



Islamabad POST

Monday, June 02, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Greetings continue to Pour in for Asian Champion Arshad

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Finance minister welcomes rising consumer trust

Detailed News On Page-08



Crackdown on illegal foreigners on cards: Naqvi

Detailed News On Page-06



Dar, Muttaqi talk

Uzbek-Afghan-Pak railway project to transform region

Another notable dimension to this evolving regional scenario is the growing role of China as a stabilizing force. Beijing has played a key role in bridging gaps between Islamabad and Kabul, using its economic and strategic leverage to encourage cooperation

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: In a significant diplomatic breakthrough, Pakistan and Afghanistan have agreed to elevate their bilateral diplomatic ties to the ambassadorial level. This development marks a new phase in the relationship between the two neighboring countries, who have long shared not only a border but also deep historical, cultural, and economic linkages. The announcement came after a constructive telephone conversation between Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi. Both leaders expressed satisfaction over the move, with Muttaqi warmly welcoming Pakistan's decision and affirming Kabul's reciprocal commitment. He termed the upgrade as a "significant milestone" in improving and stabilizing bilateral ties. The telephone conversation also placed a strong focus on regional connectivity, especially the strategic Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (UAP) Railway Line Project. This multi-billion-dollar infrastructure initiative is poised to transform the region's economic landscape by linking South and Central Asia through a modern rail corridor. The project is not only about freight or passenger movement—it is about reshaping the economic future of a region long hindered by geopolitical instability. The two foreign ministers expressed a shared resolve to finalize the framework agreement quickly, demonstrating political will to overcome logistical and bureaucratic delays.

This move is a follow-up to the Pakistani Foreign Minister's official visit to Kabul on 19 April 2025, during which a series of key understandings were reached. Both sides have now reiterated their commitment to implementing those decisions in letter and spirit. The emphasis remains on rebuilding mutual trust—something that has historically been elusive in this sensitive relationship. Another notable dimension to this evolving regional scenario is the growing role of China as a stabilizing force. Beijing has played a key role in bridging gaps between Islamabad and Kabul, using its economic and strategic leverage to encourage cooperation. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its vested interest in regional peace have made it a natural facilitator. This development can be seen as a diplomatic blow to India, whose influence in Afghanistan had seen a sharp decline following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. With relative peace now emerging on its western border, Pakistan is in a better position to shift strategic focus towards its eastern frontier with India. The geopolitical rebalancing offers Islamabad breathing space to handle the challenges posed by the Modi-led government, especially in occupied Kashmir. This latest diplomatic advancement also holds wider implications. For Afghanistan, it's a step toward greater international recognition and engagement. For Pakistan, it's a chance to solidify its position as a regional connector and peace-maker, rather than merely a frontline state in conflict.

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Upcoming budget

International Monetary Fund, Pakistan 'near deal' on salaried tax relief

"We have proposed certain taxation measures to satisfy the International Monetary Fund for providing relief to salaried class," says official

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are edging closer to an agreement on proposed tax relief for the salaried class in the upcoming 2025–26 federal budget. However, meeting the ambitious revenue target of Rs14.2 trillion will pose a significant challenge, particularly in light of the widening shortfall against the revised tax collection goal of Rs12.33 trillion for the current fiscal year. Following intensive negotiations on Friday night, IMF officials granted in-principle approval for a reduction in income tax rates across various salary slabs. The Washington-based lender estimates that the proposed cuts would offer relief

amounting to Rs56-60 billion in the next fiscal year. To offset the resulting revenue gap, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will be required to introduce compensatory income tax measures. The official said the reduction in the proposed slabs of the salaried class had not yet been worked out fully. The FBR proposed just 1% tax on the first slab, ranging from Rs0.6 million to Rs1.2 million earners per year, compared to the existing rate of 5%. The existing tax rate of 5% for the first slab turns into Rs30,000 tax, and if the proposed rate of 1% is agreed, the tax paid amount will be reduced from Rs30,000 to Rs6,000 for earnings up to Rs100,000. The IMF is insisting on collecting a 1.5% tax rate from the first slab, so if a 1.5% tax is imposed, then they will have to pay Rs9,000 tax.



QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir addressed a Grand Jirga of tribal elders at the Zehri Auditorium in Quetta. – DNA

Dar, UK FS Lammy discuss bilateral cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Sunday spoke with UK's Foreign Secretary David Lammy. They exchanged views on further enhancing bilateral cooperation in multilateral fora, particularly at the UN Security Council, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Both leaders agreed to maintain contact and also to meet on the sidelines of the high-level events scheduled to be held later this month at the United Nations, New York.

Bilawal-led delegation arrives in US

Former foreign minister to meet UN, OIC, US Congress to present Pakistan stance on India aggression

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Former foreign minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has arrived in New York at the helm of a high-level parliamentary delegation. This visit marks the commencement of Pakistan's diplomatic outreach following recent escalations with India. The delegation, comprising senior political figures including Hina Rabbani Khar, Dr Musadik Malik, Khuram Dastgir Khan, Bushra Anjum Butt, Tehmina Janjua, and Jalil Abbas Jilani, aims to present Pakistan's perspective on the recent military confrontation with India and counter New Delhi's narrative on the conflict. During their stay in New York until June 2, the delegation is scheduled to meet United Nations Secretary-General

Continued on Page 06

PM, Field Marshal address jirga

Indian proxies responsible for terrorist acts

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir emphasized that the Pakistan Army remains fully alert and prepared to respond decisively to any threat. He reiterated that peace in Balochistan is non-negotiable and that the future of Pakistan is directly linked to a stable, prosperous Balochistan

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir NI (M), the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), jointly addressed a Grand Jirga of tribal elders at the Zehri Auditorium in Quetta. The Jirga was organized to interact with the tribal leadership and discuss the evolving security situation in Balochistan, with particular focus on the ongoing proxy war fueled by India. The PM highlighted that Indian-sponsored proxies operating in Balochistan have intensified their efforts to undermine peace, destabilize the province, and disrupt development initiatives led by the Government of Pakistan and the Armed Forces. The Prime Minister underscored that terrorists groups like Fitna Al-Hindistan seek support of the locals which must be denied to them. Praising the leadership

Continued on Page 06

Outcry in India after top general admits Pakistan downed jets

"The Modi govt has misled the nation. The fog of war is now clearing," says Congress President Kharage

CENTRELINE REPORT

KARACHI: A political firestorm has erupted in India after Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan acknowledged that the country lost several fighter jets during its recent military clash with Pakistan. The Congress Party swiftly condemned the revelation,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Imran Khan's release before Eid ul Adha ruled out

Denials come amid speculations about potential deal or legal development leading to PTI founder's early release

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rumours regarding the possible release of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan before Eid ul Adha have been firmly rejected by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and government sources. Even the PTI doesn't expect it to happen. These denials come amid speculations in the media and political circles about a potential deal or legal development leading to Khan's early release. According to NAB officials, there is currently no case before any court that is ripe for Khan's release. "No notice has been issued to NAB in any matter that could result in his bail or release before Eid," a source in NAB confirmed.

Nawaz leaves for London

DNA

LAHORE, Jun 01 (dna):PML-N chief and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has left for London on Sunday. Nawaz Sharif left for the old terminal of Allama Iqbal International Airport from Jati Umra. According to PML-N official sources, Nawaz Sharif left Lahore for London by a special plane. His stay in London will last for about two weeks. He will also undergo a routine medical examination. He will also celebrate Eid-ul-Adha in London. His medical examination was scheduled, but he returned home due to tension between Pakistan and India.

Daesh operative arrested in Pak-Turkiye joint operation

Arrested Ozgur Altun accused of directing plots targeting civilian sites in Turkiye, Europe

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A senior Daesh operative was captured during a Pakistan-Turkiye joint intelligence operation conducted at a border area connecting Afghanistan, a Turkish news agency reported citing security sources on Sunday. The arrested Daesh operative was identified as Ozgur



Altun, whose codename is "Abu Yasir Al Turki". Altun was wanted to Turkiye for directing plots targeting concert venues and other civilian sites in Turkiye and across Europe, according to the report. It added that the operative was the highest-ranking Turkish member of Daesh and played a key role in the militant group's media and logistics networks. Turkiye's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) had tracked Altun's activities and uncovered that he was coordinating the movement of Daesh fighters from Europe and Central Asia to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. After sharing the information with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, a precision operation jointly conducted by MIT and ISI led to Altun's capture at the border. He was later deported to Turkiye for further investigation, the report stated. Pakistan and Turkiye have close and brotherly ties and both sides always showed resolve to deepen multifaceted cooperation. In a recent engagement between top leadership, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged to continue working closely for regional peace, sustainable development, and the shared prosperity of their peoples.

Continued on Page 06

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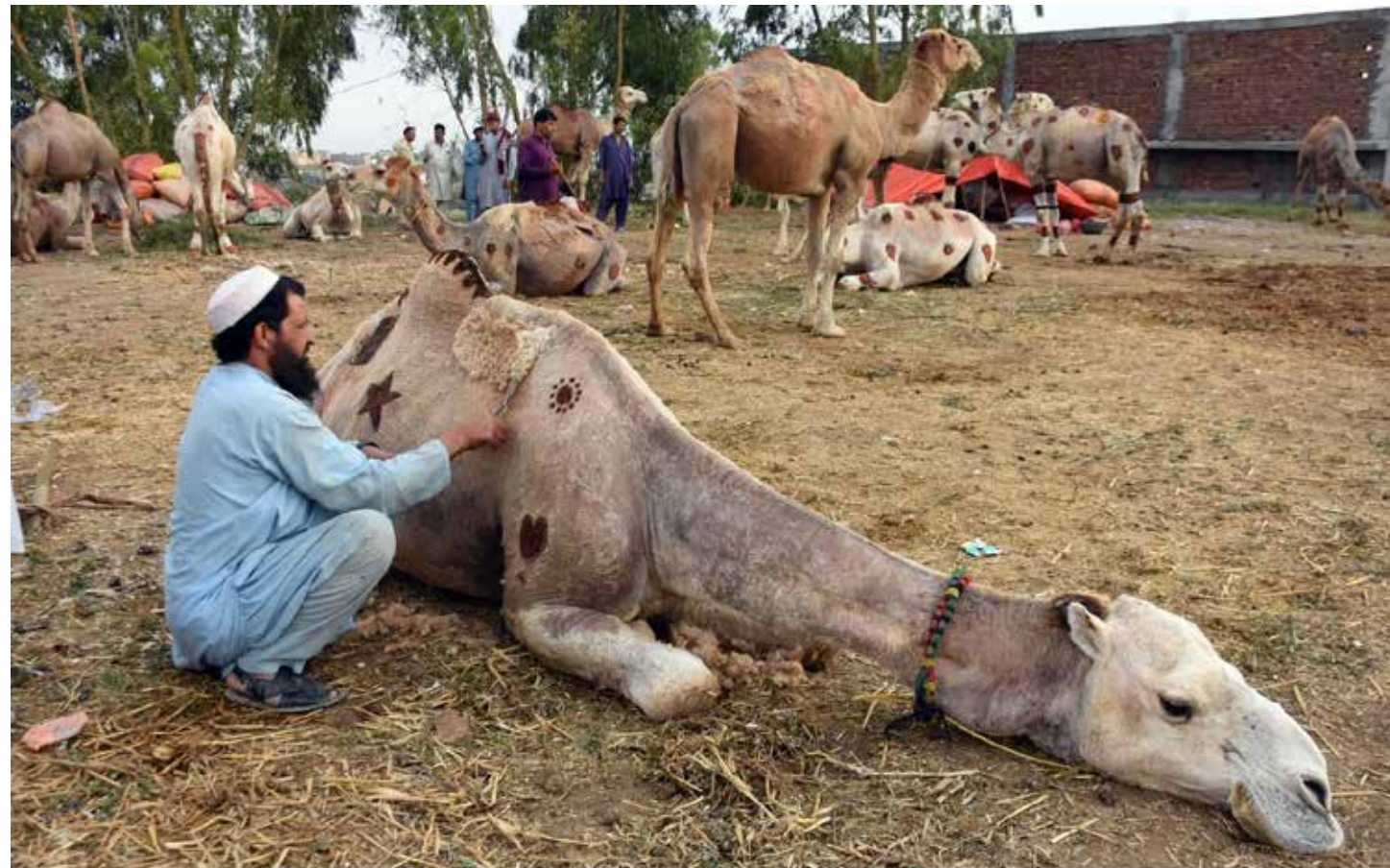
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Punjab CM urges youths to serve, obey their parents

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has paid glowing tribute to the unconditional love, sacrifices, and unwavering support of parents, calling them "a cool shade in the harsh sunlight of life." In her message on Global Day for Parents, the CM described parental love as the most valuable asset in her life, saying, "The selfless love of parents is a blessing that shapes our character and supports us through every phase of life. Their obedience is not just a moral obligation but a command from Allah Almighty, a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and a cornerstone of our Eastern cultural values." Highlighting the irreplaceable role of parents in a child's life, the CM said that a home without parents is just a structure of bricks, but their presence transforms even the simplest space into a paradise. Parents are the foundation of every success in their children's lives. Reflecting on her own journey, she added, "Whatever I have achieved today is the result of the prayers, guidance, and upbringing of my loving parents. I consider it an honor to serve and obey them." CM Maryam Nawaz urged the public to uphold the values of respect, care, and obedience toward parents, and to treat their service as a sacred responsibility. She stressed that nurturing strong family bonds is essential for a compassionate and balanced society. "May Allah Almighty keep the shadow of parents intact over all children" she prayed. The CM honored the children who lost their parents in service to the nation. "Let us also remember those whose parents sacrificed their lives for the security and sovereignty of Pakistan. I pay tribute to the brave parents whose children embraced martyrdom while defending our beloved homeland." She encouraged people to cherish and care for their parents not only on this special day but every day, recognizing them as an unmatched blessing and a guiding force in life.—DNA

Boat accident rescue operation reviewed

KOHAT: The rescue operation for searching the missing people in a boat accident is in progress under the supervision of the district administration Kohat in Indus River near Khushal Garh area of Kohat district. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law Aftab Alam Advocate along with the Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal and Ishtiaq Qureshi remained present at the site for the 4th day to review the ongoing rescue operation. He had continuously been monitoring the operation since day one. The Minister on this occasion was informed by the District Administration Kohat and Rescue officials that 4 teams of 1122, a team of Pakistan Army SSG and a team of special divers from Tarbela Dam are participating in the joint rescue operation. On the 4th day also, the operation continued from 6 am to 6 pm but not yet prove fruitful. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Camel hairdresser decorating sacrificial camels at an annual cattle market at Bhatta Chowk of Sector 1-14 ahead of the upcoming Eid al-Adha, in Federal Capital.

Call for adoption of legislation to end child marriages

Parliamentary Secretary for the Women Development Department, Ms. Saadia Temur, chaired the session. She said women development department is dedicated to promoting gender equality and ensuring protection and empowerment of women through policy development, institutional support, and legislative reforms

DNA

LAHORE: Experts and stakeholders at a high-level consultation organized by the Potohar Organization for Development Advocacy (PODA), in collaboration with the Women Development Department (WDD) Punjab on Friday, identified key recommendations to bridge the gap between pro-women legislation and its implementation across the province. The participants reinforced the recommendation to raise awareness at the grassroots level to ensure the effective implementation of existing laws for the collective benefit of society. Key recommendations included the adoption of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 by the Punjab Government, which sets 18 years as the minimum legal age of marriage for girls. Participants also urged that violations under the forthcoming Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Act be made cognizable, non-compoundable, and nonbailable to reduce underage marriages through stronger legal enforcement. It was recommended to empower Union Councils to take prompt action against violations involving child marriages at grassroots level. The expert consultation was part of PODA's project "Reduce Child Marriages to Enhance Gender Equality", supported by the



Norwegian Embassy, Islamabad. It brought together policymakers, civil society members, legal experts, and activists to review gaps between existing legislation and the on-ground realities in Punjab. Parliamentary Secretary for the Women Development Department, Ms. Saadia Temur, chaired the session. She said women development department is dedi-

cated to promoting gender equality and ensuring protection and empowerment of women through policy development, institutional support, and legislative reforms. She welcomed the efforts of the Punjab Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Ms. Maryam Nawaz for advancing women's empowerment. Ms. Temur also announced that a women development center will be

inaugurated by the end of June to support ongoing women-related programs. Executive Director of PODA, Sameena Nazir, urged the government to constitutionally mandate matriculation—comprising 12 years of education—as the minimum educational requirement, emphasizing its importance for empowering girls and preventing early marriages.

Participants acknowledged the significant step taken through the passage of the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 and urged Punjab to follow suit. They stressed that only through a combination of legal reform, administrative will, and grassroots mobilization can the province make real progress toward ending early and forced marriages and achieving gender equality.

Punjab targets child literacy, school retention

MULTAN: The Punjab government is focusing on improving the educational foundation of children through the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) program, which is not only helping retain students in schools but also bringing thousands of out-of-school children back into classrooms. Project Director Imtiaz Shahid said the FLN program was launched in 2023 to help children in early grades strengthen their basic reading and math skills. He explained the initiative is targeted at both enrolled students who are not learning properly and those who have dropped out of school. He said that in the first year, FLN camps were set up in five districts, where 1,215 schools hosted 2,050 learning camps. A total of 81,532 children benefited from the initiative, including 22,556 out-of-school children. Nearly half of the participants were girls. In the second phase, he said, the program expanded to 12 additional districts. A total of 3,030 schools hosted 6,060 camps, surpassing the original target of 148,240 by enrolling 176,588 children. Among them, 35,046 were out-of-school children brought back into education. He said, now in its third phase, the program is targeting another 12 districts with high dropout rates and low school participation. These include Mianwali, Rajanpur, Bahawalnagar, Layyah, Bhakkar, Chiniot, and others. The current phase aims to enroll 148,240 children, including 30,300 who are out of school.—APP

Branded Pharmacy, superstore to promote business in Attock

ATTOCK: President of Attock Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shahid Zaman has said that the arrival of a renowned brand like Pharmacy & Superstore in Attock will promote business and create employment opportunities. The business community of Attock warmly welcomes this venture and assures full cooperation. He expressed these views while addressing a prestigious ceremony held for the inauguration of a new branch of the Pharmacy & Superstore chain in Attock. Shahid Zaman said that he firmly believes such institutions not only ensure the availability of quality products but also introduce innovation, transparency, and healthy competition into the local busi-

ness environment. This is a positive step that will not only provide world-class services at people's doorsteps but also offer job opportunities to the local youth. He highlighted that the greatest strength of Pharmacy & Superstore is its consistent focus on customer trust. This is the very element that leads any business to success. He paid tribute to the management for turning their vision into reality and choos-



ing a historic city like Attock for their expansion. He added that this is not just a successful business model, but a beacon of guidance for the next generation—showcasing how principles, quality, and customer care can turn a business into a mission for serving the nation. On behalf of the Attock Chamber of Commerce, he assured the brand of the business community's full support. He expressed hope that this branch would not only achieve new milestones of success but also play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy, generating employment, and improving the commercial environment. He further hoped that the people of Attock would now have access to high-quality health-related products, medicines, cosmetics, and other daily essentials under one roof at reasonable prices. Concluding his remarks, he congratulated the management from the bottom of his heart and prayed that Allah blesses this business venture with exponential growth. Speaking at the ceremony, UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said that healthy competition is essential for progress in life.

Sacrificial animal trade gains momentum in KP

PESHAWAR: As Eidul Azha approaches, the trade of sacrificial animals has gained momentum in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), with a steady influx of livestock from Punjab driven by traders seeking higher profit margins. Major cattle markets including Lala Qala, Pabbi, Risalpur, Ring Road, Taru, Charsadda Road, and Amangarh are now teeming with animals primarily transported from Punjab by inter-provincial dealers aiming to capitalize on the season's rising demand. "I brought five truckloads of animals from Punjab, and all were sold out even before Eid," said Mosa Khan, a cattle trader at the Pabbi market. "Now, my brother is back in Punjab arranging for five more trucks based on the overwhelming demand." Another trader, Dilfer Shah,

shared a similar experience and said, "since last Saturday, I've sold 20 buffaloes, 50 goats, and 15 oxen brought from Sahiwal," he said, optimistic that sales will peak in the final days before Eid. While traders are seeing brisk business, the risks remain high. Heatstroke and diseases such as lumpy skin can lead to significant losses, forcing dealers to raise prices to mitigate potential setbacks. In the sweltering heat of Peshawar's Lala Qala market, 45-year-old property dealer Nasir Khan searched for an affordable sacrificial animal. After hours of bargaining on Sunday, he left empty-handed. "I came from WAPDA Town hoping to buy a buffalo within our budget. Prices are far higher than last year," he lamented. "I'll

return closer to Eid, hoping for last-minute price drops and maybe join a collective qurbani with neighbors." Traders from Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan have flooded KP's markets, yet many visitors especially salaried class are simply price-checking and leaving in frustration. An APP market survey conducted on Sunday found that inflation, high transportation costs, and soaring fodder prices are discouraging many middle-income and salaried buyers, particularly pensioners. Adding to the challenge is the intense summer heat, which has driven some potential buyers online. Digital platforms offering sacrificial animals with home delivery have gained traction, drawing customers away from traditional markets.—APP

CM's women empowerment vision to benefit cottage industry

LAHORE: Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejaz-ur-Rehman said on Sunday that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's initiative of women economic empowerment and protection, particularly in rural areas would be a game changer. In a meeting with manufacturers, exporters, and professionals associated with handmade carpet sector here, he added that carpet industry, a traditional craft employing a large number of women align perfectly with the CM's vision and can play a pivotal role in its realisation. He highlighted that over 90 percent of the workforce in this cottage industry comprises rural women who work from their homes. He asserted that with full government support, the initiative could deliver extraordinary results in a short period. They also discussed key challenges facing the industry and preparations for the 41st International Handmade Carpet Exhibition, scheduled to take place in Pakistan this October. The CTI Chairperson proposed the launch of a government-backed scheme to provide free carpet-weaving looms and hands-on training to women in rural Punjab. He suggested that the initiative could be implemented in collaboration with the PCMEA, Carpet Training Institute, or government institutions such as Punjab Small Industries Corporation, TEVTA, Punjab Skills Development Fund, and the Women Development Department. He was confident that with timely action, the project could become a flagship initiative under Maryam Nawaz's leadership—one that not only uplifts rural women but also addresses the longstanding issues of the handmade carpet industry, which is among Pakistan's top five export sectors. "The initiative would generate a skilled workforce, boost carpet exports, and leave a positive economic impact across the province," he remarked. Ejaz-ur-Rehman said the CTI is fully prepared to present a comprehensive and actionable plan to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb, and other relevant authorities, and is ready to extend complete support for its execution. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02/Itlay National/ Independence Day

June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day

June 06/Sweden National Day

June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)

June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution& Army Day

June 11/United kingdom Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth

June 12/Philippines Independence Day

June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)

June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day


June 17/Iceland National Day

June 18/Seychells National Day


June 25/Croatia National Day

June 25/Mozambique National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122


& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police...9266044

Motorway Police.9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIA Flight Info.....114


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Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi..5555489

CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111

MH.....5611116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4


RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan Bela Fazekas hosted dinner for the Pakistan-Hungary parliamentary group. Governor KP Faisal Karim Kundi was the chief guest. —DNA

OGRA rolls out e-licensing system to facilitate Oil,gas industry

“This launch marks a significant milestone in our journey toward digital governance,” said a spokesperson OGRA. “By cutting paperwork and enabling faster processing, we’re not only improving convenience for applicants and investors, but also reinforcing confidence in Pakistan’s regulatory framework.”

DNA

ISLAMABAD In a major step toward digital transformation and regulatory efficiency, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has officially launched a comprehensive e-licensing system for Pakistan’s oil and gas sector. Developed in collaboration with the National IT Board (NITB), the new platform enables fully digitized licensing across all industry segments, including Gas, LNG, CNG, LPG, refineries, and oil. The initiative is designed to simplify and accelerate the process of obtaining or renewing licenses, offering enhanced transparency and efficiency for businesses operating

PM&DC conducts NRE-I 2025 in four cities

He stated that the PM&DC is committed to ensure excellence in medical and dental education while pursuing uniform minimum standards. He added that the NRE II examination schedule will also be communicated on the PM&DC official website as soon as the NRE I exam result is announced

ISLAMABAD:The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has successfully conducted the National Registration Examination (NRE-I) 2025 in four cities. According to PMDC, the National Registration Examination NRE-I was held on Sunday in compliance with Section 18 of the PM&DC Act 2022 in examination centers in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar. The NRE is a mandatory licensing exam designed to evaluate the competency of foreign-qualified MBBS and BDS graduates of Pakistani nationality who seek full registration as General Practitioners in Pakistan.Drones A total of 5,036 graduates nationwide were registered for the NRE-I exam, in which 4,995 were MBBS graduates and 41 were BDS registered graduates. In Karachi 390 MBBS and one BDS graduates appeared. In Islamabad 1,583 MBBS, 19 BDS, in Peshawar 442 MBBS, three BDS and in Lahore 2,538 MBBS and 15 BDS graduates appeared simultaneously. PM&DC conducts NRE-I 2025 in four cities The theory examination began at 9:30 AM and lasted 03 hours and 30 minutes. The NRE examination consists of two parts NRE I and NRE II. The Candidates must pass both components separately with a minimum score of 60%. President PM&DC, Prof. Rizwan Taj, in a statement, said that the examination has been conducted under the supervision of the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) in a transparent and disciplined manner. Prof. Taj advised the aspiring medical students to only enroll in recognized international institutions listed by the PM&DC and they must provide quality education so that when these graduates come back to Pakistan can pass the licensing exam and can get absorbed in the national health system and serve their country. He added that all parents and students must check the recognised list of international medical and dental colleges, as no graduate from an unrecognised institution will be registered with PM&DC. He stated that the PM&DC is committed to ensure excellence in medical and dental education while pursuing uniform minimum standards. He added that the NRE II examination schedule will also be communicated on the PM&DC official website as soon as the NRE I exam result is announced.—DNA

Surge in demand for skilled butchers ahead of Eid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With Eid-ul-Azha less than a week away, the demand for skilled butchers in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has surged significantly, driven by the spike in sacrificial animal slaughter during the Islamic festival While some residents have already purchased sacrificial animals, many are still in search of suitable livestock. In this scenario, the role of butchers is considered to be vital for chopping the meat. Keeping in view their importance and demand, professional butchers have also increased rates of preparing meat as compared to last year. Khawar Shehzad, a butcher who also runs a meat shop in Islamabad’s sector I-10, said that Eid-ul-Azha is a special Islamic festival following the slaughtering of animals at a mass level, highlighting that everyone looked for professional


Private security guards battle heat, polyester, poverty

ISLAMABAD: As summer’s intensity scorches cities across Pakistan, thousands of private security guards remain stationed under the open sky, watching, waiting, and enduring. Clad in suffocating polyester uniforms and earning meager wages, these men stand sentinel at the gates of homes, offices, and commercial buildings, silently fighting a battle for survival To capture the reality faced by these workers, the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) gathered comments from across the country to highlight their daily struggles and unmet needs. Muhammad Yaqoob, a security guard at a private bank in Gulberg Greens, Islamabad, originally from Rawalakot, Azad Kashmir, told APP that there were no days off in his line of duty, not even on Eid. “While others celebrate with their families, we stay on duty because security is a top priority during holidays,” he said. Calling the sacrifice deeply personal, he added, “It’s not easy to hear laughter from afar while standing guard, but we do it so others can celebrate in peace.” Another guard Naeem, a middle-aged man deputed at Golf Avenue Society in Lahore, talking to APP highlighting the issue of fabric he is forced to wear in scorching heat said, “This polyester fabric burns the skin, we don’t choose these uniforms, they’re handed out. If someone can afford it, they buy a better version. Otherwise, we wear what we get.” Most uniforms are made of cheap polyester, a synthetic material that traps heat rather than allowing ventilation. Yet, in the name of uniformity and cost-cutting, many employers avoid switching to cotton despite the health risks and companies’ policy to follow their instructions and wear customized outfit. Muhammad Rizwan, stationed outside a gated housing society in Karachi’s Gulistan-e-Johar, who starts his day before sunrise said, “Our working hours are 12 hours long, and there isn’t much shade where we are. Occasionally, we end up standing under a tree. There’s no place for us to sit or even stand in shade. We have to stay alert even when there’s nowhere to take cover during extreme weather. With no break room or even a water cooler nearby.” Rizwan relies on a small thermos and a plastic stool he brings from home. any guards say their managers most of the time allow time off for severe family emergencies, but issues like delayed wages and low pay persist. Due to limited staff, some work double shifts. Despite these challenges, guards rarely complain and simply ask for cotton uniforms, daily wages, rest areas, and a day off. They carry out their duties quietly and with dignity.—DNA

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AI-based career development platform launched

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ISLAMABAD: In a significant step toward empowering students and professionals with cutting-edge career support, the official launch of AimNexus.ai, an AI-driven Career Development Platform, was held at Preston University Islamabad here the other day. The platform is developed by Muhammad Ismail, Founder & CEO of AimNovo, and a proud alumnus of the Department of Electronics at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. During the launch event, Muhammad Ismail introduced the web application and shared its salient features. He emphasized how AimNexus.ai serves as a smart, all-in-one solution for students and early-career professionals to prepare for the job market and take charge of their career development.Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abdul Basit, President of Preston University and the Federal Chapter of the Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP), and Muhammad Murtaza Noor, National Coordinator of the Inter-University Consortium for the Promotion of Social Sciences and founder of the International Students Convention, lauded the initiative. Both leaders highlighted the platform’s potential to democratize access to career resources and pledged to support awareness sessions across Pakistan to ensure maximum students benefit from this free-of-cost service. According to the details, AimNexus.ai is designed to be a personalized career guide that uses artificial intelligence to support users at every step of their professional journey. The platform’s Smart Resume Builder Pro allows users to easily create and enhance their resumes by using AI to suggest improvements and optimize language for maximum impact in job and internship applications. Users can build interview confidence through unlimited practice sessions with the AI Interview Coach, which offers feedback on responses and even analyzes body language to help users prepare thoroughly for real interviews Finding suitable opportunities becomes quicker and more accurate with the Personalized Opportunity Finder, which matches users with internships and entry-level jobs based on their skills and interests, complete with a match score to guide decision-making.

Briefs

Youth demand
higher
tobacco taxes
on World No
Tobacco Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a concerted effort to combat the alarming rise in tobacco consumption across Pakistan, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), alongside the Youth Advocates Against Tobacco (YAAT) clubs, held a significant event to commemorate World No Tobacco Day 2025. The event spotlighted the urgent need to protect young people from the harmful effects of tobacco and called for a critical increase in tobacco taxation to reduce smoking initiation among youth. The event served as a dynamic platform for youth voices, amplified through speeches, films, paintings, skits, rap songs, and podcasts—all denouncing the tobacco industry's manipulative strategies targeting Pakistan's young population. These creative outputs conveyed a powerful message: tobacco consumption is the single greatest threat facing the nation's youth today. "By channeling our voices and creativity, we are making the silent voices of tobacco's victims heard loud and clear," said a YAAT club representative. "Our performances reflect the real stories behind the statistics and call for immediate action to safeguard our generation."

China is
Pak's most
dependable
ally

ISLAMABAD: A business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) stated on Sunday that during the recent tensions between Pakistan and India, China reaffirmed its strong support for Pakistan, proving again that it's the most trusted friend of Pakistan. He said that this alliance underscores the robust nature of partnership, providing a sense of security and reassurance amid the prevailing tense situation. Shahid Rasheed Butt stated in a press release issued today that China, in its role as a brotherly nation, has not only provided political, diplomatic, and military support but has also earned the heartfelt gratitude of the entire Pakistani nation for its unwavering support. He said that India's aggressive actions, including attacks on Pakistan, provocative war exercises, and aggressive rhetoric, have escalated tensions and pose a grave threat to peace. At this critical juncture, China's swift and straightforward support for Pakistan's sovereignty, security, and defense has been a beacon of hope. He noted that India staged a false-flag operation to divert global attention from Israeli atrocities, but the play backfired. This adventure not only led to India's diplomatic isolation but also raised serious questions about the political future of the BJP and Narendra Modi.—DNA

CDA building control wing sealed
18 Illegal Buildings in Sector H-13

The Directorate General of Building and Housing Control issued a stern warning that further legal action, as per CDA laws, will be initiated against persistent violators. All stakeholders, including developers, builders, and property owners, are strongly advised in the public interest to obtain all necessary approvals, Completion Certificates, and clearances from the CDA before commencing any construction or occupying any building. Ignoring regulatory procedures will result in strict legal consequences.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the directions of Chairman CDA, Chief Commissioner Islamabad and DG Civil Defence, Muhammad Ali Randhwa, an intensified campaign and enforcement action was conducted against illegal and non-compliant construction/buildings within the Islamabad Capital Territory (I.C.T). In a significant enforcement action, the Directorate General of Building & Housing Control, in collaboration with the relevant formations, sealed 18 unauthorized buildings and

commercial outlets in Sector H-13 today. The operation was carried out jointly by Directorate General of Building & Housing Control, Directorate of Enforcement, I.C.T, Administration and Islamabad Police. The sealing action was executed strictly in accordance with the CDA Ordinance, 1960, and the Building Control Regulations, 2020 (as amended 2023). The sealed buildings were found to be in severe violation of regulatory requirements, including construction without approved building plans, unauthorized commercial use of premises, illegal occupancy without obtaining Completion

Certificates, Non-payment of applicable penalties and fees. Almost all sealed units had disregarded prior notices including Show Cause Notices, and Final Notices issued by CDA in order to complete all codal formalities. The first phase of today's operation in Sector H-13 resulted in the sealing of the following 18 buildings/commercial outlets: 1. NB Heights 2. Monticelo Residencia 3. Al-Rehman Heights 4. Adj. Al-Rehman Heights / Malik Haroon 5. G.S Enterprises 6. Doctor Heights 7. Land Mark-II 8. Land Mark-III 9. K.K

Tower Unknown Adj. K.K Tower Dawn Enterprises H-13 Apartments T.M.K Tower Clock Tower Horizon Heights Lapiz Heights Under Construction Building (Back of P.S.O Petrol Pump) This enforcement drive underscores CDA's unwavering commitment to regulatory compliance and the rule of law. The operation aimed to uphold the sanctity of Islamabad's building regulations and ensure orderly urban development. These structures posed risks and violated established norms despite ample opportu-

nity for compliance. The Directorate General of Building and Housing Control issued a stern warning that further legal action, as per CDA laws, will be initiated against persistent violators. All stakeholders, including developers, builders, and property owners, are strongly advised in the public interest to obtain all necessary approvals, Completion Certificates, and clearances from the CDA before commencing any construction or occupying any building. Ignoring regulatory procedures will result in strict legal consequences.



ISLAMABAD: Artists playing musical instruments during the class of "Opera Singing Courses" at PNCA.

Pakistan to attend
China's HUCM Program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is to participate in the Second Joint Technicians Training Program (JTTP), being launched by Hunan University of Chinese Medicine (HUCM), China, and the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH). It is aimed at strengthening scientific and technical capacity across the Islamic world. The flagship initiative under the OIC-China partnership, will take place from June 8 to June 17, 2025, at HUCM's high-tech research campus in Changsha, China. Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday. The second JTTP is set to convene 19 select technicians and early-career researchers from OIC member countries and other developing nations, offering them advanced, hands-on training in laboratory sciences and instrumentation. The training will focus on cutting-edge diagnostic and analytical

techniques such as LCMS, GCMS, FTIR, MS, and NMR, all taught within HUCM's world-class facilities. The program directly addresses a key challenge confronting the OIC region; a shortage of highly trained technical professionals in the STEM sectors. As OIC countries grapple with intersecting challenges like public health crises, poverty, food insecurity, and climate change, the lack of skilled technical manpower continues to slow scientific progress and innovation. According to COMSTECH, the initiative represents a strategic investment in human capital and a recognition of the untapped scientific potential across the 57-member OIC bloc. "This is not just a training program—it is a capacity-building mission aimed at empowering the Global South," said a COMSTECH spokesperson. The partnership between HUCM and COMSTECH symbolizes the growing academic and scientific cooperation be-

tween China and the Islamic world. By offering specialized training to laboratory technologists, technicians, and researchers—particularly women and candidates from Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the program also supports goals of inclusivity, equity, and sustainable development. Eligible candidates include professionals affiliated with universities, hospitals, and research institutions who hold degrees in engineering technology, laboratory sciences, or other STEM-related fields. The participants also include seven females including two from Uganda and one each from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Sudan and Turkey. The JTTP highlights China's expanding influence as a scientific partner for developing nations, especially within the OIC. HUCM, known for its interdisciplinary research in modern medicine, biotechnology, and traditional Chinese medicine, brings a unique blend of expertise to the partnership.

No mercy
for nursing
mafia

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal Sunday declared war on the nursing mafia, pledging to introduce tough new laws to root out corruption and ensure transparency. In a fresh conversation with a local news channel, he explained that the nursing mafia is aggressively operating on fake degrees, and it's high time we take strict action against them. He added that the government needs to crack down on these corrupt practices and ensure that only qualified professionals are allowed to practice. Syed Mustafa Kamal highlighted the exorbitant demand for nursing seats, with institutions charging up to Rs 2.5 million for foreign nursing opportunities and Rs 900,000 in Pakistan. He emphasized the urgent need for a transparent and merit-based system to ensure fairness and accountability in the nursing sector. The Federal Health Minister said that the present government will soon revamp nursing education, vows transparent admissions and strict merit-based policies.—APP

ICCI, BEOE to
sign MoU for
youth skill uplift

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move aimed at enhancing employment opportunities and skill development for Pakistani youth, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE) have agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The initiative is designed to empower the country's youth with market-relevant skills, enabling access to international employment avenues.

The agreement was reached during the visit of Muhammad Tayyab, Director General of BEOE, to the ICCI, where he held a detailed meeting with Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President ICCI. The DG was accompanied by Farrukh Jamal, Director BEOE.

Speaking on the occasion, DG BEOE Muhammad Tayyab noted the vast potential of Pakistani youth and underscored the importance of strong industry-academia linkages to channel their talent effectively. "The private sector is central to driving innovation, business

growth, and national development," said DG Tayyab. "BEOE is fully committed to supporting ICCI in this shared vision." He also announced the appointment of Umar Qureshi, Convener of Export of Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis at ICCI, as the focal person for coordination.

President ICCI Nasir Mansoor Qureshi highlighted the Chamber's recent initiatives, including the launch of an ERP system to improve service delivery to its members. He reiterated ICCI's role as a bridge between the government and private sector.

He also stressed the urgent need to equip youth with practical skills, enabling them to become job creators rather than job seekers. "Our goal should be to nurture a generation of entrepreneurs and enhance the global standing of the green passport," he remarked.

Muhammad Ishtiaq Qureshi, Coordinator to President FPCCI on Overseas Pakistanis and HR Department also contributed his insights for the purpose.

On this occasion Faheem Iqbal Chaudhry, Chairman Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association, Advisor to ICCI President Naqem Siddiqui and other were also present.

WHO
demands
global ban
on flavored
tobacco
products

ISLAMABAD: On World No Tobacco Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a strong call to governments worldwide to immediately ban all flavours in tobacco and nicotine products. The health agency warns that flavouring is a key tactic used to lure youth into addiction and is urging swift action to protect public health. The organization demanded ban on all flavours in tobacco and nicotine products including cigarettes, pouches, hookahs and e-cigarettes, to protect youth from addiction and disease. Flavours like menthol, bubble gum and cotton candy are masking the harshness of tobacco and nicotine products turning toxic products into youth-friendly bait.

Flavours not only make it harder to quit but have also been linked to serious lung diseases. Cigarettes, which still kill up to half of their users, also come in flavours or can have flavours added to them. "Flavours are fueling a new wave of addiction, and should be banned," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. "They undermine decades of progress in tobacco control. Without bold action, the global tobacco epidemic, already killing around 8 million people each year, will continue to be driven by addiction dressed up with appealing flavours.—DNA

Tax harassment
complaints to
get swift action:
RTO assures

RAWALPINDI, MAY 31 / DNA/ - Chief Commissioner of the Regional Tax Office (RTO) Tehmina Aamir, along with her team, visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and met with President Usman Shaikat. The visiting delegation included Additional Commissioner Riaz Khan, Commissioner Wilayat Khan, and Commissioner Haroon Masood. The session, chaired by RCCI President Usman Shaikat, featured comprehensive discussions on recent tax ordinances, frequent amendments to tax laws, the increasing number of SROs, challenges in the registration process, and issues concerning the installation of Point-of-Sale (POS) systems. Concerns raised by the business community were noted and addressed with due seriousness. Chief Commissioner Tehmina Aamir assured RCCI of the RTO's full cooperation and support in resolving issues related to tax notices, registration difficulties, and compliance challenges.—DNA

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Technology for harsh conditions: Ranchbot
transforming water management in agriculture

GHAZALA ANBREEN

IN the times where there are severe challenges faced by agriculture with a particular significance to water shortage and rural labour shortages, it becomes all the more expedient to make a mention of interventions offering practical solutions. The interview with Andrew Coppin, cofounder of Ranchbot Monitoring Solutions was conducted keeping in view the need of times to adopt smart technological solutions in agriculture. Andrew Coppin is a towering Australian agri-tech entrepreneur connected with revolutionary water management systems for remote agriculture. He has a vast experience in agriculture and has also been working in leadership roles and startup investment and policy advocacy. He is considered an important leader in the realms of technological use for sustainable farming. He has offered practical solutions faced by agricultural challenges on a worldwide

level, a world threatened by climate change. Ranchbot Monitoring Solutions is a primary agri-tech Australian firm with a profound understanding of rural community needs offering valuable solutions for saving livestock and improving water management. Coppin comes with new actionable strategies relating to remote water monitoring system. This can enhance livestock productivity and sustainability thereby leading to empower farmers. The ideas of Coppin center around technological advancement and a dedication to solve problems faced globally. Countries like Pakistan can learn a lot where there are challenges of water and labour constraints. Ranchbot offers timely solutions to such challenges. It is related with monitoring of water levels in distant areas. Coppin has a view that "We wanted to empower ranchers with peace of mind, while saving time and ensuring animals always have access to water." Ranchbots use satellite and GPS technology for delivering real time updates on the farmers phones. In

this manner the need for Manuel monitoring is dispensed with even in the areas which are very remote. They have taken into consideration especially the Australian outback rugged conditions while designing the water monitoring system. In such harsh conditions this system performs in a reliable manner and is able to tackle the environmental stress effectively. This system of water management is user friendly with a setup up to ten sensors and five attachment. During the interview Coppin made a resort to a success story where the Ranchbot technology he employs was helpful in combatting livestock dehydration by identifying a line break just before cattle were shipped. "The tech paid for itself within weeks," he notes, underscoring its practical and economic value for farmers. He envisages Ranchbot to be developing further into a full spectrum environmental monitoring tool like automated gate and valve control and having the traits like soil moisture tracking system and AI powered analytics. The objective he envisions is to increase efficiency on sustainable

grounds. Coppin is highly hopeful regarding Ranchbot's applicability in Pakistan battling water security issues, He believes that if such a system is adopted, it can cater for local needs and can equip farmers for conserving water, productivity of livestock and also can go a long way for reducing Manuel labor. He is in favor of Agri-tech entrepreneurs and comes with the advice, "Start with the problem, not the technology. Build tools that are practical, reliable, and scalable. And never forget, you're supporting the people who feed the world." It can be construed that Ranchbot is way beyond a product. It is especially helpful for farmers who fight with water challenges and labor shortages. Ranchbot is a modern example of how simple, thoughtful innovation can sustainably transform rural livelihoods all over the globe. It is the proof that if we adopt new technology and go for innovative, out of the box solutions then the most stringent challenges and harshest conditions can be overcome.

Musk on his way out

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-curiously 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 na ve. 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. For Musk, the break may offer a chance to recalibrate. For Trump, it’s business as usual: discard and move on. For the public, it serves as yet another cautionary tale of what happens when ambition ignores character in the pursuit of power.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 06 Issue:

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Pakistan one-China policy

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. While the Taiwan issue remains unresolved, military action remains a last resort that Beijing will likely avoid unless provoked. Pakistan, for its part, will continue to support China’s position diplomatically while advocating for peace and stability in the region.

Collective Defense in the Indo-Pacific

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The Philippines has also recalibrated its defense orientation in light of Chinese encroachments in the South China Sea. After years of accommodating Beijing, Manila has responded to persistent harassment and territorial violations with a sweeping modernization of its armed forces. Under Presidents Rodrigo Duterte and Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Philippines adopted a new defense strategy in 2024, emphasizing territorial defense, cyber capabilities and enhanced surveillance. The shift reflects growing alarm over China’s aggressive tactics, such as denying access to fishing grounds and disrupting resupply missions in contested waters

IN the evolving geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific, the proposition of a collective defense pact akin to NATO has become increasingly pertinent for the United States and its regional allies. Historically, the absence of such a multilateral security architecture in Asia was attributed to both strategic calculations and geopolitical limitations. However, the growing assertiveness of China, particularly under the leadership of Xi Jinping, has catalyzed a fundamental shift in the region’s threat perceptions and defense strategies. In this context, the article under analysis argues for the necessity and viability of a “Pacific Defense Pact,” encompassing the United States, Australia, Japan and the Philippines, as a strategic bulwark against Chinese expansionism. At the heart of this renewed strategic discourse lies China’s unabated pursuit of regional hegemony, framed under the ideological rubric of “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” Beijing’s intentions, as evidenced through its assertive actions in the Taiwan Strait, South China Sea and broader Indo-Pacific, reflect a desire to dismantle the existing U.S.-led security architecture and replace it with a China-centric order. If successful, such a reordering would drastically undermine the United States’ ability to secure its economic, strategic and technological interests in one of the world’s most dynamic regions. China’s expanding military capabilities lend credibility to these ambitions. As CIA Director William Burns disclosed in 2023, President Xi has mandated that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) be prepared to invade Taiwan by 2027. While Beijing may still harbor doubts regarding its capacity to execute such a military campaign, sustaining and amplifying these doubts is crucial to U.S. deterrence strategy. This entails convincing China that any aggression would incur prohibitive costs, thereby necessitating not only American military preparedness but also a more cohesive regional security posture. Over the past decade, the United States has moved from a primarily bilateral alliance structure in the Indo-Pacific to a more “networked” approach. This reconfiguration has involved upgrading security partnerships, repositioning mobile and lethal military assets and encouraging interoperability among allies. Unlike previous arrangements focused on exclusive bilateral commitments, the current strategy fosters intra-alliance cooperation, thereby multiplying deterrence capabilities and geopolitical cohesion. Nevertheless, these informal and ad hoc measures lack the structural robustness of a formal collective defense pact. To ensure long-term regional stability and a credible deterrence posture, a treaty-based alliance—tentatively termed the “Pacific Defense Pact”—is posited as an essential evolution. Initially comprising Australia, Japan, the Philippines and the United States, this coalition could expand as strategic and political conditions mature.

The notion of a multilateral security framework in Asia is not novel. In the aftermath of World War II, the United States established a network of bilateral alliances designed to contain Soviet influence, secure its military presence in East Asia and mitigate intra-regional tensions. These included security pacts with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia and Thailand. Unlike NATO, however, these arrangements never coalesced into a formal collective defense organization. This divergence was a result of several factors: the diverse geopolitical interests of regional actors, residual animosities stemming from historical conflicts and concerns about entrapment in a potential U.S.-Soviet confrontation. SEATO (the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), the only multilateral attempt during the Cold War, ultimately failed due to its lack of cohesion and mutual strategic purpose. It disbanded in 1977, serving as a cautionary example of the challenges associated with creating unified security structures in Asia. Contemporary developments, however, suggest that the barriers to multilateralism in Asia are eroding. Regional powers increasingly share a common threat perception centered on China’s revisionist behavior. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba has acknowledged the absence of a NATO-style alliance as a potential catalyst for regional conflict, emphasizing the urgency of institutionalizing collective defense mechanisms. Three primary trends underscore the feasibility of such a pact: first, the emergence of a shared strategic alignment in response to China’s rising military assertiveness; second, the intensification of security cooperation among U.S. allies; and third, a new emphasis on reciprocal responsibility-sharing, whereby U.S. partners play a more proactive role in maintaining regional security. Japan has undergone a profound strategic transformation. Despite deep economic interdependence with China, bilateral relations have been marred by unresolved historical grievances and ongoing territorial disputes, particularly over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. China’s increasingly aggressive maritime behavior, including the 2021 law permitting its coast guard to use force in contested waters, has heightened Tokyo’s threat perceptions. In response, Japan has loosened constitutional constraints on its military, committed to doubling defense expenditures to 2% of GDP and acquired offensive capabilities such as Tomahawk missiles. These developments signify Japan’s transition from a defensive posture to an active security contributor, as highlighted by political scientist Michael Green, who characterized Japan as “the most important net exporter of security in the Indo-Pacific.” The Philippines has also recalibrated its defense orientation in light of Chinese encroachments in the South China Sea. After years of accommodating Beijing, Manila has responded to persistent harassment and territorial violations with a sweeping modernization of its

armed forces. Under Presidents Rodrigo Duterte and Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the Philippines adopted a new defense strategy in 2024, emphasizing territorial defense, cyber capabilities and enhanced surveillance. The shift reflects growing alarm over China’s aggressive tactics, such as denying access to fishing grounds and disrupting resupply missions in contested waters. Australia, once a beneficiary of economic engagement with China, has witnessed a drastic deterioration in bilateral relations. China’s political interference, coercive economic measures and military provocations—including live-fire naval exercises in proximity to Australian shores—have prompted a strategic reassessment. Canberra’s 2024 defense strategy acknowledges that the traditional ten-year strategic warning window for conflict no longer applies. Consequently, Australia is investing heavily in long-range missiles, air defense systems and regional power projection. The Australian public has also internalized these shifts, with more than 70% perceiving China as a potential military threat, according to data from the Lowy Institute. The convergence of security interests among these key U.S. allies demonstrates not only a shared recognition of the China challenge but also a willingness to forge deeper military coordination. This alignment has been manifest in trilateral and quadrilateral initiatives such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and AUKUS. However, the authors argue that these frameworks, while valuable, are insufficient in isolation. A legally binding mutual defense treaty would offer a stronger deterrent by codifying the commitment that an attack on one member constitutes an attack on all. Political obstacles remain. A potential Trump administration’s skepticism toward alliances could hinder formal treaty negotiations. Yet the article maintains that bipartisan defense cooperation and continuity of military coordination have endured in the Indo-Pacific, even amid broader political tensions. Thus, even in the absence of immediate executive initiative, defense institutions in the United States and its allied nations should continue laying the groundwork for future formalization. The evolving strategic environment in Asia, marked by China’s growing militarism and revisionist agenda, necessitates a paradigm shift in regional security architecture. The article makes a compelling case for transitioning from ad hoc partnerships to a formal collective defense arrangement. Drawing lessons from both the success of NATO and the failures of earlier Asian security frameworks, it contends that the time is ripe for a Pacific Defense Pact. Such an alliance would institutionalize shared threat perceptions, enhance strategic interoperability and ensure a credible deterrent against Chinese aggression. In doing so, it would help preserve regional stability, uphold the rules-based international order and secure U.S. strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific for generations to come.

PAF Etches Decisive Air Dominance in the South Asian Skies

Dr Naveed Khaliq Ansaree

The failed Indian military intimidation that lasted four days, ended in a US-brokered uncomfortable ceasefire at India’s request, setting several new precedents. For the first time in aviation history, the aerial combat shattered the doctrine that “Air Dominance is money-deep.” Under the watchful eyes of its adversaries, the PAF successfully demonstrated how its low-cost combat platforms like J-10C and JF-17 Block III could outperform several of the West’s flagship Rafales and Russian Su-30s; by employing the superiority of PAF air doctrine...

PAKISTAN Air Force—the pride of the nation etched a new textbook of the “Decisive Air Dominance,” and a notion of an invisible kill-chain for the Indian Air Force (IAF) on the night of 7th May 2025, and earning the fame as an “Undisputed King of the Skies.” The PAF not only redefined the aerial duel but marked a strategic watershed in the archives of Beyond Visual Range Air to Air Missile (BVRAAM) combat that mainly unfolded near the Line of Control in Kashmir involving 70 to 75 state-of-the-art combat aircraft of the IAF pitched against 40 to 42 of the PAF. The numbers heavily favoured and the initiative rested with the IAF as it had the freedom of choice regarding the timing, place, direction and weight of attack. Pakistan Air Force in an unprecedented, spectacular and data-proven air combat of mettle and nerves downed three Rafales, one Su-30, one Mirage-2000, one Mig-29 and a multimillion-dollar drone “Heron” within a span of an hour all without losing any of its own. Such a splendid aerial victory over an aggressor many times larger is unrecorded and unheard of in purely Defensive Counter Air operations, to which the PAF had restrained itself on that fateful night. The loss of three 4.5 generation French Rafales to Chinese PL-15 BVRAAMs fired from J-10C has not only recorded the first-ever confirmed kill against a Rafale but also proven that Chinese weapon systems can perform even better when employed professionally. The Rafale which Indian Prime Minister Modi had inducted as a technological overmatch and a game-changer in the arsenal of the IAF, has instead added insult to IAF’s injury. The failed Indian military intimidation that lasted four days, ended in a US-brokered uncomfortable ceasefire at India’s request, setting several new precedents. For the first time in aviation history, the aerial combat shattered the doctrine that “Air Dominance is mon-

ey-deep.” Under the watchful eyes of its adversaries, the PAF successfully demonstrated how its low-cost combat platforms like J-10C and JF-17 Block III could outperform several of the West’s flagship Rafales and Russian Su-30s; by employing the superiority of PAF air doctrine, quality of training, real-time sensor-shooter fusion and skilful integration of electronic warfare. Overnight, PAF had buried the notion of financial superiority beneath the weight of its tactical geometry of brilliant game-plans and full-spectrum fusion of technology, along with PAF’s kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities into Multi Domain Operations as envisioned by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, a lynchpin that enabled the PAF to achieve a splendid aerial victory against the IAF. Pakistan Air Force who had mastered the Chinese technology beyond expectations emerged as an undisputed victor of the South Asia skies, making French technology lose credibility, leaving Russian in awe, Israelis embarrassing, and shaming India in the comity of modern air forces. The myth regarding superiority of French, Russian and Israeli technology was shattered in the first few hours of the aerial battle on the fateful night. Chinese dragon smiled as its arsenal was battle-tested and advertised for free; sky-rocketing the stocks of Chinese aviation industry to new heights overnight. The recent Indian aggression has introduced new dimensions while significantly lowering the thresholds for hot war by several notches in the security calculus of South Asia. India which had already set a precedent of employing its premier military instrument against non-military targets, has now escalated tensions by adding missiles and drones into its war strategy crossing the international border. Both sides may now feel free to utilise their entire military instrument and wherewithal in a crisis situation. Above all, by declaring any future terrorist attack as an “act of war” India

has dangerously lowered the threshold of all-out war, blurring the distinction between a ceasefire and the pre-hostilities phase in a future war. Any terrorist incident in India, whether home grown, foreign-sponsored or a false-flag, could push both the countries to the brink of a hot war. While the severity of the threat has gone up few notches but the threshold of hot war with Pakistan has plunged even further, making a nuclear catastrophe loom large over South Asia and the neighbouring regions; is the world really listening? Through a military volley of shock and awe, India expected Pakistan to end up in a national-mourning but it turned out otherwise. Battlefields don’t lie. Having already lost several of IAF’s flagship combat aircraft, the S-400 air defence system, Israeli drones, and control over the skies, India was unable to withstand the might, discipline, tactical brilliance and weight of the PAF precision strikes. Confronted with data-proven losses, imminent destruction and gripped by panic, urgency and fear of escalation into all out war with Pakistan, Indian leadership conceded and tacitly reached out to the global players for help through back-door diplomacy. India’s hurried acceptance of the US-brokered ceasefire appeared more of a tell-tail of a “guised-surrender,” making India lose its credibility as “Counter-weight to China and Net-Security-Provider.” The strategic blunder that India committed, and the aerial victory that the PAF had achieved not only shook the West by exposing the vulnerability of untouchable Rafales (a key pillar of EU’s air strategy) but also etched a decisive air dominance in the skies of South Asia.

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Briefs

Indian proxies responsible for terrorist...

FROM PAGE 01

and constructive role of the elders, the PM reiterated the persistent need for engaging at the grassroots level and ensuring that terrorists find no social space. This was crucial for the success of counter terrorism efforts and for the long-term peace and stability. Prime Minister said that the enemies of peace will find no space to operate within Pakistan. Our message to them is clear: the Government, Armed Forces, LEAs and Administrative apparatus, with complete support of the Pakistan, will take the Nation's fight against terrorism to its logical conclusion, defeating terrorism in a decisive manner." Highlighting series of monumental developmental packages for prosperity in Balochistan, the PM emphasized the need for ensuring trickle down effect of government initiatives to the populace. The PM He praised the people of Balochistan for their historic role in safeguarding national unity and urged them to remain vigilant against foreign-backed subversion and sabotage orchestrated and sponsored by India. While interacting with tribal elders Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir said, "This Indian sponsored proxy war is no longer hidden, it is an open malicious act of terrorism waged on our people, our progress, and our peace. We have concrete proof of India's hand behind terrorist networks operating in Balochistan. These nefarious attempts of the enemy will fail. The Pakistan Army, with the unwavering support of the nation and the brave Baloch people, will confront and crush every enemy, foreign or domestic, that dares to challenge our sovereignty." Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir emphasized that the Pakistan Army remains fully alert and prepared to respond decisively to any threat. He reiterated that peace in Balochistan is non-negotiable and that the future of Pakistan is directly linked to a stable, prosperous Balochistan. PM and Field Marshal also lauded the bravery and resilience of security forces & LAEs operating in Balochistan. Prime Minister assured full cooperation and support to the families of Shuhada and assured them that terrorists, their abettors and facilitators will not be spared". The Jirga concluded with a unanimous pledge from tribal elders to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government of Pakistan and Armed Forces, reaffirming their commitment to the security, stability, and development of Balochistan. Earlier, Prime Minister of Pakistan also visited Command & Staff College Quetta and addressed Student Officers and Faculty of Command and Staff College. Prime Minister address reflects the government's deep commitment to strengthening Pakistan's defence institutions amidst evolving regional and internal security dynamics. During his interaction, the Prime Minister highlighted the critical importance of professional excellence, operational readiness, and strategic foresight in the face of emerging and hybrid threats, especially in sensitive regions like Balochistan, where Indian sponsored terrorist proxies target our people and aim to disrupt our progress and prosperity.

Daesh operative arrested...

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The engagement reaffirmed the deep-rooted, historic, and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Turkiye, anchored in shared values, mutual respect, and a common vision for progress and prosperity. Pakistan has been fighting the terrorism for decades and always cooperated and promoted to eliminate the menace on regional and international levels. In March, US President Donald Trump, in a rare public gesture of appreciation, thanked Pakistan for assisting the arrest of Daesh-K commander Shareefullah — the person responsible for killing 13 US service members during the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. The 2021 Abbey Gate bombing killed 13 US service members and approximately 170 Afghan civilians during the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The militant Daesh group had claimed responsibility for the killings.

Governor KP calls for collective action to unlock Pakistan's Sports brilliance

Faisal Karim Kundi congratulated the newly elected RISJA officials and said that those who have come through the electoral process will play an important role in promoting sports journalism

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has emphasized that Pakistan possesses immense sports talent and expressed his willingness to welcome constructive proposals for the development of sports in the province. He expressed these views during a meeting at the Governor House with the newly elected office-bearers of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA), led by their newly elected President, Abu Bakar Bin Tallat. Faisal Karim Kundi congratulated the newly elected RISJA officials and said that those who have come through the electoral process will play an important role in promoting sports journalism. He reiterated that the media plays a key role in the development of sports in the country. "Youth are our future, and everyone must contribute to engaging them in sports," he said. "There is no shortage of talent in Pakistan, and media plays a crucial role in bringing this talent to the forefront.



I hope RISJA will also promote the talented athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." The Governor further stated that sports journalists project the positive image of the country globally.

"We will welcome all positive suggestions for sports development in KP," he said. Faisal Karim Kundi also assured the RISJA delegation of full cooperation.

The RISJA delegation, led by Abu Bakar Bin Tallat, included Abdul Mohi Shah, Shakeel Awan, Nasir Naqvi, Kiran Khan, Arfa Feroze Zaki, Shakir Abbasi, and Afzal Javed.

President, Prime Minister hail Arshad Nadeem's Asian gold medal win

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on

Saturday felicitated Pakistan's top javelin thrower, Arshad Nadeem on clinching a gold medal in the Asian Athletics Championships 2025, currently un-

derway in Gumi, South Korea. The president said that Arshad Nadeem had once again brought laurels to the country in javelin throwing as he showed superb per-

formance in throughout the championship. The president and the prime minister congratulated the nation his historic win, separate press releases of President Press Wing and PM Media Office said. The entire nation was proud of Arshad Nadeem's feat, they said and prayed for his further achievements. The prime minister said that Arshad Nadeem was continuing his journey of success, further enhancing prestige of the country's flag. He said that Arshad's hard work, passion and brilliant success was a guiding precedent for the young athletes. Arshad Nadeem's best throw of 86.40m helped him claim his maiden Asian Championships medal.

Ayaz Sadiq hails Arshad Nadeem's record-breaking performance

Arshad Nadeem's stellar performance has uplifted the spirit of the entire country. His hard work and consistent excellence are truly commendable

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended his heartfelt congratulations to Pakistan's celebrated athlete, Arshad Nadeem on his exceptional performance at the Asian Athletics Championship (AAC). In his felicitation message on Saturday, the Speaker lauded Arshad Nadeem's remarkable achievement, saying that his dedication, perseverance and unwavering commitment have once again brought pride and honor to the nation. "Arshad Nadeem's stellar performance has uplifted the spirit of the entire country. His hard work and consistent excellence are truly commendable," said the Speaker. He said that Arshad Nadeem stands as a beacon of inspiration for the youth of Pakistan and is a true embodiment of national pride. "By securing this significant victory on the international stage in South Korea, Arshad Nadeem has not only earned a distinguished place in the realm of athletics but has also captured the admiration and affection of the people of Pakistan," he added. The Speaker expressed his best wishes for Arshad Nadeem's continued success and expressed hope that he would persist in bringing further accolades to Pakistan through his relentless determination and sportsmanship. — DNA



Djokovic races into French Open fourth round in 'fun night to be in Paris'

PARIS: Novak Djokovic breezed past Filip Misolic to book his spot in the last 16 at Roland Garros on Saturday, but the 24-time Grand Slam winner had to battle with the Champions League final for the crowd's attention in Paris. The three-time French Open champion needed just over two hours to beat his 153rd-ranked Austrian opponent 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in the night session on Court Philippe Chatrier. Djokovic had previously joked that he was not keen on potentially playing the late match on centre court on Saturday as it would prevent him watching Paris Saint-Germain take on Inter Milan in the Champions League final in Munich. Football fan Djokovic may have missed the majority of PSG's 5-0 demolition of Inter, but the Serb told reporters after his win the final made its presence felt on court in Paris. "I don't know if it was good for me to get this scheduled slot, because it was interesting, the crowd was really following the (football) game," said Djokovic. "And I could hear once they (PSG) scored, and it was way too many times that they were celebrating. I was like, 'Wow, there's a lot of goals from Paris' and 'What's going on?'. "So now I heard it's 5-0, so it's quite a result, to be honest," added the AC Milan supporter. — Agencies

'China-Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation of multiple strategic significances'

DNA

BEIJING: In the current complex landscape of regional politics and economy, the cooperation among China, Pakistan and Afghanistan holds significant strategic significance. China, Pakistan and Afghanistan are geographically adjacent, and their historical and cultural exchanges have a long history. Under the current circumstances, trilateral cooperation is conducive to the peace and development of each country, the region and even the world at large. These views were expressed by Prof Cheng Xizhong, Senior Research Fellow at the Charhar Institute in a statement here on Sunday. He opined that from the geopolitical perspective, China-Pakistan-Afghanistan cooperation is conducive to the regional geopolitical landscape. Afghanistan, located in the heart of Asia, serves as a key link connecting Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia. The cooperation among China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, especially the extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can help Afghanistan gradually transform from a landlocked state into an important node of regional connectivity. By constructing infrastructure projects such as the Peshawar-Kabul Expressway and the Gwadar Port-Herat Railway, Afghanistan can open up an Indian Ocean outlet through Pakistan, promote its rich mineral resources to the international market, and integrate into the global economic system.

This can not only change Afghanistan's marginal position in the regional economy, but also make the economic ties among South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East closer, he added. Prof Cheng said that economic complementarity serves as an important foundation for cooperation among China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and is also a powerful driving force to promote the common development of the three countries. As the world's second largest economy, China has significant advantages in terms of capital, technology and industrial system. Pakistan boasts a huge labour market, abundant natural resources and important ports connecting the Indian Ocean. Afghanistan, on the other hand, is endowed with rich, undeveloped mineral resources and has a certain development potential in agriculture. In terms of trade, trilateral cooperation can reduce trade costs. China has already created hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars in revenue for Afghanistan through the pine nut trade. In the future, with the deepening of agricultural cooperation and the expansion of trade scale in industrial manufactured goods, daily necessities, etc., it will be possible to further achieve complementary advantages and form a mutually beneficial and win-win trade pattern, he added. The Chinese scholar said that in addition, cooperation in infrastructure construction and improvement of transportation networks can create favorable conditions for regional trade and investment, attract more international capital inflows, and promote regional industrialization and urbanization processes.

President Zardari for forging stronger bilateral relations with Bangladesh

ABID RAZA

LAHORE, President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan intends to forge strong bilateral relations with Bangladesh in all areas including commerce, trade, sports, culture and people-to-people ties. Speaking at a reception hosted to Bangladesh and Pakistan Men's cricket teams at the Governor's House here on Sunday, he said the Pakistan government is trying to work together to build a stronger relationship, adding that it cannot happen overnight but we need to keep investing in people and come up with solutions to take our relations to new heights. The Bangladesh cricket team is in Pakistan to play a three-match T20I series and is due to play the third and last T20I on Sunday night. Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Muhammad Iqbal Hussain, BCB cricket Operations Head Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, Advisor to Chair-

man PCB Amir Mir, team officials, and members of Pakistan and Bangladesh cricket teams were present. President Asif Ali Zardari said Pakistan businessmen wish to collaborate with Bangladeshi businesses,

and its people, adding that the Bengali nation is one of the oldest and richest nation in the region and has a proud history. He also recognized the progress made by Bangladesh over the past 50 years, adding Bangladesh

to progress and prosper via a vis exports business and Pakistan will contribute as much as it can. Reminiscing on the shared history and pangs of separation as brothers when the two brothers parted ways in

emphasizing the need for reconciliation and mutual understanding—a message that resonated deeply in his address. Recognizing transformative power of cricket as a sport which helps in uniting people throughout

for a long time. He fondly recalled his student days at the Pitaro Cadet College and the lasting friendships he made during those days, adding that he was in close contact with Bangladeshi college friends even today. President Zardari reassured the Bangladesh envoy to Pakistan of his full support in furthering the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries. The President hailed the Bangladesh tigers for their immense talent and wished them a great future. He also lavished on the young Pakistan team and expressed the hope it will do well on the international front. "The world is young, you are young and it's your time. We've seen our time, this is your time. All of you are going to see the future and I bless you and I hope that you'll have an eventful good future," President Zardari maintained. President Asif Zardari also had group photos with both the teams while he gave away mementos to the officials of the visiting Bangladesh team. President Asif Ali Zardari was also presented a memento by Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi.



adding that the Pakistani government is also interested in working with the Bangladeshi government in the long run. "We have a bright future as two nations", the President remarked. President Zardari eulogized the rich history of Bangladesh

is a success story in the world both financially as well as in human resource capital and everybody knows. "Allah has given you strength financially and in the form of manpower," he added. President Zardari said Bangladesh was destined

1971, President Zardari said the younger generation was not aware of the pain we had gone through as the older generation, adding that we had broken each other's hearts in the past and there was a need to mend the hearts today,

the world, he said "I am happy to host you all in Pakistan, in Lahore. And I hope that there will be many such trips". President Zardari also expressed the desire to visit Bangladesh, adding that he had not been to Dhaka

Uzbek-Afghan-Pak railway...

FROM PAGE 01

Ultimately, the telephone conversation between Ishaq Dar and Amir Khan Muttaqi represents more than just a symbolic exchange—it reflects a recalibration of strategic priorities, a renewed hope for regional integration, and a cautious optimism for a more peaceful, economically interlinked South and Central Asia.

Outcry in India after top general admits...

FROM PAGE 01

accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government of "misleading the nation" and calling for an urgent special session of parliament to address what it described as a grave breach of public trust and national accountability. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge led the charge, posting a sharp critique on X (formerly Twitter), saying: "In the wake of the remarks made by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in Singapore in an interview, there are some very important questions which need to be asked." "These can only be asked if a special session of the parliament is immediately convened. The Modi govt has misled the nation. The fog of war is now clearing," he said.

Bilawal-led delegation arrives in US

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António Guterres and the President of the UN General Assembly Philomen Yang. They will also brief members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and engage with the UN Correspondents Association. Following their engagements in New York, the delegation will proceed to Washington, DC, on June 3, where they plan to meet US officials, including members of Congress and representatives from think tanks, to discuss bilateral relations and regional security concerns. This diplomatic initiative follows a ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan on May 10, brokered with the assistance of the United States, after a period of heightened military tensions. The Pakistani delegation's visit underscores Islamabad's commitment to peaceful resolution and proactive engagement with international stakeholders. The delegation's itinerary also includes plans to visit European capitals to further articulate Pakistan's position on the regional situation and strengthen diplomatic ties. This concerted diplomatic effort reflects Pakistan's strategy to address regional challenges through dialogue and international cooperation.

PSG clinch first historic European Cup victory with 5-0 defeat to Inter Milan

MUNICH: Paris St Germain have finally won their first European Cup — and they did it in style. The French champions crushed Inter Milan 5-0 in the Champions League final, putting on a brilliant display from start to finish on Saturday. Teenager Desha Doue scored twice, helping PSG lift the trophy their fans and owners have been dreaming of for years. It was a night to remember as the team dominated the match and showed why they truly deserved to be champions of Europe. After losing the final to Bayern Munich in 2020, Luis Enrique's PSG side, who teetered on the brink of elimination in the league phase this season, finally claimed the trophy their big-spending Qatari owners have craved. PSG put on a masterclass which the more experienced Inter side had no answer to, scoring twice in the opening 20 minutes through former Inter defender Achraf Hakimi and Doue. The 19-year-old Doue was on target again in the 63rd minute, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia scored 10 minutes later and substitute Senny Mayulu netted three minutes from time to seal the biggest winning margin in a Champions League final. — Agencies

Briefs

**Istanbul's
'suitcase trade'
stalls as African
merchants face
crackdown**

ISTANBUL: Porters roam the narrow streets of Laleli in central Istanbul carrying parcels ready for shipment to customers all over the world. The maze of alleys that lead down to the Sea of Marmara have long been the center of the "suitcase trade" to sub-Saharan Africa, a route through which merchants carry goods back and forth in their baggage. But Laleli's informal shipping scene, once a bustling hub of cross-continental trade, is now facing growing pressure from rising costs and tougher residency rules imposed by Turkish authorities. African traders, who helped drive demand for Turkish goods through the "kargo" system – small-scale shipping services between Turkish wholesalers and buyers across Africa – say business has slumped, even as official export figures continue to rise. While some still make round trips, most trade now moves through shipping services. For agents like Fadi Bayero – a Cameroonian who runs a kargo business that ships clothing, cosmetics and home textiles from Turkey to clients across Africa – business is slow. Turkish products have a very good reputation in Africa, he said. "Before this room was filled to the ceiling. –APP

**Moroccan
women
embroider 'art
with purpose'**

SIDI RBAT, Morocco: In a small village on the coast of southern Morocco, women gather in a house to create collaborative works of textile art, and also earn a living. Several hunch over large canvases, embroidering their latest piece at the women-only workshop, in the village of 400 people. Some of their works have been shown internationally. "This project has changed my life," said Hanane Ich-bikili, a 28-year-old former nursing student turned project creative director. "And yet I had never held an embroidery needle before," she told AFP. Just 19 percent of Moroccan women hold steady jobs, according to official figures, and in rural areas they are particularly affected by poverty, unpaid labor and a lack of opportunity. An artist with roots in both Morocco and France has tried to make a difference. Margaux Derhy founded the workshop in 2022 in her father's native village of Sidi R'bat, around 70 kilometers (45 miles) south of Agadir, to fulfil her "dream to make art with purpose. –APP

**India sees
tenfold rise
in COVID-19
cases**

NEW DELHI: India has reported a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases over the past 10 days, official data showed on Sunday, with new, more transmissible virus variants believed to be driving the surge. A new wave of infections emerged in parts of Asia last month, especially Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Thailand. The new spread of the coronavirus that a few years ago brought the world to a standstill has been linked to JN.1, a highly transmissible variant of the omicron strain of COVID-19. It emerged in late 2023 and spread globally through early 2024, becoming one of the dominant variants in many countries. India's current case-load is 3,395 as of Sunday, according to Ministry of Health data – up significantly from the previous official count of 257 on May 22. The ministry confirmed last week it had detected across the country two subvariants of JN.1 – LF.7 and NB.1.8.1 – which spread faster but are believed to be mild. "The majority of those are mild cases, just like seasonal flu, and we are not seeing any significant admission or emergency visits due to COVID-19. Right now, the situation is under control. Any flu that starts spreading spreads fast like wildfire," Dr. Nikhil Modi, pulmonology and respiratory medicine specialist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in New Delhi, told Arab News.

Pak signs charter as GWO launches operations to address challenges

"Pakistan along with other founding members signed the GWO charter, formally committing to the organisation's shared vision of strengthening international cooperation on water scarcity, sustainable resource management, and climate resilience, particularly in arid and water-stressed regions," the statement said

RIYADH: The Global Water Organisation (GWO) has officially launched its operations from its headquarters in Riyadh, with founding member states, including Pakistan, signing its charter. The newly established organisation – formed under the leadership of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and the patronage of the Saudi environment minister – aims to enhance international collaboration to address the growing pressures on global water systems. Aside from Pakistan, the founding countries of the GWO include Kuwait, Qatar, Spain, Greece, Senegal and Mauritania. According to a statement from the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), the launching event "marked a major milestone in fostering international collaboration to address global water challenges." Federal Minister for Water Resources, Mian Muhammad Mueen Wattoo, represented Pakistan at the invitation of Saudi Arabia's Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Mohsen Al-Fadley, to share the country's perspective. "Pakistan along with other founding members signed the GWO charter, formally committing to the organisation's shared vision of strengthening international cooperation on water scarcity, sustainable resource management, and climate resilience, particularly in arid and water-stressed regions," the statement said. Pakistan also offered



to establish a GWO sub-office in Pakistan, the statement added. In December 2024, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the leadership and initiative of the crown prince to establish the GWO. "We are proud to join this initiative, as one of its founding members and look forward to providing, all possible support, in achieving its important goals," he had said while addressing the One Water Summit on the Margins of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Riyadh. According to the Saudi Press Agency, the founding nations of the GWO concluded their inaugural meeting in Riyadh on May 28 by signing the organisation's founding charter, "cementing a

shared vision for achieving global water resource sustainability and addressing escalating challenges facing this vital sector." The charter signatories seek to address growing challenges facing the water sector by promoting social, economic, health, and environmental development to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation for all and achieve sustainable management. The GWO represents a pivotal step in addressing one of humanity's most pressing challenges, as water scarcity affects billions worldwide and climate change intensifies pressure on global water resources, it said. The charter signatories emphasised the importance of achiev-

ing the organisation's objectives, which represent a new milestone for international cooperation in water management. The participants underscored the significance of this groundbreaking initiative in fostering collaborative solutions to water-related challenges. The founding nations stressed the importance of adopting a unified strategic vision and mission focused on water resource sustainability and promoting global progress toward practical solutions for water-related environmental and climate challenges. The agreement establishes enhanced cooperation and coordination among member states to protect water resources in terms of both quantity

and quality, ensuring continued water supplies for future generations. The organisation called for strengthening partnerships with non-member countries, United Nations organisations, international financial institutions, and all relevant stakeholders to support the organisation's objectives. The members emphasised establishing best practices and international standards in water management while enhancing knowledge and methodological exchange between countries. The meeting highlighted the importance of research, encouraging innovation and development in sustainable technologies, and providing joint mechanisms and programmes. –Agencies

Private sector's strategic budget input to revitalize economic landscape

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has put forward a comprehensive set of proposals aimed at revitalizing Pakistan's economy by addressing key challenges faced by the industrial and trade sectors. These recommendations, developed after extensive consultations with stakeholders nationwide, focus on structural reforms, investment promotion, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and policy stability to ensure sustained economic growth. Addressing a media briefing here at PIAF office on Sunday, BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar stressed that the country is facing serious economic headwinds which require immediate and sustained government intervention. "Our economy is grappling with inflationary pressures, high interest rates, energy shortages, and regulatory bottlenecks. To overcome these hurdles, the upcoming fiscal plan must prioritize industrial growth and export-led development," he said. One of the foremost demands from the BMP is the overhaul of the taxation system. The panel advocates for reducing the general sales tax (GST) rate and simplifying tax procedures to enhance compliance and ease the financial burden on businesses and consumers. "Pakistan's over-reliance on indirect taxation increases costs throughout the supply chain, which ultimately affects consumers and stifles industrial expansion," Nisar remarked. He further pointed out the need to broaden the tax net by bringing informal businesses into the formal economy, thus enhancing revenue without additional strain on existing taxpayers. The panel also emphasizes rationalizing customs duties, especially on raw materials and capital goods essential for manufacturing. Lowering tariffs will reduce input costs, encourage local production, and increase competitiveness in regional and global markets. "If we want to see a thriving manufacturing base, affordable access to inputs is crucial," he added. Energy pricing remains a critical concern for businesses. The BMP calls for aligning electricity and gas tariffs with regional benchmarks to improve Pakistan's industrial competitiveness. High energy costs have eroded profit margins and deterred investments in manufacturing and export-oriented sectors. "Without a competitive energy policy, Pakistan risks losing its edge to neighboring countries that offer cheaper power and gas," Nisar warned. Small and medium enterprises, which constitute the backbone of Pakistan's economy, have been disproportionately affected by economic challenges. BMP's proposals include introducing specialized credit facilities with low markup rates, collateral-free loans, and a tax holiday for at least five years for newly established SMEs. Such measures would promote entrepreneurship, generate employment, and foster innovation. "SMEs are not only job creators but also drivers of economic diversification. Supporting them must be a national priority," Nisar said. To further improve the business environment, the BMP suggests creating a one-window operation that integrates multiple regulatory approvals into a single streamlined process. This would cut red tape, reduce bureaucratic delays, and accelerate project implementation. –DNA

FRIA seeks targeted relief for SMEs and industry in budget

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has urged the federal government to provide targeted relief for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and manufacturing units in the upcoming Federal Budget 2025-26, warning that without immediate reforms, industrial stagnation could deepen further. FRIA Chairman Shahbaz Aslam stressed the need for an industry-focused budget, proposing key interventions to lower production costs, streamline taxation, and ensure reliable access to energy at affordable rates. "Pakistan's industrial base, particularly SMEs, is under immense pressure due to inflation, high energy prices, and weak domestic demand. The upcoming budget must be designed to reverse this trend by creating space for businesses to grow," he stated. He highlighted that despite SMEs forming over 90% of business entities, contributing around 40% to the GDP, and employing a major share of the urban workforce, they remain underrepresented in fiscal policy planning. "Without targeted incentives for this sector, economic recovery will remain elusive," he added. Shahbaz Aslam recommended a reduction in electricity and gas tariffs for industries, especially SMEs, along with immediate automation and clearance of sales tax refunds to ease cash flow issues. He called for a cut in sales tax and corporate tax rates to incentivize compliance and broaden the tax base. –APP

Business community proposals must shape budget: PIAF

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has called on the federal government to ensure that the upcoming Federal Budget 2025-26 reflects the ground realities of trade and industry by incorporating the proposals submitted by the business community. In a press statement issued after a comprehensive consultative session with key stakeholders from various industrial sectors, PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol emphasized that ignoring the input of genuine taxpayers and industry stakeholders would result in yet another missed opportunity to revive economic activity, generate employment, and stabilize the national economy. PIAF senior vice chairman Nasrullah Mughal and vice chairman Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary said that chambers of commerce, trade associations, and industrial forums across the country have submitted well-researched, data-backed budget proposals focused on tax reforms, SME development, energy cost rationalization, and investment facilitation. "The government must not treat these suggestions as ceremonial," Nasrullah Mughal stressed. "These proposals come directly from the people who are running businesses, creating jobs, and contributing to the national exchequer. If these voices are ignored, policymaking will remain disconnected from ground realities." Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary pointed out that the current economic challenges—low growth, high inflation, weak exports, and stagnant investment—can only be overcome through a collaborative approach between the government and the private sector. "The budget must not be seen merely as a fiscal document—it should serve as a roadmap for industrial growth and economic revival," he said. Faheem Saigol urged the Ministry of Finance to align the budget with the needs of the productive sectors instead of relying on indirect taxation and import-based revenue. "If we want sustainable growth, we need to shift from taxing consumption to facilitating production. Supporting industry means supporting employment, innovation, and exports," he emphasized. The PIAF Chairman reiterated that high utility costs, policy uncertainty, and heavy taxation have severely hampered the business environment, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which make up more than 90% of total businesses in Pakistan and employ over 80% of the non-agricultural workforce. "We have proposed a reduction in sales tax and customs duties on essential industrial inputs, alongside reforms aimed at simplifying tax compliance for documented businesses. SMEs should be encouraged, not burdened," he added. Saigol highlighted that the lack of affordable financing remains a major hurdle for the SME sector. "We have recommended that the government introduce collateral-free loan schemes, reduce markup rates, and offer risk-sharing mechanisms to banks to improve access to credit," he said. In addition, he called for uninterrupted power and gas supply at regionally competitive tariffs to support export-oriented and value-added industries. "Energy pricing and reliability are critical issues. –DNA

Aerial dominance - Pakistan's sky supremacy

TANVEER HUSSAIN



WHAT made this war particularly remarkable and shocking for India, was Pakistan's response. In the past, Pakistan had always tried to avoid war as much as possible. In response to Indian threats, we would knock on the doors of the United Nations, complain to Arab countries, or appeal to the U.S. and Europe, even looking toward Russia. But this time, breaking away from tradition, Pakistan decided to respond to a brick with a stone. Historically, whenever India has gained power, it has

tended to overstep its bounds. Indian politicians and journalists begin spewing venom against Pakistan. When Prime Minister Vajpayee conducted nuclear tests, the Indian government and media began humiliating Pakistan, even issuing open threats on TV channels. But when Pakistan conducted its own nuclear tests and leveled the score, India was stunned into silence. Similarly, when India purchased fighter jets from France, the rhetoric of hatred and bias against Pakistan intensified among Indian politicians and retired military officials on TV. The Indian media began treating these French jets as if they were Aladdin's magic lamp that would help them dominate all of Asia. Narendra Modi, a symbol of hatred and bias against Muslims, not only started threatening Pakistan but also began issuing open warnings to China. India mistook Pakistan's desire for peace as a sign of weakness and, in May 2025, made a huge blunder. Modi, in a fit of madness, decided to launch an attack on Pakistan, assuming that Pakistan's

poor economic situation would force it to negotiate under Indian terms to avoid war. He thought Pakistan would appeal to the U.S. or the United Nations. But that didn't happen. Instead, Pakistan responded to the Indian attack with crushing force, shooting down five Indian warplanes including three Rafales within the first hour. The fall of the Rafales shattered Indian morale. May 10 became one of the most important days in South Asian history. To save face, India launched drone and missile attacks on Pakistani air bases, but Pakistan's response was so fierce that it shocked both friends and foes. Following the Indian attacks, Pakistan's pride, the JF-17 Thunder jets, crossed the international border and completely destroyed the S-400 air defense system that India had bought from Russia for \$1.5 billion. Pakistani cyber experts hacked into India's entire digital and defense systems, rendering them useless. They shut down 70% of India's grid stations, plunging the entire country into darkness. With the enemy's

defense system neutralized, Pakistan unleashed a barrage of Al-Fatah missiles. Along with the destruction of BrahMos missile storage facilities, dozens of Indian air bases, supply stores, and defense installations were completely obliterated. Because India's air force and missile systems were grounded due to the cyber attack, Pakistani jets dominated the skies over the subcontinent. While Indian TV anchors and defense analysts descended into hysteria, claiming Indian forces had occupied various Pakistani cities, the outcome of the war had already been decided. The Indian government and military leadership, overwhelmed and demoralized, were licking their wounds. As Pakistani strikes intensified, India urgently sought help from the U.S. President. Although President Trump had declared a day earlier that he would not interfere in the conflict, he could not tolerate India's defeat. The U.S. had always supported India, hoping to strengthen it as a counterbalance to China. Trump quickly began efforts to

broker a ceasefire between the two nations. Before that, India's female military spokesperson had already stated that if Pakistan halted its attacks, India would be ready for a ceasefire. Pakistan, which had always advocated for peace, responded positively. After receiving a serious beating in the war, India came to its senses and accepted the ceasefire immediately to avoid further humiliation. Thus, even if temporary, peace returned to the region. Despite having a large military, a strong economy, vast resources, and foreign reserves, India could not stand up to Pakistan in this brief war. India must realize that instead of promoting hatred toward its neighbors, it should pursue peace. It should end the oppression in Kashmir and grant Kashmiris their rightful rights as per United Nations resolutions, so that lasting peace can be established in the region. In this war, Pakistan's allies China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan openly supported Pakistan, which is commendable. As Pakistanis, we are grateful to our friends.

**Arab ministers
denounce
Israeli
'arrogance'
over blocking
West Bank
visit**

CAIRO: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said the Israeli government's refusal to allow Arab ministers to the occupied West Bank showed its "extremism and rejection of peace." His statements came during a joint press conference with counterparts from Jordan, Egypt, and Bahrain in Amman. The Arab ministers condemned what they described as the "arrogant" Israeli decision to ban them from visiting the West Bank and its rejection of any peace efforts. Members of the Ministerial Committee assigned by the Joint Extraordinary Arab-Islamic Summit on Gaza met with Jordan's King Abdullah II in Amman earlier today to discuss ceasefire efforts in the Gaza Strip and a post-war plan. The Ministerial Committee, which consists of the foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and Bahrain, along with the Secretary-General of the Arab League, held a video conference meeting in Amman on Sunday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his deputy, Hussein Al-Sheikh, and Mohammad Mustafa, the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. Ayman Al-Safadi, Jordan's Foreign Minister, said that the "Israeli government continues to kill all the chances of peace in the region" after the committee visit was blocked on Saturday. –APP

**Five dead
in Kuwait
apartment
block fire**

KUWAIT: A fire in a residential building southwest of Kuwait City killed five people, the Gulf state's fire brigade said on Sunday. The blaze broke out in two apartments in the Rigga area, about 10 kilometers (six miles) from the capital, said spokesman Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Gharib. Three bodies were found at the scene and two more people died from their injuries in hospital, he told AFP. Several others were injured, and Gharib warned the death toll could rise due to the severity of some of the burns. An investigation has been launched into the cause. –APP

**Syrian
president
meets
Kuwait emir**

CAIRO: Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa held official talks with Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday during a state-visit, according to KUNA News Agency. The Syrian president arrived earlier in the day accompanied by his Foreign Minister Assad al-Shibani and several high-profile Syrian officials. Both leaders discussed bilateral ties between the two brotherly countries and ways to enhance them in all fields, the KUNA statement said. The talks also affirmed Kuwait's steadfast support for the unity of Syria and its sovereignty, it added. The talks also covered the latest regional and international developments. Al-Sharaa's visit to Kuwait aims to boost bilateral ties between the two countries. Ties between Syria and Kuwait resumed last year, witnessing a notable revival when Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya visited Damascus on Dec. 30. Since the visit, Kuwait launched the first flights of a humanitarian air bridge to Syria, to help alleviate the suffering of Syrians, according to KUNA News Agency. Kuwait, joining other GCC member states, has underscored its unwavering support for Syria's unity and sovereignty. Al-Sharaa had previously visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates on his Gulf tour. –APP

Briefs

Bangladesh
opens
ex-PM's trial

DHAKA: Fugitive former prime minister Sheikh Hasina orchestrated a "systemic attack" to try to crush the uprising against her government, Bangladesh prosecutors said at the opening of her trial on Sunday. Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August 2024 when Hasina's government launched its crackdown, according to the United Nations. Hasina, 77, fled by helicopter to her old ally India as the student-led uprising ended her 15-year rule, and she has defied an extradition order to return to Dhaka. The domestic International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) is prosecuting former senior figures connected to Hasina's ousted government and her now-banned party, the Awami League. "Upon scrutinising the evidence, we reached the conclusion that it was a coordinated, widespread and systematic attack," Mohammad Tajul Islam, ICT chief prosecutor, told the court in his opening speech. "The accused unleashed all law enforcement agencies and her armed party members to crush uprising." — Agencies

Pakistan
white wash
Bangladesh
in T20 series

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan white washed Bangladesh in T20 series by defeating the guests in the last and final T20 match. Pakistan defeated Bangladesh by 7 wickets. Bangladesh posted a 197-run target for Pakistan courtesy of Parvez Hossain Emon's half-century in the third and final T20I match at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday. Bangladesh's openers set the tone with an aggressive start, dominating Pakistan's bowling attack. Tanzid Hasan and Parvez stitched together a commanding partnership, scoring 53 runs without loss in the powerplay.

UK to restore
'war-fighting
readiness'

LONDON: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday he will "restore Britain's war-fighting readiness" as his government warned of "growing" Russian aggression ahead of a major defence strategy review. "We will restore Britain's war-fighting readiness as the central purpose of our armed forces," Starmer wrote in The Sun daily, including by ramping up weapons production capacity. His government's Strategic Defence Review, due to be published Monday, will assess threats facing the UK, amid Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine and pressure from US President Donald Trump for NATO allies to bolster their own defences. Starmer wrote that it will serve as "a blueprint for strength and security for decades to come". — Agencies

Finance Minister welcomes
Rising consumer confidence

The survey reveals a significant surge in consumer confidence, with 42% of Pakistanis now believing the country is heading in the right direction—the highest level recorded in six years. Perceptions of the economy being strong have also reached their most favorable levels since August 2019

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Aurangzeb Welcomes Rising Consumer Confidence in Q2 2025 IPSOS Survey The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, has welcomed the findings of the IPSOS Consumer Confidence Survey for the second quarter of 2025, calling it a strong affirmation of the improving economic outlook and public sentiment across Pakistan. The survey reveals a significant surge in consumer confidence, with 42% of Pakistanis now believing the country is heading in the right direction—the highest level recorded in six years. Perceptions of the economy being strong have also reached their most favorable levels since August 2019. Notably, optimism has overtaken pessimism for the first time since consumer confidence tracking began, marking a key psychological shift among the population. The Minister noted that this encouraging data reflects the success of the government's disciplined and targeted macro-

economic strategy implemented over the last 14 months. The stabilization of key economic indicators—including the containment of inflation, strengthening of the exchange rate, rebuilding of foreign exchange reserves, and improved fiscal discipline—has created a foundation for renewed public trust and economic recovery. He highlighted that consumer confidence in making major purchases and investments has doubled compared to the same period last year, indicating that households are beginning to feel more secure in their financial prospects. Similarly, confidence in job security is now at its highest since 2019, a sign that labor market conditions are gradually stabilizing in response to pro-growth policies and reforms. The Minister further pointed out that this upswing in confidence spans across urban and rural areas, and is particularly evident among youth and women—demonstrating the broad-based nature of the economic turnaround. He linked this optimism to sustained government efforts to create an enabling environment for private sector growth, boost exports, enhance social protection, and encourage financial inclusion.

Celebrating culture and craft

Serena Hotels and Nomad Art Gallery host vibrant event

Syed Fahim Inam Chief Marketing Officer (Group) of Serena Hotels said, "Our goal is to provide a platform where culture, community, and creativity can converge



MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with the renowned Nomad Art Gallery, brought Islamabad to life with a vibrant cultural event that seamlessly merged art, craft, and cinema into an inspiring experience for visitors from all walks of life. Held at the prestigious Serena Hotel premises, the event drew diplomats, artists, entrepreneurs, and members of the public in celebration of Pakistan's diverse cultural heritage. The event was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan, Andrea Wicke, alongside the Ambassadors of Ireland and Jordan and the management of Serena Hotels. In their opening remarks, the dignitaries underscored the vital role that art and culture play in promoting peace, tolerance, and understanding among communities. Ambassador Andrea Wicke, in particular, highlighted the power of cultural expression to bridge divides and foster dialogue. A major highlight of the event was the Crafts Bazaar, which offered a carefully curated selection of handmade crafts from across Pakistan. The bazaar presented a colorful and captivating showcase of tex-

tiles, jewelry, accessories, and home décor, all crafted by talented artisans representing a wide range of cultural traditions. Visitors had the rare opportunity to interact with the artisans, understand the stories behind their work, and purchase items directly—supporting local talent and community-based entrepreneurship. Exhibits included a diverse range of products from Nomad Art Gallery's artisan partners spread across the country. These included vibrant Ajrak prints from Sindh, finely woven Kashmiri shawls and embroidery, eco-friendly block-printed textiles, handmade toys by Grammani, and exquisite silver jewelry by Anna Shariff and the SS Collection. The event highlighted the immense potential of Pakistan's traditional crafts sector, particularly when supported by platforms that value cultural integrity and sustainability. Serena Hotels, known for its consistent efforts to promote art and culture in the region, reaffirmed its commitment to supporting such initiatives. Syed Fahim Inam Chief Marketing Officer (Group) of Serena Hotels said, "Our goal is to provide a platform where culture, community, and creativity can converge. By empowering artisans and facilitating dialogue through



art, we believe we can contribute to positive, lasting change in society." Nomad Art Gallery, a long-time promoter of indigenous art and social dialogue, also reiterated its dedication to creating spaces where art meets activism. The gallery has played a pivotal role in nurturing young

artists, women entrepreneurs, and marginalized communities through exhibitions, workshops, and cultural collaborations. The cultural event at Serena was a celebration of identity, a showcase of talent, and a call for inclusion and peace through the universal language of art.

Crackdown on Illegal
Foreigners on cards

ISLAMABAD: The third important meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Harden the State Committee was held under the chairmanship of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. During the meeting, it was decided that operations against foreign nationals residing illegally in Pakistan will be accelerated. The Interior Minister said that NADRA will provide live data verification facilities at exit points. He emphasized that all institutions must work together to fully implement the "One Document Regime". Federal and provincial agencies must coordinate efforts to eliminate the illegal spectrum from the country. Mohsin Naqvi stated that the beggar mafia is tarnishing the country's image and must be dealt with strictly. He stressed the need to declare begging a non-bailable offense. He also said that every possible support is being provided to the Ministry of Energy and provincial governments to prevent electricity theft. A representative from the Ministry of Energy briefed that Rs. 142 billion have been recovered through cooperation

between the Interior Ministry and provincial governments. It was further informed that more than 250 intelligence-based operations are being conducted daily. The meeting also reviewed progress on anti-encroachment operations and the establishment of the Pakistan Port Authority. Progress on the 'Gwadar City Safe City Project' and the construction of a protection wall was also discussed. During the briefing, it was stated that digital enforcement stations are being set up on the Indus River, while work is ongoing on an ITS for effective monitoring on motorways and national highways. The meeting also reviewed progress on the digitization of petrol pumps to curb the sale of illegal and smuggled fuel. According to the briefing under the new law, customs officers and the relevant deputy commissioner will have the authority to seal petrol pumps and seize vehicles. Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Punjab Law Minister Sohaib Ahmed Bharti, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Advisor Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, and Gilgit-Baltistan Interior Minister attended the meeting. — Agencies

Monitoring system
activated for pilgrims'
convenience

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman has stated that the the government has activated a 24/7 monitoring and rapid response system to ensure a smooth Hajj experience. He said this monitoring system is actively working around the clock to address any issues faced by pilgrims and urged Pakistanis to disregard misinformation and adhere to Saudi government regulations. During an interview with Radio Pakistan, the Secretary

highlighted the ministry's proactive measures, stating that a dedicated 24/7 monitoring system is in place to facilitate pilgrims and address their concerns promptly. He emphasized the importance of following Saudi regulations and ignoring unverified information. He said during visits, we are ensuring that top-quality arrangements are in place for housing, cleanliness, food distribution, and healthcare, strictly adhering to the standards set by the Saudi authorities. "The Government's Hajj Scheme has achieved a remarkable milestone with the successful culmination of pre-Hajj flight operations, showcasing meticulous planning and seamless execution," he said in response to a query. Dr. Ata-ur-Rehman also urged pilgrims to take necessary precautions during the hot season, emphasizing the importance of staying hydrated, avoiding direct sun exposure and following health guidelines to ensure a safe and comfortable journey. — Agencies

Glaciers
conference
gets
lukewarm
response

ISLAMABAD: The "International High-Level Conference on Glacier Preservation" concluded to emphasize the inextricable link between glacier conservation and sustainable socio-economic development. However, important outcomes of the Conference are the adoption of the Dushanbe Declaration and the Dushanbe Appeal: Call for Action, which call on UN Member States and stakeholders to take the necessary measures to strengthen international cooperation to advance and align the global agenda for the conservation of the cryosphere and glaciers. A Tajik official said that Tajikistan, as a country at the forefront of these processes and deeply committed to advancing the water and climate agenda, is ready to continue to make every effort to achieve our common goals. In conclusion, "I would like to thank all participants for their active participation and our partners for their support, as well as the National Organizing Committee, the International Advisory Committee and the Secretariat for the work done to successfully hold the completed Conference" Tajik Prime Minister said. As per the additional input from the western media, analysts however say the conference got a lukewarm response as only the Pakistani prime minister attended the conference. No other important country attended it. — APP

Two bridges in
Russia collapse
in 'blasts',
7 dead

MOSCOW: The overnight collapse of two bridges in Russian regions bordering Ukraine that killed seven people were caused by explosions, Russian officials said Sunday, treating them as "acts of terrorism". In Russia's Bryansk region bordering Ukraine, a blast caused a road bridge to collapse onto a railway line late Saturday, derailing a passenger train heading to Moscow and killing seven people, authorities said. A separate rail bridge in the neighbouring Kursk region was blown up hours later in the early hours of Sunday, derailing a freight train and injuring the driver. Authorities did not say who was behind the explosions, but investigators said a criminal inquiry was underway. Russian President Vladimir Putin was briefed on the incidents throughout the night, the Kremlin said. Videos posted on social media from the Bryansk region showed rescuers clambering over the mangled chassis of a train belonging to national operator Russian Railways, while screams could be heard in another video. "There are seven dead as a result of the collapse of a bridge onto railway tracks," Alexander Bogomaz, the Bryansk region's governor, wrote on Telegram. — Agencies

JUNE 2025

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