

Doctors Stage Mass Rally in Seoul Against Government's Medical Policies



Doctors take part in a rally to protest against government plans to increase medical school admissions in Seoul, South Korea, March 3, 2024.

SEOUL (AP) – Tens of thousands of doctors held a rally in western Seoul on Sunday to protest the government's medical school quota hike plan as Prime Minister Han Duck Soo hinted at the possible suspension of medical licenses for striking trainee doctors.

The rally by member doctors of the Korean Medical Association (KMA), the biggest medical lobby group, came as thousands of trainee doctors have remained off their jobs at general hospitals for the 13th day, protesting the plan to add 2,000 more medical school seats starting next year.

Crowds of doctors filled up a street in Seoul's western district of Yeouido, waving protesting flags and holding up signs reading "Absolute opposition

of the KMA's emergency committee have ever encouraged or desired the crippling of medical services," he said, protesting that the government is using pressure to bring trainee doctors back to work while remaining uncompromising over its quota hike plan.

About 9,000 medical interns and residents, who play a vital role in assisting with surgeries and emergency services at major general hospitals, have maintained their collective labor action for the 13th day, leading to mass cancellations and delays in surgeries and emergency medical treatment.

The government gave protesting doctors until last Thursday to return to work, warning them that non-compliance could result in punitive action, including criminal punishment or revocation of their doctors' licenses. So far, the warning has done little to bring them back to work.

Separately, Interior Minister Lee Sang Min also renewed back-to-work calls on trainee doctors, saying that trainee doctors will be granted leniency if they return to their hospitals by Sunday.

"For trainee doctors who return to work by today, the government plan to grant utmost leniency ... if they fail to return by today, the government has no choice but to deal with them sternly following the law and principles," Lee said during his appearance on a live news program with KBS.

Kim Taek Woo, the KMA's emergency committee chief, warned at the start of the rally that "the government will face resistance from the public if it turns a blind eye to doctors' efforts and attempts to repress them."

Kim accused the government of unilaterally pursuing medical reform without prior consultation with the medical field, while calling on the government to engage in dialogue with protesting doctors to resolve the ongoing walkout, Yonhap news agency reported.

"No trainee doctors or members

of the KMA's emergency committee have ever encouraged or desired the crippling of medical services," he said, protesting that the government is using pressure to bring trainee doctors back to work while remaining uncompromising over its quota hike plan.

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Zelensky Demands More Western Military Support



Rescue crews working at the site of a residential building heavily damaged by a drone strike that killed several residents, in Odesa March 2, 2024.

KYIV (AFP/Reuters) – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has urged the West to deliver more air defense systems after at least six people were killed in the latest Russian strikes.

Overnight aerial attacks claimed four lives in the southern port city of Odesa, including a three-year-old child, while shelling killed one person in the Kharkiv region near the Russian border and another in the southern frontline Kherson region, Ukrainian officials said.

"Russia continues to hit civilians," Zelensky said in a post on social media.

"We need more air defenses from our partners. We need to strengthen the Ukrainian air shield to add more protection for our people from Russian terror. More air defence systems and more missiles for air defense systems saves lives," he said.

Ukraine is currently on the back foot in the two-year war as a crucial \$60-billion aid package is held up in the United States Congress.

In Odesa, "a nine-story building was destroyed as a result of an attack by Russian terrorists," Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said in a post on Telegram.

Footage shared from the scene showed several floors of a residential building collapsed and its

facade ripped off.

In another development, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin and China's special representative for Eurasian affairs, Li Hui, said it was impossible to discuss a Ukraine settlement without Moscow's participation, the Russian foreign ministry said on Sunday.

The Chinese envoy met with Galuzin during his second trip to Europe promoting a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, a tour that will also include Poland, Ukraine and Germany, Reuters reported.

"A very engaged and thorough exchange of views took place on the topic of the Ukrainian crisis," the Russian foreign ministry said in the statement posted on its website.

"It was stated that any discussion of a political and diplomatic settlement is impossible without the participation of Russia and taking into account its interests in the security sphere."

China is ready to "continue its efforts to promote peace talks, mediate and build consensus among Russia, Ukraine and other relevant parties, and promote a final political settlement of the Ukraine crisis," China's foreign ministry said in a readout from the meeting.

Trump Wins Caucuses in Missouri, Idaho, Sweeps Michigan GOP Convention

COLUMBIA, Missouri (AP) – Former President Donald Trump continued his march toward the GOP nomination, winning caucuses in Idaho and Missouri and sweeping the delegate haul at a party convention in Michigan.

Trump earned every delegate at stake on Saturday, bringing his count to 244 compared to 24 for former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley. A candidate needs to secure 1,215 delegates to clinch the Republican nomination.

The next event on the Republican calendar is in the District of Columbia. Two days later is Super Tuesday, when 16 states will hold primaries on what will be the largest day of voting of the year outside of the November election. Trump is on track to lock up the nomination days later.

The steep odds facing Haley were on display in Columbia, Missouri, where Republicans gathered at a church to caucus.

Seth Christensen stood on stage and called on them to vote for Haley. He wasn't well received.

Another caucusgoer shouted out from the audience: "Are you a Republican?"

An organizer quieted the crowd and Christensen finished his speech. Haley went on to win just 37 of the 263 Republicans in attendance in Boone County.

Michigan Republicans at their convention in Grand Rapids began allocating 39 of the state's 55 GOP presi-

dential delegates. Trump won all 39 delegates allocated.

But a significant portion of the party's grassroots force was skipping the gathering because of the lingering effects of a monthslong dispute over the party's leadership.

Voters lined up outside a church in Columbia, home to the University of Missouri, before the doors opened for the caucuses. Once they got inside, they heard appeals from supporters of the candidates.

"Every 100 days, we're spending \$1 trillion, with money going all over the world. Illegals are running across the border," Tom Mendenall, an elector for Trump in 2016 and 2020, said to the crowd. He later added: "You know where Donald Trump stands on a lot of these issues."

Christensen, a 31-year-old from Columbia who came to the caucus with his wife and three children age 7, 5, and 2, then urged Republicans to go in a new direction.

Last year, Idaho lawmakers passed cost-cutting legislation that was intended to move all the state's primaries to the same date in May. But the bill inadvertently eliminated the presidential primaries entirely.

The Republican-led Legislature considered holding a special session to reinstate the presidential primaries but failed to agree on a proposal in time, leaving both parties with presidential caucuses as the only option.

News in Brief

TUNIS (AFP) – Thousands protested deteriorating living standards outside the prime minister's office in Tunisia following a call from Tunisia's main trade union confederation. "The economic and social situation continues to worsen," the confederation's head, Noureddine Taboubi, said in a speech to protesters. Taboubi said the state's ability to service its foreign debt in 2023 had been "to the detriment of the people and resulted in shortages of basic products." He criticized the implementation of "dikats from the International Monetary Fund" (IMF) at the expense of ordinary Tunisians. The Tunisian economy is at a standstill with growth of 0.4 percent and an unemployment rate of 16.4 percent in 2023, according to the National Institute of Statistics. Unemployment stood at 15.2 percent at the end of 2022. President Kais Saied has ruled by decree since a July 2021 power grab and last year rammed through a constitution that gave his office unlimited powers and neutered parliament.

ISLAMABAD (AP) – At least 29 people have been killed and 50 others injured due to heavy rains that swept Pakistan, causing several houses to collapse and landslides to block roads, particularly in the northwest. At least 23 rain-related deaths were reported in various areas in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan since Thursday night, the provincial disaster management authority said in a statement on Sunday. Five people died in the southwestern Balochistan province after the coastal town of Gwadar got flooded, forcing authorities to use boats to evacuate some 10,000 people. Casualties and extensive damage were also reported in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, the National Disaster Management Authority said in a separate statement. Emergency relief was being provided to people in affected areas and heavy machinery was being used to remove debris blocking highways, the agency added.

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) – Around 170 people were "executed" in attacks on three villages in northern Burkina Faso a week ago, a regional public prosecutor said Sunday. Aly Benjamin Coulibaly said he received reports of the attacks on the villages of Komsilga, Nodin and Soroe in Yatenga province on February 25, with a provisional toll of "around 170 people executed." The attacks left others wounded and caused material damage, the prosecutor for the northern town of Ouahigouya added in a statement. He said his office ordered an investigation and appealed to the public for information. Survivors of the attacks told AFP that dozens of women and young children were among the victims. Local security sources said the attacks were separate from deadly incidents at a mosque and a church in northern Burkina Faso that also happened a week ago. Authorities have yet to release an official death toll for those attacks. Burkina Faso has been grappling with an insurgency waged by rebels affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Daesh terrorist group that spilled over from neighboring Mali in 2015.

CALIFORNIA (CNN) – Blizzard conditions continued to slam Northern California over the weekend with damaging winds and heavy snow dumping on mountain ridges down to the valleys. Around 6.5 million people are under winter weather alerts across the Mountain West, with blizzard warnings still in effect for the Sierra Nevada. The most extreme conditions are unfolding at the highest elevations, with whiteout conditions and hurricane-force winds in the Sierra Nevada. The snow has closed a 70-mile stretch of Interstate 80 near the Nevada state line for more than a day after highway officials reported stranded drivers Friday night. "Extremely heavy snowfall rates of 2-6 inches an hour combined with very strong winds exceeding 100 mph at times will maintain impossible travel conditions in the Sierra Nevada," the Weather Prediction Center said.

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) – Malaysia is pushing for a renewed search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, the transport minister said on Sunday, as the 10th anniversary of its disappearance in one of the world's greatest aviation mysteries approaches. Flight MH370, a Boeing 777 carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew, vanished en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014. Malaysian investigators initially did not rule out the possibility that the aircraft had been deliberately taken off course, and debris, some confirmed and some believed to be from the aircraft, has washed up along the coast of Africa and on islands in the Indian Ocean. Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said U.S. seabed exploration firm Ocean Infinity had been invited to discuss its latest search proposal after two previous failed attempts. "The Malaysian government is committed to the search (for MH370) and the search must go on," Loke said at a remembrance event on Sunday.

BERLIN (RT) – Germany must improve its healthcare system to be able to swiftly respond to crisis situations, such as a new pandemic or a military conflict, Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said. Legislation for reforms expected to be presented this summer will be "a turning point for the healthcare system," the Social Democratic Party (SPD) politician told the newspaper Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung in an interview. Though the ruling "traffic light coalition" has already pushed for reforms following the COVID-19 pandemic, the health minister said that with the Ukraine conflict, the challenges have become even more important. "In the event of a crisis, every doctor, every hospital, every health authority must know what to do. We need clear responsibilities – for example, for the distribution of a high number of injured people among the clinics in Germany," Lauterbach explained. The minister said hospitals must also conduct drills to practice their response to disasters, dismissing accusations of scaremongering by arguing that "doing nothing is not an option."

Security Situation in Haiti Chaotic, Unknown Number of Inmates Escape

PORT-AU-PRINCE (AFP) – An unknown number of inmates have escaped after an armed gang stormed the main prison in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince on Saturday evening, according to the French embassy and local media.

"Bandits stormed the national penitentiary in Port-au-Prince and allowed a number of inmates to escape," the French embassy said in a note sent to AFP.

"Pending clarification of the situation, the embassy of France advises against all travel in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area," it said.

In a message written in Creole and posted on social media platform X, the Haitian National Police Union SNPH-17 appealed to all police and military personnel with cars, weapons and ammunition to go to the prison as reinforcements.

According to the local online news outlet Gazette Haiti, "a significant number of prisoners released" by the armed gangs are "important members of very powerful gangs."

Known gang leaders and those charged with the 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise were among those incarcerated in the prison, located a few hundred meters from the National Palace, the Haitian daily Le Nouvelliste said.

It said it had no details on the



A man drives past a burning barricade during a protest against Prime Minister Ariel Henry's government and insecurity, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti March 1, 2024.

number or profile of the prisoners that escaped.

The prison had been "spied on by the assailants since Thursday via drones", before it was attacked early Saturday evening, according to Le Nouvelliste.

Gangs aiming to oust Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry have wreaked havoc in Port-au-Prince since Thursday.

Henry is not in the capital, according to Le Nouvelliste.

The latest attacks are part of a coordinated effort by gangs united under the label "Vivre Ensemble"

("Living Together").

Powerful gang leader Jimmy Cherisier, known by the nickname Barbecue, said in a video posted on social media before the violence began that the armed groups were acting in concert "to get Prime Minister Ariel Henry to step down."

The Caribbean state was already prey to gang violence but gangs now control 80 percent of Port-au-Prince, and serious crime has reached record levels in the Western hemisphere's poorest nation, according to the United Nations.