



Islamabad POST

Saturday, June 14, 2025

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 30

Pakistan aims to secure \$2bn loan, says Aurangzeb

Detailed News On Page-08

Bilawal says Pak stance vindicated

Detailed News On Page-08

Kohli led World Bowling League next year

Detailed News On Page-06



Israel expects several waves of attacks

Israel started war, Iran will now finish it

“The Iranian nation and the country’s officials will not remain silent in the face of this crime, and the legitimate and powerful response of the Islamic Republic of Iran will make the enemy regret its foolish act,” Pezeshkian said in a video statement aired on state TV

CENTRELINE REPORT/DNA

JERUSALEM/DUBAI/WASHINGTON: Israel launched widescale strikes against Iran, saying it targeted nuclear facilities, ballistic missile factories and military commanders and that this was start of a prolonged operation to prevent Tehran from building an atomic weapon. Iranian media and witnesses reported explosions including at the country’s main uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, while Israel declared a state of emergency in anticipation of retaliatory missile and drone strikes. Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards corps said its top commander, Hossein Salami, was killed and state media reported the unit’s headquarters in Tehran had been hit. Several children had been killed in a strike on a residential area in the capital, it said.

EDITORIAL ON PAGE 5

“We are at a decisive moment in Israel’s history,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a recorded video message. Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said in a statement that Israel had “unleashed its wicked and bloody” hand in a crime against Iran and that it would receive “a bitter fate for itself”. An Israeli military official said Israel was striking “dozens” of nuclear and military targets including the facility at Natanz in central Iran. The official said Iran had enough material to make 15 nuclear bombs within days. The United States said it had no part in the operation, which raises the risk of a fresh

Continued on Page 06

Turkey urges Israel to halt ‘aggressive actions’ after Iran strikes

APP

ISTANBUL: Turkey on Friday urged Israel to stop “aggressive actions” following a wave of strikes on Iran that comes at a time of negotiations over the Islamic republic’s disputed nuclear programme. Ankara strongly condemned the Israeli airstrikes as a “clear violation of international law” and called it a “provocation that serves Israel’s strategic policy of destabilisation in the region.” “Israel must put an immediate end to its aggressive actions that could lead to further conflicts,” Turkey’s foreign ministry said in a statement. In May, Istanbul played host to nuclear negotiations between Iran and European powers. “The fact that the strikes come at a time of intensified negotiations on Iran’s nuclear programme shows that the (Benjamin) Netanyahu government is unwilling to resolve any issue through diplomatic means and is not averse to putting regional stability and global peace at risk for its own interests,” the foreign ministry said. “We call on the international community to take urgent action to prevent the spread of war,” it added.

PSX plunges over escalating Israel-Iran conflict

KSE-100 Index drops to intraday low of 121,604.59, shedding 2,488.53 points, or -2.01%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The equity market plunged on Friday as geopolitical tensions spiked following reports of Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear and military sites. The Pakistan Stock Exchange’s (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index touched an intraday high of 123,058.06, falling 1,035.06 points, or -0.83%, and dropped to a low of 121,604.59, reflecting a drop of 2,488.53 points, or -2.01%. “Early morning reports of an Israeli attack on Iran initially sent the equity market into a sharp decline,

Continued on Page 06

Iran names new military top brass

As many as 78 killed in Israeli strikes



DNA

TEHRAN: Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed a new military leadership following the killing of several top commanders in Israeli airstrikes that targeted nuclear facilities, missile factories, and key personnel to prevent Tehran from building an atomic weapon. Iranian media and witnesses reported explosions,

Continued on Page 06

Lawmakers condemn Israeli attack

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Lawmakers from the government and treasury benches in the National Assembly on Friday raised a united voice against Israel’s aggression towards Iran and urged the international community to intervene and help de-escalate the situation. Speaking on the floor of the House, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said Israel’s acts of aggression were a grave threat to global peace. “After brutal attacks on Palestine, Israel has now targeted Iran, in a blatant violation of international law,” he said.

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Briefs

Sindh announces 12 percent salary hike

Budget will play an important role in utilising the untapped potential of Sindh, says CM Murad Ali Shah

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: In a sigh of relief for public servants, the Sindh government on Friday announced a 12% ad hoc relief in salaries for grade 1 to 16 employees and 10% for those in grades 17 to 22. Presenting the Sindh budget for the fiscal year 2025-26 in the provincial assembly, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, who also holds the portfolio of finance, said the pension of the retired provincial employees will also increase by 8%. It is pertinent to mention here that the federal government had increased the salaries of federal employees from grade 1 to 22 by 10% in FY26.

PM for all possible help to Pak Zaireen

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed all relevant authorities to provide every possible assistance for the safe return and protection of Pakistani Zaireen currently in Iran following Israel’s deadly strikes. Israel launched widescale strikes against Iran earlier today, saying it targeted nuclear facilities, ballistic missile factories and military commanders.

Holiday Notice

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

Israeli brutalities

Iran must make a deal now, says Trump

Britain says it will not protect Israel as Iran vows retaliation against overnight strikes on its nuclear facilities

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump of Friday told he had advance knowledge of Israel’s air strikes on Iran, underscoring that Tehran “cannot have a nuclear bomb” and expressing hope for a return to diplomatic negotiations. S President Donald Trump urged Iran on Friday to “make a deal”, warning that there will be more “death and destruction” after Israel launched deadly strikes targeting Iranian nuclear facilities. “There has already been great death and destruction, but there is still time to make this slaughter, with the next already planned attacks being even more brutal, come to an end,” Trump said on his Truth Social platform. The comments followed Israel’s massive overnight operation targeting 100 Iranian sites, including nuclear and military facilities. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed the strikes hit the Natanz atomic facility. Iranian media reported the deaths of key military figures, including Revolutionary Guards leader Hossein Salami and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri.

Continued on Page 06

US still wants talks with Iran on Sunday: US official

APP

WASHINGTON: The United States still hopes to hold talks Sunday with Iran, even after Israel launched a massive attack on the Islamic Republic, a US official said. “We still intend to have talks Sunday,” the official told AFP on condition of anonymity. The official had no further information on whether Iran had agreed to the talks. Oman had earlier planned talks Sunday involving Steve Witkoff, President Donald Trump’s friend and globe-trotting negotiator. Iran’s foreign ministry said Friday that the United States was “responsible for the consequences” of the attack.

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Fifth Pakistan – EU dialogue on non-proliferation, disarmament

Discussions also delved into various aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation, with emphasis on the agenda of the UN General Assembly’s First Committee, the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and implementation of key international treaties



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The fifth round of the Pakistan-European Union Dialogue on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament convened in Islamabad, reaffirming the two sides’ commitment to global peace, strategic stability, and multilateral arms control efforts.

The dialogue was co-chaired by Ambassador Tahir Andrabi, Additional Foreign Secretary for Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security (ACDIS), and Ambassador Stephan Klement, the European Union’s Special Envoy for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. A wide-ranging exchange of views took place during the meeting, covering pressing issues of international and regional peace and security. The Pakistan delegation briefed their EU counterparts on developments in the aftermath of the recent Pakistan-India conflict, offering insights into the regional security environment and its broader implications. Discussions also delved into various aspects of disarmament and non-proliferation, with emphasis on the agenda of the UN General Assembly’s First Committee, the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and implementation of key international treaties such as the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The evolving landscape of global security, particularly in light of Emerging Technologies, was also addressed. Both sides reviewed the latest developments in Multilateral

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ISLAMABAD: Deputy Head of the Mission of the Azerbaijan Embassy Tamerlan Khalilov and others cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the Tent Pegging championship at the F 9 Park, on Friday. – DNA

War in Middle East

Pakistan condemns illegitimate’ Israeli aggression against Iran

Deputy PM Ishaq Dar says Pakistan stands in solidarity with the govt and people of Iran

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday condemned “unjustified and illegitimate” aggression by Israel against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Foreign Office said Israeli military strikes violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran and clearly contravened the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law. “Iran has the right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter,” said the FO, in a statement. Israel launched widescale strikes against Iran on Friday, saying it targeted nuclear facilities, ballistic missile factories and military commanders and that this was start of a prolonged operation to prevent Tehran from building an atomic weapon. Iranian media and witnesses reported explosions including at the country’s main uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, while Israel declared a state of emergency in anticipation of retaliatory missile and drone strikes. Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards corps said its top commander, Hossein Salami, was killed and state media reported

Continued on Page 06

Crisis Unit activated at MoFA

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday activated its Crisis Management Unit to ensure the safety and security of Pakistani nationals and pilgrims, after Israel carried out military strikes in Tehran and other Iranian cities. “In order to ensure safety & security of our nationals/Zaireens in Iran, we have activated a 24/7 Crisis Management Unit (CMU) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar wrote on X, who earlier condemned the strikes which he said had shaken the foundations of international law as well as the conscience of humanity. DPM Dar said that the Pakistan Embassy in Tehran had also been directed to

Continued on Page 06

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DC Abbottabad reviews forest fire prevention steps

ABBOTTABAD: Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Gohar Ali on Friday chaired a meeting to prevent forest fires and promoting environmental protection. The session focused on the underlying causes of wildfires and explored preventive strategies. ADC Gohar Ali issued clear directives to the Revenue Department, Forest Department, Police, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense and other concerned departments to implement concrete measures for forest fire prevention. He also emphasized strict legal action against individuals found responsible for negligence or violations contributing to fire outbreaks. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief and Human Rights Amanullah Saeed, District Health Officer Dr. Shakeel Sarwar, Assistant Commissioner Zarak Yar Khan Toru, District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122, Civil Defense Officer Abbottabad, representatives from the Forest Department, and other relevant officials. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding natural habitats, protecting plant life, and ensuring the safety of nearby communities through coordinated and timely interventions.—APP

Transgender shot dead in wedding

ABBOTTABAD: District Police Officer Umar Tufail on Friday took swift action following the murder of a transgender person during a wedding ceremony on Nari Road, resulting in the arrest of the suspected killer, Tauqeer Ahmed, son of Nazir, a resident of Jhanghi. The incident occurred late last night when the accused allegedly opened fire on two transgender individuals identified as Zeebi from Bhera, Sargodha and her companion Binesh from Lahore. Zeebi died on the spot, while Binesh sustained serious injuries. Upon receiving the report, the DPO Abbottabad immediately ordered the Mirpur Police to apprehend the culprit without delay. Responding swiftly, local police arrested the accused and registered a case on the complaint of the injured Binesh. The body of the deceased was handed over to the family after a postmortem examination. According to preliminary investigations, the suspect and the victim were known to each other. Further investigation is underway.—APP

ICCI condemns grant of arrest powers to FBR officers

He called upon the Prime Minister, the Federal Finance Minister, and other senior policymakers to immediately revoke the controversial clause and initiate an institutional dialogue with trade bodies, chambers, and representative organizations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a swiftly convened press conference at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi conveyed profound concern over a contentious provision in the Federal Budget 2025-26, which proposes to confer arrest powers upon officers of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), enabling them to detain Chief Executive Officers and senior representatives of business entities without recourse to prior legal proceedings or judicial oversight. Flanked by Chairman Founder Group ICCI Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, and former Presidents Mian Akram Farid and Shaikh Aamir Waheed, President Qureshi described the provision as "a direct assault on Pakistan's precarious economic fabric and a regressive step that threatens to destabilize the already fragile investment climate." He cautioned that the delegation of unchecked coercive powers to tax officers will further erode investor confidence, deepen the trust deficit between the business community and the state, and imperil the continuity of industrial and commercial operations. "Such draconian measures, devoid of procedural safeguards, are not only antithetical to principles of natural



justice but will also catalyze an atmosphere of fear and systemic uncertainty among entrepreneurs," he asserted. To mobilize collective resistance and formulate a unified response, President Qureshi announced that a National Convention of the Business Community will be convened in Lahore on June 17, wherein strategic decisions will be taken to counteract what he termed "anti-enterprise and constitutionally questionable policies." Reiterating that the business community is neither averse to taxation nor unaccountability, he underscored the imperative of upholding due process and legal checks to curb abuse of power. He pointed to the Alter-

nate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism as a more constructive and constitutionally aligned avenue for dispute resolution, one that fosters compliance through dialogue rather than intimidation. He called upon the Prime Minister, the Federal Finance Minister, and other senior policymakers to immediately revoke the controversial clause and initiate an institutional dialogue with trade bodies, chambers, and representative organizations. Furthermore, he appealed to Members of Parliament to oppose and strike down this clause during the ongoing budgetary deliberations in the National Assembly, in the broader interest of national economic stability and constitutional

propriety. "We are committed to contributing to the national exchequer, generating employment, and sustaining business growth — but not at the cost of our constitutional rights and personal security," he concluded. "A resilient and inclusive economic recovery is unachievable without reinstating the private sector's trust and sense of dignity." Other prominent voices echoed the ICCI's position, including Chairman Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, former President Mian Akram Farid, and Advisor to the President, Naem Siddiqui, all of whom reaffirmed the urgent need for legislative restraint and institutional accountability. The press conference was widely

attended by a cross-section of stakeholders from diverse trade associations, industrial sectors, and market representatives. A comprehensive policy briefing was delivered by former Executive Member Mian Mohammad Ramzan, highlighting the fiscal and legal implications of the proposed measure. Notable attendees included Executive Members Malik Abdul Aziz, Irfan Chaudhry, Chaudhry Nadeem Ahmed, Sanaullah Khan, Imran Minhas, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Ishaq Sial, and Ms. Shumaila Siddiqui, who expressed unanimous solidarity with ICCI's call for a transparent, fair, and constitutionally compliant tax regime.

FIA arrests a agents involved in visa fraud

MULTAN: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Multan Zone arrested three individuals allegedly involved in human trafficking and visa fraud, on Friday. According to an FIA spokesman, the accused identified as Abid Hussain, Abbas Ali, and Altaf Hussain were extorting large sums of money from citizens under the pretext of providing overseas employment. The suspects were apprehended from Rahim Yar Khan. Both are accused of defrauding individuals of over Rs 1.4 million each by offering fake job opportunities in Oman. Abbas Ali was arrested from Kamoke, Gujranwala, for allegedly taking Rs 780,000 from a victim for promised employment in Saudi Arabia.—APP

Vaccination drive against cervical cancer from Oct

GUJRAT: A vaccination campaign to protect girls from cervical cancer will be conducted in Gujrat district from October 20 to November 2, 2025, under the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) prevention initiative. The campaign targets girls aged 9 to under 15 years, who will receive the HPV vaccine to reduce the risk of cervical cancer. From early next year, the vaccine will be included in the routine immunization schedule under the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).—APP

Call for using professional skills to address common men issues

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel has stressed the officers that they should use their professional skills to solve the problems and difficulties being faced by the common people and reduce their suffering in the areas. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the ceremony organized to mark the completion of the 43rd Mid-Career Management Course of National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA). Principal Secretary to Governor Balochistan Hashim Khan Ghilzai, Director General of National Institute of Public Administration Quetta Syed Ali Raza Shah and Atta-ur-Rehman Khilji of Governor House and Secretariat were also present on the occasion. Addressing the participants of the event, Governor Balochistan Jafar Khan Mandokhel said that Quetta was

a prestigious institution and after completing the 43rd Mid-Career Management Course, officers would be able to face the challenges of a professional career. He said that as civil officers, you are an asset to our entire nation. National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), Quetta has equipped you with the necessary skills to excel in your career. Now it is your responsibility to use your skills to serve the people without any pressure or bias, he said adding that stick to the values of public service, integrity and accountability. He mentioned that as you start this new chapter, remember that your dedication and skills would help shape the bright future of the people of Balochistan and Pakistan. The Governor said that as public servants, they play an important role in maintaining good governance, eliminating corruption and

utilizing resources for the welfare of the people adding that your responsibility is to serve the greater good while ensuring merit and transparency. He urged the officers under training at NIPA to further enhance their professional skills by taking advantage of technology and applied research to remain innovative and in tune with modern requirements, this would enable you to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By integrating learning new things and modern research into your daily routine, you will make informed decisions and drive progress, he noted. He said that by upholding these values, you would not only meet national expectations but also contribute to the betterment of society. Thus, your actions and character will be a testament to your commitment to public service, he maintained.—APP

PU awards 10 PhD degrees

LAHORE: The Punjab University (PU) has awarded 10 PhD degrees to scholars after approval of their theses in various disciplines. According to a PU spokesperson, Ramsha Asif, daughter of Asif Abdullah, was awarded a PhD degree in the subject of International Relations; Muhammad Zaheer, son of Nabilullah, in the subject of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics; Hamayoun Shah Nawaz, son of Haji Muhammad Hanif, in the subject of Special Education; Sakina Rehman, daughter of Abdul Rehman, in the subject of Molecular Biology; Iqra Tariq, daughter of Rana Tariq Mahmood, in the subject of Information Management; Muhammad Gulraiz, son of Muhammad Bashir, in the subject of Commerce; Minal Arshad, daughter of Muhammad Arshad, in the subject of Mathematics; Akida Bano, daughter of Javed Hayat, in the subject of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics; Urooj Ashraf, daughter of Muhammad Ashraf, in the subject of Botany; and Usman Ali, son of Inayatullah, was awarded degree in the subject of Islamic Studies.—APP

Balochistan govt to operationalize various projects

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan government is actively working to operationalize various projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) framework, pursuing a comprehensive strategy to bring improvements across all sectors. The sixth meeting of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Unit was held under the joint chairmanship of Balochistan's Provincial Minister for Finance and Minerals, Mir Shoaib Noshervani, and Minister for Planning and Development, Mir Zahoor Buledi. The meeting was attended by Transport Secretary Muhammad Hayat Kakar, Special Finance Secretary Jahangir Kakar, and other senior officials. Addressing the participants,

Minister Noshervani emphasized the provincial government's commitment to public welfare and the provision of basic services, especially under the leadership of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti. He noted that various development projects are being finalized across the province under the PPP model, which he described as sustainable and beneficial for long-term public interest. A key highlight of the session was the unanimous approval to increase the number of buses in the Quetta Green Bus Project, along with the green light for launching a similar project in Turbat. These initiatives aim to enhance modern and eco-friendly transportation services for the public. Additionally, a proposal was discussed to transfer the administration of Fatima Jinnah Municipal Girls High School to a non-govern-

mental partner on a voluntary basis, with the aim of improving educational standards and administrative performance. Minister Noshervani reiterated the government's belief in PPP as an effective model for improving both transportation and education sectors. "The Green Bus Project is a major step towards convenient and environmentally-friendly travel for the public," he stated, adding that efforts are being made to implement such projects on a sustainable basis. Minister Zahoor Buledi highlighted that private sector involvement in development projects ensures transparency, higher quality, and faster execution. He said the launch of the Green Bus service in Turbat would benefit the local population and that NGO participation in managing educational institutions could become a successful model.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02/Italy 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

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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: Ambassador of the Philippines and his spouse lead a fashion show showcasing traditional Philippines dresses, on the occasion of the National Day of the Philippines. —DNA

Pakistan’s Int’l image gets boost from strong response to India

Dr. Tariq Fazal stressed that respect must be earned through actions, not just words

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Friday praised Pakistan's strong and timely response to India on May 10, saying it improved the country's international image further and boosted the confidence of overseas Pakistanis. Speaking in the National Assembly during the debate on the 2025-26 budget, Dr. Fazal said that Pakistan's desire for peace should not be seen as weakness. He warned that if India takes any aggressive step again, Pakistan will respond even more forcefully. "Ceasefire does not mean the threat is over—we are always ready," he added. He strongly criticized Indian politicians and media for spreading false propaganda about Pakistan, especially in light of recent tensions. "Let it be clear—this is not a peace deal, only a ceasefire. If India repeats its mistake, we are fully prepared," he said. Dr. Tariq Fazal urged the nation to remain united, describing Pakistan's strength as a solid wall in difficult times. "We must speak with one voice and stand together to defend our country," he said, adding that the people and armed forces are committed to protecting Pakistan's honor. He credited Allah Almighty for guiding the country and acknowledged the role of political leaders, the military, and citizens in raising Pakistan's reputation globally. He shared how overseas Pakistanis had told him they once felt hesitant while showing their passports, but that has changed after May 10. "Now, our passport is seen with respect at immigration," he said. Dr. Tariq Fazal stressed that respect must be earned through actions, not just words. He criticized Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for promoting extremist ideology and said that Pakistan has always called for peace but will never allow aggression to go unanswered. Talking about the internal situation, Dr. Tariq Fazal said Pakistan is going through a sensitive phase, and unity is more important than ever. He criticized the opposition for focusing on minor issues instead of serious economic and security matters. He accused opposition parties of playing politics instead of helping the country in difficult times, especially regarding security challenges involving the Taliban and tensions with India. "They crossed the line between fair criticism and harming national interest," he said. He called for harmony among institutions and urged everyone to present a united front. "This is the time to show the world we are united," he added. Dr. Tariq Fazal expressed disappointment that while the international community praised Pakistan's diplomatic response, some voices inside the country were still critical. He urged Parliament to act responsibly and protect national unity during times of regional stress. "The world is watching—we must not doubt our own people," he said. He praised the success of Pakistan's anti-terror operations, saying India's recent aggression was an attempt to sabotage Pakistan's action in eliminating terrorist networks. The Minister said the campaign against terrorism would continue until the last terrorist is eliminated. "This is a long-term mission, not a one-time effort," he stressed. On the economy, he highlighted the positive role of overseas Pakistanis. He credited Prime Minister for encouraging legal remittances and cracking down on black money. "In March 2025 alone, we received over \$4 billion, and total remittances reached nearly \$34.9 billion," he said, calling it proof of overseas Pakistanis' trust in Pakistan's leadership. He also appreciated the government's efforts to improve peace, security, and the investment environment. The Minister highlighted the Overseas Investment Conference and other steps taken to build trust with investors. "We are committed to rebuilding the economy through transparency and strong governance," he said. Defending the recent salary adjustments for MNAs, he said there had been no increase for 15-16 years, unlike regular annual raises for government employees. "This isn't about privilege—it's about fairness," he said, adding that lawmakers also deserve support to meet rising living costs. He described the federal budget as a shared document for all citizens, not just a few. "This is a people's budget. Every decision has been made in the national interest," he said. He welcomed the plan to form a suggestions and recommendations committee to gather feedback and improve the budget. Dr. Tariq Fazal said Pakistan had shown great strength after May 10 and is now moving forward with a renewed sense of unity and purpose. He urged political parties to put aside personal rivalries for the good of the country. "Let's not allow politics to divide us. Now is the time to build, to unite, and to show the world what Pakistan stands for," he said. Referring to

Pakistan's role in the region, he said the country has proven its importance and should now work towards becoming the progressive and self-reliant nation that thinker like Allama Iqbal dreamed of. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary warned that any attempt by India to block Pakistan's water share under the Indus Waters Treaty would be treated as a hostile act – equal to a declaration of war. He explained that the Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960 with the support of international guarantors, had two options at the time: dividing water by percentage or allocating entire rivers. To avoid future disputes, both countries, with the help of global experts, agreed that three rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab – would go to Pakistan, and the other three – Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas – would go to India. "This agreement was made to ensure long-term peace and clarity. The treaty is internationally recognized and legally binding. Any violation, especially blocking Pakistan's share, will be considered an act of war," he warned. He accused India of supporting terrorism in Balochistan, particularly through backing the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA). He said Indian-sponsored terrorists had even targeted schools in the province.

World urged to take notice of Israel’s attack aggression on Iran

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal has condemned Israel's aggression against Iran and demanded that the international community take notice of this act of aggression. Speaking to journalists at the media center outside the Parliament House on Friday, he said that Israel's aggression against Iran was condemned in the both houses of Parliament today, "I also condemn it". He strongly condemned Israel's aggression against Iran and said that this aggression of Israel is a serious threat to regional and global peace. The international community should take notice of its act of aggression. He said that during the budget session speech of the Finance Minister, the opposition has damaged the microfiance system of opposition benches. The microphone system was installed in the Parliament House in 1994, but the opposition has never protested in any era that caused damage to property. Ahsan Iqbal said that the current opposition's protest has damaged the The cost of replacing the microphone system will be Rs 350 million and I think this money should be collected from the salaries of these opposition members – But I want to remind them that when this brave man was in the House, he used to say on the Indian false flag operation, tell me what should I do, should I attack India, during his government he had released Abhi Nandan within 24 hours and handed him over to India. He said that I don't know whose eyes the PTI members are throwing dust in, when India attacked Pakistan in 2019, Imran Khan was standing helplessly in the House and they are calling it bravery. During his rule, he did not have the money to pay the IMF installment, salaries and pensions were also paid on loan, he left the country close to bankruptcy and on April 1, 2022, PTI bankrupted the country, but Alhamdulillah today, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan is now heading towards growth again. —DNA

First smart building management system launched

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading technology innovation company has partnered with Axis Mall and apartments – V One Associates to deploy the country's first fully integrated Building Management Solution in a high-rise mixed-use development Located in Faisal Town, Islamabad, Axis Mall & Apartments is a state-of-the-art 18-floor facility comprising residential apartments and commercial shops, now powered by Zong's robust Fiber-to-the-X (FTTX) capabilities, said a news release. As part of this collaboration, Zong will deploy a comprehensive fiber backbone throughout Axis Mall & Apartments, providing tenants with seamless Managed WiFi across all units. The partnership also included a dedicated Building Management System that delivers end-to-end infrastructure solutions tailored to the operational and technological needs of residents and businesses. An integrated application will further enhance the experience by allowing users to manage individual units, streamline tenant operations, and access a range of value-added digital services. Speaking at the signing ceremony Farooq Raza Khan, Head of Zong Business Solutions, said: "This collaboration with Axis Mall & Apartments is a testament to Zong's commitment to innovation and digital excellence. While Zong has long been a leader in enterprise connectivity, this marks the first time we are delivering a unified Building Management Solution at this scale; making Axis Mall & Apartments a benchmark for future-ready buildings in Pakistan.—DNA

Man nabbed for stabbing citizen

RAWALPINDI:The Bani Police on Thursday took immediate action and nabbed a man who injured a citizen with a knife. The victim reported to the Bani Police Station that the said person injured him with stabbing a knife while he was passing through a street. The police registered a case on the victim's request and arrested the accused. —APP

Bangladeshi varsity delegation for academic collaboration

ISLAMABAD:A high-level 10-member delegation comprising vice chancellors and senior officials from leading public and private sector universities of Bangladesh is set to visit Pakistan from June 16-21. The visit is being organized at the invitation of the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and being facilitated by the High Commission for the People's Republic of Bangladesh Islamabad. The primary objective of the visit is to explore and enhance avenues of academic collaboration and institutional partnerships in the fields of higher education, science, and technology. The delegation will participate in a series of high-level meetings, discussions, and interactive sessions with top Pakistani universities in Lahore and Islamabad. According to the COMSTECH, these Pakistani institutions are members of the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE), a collaborative network of premier universities dedicated to advancing scientific cooperation and educational excellence among OIC member states.—APP

HFH to begin honorary house jobs from June

RAWALPINDI: Holy Family Hospital (HFH) Rawalpindi, has announced for honorary house job program set to commence on June 25, 2025. Medical graduates from Public Sector, private sector and foreign graduates can apply for the house job opportunity for which deadline to apply is set to June 17 Dr. Ejaz Butt, Medical Suprentendent HFH in an exclusive interaction with media on Friday, explained that HFH was opening applications for medical graduates from both public and private institutions, including foreign medical graduates who either hold a Punjab domicile or had graduated from Punjab-based medical colleges. He emphasized that this initiative aimed to provide valuable clinical training under professional supervision. Regarding the selection process, Dr. Ejaz clarified that all inductions would be strictly merit-based, ensuring complete transparency—APP

Wheelchairs, assistive devices to disables

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Mal Department distributed assistive devices and wheelchairs among persons with disabilities during the second phase of its aid program, held at a local hotel here on Thursday. According to the details, a total of 169 persons with disabilities received mobility aids across Rawalpindi district. The distribution included 154 adult wheelchairs, 8 pediatric wheelchairs, 2 rollators, 2 arm crutches and 3 white canes. Parliamentarians including Tahira Aurangzeb, Qamar ul Islam, Malik Ibrar, Riffat Abbasi and other political and social figures attended the ceremony, along with a large number of persons with disabilities and their family members. Speaking at the event, MNA Qamar ul Islam said that under CM Maryam Nawaz's leadership, Punjab is progressing rapidly. We're fortunate to have leadership that cares for every member of society and works to improve their lives.—DNA

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Briefs

IRSA releases 259,166 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 259,166 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 290,358 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1445.45 feet which was 43.45 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 167,800 cusecs and 150,700 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1165.25 feet, which was 115.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 36,259 cusecs and 22,167 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 185,257, 133,709, 95,446 and 40,180 cusecs, respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 28,621 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala. —APP

Bilal Azhar assumes charge

ISLAMABAD: Bilal Azhar Kayani on Friday formally assumed the charge of his office as Minister of State for Finance, following a notification issued by the Cabinet Division. The portfolio of Minister of State for Finance was assigned to Kayani, in addition to his existing responsibilities as Minister of State for Railways and Head of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, said a press release issued by the Finance Ministry. —APP

IHC asks govt to write in amicus brief

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) here Friday said that the government of Pakistan should write in the amicus brief that it has no objection if Dr Aafia Siddiqui is released as a result of cases being filed for this purpose in the United States of America. As per details, a single bench of Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaque Khan heard the constitutional petition of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui about the release of her sister Dr Aafia Siddiqui. The lawyer of Fowzia Siddiqui, Imran Shafique after the hearing told media outside the court premises that during today's hearing American lawyer of Aafia Siddiqui Clive Smith, Maria Kari and Dr Fowzia Siddiqui appeared on the video link. Tania Siddiqui was also present. The Deputy Attorney General represented the government. The court asked the government lawyer that regarding the cases being filed in the US, the government of Pakistan should add a sentence in amicus brief that it has no objection if Dr Aafia Siddiqui is released as the result of these cases. The court said it is lame excuse that this would create legal issues for the government as in the previous amicus brief the government had already said so. —APP

Societies registration bill sails through Senate

“There may be slight differences in the forms, but the main objective is the same: ensuring students at seminaries receive a verified syllabus that includes modern subjects and access to qualified teachers

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday passed the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which stipulates that Deeni Madaris already registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, or those opting for direct registration with the Directorate General of Religious Education, will be deemed duly registered. Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, while presenting the bill, informed the Senate that two parallel streams exist for seminary registration: one includes religious seminaries affiliated with the federal government, functioning under a structured system



ISLAMABAD: Guests posing for a picture on the occasion of the National day of the Philippines. —DNA

Solar tax defies national interest, hurts public

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned economic expert and business leader Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt stated on Friday that the decision to impose a tax on solar panels is not only unwise but also a direct attack on national self-reliance, energy reforms, and public relief. He said this step is equivalent to pushing people further into the abyss of inflation, increasing business costs, and deepening dependency on imported fuel.

Addressing an emergency meeting of traders and industrialists, Dr. But stated that electricity prices in Pakistan are already the highest in the region, while traders and manufacturers are struggling under the weight of production costs. Solar panels could have significantly reduced electricity bills and saved valuable foreign exchange. Still, even this path is now being deliberately blocked.

He asserted that there is no moral, economic, or environmental

justification for taxing solar technology. Developed countries are offering subsidies for solar power, while a crisis-hit country like Pakistan is imposing taxes on it, which is tantamount to national suicide. He warned that this decision would hinder the promotion of clean energy, undermine the concept of net metering, and severely erode the confidence of both consumers and investors. Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt stated that this move has been made under the influence of the import lobby, the oil mafia, and the

IPPs lobby, all of whom are fearful of the growing popularity of solar energy. Due to these vested interests, Pakistan has never achieved energy self-sufficiency. In a country where circular debt has crossed 3.5 trillion rupees, what logic is there to tax cheap, alternative, and privately invested sources of power, he asked. The business leader cautioned that this decision must be reversed immediately. Otherwise, investment in the solar sector will dry up, the local market will shrink, and Pakistan will violate

its commitments under global environmental agreements. He emphasized that the government should make solar technology completely tax-free for the public so that a sustainable solution to the power crisis can be achieved. He concluded by stating that if the government has no other way to increase revenue, it should reduce unnecessary expenditures, but must not target people experiencing poverty who have sold jewelry or borrowed to obtain solar power.

APBF says with fiscal restraint budget honours APBF's SME agenda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum has said that in a time of tight fiscal space and under the watchful eye of the International Monetary Fund, the government's Budget 2025-26 has emerged as a promising and balanced effort—marked not only by financial

prudence but by strategic priorities that reflect national resilience.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, while addressing a post budget sitting organized by the All Pakistan Business Forum, observed that this budget, laid out under immense global and domestic pressure, still manages to address core economic challenges while showing ap-

preciation for the pillars that hold Pakistan together—from entrepreneurs to armed forces. Maaz Mahmood said that the country is witnessing a rare sense of alignment across institutions. At the heart of this unity stands Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose recent promotion is not just a ceremonial honour but a reflection of his unshaken leadership across

defence and economic fronts. His strategic vision and disciplined coordination have helped Pakistan defuse military tensions with India and maintain internal stability during turbulent times. It is due to this leadership that the state has found room to act—even within tight IMF restrictions—toward building confidence in both national security and economic recovery. The increase in defence budget is

not just a line item, but a necessity in the current regional context. With the Indian posture growing increasingly hostile and hybrid threats on the rise, the government has rightly prioritised military preparedness, raising defence allocations by over 20 percent. The message is clear: Pakistan's sovereignty and deterrence remain non-negotiable. Yet what makes this budget more meaningful is that despite these rightful defence allocations, the government has not neglected the country's economic engines—particularly the small and medium

enterprises. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the SME sector, long advocated for by the All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) and its President Syed Maaz Mahmood, has been given room to breathe. In a climate of high interest rates and reduced lending, the government's decision to facilitate soft financing through the State Bank's refinancing schemes, reduce import duties on industrial inputs, and offer targeted tax relief reflects a sincere effort to honour APBF's long-standing demands.

Abbasi strongly condemns Israeli attack on Iran

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways, Muhammad Hanif Abbasi Friday strongly condemned the recent Israeli aggression against Iran, calling it a grave threat to regional peace and stability. In a statement issued here, Hanif Abbasi said the Israeli attack on Iran is “unacceptable and highly condemnable.” He expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Chief of Staff of the Iranian armed forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri and paid tribute to his service. He also denounced the killing of Major General Hossein Salami, Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), saying that such targeted assassinations are a dangerous escalation and deserve global condemnation. The minister said that prominent Iranian nuclear scientists Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Tehrani and Dr. Fereydoon Abbasi were also martyred in the attack. “The loss of innocent lives is a crime against humanity,” Hanif Abbasi added, urging the international community to take strong notice and respond decisively to Israel's blatant aggression. —APP

Standing Committee presents multiple reports in Senate

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control, Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman, presented several reports of the committee on various legislative bills in the Upper House on Friday. The Chairman laid before the House the report of the committee on the National Occupational Health and Safety Bill, 2023, which was introduced by Senator Dr. Zarqa Suhrawardy Taimur on November 27, 2023. Senator Faisal Rehman presented another report on a bill to further amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 [The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2024], introduced by Senator Fawzia Arshad on June 10, 2024. The bill proposes the insertion of new sections 344B, 344C, 344D, and 344E into the Code. Chairman presented another report on a bill to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 [The Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Bill, 2024], moved by Senator Palwasha Mohammed Zai Khan on September 2, 2024. —APP

Kitchen items' prices decrease by 0.11pc

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), decreased by 0.11 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on June 12, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 309.51 points as compared to 309.85 points during the past week. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed a decrease of 1.41

per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed an increase of 0.15 per cent and went up to 299.44 points from last week's 298.99 points while consumption group of Rs 17,732 to 22,888 also increased by 0.04. The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175, came down to 0.03 percent, 0.10 percent and 0.18 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 15 (29.41%) items increased, 09

(17.65%) items decreased and 27 (52.94%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included Chicken (11.32%), Garlic (5.69%), Pulse Mash (1.14%), Pulse Masoor (0.43%), Pulse Gram (0.21%), Cooking Oil 5 litre & Vegetable Ghee 2.5kg (0.20%) each, Wheat Flour (0.05%) and LPG (0.02%). The commodities which recorded major increase in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included Tomatoes (19.73%), Potatoes (9.11%), Onions (3.23%), Bananas (2.25%), Powdered Milk (0.73%), Eggs (0.67%). —APP



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Israel’s strike on Iran – a dangerous escalation

IN a stunning and highly consequential escalation, Israel has launched a direct and deadly attack on Iran, resulting in the killing of Iran’s army chief, a senior nuclear scientist, and at least five other key figures involved in Iran’s nuclear program. A number of civilians also lost their lives in the attack, while critical infrastructure across various strategic locations in Iran sustained heavy damage. This is not merely an isolated incident—it marks the beginning of what could become a full-fledged regional war with global consequences.

The world has responded with condemnation. However, as history has shown, statements of concern and diplomatic calls for restraint do little to prevent further violence when decisive action is needed. Iran, for its part, has declared that it did not start the war but will now finish it. These chilling words make it clear that Tehran is preparing for a large-scale retaliation that could push the Middle East into uncharted and perilous territory.

What is perhaps most alarming is the ease with which Israeli forces were able to penetrate Iranian defenses and strike high-profile, heavily-guarded targets. This raises serious questions for Iranian leadership and military strategists. Was this the result of Israeli technological superiority—perhaps using advanced cyber capabilities, satellite intelligence, or internal sabotage? Or does it indicate a deeper, structural weakness within Iran’s defense establishment? For a country that has consistently positioned itself as a regional power and frequently voices defiance against foreign threats, such a devastating breach is deeply unsettling. The Iranian leadership owes its people and the wider region an explanation.

Israel’s actions must also be examined in the context of its ongoing military campaign in Gaza. For months now, Israel has unleashed a relentless assault in Gaza, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties, widespread destruction, and a worsening humanitarian crisis. Now, by turning its attention toward Iran, it appears that Tel Aviv is not merely acting in self-defense or as a response to provocation—it is seeking to redefine the strategic map of the Middle East by eliminating its adversaries, unchecked and unhindered. This unilateral military aggression, unfortunately, has been made possible in part by the unconditional support Israel receives from powerful global actors, particularly the United States. Washington’s long-standing political, financial, and military backing of Israel has emboldened Tel Aviv to act with impunity. The United Nations and other international organizations have been reduced to bystanders, issuing condemnations that carry little to no weight. If this conflict spreads, as seems increasingly likely, world powers—especially the United States—must bear part of the responsibility for failing to restrain their ally.

At the same time, Iran must also confront uncomfortable truths. Its role in supporting proxy groups across the region—be it Hezbollah in Lebanon, var-

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



ious militias in Iraq, or the Houthis in Yemen—has exacerbated tensions and drawn criticism, even from within the Muslim world. While Iran positions itself as a resistance power against Western and Israeli domination, its reliance on proxies has often resulted in instability and drawn retaliation from its adversaries. A path forward must involve Iran reevaluating its strategic approach to avoid further escalation.

Nonetheless, the current Israeli attack goes beyond tit-for-tat warfare. This is an outright act of war—targeted, calculated, and designed to eliminate Iran’s top military minds and cripple its nuclear ambitions. It is, in essence, a declaration that Israel will stop at nothing to maintain regional dominance. If such actions go unanswered, it could create a dangerous precedent for the normalization of targeted killings and state-sponsored acts of war.

Iran’s vow to retaliate “heavily” must therefore be taken seriously, but it should also be tempered with strategic foresight. A hasty or disproportionate response could spiral the region into chaos, with devastating consequences for civilians not just in Iran and Israel but across the Middle East. Oil prices have already begun to spike. Trade routes through the Strait of Hormuz may be affected. The world economy, still recovering from earlier global shocks, can ill afford a prolonged regional conflict.

In this volatile scenario, the role of regional powers and multilateral bodies becomes critically important. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Arab League, and major Muslim countries must step in—not just with words but with actionable diplomacy. It is time for the Muslim world to unite in preventing the total collapse of peace and security in the region. That unity must not be directed blindly in favor of one side, but toward bringing an end to cycles of violence, aggression, and retribution.

Moreover, the international community must urgently push for restraint, de-escalation, and a return to diplomacy. The stakes are simply too high. The situation demands the convening of an emergency summit involving all major stakeholders—including Iran, Israel, the United States, European powers, Russia, and China—to establish red lines and avoid further deterioration.

What is happening today is not just an Israeli-Iranian conflict. It is a crisis that affects the entire world. From global oil prices to the threat of nuclear proliferation, the ripples from this confrontation will reach every corner of the planet. And if war erupts on a larger scale, the resulting humanitarian disaster could dwarf anything we’ve seen in recent years.

As Iran prepares its counterstrike, and Israel remains on high alert, the message from the international community must be clear: war is not the answer. But that message must be backed by credible diplomatic pressure and the willingness to hold all parties accountable—including those who arm, fund, or politically shield them.

The Muslim world must also seize this moment to reclaim its voice. The silence or indifference of past years must end. This is a test not just for Iran or Israel, but for all nations that claim to care about peace, justice, and the rule of international law.

The time to act is now. Before the region is engulfed in fire, and the world dragged into a war it cannot afford

Trump-Xi’s 90-Minute Gamble: A silent surrender or strategic realignment?

Qamar Bashir



The broader implication is alarming. A full tariff regime would hike prices, shrink consumer purchasing power, and trigger layoffs from ports and warehouses to transport and sales. According to a U.S.-China Business Council 2023 report, U.S. imports from China underpin over 1 million American jobs in logistics, shipping, warehousing, and retail. While Trump’s administration projects toughness, it’s clear that economic interdependence leaves little room for bravado. And China remains unfazed

IN an X-post that barely exceeded a hundred words, President Donald Trump confirmed a 90-minute telephonic conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping. While the statement appeared brief and deliberately vague, its subtext echoed far louder than the words conveyed. In reality, this seemingly hollow post symbolized a tectonic shift in diplomatic posture—less a show of power and more a subtle nod to reality: that America may no longer be in the driver’s seat of global economic and strategic dominance, at least not in its contest with China. The call, notably, was initiated by Trump himself—an act that carries profound diplomatic symbolism. Here was a leader who, during both his presidencies, repeatedly condemned China for “plundering” the U.S. economy, decried the “unfair trade imbalance,” and accused previous administrations of capitulating to Beijing’s will. Trump once boasted that his harsh tariff regime would force China to its knees, expecting Chinese negotiators to flock to Washington, desperate for relief. But that fantasy never materialized. Instead, China absorbed the economic blows, diversified its global trade networks, and fortified its internal resilience.

Rather than the desperate supplicant Trump imagined, Xi Jinping held his ground. Now, ironically, Trump is the one initiating calls, complimenting Xi as a “great leader” and praising China as a “great country”—a stark contrast to his prior inflammatory rhetoric, which often painted Xi as the authoritarian figurehead of an exploitative communist regime. Trump mentioned that the conversation focused primarily on rare earth minerals—an issue that indeed deserves attention. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), China accounts for over 60% of global rare earth mining and more than 85% of global rare earth refining capacity as of 2024. These materials are essential in semiconductors, electric vehicles, smartphones, wind turbines, and military defense systems. Trump’s veiled acknowledgment that China controls this economic chokepoint reveals the administration’s growing anxiety over America’s increasing dependency.

Yet, even more revealing was what Trump claimed was not discussed—Ukraine, Iran, and Palestine. In diplomacy, denial often implies focus. By explicitly stating these topics weren’t addressed, Trump tacitly confirmed they were. After all, in a 90-minute high-level dialogue, limiting discussion to minerals alone is implausible. These geopolitical flashpoints—Ukraine’s war, Iran’s nuclear program, and the Gaza conflict—are where U.S.-China tensions remain sharpest. And Trump, who famously declared he could “end the Ukraine war in 24 hours,” likely used this opportunity to test China’s position on global peace-brokering. Taiwan, too, must have surfaced. The U.S. adheres to

the One-China Policy yet continues to arm and politically support Taiwan. China regards this as direct interference in its sovereignty. U.S. military drills in the Indo-Pacific, including in the Taiwan Strait, are seen by Beijing as provocations. Trump’s new Defense Secretary recently reiterated America’s commitment to defend Taiwan—a message that no doubt reached Xi’s ears. China’s military has responded by accelerating exercises in the South China Sea, fortifying artificial islands, and increasing joint military drills. Simultaneously, the U.S. has strengthened regional security arrangements, notably: AUKUS: A trilateral pact among Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, established in 2021 to enhance defense technology cooperation, QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue): A strategic forum involving the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia, aimed at ensuring a “free and open Indo-Pacific, EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement) with the Philippines, granting the U.S. access to key military bases near Taiwan and the South China Sea and U.S.-ROK (South Korea) and U.S.-Japan bilateral defense treaties, alongside military cooperation with Vietnam and Thailand.

This telephonic détente comes as the 90-day pause on Trump-imposed tariffs nears expiration. If reinstated, tariffs would strike a broad range of Chinese exports—including electronics, machinery, plumbing tools, and household essentials—integral to the U.S. supply chain.

Working at a Home Depot in Macomb, Michigan, I see firsthand how deeply entwined U.S. retail infrastructure is with Chinese manufacturing. Roughly 90% of Home Depot’s tools, materials, and household items originate from China. With daily sales reaching \$5–6 million per store nationwide, any disruption—through tariffs or supply chain blockages—could send shockwaves across the retail and logistics industries.

The broader implication is alarming. A full tariff regime would hike prices, shrink consumer purchasing power, and trigger layoffs from ports and warehouses to transport and sales. According to a U.S.-China Business Council 2023 report, U.S. imports from China underpin over 1 million American jobs in logistics, shipping, warehousing, and retail. While Trump’s administration projects toughness, it’s clear that economic interdependence leaves little room for bravado.

And China remains unfazed. During my August 2024 visit to a solar panel manufacturing plant in Shenzhen, I was told with calm confidence: “We’ll redirect to other markets.” That’s not an empty boast. China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) now involves over 150 countries and 32 international organizations, making it the most expansive economic integration framework in history. With buyers across Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin

America, losing the U.S. market is an inconvenience—not a catastrophe—for Chinese exporters.

Meanwhile, the U.S. economic dependence is stark. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, China is the third-largest U.S. trading partner, with bilateral trade in goods reaching \$575 billion in 2023, and China supplies over 80% of certain U.S. imports in electronics, rare earths, toys, and machinery. In contrast, the U.S. accounts for only 12% of China’s total exports, per data from China’s General Administration of Customs.

Trump’s announcement of a new negotiation team, including a former U.S. envoy to Iran, signals a broader recalibration of U.S. foreign policy. It suggests that Washington is open to involving China in thorny Middle Eastern diplomacy—particularly in the Iran nuclear negotiations, now being quietly brokered by Oman, Egypt, and other neutral states. With China’s status as Iran’s top oil customer and major investor in infrastructure, Beijing’s role could be transformative.

One telling sign of détente is Xi’s invitation for Trump and the First Lady to visit China—something Trump likely long sought but never received during the earlier phase of his presidency. That Xi now extends this gesture suggests a new diplomatic tone—perhaps not of equals, but certainly of recognition. Trump, once determined to isolate China, now finds himself vying for proximity.

All this underscores a sobering truth: America no longer holds all the cards. While Washington continues spending—\$60 billion in Ukraine aid alone approved by Congress in April 2025—China is building infrastructure, accelerating digitization, and strengthening energy networks. While the U.S. wages wars, China builds roads, ports, and pipelines. In the end, this 90-minute conversation may be remembered as more than just a phone call—it may be the quiet turning point when Washington recognized the need to talk with China, not down to it. As Trump’s once-fiery rhetoric gives way to phrases like “great leader” and “great country,” one cannot ignore the shift in tone. Respect—especially when reluctant—is the first indicator of acknowledged parity. The upcoming rounds of dialogue will clarify whether this is a genuine turning point or a temporary pause in an economic cold war. But one thing is certain: this is no longer a zero-sum game. It’s either going to be a rare win-win outcome—or a lose-America, win-China equation, with global consequences.

Press Secretary to the President (Rtd)
Former Press Minister at the
Embassy of Pakistan to France
Former MD, SRBC
Macomb, Michigan, USA

Classical geopolitics and contemporary realism

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Wu critiques the notion that maritime powers can remain aloof from continental entanglements—a debate mirrored in contemporary U.S. strategy. Mahan initially downplayed the need for direct land engagements, believing naval blockades and economic pressure could suffice. However, Mackinder and Spykman recognized that technological advancements (e.g., railways, airpower)...

THE study of international relations has long been dominated by realist theories that emphasize power politics, state-centric analysis and the anarchic nature of the global system. However, as Zhengyu Wu argues in Classical Geopolitics, Realism and the Balance of Power Theory, classical geopolitics a school of thought rooted in geographical determinism and strategic history has been unjustly marginalized from mainstream realism since World War II. This essay explores Wu’s central thesis: classical geopolitics, embodied in the works of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Halford Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman, is not only compatible with realist principles but also enriches balance-of-power theories by integrating geography, technology and historical patterns. By re-engaging classical geopolitics with realism, scholars and policymakers can better address contemporary strategic challenges, from U.S. grand strategy to the rise of China. Classical geopolitics shares foundational assumptions with realism, particularly its focus on international anarchy, state survival and power competition. Wu contends that geopolitical thinkers like Mahan and Mackinder viewed states as rational actors in a Hobbesian world, where geography and technology shape their interactions. For instance, Mahan’s analysis of naval supremacy underscored how control of sea lanes influenced national power, while Mackinder’s “Heartland Theory” framed Eurasia as the pivot of global dominance. Both theorists assumed that states, driven by self-interest, would seek to balance against hegemonic threats a core tenet of realism. However, classical geopolitics diverges from mainstream realism in its holistic and dynamic approach. Unlike structural realists who abstract states into interchangeable units, classical geopolitics examines how geographical features (e.g., coastlines, heartlands) and technological shifts (e.g., railways, nuclear weapons) create enduring patterns of conflict. This interdisciplinary lens—combining geography, history and strategy—provides a richer understanding of why certain regions (e.g., Europe, East Asia) remain perennial flashpoints. A central theme in classical geopolitics is the symbiotic relationship between maritime dominance and continental equilibrium. Mahan’s The Influence of Sea Power Upon History demonstrated how Britain’s naval supremacy relied on preventing continental hegemony, particularly by France. Similarly, Mackinder warned that a unified Eurasian heartland could dominate the “World Island” (Europe, Asia and Africa), enabling a land power to challenge maritime states. For Wu, this linkage

explains why dominant sea powers like Britain and the U.S. historically intervened in continental affairs: to prevent rivals from consolidating resources that could threaten their naval preeminence. Spykman expanded this logic in America’s Strategy in World Politics, arguing that U.S. security depended on balancing power in both Europe and East Asia. He posited that the “rimland”—the coastal regions of Eurasia—was the true geopolitical battleground, as control over these areas could encircle or isolate a heartland power like Russia. Thus, classical geopolitics reframes the balance of power not as an abstract equilibrium but as a spatial contest shaped by geography.

Wu critiques the notion that maritime powers can remain aloof from continental entanglements—a debate mirrored in contemporary U.S. strategy. Mahan initially downplayed the need for direct land engagements, believing naval blockades and economic pressure could suffice. However, Mackinder and Spykman recognized that technological advancements (e.g., railways, airpower) eroded the insulation once provided by oceans. During World War I, Britain’s reliance on continental allies highlighted the limits of a purely maritime strategy. Spykman, writing during World War II, warned that offshore balancing—relying on regional actors to contain rivals—was insufficient. He advocated for onshore commitments to maintain rimland stability, a stance Wu echoes in critiquing modern proponents of offshore balancing. For instance, the U.S. post-Cold War strategy of minimal engagement in Eurasia risks ceding influence to rising powers like China, which could dominate East Asia’s resources and challenge U.S. primacy.

Classical geopolitics assigns unique significance to heartland powers like Russia. Mackinder viewed the Eurasian heartland as a potential springboard for global domination, while Spykman emphasized its dual role as both a threat and a stabilizer. Historically, Russia has balanced against rimland hegemony (e.g., Napoleonic France, Nazi Germany), aligning with sea powers to preserve continental fragmentation. This duality underscores Wu’s argument that heartland powers are not inherently revisionist but can act as balancers when rimland powers grow too dominant. In the 21st century, Russia’s weakened state has paradoxically reinforced its strategic value to the U.S. By countering Chinese expansion in Central Asia or European integration, Russia inadvertently supports a multipolar Eurasia. Wu suggests that recognizing this dual role could inform

U.S. strategy, fostering selective cooperation with Moscow to contain Beijing’s rise.

Wu positions classical geopolitics as a corrective to gaps in mainstream balance-of-power research. While Kenneth Waltz’s structural realism predicts systemic balancing, it neglects how geographical and technological factors shape state behavior. Classical geopolitics fills this void by explaining why certain regions (e.g., the rimland) attract intervention and how dominant powers (e.g., the U.S.) manipulate spatial dynamics to maintain hegemony. For example, Britain’s historical role as a “balancer” in Europe was not automatic but required active diplomacy and military deployments. Similarly, the U.S. post-1945 strategy of containing the Soviet Union involved alliances with rimland states (e.g., Japan, West Germany), illustrating Spykman’s emphasis on circumferential engagement. Wu argues that such demonstration the need to integrate unit-level variables (geography) with systemic theories.

Wu’s analysis offers three key insights for modern strategy:

1. U.S. Leadership and Legitimacy: The U.S. must uphold its role as a balancer in Eurasia to retain legitimacy. Retreating from alliances (e.g., NATO) risks triggering balancing coalitions against American hegemony.
2. Critique of Offshore Balancing: Reliance on regional actors (e.g., India to counter China) is flawed, as East Asia lacks peer competitors to Beijing. Technological advances (e.g., missiles, cyberwarfare) also reduce the feasibility of delayed intervention.
3. Russia’s Strategic Value: Despite tensions, cooperation with Russia could prevent Chinese or European dominance of Eurasia, aligning with historical precedents.

Zhengyu Wu’s synthesis of classical geopolitics and realism revitalizes a tradition often dismissed as deterministic or outdated. By anchoring balance-of-power theory in geographical realities, he provides a framework for understanding enduring patterns of conflict—from 19th-century Europe to 21st-century Asia. For policymakers, this approach underscores the folly of disengagement and the need to adapt strategies to technological and spatial shifts. As Wu concludes, classical geopolitics is not a relic of the past but a vital tool for navigating an anarchic world where geography still dictates destiny. In an era of rising great power competition, re-engaging with classical geopolitics offers realism the policy relevance it risks losing to abstraction. The lessons of Mahan, Mackinder and Spykman remind us that while the tools of power evolve, the map remains a blueprint for strategy.

Briefs

Israel started war, Iran will now finish it

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escalation in tensions in the Middle East, a major oil producing region. Alongside extensive air strikes, Israel's Mossad spy agency led a series of covert sabotage operations inside Iran, Axios reported, citing a senior Israeli official. These operations were aimed at damaging Iran's strategic missile sites and its air defence capabilities. Iranian state media reported that at least two nuclear scientists, Fereydoon Abbasi and Mohammad Mehdi Tehrani were killed in Israeli strikes in Tehran. Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport was closed until further notice, and Israel's air defence units stood at high alert for possible retaliatory strikes from Iran. "Following the pre-emptive strike by the State of Israel against Iran, a missile and UAV (drone) attack against the State of Israel and its civilian population is expected in the immediate time frame," Defence Minister Israel Katz said in a statement.

Iran must make a deal now, says...

FROM PAGE 01
Responding to the strikes, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei condemned the Israeli operation as a "crime" carried out by "satanic, bloodstained hands." He warned that Israel should expect "a severe punishment" and that "the powerful arm of the Islamic Republic's Armed Forces won't let them go unpunished." "The Zionist regime has prepared for itself a bitter, painful fate," Khamenei added, signaling a likely intensification of hostilities. As the region braces for possible Iranian retaliation, global powers watch closely, urging restraint while preparing for all contingencies in an increasingly volatile Middle East.

Fifth Pak – EU dialogue...

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Export Control Regimes (MECRs) and their potential impact on strategic stability. Furthermore, the dialogue highlighted the growing importance of Science Diplomacy as an area for future collaboration between Pakistan and the EU. Both delegations agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation in this field through institutional linkages and knowledge-sharing platforms. The two sides mutually agreed to convene the sixth round of the dialogue in Brussels in 2026, continuing their commitment to regular engagement on these critical issues.

Pakistan condemns illegitimate..

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the unit's headquarters in Tehran had been hit. Several children had been killed in a strike on a residential area in the capital, it said. Reacting to the attack, Pakistan said it stood in resolute solidarity with the people of Iran and unequivocally denounced the blatant provocations, which constituted a grave danger and a serious threat to the peace, security, and stability of the entire region and beyond, with serious implications.

Lawmakers condemn...

FROM PAGE 01
Expressing solidarity with the Iranian people, he affirmed that the entire Pakistani nation and its Parliament stood with Iran. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan also strongly condemned the Israeli strikes, calling Israel a threat to regional stability. He denounced the destruction of schools, universities, and hospitals in Palestine and criticized the silence of the global community. "The world is watching in silence as war crimes are being committed," he said, urging the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations to take decisive action.

As NATO ups defence spending, can Europe produce the weapons?

"This is really keeping me up at night, making sure that we not only ramp up spending, but also ramp up defence industrial production," NATO chief Mark Rutte said

BRUSSELS: NATO leaders meeting in The Hague this month look set to agree to a major increase in military budgets under pressure from US President Donald Trump. But as Europe promises to ramp up defence spending and wean itself from reliance on the United States, a key question looms: can it produce enough weapons? "This is really keeping me up at night, making sure that we not only ramp up spending, but also ramp up defence industrial production," NATO chief Mark Rutte said Thursday. More than three years into Moscow's war on Ukraine, NATO says Russia's weapons production far outstrips the West's and has warned that the Kremlin could be ready to attack the alliance within five years. The demands on NATO's European members are huge: new hardware targets agreed this month will require the biggest armament spree in decades. Rutte has pushed for a commitment to bolster defence spending to 3.5 percent of GDP within seven years, plus 1.5 percent on security-related areas such as infrastructure. That would likely work out as hundreds of billions of extra euros a year. While countries seem largely on board, German de-

fence minister Boris Pistorius last week pointed to one challenge "nobody really discusses".

"It is about how much money is really able to be spent... if industry is not able to deliver what we ordered," he told his NATO colleagues. The push to bolster output will be prominent in The Hague with NATO hosting an industry forum alongside the summit.

After years of underinvestment following the Cold War, the European Union has unveiled a raft of initiatives since Moscow's 2022 invasion. National budgets have increased and Brussels has sought to plug the funding gap with plans that could mobilise a further 800 billion euros (\$924 billion).

A major focus is making sure most of that money is spent buying weapons in Europe so the continent can stand more on its own two feet. But persistent gripes remain: businesses lack long-term orders, capacity is too low, costs are too high, production times too long and the industry too fragmented. "To some extent, the budgetary debates and the spending debates are behind us. The question is, how do you translate all of that funding into actual capabilities?" Hugues Lavandier, head of aerospace and defence for Europe at McKinsey,

told a Brussels conference.

Waiting times for new weaponry can stretch for years, and for some key equipment such as longer-range missiles, Europe still relies on the United States. But proponents say the continent has the potential to meet demand – provided governments and defence firms get a move on.

"Our assessment is that we can produce 95 plus percent of whatever we need to credibly deter and be ready," said Francois Arbault, a top official overseeing the defence industry at the European Commission. "But we need the orders and we need that manufacturing power to be actually materialised in additional investment, because you need to ramp up." Industry leaders say orders are picking up, if not as fast or for as long a period as hoped, and insist businesses are already putting money into expanding. The CEO of Swedish defence giant Saab, Micael Johansson, told AFP his firm increased its workforce by 6,000 people and quadrupled ammunition in recent years.

"Absolutely, we can do more – and fortunately, many of us have invested at risk to increase capacity," he said. "We're getting the signals that demand will be high, but I can't say that I know exactly what

target levels we're aiming for."

One fear officials have is that a sudden splurge in spending could lead to price hikes.

"There's a real risk that we get, you know, less bang for our buck because of inflation," said Matthew Whitaker, the US ambassador to NATO.

"We need to make sure that it's incremental, that it's measured, but that it's sustained."

To help smooth out barriers blocking investment, the EU is set to unveil a push to strip away red tape next week.

"It cannot be that the defence industry needs to wait five years to have a permit to build a new factory," EU defence commissioner Andrius Kubilius said. "Russian leader Vladimir Putin will not wait for us to get our paperwork in order."

One way to bolster Europe's capacity long-term could be turning to battle-hardened Ukraine.

As Russia's war has raged on, Ukrainian firms have become experts at cost-cutting and the country is now a leader in drone technology.

"The Ukrainian industry is very important," said Guntram Wolff at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels. "The products that they produce are actually low cost and very effective." – APP

Los Angeles Grand Slam Track meeting cancelled: official

"The global economic landscape has shifted dramatically in the past year, and this business decision has been made to ensure our long-term stability as the world's premier track league. Our attention is now on 2026..."

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles leg of Michael Johnson's inaugural Grand Slam Track athletics series has been cancelled, officials confirmed Thursday. The fourth and final stop on the new circuit had been due to take place at Los Angeles' Drake Stadium from June 28-29. However sources with knowledge of the situation told AFP Thursday that the meeting had now been scrapped due to "poor economics".

An official announcement later Thursday confirmed the decision. "The decision to conclude the inaugural Grand Slam Track season is not taken lightly, but one rooted in a belief that we have successfully achieved the objectives we set out in this pilot season," Johnson said in a statement.

"The global economic landscape has shifted dramatically in the past year, and this

business decision has been made to ensure our long-term stability as the world's premier track league. Our attention is now on 2026..."

Reports in the United States and Britain said the cancellation was made due to the failure to secure adequate sponsorship and broadcast revenue for the league, which was launched in Kingston, Jamaica in April. Ticket sales for the Los Angeles event had also been sluggish, reports said, with Britain's The Times saying the decision to cancel would save organizers around \$3 million in prize money and travel expenses. The cancellation is a stinging blow to Johnson's hopes of revolutionizing athletics through the circuit, which was launched as part of an attempt to reinvigorate interest in the sport after years of decline.

Johnson's stated goal of Grand Slam Track was to

produce a more concentrated format which promised more head-to-head races between the world's best athletes. However while the series was able to recruit stars such as US Olympic 200m champion Gabby Thomas and 400m hurdles icon Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, it failed to recruit a slew of top sprinting talent including the reigning men's and women's 100m champions Noah Lyles and Julien Alfred.

The series offered athletes prize money of up to \$100,000 for their overall standings after participating in two races at each meet. However, while athletes expressed enthusiasm for the series, there were clear signs it had failed to capture the imagination of fans. Swathes of empty seats were seen at the opening meeting in Kingston, while for the third meeting in Philadelphia,

the program was cut from three days to two days.

US Olympic 400m hurdles champion Rai Benjamin had been among the athletes expressing scepticism over Grand Slam Track's chances of success.

"I look at it as a business," Benjamin said before the opening meeting in April. "At the end of the day, if there's no ROI (return on investment), then you have a failed business model. And it's like, how long could you be sustainable?"

"They're not going to make any money this year, they're not going to make any money next year," Johnson however brushed off those concerns, adamant that the series would generate interest once launched. "I've started several successful businesses in my life and not a single one was profitable in year one," Johnson said. "That's not how you build businesses." – APP

Air India crash latest test for new Boeing leadership

NEW YORK: The devastating Air India crash seems certain to embroil Boeing in further rounds of negative headlines at a time when it has shown progress under new leadership.

Shares of the American plane manufacturer finished down nearly five percent Thursday as the pope, King Charles and the president of India expressed sorrow over the Boeing 787 Dreamliner carrying 242 people.

"Our deepest condolences go out to the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board Air India Flight 171, as well as everyone affected in Ahmedabad," said Boeing CEO Kelly Ortberg, adding in a statement that he told Air India's chairman Boeing would support the probe.

The calamity, the first deadly crash of a 787, comes just before Ortberg and other aerospace leaders converge at Le Bourget Airport for next week's Paris Air Show.

Prior to Thursday, industry insiders expected the focus at Le Bourget to include the aviation sector's adaptation to trade tensions, the latest state-of-the-art flying technologies and the outlook for any improvement in the supply chain that has slowed deliveries from Boeing and rival Airbus.

But the crash is also certain to be a major topic of conversation, as well as a source of speculation and sobriety. "A week from now there probably will be one or two operating hypothesis of what happened that people at the show and the public will be talking about," said Morningstar analyst Nicolas Owens. Only time will tell what the accident means for Boeing, but Owens still expects the company to rack up additional 787 orders next week in Paris.

"It's highly improbable that people conclude that it's a systemic problem with the engine or the plane," he said. – APP

US still wants talks with...

FROM PAGE 01
Israel, which relies on US diplomatic and military support, carried out the attack despite Trump earlier saying he wanted to give time for diplomacy. Secretary of State Marco Rubio earlier said that the United States was not involved in the attack and warned Iran not to retaliate against US forces stationed around the Arab world.

Crisis Unit activated at MoFA

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provide all facilitation to community members and Zaireens. The Embassy's hotline number is: (0098)-2166941388, he added.

According to Iran's state-run news agency IRAN, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami, and other military and civilian figures have been assassinated in separate Israeli strikes in Tehran.

Iran names new military top brass

FROM PAGE 01
including at the country's main uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, while Israel declared a state of emergency in anticipation of retaliatory missile and drone strikes. At least 20 senior Iranian commanders, including the head of the Revolutionary Guards, Aerospace Force Commander Amir Ali Hajizadeh, and scientists, were killed in strikes, two regional sources told Reuters. Following the confirmation, Ayatollah Khamenei swiftly appointed new Revolutionary Guards and armed forces chiefs to replace those killed.

PSX plunges over escalating...

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though some recovery has since been observed," said Amreen Soorani, Head of Research at Al Meezan Investment. "This event has significantly escalated geopolitical uncertainty, a sentiment clearly reflected in the immediate 8% surge in oil prices. Given evolving information, the broader market reaction in the coming days would be dominated by the extension and repercussion of the same." Israel confirmed it had carried out strikes on Iranian nuclear and military sites to block Tehran's alleged pursuit of atomic weapons. The Israeli military said 200 jets were used to target approximately 100 locations, including sites in Tehran, Natanz, and northwest Iran. Blasts were reported at a key Revolutionary Guard Corps facility and the Natanz uranium enrichment plant, with footage showing heavy smoke. The UN nuclear watchdog confirmed Natanz had been hit and stated it was monitoring radiation levels.

KBBA Elections Take Place Today

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The elections of the Karachi Basketball Association (KBA) will be held today (Saturday) at Faran Club, located near the National Stadium in Karachi, as announced by Ashfaq Ahmed, Chairman of the Karachi Basketball Scrutiny Committee.

In an official statement, Ashfaq Ahmed confirmed that the scrutiny process of basketball clubs in Karachi has been successfully completed. "After thorough evaluation, we have finalized a list of 16 eligible clubs that meet all required criteria," he stated.

Notices have been sent to all member clubs with voting rights, inviting them to participate in the electoral process. Additionally, relevant departments and authorities have been formally informed. Following the elections, a detailed report will be submitted to the Sports Department, Government of Sindh, the Sindh Olympic Association, and the Pakistan Basketball Federation.

From samurai threat to Asian Games

SANO: Legend has it that death threats from disgruntled samurai warriors were behind Japan's first cricket match in 1863 and the sport has battled for recognition in the baseball-mad country ever since. But Japan's cricket association, which operates out of a disused school near a wooded mountain, says the sport is slowly gaining popularity and hopes next year's home Asian Games and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics can take it to a new level. "My whole 11 years here have been about trying to provide people with opportunities to play," said Englishman Alan Curr, Japan Cricket Association's chief operations officer. "That's a lot easier if they know the sport exists. – Agencies

PSB releases more than Rs30mn as reward money for athletes, coaches

KARACHI: PSB has distributed Rs30.83 million to athletes and coaches during the 2024-25 fiscal year in accordance with the National Sports Policy. These awards were given to 29 medal-winning athletes and their coaches for outstanding performances and bringing laurels to Pakistan in various international competitions. The disbursements were made on different occasions between November 2024 and May 2025. Haider Ali, who won a bronze medal at the Paris Paralympics, received Rs5 million. Noor Zaman was similarly awarded Rs5 million for his victory in the Under-23 World Squash Championship. Other notable recipients included Muhammad Asif, who received Rs2,500,000 for winning the IBSF World Snooker Championship, and footballer Muhammad Riaz who was granted Rs2,500,000 in special funds on instruction of PM after videos of him selling jalebis went viral on social media. – Agencies

Im grabs share of US Open lead as Pavon attacks, Scheffler struggles

The 27-year-old Asian standout reeled off three consecutive birdies on the back side, a four-foot putt at the par-five 12th and 12-footers at 13 and 14

OAKMONT: South Korea's Im Sungjae seized a share of the lead of the US Open on Thursday at Oakmont with France's Matthieu Pavon making a charge and top-ranked Scottie Scheffler struggling.

Im sank a birdie putt from just inside 18 feet at the first hole, his 10th of the day, and rolled in a birdie putt from just outside six feet at the second to reach five-under par, moving one stroke ahead of clubhouse leader J.J. Spaun. But Im found the Church Pew bunker and left rough at the third on the way to his first bogey to fall back level with the American. The 27-year-old Asian standout reeled off three consecutive birdies on the back side, a four-foot putt at the par-five 12th and 12-footers at 13 and 14. Im shared fifth at this year's Masters and had his best major finish at Augusta National with a 2020 runner-up effort.

Spaun fired a four-under 66, matching the best first round at a US Open at Oakmont, with South African Thriston Lawrence on 67. Alongside Lawrence at three-under was nack-nine starter Pavon, who birdied 12 from inside three feet, the 14th from just inside eight feet and drove the green at 17 for a tap-in birdie. Scheffler endured a roller-coaster round as favorites tumbled, standing on one-over after 12 holes with four bogeys and

three bogeys. Two-time Masters champion Scheffler, whose nine wins last year included Paris Olympic gold, has won three of his past four starts, including last month's PGA Championship.

He is trying to become the first man to capture consecutive majors since Jordan Spieth in 2015. Spaun fired a four-under-par 66 for a one-stroke lead, his bogey-free round the lowest in his nine major starts and equal to the lowest first round of any US Open at Oakmont, the 66 by American Andrew Landry in 2016.

"I'm just overly pleased with how I started," Spaun said. "I hit a lot of good shots and tried to capitalize on any birdie opportunities, which aren't very many out here. "But I scrambled really well, too, which is a huge component to playing well at a US Open, let alone shoot a bogey-free round."

South Africa's Lawrence, third in last year's European Tour Race to Dubai, drove the green at 17 and sank a four-foot birdie putt then escaped the right rough to par 18 and shoot 67. "I like a tough test," he said. "I feel like it fairly suits me." World number two Rory McIlroy, who completed a career Grand Slam by winning the Masters, fired a 74. The back-nine starter birdied 11 and 12 but made four bogeys and a double bogey on his second nine.

Defending champion Bryson DeChambeau shot 73 with five bogeys and two birdies. "Pretty disappointed with how I played," DeChambeau said. Six-time US Open runner-up Phil Mickelson, who turns 55 on Monday, opened with a 74 in his bid to complete a career Grand Slam. – APP

Kohli-backed World Bowling League to roll out next year

Cricketer Kohli has been bowling and watching it since he was 11-12, says Mishra

SPORTS DESK

MUMBARI: The first edition of the World Bowling League (WBL), backed by celebrity cricketer Virat Kohli and baseball star Mookie Betts, will roll out with six franchises competing in iconic locations early next year, league chief Adi K Mishra told Reuters. The WBL is looking to transform a pastime for millions around the world into a cutting edge, made-for-TV experience via a heady mix of celebrity franchise owners, exotic locations and technological innovation.

"It's an incredible sport which just hasn't been structured correctly for the past 50-60 years and everyone just dismisses it as a recreational activity," Mishra, the founder and CEO of sports tech firm League Sports Co., said in a video call from the United States. "We are going to launch with six franchises in the first quarter of next year. It's going to be a team of four –

two male and two female bowlers." Mishra did not go into detail about the format but said professional bowlers would compete in the core sport while celebrities

would take part in auxiliary events, with teams collecting points throughout the season. With its origins in ancient Egypt, bowling's heyday in the United States was



in the 1960s and 70s when every town and suburb had its own alley.

Even today, some 200 million people put on flat-soled shoes and take to the lanes every year, including 75 million in the US, Mishra said. The WBL is by no means the first attempt to create a professional circuit in the Tenpin game, and American Don 'Mr Bowling' Carter was the first athlete in any sport to ink a \$1 million sponsorship deal back in 1964. What separates the WBL from previous attempts, Mishra says, is its global reach – the league is in the advanced stage of finalising franchises in Japan, South Korea, Singapore and India – and the ambitious vision. "Our first fundamental premise was – how can we take this and make this an aspirational product?" Mishra added. "We want to take two lanes and put them in iconic locations around the world – Hudson Yards in New York, Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, a variety of different locations in Dubai and India."

Briefs

US sees no immediate reason to ground Boeing 787 after Air India crash

WASHINGTON: US officials said on Thursday they have not seen any immediate safety data that would require halting Boeing 787 flights after a fatal Air India accident killed over 240 people. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy and Acting Federal Aviation Administration head Chris Rocheleau made the comments at a news conference and said they had seen videos of the crash in India. Duffy said he had spoken to National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy. An NTSB and FAA team, with support from Boeing and engine manufacturer GE Aerospace, was going to India, Duffy said. "They have to get on the ground and take a look. But again right now it'd be way too premature," Duffy said. "People are looking at videos and trying to assess what happened, which is never a strong, smart way to make decisions on what took place." Duffy said the FAA was reviewing information with Boeing and GE as part of the investigation into the crash. Duffy also emphasized the US government "will not hesitate to implement any safety recommendations that may arise. We will follow the facts and put safety first.—APP

SECP invites public comments on proposed amendments

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued a Consultation Paper proposing amendments to the Voluntary Pension System (VPS) Rules, 2005, aimed at enhancing access and efficiency in Pakistan's pension framework. Drones The key proposal is to allow Employer Pension Funds (EPFs) to serve multiple employers under a common fund structure, says a press release issued by the SECP on Friday. This change would enable pension fund managers to pool contributions from various employers, improving cost-efficiency through economies of scale and allowing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to offer retirement benefits without setting up separate funds.—APP

Gold prices up by Rs.4,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.4,600 and was traded at Rs.361,500 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs. 356,900 on last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported. Drones The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.4,023 to Rs.310,007 from Rs. 305,984 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it went up by Rs.3,688 to Rs.284,183 from Rs. 280,495. The rates of per tola silver also increased by Rs.35 to Rs.3,780 and ten gram silver rose by Rs.30 to close at Rs.3,240. The price of gold in the international market went up by \$46 to \$3,417, whereas the prices of silver surged by \$0.35 to \$36.22, the Association reported.—APP

Rupee sheds 29 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Friday depreciated by 29 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 282.96 against the previous day's closing of Rs 282.67. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283 and Rs 285.5 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs0.46 to close at Rs 326.39 against the last day's closing of Rs 325.93, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).—APP

Arab world, ME condemn Israel's attacks against Iran

And it affirmed Bahrain's stance advocating for the resolution of the crises through dialogue and diplomatic means, as well as the necessity of continuing US-Iranian negotiations regarding the Iranian nuclear file

DUBAI: The Arab world has responded to Israel's strikes against Iran, each country offering its condemnation of the attacks that killed at least two top military officers, raising the potential for an all-out war between the two bitter Middle East adversaries. The UAE, through its foreign affairs ministry, stressed the importance of "exercising the utmost self-restraint and judgment to mitigate risks and prevent the expansion of the conflict." "Enhancing dialogue, adhering to international law, and respecting the sovereignty of states constitute essential principles for resolving the current crises," the foreign affairs ministry added. The UAE emphasized the need to resolve disputes through diplomatic means rather than confrontation and escalation, and called on the United Nations Security Council

to take urgent and necessary measures to achieve a ceasefire, and to reinforce international peace and security. Oman offered its "strong condemnation of the brutal military aggression launched by Israel on the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which targeted sovereign facilities and caused casualties." "Oman considers this action a dangerous and reckless escalation that constitutes a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law. It also represents unacceptable and ongoing aggressive behavior that undermines the foundations of stability in the region," the country's foreign affairs ministry said. Jordan's foreign ministry spokesperson Sufian Qudah warned of the "consequences of such escalatory actions, saying they threatened regional security and stability and risk exacerbating tensions", state news agency Petra reported.

Elsewhere Qatar said it "considers the assault a blatant violation of Iran's sovereignty and security, as well as a clear breach of international law and its established principles," state news agency QNA meanwhile reported. "The State of Qatar voices its grave concern over this dangerous escalation, which forms part of a recurring pattern of aggressive policies that threaten regional peace and stability and hinder efforts aimed at de-escalation and diplomatic resolution." Qatar emphasized "the urgent need for the international community to assume its legal and moral responsibilities and to act swiftly to halt these Israeli violations." "The State of Qatar reaffirms its firm position in rejecting all forms of violence, and reiterates its call

for restraint and the avoidance of escalation that could widen the scope of conflict and undermine regional security and stability," QNA reported. Turkiye also condemned "in the strongest terms" Israel's air strike on Iran, calling it a provocation that violates international law and risks further escalation in the region. The Turkish foreign ministry in a statement said the attack showed Israel "does not want issues to be resolved through diplomatic means" and urged it to halt "aggressive actions that could lead to greater conflicts." Jassim Mohammed Al-Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), also described the Israeli attacks as a 'clear violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.' Al-Budaiwi, in a statement, called on the 'international community and the Security Council to assume their

responsibilities towards immediately halting this aggression and avoiding escalation that could ignite a wider conflict, which would have dire consequences for regional and international peace.' In its condemnation of the attacks, Bahrain's Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned of its "grave repercussions on regional security and stability". And it called for "de-escalation, restraint, and a reduction in tensions". The Ministry reiterated Bahrain's call for an immediate halt to military escalation to spare the region and its people from the consequences on regional stability, security, and international peace. And it affirmed Bahrain's stance advocating for the resolution of the crises through dialogue and diplomatic means, as well as the necessity of continuing US-Iranian negotiations regarding the Iranian nuclear file.—Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, chaired a high-level meeting to review preparations for the upcoming 12th session of the Pakistan-UAE Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) in Abu Dhabi, at MoFA.

Jordan closes airspace, says it won't be battleground for any conflict

DUBAI: Jordan has not and will not allow any violation of its airspace, nor will it be a battleground for any conflict, a senior minister said in a statement on Friday. "Jordan's national security is a red line, and the Kingdom will not allow any attempt to threaten its security and the safety of its citizens," Mohammad Momani, Minister of Government Communication and Government Spokesperson added. Royal Jordanian Air Force aircraft and air defense systems intercepted a number of missiles and drones that entered Jordanian airspace Friday morning, a report from state news agency Petra stated. The interception operation came in response to military assessments that missiles and drones were bound to fall into Jordanian territory, including populated areas, which could cause casualties, Petra added. Momani also urged the international community to exercise pressure in order to restore calm and prevent further escalation in the region. Jordan's aviation authority closed the country's airspace and grounded all flights after Israel attacked Iran. "The Kingdom's airspace is temporarily closed, and air traffic suspended for all aircraft – incoming, outgoing and in transit, as a precaution against any risks resulting from the regional escalation," the authority said in a statement. The country's armed forces were also placed on high alert in response to growing regional tensions, a military source said.—DNA

Volunteer rescuers describe horror at India plane crash site

Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking after visiting the crash site on Thursday, said the plane was carrying 125,000 litres (27,500 gallons) of fuel. The "temperature was so high that one didn't get a chance", he said

AHMEDABAD: Volunteers who rushed to help after a passenger jet crashed into a residential neighbourhood of India's Ahmedabad city described Friday the intense fireball they faced – and the challenge ahead to identify the bodies of at least 265 victims. Bharat Solanki, 51, was working at a fuel station when the Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner – carrying 242 passengers and crew – took off from nearby Ahmedabad airport around lunchtime on Thursday. Less than a minute later it ploughed into a residential area, bursting into searing flames with what residents described as an ear-splitting blast. All but one aboard the plane was killed, and at least 24 others died on the ground. Solanki and a couple of friends rushed to the site. "We saw bodies everywhere – they were in pieces, fully burnt," he said, recalling the horror of the scene. "We took out dead bodies", he said, adding that he also helped bring out those injured from the medical hostel and nearby buildings that the plane smashed into. "Everywhere just bodies, parts, body parts. The bodies were totally burnt. It was like coal." Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who visited the crash site on Friday morning, called it a "scene of devastation". He was seen peering up at a fire-blackened multi-storey building with the plane's wheels and tail embedded in a wall. Authorities have set up DNA testing for relatives of passengers and those killed on the ground to identify the scorched bodies and body parts. It may be weeks before a final death toll is confirmed. Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking after visiting the crash site on Thursday, said the plane was carrying 125,000 litres (27,500 gallons) of fuel. The "temperature was so high that one didn't get a chance", he said.—APP

US says airstrike killed Daesh official in Syria

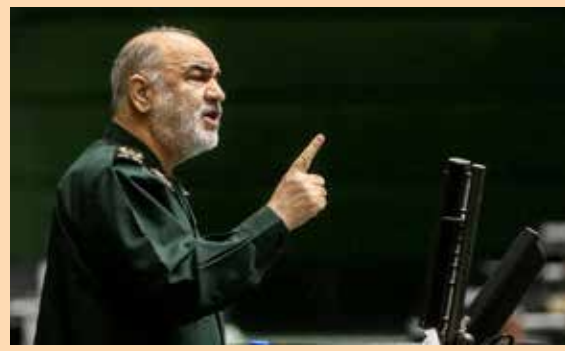
WASHINGTON: The US military announced Thursday that a recent airstrike had killed an Daesh group official in northwest Syria. In a post to social media, US Central Command said its forces "conducted a precision airstrike in northwest Syria killing Rakhim Boev, a Syria-based Daesh official," using another name for Daesh. The post on X said Boev was "involved in planning external operations threatening US citizens, our partners, and civilians." The accompanying image depicts an SUV vehicle with a bashed-in windshield and roof. AFP previously reported that two people were killed in separate drone strikes Tuesday, on a car and a motorcycle, in the northwestern bastion of the Islamist former rebels who now head the Syrian government. A call to CENTCOM seeking confirmation that the incidents are related was not immediately returned. The twin drone strikes in the Idlib region mirror the US-led coalition's past strikes on jihadists in the area. During a meeting in Riyadh last month, US President Donald Trump called on his Syrian counterpart Ahmed Al-Sharaa to help Washington prevent a resurgence by Daesh.—APP

Who was Hossein Salami, the revolutionary guards chief killed in Israeli attacks**MONITORING DESK**

NEW YORK: Israeli strikes on Iran, targeting the country's nuclear facilities, have claimed the life of the chief of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Hossein Salami, including two other commanders. According to a statement by the IRGC, its top commander, Hossein Salami, was killed in the Israeli strikes after the unit's headquarters were hit in Tehran. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a video message said, "Moments ago Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, a targeted military operation to roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival. This operation will continue for as many days as it takes to remove this threat." Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has vowed that Israel would receive "a bitter fate for itself". According to a CNN report, Hossein Salami, born in 1960 as per a United States sanctions docket, was one of the most powerful men in Iran, overseeing its most potent military arm and reporting directly to its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "Salami first joined the Revolutionary Guards – a powerful branch

of the Iranian armed forces – in 1980 during the Iran-Iraq war and became deputy commander in 2009, then commander a decade later," per a report by the BBC. The Revolutionary Guards is one of the country's most powerful military and political groups. He was known to have a hardline stance against Iran's rival countries like Israel and the United States. Salami had been sanctioned by the UN Security Council and the US for his involvement in Iran's nuclear and military programmes since 2000s, the report added. The top commander had previously warned Iran's rivals, including Israel and US, that Tehran would "open the gates of hell" if attacked, the report said. Just a day before the strikes, Salami had said that Iran was "fully ready for

any scenarios, situations, and circumstances", the report quoted him as saying. "The enemy thinks it can fight Iran the same way it fights defenceless Palestinians who are under an Israeli siege." "We are war-torn and experienced," Salami and other senior officers of the Revolutionary Guards routinely advise Iran's supreme leader, the BBC reported. According to the CNN, "Salami was at the helm of the IRGC when Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel in April and October last year, in the first direct strikes by Iran on Israeli territory." The attacks were launched by Iran in retaliation to the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, and IRGC general Abbas Nilforoushan.



When will the Ummah wake up?



TANVEER HUSSAIN

TO maintain sovereignty and achieve regional dominance, a country needs a strong military, a robust economy, diplomatic relations, and political stability. With the help of the United States, Israel has become a major military power. Its nuclear program is also nearing completion. At present, the Jewish lobby controls the global economy, and all their support

and resources are aligned with Israel. Despite being an illegitimate state, Israel has achieved remarkable diplomatic success. It is simultaneously favored by both Jewish and Christian communities. In the event of any war, the United States and all of Europe stand firmly behind Israel. On the other hand, Arab countries are rich in natural resources and generally enjoy good diplomatic relations with the world. Apart from a few exceptions, their internal law and order situation is also relatively stable. However, these countries are militarily very weak. In the 1967 war, Israel simultaneously attacked three countries and managed to ground the air forces of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria within just an hour. In this war, Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria, the Sinai Desert and Suez Canal from Egypt, and the Gaza Strip from Jordan. Al-

though in 1973 the Arabs gave Israel a tough lesson, Egypt even managed to reclaim much of the Sinai and the Suez Canal, there was a severe shortage of modern weapons. Despite initial victories, they could not completely defeat Israel. Among the Arab countries, Iraq was once a major military power, but the eight-year-long futile war between Iran and Iraq drained the entire Muslim world's resources. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait made things even worse. This mistake directly benefited the United States. America not only completely destroyed Iraq but also plundered its oil resources. After the U.S. occupation of Iraq, resistance movements only added to the destruction. Whenever Israel found an opportunity, it never hesitated to harm the Arabs. In 1981, Israel destroyed Iraq's nuclear reactor, depriving it of nuclear technol-

ogy. The assassination of Iraqi nuclear scientists in Paris dealt Iraq an irreparable blow. Now the same has been done to Iran. Israel attacked Iran and caused significant and irreversible damage to its nuclear assets. Earlier, Libya, exhausted by prolonged U.S. sanctions, voluntarily surrendered its nuclear program. In the past, Israel, in collaboration with India, made a nefarious attempt to sabotage Pakistan's nuclear program. However, Pakistan's armed forces had made excellent security arrangements. By the grace of God, the conspiracy by Israel and India did not succeed. The proxy war between Arabs and Ajams has also caused irreparable damage to the entire region. In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad's government, with the help of Iran and Hezbollah, destroyed its own country. As a result, over four million Syrians took refuge in Turkey, Lebanon,

and Jordan. A few months ago, various militant groups gained control in Syria, giving hope that perhaps now Syrian citizens may experience some peace. In Yemen, the Houthis takeover and the subsequent Saudi attacks to remove them have further complicated the regional situation. It is now time for Muslim countries to reactivate the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) platform. Instead of wasting resources and energy on internal disputes and proxy wars, they must face the common enemy together and strive for the liberation of the Holy Land, Palestine. They must work to end Indian state terrorism in Kashmir, ensure the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination in accordance with UN resolutions, and secure justice for the oppressed Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. All of this is only possible through the unity of the Muslim world.

Egypt blocks march to Gaza to draw attention to humanitarian crisis

RABAT: Egypt blocked activists planning to take part in a march to Gaza, halting their attempt to reach the border and challenge Israel's blockade on humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory before it could begin. Egyptian authorities and activists both said Thursday that people planning to march across the Sinai Peninsula were deported. To draw attention to the humanitarian crisis afflicting people in Gaza, marchers have for months planned to trek about 30 miles (about 50 kilometers) from the city of Arish to Egypt's border with the enclave on Sunday to "create international moral and media pressure" to open the crossing at Rafah and lift a blockade that has prevented aid from entering. Saif Abu Keshek, one of the activists organizing the march, said that about 200 activists – mostly Algerians and Moroccans – were detained or deported. But those arriving to the Cairo International Airport on Thursday afternoon were allowed into Egypt, the Spain-based activist added. Organizers have not received approval from Egyptian authorities for Sunday's march and were evaluating how to proceed, he said—APP

Syria condemns Israeli incursion into Damascus countryside

LONDON: The Syrian Arab Republic condemned an overnight incursion by Israeli forces into its southern territory, resulting in the death of a civilian and the detention of scores of residents. "The escalation represents a clear violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including the 1974 Disengagement Agreement," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates said in a statement on Thursday. It added that the attack undermines Syria's efforts to achieve stability and reconstruction and called on the UN Security Council "to take decisive steps to halt those repeated attacks and ensure respect for international law, in order to preserve regional security and stability." Syria's Ministry of Interior said on Thursday that the Israeli forces killed one civilian and "kidnapped seven others during a raid in the town of Beit Jinn, (in the) Damascus countryside" overnight. The Israeli forces, comprised of tanks, armored personnel carriers, and infantry vehicles, along with reconnaissance drones, entered Beit Jinn in the Qatana area in the country's southern territory, 12 km from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.—APP

Yunus meets key party leader in London

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus met in London on Friday with the leader of the South Asian nation's key party that many expect to be the frontrunner in elections next year. Tarique Rahman, 59, the son of former prime minister Khale- da Zia, is the acting chairman of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which is widely seen as likely to sweep elections that Yunus said will be held in April. The exact date of the elections remains a sticking point but they will be the first in the nation of around 170 million people since a student-led revolt ousted former premier Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, ending her iron-fisted 15-year rule. Yunus and Rahman were shown smiling and shaking hands in the meeting in London, according to photographs released by the government press team, although relations between the caretaker government and the BNP have been rocky. Yunus's government warned last month that political power struggles risked jeopardizing gains that have been made, saying that holding elections by mid-2026 would give them time to overhaul democratic institutions.—APP

Briefs

Air India flight makes emergency landing in Thailand

All 156 passengers on flight AI 379 escorted from the plane, says Airports of Thailand official

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: An Air India flight from Phuket in Thailand to India's capital New Delhi received an onboard bomb threat on Friday and made an emergency landing on the island, airport authorities said. All 156 passengers on flight AI 379 had been escorted from the plane, in line with emergency plans, an Airports of Thailand official said.

The aircraft took off from Phuket airport bound for the Indian capital at 9.30am (0230 GMT) on Friday, but made a wide loop around the Andaman Sea and landed back on the southern Thai island, according to flight tracker Flightradar24. The incident follows the crash of an Air India flight in Ahmedabad on Thursday shortly after takeoff, in which more than 240 people were killed. AOT did not provide details on the bomb threat. Air India did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Indian airlines and airports were inundated with hoax bomb threats last year, with nearly 1,000 hoax calls and messages received in the first 10 months, nearly 10 times that of 2023.

Bilawal condemns Israeli attack

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Friday strongly condemned Israel's unprovoked attack on Iran, terming it a grave threat to regional stability. In a tweet, Bilawal Bhutto expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of life caused by the strike and extended his heartfelt condolences to the Iranian people during this difficult time. "I strongly condemn Israel's unprovoked attack on Iran, which has resulted in tragic loss of life and poses a grave threat to regional stability," he said. Calling for urgent international intervention, he urged the United Nations and all responsible nations to work collectively to de-escalate tensions and uphold international law, so that peace and security may prevail over aggression and conflict. — APP

DPM holds meeting for Pak-UAE talks

ISLAMABAD, Jun 13 (AP-P): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review preparations for the upcoming 12th session of the Pakistan-UAE Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) scheduled to be held in Abu Dhabi.

The meeting was attended by SAPM to DPM Office, federal secretaries of economic affairs, commerce, maritime affairs, interior, inter-provincial coordination, national heritage, and health, along with senior officials from relevant ministries and departments, including MoFA, overseas Pakistanis, finance, railways, defence, and tourism. — APP

Senate condemns Israeli aggression

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Friday strongly condemned the Israeli aggression against Iran, reaffirmed its unwavering solidarity with the Iranian people, and fully supported their right to self-defense in the face of the ongoing hostilities. In a unanimously adopted joint resolution, the House took a strong and united stance, unequivocally condemning Israel for its heinous crimes against the Muslim Ummah, particularly targeting the brotherly nations of Palestine and Iran.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted Mango Festival at Serena Hotel

The event was attended by over 300 guests, including members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior government officers, business executives, representatives of the Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association, and officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with Serena Hotels and Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association (PFVA), hosted a Mango Festival at Serena Hotel today. The event celebrated Pakistan's world-renowned mangoes, honoring the growers, exporters, scientists, and trade partners who have elevated Pakistani mangoes to a global brand. Federal Minister of Commerce, Sardar Jam Kamal Khan, graced the event as Guest of Honour alongside Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch. The CEO of Serena Hotels, Aziz Boolani, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov of Turkmenistan, Patron-in-Chief of PFVA Waheed Ahmed, Senior Vice Chairman of PFVA Ch. Shoaib Ahmed, and Chief Executive TDAP Faiz Ahmed were present on the occasion. A large number of Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad also

participated in the event.

The Federal Minister for Commerce, in his remarks, highlighted Pakistan's distinction as producer of over 250 varieties of finest mangoes which provided an opportunity to promote Mango Diplomacy. He announced that Pakistan will continue its tradition of sharing mangoes through its diplomatic missions worldwide this year. The Federal Minister thanked the Foreign Ministry, Serena Hotels and the Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association (PFVA), for arranging the festival coinciding with the start of the mango season. In her remarks, the Foreign Secretary shared that the Mango Festival is not just a celebration of Pakistan's king of fruits—it is a symbol of vibrant Pakistani culture, its cuisine, and commerce. It reflects the richness of our soil, the dedication of our farmers, and the spirit of our people. The event was attended by over 300 guests, including members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior government officers, business executives, representatives of



the Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Association, and officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This event showcased

the potential of Pakistani mangoes as a popular fruit not only in Pakistan but also in the international market.

In Brussels
Bilawal-led delegation highlights Pak policy

Bhutto Zardari briefed the interlocutor on the regional security situation and the adverse implications of India's aggressive posture for regional trade and connectivity

BRUSSELS: A high-level Parliamentary Delegation of Pakistan, led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Member of the National Assembly and former Foreign Minister, commenced its official visit to Brussels with a series of strategic engagements focused on Pakistan's evolving regional security concerns and its principled response to recent provocations by India. The visit forms part of Pakistan's international outreach to present its perspective on the deteriorating South Asian security environment, exacerbated by India's unlawful aggression, repeated violations of international law, and its unilateral decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, a move with potentially global implications for peace, stability, and treaty based international order. In their first meeting, the delegation engaged with Bernd Lange, Chair of the Committee on International Trade (INTA) at the European Parliament. Bhutto Zardari briefed the interlocutor on the regional security situation and the adverse implications of India's aggressive posture for regional trade and connectivity. The meeting also covered Pakistan's ongoing engagement under the GSP+ framework. Bilawal Bhutto highlighted the need to insulate development and trade cooperation from destabilizing external shocks, stressing Pakistan's commitment to constructive dialogue and mutually beneficial trade with the European Union. The delegation met with Birgit Stevens, Director General for Bilateral Affairs at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and discussed the strategic dimensions of bilateral ties in the current regional context. — DNA



UN General Assembly overwhelmingly demands immediate Gaza ceasefire

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations General Assembly on Thursday adopted a resolution, by overwhelmingly majority, demanding an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Israel's war in Gaza and aid access, after the United States vetoed a similar effort in the Security Council last week. Piloted by Spain, the resolution, co-sponsored by Pakistan and 47 other states, garnered 149 votes in favour to 12 against, with 19 abstentions. Among those opposing the resolution were the United States and Israel, who were joined, among others, by Argentina, Hungary and Paraguay. India, Georgia, Ecuador, Romania and Ethiopia were among the countries abstaining. Under its terms, the resolution strongly condemns the use of starvation as a weapon of war, demands a full lifting of the Israeli blockade on humanitarian aid, and insists on the protection of civilians under international law. Although General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, they carry significant political and moral weight. On 4 June, the Security Council failed to adopt its draft resolution after a veto by the United States, a permanent member. There is no veto in the 193-member Assembly. Meanwhile, famine conditions continue to threaten lives across Gaza, and reports persist of civilians being killed or injured while trying to access food at distribution points operated independently of the UN but supported by Israel and the US. Opening the special session, General Assembly President Philemon Yang said that "the horrors in Gaza must end" after 20 months of war. He criticized the Security Council's ongoing paralysis and inability to fulfill its core responsibility to uphold peace and security. He called the situation on the ground "unacceptable", highlighting the deprivation of food, water and medicine for civilians, the continued captivity of hostages, and the need for urgent international action. President Yang noted that next week's high-level meeting in New York on implementing a two-State solution, chaired by France and Saudi Arabia, saying it would offer a chance for renewed commitment towards peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. — Agencies

'Unimaginable': families mourn dead in Air India crash

AHMEDABAD: In an echoing hall in India's Ahmedabad, mourning families gave DNA samples on Friday to identify relatives missing after a London-bound passenger jet crashed in a residential area. At least 265 people on board and on the ground were killed when the Air India 787-8 Dreamliner smashed into a residential area soon after takeoff on Thursday. Just one passenger miraculously survived the giant fireball. Ashfaq Nanabawa, 40, said he had come to find his cousin Akeel Nanabawa, who had been onboard with his wife and three-year-old daughter. He said they had spoken as his cousin sat in the plane just before takeoff. "He called us and he said: 'I am in the plane and I have boarded safely and everything was okay.' That was his last call." Nanabawa, speaking in the early hours of Friday morning, said he and his family had given DNA samples, but were yet to "identify any of the bodies" ... Friends also arrived in a desperate search for news. Premal Mehta, 39, from Ahmedabad, said he did not want to believe his friend Mahesh Jeerawala had been killed. "I am using everything in my power, political contacts, whatever it is, to find him", he said in desperation, as he supported his friend's brother, who was providing a DNA sample. Others had flown in seeking news, or to identify the dead. Ismail Sheikh said he had celebrated only days before with his friend, a London resident who had returned to see family in India. His friend was onboard with his wife and two children. — APP

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Finance Minister says
Pakistan aims to secure \$2bn commercial loan this month

Fin Min says half of this fund will be guaranteed by ADB and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

FAISAL SHIEKH

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb has said that Pakistan plans to re-enter commercial lending markets, targeting \$2 billion in funding this month to raise foreign exchange reserves to \$14 billion, The News reported. Half of this will be guaranteed by Asian Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the minister apprised the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance on Thursday. He said that while monetary policy falls under the State Bank's domain, he expects a rate cut in the upcoming meeting, with inflation likely to enter single digits next fiscal year. Aurangzeb said that the government would move towards downsizing and rightsizing in Utility Stores Corporation and Passco. "I want to make it clear that the government will move towards downsizing and rightsizing these SOEs, he told the panel. Federal Secretary Finance Imdadullah Bosal informed the committee that the government has approved a 10% salary increase for all public sector employees and a Special Relief Allowance at 50% for Armed Forces officers and 20% for Junior Commissioned Officers

(JCOs) and soldiers in the 2025-26 budget. Initially, a 6% salary hike was proposed, but the federal cabinet raised it to 10% during the budget approval meeting. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, chaired by Syed Naveed Qamar, held its first session to review the budget and finance bill. Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiyani — who assumed the role after the post-budget press conference boycott by journalists (later resolved by the Information Minister) — attended the meeting. The finance secretary briefed the committee on relief measures, including 10% salary increase for government employees, 7% pension hike, 30% Disparity Allowance to reduce pay gaps, and Special Relief Allowance at rate of 50% for officers of Armed Forces and 20% for JCOs/soldiers. Along with hiking salaries and allowance both for civilian and military personnel, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) also reduced tax rates for slabs of salaried class. The sources said that the FBR has done its working and estimated that for the first income slab earning from Rs0.6 million to Rs1.2 million, the tax rate was proposed reduction from 5% to 1% in the Finance Bill 2025-26. In the cabinet meeting when the salary of public sector was proposed to be increased from 6% to 10% then the tax rate for first slab was jacked up from one to 2.5%. It means that the tax incidence for first slab of Rs0.6 million to Rs1.2 million was increased from Rs6,000 to Rs15,000 per year.