

**MUSTREAD**

**Israeli army drone crashes in Gaza**

**Jerusalem:** The Israeli army confirmed on Tuesday that one of its military drones had fallen over the Gaza Strip earlier in the morning. The immediate circumstances of the crash were not clear. An Israeli military spokeswoman told Xinhua that the military was investigating the incident. Palestinian media reported that a Hamas force near the fence separating between Israel and Gaza shot down the drone and captured it. On Monday, an Israeli army drone crashed over southern Lebanon during a surveillance mission. Israel said the drone had fallen due to a malfunction, but the Iran-backed Lebanese armed group of Hezbollah said the aircraft was intercepted by its activists.

**More than 200 Libya's gov't troops killed in 3 days**

**Tripoli:** Libya's east-based rebel army said earlier Tuesday that more than 200 of the UN-backed government forces have been killed during the past three days in south of the capital Tripoli. "More than 200 of the militias (government forces) have been killed in the past three days of military operations, including airstrikes and ground confrontations in the axes," the army's information center said in a statement. The statement also said that hundreds more of government forces have been injured. The government has been engaged in a deadly armed conflict in and around Tripoli since early April against the rebel army, which is trying to take over the city and overthrow the government. Libya has been mired in violence and political instability ever since the fall of the late leader Gaddafi's government in 2011.

**Maduro convenes defense council amid alleged Colombia threat**

**Mexico City:** Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has called on the country's National Defense Council to make decisions with regard to alleged threats from Colombia, an announcement which comes as Venezuela is starting large-scale military drills near the Colombian border. "I have decided to convene, in accordance with article 323, the Defense Council to address the issue of the warlike threat of the Government of Colombia against our beloved homeland of Venezuela," Maduro said in a televised address on Monday. Last week, the Venezuelan leader announced that large-scale military exercises would be held near the Colombian border on September 10-28. According to Maduro, Venezuela was deploying air defense systems at its border with Colombia for the period of holding the drills. Tensions between Venezuela and Colombia have been strained amid Maduro's struggle with the opposition, which tried to overthrow the Venezuelan leader in January.

**UK parliament suspended until Oct 14**

**Moscow:** The British parliament was suspended until October 14 in the early hours of Tuesday, right after the proposal of Prime Minister Boris Johnson to hold early parliamentary elections was rejected. Earlier in the day, lawmakers for the second time in a week rejected Johnson's bid for snap parliamentary elections with 293 votes in support, while 434 were needed for passing. Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow said "this is not ... a normal prorogation. It is not typical, it is not standard, it is one of the longest for decades." The House of Commons ended his speech with the words "we degrade this parliament." Opposition lawmakers were holding signs saying "silenced." Johnson's defeat came hours after Queen Elizabeth II gave a royal assent to the bill, blocking a no-deal Brexit in late October. This bill, dubbed by the prime minister as the "surrender bill," was adopted on Wednesday and then passed to the House of Lords. During the debates in the UK parliament, Johnson proposed a snap election on October 15, but his call was rejected. On Friday, the upper chamber approved the bill, forcing Johnson to ask the European Union for a Brexit deadline delay.

**Mohajir leader exposes atrocities committed by Pak Army in PoK**

Agencies, London

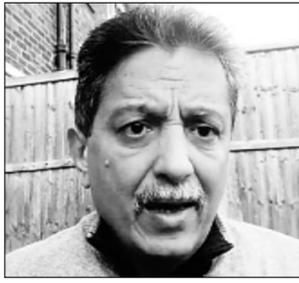
At a time when Pakistan is gearing up to table its false narrative of human rights violation in Kashmir at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva today, a UK-based Mohajir leader has exposed the atrocities committed by its military establishment in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Highlighting the grim situation in PoK, Aarif Aajaki on Tuesday said that the entire region is witnessing massive pro-freedom protests since past two days. He added that multiple rallies are being taken out to condemn atrocities committed by Pakistan.

"Nobody is allowed to move freely there. Operations are underway. People are not allowed to access social media. Not even media persons are allowed to report from here," Aajaki stated.

"What is Pakistan Army doing?" the Mohajir leader questioned further with a mark of discontent on his face.

Further expressing his discontent over Pakistan's way of handling the region, he went on to add this is "not what we had expected" out of Pakistan.



"We thought they will do something for us. But instead of fighting wars the military commanders are engaging themselves in Twitter war," Aajaki noted in an apparent reference to the diabolic remarks vented out against India by Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Qamar Javed Bajwa and Director-General of Inter-Services Public Relations Asif Ghafoor in the wake of New Delhi's decision to revoke Article 370 that had accorded special constitutional status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Since last month, Pakistan has been unsuccessfully tried to internationalise the Kashmir issue de-

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spite India making it clear that the issue is "strictly internal" to the country. The Mohajir leader stressed that Pakistan, since the past 72 years, has been playing the Kashmir card on the global platform, including the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations.

He also highlighted Pakistan's bid of encouraging 'jihad' within Indian territory to incite violence."

Notably, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, last month, had said that he will become the commander of his people if 'jihad' was ever formally declared for Kashmir.

**China, Russia set to continue promoting political solution to Korean crisis**

Agencies, Moscow

China and Russia will continue to support a political solution to the North Korean issue, China's new Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui stressed in an interview with Sputnik.

Earlier on Tuesday, North Korea fired two projectiles in the direction of the Sea of Japan. The launch came just a day after North Korea's government announced that it was ready to resume talks with the United States in the second half of September.

"China and Russia have always followed the goal of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, have stressed that dialogue and consultations are the only effective means of resolving the Korean peninsula issue; have admitted that a political solution to the issue of the Korean Peninsula must be aligned with the goal of denuclearization in exchange for security and development guarantees and requires a universal and balanced resolution of the concerns of all parties and, at the same time, cooperation in denu-

clearization and the establishment of a peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula," Zhang said.

The ambassador stressed that China supported dialogue between Washington and North Korea and stood for the amelioration of relations between Pyongyang and Seoul.

"China and Russia will continue to play a constructive role in promoting a political solution to the Korean Peninsula issue," Zhang emphasized, speaking in an interview with Sputnik.

The ambassador also said that there was hope that parties to the North Korean issue would use the opportunity and explore effective means to contribute to the settlement.

On Sunday, Moon Chung-in, a special adviser to South Korean President Moon Jae-in, told Sputnik that Russia, China and Japan should join the dialogue between the United States and North Korea on normalization, stressing, however, that at this stage, progress in talks depends only on Washington and Pyongyang.

**Trump says Taliban talks dead**

Agencies, Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump proclaimed talks with Afghanistan's Taliban leaders dead on Monday, while the general in charge said the U.S. military is likely to ramp up operations in Afghanistan to counter an increase in Taliban attacks.

Trump scrapped talks with the Taliban planned for Camp David, Maryland, over the weekend after an American soldier was killed by a suicide bomber in the capital Kabul last week.

"They're dead. They're dead. As far as I'm concerned, they're dead," Trump told reporters when asked about the talks as he left the White House for a trip to North Carolina.

Trump had hoped to cap months of U.S. negotiations with the Taliban militants, who control large parts of Afghanistan, with a secret meeting at Camp David that would include Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and was aimed at securing an agreement to pull U.S. troops out of America's longest war of 18 years.



Despite the Afghan government's wariness of negotiating with the Taliban, Trump had hoped having both parties at the presidential retreat could produce a deal.

A draft accord agreed last week would have seen about 5,000 American troops withdrawn over coming months in exchange for guarantees that Afghanistan would not be used as a base for militant attacks on the United States or its allies.

**Hong Kong leader says escalation of violence will not solve social issues**

Agencies, Hong Kong

An escalation of violence cannot solve social issues in Hong Kong, the leader of the Chinese-ruled city, Carrie Lam, said on Tuesday, adding that she deeply regretted interference by foreign parliaments in the Asian financial hub's matters.

Lam was speaking after another weekend of sometimes violent clashes in the former British colony, with police firing tear gas to disperse protesters in cat-and-mouse skirmishes, at times smashing windows and starting street fires.

"It's extremely inappropriate for foreign parliaments to interfere in HKSAR internal affairs in any way, and (we) will not allow (the United States) to become a stakeholder in HKSAR matters," Lam said, referring to Hong Kong's status as a special administrative region of China.

During a rally at the U.S. con-



Chinese officials have accused foreign forces of trying to hurt Beijing by creating chaos in Hong Kong, and warned other nations against interfering in what they called an internal affair.

gress on Sunday, thousands of demonstrators had called for help in bringing democracy to Hong Kong.

The protesters wanted the U.S.

Congress to pass legislation that would require Washington to make an annual assessment of whether Hong Kong is sufficiently autonomous from mainland China to retain special U.S. trade and economic benefits.

Chinese officials have accused foreign forces of trying to hurt Beijing by creating chaos in Hong Kong, and warned other nations against interfering in what they called an internal affair.

On Monday, former U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the anti-government protests were "not an internal" Chinese matter and the United States should offer at least moral support to the demonstrators.

After three months of unrest, Lam last week withdrew a controversial extradition bill that had triggered the protests, but the gesture failed to appease many demonstrators, who are using the popularity of the movement to revive old grievances.

**Putin, Xi to meet in September**

**Moscow:** Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold a meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, this month, while an exact date and agenda of the talks are currently being agreed upon, newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui told Sputnik.

"In September of this year, the 24th regular meeting of China's and Russia's heads of state will take place. Right now, the two sides are discussing the agenda, as well as the date and location of the meeting. The foreign ministries of the two countries will release all the relevant information in due time," Hanhui said.

The ambassador added that the leaders of Russia and China planned to "solve some current issues" and would outline key directions of bilateral cooperation.

"During the meeting, a range of important bilateral documents on cooperation will be signed," the Chinese ambassador told Sputnik.

**Israeli leader claims to find new Iranian nuke site**

Agencies, Jerusalem

Israel's prime minister today unveiled what he said was a previously undisclosed Iranian nuclear weapons site, further escalating a showdown between the two enemy countries.

Benjamin Netanyahu's announcement came as the UN nuclear watchdog held a meeting in Vienna, where he's hoping the agency will take tougher action against Iran. It also came in the final stages of Israeli national elections, drawing criticism from opponents that the sudden press conference was a campaign stunt.

Speaking to reporters, Netanyahu said Israel discovered the facility, located in the central Iranian town of Abadeh, using information gathered in a trove of documents Israeli agents stole from an Iranian warehouse and made public early last year. "Iran conducted experiments to develop nuclear weapons," Netanyahu said.

He provided no details or evidence of what those experiments were, but he showed off two satellite



photos. The first, taken in June, showed the facility intact.

The second, taken in July, showed parts of the building had been destroyed, in what he said was an Iranian cover-up after Israel discovered the facility. "This is what I have to say to the tyrants of Tehran," he said. "Israel knows what you're doing, Israel knows when you're doing it, and Israel knows where you're doing it."

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy, and Netanyahu has been a leading opponent to the international nuclear deal with Iran.

He says that Iran is trying to build a nuclear bomb, a charge it denies, and has accused the Iranians of violating provisions of the agreement.

There was no immediate reaction from Iran. Abadeh is a small city famous for its carpets located some 500 kilometers (300 miles) southeast of Tehran, Iran's capital.

There has been a longtime airport project planned for the area that authorities broke ground on in 1995. At one point, officials suggested it could become an air defense base. However, there's been no major development at the site.

GPS coordinates offered by Netanyahu did correspond to a set of buildings located in the hills north of Abadeh, according to commercially available satellite images. However, their purpose could not be immediately determined.

Last year, President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nuclear agreement and re-imposed sanctions on Iran. The deal has steadily unraveled since then, and caused tensions to heighten across the Persian Gulf and broader Middle East.

**Air strikes hit Syria ceasefire zone**

**Agencies, Beirut:** Air strikes hit a part of northwest Syria for the first time since a ceasefire was declared 10 days ago, a war monitor and rebel group spokesman said on Tuesday.

Syrian government forces and their Russian allies unilaterally agreed a truce on Aug. 31 in opposition-controlled Idlib, where a "de-escalation zone" was brokered two years ago.

Since Aug. 31 the intense air strikes by Russian and Syrian warplanes that had accompanied a Syrian government push to retake the area have stopped, although there has been ground fighting and shelling.

The United States said its forces had carried out strikes against an al-Qaeda facility in Idlib on the day the ceasefire came into effect. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor, based in Britain, said planes had carried out two raids on in the strategic Jabal al-Akrad mountain range near the western Latakia coast.

**Japan's Abe, headed for longest premiership**

Agencies, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will likely pick a former Olympic speed skater to prepare for the 2020 Games and keep allies in key posts in a cabinet reshuffle on Wednesday as he readies a tax rise and aims to revise the pacifist constitution.

Speculation has swirled that Abe, poised to become Japan's longest-serving premier in November, will hand a post to Shinjiro Koizumi, 38, the popular son of an ex-prime minister whom surveys show voters favour as the next leader, but expectations have waned recently.

Abe is set to retain Finance Minister Taro Aso, 78, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, 70, both of whom have served in their positions since the conservative leader returned to office in 2012, promising to reboot the economy and bolster the military, political sources and media said.

Aso must help ensure the economy weathers an October increase in the sales tax to 10% from 8% that could dampen consumption when a U.S.-China trade war is clouding growth.

Abe is also poised to keep veteran lawmaker Toshihiro Nikai, 80, as Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) secretary general, the party's number two post, political sources and media said.

Economy Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, 63, a Harvard-educated lawmaker with a reputation as a tough negotiator, will take over at the foreign ministry from Taro Kono. But Motegi will probably stay in charge of trade talks with the United States ahead of a deadline for a deal later this month, media reported. Kono, a fluent English speaker who is well-known in Washington and has been on the front line of Japan's feud with South Korea over wartime history and trade, is in line to become defence minister, media reported.

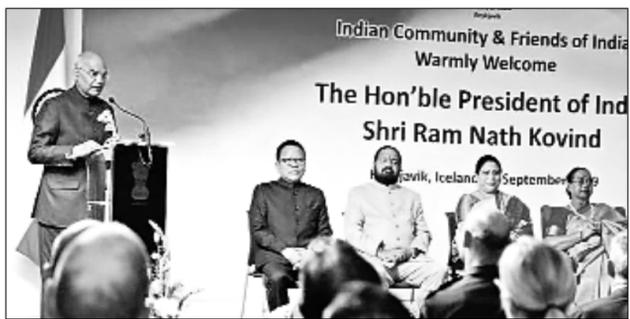
**Indian community forging deep people-to-people ties with Iceland: Kovind**

Agencies, Reykjavik (Iceland)

The Indian community in Iceland are forging deep people-to-people relations with the Nordic country, President Ram Nath Kovind said. Terming the Indian diaspora as 'cultural ambassadors', the President applauded them for contributing to the local society through their advanced skills and knowledge.

"We live in an age defined by knowledge, technology and digital space. These represent new markers of our growing ties with Iceland. We are proud of your achievements. You convey an image of India that is highly mobile and highly skilled," Kovind said while addressing a gathering of the Indian community.

He underlined that yoga is immensely popular in Iceland, saying that the people of the tiny Nordic country understand the value of living in harmony with nature and



oneself which are basic to the exercise. The President called upon the Indian community to make efforts to promote Ayurveda and traditional knowledge system across the world.

Expressing happiness that Hindi would be now taught at the University of Iceland, Kovind said that the move would strengthen cultur-

al understanding between the two countries.

Highlighting the initiatives done by the government, Kovind said, "We have set a target to become a five trillion-dollar economy by 2025. Through Jal Jeevan Abhiyaan, we are working to provide clean tap drinking water to every rural household by 2024."