

MUSTREAD

4 killed in traffic accident in Eastern Afghanistan

Kabul: Four commuters were killed as their car collided with a truck in the eastern Afghan province of Ghazni on Saturday, the state-owned Bakhtar news agency reported. The deadly mishap took place in Ab Band district on a road linking Ghazni to neighboring Kandahar province in the wee hours of the day, the official media outlet added. Blaming reckless driving for the deadly road accident, the report said that an investigation had been initiated into the case. A similar accident claimed 11 lives and injured four others in Ghazni's neighboring Helmand province on Wednesday.

China issues yellow alert for Typhoon Wipha

Beijing: China's national observatory on Saturday issued a yellow alert for Typhoon Wipha as the sixth typhoon of the year is expected to bring strong winds and heavy rain to the southern coastal regions of the country. The typhoon, observed at 19.9 degrees north latitude and 120.2 degrees east longitude at 5 a.m. Saturday, is moving northwestward at a speed of 15-20 km per hour, according to the National Meteorological Center. It is anticipated to make landfall along the coastal areas from Shenzhen City in south China's Guangdong Province to Wenchang City in Hainan Province during the afternoon or evening on Sunday, the meteorological center said.

Wildfire expected to increase in western Canada

Ottawa: Wildfire activity is expected to continue to increase and persist to well-above-average conditions over much of western Canada by August, Canada's minister of energy and natural resources said Friday. In a wildfire update, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Tim Hodgson delivered the latest national wildfire forecast, saying the highest fire danger is in southern British Columbia. The minister said weather forecasts point to above-average temperatures across much of Canada from July through August, with dry conditions expected to intensify in the coming weeks, particularly in the west and north. Based on these weather forecasts, Natural Resources Canada's modeling predicted elevated wildfire risk from Yukon eastward to northwestern Ontario and in Nova Scotia and eastern New Brunswick, said Hodgson.

Mexican president rejects new US border wall construction

Mexican City: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Friday voiced strong opposition to the construction of a new segment of the U.S. border wall in the state of New Mexico, calling it a unilateral move by the U.S. government. Speaking at her daily press conference, Sheinbaum emphasised that Mexico is not involved in the project in any way and is not contributing funding. "They're building it on their own. We don't support the wall. We've achieved a safe border through cooperation and coordination, not walls," she said. Sheinbaum described the construction as a decision made solely by U.S. President Donald Trump and emphasized Mexico's preference for development-based cooperation and respect for Mexicans living in the United States.

Canada condemns killings of Druze civilians in Syria

Washington: The Canadian government condemns the murder of civilians, primarily from the Druze community, in southern Syria, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Friday. "Canada condemns the killing of civilians, predominantly members of the Druze community, amid escalating violence in southern Syria. We call on all parties to respect the ceasefire and to take immediate and concrete steps to prevent the further spread of intercommunal violence," GAC said via its Canada Foreign Policy page on X. Canada believes it is important to uphold Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity, GAC added. Last week, armed Bedouin groups attacked several Druze settlements in Suwayda province, clashing with Druze self-defense forces.

Trump signs GENIUS Act into Law

Washington (UNI)

US President Donald Trump today signed into law the GENIUS Act, a landmark bill that establishes a regulatory framework for payment stablecoins, marking a pivotal moment in America's digital currency policy.

Formally titled the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for US Stablecoins Act, the legislation is designed to regulate dollar-backed stablecoins and bolster the US position in the global crypto economy.

"I pledged that we would bring back American liberty and leadership and make the U.S. the crypto capital of the world," Trump said at the signing ceremony. "The GENIUS Act creates a clear and simple regulatory framework to unleash the immense promise of dollar-backed stablecoins." Flanked by crypto industry leaders and Republican lawmakers who sponsored the bill, Trump used the occasion to tout America's return to financial and technological dominance. "They named it after me," he said.

"This could be perhaps the great-

Declares US 'Crypto Capital of the World'



est revolution in financial technology since the birth of the internet itself. A lot of people are saying that," Trump said. "What do you guys think? If you say yes, I'm saying yes." "Nobody's gained the respect in such a short period of time," Trump said. "This signing is a massive validation of your hard work and your

pioneering spirit and your ability to never give up."

The White House, in an official statement, confirmed: "On Friday, July 18, 2025, the President signed into law S.1582, the GENIUS Act, which provides for the regulation of payment stablecoins, and for other purposes."

Trump says some 'big trade deals' to be announced soon

New York: U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday a couple of big trade deals will be announced soon. "They could almost do it today ... maybe later on. We'll do it," said Trump at the signing ceremony of the stablecoin act at the White House.

"When I send out the paper that you're paying 35 percent or 40 percent tariff, that's a deal. Then, they'll call and see if they can make a little bit different kind of a deal, like opening up their country to trade," added Trump.

Trump has recently signed an executive order to extend the 90-day suspension of sweeping U.S. reciprocal tariffs from July 9 to Aug. 1, with trade negotiations ongoing with several major trading partners.

Houthis claim hypersonic missile strike on Israel's Gurion airport

Doha: Yemen's Ansar Allah movement, also known as the Houthis, has claimed that it has carried out another hypersonic missile attack on Ben Gurion Airport in Israel.

"We have carried out an advanced military operation against Lod Airport [Ben Gurion] in the occupied Jaffa region using the 'Palestine-2' hypersonic ballistic missile," Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree said on social media.

The spokesman added in his post on Telegram that the Houthis were going to continue attacks, unless Israel stopped military action in the Gaza Strip and lifted the blockade.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said on Telegram on Friday evening that a missile launched by the Houthis from Yemen had been intercepted.

"Following the sirens that sounded a short while ago in several areas in Israel, a missile launched from Yemen was intercepted by the IAF [Israeli Air Force]," the IDF said.

Israel, Syria agree to ceasefire

Amid rising sectarian violence

Moscow (UNI)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Syria's transitional president Ahmed al-Sharaa have agreed on a ceasefire, US Ambassador to Turkey and Special Envoy for Syria, Thomas Barrack, said.

"Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa supported by the [US Secretary of State Marco] Rubio have agreed to a ceasefire embraced by Turkey, Jordan and its neighbors. We call upon Druze, Bedouins, and Sunnis to put down their weapons and together with other minorities build a new and united Syrian identity in peace and prosperity with its neighbors," Barrack wrote on X.

A source in the Turkish Foreign Ministry told Sputnik that Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan had



told Rubio over the phone that Ankara was ready to work with Washington to ensure Syria's future and "end conflict and tensions permanently."

Last week, armed Bedouin groups attacked several Druze settlements in Suwayda province, clashing with Druze self-defense forces.

Hezbollah leader says ready to confront Israel if necessary

Beirut: Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem said Friday that the group is fully prepared to confront Israel militarily if necessary, warning that Lebanon faces an "existential threat" from the ongoing "Israeli aggression" and U.S.-backed regional pressures.

He made the remarks during a memorial service for the group's fallen commander, Ali Abdul Moneim Karaki (Abu al-Fadl), who was killed during an Israeli attack in 2024.

We are prepared for defensive confrontation.

Ukraine introduces new drone scheme



Kyiv (UNI)

The outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian military is trying to extract every advantage it can against its much more powerful opponent — Russia.

Under a scheme first trialled last year and dubbed "Army of Drones: Bonus" (also known as "e-points"), units can earn points for each Russian soldier killed or piece of equipment destroyed, reports BBC.

"The more strategically important and large-scale the target, the

more points a unit receives," reads a statement from the team at Brave 1, which brings together experts from government and the military.

"For example, destroying an enemy multiple rocket launch system earns up to 50 points; 40 points are awarded for a destroyed tank and 20 for a damaged one."

Each uploaded video is now carefully analysed back in Kyiv, where points are awarded according to a constantly evolving set of military priorities.

"I think, first and foremost, it's about quality data, the mathematics of war, and understanding how to use limited resources more effectively," says BBC quoting the man behind the e-points scheme, Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine's Minister of Digital Transformation.

After three and a half long years of grinding, all-out war, the system has another vital use.

Iraq says entities behind drone attacks on radar sites identified

Baghdad: Iraqi authorities on Friday said the entities behind recent drone attacks on several of its military radar sites had been identified, without giving details. Sabah al-Numan, spokesperson for the commander-in-chief of the Iraqi forces, said in a statement that the drones used in the attacks were manufactured outside Iraq and launched from specific sites within Iraqi territory.

The entities involved in planning and carrying out these hostile operations were also identified, said the statement, without giving further explanation. According to the spokesperson, legal measures will be taken against all those involved.

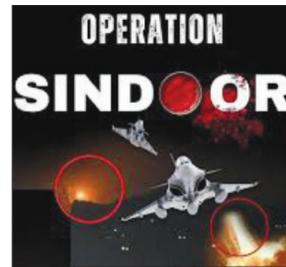
On June 24, several suicide drones struck the Camp Tajj north of Baghdad and the Imam Ali Base in Dhi Qar province.

Trump says he thinks 5 jets were shot down in India-Pakistan hostilities

Agencies, Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday up to five jets were shot down during recent India-Pakistan hostilities that began after an April Islamist militant attack in India-administered Kashmir, with the situation calming after a ceasefire in May. Trump, who made his remarks at a dinner with some Republican U.S. lawmakers at the White House, did not specify which side's jets he was referring to.

"In fact, planes were being shot out of the air. Five, five, four or five, but I think five jets were shot down actually," Trump said while talking about the India-Pakistan hostilities, without elaborating or providing



further detail.

Pakistan claimed it downed five Indian planes in air-to-air combat. India's highest-ranking general said in late May that India switched tac-

tics after suffering losses in the air on the first day of hostilities and established an advantage before a ceasefire was announced three days later.

India also claimed, opens new tab it downed "a few planes" of Pakistan. Islamabad denied suffering any losses of planes but acknowledging its air bases suffered hits.

Trump has repeatedly claimed credit for the ceasefire between India and Pakistan that he announced on social media on May 10 after Washington held talks with both sides. India has differed with Trump's claims that it resulted from his intervention and his threats to sever trade talks.

Severe tropical storm Wipha blows away from Philippines

Manila: Wipha intensified into a severe tropical storm as it blew away from the Philippines on Saturday, bringing strong winds and heavy rains to many areas, including Metro Manila.

On Saturday morning, the Philippine state weather bureau, PAGASA, said in its weather bulletin that Wipha exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility at 10 a.m. local time.

It said that Wipha will continue moving west-northwestward towards southern China. The severe tropical storm is forecast to continue intensifying and may reach the typhoon category on Sunday afternoon or evening.

The wind signals warn the public of the general wind threat over an area due to the tropical cyclone.

Russia meddling intel 'manufactured' by Obama aides: Tulsi Gabbard



Washington (UNI)

US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard released a report today alleging Obama administration officials manipulated intelligence related to Russian interference in the

2016 election.

Gabbard asserted in a statement that former officials engaged in a "treasonous conspiracy" and said her office was turning over evidence to the US Department of Justice (DOJ) for possible criminal referrals. "I'm referring all these documents that we have, that we have found and uncovered, referring them to the Department of Justice for further investigation, accountability and action, not just investigation, but action accountability that can take place," Gabbard told Fox News.

The Office of the US Director of National Intelligence (DNI) revealed on Friday that the Obama administration fabricated the case of Russia's alleged 2016 election interference, despite consecutive intelligence reports indicating otherwise.

UN chief appoints independent scientific panel to examine effects of nuclear war

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed an independent scientific panel of experts to study the physical effects and societal consequences of a nuclear war, a spokesperson said Friday.

"The establishment of this 21-member panel is a response to a global environment in which the risk of nuclear war is higher than at any point since the depths of the Cold War," Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the UN chief, said at a daily briefing.

The panel of experts is tasked with examining the consequences on a local, regional and planetary scale in the days, weeks and decades following a nuclear war, he said.

Support plummets for French PM Bayrou after 2026 budget plan

Moscow (UNI)

More than 50 per cent of French citizens would like to see Prime Minister Francois Bayrou, who announced measures to reduce France's public deficit earlier this week, stepping down, a new poll conducted by Ipsos BVA for the RTL broadcaster revealed.

On Tuesday, Bayrou unveiled his proposals to reduce France's public deficit by over 43 billion euros (over \$49.8 billion) in 2026. The French left and right opposition have reacted negatively to the 2026 budget bill presented by the prime minister, not ruling out a vote of no confidence that could force the cabinet to resign.

The new Ipsos poll published by RTL on Friday showed that only 20 per cent of French citizens support-



ed the prime minister, while 59 per cent would like Bayrou to resign.

Among the over 1,000 people polled on July 16-17, 44 per cent support dissolution of parliament and 34 per cent support a vote of no confidence leading to the resignation of the cabinet.

Tensions rise as Lula blasts US over visa sanctions tied to Bolsonaro trial

Agencies, Brasilia

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called a U.S. decision to impose visa bans on officials involved in former President Jair Bolsonaro's trial "arbitrary" and "baseless," and said foreign interference in the judiciary was "unacceptable."

In a statement on Saturday, the leftist leader said the action violated fundamental principles of respect and sovereignty between nations.

In an escalation of tensions between U.S. President Donald Trump and the government of Latin America's largest economy, Washington imposed visa restrictions on Friday on Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, his family and other unnamed court officials.

The visa bans were a response to



the Supreme Court's decision to issue search warrants and restraining orders targeting Trump ally Bolsonaro, who is accused of plotting a coup to overturn the results of a 2022

election he lost.

"I am certain that no form of intimidation or threat, from anyone, will compromise the most important mission of Brazil's powers and institutions, which is to permanently defend and uphold the democratic rule of law," said Lula.

Solicitor general Jorge Messias, the top judicial official for Lula's executive branch, said in a statement posted on X late Friday that Prosecutor General Paulo Gonet was also targeted by the ban.

Messias said no "improper maneuver" or "sordid conspiratorial act" would intimidate the judiciary in carrying out its duties with independence, as he condemned what he also described as arbitrary U.S. visa revocations targeting Brazilian

officials for fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities.

In addition to Moraes, seven other justices from Brazil's 11-member Supreme Court were also hit by the U.S. visa restrictions, Government Institutional Relations Minister Gleisi Hoffmann said on Friday.

The Prosecutor General's Office and the Supreme Court did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Trump has criticised the proceedings against Bolsonaro as a "witch hunt", a term he has used to describe his own treatment by political opponents, and has called for the charges to be dropped.

3 killed in explosion at police training facility in U.S. state of California

Los Angeles: Three deputies were killed Friday morning in an explosion at a police training facility in Southern California, authorities confirmed. The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department referred to the explosion on the social media platform X as a "critical workplace incident," which occurred shortly after 7:30 a.m. local time (1430 GMT) at the Biscailuz Center Academy Training in East Los Angeles.

"There were three department member fatalities," the department said, adding that homicide detectives are investigating the scene.

Local KABC-TV reported that the victims were handling some kind of explosives when the blast occurred.