

NEWS IN brief

Pak presidential polls on Aug 6

DAWN ONLINE

The Election Commission of Pakistan announced on Tuesday that presidential elections would take place before Eid-ul-Fitr on August 6, DawnNews reported.

A proposed schedule of the presidential poll was sent to CEC Justice (r) Fakhruddin G. Ebrahim, who gave final approval, the election commission said.

According to the approved schedule, the nomination forms would be submitted on July 24.

BBC to launch 5 new HD channels

BBC ONLINE

The BBC yesterday announced it plans to launch five new high definition channels by early 2014.

There will be HD versions of BBC News, BBC Three, BBC Four, CBeebies and CBBC.

They will be available over rooftop aerials via Freeview receivers as well as satellite and cable services.

Mexico arrests Zetas drug cartel head

AFP, Mexico City



Mexican marines captured the head of the country's violent Zetas drug cartel on Monday, giving the new government its biggest catch as it seeks to rein in violence.

Miguel Angel Trevino, alias "Z-40," was detained in Nuevo Laredo, the northeastern Tamaulipas state city bordering Texas, along with two other people.

The Zetas are considered one of the most powerful and feared organized crime groups in Mexico, founded

US drone issue : No double standards, says Nawaz

DAWN ONLINE

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said here on Monday that unlike the previous government, his government would not adopt double standards on the issue of drone attacks. The previous regime used to criticise drone attacks, but silently supported them, he said.

"We hope that drone attacks will end in the days to come," Sharif said in an address to industrialists, export-

Manning trial: Plea to dismiss charge of abetting enemy

AP, Fort Meade, Maryland

Lawyers for the Army private who leaked a trove of classified government documents urged a judge on Monday to dismiss a charge that he aided the enemy, saying prosecutors had failed to prove Pfc. Bradley Manning intended for the information to fall into enemy hands.

The charge is the most serious and carries the most severe punishment life in prison in the military's case against Manning, who has acknowledged sending hundreds of thousands of documents to the anti-secrecy

Myanmar activists want action

AFP, Yangon

Activists yesterday urged Myanmar President Thein Sein to "turn his words into action" after the former general promised to free all political prisoners by the end of the year.

Pro-democracy campaigners, however, have accused the former junta premier of using a series of headline-

Army, rebels dash kills 130 in DR Congo

AFP, Goma

Fighting between troops and rebels in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo has killed at least 130 people including 10 soldiers, the government said Monday, the deadliest clashes in months.

Loud blasts rang out north of the flashpoint city of Goma Monday afternoon, and up to 1,000 people fled towards the city in a cloud of dust, an AFP photographer reported.

Russia holds biggest war games

AP, Moscow

Russia has launched its biggest military manoeuvres since Soviet times, involving 160,000 troops and about 5,000 tanks across Siberia and the far eastern region.

President Vladimir Putin watched some of the drills on Tuesday on Sakhalin Island in the Pacific.

The manoeuvres are part of recent efforts to boost the



Egyptian supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood block yesterday the Six October Bridge in the center of Cairo. The demonstrators, demanding the reinstatement of Morsi, clashed with riot police as they tried to block the bridge, one of the main highways in the capital. Inset, riot policemen fire tear gas at supporters of Morsi.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

Egypt forces, protesters clash kills 7

REUTERS, Cairo

Seven people were killed and more than 260 wounded when supporters of Mohamed Morsi clashed with the deposed president's opponents and security forces through the night as violence returned to Egypt's streets.

Two people were killed at a bridge in central Cairo where police and anti-Morsi locals clashed with some of his supporters who were blocking a route across the River Nile.

Another five were killed in the Cairo district of Giza, said the head of emergency services, Mohamed Sultan.

The street battles, which raged into the early hours of Tuesday morning, were the bloodiest since more than 50 Morsi supporters were killed a week ago.

Trayvon Martin inquiry to continue

Says US attorney general; More protests planned

BBC ONLINE

America's top prosecutor, Eric Holder, has said an investigation into the "tragic, unnecessary" death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin will continue.

The justice department last year opened an inquiry into the unarmed black teenager's death, then stood aside to allow Florida's prosecution to proceed.

George Zimmerman, who said he opened fire in self-defence in February 2012, was cleared of murder on Saturday.

Civil rights groups have pledged further protests over the verdict.

Over the weekend, demonstrations across the country against the verdict have been mostly peaceful, with many demanding justice for Martin's family and questioning the fairness of the justice system.

Anger over the acquittal of a US neighborhood watch volunteer who fatally shot an unarmed black teenager continued on Monday, with civil rights leaders saying mostly peaceful protests will continue this weekend with vigils in dozens of cities, AFP reported.

George Zimmerman's lawyer has told ABC News that Zimmerman will get his gun back and intends to arm himself again.

Syria mortar fire hits Israeli-occupied Golan

UK to give rebels chemical weapons protector

AFP, Jerusalem, Damascus

Mortar fire from inside war-torn Syria hit the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on Tuesday, an army spokeswoman said.

"Several mortar rounds fired from Syria exploded in northern Golan without causing any damage or casualties," the spokeswoman told AFP.

It was apparently stray fire from fighting between Syrian government forces and rebels and was not deliberately fired towards Israeli-occupied territory, she added.

Israel, which remains technically at war with Syria, seized 1,200 square kilometres of the strategic plateau during the 1967 Six-Day War, which it later annexed in a move never recognised by the international community.

Britain is to give Syrian rebels equipment to protect themselves against chemical and biological weapons as "a matter of special urgency", saying it would allow them to potentially survive a sarin gas attack, reported Reuters.

In a written statement to parliament on Tuesday, Foreign Secretary William Hague said Britain would deliver 5,000 escape hoods, nerve-agent pre-treatment tablets and chemical weapons detector paper to the Syrian National Coalition on or after August 3.

The UN's special envoy on children in war was in Syria for talks as concern mounted over the rising child death toll in the bloody two-year conflict.

Leila Zerrougui, the UN secretary general's special representative on children and armed conflict, will spend three days in Syria, where she will meet government officials, UN representatives and non-governmental organisations, the United Nations said.

She will also visit neighbouring Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey, which are hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees.

At least nine Syrians, including a child, were executed by regime forces at a checkpoint in Damascus province, a watchdog said on Tuesday.

India needs fundamental change in politics

Says Nobel laureate Amartya Sen

PTI, Kolkata



Calling for reforms, Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen has said that India needs a fundamental change in politics to usher in an inclusive and equitable growth.

"We do want many, many changes that include reforms, which has made a contribution to India and could make more but it requires not just policy changes, it also requires quite a fundamental change in politics and the political economy of the country," Sen said on Monday night.

At the launch of his new book 'An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions' published by Penguin, he said, "We believe that India is in a very difficult situation now and the glitter of the achievement might well hide that".

The book argues that the government has to play a much larger role in healthcare and education.

"An educated and healthy workforce brings economic growth and for that we need a fundamental change," Sen said.

He also pointed out how India's subsidy structures are biased. For instance, as much as two percent of India's total GDP is spent on power subsidies for the relatively privileged, even as one third of Indian households have no electricity connection at all. "We are basically a subsidy driven economy and that has to change," he said.

Sen said the book isn't a critique of the government's policies but points out the success stories and the failures of the country. "It's an effort to engage and tell India how and why it has ended up behind an economically far weaker country like Bangladesh in key human indicators," he said.

'No decision on Rahul as PM yet'

Modi has credibility, says Ramdev

AGENCIES

Congress on Monday kept open the possibility of projecting Rahul Gandhi as its prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 general elections with party general secretary Ajay Maken saying no decision had yet been taken on the issue, TNN reported.

"It has not yet been decided. When it will be decided, you will know," Maken told reporters. He was responding to queries about the Congress's official position on declaring Rahul as the PM nominee ahead of the coming Lok Sabha polls.

Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi has "credibility" while the BJP needed to "bring a lot of change" in its character, Yoga guru Ramdev said yesterday, reported PTI.

Expressing support to Modi as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, Ramdev told reporters here, "Modi is a secular leader...he developed Gujarat a lot, including areas belonging to minorities."

Referring to Congress' criticism of the Gujarat chief minister, he said, "Modi does not require any certificate from Congress whether he is secular or non-secular."

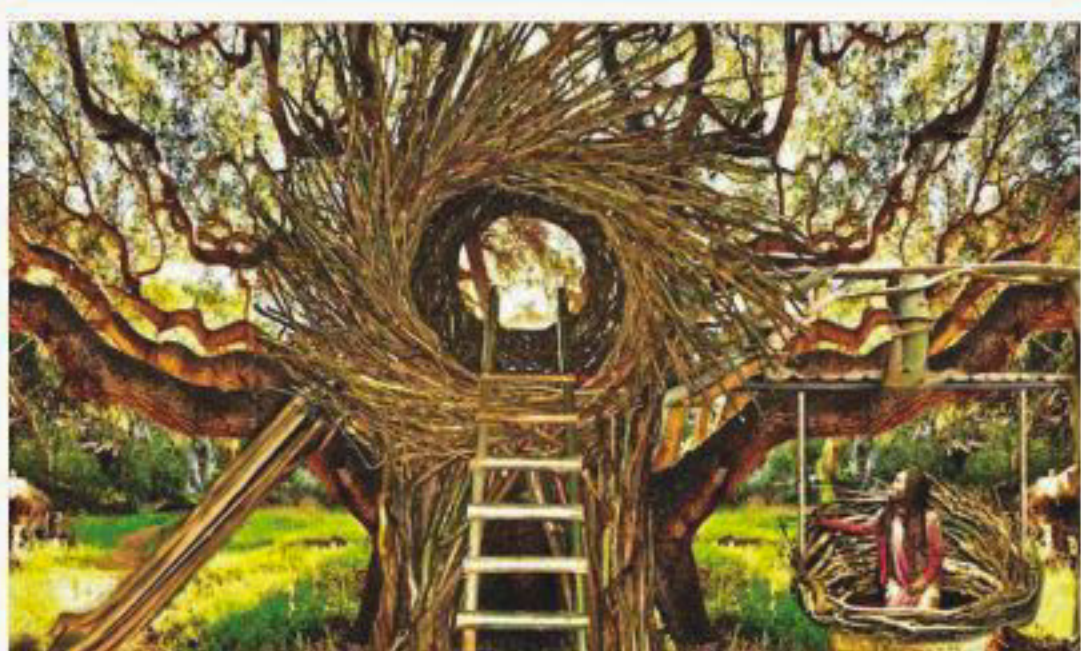


UNDERWATER VLADIMIR PUTIN

Russian president submerges on board Sea Explorer 5 bathyscaphe near the isle of Gogland in the Gulf of Finland on Monday, visiting Oleg frigate which sank in 1869.

PHOTO: AFP

ODDLY enough



Sleep like a bird in human nest!

STAR DESK

California-based artist Jayson Fann designs and creates nests for humans, where one can experience what it feels like to sleep like a bird.

Made from tree branches harvested from local forests, the Spirit Nests are available for purchase from Big Sur Spirit Garden, an international arts and culture center in the Big Sur valley. Or, you could head to the only nest that's open to public at the Treebones Resort, on the Big Sur Coast.

Before you start dreaming of spending a night in a nest, you must know that these structures

Russia president accuses US of trapping Snowden

Edward Snowden applies for Russia asylum

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday accused the United States of trapping US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden in Moscow, saying he would leave Russia as soon as possible.

"As soon as there's the chance to move somewhere he will certainly do this," Putin said in televised remarks.

"He arrived on our territory uninvited, he did not fly to us, he was flying in transit to other countries," Putin said.

"But as soon as he was in the air, it became known, and our American partners essentially blocked off his further flight."

These were Putin's first public remarks since Snowden met with several rights activists and lawyers Friday at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, where he is stranded.

Putin said of the United States: "They themselves scared off all the other countries,



no one wants to take him, and therefore they essentially themselves trapped him on our territory.

Snowden applied yesterday for temporary asylum in Russia, ending three weeks of uncertainty after arriving from Hong Kong to escape the clutches of US justice.

Snowden, wanted by the United States for revealing sensational details of its spying operations, made the application from the transit zone of state-controlled Sheremetyevo airport after meeting rights activists and lawyers there on Friday.

"The application has been filed with the Russian authorities," said Kremlin-friendly lawyer Anatoly Kucherena, who participated in the dramatic airport meeting and helped the fugitive negotiate the complexities of Russian legislation afterwards.

"There is no (other) way to resolve this situation," Kucherena told AFP during an interview in Moscow.

Nasa discovers new Neptune moon

BBC ONLINE

The Hubble space telescope has discovered a new moon orbiting Neptune, Nasa has confirmed.

Designated S/2004 N 1, this is the 14th known moon to circle the giant planet.

It also appears to be the smallest moon in the Neptunian system, measuring just 20 km across, completing one revolution around Neptune every 23 hours.

US astronomer Mark Showalter spotted the tiny dot while studying segments of rings around Neptune.

Nasa said the moon was roughly 100 million times dimmer than the faintest star visible to the naked eye.



Panama seizes N Korea ship

'Missile material found'

AFP, Panama City

Panama's president said Monday that a North Korean ship captain tried to kill himself after the vessel was stopped en route from Cuba and found to have suspected missile material on board.

Outlining a dramatic sequence of events, President Ricardo Martinelli said the ship was targeted by drug enforcement officials as it approached the Panama Canal and was taken into port, but a search revealed a cargo of far greater concern.

The vessel's estimated 35-man crew also rioted when police stepped aboard, according to Martinelli, who said the suspicious cargo was found within a massive consignment of sugar.