

First Pakistani woman to scale Everest

THE HINDU ONLINE

Samina Baig became the first Pakistani woman to scale Mt Everest on Sunday morning. She did so in the company of Indian twin sisters, among others.

After scaling the peak, the trio hoisted Indian and Pakistani flags side by side atop Mt Everest, as a message of peace, friendship and collaborative action.

Baig, 22, a native of Shimshal village deep in the Karakorum range in Upper Hunza, was accompanied by her brother and guide Mirza Ali, 29, on the climb.

The attempt began as an event to commemorate the first successful expedition to Mt Everest, on May 29, 1963, by Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay.



6 independent MNAs join Sharif's party

DAWN ONLINE

Six independents elected from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) yesterday met with Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) chief Nawaz Sharif and announced their inclusion in the party, DawnNews reported. The six independent candidates who succeeded in winning from different Fata regions met with the PML-N chief in Raiwind before joining the party. The MNAs include Shahji Gul, Bismillah Khan, Sajid Toori, Ghazi Gulab Jamal, Bilal Rahman and Nazir Khan. The MNAs moreover assured the PML-N leadership of their full support and cooperation for the party in government formation after it won the May 11 general elections.

Pakistan court grants Musharraf bail in Bhutto murder

AFP, Rawalpindi

A Pakistani court yesterday granted bail to former military ruler Pervez Musharraf over the murder of Benazir Bhutto, an official said, but the retired general remains under house arrest.

"General Musharraf's bail has been confirmed" by an anti-terrorism court in the garrison town of Rawalpindi, next to Islamabad, court official Mohammad Aslam Joya told AFP.

Judge Habibur Rehman has ordered Musharraf, who ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008 after seizing power in a coup, to pay two bonds worth one million rupees (\$10,000) each, he added.

Musharraf has been detained in his farmhouse on the edge of Islamabad since April 19, on charges of conspiracy to murder two-time prime minister Bhutto, who was assassinated in a gun and bomb attack in 2007 in Rawalpindi.

The bail does not mean his automatic release as he also faces legal cases over the sacking of judges when he imposed emergency rule in 2007, and the 2006 death of a



Obama to discuss CT strategy

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama will discuss his counterterrorism strategy (CT) Thursday, revealing to the American public his plans for unmanned drones and Guantanamo Bay, the White House said Sunday.

During his speech at the National Defense University in Washington, the president will discuss "our broad counter-terrorism policy, including our military, diplomatic, intelligence and legal efforts," a White House official told AFP.

AP boss calls US govt's phone seizures 'unconstitutional'

AP, Washington

The Associated Press' president and chief executive says the government's secret seizure of two months of reporters' phone records has already had a chilling effect on news gathering, a week after the subpoenas were revealed publicly.

Gary Pruitt on Sunday called the Justice Department's actions "unconstitutional" and said the AP hasn't ruled out legal action.

In his first television interviews since the AP reported the Justice Department seizure, Pruitt said it has made sources less willing to talk to AP journalists and, in the long term, could limit Americans' information from all news outlets.

Pruitt told CBS' "Face the Nation" that the government has no business monitoring the AP's newsgathering



Karzai arrives in India to seek military aid

AFP, New Delhi

Afghan President Hamid Karzai arrived in India yesterday on a two-day visit during which he is expected to seek greater military aid from the government in New Delhi, officials said.

The Afghan leader landed in the northern Indian city of Chandigarh for a private function and will reach the national capital later Monday, an AFP photographer from the site reported.

Karzai on Tuesday will meet President Pranab Mukherjee, who is also the ceremonial supreme commander of Indian armed forces, the world's fourth largest, a foreign ministry statement said.

In 2011 India and Afghanistan began a "strategic partnership" aimed at deepening security and eco-



Afghan suicide attack kills 14

AFP, Mazar-i-sharif

A suicide bomber struck outside government buildings in northern Afghanistan yesterday, killing 14 people including a local politician in the latest attack to target provincial officials.

Emergency services rushed to the scene and took the wounded to hospital after the bomber, who was wearing police uniform, blew himself up next to Rasoul Mohseni, the head of Baghlan's provincial council.

Also among the dead were seven police guards and several other people waiting to speak to Mohseni, who was walking into the government offices in Pul-e-Khumri, the capital of Baghlan province, when he was killed.

CHINESE PM'S INDIA TRIP

Li, Singh seek each other's trust

They discuss impact of dams, regional links and border disputes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India and China yesterday discussed the possibility of infrastructure development to link India's North Eastern region with Bangladesh, Myanmar and other countries in South East Asian region as New Delhi flagged concerns over construction of dams on the Brahmaputra river, which has impact on water flow to lower riparian countries.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in a media statement said that during his talks with his visiting Chinese counterpart Li Keqiang, he suggested expanding the existing cooperation between the two countries on sharing of hydrological data of the Brahmaputra river to include construction of projects on the river on the Chinese side.

China is reported to be working on building seven dams on mighty Brahmaputra river. India wants to know more about them as the projects have sparked concerns in northeastern Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Li, for his part, is understood to have conveyed to Singh that China has been sensitive to the concerns of lower riparian countries.

The Indian Prime Minister said he and Li also discussed the possibility of infrastructure devel-



opment to link India's North Eastern region with Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and other countries in South East Asian region.

It is understood that both India and China are keen on cooperating on building a deep sea port off Sonadia in Bangladesh, a project that is aimed at easing the pressure of traffic congestion on the Chittagong port and bring South Asia and South East Asia closer economically.

Singh made it clear to Li that the future growth of Sino-India relations hinged on maintaining peace and tranquility at the border.

"The basis for continued growth and expansion of our ties is peace and tranquility on our borders. While seeking an early resolution of the boundary question, Premier Li and I agreed that this must continue to be preserved", Singh added.



The border dispute between New Delhi and Beijing had flared last month into a three-week standoff after Chinese troops intruded nearly 19 kilometres into Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting longstanding tensions.

China has denied crossing the Line of Actual Control that serves the de facto border between the nuclear-armed neighbours which has never been formally demarcated although they have signed accords to maintain peace in the Himalayan area.

Singh also took up with Li the issue of India's rising trade deficit with China and sought greater access to China for Indian goods like pharmaceuticals and software technology.

India and China firmed up eight agreements to enhance cooperation in a range of areas including trade, culture and water resources, PTI reported.



PHOTO: AFP

Iraqis inspect the damage following an explosion in the Kamaliya area of eastern Baghdad yesterday. Two days of bombings, attacks on police and a botched hostage rescue killed 50 people in Iraq, among them 24 police who died as security sharply deteriorates in Anbar province, officials said.

Imran Khan's party wins revote in Karachi

REUTERS, Islamabad

Cricket hero Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf party won a revote in an upmarket constituency of Karachi on Sunday, unofficial results showed, a day after gunmen killed a party leader, setting the stage for protests and counter-protests.

Khan blamed the killing of Zara Shahid Hussain on the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) party, which has a stranglehold on the city. Furious MQM leaders denied responsibility, condemned the killing and demanded a retraction from Khan.

The attack in the upscale Defense area, the family neighborhood of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, capped a bloody election campaign in which around 150 people were killed nationwide.

The May 11 general elections handed a landslide victory to opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Imran's campaign



Activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) light candles in a protest against the killing of party leader Zohra Hussain, in Karachi on Sunday night.

electrified many Pakistanis, pushing the PTI from a marginal party to Pakistan's third largest.

But results from a handful of constituencies across the country are still uncertain amid accusations of vote-rigging. There is re-polling in a few others where security issues prevented voting.

Last week's election gave the MQM 18 of 19 national assembly seats in Karachi. Now

N Korea fires 6th missile in 3 days

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea fired two short-range missiles yesterday, making six launches in three days, and it condemned South Korea for criticizing what it said were its legitimate military drills.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said North Korea had fired one missile on Monday morning and a second one in the afternoon. Both were fired into the sea off North Korea's east coast, a ministry official said.

The launches come hard on the heels of more than two months of threats from North Korea that it would wage a nuclear war against South Korea and the United States if it were attacked.

The North condemned joint U.S. and South Korean military exercises, that ended in late April, as a rehearsal for an attack on its territory.

"We are conducting intense military exercises to strengthen our defense capacity," North Korea's KCNA news agency quoted the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, the body that handles inter-Korean issues, as saying on Monday.



Israel seeks deal with Palestinians

AP, Jerusalem

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's senior coalition partner says that reaching a final peace agreement with the Palestinians is unrealistic at the current time and the sides should instead pursue an interim arrangement.

Finance Minister Yair Lapid's assessment, delivered in a published interview Sunday just days before the arrival of US Secretary of State John Kerry, throws a contentious idea into the mix as the US searches for ways to restart peace talks.

It remains unclear whether the idea of a temporary arrangement will be raised during Kerry's visit later this week. In March, American officials confirmed that an interim arrangement, while not their preference, was one of the ideas being explored.

Assange to his own rescue

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Authorities at GCHQ, the government eavesdropping agency, are facing embarrassing revelations about internal correspondence in which Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is discussed, apparently including speculation that he is being framed by Swedish authorities seeking his extradition on rape allegations.

The records were revealed by Assange himself in a Sunday night interview with Spanish television programme Salvados in which he explained that an official request for information gave him access to instant messages that remained unclassified by GCHQ.

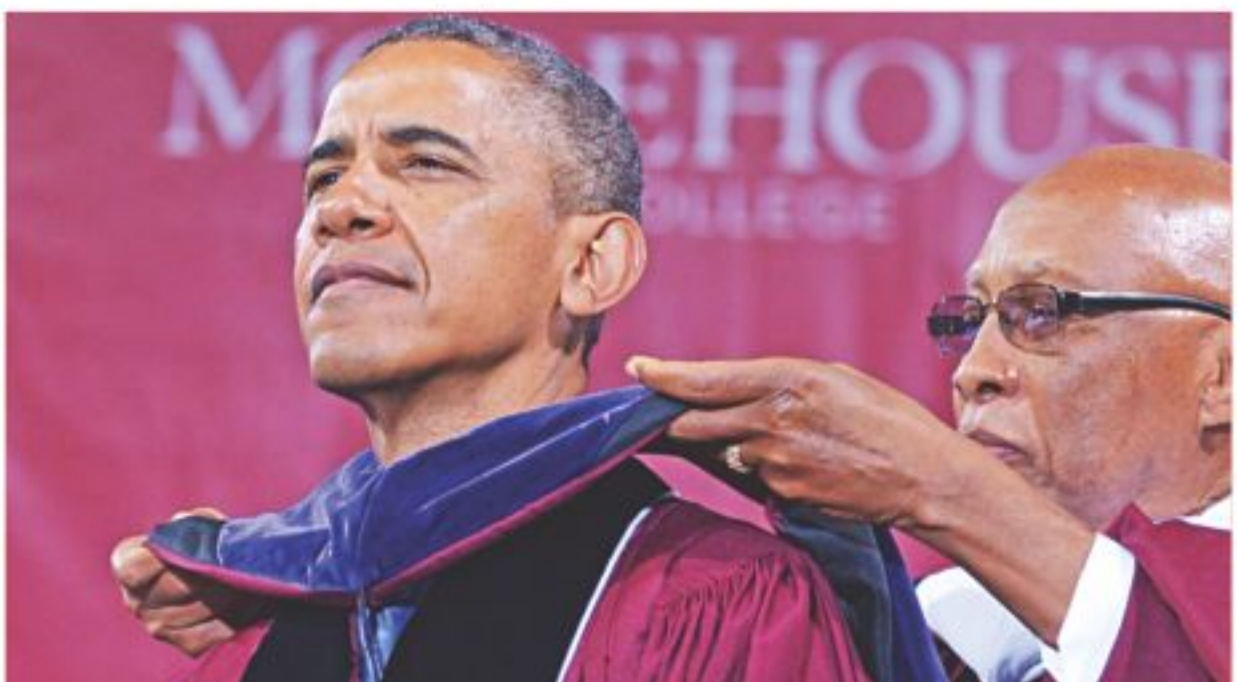
A message from September 2012, read out by Assange, apparently says: "They are trying to arrest him on suspicion of XYZ ... It is definitely a fit-up... Their timings are too convenient right after Cablegate."

The messages appear to contain speculation and chatter between GCHQ employees, but Assange gave little further explanation about exactly who they came from.



MOREHOUSE GRADUATION SPEECH

Obama touts his 2nd term agenda



Obama is presented with an honorary doctor of law degree.

AFP, Atlanta

US President Barack Obama, in a rousing speech to graduating college students here Sunday, touted his second term agenda, steering clear of scandals that have engulfed the White House in recent days.

"My job, as president, is to advocate for policies that generate more opportunity for everybody -- policies that strengthen the middle class and give more people the chance to climb their way into the middle class," Obama said in a commencement address at historically black Morehouse College in the southern city of Atlanta, Georgia.

"Policies that create more good jobs and alleviate poverty, that educate more children, that give more families the security of health care, and protect more of our children from the horrors of gun violence," he added.

Venezuela to restore US diplomatic ties

REUTERS, Caracas

Venezuela's recent designation of an acting head of its diplomatic mission in the United States shows the OPEC nation's desire to restore full diplomatic relations, the foreign minister said in an interview broadcast on Sunday.

Disputes between Caracas and Washington were common during the 14-year-rule of late socialist leader Hugo Chavez, leaving both nations without ambassadors on each other's capitals.

Foreign Minister Elias Jaua suggested in a televised interview that the move to name government ally Calixto Ortega as charge d'affaires in Washington could be a prelude to restoring ambassadors.

Anti-Maoist operation kills 8 in India

AFP, Raipur

Indian police reported yesterday that eight villagers, including three children, died in crossfire between security forces and Maoist rebels, but opposition politicians said the victims were "massacred".

A policeman also died in the incident on Saturday in the Edameta area of Bijapur district, 550 kilometres south of capital Raipur, the chief of anti-Maoist operations in central Chhattisgarh state said.

The state's main opposition party accused security forces of killing "innocent" villagers in a "fake encounter", a term used in India to refer to illegal killings by security authorities where the victim is deliberately targeted.

ODDLY enough

Pak civil servants' new dress code

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

Pakistan has told its civil servants not to wear socks as the country turns off air-conditioners amid soaring temperatures to deal with chronic power cuts.

The government has turned off all air-conditioning in its offices as the country endures blackouts of up to 20 hours a day in some places.

As part of a new dress code, moccasins or sandals must be worn without socks.

Cameron faces rebellion over gay marriage

AFP, London

British Prime Minister David Cameron faces further dissent from within the ranks of his Conservative Party as a bill to legalise gay marriage returns to Parliament yesterday.

Cameron faces a setback in the lower chamber, the House of Commons, if the opposition Labour Party joins forces with Tory rebels in a vote on his bill.

While Cameron, several senior party colleagues and his Liberal-Democrat coalition partners back the bill legalising gay marriage, large sections of his Conservative party are fiercely opposed to the idea.

Dozens of disgruntled lawmakers are expected to deliver a heavy blow to Cameron's agenda by backing an amendment on Monday.