

News in brief

◆ **An Israeli court** yesterday postponed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's testimony in his corruption trial after he requested a delay with the support of US President Donald Trump, in a ruling published by the premier's party. "Following the explanations given... we partially accept the request and cancel at this stage Mr Netanyahu's hearings scheduled" for this week, the Jerusalem district court said in its ruling, published online by the Likud party. Netanyahu's lawyers had asked the court to excuse him from testifying over the next two weeks so he could focus on security issues following a ceasefire with Iran and amid ongoing fighting in Gaza where Israeli hostages are held. They had submitted Netanyahu's schedule to the court to demonstrate "the national need for the prime minister to devote all his time and energy to the political, national and security issues at hand". The court initially rejected the lawyers' request but said in its ruling on Sunday that it had changed its judgement after hearing arguments from the prime minister, the head of military intelligence and the chief of the Mossad spy agency.



**Israeli court postpones Netanyahu appearance in graft trial**

**France imposes smoking ban on beaches, parks**

◆ **France yesterday** banned smoking in parks and on beaches, part of efforts to protect the public from passive smoke and create the country's first non-smoking generation. The ban, published in the official government gazette on Saturday, also applies to bus shelters and areas near libraries, swimming pools and schools. It was introduced one week before the start of school holidays, aiming to shield children from smoke on beaches. The rules do not apply to bar and restaurant terraces, where smoking remains permitted. They also do not apply to electronic cigarettes. On a beach packed with sunbathers and sloping into the crashing Atlantic surf in southwestern France, opinions on the new rules were mixed as smokers puffed away without apparent fear of reprimand.

◆ **Heavy rain** and flash flooding across Pakistan have killed 45 people in just a few days since the start of the monsoon season, disaster management officials said yesterday. The highest toll was recorded in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that borders Afghanistan, where 10 children were among 21 killed. The disaster management authority said 14 of those victims died in the Swat Valley, where media reported a flash flood swept away families on a riverbank. In Pakistan's most populous province of Punjab, along the frontier with India, 13 fatalities have been recorded since Wednesday. Eight of them were children who died when walls or roofs collapsed during heavy rain, while the adults were killed in flash floods. Eleven other deaths related to the monsoon downpours were recorded in Sindh and Balochistan provinces.

**Pakistan flash floods, heavy rain kill 45 in just days**



SPOTLIGHT

India plane crash probe looking at all angles: minister



The tail of Air India flight 171 is pictured after it crashed in a residential area near the airport in Ahmedabad  
**New Delhi, India**

An Indian aviation minister on Sunday said investigators were probing "all angles" behind an Air India crash when asked by media about possible sabotage. All but one of the 242 people on board the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner were killed when it crashed in the western city of Ahmedabad on June 12. Authorities have identified 19 others who died on the ground, but a police source told AFP after the crash that the toll was 38. India's minister of state for civil aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, said the investigation was looking at "all angles" when asked specifically about possible "sabotage", in an inter-

view with Indian news channel NDTV. "It has never happened before that both engines have shut off together," Mohol said earlier in the interview, in reference to theories by some experts of possible dual-engine failure. The minister added that until the investigation report is published, it would be premature to comment on the cause. The team appointed to investigate the crash started extracting data from the plane's cockpit voice and flight data recorders this week, in an attempt to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the disaster. Air India has said that the plane was "well-maintained" and that the pilots were accomplished flyers.

Iran could enrich uranium 'in matter of months': IAEA chief

Uncertainty surrounds Iran's 900-pound stockpile of 60% enriched uranium



Iran voices 'serious doubts' over Israel commitment to ceasefire

AFP | Tehran, Iran

Iran yesterday said it was not convinced Israel would abide by a ceasefire that ended their 12-day war this week. "We did not start the war, but we have responded to the aggressor with all our power," Iran's armed forces chief of staff, Abdolrahim Mousavi, was quoted as saying by state television, referring to Israel.

"We have serious doubts over the enemy's compliance with its commitments including the ceasefire, we are ready to respond with force" if attacked again, he added, six days into the ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump. In a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published on Sunday, Iran demanded that the United Nations recognise Israel and the United

States as being to blame for this month's war. "We officially request hereby that the Security Council recognise the Israeli regime and the United States as the initiators of the act of aggression and acknowledge their subsequent responsibility, including the payment of compensation and reparations," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in the letter.

● **Tehran suspends cooperation with the IAEA, rejecting inspection requests**

● **Iranian officials confirm serious damage to key nuclear sites but withhold specifics**

● **International scrutiny intensifies, as IAEA access is denied**

AFP | Washington, United States

UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi says Iran likely will be able to begin to produce enriched uranium "in a matter of months," despite damage to several nuclear facilities from US and Israeli attacks, CBS News said Saturday.

Israel launched a bombing campaign on Iranian nuclear and military sites on June 13, saying it was aimed at keeping Iran from developing a nuclear weapon -- an ambition the Islamic republic has consistently denied. The United States subsequently bombed three key facilities used for Tehran's atomic programme. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi says the extent of the damage to the nuclear sites is "serious," but the details are unknown. US President Donald Trump insisted Iran's nuclear program had been set back "decades." But Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said "some is still standing." "They can have, you know, in a matter of months, I would say, a few cascades of centrifuges spinning and producing enriched uranium, or less than that," Grossi said Friday, according to a transcript of the interview released Saturday. Another key question is whether Iran was able to relocate some or all of its estimated 408.6-kilo (900-pound) stockpile of highly enriched uranium before the attacks. The uranium in question is enriched to 60% -- above levels for civilian usage but still below weapons grade. That material, if further refined, would theoretically be sufficient to produce more than nine nuclear bombs. Grossi admitted to CBS: "We don't know where this material could be." "So some could have been destroyed as part of the attack, but some could have been moved. So there has to be at some point a clarification," he said in the interview.

**Iran to suspend cooperation** For now, Iranian lawmakers voted to suspend cooperation with the IAEA and Tehran rejected Grossi's request for a visit to the damaged sites, especially Fordo, Saturday. Another key question is whether Iran was able to relocate some or all of its estimated 408.6-kilo (900-pound) stockpile of highly enriched uranium before the attacks. The uranium in question is enriched to 60% -- above levels for civilian usage but still below weapons grade. That material, if further refined, would theoretically be sufficient to produce more than nine nuclear bombs. Grossi admitted to CBS: "We don't know where this material could be." "So some could have been destroyed as part of the attack, but some could have been moved. So there has to be at some point a clarification," he said in the interview.

the main uranium enrichment facility. "We need to be in a position to ascertain, to confirm what is there, and where is it and what happened," Grossi said. **Trump confident** In a separate interview with Fox News's "Sunday Morning Futures" programme, Trump said he did not think the stockpile had been moved. "It's a very hard thing to do plus we didn't give much notice," he said, according to excerpts of the interview. "They didn't move anything." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Saturday underscored Washington's support for "the IAEA's critical verification and monitoring efforts in Iran," commending Grossi and his agency for their "dedication and professionalism." The full Grossi interview will air on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan" on Sunday.



According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran had enriched uranium to 60% in 2021, well above the 3.67% limit set by a 2015 agreement from which the United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018. To make a weapon, Iran would need to enrich uranium up to 90%.

**Israel has 90 nuclear warheads?**

Israel has maintained ambiguity about its own atomic arsenal, neither officially confirming nor denying it exists, but the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has estimated it has 90 nuclear warheads.

Trump says 'not going to stand' for Netanyahu's continued prosecution

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump said Saturday the United States was "not going to stand" for the continued prosecution of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on corruption charges. "The United States of America spends Billions of Dollar a year, far more than on any other Nation, protecting and supporting Israel. We are not going to stand for this," Trump posted on his Truth Social platform. Netanyahu responded on X, saying "thank you again" and promising that "together, we... will make the Middle East Great Again!".

An Israeli court on Friday rejected Netanyahu's request to postpone giving testimony in his corruption trial, ruling that he had not provided adequate justification for his request. In one case, Netanyahu and his wife Sara are accused of accepting more than \$260,000 worth of luxury goods such as cigars, jewelry and champagne from billionaires in exchange for political favors. In two other cases, Netanyahu is accused of attempting to negotiate more favorable coverage from two Israeli media outlets. Netanyahu has denied any wrongdoing and has thanked Trump for his support in Israel's



war with Iran, which saw a ceasefire agreement earlier this week. Trump on Wednesday sprung to Netanyahu's defense, describing the case against him as a "witch hunt." On Saturday, he described Netanyahu as a "War Hero" and said

the case would distract the prime minister from negotiations with Iran and with Hamas, the Gaza-based Palestinian armed group that Israel is at war with. "This travesty of 'Justice' will interfere with both Iran and Hamas negotiations," said Trump, although it was unclear what negotiations he was referring to with regards to Iran. The US leader also likened Netanyahu's legal troubles to his own before he took office for his second term. "It is a POLITICAL WITCH HUNT, very similar to the Witch Hunt that I was forced to endure," said Trump.