutal siege, but also does not allow medication or construction materials into Gaza.