Death toll of Afghan road accident soars to 79

Kabul: The Death toll of the deadly road accident, which oc-curred in Afghanistan's western Herat province on Tuesday night, has reached 79, including women and children, spokesman for the Ministry of Interior Affairs Abdul Mateen Qani said Wednesday. Among the victims, 19 are children, the official added. Earlier, local officials in Herat city counted the dead bodies as high as 64, and three people were injured. The bloody road mishap took place after a passenger bus carrying Afghan returnees from Iran collided with a motorbike and a mini-truck on a road linking the neighboring Iran to Herat city in Afghanistan on Tuesday night.

1 killed in auto repair garage fire in northern Vietnam

Hanoi: A fire broke out at an auto repair garage in northern Vietnam's Ninh Binh province early Wednesday, killing one person and destroying several cars, Vietnam News Agency reported. The blaze occurred at around 1:40 a.m. local time and was brought under control about an hour later, according to the report. The cause of the incident is under investigation.

1 killed, several injured in unexploded ordnance blast in Iran

Tehran: A blast from unexploded ordnance left over from the 12-day conflict with Israel killed one person and injured seven in western Lorestan province, official news agency IRNA reported. The explosion took place Tuesday evening in Beyranshahr city. The injured, all children and adolescents, were taken to a hospital, it said. It added that the number of those wounded in the incident could increase. On June 13, Israel launched major airstrikes on several areas in Iran, including nuclear and military sites, killing senior commanders, nuclear scientists, and many civilians. Iran responded with multiple waves of missile and drone attacks on Israel, causing casualties and damage

SL issues over 1,300 driving licenses to foreign nationals at airport counter

Colombo: Sri Lanka has issued over 1,300 driving licenses to foreign nationals after the De-partment of Motor Traffic (DMT) established a license issuance counter at the Bandaranaike International Airport, the DMT said on Wednesday. The DMT said 1,338 driving licenses have been issued until Aug. 17 since the counter was es tablished on Aug. 3. The dedicated counter was introduced for the convenience of foreigners visiting Sri Lanka. Earlier, for-eign tourists who wanted a driving license had to visit the DMT office in Colombo.

13 killed in gunmen attack on mosque in N. Nigeria

Abuja: At least 13 people were shot dead when a group of gunmen attacked a mosque during early morning prayers in Nigeria's northern state of Katsina on Tuesday, a local official said. Nasir Muazu, commissioner for internal security and home affairs in Katsina State, told local media that the gunmen invaded the mainly Muslim Unguwan Mantau community in the Malumfashi Local Government Area, shooting indiscriminately at the worshippers at the mosque during the dawn prayer. Muazu said the attackers were suspected to be on "a reprisal mission", noting that the locals, two days earlier, laid an ambush for bandits troubling the Un-guwan Mantau community, killing "many of them".

Slovenia delivers first batch of Gaza aid via

Ljubljana: Slovenia has sent its first shipment of humanitarian aid for Gaza to Jordan, the Ministry of Defence said Tuesday. The aid, consisting of food and blankets from the Defence Ministry's reserves, was transported by a Spartan military cargo aircraft. Two more flights are scheduled, with all deliveries expected to be completed by the end of August. According to the ministry, the shipment was received in Jordan at a military airport near Amman. Defence Minister Borut Sajovic stressed the importance of the operation, noting that civilians in Gaza have endured nearly two years of conflict with limited humanitarian assistance reaching the enclave.

Donald Trump imposed 'sanctions on India' to end war in Ukraine: White House

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said that US President Donald Trump imposed tariffs as a form of "sanctions" to exert additional pressure on Russia to end the war in Ukraine.

India made "huge" profits on the sale of Russian oil after the war in Ukraine, and Trump said that his sanctions on New Delhi may have played a role in Russian President Vladimir Putin agreeing to meet him Trump doubled India's tariff burden to 50 per cent by adding a new 25 per cent levy on top of the previously announced 25 per cent. Leavitt told reporters the move was part of Washington's strategy to apply "secondary pressure" on Moscow. "Look, the president has put tremendous public pressure to bring this war to a close. He's taken actions as you've seen, sanctions on India and other measures as well. He's made himself very clear that he



wants to see this war end, and he has scoffed at suggestions that we should wait another month before any meeting takes place," Leavitt said.

She also said that plans are underway for a bilateral meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, noting that while the Kremlin has so far avoided firm commitments, it has not ruled out

UK, France not to deploy troops to Ukraine

Moscow: The United Kingdom and France are unlikely to deploy tens of thousands of troops to Ukraine, and the so-called "coalition of the willing" is exploring alternative ways to guarantee Kiev's security. The Times newspaper reported. The "coalition of the willing" is focusing on protecting Ukraine from the air and sea, as well as deploying military instructors on the ground to help replenish the Ukrainian armed forces, the report said on Tuesday. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said that the "coalition of the willing" and the United States would discuss plans on providing security guarantees to Ukraine in the coming days.

future talks. Earlier in the day, Trump reiterated that the US would not deploy ground forces to Ukraine but left open the possibility of other forms of American support. "The president understands security guarantees are crucially important to ensure a lasting peace, and he has directed his national security team to coordinate with our friends in Europe and to continue discussions with both Ukraine and Russia," Leavitt added. Trump also met Zelensky at the White House on Tuesday, signaling openness to a potential trilateral meeting with Putin. Describing the talks as "very successful," Trump said progress had been made toward a possible negotiation. Zelensky, meanwhile, called it the "best conversation" he has had so far with the US President.

US willing to provide air support to Ukraine to aid in reaching peace deal with Russia

Washington: While ruling out any US boots on the ground in Ukraine, President Donald Trump nonetheless did express willingness to provide the country with air support if it helps in Moscow and Kyiv reaching an agreement for settlement, reports The Guardian. His comments came a day after he pledged security guarantees to help end the war at an extraordinary White House summit. Affirming Washington's full involvement in Europe's security, Trump had ruled out Ukraine's admission into NATO, calling it 'unrealistic'.

China to display new-generation armaments in V-Day military parade



China will showcase a series of newgeneration armaments during the upcoming V-Day military parade in Beijing, such as fourth-generation tanks and aircraft, unmanned intelligence and counter-unmanned equipment, and advanced missiles including hypersonic ones, said an official on Wednesday.

All the armaments to be displayed are domestically made and in active service, said Wu Zeke, a senior officer of the Joint Commission, at a press conference.

Wu added that these armaments are composed mainly of new-type fourthgeneration equipment, such as new-type tanks, ship-borne aircraft and fighter jets. Organised according to combat modules, these formations highlight the Chinese military's systems-based operational capabilities.

A series of land, sea and air unmanned intelligent and counter-unmanned equipment, as well as cyberelectronic combat forces, such as newtype drones, directed-energy weapons and electronic jamming systems, will also be displayed, he said.

In addition, the parade will feature other types of advanced equipment such as hypersonic and air defense anti-missile equipment and strategic missiles — which will demonstrate China's powerful strategic deterrence capability, Wu noted.

IDF puts additional 60,000 reserves on alert for operation to fully take over Gaza City

The Israeli Defence Forces have put over 60,000 reserve troops on alert for the total capture of Gaza City. This comes in the wake of Israel's plan to fully occupy the Gaza Strip to remove the Hamas forces in the area. The military is set to launch its offensive against Hamas today in Gaza City, announced Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz.

According to The Times Of Israel, the reserves would not be rolled out at once but rather in waves. The majority — around 40,000-50,000 would be ordered to show up for duty on September 2. Another wave would take place in November-December, and a third wave in February-March 2026, the IDF said.

This move markedly increases the number of reserves being called for



sands of reserves currently serving.

Additionally, the military is also

extending reserve duty for some 20,000 reservists who were currently on duty by another 30-40 days. This would bring the total number of reservists at a given time during the offensive to around 130,000.

These reserves include three brigades and several more battalions, and many combat support soldiers, including in intelligence and

Not all reserves are going to de-ployed to Gaza City, but rather will fill in for the active ground troops deployed in various areas currently.

In all, five IDF divisions, made up

set to participate in the military's planned offensive against Hamas in Gaza City, according to the army. The forces included 12 brigade level teams, each of which has in-

of tens of thousands of troops, were

fantry, armoured, artillery, and combat engineering forces, along with combat support. In addition, the Gaza Division's

northern and southern brigades – normally tasked with the border – are set to participate in the offensive, bringing the total number of brigades to 14.

11 killed, 10 injured in rain-related incidents in Karachi

At least 11 people were killed and 10 others injured in rain-related incidents in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi as record downpours turned neighborhoods into lakes, disrupted flights, and caused power shutdowns, local authorities said Wednes-According to the state-run Rescue

1122 department, victims died in electrocutions, drownings, and wall collapses across Karachi, the capital city of southern Sindh province, after heavy rain struck the city since Tuesday morning. Among the dead were four members of a family in Gulistane-Jauhar area of Karachi after their house wall collapsed, while others lost their lives to rain-soaked power lines and floods in low-lying areas.

The provincial government of

Sindh declared Wednesday a public holiday, shutting down schools and of-



fices in an effort to keep citizens off inundated streets.

Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab announced a rain emergency, deploying rescue and sanitation teams, while Governor of Sindh Kamran Tessori opened the Governor's House to shel-

Flights at Jinnah International Airport of Karachi were severely disrupted, with at least eight cancellations and 20 delays, as power outages at a high level and internet breakdowns crippled communication.

India-Sri Lanka conclude naval exercise SLINEX-25, strengthen cooperation, sharpen operational readiness

Agencies, Colombo

The 12th edition of the Sri Lanka-India Naval Exercise (SLINEX-25) successfully concluded on August 18, in the western seas off Colombo, as per an official statement by the Sri Lankan Navy.

As per the statement, "both the navies carry out a wide spectrum of operations across the ocean region to fulfill the nations' and regional maritime aspirations, these regular maritime exercises play a vital role in sustaining their operational readi-

ness by enhancing its capabilities, advancing technology and sharpening professional skills."

The annual SLINEX strengthened the cooperation and interoperability between the two navies, thereby reaffirming their shared commitreaffirming their shared commit-



ment towards safeguarding security in the Indian Ocean Region.

As per the official statement, during SLINEX-25, the Sri Lanka Navy was represented by the Offshore Pa-SLNS Sayura, while the Sri Lanka Air Force contributed a Bell 412 heli-

India, China to resume direct flights: MEA



Agencies, Beijing India and China agreed to resume direct flight connectivity between the Chinese mainland and India at the earliest, as a part of the discussions upon Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi's visit.

Both sides agreed to finalise an updated Air Services Agreement. "Both sides agreed to resume direct flight connectivity between Chinese mainland and India at the earliest, and finalize an updated Air Services Agreement. They also agreed on the facilitation of visas to tourists, businesses, media and other visitors in

both directions," the statement read. The flights were suspended after the Doklam crisis and the Covid pan-

On Tuesday, both sides agreed to continue and further expand the scale of the Indian pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash/Gang Renpoche and Lake Manasarovar/Mapam Yun Tso in Tibet starting in 2026.

The matter of reopening the Nathula route for the yatra was earlier raised in Parliament by Sikkim Rajya Sabha MP DT Lepcha, prompting coordinated efforts between the Government of India and the Government of Sikkim.

The resumption of the yatra through Nathula is expected to provide a spiritual avenue for pilgrims, while also boosting tourism and strengthening local economies along

Bangladesh general polls to be held in Feb, Election roadmap this week

Bangladesh will hold its 13th parliamentary elections in February next year, with the Election Commission expected to release a detailed action plan within the week

Election Commission Senior Secretary Akhtar Ahmed told state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) that a draft of the election roadmap has been prepared and will soon be submitted for final approval.

He said the plan will focus on inter-departmental coordination and operational issues to ensure smooth

conduct of the polls. The announcement comes amid doubts raised by political parties over whether elections will be held on schedule. Leaders of the National Citizen Party (NCP) have argued that polls cannot take place without key



reforms and the completion of trials initiated by the interim government.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said that preparations for the

polls were moving ahead as planned The polls will be held in February and the government's stance on this remains firm," he told reporters after a Cabinet Division meeting.

Earthquake of magnitude 3.7 strikes Pakistan

Agencies, Islamabad

An earthquake of magnitude 3.7 struck Pakistan in the early hours of Wednesday, a statement by the National Cen-

ter for Seismology (NCS) said. As per the statement, the earthquake took place at a depth of 170km.

In a post on X, the NCS said, "EQ of M: 3.7, On: 20/08/2025 02:38:23 IST, Lat: 29.86 N, Long: 71.09 E, Depth: 170 Km, Loca-

tion: Pakistan.' Earlier on Tuesday, an earth-quake of magnitude 5.2 jolted Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and several parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Seismic Network of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said in a statement quoted by



According to the statement, the quake was felt in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, KP's Peshawar, Swat, Chitral, and Abbottabad.

The PMD's press release said that the earthquake originated at 10:20 am (local time). Its epicentre was the Hindu Kush region in Afghanistan, at a depth of

As per Dawn, Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority reported that the earthquake was also felt in the province's divisions of Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Lahore, Multan, Sahiwal and Sargodha.

Iran, Russia, China discuss interaction with E3 on Nuclear deal

Tehran (UNI)

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi said he held discussions with Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Iran Rafael Gevorkyan and Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu on joint measures to counter the stance of the E3 countries, the United Kingdom, France and Germany regarding UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and the Iranian nuclear issue.

Last week, the Financial Times, citing a letter, reported that the E3 countries informed the United Nations of their readiness to reimpose sanctions on Iran if Tehran does not agree to the nuclear deal by the end

"At a meeting with the ambas-

sador of the People's Republic of China and the chargé d'affaires of Russia in Iran, joint measures to combat the destructive approach of the three Eu ropean governments regarding UN Security Council Resolution 2231 were discussed," Gharibabadi said on

In 2015, the UK, Germany, China, Russia, the United States, France and Iran signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which lifted sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear program. However, the United States withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and reimposed sanctions on Tehran, after which Iran an nounced a gradual reduction of its commitments on nuclear research and uranium enrichment.