

Court brings forward Pak presidential poll

Ruling party, opposition confirm candidates

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday revised the date for the presidential election, asking the election commission to hold it on July 30 instead of August 6.

The court made the order as many of the lawmakers who will elect a replacement for President Asif Ali Zardari will be paying pilgrimages or offering special prayers on August 6 for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which ends a few days later.

The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-N (PMLN) candidate Mamnoon Hussain, widely expected to win the vote, filed his nomination papers yesterday, as did Senator Raza Rabbani of Zardari's Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

"The court has dictated its order and it is a right order," said PMLN Senator Raja Zafar-ul-Haq, who brought the petition.

The PMLN won a majority in May's parliamentary election and their nominee is expected to win the presidential poll, in which members of the National Assembly, Senate and provincial



Mamnoon Hussain Raza Rabbani

assemblies can vote. Zardari, who came to power in 2008 on a wave of public support after the assassination of his wife Benazir Bhutto, had already announced his intention not to stand again, and given the PMLN's power he stood little chance of re-election in any case.

Following constitutional amendments brought in by the last PPP government, the Pakistani president has a largely symbolic role with little real power, though Zardari was often seen as a sharp political operator behind the scenes.

The Election Commission of Pakistan is expected to follow the Supreme Court order and polling should be held on July 30 at parliament house in Islamabad and in the four provincial assembly buildings.

It's Prince GEORGE

AFP, London

Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate yesterday named their baby boy George Alexander Louis, sticking firmly to royal tradition with a first name used by six previous monarchs.

George was the bookmakers' clear favourite for the third-in-line to the throne as it pays apparent tribute to Queen Elizabeth II's father King George VI, the infant's great-great-grandfather, who died in 1952.

"The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are delighted to announce that they have named their son George Alexander Louis. The baby will be known as His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge," Kensington Palace said in a statement.

The baby will not automatically be King George VII whenever he comes to the throne, as there have been reports that William's father Prince Charles may take that title when he becomes king.

The announcement came just hours after the queen visited Kensington Palace and met her newborn great-grandson for the first time. The 87-year-old monarch would have given final clearance for the name to ensure that it was in keeping with the traditions of the House of Windsor and a monarchy that has lasted more than 1,000 years.

The naming was relatively quick by royal standards. Charles and his first wife Diana took a week to announce William's name in 1982, while the world had to wait a month after Charles was born in 1948.

22 July 2013
Born at 4:24pm at St Mary's Hospital in London

103 cannon shots rang out on Tuesday over London

3.8 kg Weight at birth

3rd in line to the British throne after his grandfather Charles and father William

Britain's royal baby

25,300 tweets per minute after the announcement that the royal baby had been born

5,000 pounds (5,800 euros): the cost of a standard room in the private maternity ward at St Mary's hospital

16 The number of countries in which he will be head of state

22 days of waiting for journalists from around the world outside the hospital

1st grandchild for prince Charles

1st child of Kate and William



AFP

British royal family coat of arms

NEWSIN brief

First verdict due in Delhi gang-rape

AFP, New Delhi

An Indian court is expected to deliver the first verdict this week on one of five suspects tried over the fatal gang-rape of a student, which triggered outrage and protests across the country.

A juveniles' court in New Delhi has finished hearing the case of the youngest suspect, who was 17 at the time of the horrific assault on the 23-year-old woman on a moving bus in the capital.

Myanmar frees dozens of prisoners

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar has agreed to release some 70 political prisoners, an official said Tuesday, after President Thein Sein vowed to free all dissidents by the end of the year. Last week, during his first visit to London as part of a European tour aimed at burnishing Myanmar's international image, Thein Sein said there would be "no prisoners of conscience in Myanmar" by the end of the year.

Over 500 rhinos killed in SA this yr

AFP, Johannesburg

More than 500 South African rhinos have been killed this year, official figures showed yesterday, amid strong demand for horns on the Asian black market. Last year, 668 rhinos were killed in South Africa, a record high that could be surpassed if the poaching continues at today's pace.

Meal scam: Indian school head caught

AFP, Patna

Police yesterday arrested the head of a school in eastern India where 23 students died after eating food contaminated with pesticide, an officer told AFP. The children, aged four to 12, died after eating a free lunch of lentils, potatoes and rice cooked at the school in a poverty-stricken village on July 16.

Most Israelis back peace deal: Poll

AFP, Jerusalem

More than half of Israelis are likely to support a peace deal with the Palestinians should it come to a referendum, a poll said yesterday.

The poll showed 39 percent of respondents would support any peace plan, and another 16 percent would "probably" approve it. Some 25 percent said they would oppose it.

US to arm Syria rebels

UN chemical weapons experts arrive in Damascus

AGENCIES

The CIA could begin shipping arms to Syria in the coming weeks, after two US congressional panels cleared the way for the controversial transfer of weapons.

The White House announced in June that it would provide limited military support for vetted rebel groups, which have recently been struggling in their campaign against President Bashar al-Assad.

Republicans and Democrats on the House and Senate intelligence committees have expressed concerns that arms could end up in the hands of Islamist militants fighting in the region - or not do enough to tip the balance in the civil war.

Mike Rogers, chairman of the

House committee, said on Tuesday that the panel had agreed to support the plan to arm the opposition fighters. However, the committee made clear it has only agreed reluctantly and retained serious anxieties about whether Barack Obama's new policy would work.

On Tuesday House Speaker John Boehner also weighed in in favor of the committee's approach, saying "their effort to help the right set of rebels in Syria is in our nation's best interest."

While not legally required, intelligence committee approval of US military assistance has traditionally been key to administrations moving ahead with such aid.

Meanwhile, two UN envoys were in Damascus yesterday on a mission to persuade the Syrian

government to let in inspectors to investigate alleged chemical attacks during the 28-month conflict.

The Syrian regime and rebels fighting to topple it have accused each other of using chemical weapons in the drawn-out conflict which has seen more than 100,000 people killed.

Swedish scientist Ake Sellstrom and Angela Kane, the UN high representative for disarmament, arrived from Beirut for the talks, which the United Nations has been pushing for since April.

Their visit came as opposition sources said that Saudi Arabia had stepped up its weapons deliveries to rebels in readiness for a major offensive in Aleppo province, including on government-held areas of the northern metropolis.

Attack targets Pak spy agency

Five killed; 30 injured

BBC ONLINE

At least five people have been killed and more than 30 injured in an apparent bomb attack on government security agencies in Pakistan's Sindh province, officials said yesterday.

Sporadic gunfire was reportedly heard in the area following the explosions. Sukkur is located some 500km north-east of Karachi, the main city in Sindh province.

Up to seven attackers stormed the heavily guarded compound yesterday and seized control of one of the government buildings while another office was still under fire, according to the state-run Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV).

The roof of a third building was reported to have collapsed, with people feared trapped beneath the rubble.

Police sent reinforcements to the area, officials said, adding that it was not yet clear who was behind the assault.

Confusion arises over Snowden travel papers

BBC ONLINE



Fugitive US intelligence leaker Edward Snowden has not been given Russian travel documents, his lawyer has said yesterday, contradicting earlier reports.

His comments dashed expectations that Snowden, who last week applied for asylum in Russia would leave the airport Wednesday after reports said he would receive a document allowing him free movement.

Anatoly Kucherena told reporters his client would remain in the transit zone at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, where he has been for the past month.

Earlier, airport officials said that Kucherena had given Snowden the travel documents.

The US wants him extradited for leaking details of surveillance programmes.

He said the question of whether and when he would leave the airport was so far "undecided" although Snowden wanted to stay in Russia.

He said Snowden was starting to learn the Russian language and was planning on remaining in the country.



REFUGEE BOAT TRAGEDY
An Indonesian police man carries an exhausted young boy following more rescue by search and rescue team in Cidaun, West Java yesterday. Rescuers searched the seas off Indonesia's Java island yesterday for possibly dozens of asylum-seekers missing after their Australia-bound boat carrying 250 people sank, leaving at least 9 dead, with 189 saved, an official said.

PHOTO: AFP

Egypt army chief calls for protest

Qatar joins calls for release of Morsi

AGENCIES

Egypt army chief has called for mass protests against "terrorism" after an explosion outside a police building in northern Egypt killed one police conscript and injured 19 officers and civilians - bringing the death toll from fighting since the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi to at least 190, according to one estimate.

Following the attack, General Abdel-Fatah Sisi - the army chief who forced Morsi from power on 3 July - called for millions to protest this Friday.

His speech prompted concerns that the military may be seeking popular legitimacy for a violent crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood. It also added to fears that it is Sisi, rather than the civilian government he installed following Morsi's overthrow, who has the greatest influence on post-Morsi Egypt.

Meanwhile, Qatar, a strong backer of Arab Spring uprisings and supporter of ousted Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, has joined international calls for his release from detention while expressing concern at violence sweeping Egypt.

The United States, Germany, the United Nations and the European Union have all called for Morsi's release.

ODDLY enough



£1m spent on perfume in two months!

MAIL ONLINE

A supposed Saudi princess claimed yesterday that she is so wealthy she has splashed out almost £1 million on perfume in the past two months.

Her spree has created an Aladdin's cave-style display of opulence which has to be seen to be believed, the High Court heard.

Sara Al Amoudi is accused of being a one-time penniless Ethiopian prostitute who posed as a princess to swindle London property developers Amanda Clutterbuck and Ian Paton out of luxury flats worth £14million.

But the mysterious 'princess', aged between 31 and 45, denied the charges.

Amoudi, who arrived at the London court in a Rolls Royce with numberplates reading 'HRH', told judge Sarah Asplin her shopping addiction was so serious she had sought medical help.

She said: 'I'm afraid I'm addicted to spending money, and get through enormous amounts of cash. I can easily spend £50,000 to £100,000 in one spree.'

MAGSAYSAY AWARD Afghan, Myanmar women honoured

REUTERS, Manila

Afghanistan's first woman governor and a Myanmar civil society organiser, who both helped families displaced by conflict in their home nations, are among five winners of Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize this year.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation yesterday singled out Afghanistan's Habiba Sarabi, a 57-year-old doctor, for her "bold exercise of leadership to build up a functioning provincial government against great odds."

Sarabi, currently the only Afghan woman in such a role, also devoted her energy to helping Afghans in refugee camps.

The Foundation also recognised Lhpaiz Seng Raw from Myanmar, for her "quietly inspiring and inclusive leadership in the midst of deep ethnic divides and prolonged armed conflicts."

A Filipino healthcare pioneer, a Nepalese anti-human trafficking organisation and an Indonesian anti-corruption group are the other winners of the awards to be handed out on August 31.

The winners will receive prizes of \$50,000 each at a ceremony set for August 31 in Manila.

Go home or face arrest

Illegal immigrants in Britain warned

PRESS TV ONLINE

The British Home Office has launched a crackdown on illegal immigrants by sending vans around London that show a message saying "go home or face arrest".

The vans will display a controversial message, "In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest. Text HOME to 78070 for free advice, and help."

Immigration Minister Mark Harper said, "We are making it more difficult for people to live and work in the UK illegally. Every single day our enforcement officers are arresting, detaining and removing people with no right to be in the UK." The Home Office claims that people, who voluntarily return to their countries is the most cost-effective way of removing illegal immigrants.

Salman charged with homicide

AFP, Mumbai

An Indian court yesterday charged Bollywood star Salman Khan with culpable homicide over a 2002 hit-and-run case that could land him behind bars for 10 years, a report and a court petitioner said.

Khan, 47, is alleged to have rammed his Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle onto a pavement and over five sleeping homeless people in suburban Mumbai, killing one and injuring four others.

Khan, wearing a grey shirt and black trousers, pleaded not guilty to charges including culpable homicide not amounting to murder in a Mumbai sessions court, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said.

The judge then read out the charges, which carry a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Khan was earlier being tried under lesser charges of rash and negligent driving but prosecutors filed an application for the charges to be upgraded, which the court upheld this February.

MODI'S US VISA ROW Hindu-Muslim feud reaches Washington

TNN, Washington

As if politics in Washington and the United States isn't divisive enough, Hindus and Muslims from the subcontinent have brought their decades-old partisan feud to America.

A tactically leaked letter by 65 Indian lawmakers, many of them Muslims, to US President Barack Obama, pressing him not to revoke the ban on Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi from visiting US because of his alleged role or inaction in the 2002 communal riots is just the latest jab in the ongoing skirmish between the two sides. In a separate development, 27 US lawmakers have written to Secretary of State John Kerry expressing "profound concern over the escalating violence and intolerance towards religious minorities in Pakistan, including Hindus, Christians, Ahmadis, and Shia Muslims."

The two letters are unrelated, but they are emblematic of the growing political activism in America of Hindu and Muslim groups from India. Although written several months back in 2012, the letter to Obama from Indian MPs was selectively leaked to the media only this week by an advocacy group of Indian Muslims in America. The leak, on the eve of BJP chief Rajnath Singh's visit to the US capital, is ostensibly aimed at scuppering moves by the BJP and Hindu groups to seek a revocation of the ban on Modi, who is increasingly seen the BJP's prime ministerial candidate.

The fact that Indian MPs have brought their domestic political feud to President Obama's desk has surprised many commentators.