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Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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President signs bill prohibiting child marriages

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Govt decides to Block illegal SIMs Naqvi

Detailed News On Page-08



Djokovic rolls past Moutet to reach last 32

Detailed News On Page-06



PM Shehbaz says

Pakistan won't allow India to cross red line

Says, "India's unilateral and illegal decision to hold in abeyance the Indus Water Treaty, which governs the sharing of the Indus Basin's water, is deeply regrettable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday, rejecting the weaponization of water, warned that Pakistan would not allow India to cross the red line by holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and endangering millions of lives for narrow political gains. "India's unilateral and illegal decision to hold in abeyance the Indus Water Treaty, which governs the sharing of the Indus Basin's water, is deeply regrettable. Millions of lives must not be held hostage to narrow political gains, and Pakistan will not allow this. We will never allow the red line to be crossed," the prime minister said. Prime Minister Shehbaz, in his comprehensive address, touched all the relevant issues, including glacial preservation, Pakistan's climate vulnerability, 2022 floods in Pakistan, global climate action and responsibility, scientific projections on glacial melt, weaponization of water and call to protect nature and humanity's shared destiny. "The world today bears fresh scars from the use of conventional weapons in Gaza that have left deep wounds. As if that were not enough, we are now witnessing an alarming new low—the weaponization of water," he told the international conference being hosted by Government of Tajikistan in collaboration with the United Nations, UNESCO, WMO, the Asian Development Bank, and other key partners as a historic moment for climate ambition, glacier preservation, and international cooperation. The 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, through a resolution, had declared 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, 21st of March as World Day for Glaciers starting in 2025, and that the

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PM lauds security forces for eliminating seven terrorists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday lauded the security forces for eliminating seven terrorists during operations against the Khawarij in North Waziristan and Chitral. The prime minister, who is in Dushanbe on the last leg of his four-nation visit, expressed grief over the martyrdom of Lieutenant Daniyal Ismail, Naib Subedar Kashif Raza, Lance Naik Fiaqat Ali, and Sepoy Muhammad Hameed in the operation. He prayed for peace for the martyred souls and for patience and strength for their families. The prime minister affirmed that the sacrifices of the martyrs for the country would not go in vain and that the nefarious designs of the terrorists would be thwarted. He said that the terrorists would have to pay a heavy price for harming innocent civilians and their properties. "We will soon eliminate the scourge of terrorism. The enemies of Pakistan will never succeed in their evil designs. The government and the security forces are fully committed to eradicating terrorism from the country," he added.

PTI workers sentenced in police station attack case

Police take four accused present in court — Muhammad Akram, Meeran Khan, Shahzeb, Sohail Khan — into custody

FAIZ CH

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad on Friday announced its verdict in the May 9 attack case on Ramna police station, sentencing 11 individuals, including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Abdul Latif and former MPA Wazirzada Kailashi, to a total of 15 years and four months in prison, along with fines. ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra delivered the judgment today. Following the verdict, police took four of the accused present in the court — Muhammad Akram, Meeran Khan,

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Rains kill 32 in various incidents

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: At least 32 people have been killed and more than 150 injured in Pakistan in a week of storms that followed a heatwave, with officials reporting on Friday five more deaths. Five people including a child were killed on Thursday in different districts of north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during heavy rains and strong winds, the province's disaster management authority said. Stormy weather is expected to continue in northern and central parts of Pakistan until Saturday, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

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Relief granted to PTI illegal: ECP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has stated that the Supreme Court's July 12, 2024, verdict declaring PTI eligible for reserved seats exceeded the constitutional authority granted under Article 187(1) of the Constitution. In its written response submitted in the SC against its July 12 verdict, the election body said: "The relief granted in the majority judgement to PTI is beyond the scope of power under Article 187(1) of the Constitution." Last year, the top court ruled that the former

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HONG KONG: DPM Ishaq Dar meets Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Hong Kong within a span of 10 days. Congratulated him on successful signing ceremony of the Convention establishing International Organization for Mediation (IOMed), a groundbreaking initiative by China with transformational impact. — DNA

CJCSC Gen Mirza

India's 'strategic miscalculation' cannot be ruled out

"Issues can only be resolved by dialogue... They cannot be resolved on the battlefield," says most senior army official

CENTRELINE REPORT

SINGAPORE: Pakistan and India are close to reducing the troop build up along their border to levels before conflict erupted between the nuclear-armed neighbours this month, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza said on Friday, although he warned the crisis had increased the risk of escalation in the future. Both sides used fighter jets, missiles, drones and artillery in four days of clashes, their worst fighting in decades, before a ceasefire was announced. The spark for the latest fighting between the old enemies was an April 22 attack in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and

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'Pakistan downed five Indian planes'

Chinese jets effective in combat, Rafale jets underperformed, says Swamy

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: In a rare and candid admission, senior BJP leader Subramanian Swamy acknowledged that Pakistan shot down five Indian Air Force jets during the recent conflict. Speaking in an interview, Swamy said that the Indian planes were defeated in air combat

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Briefs

Crypto Council to meet on June 2

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Crypto Council (PCC) is set to hold a high-level meeting on June 2 to discuss the evolving regulatory and legal framework surrounding digital currency and the broader crypto landscape in the country. The meeting would be chaired by Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, according to press release issued by finance ministry. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Blockchain and Crypto, Bilal Bin Saqib would participate in his capacity as the PCC's Chief Executive Officer.

China has 'violated' agreement

DNA

WASHINGTON: China, perhaps not surprisingly to some, HAS TOTALLY VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH US. So much for being Mr. NICE GUY!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform. US trade talks with China were "a bit stalled" and getting a deal over the finish line will likely need the direct involvement of President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Fox News on Thursday. Two weeks after breakthrough negotiations that resulted in a temporary truce in the trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. — Editor

Promoting Multilateralism

Pakistan joins China's new global mediation body

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister appreciated the Chinese leadership for its wisdom in developing and consistently leading efforts for the establishment of IOMed and in fostering a global community with a shared future

NEWS DESK

HONG KONG: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, today signed, on behalf of Pakistan, the Convention on the establishment of International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) in Hong Kong, Special Administrative Region of People's Republic of China. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister appreciated the Chinese leadership for its wisdom in developing and consistently leading efforts for the establishment of IOMed and in fostering a global community with a shared future. The DPM/FM stated that the creation of IOMed underscores the indispensability and significance of multilateralism as the centerpiece for international peace, stability, and development. IOMed also offers new opportunities and fresh hopes to build a more inclusive, more just and more equitable world. As one of the founding members of IOMed, Pakistan would continue to be an active

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Ishar Dar meets CE of Hong Kong

DNA

HONGKONG: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, today met with Chief Executive John Lee of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister congratulated the Chief Executive on the successful establishment of International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) while highlighting Hong Kong's unique role as a global hub linking East and West and its growing significance in international mediation. Recalling long-standing friendship between Pakistan and Hong Kong, the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister commended the

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Pakistan to upgrade diplomatic relations with Afghanistan

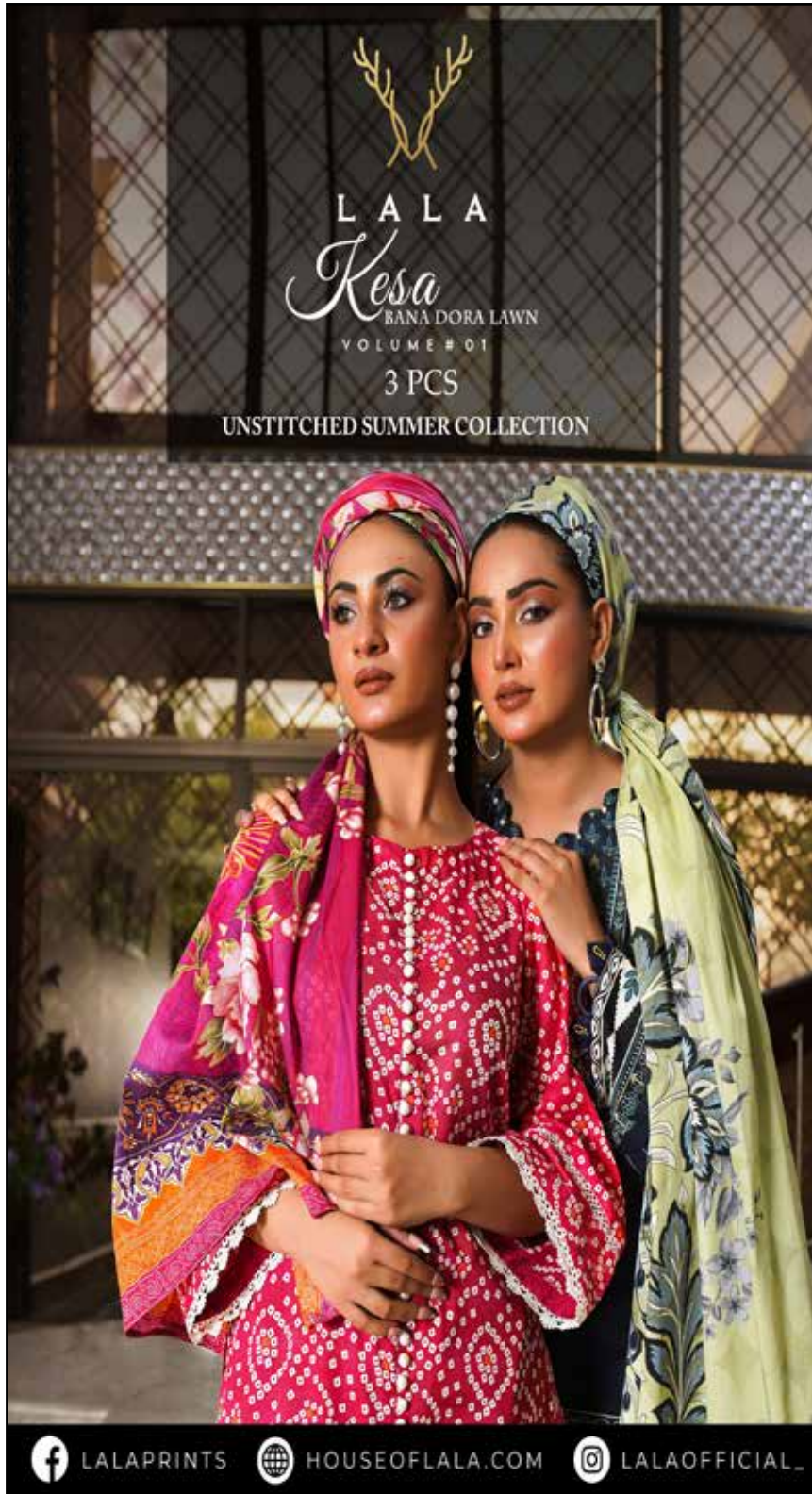
Islamabad will upgrade its Chargé d'Affaires in Kabul to level of ambassador, says DPM Dar

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday announced that Pakistan would upgrade its Chargé d'Affaires in Afghanistan to the level of an ambassador amid improving ties with the neighbouring country. Taking to X, Dar said that Pakistan-Afghanistan relations were on positive trajectory after his "very productive" visit to Kabul on April 19. "I am confident this step would further contribute towards enhanced engagement, deepen Pak-Afghan cooperation in economic, security, CT & trade areas and promote further exchanges between two fraternal countries," he stated. Pakistan and Afghanistan have embassies in each other's capitals but they are led by charge d'affaires, not ambassadors. China was the first country to accept an ambassador from the Taliban-run administration in Kabul though it does not formally recognise its government. Several other states, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), followed. The two nations share a porous border spanning around 2,500 kilometres with several crossing points which hold significance as a key element of regional trade and relations between the people across both sides of the fence. The issue of terrorism remains a key issue for Pakistan

which has urged Afghanistan to prevent its soil from being used by groups such as the TTP to carry out attacks inside the former's territory. However, days earlier, a commander of the Afghan Taliban, Saeedullah Saeed, warned terrorists of Fitna al-Khawarij against fighting the Pakistan forces, conducting attacks in the name of Jihad. Earlier this month, China hosted an informal meeting between Islamabad and the Afghan Taliban administration, wherein Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi says it was decided between the two nations to upgrade their diplomatic ties. The neighbours agreed in principle to send ambassadors to each other's country as soon as possible, Yi said after his talks with Afghanistan's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and FM Dar. Meanwhile, Islamabad and Beijing also agreed to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, reaffirming their commitment to enhancing regional connectivity and economic cooperation. The key outcomes from the Beijing meeting also included commitments to enhance cooperation in security and counter-terrorism, including joint action against militant groups and external interference and an understanding to formally resume the trilateral process by convening the sixth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan

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Kundi briefed on potential flood threats

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi visited the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) here on Friday where he was given a comprehensive briefing on the country's potential flood threats. The session, held in the presence of NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, included detailed updates from heads of various departments. Officials informed the Governor about water levels and potential flood risks in the Indus, Kabul, Kurram, Kunhar, and Swat rivers. The briefing highlighted that Dera Ismail Khan and surrounding areas could face significant destruction in the coming days due to possible severe flooding. Governor Kundi expressed concern over the increasing impacts of climate change, saying that extreme weather patterns are becoming more evident and are

contributing to growing challenges. He stressed the need for timely and effective measures to minimize loss of life and property. Appreciating NDMA's preparedness and preemptive strategies, the Governor assured full cooperation from the Governor House. He emphasized establishing a one-window relief operation to ensure swift aid during emergencies, involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well. Governor Kundi also mentioned that the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center intends to provide homes for flood victims in Dera Ismail Khan based on NDMA's assessments. He urged NDMA to facilitate the identification and provision of suitable land under its supervision to support the initiative effectively. Meanwhile, Chairperson of NAVTTC, Gulmina Bilal Ahmed, met with Governor

Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House Islamabad to discuss the promotion of technical education in the province. Governor Kundi highlighted NAVTTC's vital role in empowering youth and supporting economic progress through skill development programs. The two also discussed a proposal to allocate special quotas for children of martyred security personnel from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in vocational institutes named after Shaheed IG Safwat Ghayur. The initiative was praised as a meaningful tribute to national heroes. They also consulted on potential scholarships for KP students in UK universities. Additionally, the Chairperson handed over the NAVTTC registration certificate for Gomal University, which the Governor welcomed as a positive step for students in the province.—DNA



LARKANA: People busy filling water coolers on hand pump during hot day in the city.

ICT admin bans protests amid section 144 enforcement

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration have warned citizens against participating in any protests, reminding them that public gatherings are currently banned in the capital under Section 144. According to the spokesman of ICT administration here, the Islamabad district administration has issued a clear message ahead of a possible protest scheduled for today. The spokesman confirmed that Section 144 remains in force across the federal capital, making all forms of public demonstrations illegal. According to the spokesman, any attempt to hold a protest or rally in the city would be considered a violation of the law. The official added that such gatherings would also breach the Assembly Act, and legal action will be taken against those involved. The administration also referred to a protest held yesterday, during which several participants were taken into custody. Cases were registered against those who were seen breaking the law, the spokesman said. Officials have warned that any repeat of such actions will lead to strict legal consequences. The administration urged the public not to engage in any illegal activity or join any protest that defies the current restrictions. Residents of Islamabad have been advised to follow the law and stay away from gatherings that could disturb public order. Authorities say the restrictions are in place to maintain peace and prevent any disruptions in the capital.—APPP

Govt to fund Tirich Mir summit expedition

PESHAWAR: An event was organized under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first successful summit of Tirich Mir, the highest mountain peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the ceremony, the year 2025–26 was officially declared as the "Year of Tirich Mir," and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed. Present at the event were Muzammil Aslam, Advisor to the Finance Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Member of the National Assembly Faisal Amin Khan Gandapur; Director General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Habibullah Arif; Deputy Head of Mission of Norway, Thomas Darr; MD PTDC, Aftab Rana; Carlo Alberto Pinelli from Mountain Wilderness International and others. Also invited were mountaineers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Tayyab Syed and Abbas, who, in collaboration with Japan in 1991, attempted to summit the peak but fell short by only 100 meters. During the event, DG Habibullah Arif and Carlo Alberto Pinelli (recipient of the Nishane-Imtiaz) signed the MoU. Addressing the ceremony, Provincial Finance Advisor Muzammil Aslam paid tribute to the Tourism Authority for organizing the event on such a historic occasion. He announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is sponsoring the program for the first time. The initiative will not only provide training to the mountaineers but also support them in summiting the peak. He further announced a two-year royalty fee waiver for mountaineers, making it easier for climbers from around the world to attempt the highest peaks in Pakistan, particularly those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.—APP

PNCA, Romania embassy launch Opera singing courses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of the Arts in collaboration with the Embassy of Romania, proudly launched its first-ever Opera Singing Courses at the PNCA Islamabad — marking a significant step in Pakistan's performing arts education and international cultural exchange. The launch event was graced by two distinguished chief guests: Ms. Farah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage and Culture, and H.E. Mr. Dan Stoenescu, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan. In her remarks, Ms. Farah Naz Akbar lauded PNCA and the Embassy of Romania for taking a vi-

sionary step in introducing opera singing in Pakistan. She emphasized the importance of such collaborations in nurturing new talent and strengthening cultural diplomacy. Ambassador Dan Stoenescu delivered an inspiring address highlighting the universal power of music and announced a generous initiative by offering scholarships for music students in Romania. This scholarship program is a major opportunity for emerging Pakistani musicians to receive world-class training abroad. An engaging overview of the course, its vision, and methodology was presented by Ms. Georgiana Costea-Gluga, who will be closely involved in the training process. DG PNCA highlighted the role of PNCA for promotion of music and arts in Pakistan.

Many international cultural exchange initiatives were taken under the leadership of Muhammad Ayoub Jamali being the DG of PNCA. The event featured captivating live performances by PNCA students — including opera singing, violin, guitar, keyboard, and a cultural/folk fusion — showcasing the diversity and depth of local talent. This milestone initiative would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Mr. Ghulam Muhammad, Incharge of Music Classes at PNCA. His dedication, coordination, and passion for music played a central role in making this collaboration and launch a success. The event concluded with refreshments and a warm round of applause for all participants and organizers.

NISE concludes 3-day training course

SLAMABAD: The National Institute of Special Education (NISE) successfully concluded its three-day training course titled "Bridge Between Voice and Speech: Enhancing Skills in the Science of Speech and Hearing". Organized by the Directorate General of Special Education under the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, the program aimed to strengthen professional competencies in speech therapy, audiology, special education and rehabilitation services. The training brought together 97 participants from across Pakistan, including speech-language pathologists, audiologists, psychologists, rehabilitation specialists, special education teachers, researchers, and parents of children with special needs. The program commenced with a welcome address by NISE In-Charge Noorin Ulfat, followed by an introductory session conducted by Course Coordinator Muhammad Asim. Eight leading experts delivered comprehensive training sessions, covering crucial topics such as early intervention strategies, diagnostic tools for speech and language assessment, assistive technologies including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, audiological evaluation techniques, hearing aid and cochlear implant applications, vestibular disorders, and preventive measures for hearing loss. Notable faculty members including Sadaf Zafar, Shahbaz Akhtar Khalid, Dr. Sajida Mahmood, Dr. Sadaf Naveen, and Dr. Irfan Ahmed shared their expertise through case-based discussions and practical demonstrations. The training emphasized evidence-based practices, interdisciplinary collaboration, and inclusive education approaches for children with communication disorders. The concluding certificate distribution ceremony was attended by senior officials from the Directorate General of Special Education and prominent figures in Pakistan's disability sector. The program successfully achieved its objectives of knowledge sharing, professional networking, and capacity building in the field of communication sciences and special education.—DNA

KP, Punjab CIGs vow to boost RTI awareness

PESHAWAR: Chief Information Commissioner of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Farah Hamid Khan on Friday met her Punjab counterpart, Malik Muhammad Phulla, in Lahore to discuss ways to strengthen awareness and implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) law across both provinces. The central focus of the meeting was to enhance public understanding of RTI laws, especially among citizens from underprivileged and remote areas where a significant communication gap exists between local communities and government institutions, said a press release issued here. The commissioners discussed the launch of a flagship program aimed at delivering targeted training on RTI usage in such regions. Both leaders pledged to adopt a joint strategy, in collaboration with civil society organizations, to proactively disclose key categories of public information as outlined in the RTI Act.—APP

Eight people die in weather incidents in KP

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has stated that since May 27 last, eight people have died in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to storms, strong winds, and rains. According to the report, recent rains in the province have injured 21 people so far and among the deceased are five men, two women, and one child. PDMA further reported that among the injured are 10 men, five women, and six children. A total of 25 houses have been damaged due to the rains. Of these, 24 houses were partially damaged while one house was completely destroyed. These incidents occurred in Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Shangla, Swat, Torghar, Mohmand, Mansehra, and Haripur. Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has predicted more rain in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with showers expected in Peshawar and various other areas.

UAE embassy visa application procedure announced

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UAE Visa Center in Islamabad wishes to inform all prospective visa applicants that effective Monday, June 2, 2025, only applicants with confirmed biometric appointments will be entertained at the UAE Embassy for visa processing and related formalities. This decision has been taken to ensure streamlined and efficient processing of visa applications and to reduce unnecessary crowding at the center. From June 2 onward, only applicants who possess a valid appointment code for biometric and document verification will be allowed to enter the Visa Center. Before ar-

riving at the Embassy, all applicants must deposit a non-refundable fee of USD 69 at any Bank Alfalah branch. The original bank receipt must be presented at the time of the appointment along with all necessary documents, including photocopies of documents uploaded during the online visa application. Applicants who have completed their online visa application but have not received an appointment code must contact the EIMASS Help Desk at: +971 2 418 6999. After a brief verification process, the appointment code will be sent via email or SMS to the contact details provided in the online application form. Once you have received the appointment code, please visit the following portal to schedule

your visit to the UAE Visa Center, Islamabad: [APPLICANT - Appointment System] (official URL will be shared through EIMASS). You will be required to enter your passport number and appointment code to receive a confirmed date and time for your biometric appointment. This appointment system is strictly for document verification and biometric enrolment as part of the UAE visa application process. We request the cooperation of all applicants and members of the public to ensure compliance with the new procedures to facilitate smooth and timely visa processing. For further assistance, please reach out to the UAE Visa Center helpline.

Faysal Bank recognised for innovation, excellence

ISLAMABAD: Faysal Bank Limited (FBL), one of Pakistan's leading Islamic banks, has won four prestigious accolades at the Global Islamic Finance Awards (GIFA) 2025, hosted by The Digital Banker. The Bank was recognised for Best Islamic Savings Account of the Year (Amal Women Account), Best Islamic Financial Inclusion Initiative (Khushal Kisaan Account), Islamic Debit Card of the Year (Noor Debit Card) and Best Gen AI Initiative (iFaysal), reaffirming its leadership and commitment to advancing innovation, inclusion and excellence within the Islamic finance sector.

Faysal Bank continues to lead the way in Islamic banking with Shariah-compliant solutions that deliver impact across diverse customer segments. The Bank's women proposition 'Amal' has empowered over 50,000 women with accessible savings, free takaful and essential wellness services, setting a new benchmark in women-focused banking. Similarly, the Khushal Kisaan Account supports rural growth tailored agri-finance and digital tools, the Noor Debit Cards offer ethical, globally accepted payment solutions and iFaysal leverages AI to transform customer experiences. Speaking on the achieve-

ment, Mr. Yousaf Hussain, President & CEO, Faysal Bank, said, "We feel privileged to receive this award as it affirms our strategic drive with a passion for innovation, commitment to customers and ambitions to set new benchmarks in Islamic banking. Moving forward, we will continue to strive toward enabling a meaningful change, deliver superior Shariah-compliant solutions and contribute to a more inclusive financial future." Recognised after a rigorous international evaluation process by a panel of judges including subject-matter and industry experts.—APP

Tubewells Geo-tagging to address water resource challenges in KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: In order to address key water resource challenges and growing threat of water scarcity due to global warming, the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), a global research for development organization, has started geo-tagging of tubewells in Marshera and Charsadda districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The initiative has been taken by IWMI under its Water Resource Accountability Programme (WRAP) launched with the support from Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). "Under WRAP project, IWMI is working in two districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to assist government in addressing critical water governance and management challenges," informed Engr Muhammad Naem, Advisor IWMI. Briefing newsmen about working of IWMI in KP, Engr Naem said geo-tagging of tubewells have been started to obtain data for comprehensive assessment about ground water situation in the two

districts and to chalk out actionable policy measures to control and improve the situation. Engr Naem said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is facing serious water challenges due to missing water accounting framework, inefficient water allocation, erratic rainfall behaviour, climate change and rapid glaciers ablation. All these challenges are creating uncertainty for the further water availability which needs proactive measures for water accounting, irrigation demand management and regulatory improvements to combat future vulnerabilities. Working since December 2023 in KP, IWMI has installed 20 soil moisture sensors in each pilot districts and held four capacity building sessions for farmers in Manshera on adopting new technologies focusing on sustainable water usage, achieving high yield, Naem told newsmen. The organization is also collecting soil samples for physio-chemical properties assessment to educate farmers on optimal crops suitable for their field. For establishing water allocation system for multiple sectors, IWMI has

collected water demand data for agriculture, industry, domestic and livestock. Similarly, for capacity building of relevant provincial organizations, institutions and officials to improve overall water management system, IWMI under WRAP project has successfully launched different activities in support of technical interventions. Two cutting-edge scientific equipment, Eddy Covariance (EC) Flux Tower, will also be installed in these two districts of KP to optimize crop water usage, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance agricultural sustainability. "The Eddy Covariance (EC) Flux Tower is a sophisticated monitoring system that will provide precise data on water and energy fluxes, critical for understanding the interplay between farming practices and the environment," informs Engr Kifayat Zaman, Assistant Team Lead WRAP KP. Talking to newsmen, Engr Kifayat said we need to use technology for groundwater monitoring and its optimized use by deployment of sensors and other

monitoring equipment. He said water usage situation in Pakistan is grim as per capita water availability which was 5600 cubic meter in 1951-55 has been reduced to just 930 cubic meters per year in 2024. This level of water usage places Pakistan below the threshold of a water-stressed country and considers it water-scarce. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kifayat continued, against the total water allocation of 8.78 MAF, the province utilizes 5.97 MAF with an annual unused resource of 2.81 MAF due to lack of infrastructure. Water tables at different locations are dropping at fast rates with excessive abstraction and the recharge is inadequate. IWMI under WRAP is implementing provincial level interventions including water accounting, development of GMIS to support water regulatory authorities, application of Irrigation Demand Management to improve water productivity and establishing a water allocation system for multiple sectors.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- MAY
- May 03/Poland National Day
- May 06/Bulgaria Armed Forces Day
- May 06/UAE Armed Forces Day
- May 07/Kazakhstan Armed Forces Day
- May 08/Czech Republic National Day
- May 09/European Union National Day
- May 17/Norway Constitution Day
- May 21/Hungary Armed Forces Day
- May 22/Yemen Republic Re-unification Day(National Day)
- May 24/Eritrea National Day
- May 25/Lebanon Liberation and Resistance Day
- May 25/Argentina National Day
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Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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Ethiopia, Pak discuss bilateral coop in higher education

He also extended an invitation for the higher officials of the Education Ministry of Ethiopia and top universities in Ethiopia to attend the 6th Vice Chancellors Forum, scheduled for June 23-25, 2025, in Rabat, Morocco

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Friday explored various avenues for bilateral cooperation in the higher education sector in a bid to further strengthen the bilateral ties and foster academic excellence through potential collaborative initiatives.

An important meeting to this end took place between H.E. Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia, and H.E. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC), at his office in Islamabad.

Both sides discussed a wide range of initiatives, including student and faculty exchange programs, curriculum development for quality assurance in higher education, exchange of knowledge and expertise in educational digitalization, and joint



research projects in various fields such as agriculture, science and technology, medicine, engineering and Artificial Intelligence.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal highlighted the great importance attached by H.E. Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed to quality assurance in education and the promotion of modern technologies in the country. He noted Pakistan's extensive experience and knowledge in high-

er education, which Ethiopia could leverage for its human resource development. The Ambassador also emphasized education diplomacy as a cornerstone for building lasting and sustainable ties between the two countries. HEC Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed warmly welcomed the Ambassador's initiative, reiterating Pakistan's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's educational aspirations. He briefed the Ambassador on the advancements in Pakistan's higher education sector, particularly in digital learning platforms and research infrastructure. The Chairman assured the Ambassador of HEC's full support in facilitating institutional linkages and providing opportunities for Ethiopian students to pursue higher education in Pakistan's public sector universities. He also extended an invitation for the higher officials of the Education Ministry of Ethiopia and top universities in Ethiopia to attend the 6th Vice Chancellors Forum, scheduled for June 23-25, 2025, in Rabat, Morocco.

31 students present research proposals

ISLAMABAD:A total of 31 PhD scholars showcased their research proposals at the 73rd meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), underscoring the university's steadfast commitment to academic excellence and cutting-edge research. The meeting concluded on a successful note, marking a significant step forward in fostering a vibrant research culture. The event was held in two sessions. The first session featured 15 PhD candidates from the Faculty of Sciences, who presented their innovative research synopses. Their presentations were met with high praise for demonstrating scholarly depth, originality, and scientific rigor. The second session included 16 scholars from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and the Faculty of Education. This session was chaired by Professor Dr. Irshad Ahmed Arshad, Director of BASR, who commended the students' dedication and academic insight. The meeting was attended by the university's deans, senior faculty members, and subject experts, all of whom appreciated the students' research enthusiasm and intellectual competence. While the majority of proposals received approval, some were returned with constructive recommendations for refinement and enhancement. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized AIQU's role as a leading institution in promoting research and quality education. He stated, "Our researchers and graduates continue to contribute meaningfully to the intellectual and developmental progress of the nation. AIQU remains committed to nurturing future scholars who will shape tomorrow's knowledge economy.—APP

CERP, Princeton launch energy transition roadmap project

Over the last three years, the Julis-Rabinowitz Center for Public Policy & Finance at Princeton SPIA has cosponsored this workshop series

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step toward building a sustainable and resilient energy future, the Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP) and researchers from Princeton University have initiated a project to develop a long-term energy transition planning framework for Pakistan.

The initiative comes at a time when Pakistan's energy sector faces high costs, volatility, and an overreliance on imported fossil fuels, which account for nearly 60% of the country's energy supply. Outdated infrastructure, inefficient management, and transmission bottlenecks have contributed to persistent power shortages and a growing circular debt crisis, issues that the roadmap aims to address while planning for future growth, sustainabil-

ity, and climate resilience. The launch event, "Pakistan's Energy Transition Roadmap," was part of a two-day workshop, the final of a three-part capacity-building and learning series, which brought together over 50 policymakers, researchers, and private-sector experts. Drawing on Princeton's Net-Zero project expertise, this initiative will provide Pakistan with practical, evidence-based guidance on how to equitably move from reliance on expensive, imported fossil fuels to cleaner, more affordable energy sources aligned with economic growth and development goals. Speaking at the event, Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari emphasized the need for an integrated plan. "The Energy and Petroleum Division are working separately, but for the plan to

be truly effective, it needs to be built on real, credible data...I believe we need to formalize this relationship with CERP to help us plan better and gain valuable insights from their experts. CERP is uniquely positioned to advise us and help us identify the issues they have expertise in." Bilal Anwar, CEO of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), added that climate risks and natural disasters make planning ahead more urgent than ever to avoid future social and economic costs. "This project isn't about imposing ideas, it's about co-creating a roadmap that respects Pakistan's unique challenges while exploring practical opportunities for cleaner, more affordable energy. At CERP, we ensure that every step we take is rooted in rigorous evidence, so that solutions are grounded in real data and tailored to Pakistan's specific needs," said Maroof A. Syed, President & CEO of CERP. Reflecting on his three years with this workshop series, Dr Chris Greig, Senior Research Scientist at Princeton's Andlinger Center for Energy and Environment, noted, "These discussions with participants, sector specialists, policymakers and other stakeholders have been valuable in helping us understand the real challenges and the urgency of finding context-specific solutions that work for Pakistan's economy and people. They also help us think about development-compatible pathways to Pakistan's sustainable energy future." Over the last three years, the Julis-Rabinowitz Center for Public Policy & Finance at Princeton SPIA has cosponsored this workshop series.

Over Rs 2.4m fined on tinted windows, fake number plates

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's Excise Department has taken action against hundreds of vehicles during May for violating traffic regulations and issued fines worth over Rs 2.4 million in a one-month drive targeting tinted windows and non-standard number plates. In this regard, a monthly performance review meeting was held under the supervision of Director General Excise, Irfan Memon. The meeting was attended by Director Excise and other senior officials. During the briefing, it was revealed that a total of 74 vehicles were fined for using non-standard number plates in the last month. These fines added up to Rs 920,000. Officials said that many vehicles were found using number plates that did not meet the official specifications. The department also acted against 143 vehicles found using tinted windows. These vehicles were penalized with fines totaling Rs1.575 million. DG Irfan Memon stressed the importance of regular checks and called for surprise inspection points across the city. He directed officers to intensify efforts against the use of non-standard number plates and tinted windows. He instructed officials to not only fine drivers using tinted windows but also to move such vehicles to the nearest police station. He emphasized that visible enforcement on the roads will help ensure better compliance with the rules. According to officials, the use of non-standard number plates makes it difficult to identify vehicles during surveillance or in case of any security-related incident. They said that plates not issued by the Excise Department can also be misused for criminal activities. DG Memon asked officers to remain alert and keep a record of repeat offenders. During the meeting, the department's overall field performance was reviewed. Officers presented reports highlighting areas of improvement and shared data on fines collected and vehicles inspected. DG Memon directed field officers to remain on patrol and ensure that all vehicles on the roads are in compliance with registration and safety standards. He said that illegal modifications, including tinted glasses and fake or decorative number plates, would not be tolerated. He said the department's efforts are aimed at improving road safety and ensuring that vehicles can be identified easily by law enforcement. He also asked officers to engage with drivers and inform them of the legal requirements related to number plates and car windows. Officials said that in some cases, vehicles found using tinted glasses were luxury cars. In such cases, the department issued fines and also involved the police to detain the vehicles until the windows were restored to clear glass. The DG said that enforcement teams must work in coordination with local police stations. He instructed them to report any resistance or unusual activity during field inspections. He also said that a public awareness campaign is being planned to inform residents of the capital about the rules related to vehicle registration and modifications. He said drivers must understand that non-standard plates and dark windows are not just violations but also pose a challenge for security checks. The department plans to increase the frequency of field checks in the coming weeks. Officers will be deployed at various entry and exit points of the city. Mobile squads will also be used for surprise checks at different locations. In the coming months, the Excise Department will also begin using automated systems to detect violations. Cameras installed at key locations will help identify vehicles with tinted windows or unreadable number plates. This data will be used to issue e-challans and take follow-up action. DG Memon concluded the meeting by saying that enforcement drives will continue and no relaxation will be given to those violating basic road safety and registration rules. He said the department's main goal is to ensure that every vehicle on the road is clearly identifiable and legally registered.—DNA

Rupee gains 04 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 04 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.02 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.06. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 282.5 and Rs 284.4, respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.75 to close at Rs 319.85 against the last day's closing of Rs 318.10, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.95, whereas an increase of Rs 0.42 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 380.23 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 379.81. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 01 and 03 paise to close at Rs 76.78 and Rs 75.17, respectively.—APP

Muqam vows full support for merged districts

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday held an important meeting with PML-N presidents and key party leaders from the merged districts of the former FATA. During the meeting, the delegation briefed Engineer Amir Muqam who is also PML-N President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the major issues affecting the region. Muqam listened attentively and expressed strong support for their concerns, declaring the demands "completely valid" and reaffirming his commitment to addressing them.— "The well-being of the people in the merged districts is our priority. I am dedicated to offering every possible assistance. These districts have a distinct identity and significance," Muqam stated. The delegation expressed full confidence in Engineer Amir Muqam's leadership and praised his continued efforts to resolve longstanding issues and promote the welfare of the people in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.= Muqam highlighted that the federal government, under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, is prioritizing the development and support of the merged districts.= The meeting was attended by prominent PML-N figures from across the merged districts, including former MNAs Malik Nazir and Malik Spingul, Senior Vice President Inayat Khan, Coordinator Zar Khan Safi, Faqir Muhammad, Gul Karim, Malik Shaban Orakzai, Sanaullah, Abdul Karim Abid, Mir Badshah Jandola, Saeed Duraz Khan, Kashif Khan, Naqeebullah Mehsud, and Akhtar Zaman. Member of the Provincial Assembly Sardar Shah Jehan Yousaf also participated.—DNA

ICT admin reviews cattle markets, security plans

ISLAMABAD:With Eid ul Azha approaching, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has reviewed the city's preparations to manage cattle markets, traffic, security, and sanitation. In this regard, a high-level meeting, chaired by the Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa discussed the arrangements to ensure a smooth and organized holiday for residents. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, DIG Islamabad, Chief Traffic Officer, SSP Safe City, Director DMA, MCI officials, and all Assistant Commissioners. The meeting focused on reviewing the setup and management of cattle markets across the federal capital. Participants were briefed

on parking, traffic flow, and security measures around the livestock sale points. According to the briefing by DC Islamabad, a total of six official cattle markets have been established in various parts of the city. These designated sites will be the only legal spots where the sale and purchase of sacrificial animals are allowed. Any such activity outside these approved areas will not be permitted. Chief Commissioner and other senior officials were informed that magistrates have been appointed at all six markets to respond to any complaints or issues raised by the public. This step is intended to ensure immediate redressal and smooth functioning of the markets. Security preparations were another key part of the meeting.

DIG Islamabad informed the participants that tight security measures have been planned across the city during Eid days. Additional police personnel will be deployed at all cattle markets and major locations to maintain order and respond to any untoward incidents. The meeting also reviewed the arrangements for Eid prayers. Officials discussed the preparations at various Eidgahs and large mosques across the city to accommodate prayer gatherings. Measures related to crowd control and safety during prayers were reviewed in detail. Another important point discussed was the post-Eid sanitation operation. After the animal sacrifices, proper disposal of waste remains a major concern. —DNA

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on Earth Day

Briefs

IRSA
releases
278,229
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 278,229 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 332,599 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1478.03 feet which was 76.03 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 177,500 cusecs and 152,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1161.05 feet, which was 111.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39,620 cusecs and 10,750 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 210,439, 146,538, 115,560 and 59,660 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 37,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 50,917 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP

PTI internally
divided

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), stating that the party is plagued by internal divisions and guided more by personal motives than national interest. Talking to a private news channel, he stated that PTI has never presented a unified stance on national issues. He said the government has always favored dialogue as a democratic path forward, but not in the way PTI demands. "We support dialogue for the country's betterment, while PTI seeks it only to secure an NRO for its former chairman," he added. The minister claimed that PTI workers are no longer motivated, having become disillusioned by past experiences. "The leadership abandoned them during tough times—workers were jailed while leaders escaped." —APP

The \$30b trade
deficit should
be eliminated
in budget

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, the President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, the President of All Karachi Industrial Alliance, the Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board, and the President and former provincial minister, Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that it is essential for the federal government to craft the upcoming fiscal budget in a way that sets it apart from previous ones, reflecting commitment to progress. He emphasized that the new budget should prioritize economic growth, job creation, and national defence, which are essential for overcoming the current challenges and effectively addressing any hostile intentions. —APP

Workshop highlights health complications of child marriages

Senior government officials from the departments of population, health, social welfare, and local government, along with media representatives, religious scholars, social activists, and lawyers, participated in the workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PODA (Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy), in collaboration with the District Population Welfare Office (DPWO) Gujrat, organized a workshop for government officials focused on the health complications associated with child marriages, a major contributor to population growth in Pakistan. Participants unanimously endorsed the National Assembly Bill 2025, "ICT Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2025," and called for uniform legislation across all provinces to prohibit child marriages. The workshop is part of a three-year initiative titled "Reduce Early Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality," being implemented by PODA in 41 districts of Punjab. The 3-year project from December 2022 to November 2025 is supported by the Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad. On this occasion, Nabeela Aslam, Project Manager at PODA, and Umer Farooq, District Population Welfare Officer, signed a letter of coordination to strengthen collaborative efforts to protect women's rights and promote gender equality. Speaking as the chief guest, DPWO Umer Farooq emphasized the importance of raising awareness about constitutional and fundamental rights, especially among grassroots communities.



"Even men are often unaware of their rights in our society," he remarked. He further highlighted that education is the only sustainable path to women's empowerment. Addressing the issue of child marriage, he stressed the urgent need for effective legislation and its strict implementation to safeguard the rights of girls. He welcomed the legislation passed by the National Assembly and Senate as a vital step to prevent avoidable deaths and reduce the high maternal and child mortality rates in Pakistan. Keynote speaker Dr. Kanwal Tabassum, Senior Women Medical Officer

(SWMO) from the Department of Health and Population, shed light on the severe health risks of child marriage. She explained that young girls often suffer from social isolation, physical abuse, and immediate pressure to bear children. Common health issues include malnutrition, anemia, and serious pregnancy-related complications such as uterine damage. "Her learning stops, she is isolated from her family, and with low hemoglobin, she faces severe pregnancy risks," Dr. Tabassum stated. "And if she fails to conceive right away, she is compared to animals - 'even our cow gives

birth every year,' she is told." Dr. Mehak Anwar, WMO at FHMU Gujrat, added that the brain's frontal lobe continues to develop until the age of 23, raising concerns about the mental and physical readiness of adolescent girls for motherhood. She highlighted serious health conditions such as urinary tract infections (UTIs), obstetric fistula, and eclampsia as common consequences of early marriages. "Adolescent girls develop high blood pressure, which wreaks havoc on their lives," she noted. Participants welcomed the recent passage of a bill by the National Assembly and Sen-

ate—representative bodies of the entire country—setting 18 years as the minimum legal age for girls to marry and making the National Identity Card mandatory for Nikah registration in the ICT. They praised this legislative development as a critical step toward ending child marriage and safeguarding the rights of adolescent girls. PODA Legal Advisor, Advocate Khawaja Zahid Nasim, addressed legal questions raised during the session. He stated that it has become the obligation of all provinces to honor the collective wisdom of the Parliament, which is the representative body of all provinces, by adopting similar legislation to protect the fundamental rights of girls. The workshop concluded with the adoption of a joint resolution, urging the Punjab Assembly to enact similar legislation at the provincial level. Participants pledged to continue raising awareness within their communities about the harmful effects of child marriage and to advocate for the rights of adolescent girls, recognizing them as full citizens of Pakistan. Senior government officials from the departments of population, health, social welfare, and local government, along with media representatives, religious scholars, social activists, and lawyers, participated in the workshop.

Teachers
applaud
Senate move
to reinstate
tax rebate

ISLAMABAD: The teaching community of Islamabad welcomed the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue's approval of the Income Tax (Second Amendment) Bill 2025, which aims to reinstate critical tax relief for salaried individuals, especially teachers and researchers. The Senate panel, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, endorsed the bill, focusing particularly on reversing recent tax burdens that had led to significant salary deductions for teachers. This development follows the Federal Cabinet's earlier decision, dated March 26, 2025, to reinstate the 25% tax rebate for full-time teachers and researchers. The rebate had been abruptly discontinued four months prior, drawing widespread criticism from the education sector. Reacting to the committee's approval, Mr. Fazal-e-Maula, Chairman of the Joint Education Action Committee Teachers, praised the move as a "positive step," but noted that more comprehensive measures were needed. "While the restoration of the 25% tax rebate is appreciated, it is only a small relief. The government must go a step further and introduce an education allowance," he said. He also advocated for aligning teachers' salaries with those of other government employees in equivalent grades. Prof Danish Yaseen, Joint Secretary of the Federal Government College Teachers Association (FGCTA), echoed similar sentiments. "After restoration of the 25% rebate, teachers now stand where they previously were. But the government should consider further incentives, as is done in other countries. Teachers should not be burdened with financial worries, only then they can foster a peaceful and focused classroom environment." Prof Akram Khan Khosa, President of the FGCTA said, "Despite playing a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future, teachers continue to suffer due to low salaries, an outdated service structure, and lack of incentives," he said. Khosa urged the government to go beyond tax relief and introduce an Education Allowance to alleviate the financial struggles faced by teachers. —APP

India seeking gaps in Pakistan's defences

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Shahid Rasheed Butt, stated on Friday that the threat of war in the region is not diminishing but is steadily escalating. He said that India is actively trying to identify weaknesses in Pakistan's defense system to launch a decisive attack, not realizing it would be a grave mistake. Shahid Rasheed Butt asserted that China is no longer simply a friendly nation; it has become a true brother to Pakistan and called for enhanced strategic cooperation between the two countries. In a statement issued here today, Shahid

Rashid Butt emphasized that those attempting to incite unrest within Pakistan during such sensitive times are acting against national interests and should be regarded as traitors. He pointed out that narrow-minded India has never sincerely accepted Pakistan and consistently seeks to harm us; therefore, our existence relies on a formidable defence. The business leader argued that Pakistan's nuclear capability serves as a strong deterrent to India's aggressive ambitions and called for further enhancement of this capability to ensure long-term freedom and security. Shahid Rasheed Butt described South Asia as being at a

crucial crossroads, with India unwilling to abandon its war hysteria or retreat from its aggressive stance. He criticized the military exercises being conducted under the moniker "Operation Shield" in four Indian states, labelling them as deliberate attempts to escalate border tensions. India has not only faced defeat on the battlefield but has also experienced diplomatic isolation. Faced with this pressure, the Modi government is once again stoking war hysteria in the region, he observed. He added that India perceives ceasefire agreements merely as temporary tactics to buy time for war preparations. However, Pakistan will give a robust response and

will never compromise on its sovereignty, security, or national interests. Shahid Rashid Butt urged the international community to take serious notice of India's provocations and military drills. He warned that if India is not restrained from its aggressive path, not only will South Asia suffer, but the peace of the entire world will also be at risk. He emphasized that Pakistan's unity, internal stability, and national cohesion are more crucial than ever. Any attempt to divide the nation from within only serves the enemy's interests. Political forces, civil society, and institutions must remain united to confront growing external threats and protect national sovereignty.

Pak, WFP partner to combat climate-linked malnutrition

ISLAMABAD: Federal government and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) have agreed to strengthen collaboration on climate-resilient initiatives to tackle malnutrition and food insecurity in vulnerable regions. The decision came during a meeting between Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, and WFP Country Director Coco Ushiyama on Friday. The discussions centered on Pakistan's five-year cooperation framework with WFP, with a focus on addressing stunting—a critical health issue exacerbated by climate change, conflict, economic downturns from COVID-19, and governance challenges (collectively termed the "4Cs"). Dr. Malik stressed the importance of proactive, results-oriented programs that integrate climate adaptation and resilience-building into nutrition strategies. "Our partnership must translate climate policies into tangible benefits for communities, especially in food-insecure areas," he said. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to embedding climate resilience into Pakistan's national development agenda, ensuring long-term food security and improved health outcomes. The collaboration aims to leverage WFP's expertise in humanitarian aid and Pakistan's climate action plans to mitigate the impacts of environmental crises on vulnerable populations. The meeting marks a step forward in aligning Pakistan's climate and nutrition policies, with further details on joint initiatives expected in the coming months. —DNA

CASS holds seminar on modern warfare

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS), hosted a high-level national seminar titled "Military Interoperability in Modern Warfare: Transforming Pakistan's Defence Posture." The event was widely attended by academia, students, intellectuals and domain experts. CASS is an independent think tank that continues to arrange academic events for academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context. The introductory remarks for the seminar were given by Ameer Abdul

lah Khan, Senior Research Associate at CASS Lahore. He emphasised that interoperability is no longer a technical choice but a strategic compulsion. Air Marshal Abdul Moeed Khan HI(M) (Retd) delivered the keynote, emphasising that airpower has fundamentally reshaped the character of joint operations. He highlighted that air superiority provides the platform for ISR dominance, precision targeting, electronic warfare, and real-time command and control. He further noted that modern jointness must be built on shared doctrine, integrated training pipelines, and real-time situational awareness. While pointing out potential areas for

improvement, he asserted that air defence architectures should be strengthened to ensure an impenetrable defence. Referring to Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos, he highlighted how Pakistan's swift, measured, and integrated triservice response disrupted India's operational calculus, showcasing the value of multi-domain convergence in real-time. He remarked that victory in future wars hinges upon a triservice operational cycle: combined war planning, scenario-based wargaming, and full-spectrum national joint exercises. Lt Gen Aamer Riaz HI(M) (Retd) delivered an incisive interoperability analysis in both conventional and sub-conventional warfare.

Expert addresses Central Asian security at IRS

The Institute of Regional Studies continues to serve as a key forum for fostering dialogue on Pakistan's strategic priorities

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prominent counterterrorism analyst, DAWN columnist, and President of the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Mr. Amir Rana delivered an insightful lecture at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in Islamabad. Held under the prestigious Eminent Speaker Series, the talk was titled "Counterterrorism Challenges in Central Asia: A Pakistani Perspective." In his address, Mr. Rana provided a comprehensive analysis of the shifting security landscape across Central Asia, offering critical insights and lessons for Pakistan

as it navigates its own internal and regional counterterrorism challenges. He praised Central Asian states for their firm and consistent policies in tackling violent Islamist extremism—particularly their efforts to ban extremist groups and political entities. Pakistan, he stressed, must adopt a similarly resolute and unambiguous approach, and ensure that counter-extremism efforts are holistic and inclusive. "Terrorism demands a holistic, objective strategy, grounded in both political resolve and societal resilience," Mr. Rana asserted. Highlighting persistent threats from groups like ISKP and Al Qaeda, Mr.

Rana warned against lowering security vigilance, even in periods of relative calm. He noted that transformative extremist currents—from Tunisia to Malaysia—continue to shape global trends, posing potential threats to regional and international stability. A key focus of his talk was the need to further curb any financial infrastructure of terrorism. Mr. Rana advocated for enhanced regulatory oversight and intelligence cooperation to ensure a complete cut off of funding to extremists. He further stressed the role of regional platforms, especially the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in mounting a coordinated

response to transnational terrorism and radicalization. Security in Central Asia is intrinsically tied to strategic choices in South Asia. What we need is cooperation, not complacency," he concluded. The session attracted a diverse audience of scholars, diplomats, policy experts, and practitioners, sparking an engaging discussion on shared regional threats and the future of counterterrorism collaboration. The Institute of Regional Studies continues to serve as a key forum for fostering dialogue on Pakistan's strategic priorities, bringing together experts and stakeholders for meaningful exchanges on issues of national and regional importance.

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China-Taiwan tensions and Pakistan's consistent stand

THE China-Taiwan relationship remains one of the most sensitive geopolitical fault lines in the modern world. With Taiwan's newly elected president Lai Ching-te taking office under a firm pro-sovereignty stance, and China responding with aggressive military drills around the island, tensions are at their highest in years. The specter of a possible military conflict looms large, raising questions not only about regional stability but also about the global economic and political order. Beijing views Taiwan as a breakaway province that must eventually be reunified with the mainland, by force if necessary. This "One China" principle has been a cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy for decades. Taiwan, on the other hand, functions as a de facto independent state with its own government, military, and democratic institutions. The election of a leader from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which leans toward formal independence, has only deepened the divide. China's latest military maneuvers—simulating a blockade and potential strike—are a clear signal to both Taiwan and its allies, especially the United States. Beijing wants to convey that any moves toward formal independence will not be tolerated and could invite a military response. While a full-scale invasion remains a high-risk option fraught with economic and political costs, the possibility cannot be ruled out, especially if Beijing perceives a narrowing diplomatic or strategic window. In this volatile environment, Pakistan has maintained a consistent and principled position. As a longstanding strategic partner of China, Pakistan firmly adheres to the "One China" policy. Islamabad recognizes the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government representing all of China, including Taiwan. This stance has been reiterated on numerous occasions, both bilaterally and at international forums, and is unlikely to change. Pakistan's support is rooted not only in diplomatic solidarity but also in the broader context of its deepening ties with China—most notably through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative. As such, any confrontation in the Taiwan Strait would have implications for regional connectivity and trade, making stability in the Asia-Pacific a strategic priority for Islamabad as well. As for Taiwan's future, much depends on the delicate balance between deterrence and diplomacy. The U.S. and its allies continue to support Taiwan's defense capabilities, but without extending formal diplomatic recognition. This ambiguity, known as "strategic ambiguity," is intended to prevent both a unilateral declaration of independence by Taiwan and a preemptive strike by China. The stakes are enormous. Taiwan is a key player in the global semiconductor industry, and any conflict would disrupt global supply chains. Moreover, military action could escalate into a broader regional war, drawing in major powers and destabilizing Asia-Pacific markets.

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Elon Musk walks away from Trump – a bonhomie that couldn't last

IN the ever-shifting sands of American politics and corporate interests, another chapter closes with the quiet but telling departure of tech billionaire Elon Musk from his once-curious bonhomie with President Donald Trump. What began as an unpredictable alliance built on overlapping interests—freedom of speech, deregulation, and contrarian posturing—has seemingly reached its logical end. Musk, known for his libertarian streak and disdain for institutional controls, may have finally realized a lesson many learn the hard way: Trump is not a reliable ally. The fallout comes at a time when both men are navigating critical moments—Trump is eyeing a return to the presidency, while Musk is battling public scrutiny over his stewardship of X (formerly Twitter), Tesla's market instability, and his growing influence in AI and space. While the details of their break remain largely implicit, several factors point to an inevitable rupture driven by clashing egos, divergent priorities, and fundamentally different worldviews. For Musk, associating with Trump has always been a double-edged sword. On one hand, Trump's base aligns well with Musk's growing appeal among anti-establishment voices and free-speech advocates. On the other, Trump's unpredictable behavior, lack of loyalty, and transactional politics make him a liability to anyone seeking consistency or strategic partnership. Reports suggest that Musk had overestimated his influence over Trump, believing he could act as a bridge between tech innovation and populist politics. That assumption, as history has often shown, was misplaced. Trump, true to form, places loyalty below utility. He has discarded allies—politicians, donors, and business magnates—whenever they no longer served his immediate goals. Musk is only the latest in a long list. The moment Musk's value diminished in Trump's political calculus, the warmth began to evaporate. Whether it was a disagreement over policy, a lack of public endorsement, or a refusal to offer support for Trump's re-election bid, the result was predictable. There are broader lessons to be drawn here. First, no matter how powerful or wealthy, individuals who attach themselves to volatile political figures often end up paying a reputational price. Musk may now realize that his temporary alignment with Trump alienated key stakeholders—investors, regulators, and global partners—who are wary of Trump's brand of divisive politics. Second, Trump has once again reaffirmed that he places his own interests above all else. Loyalty is a one-way street in his world, and any expectation of reciprocity is naive. Musk's calculated distancing from Trump might help him repair his image among centrist and liberal constituencies, but the damage to public perception will take time to undo. Ultimately, the end of this alliance is a reminder that charisma and influence alone cannot sustain a political-entrepreneurial partnership, especially one rooted in self-interest rather than shared values.

Gaza genocide: A stain on humanity and global order

Khayam Abbasi



What we are witnessing is not just a failure of policy but the failure of an entire structure that claims to stand for justice, peace, and human dignity. The monopoly of power wielded by the P5 countries, especially the United States, undermines the very purpose for which the United Nations was established. This system enables apartheid regimes and occupying powers (like the Zionist regime) to act with impunity

THE ongoing genocide and destruction in Gaza have become a grotesque stain on the face of humanity, international law, and the global order. It is a wound so deep and dark that humanity may not be able to wash it clean for centuries. The children, the elderly, the women, and the youth who are being martyred in the relentless Zionist bombings are not mere numbers. They are not statistics or anonymous faces. The images and videos of their suffering are not just social media content; they are harrowing stories of real people—once living, laughing, playing, and dreaming—now victims of a brutality that eclipses even some of the worst atrocities recorded in human history. What is more horrifying than the crimes themselves is the silence of the powers that dominate the global system. While America and the West continue to supply the Zionist regime with weapons, financial support, and diplomatic cover, they simultaneously champion the slogans of human rights and democracy. This stark contradiction places a profound question mark on their moral credibility and exposes the sheer hypocrisy of the international order. Despite overwhelming global outrage, with millions of people protesting around the world in support of Gaza, tangible outcomes remain absent. Why is it that the global outcry, the voices of millions demanding justice, fail to translate into meaningful action by their governments? Why do those in power, those with influence, continue to enable this genocide through complicity or silence? The answer lies buried in the hollow foundations and double standards of the so-called "rules-based international order." After World War II, the world created the United Nations with the promise that never again would humanity witness the horrors of global warfare or mass exterminations like the Holocaust. The United Nations was meant to be a democratic body where peace, justice, and equality would be upheld universally. However, the reality is far from this ideal. The structural design of the UN system is not based on democratic principles but on monopoly and dominance—especially that of powerful nations over weaker ones.

This monopolistic structure is most evident in the composition and functioning of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The UNSC has 15 members, of which only five are permanent (P5): the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France. These five nations possess veto power, allowing any one of them to unilaterally block any resolution, regardless of the will of the majority. This veto system is the clearest manifestation of the United Nations' undemocratic character, granting these five countries supremacy over the other 190+ member states. The imbalance of power is striking. In the UN General Assembly, every nation is given an equal vote. However, the resolutions passed there are non-binding—they are mere recommendations without enforcement mechanisms. In contrast, the decisions of the Security Council carry real weight, and within it, power is concentrated in the hands of a few. In the case of war of genocide in Gaza, this imbalance has had devastating consequences. The United States has vetoed four ceasefire resolutions in the Security Council since the war began. Despite this, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly supported calls for a ceasefire:

- On October 27, 2023, the General Assembly passed a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, with 120 votes in favor, 14 against, and 45 abstentions.
- On December 12, 2023, another resolution was passed with 153 votes in favor, 10 against, and 23 abstentions.
- On December 11, 2024, a third resolution called for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire, passed with 157 votes in favor, 8 against, and only 7 abstentions.

The average breakdown of these votes reveals a stark truth: In favor: approximately 74.27% Against: approximately 5.53% Abstentions: approximately 12.96% Despite a clear global consensus, one country—the United States—has repeatedly used its veto to prevent any binding action, allowing the genocide to continue unabated. This is not just a political failure; it is a moral collapse of the global system.

What we are witnessing is not just a failure of policy but the failure of an entire structure that claims to stand for justice, peace, and human dignity. The monopoly of power wielded by the P5 countries, especially the United

States, undermines the very purpose for which the United Nations was established. This system enables apartheid regimes and occupying powers (like the Zionist regime) to act with impunity. It emboldens powerful nations to destroy entire regions—like Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan—without fear of consequence or accountability. The current world order, based on dominance, deception, and selective morality, cannot survive much longer. If humanity is to have a future grounded in justice and peace, the monopolistic control at the heart of this system must be dismantled. The same structure that protects the terrorist Zionist state today is what allowed the devastation of countless nations in recent decades. The same structure that refuses to hold Israel accountable is the one that permitted the invasion and destruction of entire countries under the guise of "liberation" and "freedom."

The world can no longer function under a system where a handful of nations dictate the fate of billions. The cries from Gaza echo this truth. The children martyred under the rubble, the mothers holding the lifeless bodies of their loved ones, and the generations being wiped out—all expose the ugly face of a system that was supposed to protect them.

The martyrs of Gaza have laid bare the failure and hypocrisy of the international order. Their sacrifice has illuminated the truth in a world built on illusions. Their patience and resilience in the face of unimaginable suffering have unmasked the injustice that lies at the heart of the global power structure.

It is now up to the conscience of humanity. We must ask ourselves: how long will we allow the machinery of oppression to operate under the mask of diplomacy and democracy? How long will we allow the veto of a single nation to hold the lives of millions hostage?

If real change is to occur, then the world must demand the reform—or even the complete restructuring—of the international system. A system built on justice cannot coexist with impunity. Peace cannot coexist with monopoly. True humanity cannot coexist with silence in the face of genocide. The time has come to rewrite the rules. The cries of Gaza must not be in vain.

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Poland's Multifaceted R2P Response to Ukraine

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Poland did not limit its efforts to humanitarian assistance. It became a strong voice in international forums demanding accountability for war crimes and violations of international law by Russian forces. Polish leaders condemned the annexation of Crimea, the sham referendums in Eastern Ukraine and the invasion itself, labeling them as blatant breaches of international norms. Poland's active role in the United Nations Human Rights Council and the General Assembly included co-sponsoring resolutions...

THE concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), formally adopted by the United Nations in 2005, marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of global humanitarian norms. Grounded in the commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, R2P rests on three pillars: the responsibility of states to protect their populations, the international community's duty to assist in building this capacity and the obligation to take timely and decisive action when a state fails to safeguard its population. Poland's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine since 2014—and particularly following the full-scale invasion in February 2022—provides an important and often overlooked case of how a neighboring state can meaningfully engage with the R2P framework. Poland's multifaceted engagement—encompassing humanitarian aid, diplomatic initiatives, legal measures and military support—demonstrates that non-superpower states can act as effective agents of atrocity prevention and response. Through its actions, Poland has not only fulfilled its moral and strategic interests but has also emerged as a model of regional responsibility in operationalizing R2P principles. Although the R2P doctrine traditionally emphasizes international organizations and powerful states, Bieniczyk-Missala underscores the potential of neighboring countries to act as pivotal actors in mass atrocity contexts. Neighbors possess intimate geographical, cultural and historical knowledge of the conflict zone and often have strategic motivations for regional stability. Pillar II (capacity-building and assistance) and Pillar III (timely and decisive response) provide the normative and operational framework for such states to act proactively in crisis situations. In the case of Ukraine, Poland utilized all three types of Pillar II mechanisms: encouragement, capacity-building and protection assistance. Over the years, Poland has supported democratic development in Ukraine through various development aid initiatives, including reforms in education, local governance, anti-corruption efforts and the strengthening of independent media. These efforts have contributed to the long-term prevention of conflict by fortifying Ukraine's democratic and legal infrastructure. Poland's engagement with Ukraine began well before the outbreak of large-scale conflict. Following Ukraine's independence in 1991, Poland prioritized democratic transition and regional cooperation. After the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia, Poland intensified its developmental assistance, often working in collaboration with other international partners like Canada under programs such as the Polish-Ukrainian Democracy Support Program. However, the

nature of assistance shifted drastically after February 24, 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion. Poland quickly became a major logistical and humanitarian hub, welcoming over a million refugees and providing services through a robust legal framework that included the special law on assistance for Ukrainian citizens. These measures granted refugees access to housing, medical care, education and social services. By August 2022, over 1.2 million Ukrainians had registered in Poland, primarily women and children. Simultaneously, the Polish government, in partnership with NGOs, international organizations and local governments, created temporary shelters, container towns and emergency medical services, many of which were tailored to the needs of vulnerable populations, such as children and the elderly. The Governmental Agency for Strategic Reserves (RARS) coordinated deliveries of food, medicine and fuel, including over 11,000 tonnes of food and 70,000 cubic meters of fuel between 2022 and 2024.

Poland did not limit its efforts to humanitarian assistance. It became a strong voice in international forums demanding accountability for war crimes and violations of international law by Russian forces. Polish leaders condemned the annexation of Crimea, the sham referendums in Eastern Ukraine and the invasion itself, labeling them as blatant breaches of international norms. Poland's active role in the United Nations Human Rights Council and the General Assembly included co-sponsoring resolutions that condemned Russian aggression and promoted investigations into human rights violations. The Polish government also supported the expulsion of Russia from the Council of Europe and initiated or participated in various investigative and accountability efforts, such as the creation of the International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the Joint Investigative Team at Eurojust. Notably, Poland was the first country outside Ukraine to open legal proceedings concerning war crimes committed in the conflict. The establishment of the Core International Crimes Evidence Database (CICED) and Poland's support for a special tribunal to prosecute crimes of aggression demonstrate a comprehensive approach to legal accountability, aligning closely with the aims of R2P's third pillar. These legal mechanisms serve not only justice but also as tools of deterrence and moral censure.

While Poland's primary focus remained humanitarian, it also supported Ukraine militarily, in line with the principle that the use of force under R2P must be a last resort and proportionate to the threat. Poland facilitated arms deliveries, coordinated training for Ukrainian military personnel and served as a transit point for military assistance from other NATO allies. These actions reinforced Ukraine's defensive capacity and served as a deterrent against fur-

ther Russian expansionism. Moreover, Poland worked within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) framework, invoking the Moscow Mechanism multiple times to investigate human rights abuses. Its leadership within the OSCE, particularly during its 2022 leadership, highlighted the intersection of diplomacy, legal accountability and humanitarian concern.

A unique feature of Poland's response was the widespread involvement of civil society. Surveys revealed that approximately 77% of Polish citizens participated in supporting Ukrainian refugees, reflecting a strong societal consensus and grassroots solidarity. Polish cities partnered with their Ukrainian counterparts to deliver aid and religious and civic groups provided food, shelter and psychological support. This alignment between government policy and public sentiment enhanced the legitimacy and sustainability of Poland's efforts. Furthermore, Poland coordinated effectively with international organizations such as the UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF, thereby amplifying the reach and impact of its assistance. Poland also pushed for stringent economic and political sanctions against Russia. These included freezing assets, banning trade in dual-use goods and denying visas to individuals implicated in war crimes. The Polish parliament passed legislation enabling these measures and maintained a consolidated list of sanctioned entities. Polish leaders were among the first to visit the sites of mass atrocities in Bucha and Irpin, symbolizing moral leadership and international solidarity. The use of sanctions was not only a political tool but also a fulfillment of R2P's preventive logic: to weaken the aggressor's capacity to inflict further harm and signal the unacceptability of such conduct in the international system.

Poland's response to the war in Ukraine represents a comprehensive and multilayered operationalization of the Responsibility to protect doctrine. Its strategic location, historical ties and democratic values positioned it to act decisively. Through development aid, humanitarian support, legal accountability mechanisms and diplomatic activism, Poland fulfilled both its regional obligations and broader international responsibilities. This case demonstrates that middle powers and neighboring states can be instrumental in atrocity prevention and response. Poland's actions reaffirm the relevance and adaptability of R2P in contemporary conflicts, especially when implemented through a balance of moral conviction, legal reasoning and strategic foresight. As the international community continues to grapple with mass atrocities worldwide, the Polish example offers a powerful model of principled engagement under the R2P framework.

– University of Okara

Briefs

Pakistan won't allow India to...

FROM PAGE 01
Government of Tajikistan will host the International Conference on the subject in 2025. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Pakistan, being home to over 13,000 glaciers, was the most concerning as glaciers contributed nearly half of the annual flows in the Indus River system - the lifeline of our civilisation, culture and economy. Referring to the "sobering" scientific projections, he highlighted that glacial melt in our region was expected to accelerate flooding in the coming decades, followed by a drastic decline in river flows as glaciers recede further. Highlighting Pakistan's commitment to shared responsibility and collective action, he called for enhanced global climate action to mitigate the negative impacts of climate change.

Pakistan to upgrade diplomatic...

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Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in Kabul. Tensions appeared to ease after a rare meeting between Muttaqi and Dar in Kabul last month where the Taliban's acting foreign minister expressed concern over the deportation of tens of thousands of Afghans from Pakistan. During the meeting, both sides agreed to continuing dialogue in a constructive and positive atmosphere to address bilateral concerns, including security, trade, transit co-operation, and broader ties.

India's 'strategic miscalcul...

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Kashmir (IIOJK) that killed 26 people, most of them tourists. New Delhi blamed the incident on Islamabad, a charge denied by Pakistan. Earlier this month, Pakistan's armed forces launched a large-scale retaliatory military action, named "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos", and targeted several Indian military targets across multiple regions. The strikes, described by officials as "precise and proportionate", were carried out in response to India's continued aggression across the Line of Control (LoC) and within Pakistan's territory, which New Delhi claimed were aimed at "terrorist targets".

'Pakistan downed five Indian...

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as Pakistan deployed Chinese fighter jets which outperformed the French-made aircraft used by New Delhi. "Pakistan downed five of our planes. They used Chinese planes to down our planes, which were French," Swamy revealed. "The Chinese planes were good, but the French were not. Rafale is not up to the mark as per India's needs," he added, criticising the performance of the highly-touted Rafale jets. He went on to make a startling claim regarding the controversial Rafale deal, alleging corruption in the procurement process. "Corruption happened in Rafale which won't be investigated till Modi is the PM," he stated firmly.

Relief granted to PTI illegal...

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ruling party was eligible for the allocation of reserved seats. The verdict was announced by a 13-member bench, headed by then chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa. Besides ECP, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) also filed review petitions against the July 12, 2024 judgment on the reserved seats for women and minorities in national and provincial assemblies.

Pakistan lives in my heart

Austrian Olympian's tribute before K2 expedition



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Four-time Austrian Olympian and judoka Sabrina Filzmoser expressed her admiration for Pakistan, saying she has always received immense love during her visits to the country. Speaking at a press briefing at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, she emphasized the importance of showcasing Pakistan's positive image to the world, in contrast to the negative narratives often spread internationally. "I intend to ride a bicycle from Islamabad to the K2 Base Camp via Skardu before attempting to summit K2," she announced,

accompanied by Pakistan Judo Federation (PJF) President, Col (R) Junaid Alam. Filzmoser boasts an illustrious judo career: she was a World Championship bronze medalist in 2005 and 2010, European Champion in 2008 and 2011, placed 7th at the 2012 Olympic Games, and is a two-time winner of the prestigious Super World Cup Tournoi de Paris (2006, 2008). She also secured bronze medals at the 2017 Cancun Grand Prix and the 2019 Budapest Grand Prix, becoming the oldest medalist in Judo World Tour history. Tokyo 2020 marked her fourth Olympic appearance. Despite the challenges, Filzmoser expressed strong determination to complete her K2 mission, describing the climb as one of the toughest in the world. "Pakistanis are incredibly hospitable," she said. "I have always felt immense love here."

She also expressed her desire to inspire Pakistani women to participate in sports and hopes to become a role model for young girls. Sharing a recent incident, she said her bicycle had broken down, but local citizens readily came to her aid—a gesture that deeply moved her. "Climbing K2 is a personal challenge, and promoting Judo is my lifelong dream," she added. "I'm happy to see the full support of the Pakistan Judo Federation in this meaningful mission."

Filzmoser described Pakistan as a country that holds a special place in her heart, calling it her second home. "I always refute negative portrayals of Pakistan wherever I go," she asserted. She is scheduled to depart for her K2 expedition from Islamabad on Saturday. Earlier, PJF President Col Junaid Alam expressed gratitude to Sabrina for choosing Pakistan for what he termed a "peace mission." He revealed that Sabrina has agreed to conduct talent hunt and training sessions before, during, and after the expedition. "She has also graciously accepted the role of Brand Ambassador for **Takbeer Judo Club (TJC)," he added.

Brook hails 'exceptional' Bethell as England rout West Indies



BIRMINGHAM: Harry Brook predicted Jacob Bethell "will be some player" after the 21-year-old rising star impressed in England's thumping victory over the West Indies in the first one-day international at Edgbaston on Thursday. There has long been talk over whether Bethell, recently returned from IPL duty, will go straight back into the

Test side for the upcoming five-match series with India. And that speculation will only intensify following Bethell's expertly-paced innings of 82 from 53 balls that propelled England to a huge total of 400-8 on his Warwickshire home ground. Faced with trying to become only the second team in the 4,880-match history of men's ODI cricket to score over 400 to win, fol-

lowing South Africa's 438-9 against Australia at Johannesburg in 2006, the West Indies collapsed to 162 all out. Brook, speaking after launching his reign as England's permanent white-ball captain with a dominant 238-run win, said of left-hander Bethell: "He batted beautifully there. - "Confident lad" - "When one of us gets going, most of the time it's hard to stop us and he showed that. He couldn't go on and get three figures but it was a match-winning innings and he's going to be some player. "He's a confident lad, I don't think he needs too much more bigging up, he knows he's a good player and we all know he's an exceptional player. He's going to have a very long England career if he keeps on batting the way he does. He brings so much to a side (because) he can bowl and field as well." Victory ended England's seven-match losing streak in ODI cricket and put them 1-0 up in this three-game series against the West Indies. - Agencies

Noor Zaman secures spot in British Open Squash Championship main draw

Reigning World Under-23 Squash champion continued his impressive run on the professional circuit

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's Noor Zaman has qualified for the main draw of the British Open Squash Championship after defeating Egypt's Kareem El Torkey in the qualifying final. The reigning World Under-23 Squash champion continued his impressive run on the professional circuit, securing his place in the main round of the prestigious tournament in England. In the decisive qualifying match, the 10th-seeded Zaman overcame third-seeded El Torkey 11-5, 11-8, 3-11, 11-7 in 46 minutes. Earlier in the qualifying rounds, Zaman defeated England's Will Salter 3-1 (10-12, 11-2, 11-5, 11-3) in 42 minutes and Adrian Waller 3-1 (9-11, 11-6, 11-7, 14-12) in a 59-minute thriller. Zaman, the first Pakistani player to reach the British Open main round since 2022, will face England's Curtis Malik in the first round on Sunday. In 2022, Tayyab Aslam was the last Pakistani to compete in the tournament's main draw. The rising star's consistent performances highlight his growing stature in international squash. Pakistan holds a record of 30 British Open titles - the most by any country, with 10 of these titles won by Janagir Khan.

Arshad shines early as Pakistan duo reach javelin final

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Olympic gold medallist javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem and rising star Yasir Sultan have qualified for the javelin throw final at the Asian Athletics Championship. Arshad recorded a throw of 86.34 metres in his first attempt in Group A to secure a place in the final. "I was at the top in the qualifying round with a long throw," said Arshad. "The final is tomorrow at 1:10pm Pakistan time." Pakistan's second javelin thrower, Sultan, qualified for the final with a throw of 76.7m in Group B. The javelin throw final of the Asian Athletics Championship will be held tomorrow. "Everyone has always prayed for me, please do so tomorrow as well," Arshad urged. "Pray that I may raise Pakistan's flag high - Pakistan Zindabad!" Pakistan has a compact yet promising five-member squad for the 2025 Asian Athletics Championships, taking place in Gumi, South Korea, from May 27 to 31. Leading the national contingent is Olympic and Commonwealth Games gold medalist Nadeem. - APP

Governor KP greets newly elected office bearers of RISJA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi, President of Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Tariq Bugti, and Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid have extended their heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected office bearers of the Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA). In their congratulatory messages, the dignitaries felicitated RISJA President Abu Bakar bin Talat, General Secretary Arsalan Shirazi, Fi-

nance Secretary Nasir Naqvi, Patron Abdul Muhi Shah, Chairman Shakeel Awan, and the entire elected team. Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi and Minister Hanif Abbasi expressed hope that the new leadership would play a vital role in promoting sports journalism and contributing to the positive projection of Pakistan's soft image globally. They acknowledged RISJA's longstanding commitment and commendable service in the field of sports media. PHF President Tariq Bugti and Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid also conveyed their best wishes to the newly elected RISJA body. They praised RISJA as a dy-

namic and well-organized journalistic platform and lauded its consistent support for the development of national sports, particularly field hockey. "The role of RISJA in promoting our national game-hockey-has always been admirable, and we are confident that the new leadership will continue this tradition with even greater enthusiasm and professionalism," they stated. The messages reflected a shared vision for strengthening the bond between sports federations and the media, recognizing RISJA's potential in shaping the future of sports journalism and fostering a culture of athletic excellence in Pakistan.

Djokovic rolls past Moutet to reach French Open last 32

Djokovic will play 23-year-old Austrian qualifier Filip Misolic for a spot in the last 16. Misolic withstood a comeback from Canadian 27th seed Denis Shapovalov to prevail 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 4-6, 6-3

PARIS: Novak Djokovic extended his perfect record against French players at Roland Garros with a 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (7/1) win over Corentin Moutet to reach the third round on Thursday. It was largely plain sailing for the 38-year-old Djokovic although he did have to save a set point to force a tie-break in the third set. That came after the 24-time Grand Slam champion took a medical timeout earlier in the set to receive treatment for a blister on his left foot. "Things got a little bit complicated with the blister. That was bothering me for a bit," said Djokovic. "But I don't think it's going to be an issue for me to recover." Just when Moutet threatened to prolong the match, Djokovic clicked back into gear - a day after a nightmare cycle around the Arc de Triomphe - to improve to 12-0 against Frenchmen at Roland Garros. "Obviously atmosphere was electric, especially in that third set. He was close to win it, so the crowd got involved. And it was, yeah, not much fun for me," said Djokovic. He is through to the last 32 in Paris for the 20th time, more than even 14-time champion Rafael Nadal managed. But Djokovic



said he would not repeat his jaunt around the notoriously busy Place Charles de Gaulle, where 12 avenues converge. "At one point we had cars all over the place. It was quite an adrenaline experience, but I don't think I will repeat that," he said. "Probably in all other streets, it's much more safe. But, yeah, we were crazy enough to get into that roundabout. It was fun but at one point but also a bit dangerous." Djokovic will play 23-year-old Austrian qualifier Filip Misolic for a spot in the last 16. Misolic withstood a comeback from Canadian 27th seed Denis Shapovalov to prevail 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (8/6), 4-6, 4-6, 6-3. The three-time French Open champion issued a playful appeal to tournament organisers not to schedule his next match on Saturday night, to avoid a clash with the Champions League final. Paris Saint-Germain will be bidding for a first European crown against Inter Milan. Kick-off in Munich is roughly 30 minutes after the evening session begins at Roland Garros. "It's going to be PSG that I will support. I will definitely watch it if I'm not playing night session," said Djokovic. "Yeah, that will be nice. FYI, Roland Garros schedule..." - APP

Pakistan joins China's new global mediation...

FROM PAGE 01
voice in this noble mission, he added. The DPM/FM underlined Pakistan's strong commitment towards promoting peace and security as well as development. He underlined the critical importance of advancing and preserving multilateralism through faithful adherence to the principles of the UN Charter, full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions as well as international law. The DPM/FM drew attention to India's violation of international law through its acts of aggression against Pakistan and its unlawfully holding in abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty. He also highlighted the occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and occupied Palestinian Territories as drivers of conflict to regional peace and security. The DPM/FM called for resolution of the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. The idea for the establishment of the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) was one of the key outcomes of the 2nd Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing in April 2019. China initiated discussions for the establishment of IOMed in 2021, and invited Pakistan to join negotiations as one of its founding members.

Ishar Dar meets CE of Hong Kong

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Chief Executive and SAR Government for its impressive economic and social development strides under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. The DPM/FM and Chief Executive discussed proposals to further deepen economic, investment and trade cooperation with Hong Kong through multiple streams. Hailing the launch of IOMed as a milestone inspired by President Xi Jinping's vision, the DPM/FM noted its alignment with Pakistan's commitment to dialogue-driven diplomacy and UN Charter's principles. The DPM/FM also commended the Pakistani community in Hong Kong for strengthening bilateral ties and contributing to the city's diversity and economy. The Chief Executive warmly welcomed the DPM/FM's visit and expressed eagerness to further enhance collaboration between Hong Kong and Pakistan.

PTI workers sentenced in police...

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Shahzeb, and Sohail Khan - into custody. Meanwhile, the court has issued warrants for the arrest of the absconding suspects. Following the arrest of the ousted prime minister Imran Khan by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), dozens of PTI workers and leaders carried out violent protests across the country. At least 70 PTI leaders were accused of planning the May 9, 2023, violent events and inciting the workers and supporters to attack military and government installations. The ATC found the accused guilty of attacking Ramna police station, engaging in firing, pelting stones, and attempting to beating police personnel. The judgment stated that the culprits set motorcycles on fire to achieve their objectives.

Rains kill 32 in various incidents

FROM PAGE 01
Heavy windstorms killed 10 people on Tuesday and 14 on Saturday in different parts of the country, one of the most vulnerable to climate change and grappling with increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Three children were killed on Wednesday in Hyderabad in Sindh province, a senior official said. While the majority of the deaths were caused by collapsing walls and roofs, at least two people died after being hit by solar panels dislodged by the whipping gusts. People are killed every year in Pakistan by intense storms, which were unusually frequent this month.

Briefs

**SECP
proposes
regulatory
framework for
algorithmic
trading**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Friday released a concept paper titled "Regulating Algorithmic Trading in Pakistan", outlining recommendations based on international best practices. The proposed framework seeks to foster innovation while safeguarding market integrity and investor protection, said a news release. The global rise of algorithmic trading, besides offering numerous advantages in speed and efficiency, also presents a set of new challenges. To address these, the SECP's framework proposes clearly defined roles for key stakeholders. Exchanges will oversee registration, testing, and the assignment of unique identifiers for algorithmic traders. Brokers must implement strong control mechanisms, comply with audit and governance requirements, and ensure rigorous oversight of their algorithmic trading activities. Meanwhile, third-party algorithm providers will be required to adhere to applicable laws and regulatory standards. Recognizing that Pakistan is in the early stages of regulating algorithmic trading, the SECP recommends a phased implementation approach. Initially, access will be limited to institutional investors, with potential expansion to retail investors in later phases, contingent upon market readiness, risk assessment, and accumulated experience. The Concept Paper is now available for public feedback on the SECP's website.—APP

**Kitchen items'
prices decrease
further by
0.81pc**

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), decreased by 0.81 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on May 29, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 309.80 points as compared to 312.34 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 0.41 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed a decrease of 0.67 per cent and came down to 298.17 points from last week's 300.18 points. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, came down 0.95 percent, 0.69 percent, 0.63 percent and 0.74 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14 (27.45%) items increased, 10 (19.61%) items decreased and 27 (52.94%) items remained stable.—APP

**Rockfall at
Indonesian
limestone
quarry kills
eight**

CIREBON: At least eight people were killed and a dozen injured Friday in a rockfall at a limestone quarry on Indonesia's Java island, police said. The company overseeing the mine was operating legally but safety standards were lacking, according to West Java governor Dedi Mulyadi, who said he has ordered its closure following the collapse. Workers and heavy equipment were buried when rocks suddenly crumbled at the mining site in the city of Cirebon on West Java province at around 09:30 am local time (0230 GMT). "We are now focusing on evacuating victims. Until now, eight people have been found dead, and 12 others were injured and have been taken to hospitals.—APP

China supports settlement of disputes thru dialogue: Wang Yi

Let us uphold fairness, justice and equity, stress the true spirit of the rule of law, ensure both procedural justice and outcome justice, enhance the participation of developing countries, make international dispute settlement mechanisms fairer and beneficial to all, and improve the representation and say of the Global South in international governance

DNA

HONG KONG: China will continue to support the World community for promoting peaceful resolution of disputes and advancing friendship and cooperation between countries. This was stated here on Friday by the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in his remarks at the signing ceremony of the Convention On the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation. On behalf of the Chinese government, he warmly welcomed all guests and congratulated the founding members at the convention. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee noted that the U.N. Charter, in its preamble, states a clear purpose of different countries living together in peace and maintaining international peace and security. Eighty years later, faced with accelerating global transformation not seen in a century, President Xi Jinping has pointed out that

disagreements between countries are normal and should be properly settled through dialogue and consultation. Wang pointed out that China has all along advocated addressing disagreements in a spirit of mutual understanding and accommodation, building consensus through dialogue and consultation, promoting development through win-win cooperation, and solving issues with a future-oriented perspective. China has been actively exploring ways of hotspot issue settlement that carry the Chinese touch, so as to lend our thoughts to countries seeking to resolve problems or disagreements with others. Three years ago, Wang added, "China and like-minded countries jointly initiated the establishment of the IOMed. Through diligent efforts, we have finally concluded the Convention, and received extensive support and positive responses from the international community. An innovative step in international rule of law, the IOMed has great significance in the history of international relations. The establishment of the IOMed is an actualization of the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter. Mediation, as is clearly stated in

Article 33 of the Charter, is one of the first means that should be tried in seeking peaceful solutions to international disputes. But so far, there is not yet an intergovernmental legal organization in this field. The IOMed takes it as its mission to mediate disputes between states or between a state and foreign investors, and international commercial disputes based on the will of relevant parties. It will fill an institutional gap in international mediation and serve as an important public good in the field of the rule of law for better global governance. The establishment of the IOMed is an example of a civilizational belief in harmony. Resolving conflicts through dialogue and mediating disputes through consultation is a common value and aspiration of all major civilizations in the world. The birth of the IOMed can help transcend the "you-lose-I-win" zero-sum mentality, promote the amicable resolution of international disputes, and foster more harmonious international relations. The establishment of the IOMed is an epitome of inclusiveness in the culture of the rule of law. It incorporates the very best of major legal systems, respects the wishes of parties concerned,

and draws upon the strengths of being more flexible, cost-effective, convenient and efficient. And it will complement and form synergies with litigation, arbitration and other existing international dispute settlement mechanisms. As decided through consultation among countries participating in the negotiation of the Convention, the IOMed will be headquartered in Hong Kong, whose handover is itself a success story of peaceful settlement of international disputes. The success of One Country, Two Systems has created brighter prospects for prosperity and stability in Hong Kong. What's more, the city enjoys exceptional advantages in international mediation, for example, its affinity to the motherland and connection to the world, its enabling business environment, its highly-developed legal system, and its strength in both common law and civil law. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for its strong support in preparing for the launch of the IOMed. I believe that the IOMed will grow stronger with Hong Kong. The rising star in international rule of law and the Oriental Pearl will shine

brightly together.

The IOMed is a seedling that we have jointly planted today. To grow and thrive, this seedling needs the care and support of the international community. China looks forward to signatories' early ratification of the Convention and welcomes the active participation of more countries. Let us honor the purposes of the U.N. Charter, ensure voluntary participation, equal decision-making and common interests, and see to it that all parties' legitimate concerns are respected and win-win outcomes achieved. Let us promote reconciliation, cooperation and harmony, cultivate a culture and raise the awareness of mediation, and put in place at an early date a set of world-class mediation rules and mechanisms featuring autonomy, flexibility, pragmatism and high efficiency. Let us uphold fairness, justice and equity, stress the true spirit of the rule of law, ensure both procedural justice and outcome justice, enhance the participation of developing countries, make international dispute settlement mechanisms fairer and beneficial to all, and improve the representation and say of the Global South in international governance.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, met with Ms. Coco Ushiyama, Country Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

Philippines looks to deepen trade, business ties with UAE

MANILA: The Philippines is ready to deepen its economic partnership with the UAE, Manila's special envoy has said, as the visit of a business delegation from Dubai concluded this week. Dubai Chambers organized a business forum in Manila on Wednesday as part of its "New Horizons" initiative. With its delegation visiting the Philippine capital, the business body had organized at least 180 bilateral meetings. The event also saw Dubai Chambers and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry sign a preliminary agreement aimed at strengthening trade and investment ties through various efforts, including sending trade missions and organizing business-matching missions. "The Philippines is open, ready, and eager for stronger trade and business ties with the UAE," Kathryn Yu-Pimentel, the Philippines' special envoy to the UAE for trade and investment, said during the forum. "Last year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the UAE — a golden milestone. Today, we look ahead with even more optimism." The UAE is a key trading partner of the Philippines in the region. In 2023, non-oil bilateral trade between the Philippines and the UAE reached over \$1 billion. The Gulf state also ranked as the Philippines' top export market among the Gulf Cooperation Council nations, and its 17th largest trading partner globally. It is also home to the second-largest Filipino diaspora after Saudi Arabia, with some 700,000 overseas Filipino workers living and working in the UAE. Many are employed in the construction, healthcare and hospitality sectors.—APP

Two Pakistanis, honoured posthumously at solemn ceremony

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations honoured 57 military, police, and civilian peacekeepers from 32 countries, including two from Pakistan, who paid the ultimate price for the cause of peace last year serving the missions around the world, at an impressive ceremony Thursday that marked the annual International Day of UN Peacekeepers. Among the posthumous awardees of Dag Hammarskjöld medals are: Sepoy Muhammad Tarique and Havildar Ahsan Ullah Khan who both served with UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who presided over the ceremony in the Trusteeship Council Chamber at UN Headquarters in New York, gave away the awards for the fallen peacekeeper which were received by ambassadors of the countries they hailed from. The awards for the civilians, who lost their lives in line of their duty, were received on behalf of their families by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare. Pakistan's UN Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, accompanied by the Mission's Military Adviser Col. Umar Shafique, attended the ceremony and accepted the awards, along with other heads of missions and their military attaches. The UN chief also presented awards to the 2024 Military Gender Advocate of the Year, Squadron Leader Sharon Mwinsote Syme from Ghana and the UN Woman Police Officer of the Year award to Superintendent Zainab Gbla of Sierra Leone. Both of them also serve with the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA). The first UN peacekeeping operation was established in 1948 and today more than 68,000 civilian, military, and police personnel are posted at 11 missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Pakistan is the 5th largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN Peacekeeping, the UN's flagship activity. It currently deploys more than 2,800 military and police personnel to the UN peace operations in Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cyprus, Somalia, South Sudan and Western Sahara. The Day pays tribute to their unwavering service and sacrifice while honouring the more than 4,400 blue helmets who have died in the line of duty over the past 77 years - 57 in 2024 alone. This year's theme focuses on the future of peacekeeping and Secretary-General Guterres noted that "peacekeepers face increasingly complex situations in an increasingly complex world." He highlighted growing polarization and division across the globe, threats such as terrorism and deadly misinformation targeting peacekeepers, as well as challenges that transcend borders ranging from climate change to transnational crime. "Now more than ever, the world needs the United Nations — and the United Nations needs peacekeeping that is fully equipped for today's realities and tomorrow's challenges," he said. The Secretary-General stressed that "it is essential that peacekeepers have what they need to do their jobs" and "this is the shared responsibility of the United Nations and Member States." The UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, said, "Our personnel are our most important capability. The sacrifices made by our peacekeepers call for more than remembrance; they demand action." He added, "Throughout its history, peacekeeping has always adapted to ever-changing contexts to achieve results. The future of peacekeeping hinges on our collective commitment to continue to adapt and invest—so we can continue delivering hope and protection where it's needed most.—DNA

Atif welcomes decision to reduce trade conversion fees

ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), welcomed the significant decisions made by the CDA Board. He stated that measures such as the reduction in trade conversion fees and the review of industrial plot rates are commendable steps. The decision to charge residential rates instead of industrial rates for farmhouses is also a step in the right direction. He mentioned that FPCCI had brought this crucial issue to the attention of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Haroon Akhtar, during his visit to FPCCI. He expressed gratitude to Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar for not only listening to the business community's voice but also for taking action. An agreement was reached to review and adjust the unrealistic rates imposed on industrial plots based on FPCCI's proposals, which is a major success for the business community and something that trade and industrial stakeholders had been waiting for a long time. FPCCI President Atif Ikram said that the reduction in trade-related fees will primarily benefit small and medium-sized enterprises. Lower costs will make it easier for them to start new businesses or expand existing ones. When business expenses are reduced, it becomes more attractive for both local and foreign investors to invest in the country. This can foster a favorable environment for the growth of the national economy.—DNA

Pak embassy hosts business networking dinner

TOKYO: The Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo hosted a business networking dinner in honour of the Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan aimed at fostering greater economic co-operation between the two countries. The event brought together a distinguished gathering of Japanese government officials, leading business figures, media representatives, and members of the Pakistani diaspora in Japan, said a news release. The minister emphasized Pakistan's strong commitment to enhance trade and investment ties with Japan. Jam Kamal outlined Pakistan's focus on key sectors such as information technology, minerals, agriculture, and renewable energy, inviting Japanese investors to explore the vast potential and emerging opportunities in these areas. Participants engaged in discussions on potential partnerships, investment avenues, and the strengthening of commercial linkages. The minister also acknowledged the important role of the Pakistani diaspora in Japan, praising their contributions in promoting Pakistan's trade interests and acting as a bridge between the two nations. The event concluded on a positive note, reaffirming both countries' shared interest in expanding economic collaboration and building stronger, mutually beneficial partnerships in the years ahead.—APP

EU to propose more flexible climate goal in July

BRUSSELS: The European Commission will propose a new EU climate target in July that includes flexibilities for how countries meet it, as Brussels attempts to fend off mounting criticism of Europe's environmental aims, EU diplomats told Reuters. The European Union's climate commissioner, Wopke Hoekstra, confirmed plans to present an EU climate target for 2040 on July 2, during a meeting with EU countries' representatives on Wednesday, diplomats familiar with the closed-door talks told Reuters. The proposal will set an EU goal to cut net greenhouse gas emissions 90 percent by 2040, compared with 1990 levels, the diplomats said. However, the EU executive plans to add flexibilities to that target, which could reduce what it demands from domestic industries. The flexibilities include setting an emissions-cutting target for domestic industries that is lower than 90 percent and letting countries buy international carbon credits to make up the rest, to reach 90 percent, the diplomats said. A European Commission spokesperson declined to comment on the plans. The Commission has promised not to weaken Europe's ambitious climate aims, despite mounting criticism from governments and lawmakers concerned about the cost for European businesses, which are struggling with high energy prices and looming US tariffs.—Agencies

At least 88 people dead after floods in Nigeria

ABUJA: At least 88 people have been confirmed dead after floods submerged Mokwa, a market town in Nigeria's Niger State, on Thursday, an official said. Hussein Isah, head of the operations office in Minna, capital of Niger State, said that many more are still at risk, with rescue efforts under way on Friday. Earlier reports said at least 20 died. "The number keeps rising," Isah told The Associated Press. "But at the last count, 88 bodies have been recovered." The floods were triggered by torrential rains that lasted several hours. According to local reports quoting residents and local government officials, a dam collapse in a nearby town worsened the situation. Mokwa is a major meeting point for traders from the south and food growers in the north of the country. In a similar occurrence last September, torrential rains and a dam collapse in Nigeria's northeastern Maiduguri caused severe flooding, leaving at least 30 people dead and displacing millions, worsening the humanitarian crisis caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. Nigeria often faces seasonal floods, particularly impacting communities along the banks of the Niger and Benue Rivers.—APP

Ministry, SIFC reaffirm commitment to agri uplift

Both the Ministry and SIFC expressed a shared commitment to promoting the livestock sector through targeted interventions, including better healthcare, breeding services, and value chain development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday held a meeting with Director General of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The meeting focused on enhancing mutual cooperation between the Ministry and SIFC to address the challenges faced by the agriculture sector and to strengthen its role in national economic development. During the meeting, both sides held a detailed discussion on several key initiatives aimed at providing relief to farmers and improving the overall productivity of the sector. A comprehensive relief package is under consideration to support farmers

suffering from rising input costs and adverse climatic conditions.

It was agreed that a transparent price mechanism will be introduced

to ensure fair returns to farmers and provide them with much-needed economic stability. The issue of General Sales Tax (GST) on cotton also came

under discussion, with proposals to reduce or remove the tax currently under active consideration to facilitate cotton growers and encourage

production. Both the Ministry and SIFC expressed a shared commitment to promoting the livestock sector through targeted interventions, including better healthcare, breeding services, and value chain development. In addition, the upcoming federal budget may include a dedicated Kisan Package to compensate farmers for past losses and to provide financial support through subsidies and incentives. The Federal Minister appreciated the role of SIFC in fostering inter-institutional coordination and assured the Council of the Ministry's full cooperation in implementing policy reforms. Major General Asad ur Rehman Cheema reaffirmed SIFC's commitment to facilitating strategic investments and ensuring timely implementation of initiatives in the agriculture sector.



Briefs

Petrol, diesel prices may remain unchanged or drop slightly from June 1

Kerosene and light diesel oil prices expected to rise slightly

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The price of petrol is likely to go down by Rs0.60 per litre and high-speed diesel (HSD) by Rs0.28 per litre, industrial and official sources told The News on Thursday. However, chances are bright for keeping the POL (petrol, oil, lubricant) prices unchanged from June 1. This will be decided with the input of the finance ministry. Nevertheless, the kerosene oil price may increase by Rs0.30 per litre to Rs164.96 from the existing Rs164.64 per litre. The price of light diesel oil (LDO) is also likely to increase by Rs1.30 per litre. In the international market, Brent crude oil prices ranged between \$64.02-64.60 per barrel. West Texas Intermediate fell more than 1.5% to trade below \$61 a barrel after Interfax cited Kazakhstan as saying that OPEC+ is set to hike output at a meeting on Saturday, with the size of the increase still to be decided. Broader markets eased off of earlier highs on data showing the US economy shrank at the start of the year, further pressuring the commodity. Crude had earlier rallied as much as 2% after a trade court blocked a vast range of President Donald Trump's trade levies, including elevated rates on China – the world's top importer of crude.

Centre 'convenes' meeting to prepare budget proposals

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) has convened a meeting on June 2 (Monday) to prepare proposals for the upcoming fiscal year's development budget. The crucial meeting will be presided by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, the sources said. Representatives from all federal ministries and the four provinces will participate in the APCC session. During the meeting, the committee is expected to approve the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the next fiscal year. APCC is a consultative body that gives recommendations on macroeconomic and development framework to the National Economic Council (NEC). The sources noted that the Ministry of Finance aims to provide up to Rs952 billion for the PSDP. However, the Ministry of Planning has received proposals from various ministries and divisions for allocation of a massive Rs2,900 billion for the PSDP. Meanwhile, the planning minister has requested an allocation of Rs1,650 billion for the PSDP. The final approval for the PSDP. The final approval for the development budget will be given by the NEC, headed by the Prime Minister.

'Hope for Russia-Ukraine talks 'barely' alive'

UNITED NATIONS: Hope is "just barely" alive in the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine, a senior UN official said Thursday, denouncing the recent "brutal surge in large-scale Russian attacks" against Ukraine. UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo told the Security Council that the "cautious hope" she expressed a month ago has diminished in the face of recent aggressions. "According to Ukrainian officials, with 355 drones, Monday's attack was the largest drone attack on Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion," DiCarlo said, adding: "This topped the previous record from the night before." – Agencies

Govt decides to block all SIMs registered against expired CNICs

All connections linked to CNICs issued in 2017 or earlier to will be deactivated in the first phase



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to immediately block all SIM cards registered against expired identity cards, with all the connections linked to CNICs issued in 2017 or earlier to will be deactivated in the first phase. The SIM blocking policy will

also be applied to cancelled CNICs issued after 2017 in later phases. The decision was taken during a high-level meeting headed by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi at the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) headquarters in Islamabad. The meeting, attended by Minister of the State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and senior officials of Nadra, also decided that

only the SIMs registered with active identity cards will remain valid. Nadra chairman briefed the officials on the organization's progress in expanding access, improving service delivery, and advancing digital transformation. The meeting was told that 87 new registration centres and 417 additional counters were opened nationwide and the federal government

approved key amendments to the National Identity Card Rules 2002. The Nadra chairman said that the facial recognition system will support citizens who face difficulties with fingerprint verification. He said that the SIMs registered to deceased individuals or expired identity cards will also be blocked immediately. The Nadra chief highlighted that citizens' biometric data is being secured in local databases. This data remains vulnerable to misuse and theft, he said, while urging the use of Nadra's secure and verified databases for facial recognition technology. While addressing the meeting Naqvi, who is coordinating closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that Nadra services had been expanded to 44 tehsils and union councils where facilities were previously unavailable. All 31 union councils of Islamabad are expected to have Nadra services by 30 June, he added. He instructed a comprehensive review to identify countries and regions where Nadra services are most needed. He also approved the establishment of new regional Nadra offices in Multan, Sukkur, and Gwadar. Moreover, the minister ordered the termination of separate biometric data storage by related agencies and mandated that facial recognition technology be implemented across the country by 31 December 2025. The Ministry of Interior will oversee the process, he added. On the occasion, Naqvi laid the foundation stone for a 10-storey Nadra Mega Centre in Sector I-8, Islamabad. The new facility is expected to be completed by June 2026.

Gaza civil defence says 44 killed in Israel attacks

GAZA CITY: Palestinian Territories, May 30 (AFP/AP-P): Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli attacks killed 44 people on Thursday, including 23 in a strike on a home in the centre of the Palestinian territory. "Forty-four people have been killed in Israeli raids on the Gaza Strip," civil defence official Mohammad al-Mughayyir told AFP. "Twenty-three people were killed, others injured and several (are) missing following an Israeli strike on the Qreina family's home east of Al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza." Mughayyir also reported "two people killed and several injured by Israeli forces' gunfire this morning near the American aid centre in the Morag axis, southern Gaza Strip." When asked by AFP about the strike in Al-Bureij and the gunfire near the aid centre, the Israeli military said it was looking into them. The centre, run by a US-backed organisation, is part of a new plan for distributing aid in Gaza that Israel says is meant to keep supplies out of the hands of Hamas, but which has drawn criticism from the United Nations and the European Union. AFP footage from Al-Bureij showed

Palestinians searching through the rubble of a destroyed building. In a statement, the military said it had struck "dozens of terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip" over the past day. "Among the targets struck were terrorists, military structures, observation and sniper posts that posed a threat to IDF troops in the area, tunnels and additional terrorist infrastructure sites," it added. Earlier this month, Israel stepped up its offensive in Gaza, triggered by an attack by Palestinian militant group Hamas on October 7, 2023. The Hamas attack resulted in the deaths of some 1,218 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official figures. Out of 251 hostages seized during the October 7 attack, 57 remain in Gaza including 34 the Israeli military says are dead. Mediators continue to push for a ceasefire that remains elusive. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Thursday at least 3,986 people had been killed in the territory since Israel ended a two-month ceasefire on March 18, taking the war's overall toll to 54,249, mostly civilians. – Agencies

Pakistan 'alarmed' by escalation in Russia-Ukraine war

UNITED NATIONS: A glimmer of hope for peace that some diplomatic efforts in the Ukraine-Russia war had created has been overshadowed by a new intensification in hostilities, Pakistan told the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, warning that there is no military solution to the conflict. "Despite the hopeful momentum generated by diplomatic initiatives – including UN Security Council Resolution 2774, ceasefire understandings, and negotiations facilitated by the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye – we are alarmed by the recent reports of intensification of hostilities," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the 15-member Council. Speaking in a debate on the situation in Ukraine, he said that Pakistan remains deeply concerned by the devastating humanitarian and security consequences of the conflict that has been raging for over 4 years. The new escalation in the conflict, marked by increased attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, undermines the fragile progress achieved through painstaking diplomacy. In this regard, Ambassador Jadoon underscored the need for protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure; asserting that military means cannot resolve this conflict, and that fragile foundation of peace laid down by the diplomatic efforts needs consolidation. "We welcome the direct talks between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, including agreements on prisoner exchanges, as steps in the right direction," the Pakistani envoy said, pointing out that these efforts were being overshadowed by the worsening situation on the ground. – Agencies

Azerbaijan's Independence Day celebrated in Tehran

In his address, Ambassador Ali Alizade highlighted the historical significance of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), emphasizing its profound impact on Azerbaijan's national statehood and its role in laying the foundations for the country's independent development

BAKU: The Azerbaijani Embassy in Iran organized an official reception in Tehran to mark May 28 – Independence Day. The event was attended by high-ranking Iranian officials, including Minister of Roads and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh, the governors of Ardabil and Gilan provinces, other officials, public and political figures, representatives of the diplomatic corps, senior military personnel, and members of the Azerbaijani community residing in Iran. The ceremony began with the performance of the

national anthems of both countries. In his address, Ambassador Ali Alizade highlighted the historical significance of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR), emphasizing its profound impact on Azerbaijan's national statehood and its role in laying the foundations for the country's independent development. The ambassador noted that the resumption of the embassy's activities in July 2024, the implementation of high-level reciprocal visits, the first joint military exercises, and the signing of numerous important documents demonstrate that Azerbaijan-Iran relations are based on strategic foundations. "The Joint Statement signed at the presidential level marks the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in interstate relations," he added. In her remarks, Iranian Minister Farzaneh Sadegh noted that Iran was one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. She highlighted the joint projects implemented between the two countries and outlined future prospects for cooperation. She described the visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Azerbaijan this year as a significant milestone in strengthening bilateral relations. The event also featured the screening of a short film titled "May 28 – Independence Day." Additionally, an exhibition showcasing Azerbaijan's historical and cultural heritage was launched as part of the event. – ADNA

President Asif Ali Zardari signs bill prohibiting child marriage into law

Law prohibits Nikah khuwan from solemnising marriages where one or both of girl and boy are under age of 18

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday signed the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025, which fixes minimum age for marriage at 18, making it an official law. According to the new legislation, no Nikah khuwan will be allowed to solemnise a marriage where one or both of the girl and boy are under the age of 18. Any Nikah khuwan found violating this law may face up to one year in prison and a fine of Rs100,000. Moreover, if a man over the age of 18 marries an underage girl, he may be sentenced to up to three years of rigorous imprisonment. The law prohibiting child marriage also states that if a court becomes aware of an underage marriage taking place, it will issue an order to prevent it. Furthermore, any individual informing the court may request to keep their identity confidential, and the court is obligated to provide protection. Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman paid tribute to President Zardari for signing the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, calling it a landmark moment in the fight against underage marriage in Pakistan. She said that this important legislation marks a milestone in the country's legal efforts to end child marriage and protect the rights of women and children. "Despite facing pressure, President Zardari showed resolve by signing the bill", which Rehman described as a symbol of a new era of reform in Pakistan. According to the senator, the bill's ap-

proval represents a victory for the protection of women's and children's rights. She emphasised that this law is the result of a long and difficult struggle, and it will help improve access to education and healthcare for young girls. "This bill is not just legislation, it is a commitment to ensure that every girl has the right to education, health, and a dignified life," she said. Rehman added that banning child marriage is a step toward securing safety, hope, and a brighter future for coming generations. She noted that after Sindh, the federal government has now sent a strong message against underage marriage, and she urged other provinces to follow suit and take steps toward similar progressive legislation. The bill was originally introduced in the National Assembly by PPP MNA Sharmila Faruqi and later presented in the Senate by Rehman. The legislation, however, was rejected by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which termed it against Islam. "The CII at its meeting termed the Child Marriage Restraint Bill which was moved by Sharmila Faruqi MNA in the National Assembly as un-Islamic," an official statement issued by the CII media wing after the meeting said. The participants of the meeting chaired by Dr Raghbir Hussain Naeemi maintained that clauses of the Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025, fixing the age limit for marriage and declaring marriage below age of 18 as child abuse and punishment for committing the act, do not conform with the Islamic injunctions. The CII meeting, while pointing out some problems in under-age marriages, also observed that the trend should be discouraged.

Pedestrian bridge collapses

KHANEWAL: A railway employee lost his life and a female passenger sustained injuries when a pedestrian bridge collapsed at Khanewal Railway Station on Friday. The deceased was identified as ST Akram, a resident of Okara, who was posted at the Lahore Headquarters. The identity of the injured woman could not be ascertained immediately. According to Rescue 1122 officials, the injured woman was provided first aid on the spot and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital for further medical treatment. Rescue teams rushed to the scene soon after the incident. Sources revealed that the collapsed bridge was built before the creation of Pakistan and was in use by passengers for many decades. An investigation into the incident was expected to be launched to determine the cause of the collapse and assess the structural conditions of other bridges in the station. – APP

President Dan calls for unity & respect for Romania

BUCHAREST: On Heroes' Day, Romanian President Nicusor Dan urged citizens to continue the legacy of the nation's heroes by building a dignified, united and respected country. Speaking at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Carol I Park, Dan attending his first official event as president said Romania's freedom and democracy were built on the courage and sacrifice of past generations. "We owe them our respect and gratitude," he said. "Our heroes fought for freedom, dignity, and unity. Today, we must not only remember them but also carry on their work—a strong Romania at the heart of Europe." Dan called for unity, especially on Ascension Day, a major Christian holiday. "Let's focus on what brings us together, not what divides us," he said. "Only through solidarity can we face future challenges and build a secure, prosperous nation." Defense Minister Angel Tilvar also honored fallen soldiers, from Romania's wars to recent missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, calling them "the few to whom the many owe so much." – APP

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