



Islamabad POST

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Detailed News On Page-08

Sarkozy stripped of France honour after conviction

Detailed News On Page-06



Putin says ready to talk to US

Detailed News On Page-06



Massive destruction

Israel feels the heat as Iran strikes

Air raid sirens and explosions were heard by journalists in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv early Sunday, as Israel's military said millions of Israelis were "running for shelter" around the country

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iranians and Israelis woke to smoke and rubble on Sunday after the arch-rivals expanded their attacks overnight, with Israel striking Tehran's defence ministry, and Iran unleashing a deadly barrage of missiles. Air raid sirens and explosions were heard by journalists in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv early Sunday, as Israel's military said millions of Israelis were "running for shelter" around the country. Israel's emergency services said at least eight people, including children, were killed in the overnight strikes, and around 200 were wounded. In Iran's capital, AFP journalists heard a series of blasts at around 2:30 am. The third day of tit-for-tat attacks comes despite global calls for de-escalation, with Iran scrapping its latest nuclear talks with the United States, saying it could not negotiate while under fire from Israel. After decades of enmity and conflict by proxy, it is

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If pushed to wall, Iran can take war to other countries

Iran FM says has 'solid proof' US forces supported Israel

NEWS DESK / DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran had evidence to show US forces supported the intense bombardment campaign Israel launched against the Islamic republic this week. "We have solid proof of the support of the American forces and American bases in the region for the attacks of the Zionist regime military forces," Araghchi told foreign diplomats in a meeting broadcast on state TV. He said that Israel had "crossed a new red line" by targeting Iran's

nuclear sites in strikes. The FM slammed the United Nations Security Council, accusing it of "indifference" over Israel's deadly attacks on Iran. Araghchi said the Israeli attack "is being met with indifference at the Security Council", adding that Western governments have "condemned Iran instead of Israel despite it being the side that was violated". He further stated that the attacks on Israel will end once Israel halts its military campaign against the Islamic republic. "We are defending ourselves; our defence is entirely legitimate," said Araghchi in a meeting with foreign diplomats, adding that "this defence is our response to aggression. If the aggression stops, naturally our responses will also stop."



TEL AVIV: A view of destroyed buildings in the Central part of Israel, hit by the Iranian missiles. – DNA

Grenade attack martyrs two police officials

Unidentified assailants threw hand grenade at police mobile unit on patrol in Tota Colony, say police officials

DNA

QUETTA: In a shocking incident, two policemen were martyred and one injured in a grenade attack on a police vehicle in the Sui area of Dera Bugti district, Balochistan. According to police officials, unidentified assailants threw a hand grenade at a police mobile unit on patrol in the Tota Colony of Sui, which resulted in a loud explosion. The explosion martyred two officers, Nasruddin and Rahim Ali, while another officer, Sub-Inspector Anwar, was injured and was transferred to Sui Hospital.

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Field Marshal Asim Munir welcomed in US with

COAS Munir is visiting the US for a week, reportedly at the invitation of US military leadership

DNA

LONDON / NEW YORK: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir has been welcomed in the United States with an appreciation campaign going live on the iconic Times Square billboard in New York City (NYC). Field Marshal Munir is visiting the US for a week, reportedly at the invitation of US military leadership.

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'Baseless propaganda'

Pakistan denies supplying ballistic missiles to Iran

Security sources reject reports claiming Pakistan provided non-nuclear ballistic missiles to Iran

Trump flexes military might at parade

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump hosted the largest US military parade in decades on his 79th birthday on Saturday, as protesters rallied across the country to accuse him of acting like a dictator. Trump hailed the

MORE NEWS ON BACK PAGE

United States as the "hottest country in the world" after watching tanks, aircraft and troops file past him in Washington to honor the 250th anniversary

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Pakistan extends felicitations to Bulgaria

"This special occasion is a testament to the cordial and enduring friendship between our two nations over the decades"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday extended the warmest felicitations to the leadership and people of Bulgaria on the landmark occasion of the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Bulgaria. "This special occasion is a testament to the cordial and endur-

ing friendship between our two nations over the decades," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. To commemorate this occasion, the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Bulgaria exchanged congratulatory messages celebrating our shared achievements. The messages emphasized their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation across various sectors in the interests of both nations.

Briefs

Over 400 Pakistani pilgrims evacuated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has asked its citizens to avoid travelling to Iran for a limited period in light of recent Israeli attacks. In its advisory issued for the citizens, the government said it is closely monitoring the situation and remains fully committed to the protection of its citizens. In light of the evolving regional situation, the Government of Pakistan is taking necessary measures for the welfare and safety of Pakistani nationals: Evacuation of 450 Pakistani Zaireen from Iran has been facilitated as of yesterday. Arrangements are being made for the safe evacuation of Pakistani students (154 in the first batch) currently residing in Iran. Our Embassy in Iraq is in contact with Pakistani zaireen who are stranded due to the closure of airspace. Measures are underway to ensure their safe stay in Iraq and possible evacuation.

6,000 flights cancelled in two days

Tel Aviv, Tehran, Baghdad airports closed; partial access via Jordan, Lebanon

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Due to the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran, 6,000 flights have been cancelled globally over the past two days. According to aviation sources, Tel Aviv Airport in Israel has been the most affected, while airports in Damascus, Baghdad, Tehran, Beirut, and Amman's Queen Alia Airport remain continuously closed. Sources added that the airspace over Iran, Baghdad in Iraq, and Israel has been closed for two consecutive days, while certain flights have been allowed to pass through the airspace of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria only with prior approval and under partial restrictions.

Imran Khan release issue

Will respond with bullets if fired upon', warns KP CM

KP CM urges PTI supporters to come out in their respective tehsils on June 22

SHAMIM SHAHID / DNA

PESHAWAR: In a show of his aggressive political style, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has once again warned of an armed march towards Islamabad, vowing that any attack on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters would be met with force. The News reported on Sunday. "If a bullet is fired at us, we will respond with bullets and not just fire back but strike with full force," Gandapur said while addressing a rally held in the Mathra area on the outskirts of Peshawar to demand the release of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan. The former ruling party, along with the ex-prime minister Khan, have been facing an uphill battle on both legal and political fronts with the party founder and senior leaders such as Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others

being behind bars in various cases. The PTI has marched on to the federal capital on multiple occasions leading to confrontations with law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and mass arrests of workers and leaders which were followed by its highly anticipated negotiations with the government, which as hoped by many, failed to bear much fruit after the PTI boycotted it citing government's failure to form a judicial commission to probe the May 9, 2023 riots and November 2024 Islamabad protest. Last month, sources said that Khan had agreed to initiate dialogue with the government – marking a major political shift in the party's stance which has time again stressed on engaging with the establishment as opposed to the government. However, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar soon afterwards

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What is the likely future of Isarel-Iran war

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



AS the specter of war looms over the Middle East, the world watches with anxious eyes the unfolding confrontation between Israel and Iran. On the surface, the conflict appears to be a direct military standoff between two long-time adversaries. But dig deeper, and the fingerprints of global powers—chiefly the United States—become unmistakably visible. Former U.S. President Donald Trump, in his characteristic style, declared that the United States was "not involved" in Israel's military strikes against Iran's nuclear facilities. Yet this statement rings hollow. The notion that Israel could launch such a complex and far-reaching operation without American support strains credulity. Israel's military capabilities, though formidable, are heavily reliant on U.S. intelligence, logistics, and high-tech weaponry. The targeting of Iranian nuclear infrastructure—often buried deep underground and protected by cutting-edge defense systems—would require not only precision-strike capabilities but also satellite data, cyber-intelligence, refueling logistics, and advanced radar-jamming support. These are capabilities Israel does not possess independently in sufficient volume.

“The most profound tragedy would be if the Muslim world failed to read the writing on the wall. Unity, not division, is the need of the hour. Because if Iran falls today, the fire may spread—and tomorrow’s target could be much closer to home”

The question is why the blatant denial from Trump and the cautious language from the current administration? The answer lies in Washington's balancing act. By denying involvement, the U.S. seeks to preserve its role as a potential mediator in any future Iran-Israel de-escalation effort. Admitting complicity in the strikes would undermine America's diplomatic leverage not only with Iran but also with many of its regional partners. Moreover, it would open the floodgates of international condemnation and possibly even retaliatory attacks on U.S. assets in the Middle East. However, Trump's threat that if "U.S. facilities were attacked, America would respond with full force" reveals the inherent contradiction in Washington's narrative. If the United States is not involved, why issue such a warning? The subtext is clear: the U.S. is indeed involved—at least tacitly, if not operationally. Washington's true concern is managing the blowback.

At the core of this conflict is not just Israel's security, but a broader geopolitical ambition shared by many in the West: regime change in Iran. For decades, the Islamic Republic has been a thorn in the side of both American and European foreign policy establishments. Its clerical leadership, rooted in anti-Western ideology, has refused to integrate into the liberal international order. The U.S. and EU have grown increasingly frustrated with Iran's nuclear ambitions, its support for regional militias, and its suppression of dissent. Thus, the current military campaign is not just about neutralizing nuclear threats; it is also about weakening the Iranian regime's grip on power. A destabilized Iran, the thinking goes, might give way to a more liberal, democratic leadership—more amenable to Western interests. Europe's muted response to Israel's aggression reinforces this theory. Rather than issuing a strong condemnation, EU leaders have merely called for "non-escalation." The absence of real diplomatic pressure on Israel suggests tacit approval of its objectives. Equally concerning for Iran is the presence of internal fissures within its establishment. The success of Israeli strikes has reportedly been aided by intelligence leaks from within Iran—leaks that point to moles embedded in the political and military hierarchy. This internal betrayal hints at a deeper rot: a lack of national cohesion and rising disaffection among segments of the Iranian populace and establishment alike. Some observers argue that the clerical regime's dwindling popularity has made it more vulnerable to both foreign attack and internal dissent. Years of economic sanctions, political repression, and

broken promises have taken their toll on public morale. The current crisis, therefore, is not just external but deeply internal. Iran's government finds itself fighting a war on two fronts—against Israel abroad and against discontent at home. This situation should ring alarm bells across the Muslim world. As Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif rightly pointed out in his address to the National Assembly on June 14, 2025: "If today is Iran, tomorrow it may be Pakistan or any other Muslim country." His words serve as a stern warning and a clarion call for unity among Muslim nations. It is no longer sufficient to view this as a localized Iran-Israel conflict. This is a broader campaign that could target any Muslim country seen as resisting Western or Israeli interests. Minister Asif's suggestion that Muslim countries maintaining diplomatic ties with Israel should reconsider their positions is both timely and urgent. While diplomacy should never be abandoned lightly, engagement with a state that undertakes unilateral military aggression against another Muslim country demands a moral reckoning. Maintaining ties while turning a blind eye to such actions sends the wrong message: that economic and political expediency trumps principles of sovereignty, justice, and solidarity. The road ahead is fraught with peril. If

Iran chooses to retaliate directly against Israeli or U.S. assets, the region could spiral into a full-scale war with global ramifications. Already, regional militias aligned with Iran—such as Hezbollah and the Houthis—have begun mobilizing, and any miscalculation could light the fuse of a wider conflagration. Conversely, if Iran absorbs the blows and avoids a kinetic response, it risks emboldening its enemies and further weakening internal morale. In either case, the situation is untenable unless addressed through comprehensive regional diplomacy. But for that to happen, the U.S. must first come clean about its role and choose whether it wants to be a participant in war or a broker of peace. As it stands, its current duplicity undermines its credibility. The Israel-Iran war is not just a regional showdown—it is a flashpoint in a global struggle for influence, ideology, and identity. With America deeply implicated despite its denials, and Europe silently complicit through inaction, Iran finds itself isolated and under siege. Its internal vulnerabilities and external threats have converged into a perfect storm. But the most profound tragedy would be if the Muslim world failed to read the writing on the wall. Unity, not division, is the need of the hour. Because if Iran falls today, the fire may spread—and tomorrow's target could be much closer to home.

CM announces free higher education for workers' kids

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched a landmark initiative offering free higher education to the children of industrial and mine workers at COMSATS University. Under the program, the Punjab government will bear all educational expenses, marking a historic step towards uplifting the working class through education. The CM talking about the initiative said, "Children of workers will be admitted to seven campuses of COMSATS University, and the Punjab government will pay their fees." She added that workers are the crown of the nation, and her government is determined to provide

them with every essential facility, especially in the fields of education and healthcare. "The doors of higher education are now open for every worker's child in Punjab. No child will be deprived of education due to financial hardship," she affirmed, adding that these measures reflect a commitment to social justice that has no precedent in the province's history. CM Maryam Nawaz added that children of registered workers, including those of deceased and disabled workers, would be eligible for this opportunity across all major campuses of COMSATS University, Islamabad, Lahore, Abbottabad, Wah, Attock, Sahiwal, and

Vehari. She noted that the initiative is a testament to her government's inclusive vision and dedication to improving the lives of laborers through meaningful, long-term support. Relevant authorities briefed the Chief Minister that the Worker Welfare Fund has opened the application process and that deadlines vary by campus, ranging from early July to mid-August. Applicants are required to apply online through the university's official website and must also submit relevant documents at the admission office. These include copies of the worker's CNIC, registered worker certificate, the student's CNIC or B-Form, and proof of social security or old age benefit enrollment.—APP

Kundi urges proactive social media engagement

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized the undeniable role of social media across Pakistan, particularly in shaping public opinion in sensitive regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He stressed the need for political forces to become more active in the digital arena to positively influence the mindset of the youth. He expressed these views while addressing a central meeting of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) digital team held in Islamabad. The meeting focused on the party's digital strategy, upcoming social media campaigns, and strengthening public engagement through online platforms. The session saw active participation from PPP's Central Secretary for Information Nadeem Afzal Chan, Sindh's Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, MNA Qasim Gillani, Senator Nadeem Bhutto, and digital media heads from various divisions. Additionally, PPP's overseas digital activists from the UK, Canada, Germany, UAE, Saudi Arabia, the US, and other countries joined the meeting via Zoom. Governor Kundi said that digital media has become a powerful tool in influencing public discourse, particularly in a province like KP. "Unfortunately, certain elements are spreading lies and fake news to mislead our youth. It is our responsibility to counter disinformation with truth and promote narratives based on national unity," he said.—APP

'Murree Summer Fest' inaugurated

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Arts Council here on Sunday launched the 'Murree Summer Fest' at Jinnah Road under the patronage of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

The festival features performances by renowned artists including singer Ali Zafar, classical musician Zain Zohaib, vocalist Umer Abbas, singer Sonu and comedian Jani.

The festival, being organized under the special directives from Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azmaa Bukhari, is hosted and preceded by Ayesha Jehanzeb and poet Ali Zaryon.

"The cultural initiative aims to provide quality entertainment while promoting our regional arts," said a spokesperson Punjab Arts Council. He further said that the festival is expected to enhance Murree's tourism and cultural vibrancy.

Visitors can enjoy the festive activities throughout the day at the main Jinnah Road venue.

Proposals form SWAT, sniper teams for competitions reviewed

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired an important meeting at the Central Police Office on Sunday to review proposals for establishing Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Sniper teams to participate in national and international competitions. Senior officers including Additional IG Elite Dr Muhammad Waqar Abbasi, Additional IG Training Tariq Rustam Chauhan, DIG Elite, Commandant Elite Police Training School, AIG Logistics, and AIG Procurement were in attendance. The IGP stressed the importance of showcasing Punjab police's capabilities in national and international special forces and shooting competitions. He directed that elite teams comprising the most skilled commandos and snipers be constituted and provided with modern weaponry and advanced tactical training. Dr Usman Anwar said that the professionalism and operational excellence of Punjab Police's special forces are on a par with the world's leading civil armed forces. He noted that Punjab Police personnel, equipped with cutting-edge training, excel in crime fighting, tactical operations, and sniper expertise. He expressed confidence that the force will demonstrate its competence and discipline in upcoming international contests.—APP

BISP to launch retail-based payment model

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) is set to launch its new retail-based payment model from Monday (June 16) to protect the beneficiaries from severe heat wave conditions, marking a major shift from the traditional campsite-based disbursement mechanism. This transition aims to ensure safer, more dignified, and accessible payment services for beneficiaries, especially in light of the ongoing heatwave across several regions. In preparation for the disbursement of the Quarter 4 tranche, Additional Secretary BISP Dr. Tahir Noor visited District Khanewal today. The purpose of the visit was to assess field readiness, review arrangements, and engage with district teams and representatives of partner banks to ensure seamless execution of the new payment system. Dr. Tahir Noor underscored that the retail model is being introduced to provide beneficiaries with an improved experience through convenient

access points, biometric verification, and a more transparent process that includes printed receipts. He reiterated BISP's commitment to ensuring that cash transfers are made in a manner that upholds the dignity, ease, and respect of every beneficiary. He directed partner banks to ensure the full functionality of all retail outlets. This includes the presence of trained staff, the availability of biometric devices, reliable network connectivity, and the visible display of awareness material to guide beneficiaries at each payment point. Dr. Noor also instructed BISP field teams to conduct clear and timely communication campaigns so that all beneficiaries are informed well in advance about the new disbursement procedures. Earlier in the week, Dr. Tahir Noor visited Multan and Bahawalpur as part of his broader South Punjab oversight tour. During these visits, he reviewed field preparations and engaged in coordination meetings with

regional BISP officials and representatives of partner financial institutions. He emphasized the importance of strong coordination among all stakeholders, including BISP field staff, partner banks, local administrations, and the beneficiaries themselves. He stressed that the singular focus of all teams should be the delivery of full cash grants to the intended recipients while ensuring their comfort and respect throughout the process. The new retail payment model will formally go into effect from June 16. Beneficiaries are advised to visit only their designated retail outlets with their original CNICs. They must collect their full payments along with printed receipts. In case of any issues or complaints, beneficiaries are encouraged to contact their respective Tehsil BISP office or call the BISP helpline at 0800-26477. This transformation in the payment mechanism represents a significant step forward in BISP's mission to deliver citizen-centric.—APP

Babusar Top: A mesmerizing journey

PESHAWAR: The dramatic interplay of sunshine and clouds, often accompanied by moderate to erratic rainfall, paints a mesmerizing landscape at historic Babusar Top, the high-altitude mountain pass nestled in upper Kaghan Valley of Mansehra district. Attracting thousands of tourists during summer especially holidays of Eidul Azha, travelling to Babusar Top from Naran leaves imprints of natural beauty with lakes, meadows, green hill tops and zigzagging road to be reminded in tourists minds for years. People from all across the country through this destination, located at a breathtaking altitude of 13,691 feet that connects Upper Kaghan and Naran in Mansehra with Chilas in Gilgit-Baltistan. "I have visited many places within Pakistan and abroad, but nothing compares to the natural splendor of Babusar—a home to thrill and adventure," said Muhammad Imran, a 40-year-old architect from C&W Department in Peshawar. Captivated by the awe-inspiring beauty of Babusar Pass, Imran revealed enjoying chilled drinks stored in nearby glaciers while listening the patriotic song "Dil Dil Pakistan in his car on his way to Babusar Top from Naran. Pakistan's flag hoisted proudly atop the pass welcomes thousands of tourists and adventure seekers each summer. Visitors are drawn to its waterfalls, pristine lakes, dodara forest, meadows and birds chirping echo through lush valleys from Kaghan-Naran to Babusar Top. The tourist recounts his journey from Lower Naran Manshera where he enjoyed local delicacies such as Chapli Kabab, brown trout in relatively cold weather and from there, to legendary Lake Saiful Malook, famed in folklore for the Persian prince Saiful Malook and the fairy princess Badri Jamal. "During our jeep journey from Naran to Babusar trip, we experienced hiking toward Ansu Lake, witnessing Sooch waterfall's icy cascades amid great fun and excitement," he shared. The journey toward Babusar is dotted with captivating stops like glacial Lulusar Lake at 11,190 feet, surrounded by snow-capped peaks and azure waters. Small roadside shops along Bhattal town, offered unique gifts— Palosa and Ber honey, woolen shawls, caps and glacier-chilled drinks Sher Zaman, a local honey vendor, said the prized Palosa and Ber honey — sourced from Karak and Lachi Kohat — is popular among tourists and even exported to Gulf countries due to its purity. However, the region's natural charm faces threats like deforestation, glaciers melting, unregulated construction and deteriorating road conditions exacerbated by climate change and timber mafia are affecting the pristine environment.—DNA

Gambling s trap youth, unemployed persons

MULTAN: A silent digital trap is catching thousands of young people, students and unemployed labourers across south Punjab as gambling s cleverly disguised as harmless mobile games and looting people. These s are spreading fast through social media, offering the false hope of "easy money from home." But behind the colorful graphics and catchy slogans lies a deep financial and mental danger. These s promote various games. At first glance, they seem like simple fun. But as soon as, a user signs up, they are welcomed with free bonuses, sometimes Rs 500 or more just to play. In the beginning, they win small amounts. Encouraged by early success, many users start putting in

their own money, hoping to earn even more. That's when the real loss begins, said IT experts while talking to . "I thought I could earn some side income by playing a game online. But within two weeks, I had lost Rs 15,000," shared a college student on condition of anonymity. His story is not unique. From students to unemployed adults, these s are pulling people in with big promises and pushing them towards debt, anxiety, and depression. Once hooked, many users begin spending more time and money than they can afford. The excitement turns into obsession. "The kept sending me notifications repeatedly. In many cases, these s operate from outside country and avoid legal

consequences by changing names frequently. IT experts stated that there was weak digital monitoring system. Although, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and FIA Cybercrime Wing have banned several such s in the past, but new versions continue to surface Making matters worse, many social influencers promote these s in exchange for money. They call them "income games" or "earning tricks," tricking their followers into trying them. Most viewers don't know that these promotions are often paid advertisements. Similarly, Psychologists are also found issuing warning of a growing mental health crisis linked to these s. Many people become addicted, and their

focus, sleep, studies, and relationships suffer badly. "It's a digital addiction that leads to gambling addiction. Families across South Punjab are reporting unexpected financial losses and emotional tension. In many cases, parents only learn about it when it's too late. Citizens are calling for strong awareness campaigns, especially in schools, colleges and universities. They also recommend strict monitoring of stores. IT experts stated, people need to know that there is no such thing as easy money. Real income comes from real work not spinning a wheel or betting on a fake game. It's time to raise voice before more dreams are destroyed by these flashy lies, they added.—APP



LAHORE: Former Federal Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Food safety team conducts operation in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN :On the special directives of Deputy Director Wasif Khan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KP FS&HFA) team carried out an inspection operation on Multan Road, targeting food outlets and beverage vendors to ensure compliance with hygiene and safety standards. During the operation, a mobile laboratory was used to conduct on-the-spot testing of various food and beverage samples. The team assessed the quality and safety of items being sold, aiming to safeguard public health and maintain food standards. Vendors were issued clear instructions to uphold cleanliness, adopt hygienic practices, and maintain the quality of their products. Strict warnings were given where violations were observed. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Director Wasif Khan stated, "Ensuring safe and hygienic food is a top priority. These field inspections are meant to create awareness and accountability among food business operators. We urge all vendors to strictly follow health regulations to avoid action." The operation is part of a broader campaign to enforce food safety regulations across the district and protect consumers from substandard and unsafe food.—APP

Major funds approved for Rwp uplift projects, water schemes

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman District Coordination Committee, Engineer Qamar ul Islam Raja MNA, announced the approval of major development funds worth billions of rupees by the Punjab Government in its annual development plan for various projects across Rawalpindi district, including NA-53 constituency. The Budget 2025-26 will be presented on Monday (16th June) in the Punjab Assembly. Talking exclusively to media here on Sunday, Raja Qamar ul Islam confirmed that the long-pending amount of Rs.9.0 billion has also been fixed for the Rawalpindi Ring Road project, which will be immediately released to accelerate regional development. He informed that approvals include Rs. 21.0 crore for Jorian Hospital and

Rs. 11.0 crore for Pothohar Town Rawat Hospital to complete pending work. For infrastructure development, Rs. 2.3 billion was approved for dualization of Gorakhpur-Khasala Khurad Road and Rs. 1.7 billion for Tulsah Morr Adiala Road Underpass to reduce travel time between Adiala Road and Chontra areas. "We are implementing a network of development projects across NA-53 to provide better facilities to residents", he said while highlighting the mega road network initiatives. "The approval of Rs. 3.5 billion for Khawaja Corporation Flyover and underpass will significantly improve connectivity", he added. Qamar highlighted that allocation of Rs. 1.8 billion to revive the Mujahid Dam project following Mohota Dam's completion has also been approved and added in the develop-

ment plan, with efforts underway to secure additional funds for its completion by fiscal year 2025-26. Rs. 15.0 crore approved for feasibility studies to utilize Swaan River water for Rawat and Chontra areas. Road infrastructure projects include Rs. 2.0 crore for Choor Sharif to Malukal Road, Rs.15.0 crore for Dhok Budhal to Sukho Road linking Rawat directly with Chakwal Road. To expedite water supply schemes, Rs.1.0 crore has been allocated for designing supply systems from Dhoke Chuh Dam, avoiding construction delays. Other water initiatives include Rs. 6.0 crore for Mohri Ghazan, Lakhana and Dhamial supply schemes, Rs. 7.0 crore for Dhoke Budhal water scheme restoration and drainage, Rs. 2.8 crore for Malukal water scheme rehabilitation Rs. 1.5 crore for drainage in Jorian and UC Dhamial.

DIG reviews security measures at diplomatic enclave

DNA

ISLAMABAD :Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Headquarters/Security, Syed Ali Raza, on Sunday visited the entry and exit points of the Diplomatic Enclave to review security arrangements. During the visit, DIG Raza met with Islamabad Police officers and personnel on duty and emphasized the importance of tightening the inspection process. He directed that every vehicle be thoroughly checked before being allowed entry. DIG Raza reviews security measures at diplomatic enclave DIG Raza said that the

protection of all important buildings within the Diplomatic Enclave was a top priority. "We must remain vigilant and keep a close watch on any suspicious movements," he said and added, "Given the current national situation, we must be prepared to handle any untoward incidents and ensure all arrangements are in place to maintain peace and tranquility." The DIG said that Islamabad Police would not allow any disruption to peace and order in the federal capital and would take all necessary actions to protect lives, property and public and private assets. "All resources will be employed to prevent malicious elements

from achieving their nefarious goals," he said. DIG Raza reviews security measures at diplomatic enclave DIG Raza further directed the officers to strengthen security measures, enhance patrolling in the Diplomatic Enclave, and ensure more effective checks. Senior officers were instructed to personally brief personnel regarding potential emergencies and check all duty posts. DIG Raza also emphasized that all personnel on duty must wear clean uniforms and ensure the proper use of equipment. Any negligence or laxity in duties, he warned, would lead to strict departmental action.

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EXPORTERS OF
MARTIAL ARTS UNIFORMS
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PAKISTAN

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KARATE
KUNG-FU
JU-JITSU
TAEKWONDO
UNIFORMS AND
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WHERE EACH STITCH IS WATCHED

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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

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RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666



Departments

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CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Experts urge timely desilting of drains to prevent monsoon losses

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecasts the monsoon to commence around June 23 and continue until September, with potential flash floods and urban inundations, particularly in regions like Koh-e-Suleman, Sindh, AJK, KPK, Punjab, and Islamabad

SAIFULLAH ANSAR/AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD:As Pakistan braces for a 13% increase in rainfall during the 2025 monsoon season, experts warn that inadequate drainage infrastructure could exacerbate flood risks and economic losses. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecasts the monsoon to commence around June 23 and continue until September, with potential flash floods and urban inundations, particularly in regions like Koh-e-Suleman, Sindh, AJK, KPK, Punjab, and Islamabad. Experts emphasize that without proactive drainage maintenance—such as clearing debris and removing blockages—the country faces significant economic repercussions.

Monsoon-induced flooding has historically inflicted severe economic damage across South Asia. For instance, the 2020 floods in the region caused an estimated \$105 billion in damages, with Pakistan alone accounting for \$1.5 billion of that total. Similarly, in 2024, Nepal experienced floods resulting in over Rs17 billion in losses, primarily affecting agriculture and infrastructure.

These recurring disasters underscore the urgent need for improved drainage systems to mitigate economic losses and enhance resilience against future floods. In Islamabad, sectors such as G-10, F-10, I-10, and I-9 face chronic drainage issues. Drains are often clogged with solid waste, including plastic bags, bottles, food waste, and construction debris.

During the monsoon, these drains become further obstructed with soil, sand, and shrubs, significantly reducing their capacity and causing water to overflow into residential areas. Residents have repeatedly urged authorities to clean and maintain these drains to prevent property damage.

Environmental experts highlight that the worsening flood situation is not solely due to increased rainfall but also due to climate change, neglected infrastructure, and insufficient public awareness about the consequences of dumping waste into drainage channels.

Informal settlements, particularly in sectors like G-6, F-6, G-7, F-7, and G-8, are often situated along drain canals. These areas are at high risk of floodwater intrusion, which can cause significant damage to infrastructure. Experts recommend issuing timely warnings to these communities to take necessary precautions.

Experts note that sediment accumulation in drains reduces their width and capacity. For example, a drain that was once 100 feet wide may now be only 50 feet wide due to sediment buildup. This narrowing increases the risk of overflow and flooding, as the same volume of water is forced through a much narrower channel.

Low-cost houses, especially those with basements or illegal connections to drains, are particularly vulnerable to floodwater intrusion. Experts urge authorities to prioritize drainage maintenance and infrastructure improvements ahead of the monsoon season.

Proactive measures, such as regular cleaning of drains and raising public awareness about the importance of proper waste disposal, are essential to mitigate flood risks and economic losses.

Addressing these issues can significantly reduce the impact of monsoon floods and protect both lives and livelihoods. Environmentalist Muhammad Aslam urged authorities to take immediate action in informal settlements, particularly in sectors G-6, F-6, G-7, F-7, and G-8, where many homes are built along drainage canals.

“These areas are highly vulnerable to flooding, and residents should be issued timely warnings to take precautions,” he said. Aslam also highlighted that sediment accumulation is drastically reducing drain capacities.

“A drain that was once 100 feet wide is now about 50 feet due to unchecked buildup,” he explained. “The same volume of water now pushes through a tighter space, raising the risk of overflow into nearby neighborhoods.”

He further warned that low-cost houses, especially those with basements or illegal drain connections, are at serious risk.

“When floodwaters reach the end of these narrow, poorly maintained drains, they spill over into residential areas with devastating consequences,” he added.

SSP vows zero tolerance for crime in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations Islamabad, Muhammad Shoaib Khan, chaired an important meeting regarding crime prevention and directed a strict crackdown on hardened criminals, members of active gangs, and proclaimed offenders. An official told APP that SSP Shoaib instructed officers to closely monitor habitual offenders, enhance the effectiveness of police patrolling, and ensure the arrest of suspects and recovery of stolen items in cases of robbery, theft, and motorcycle and car lifting. He emphasized that all available resources should be utilized to curb criminal activities and that the arrest of individuals involved in serious crimes must be prioritized.

SSP Shoaib also stressed that arrested individuals must be challaned with solid evidence to ensure strict legal action and successful convictions. He directed officers to take indiscriminate action against land grabbers, drug peddlers, and those possessing illegal weapons. He urged unwavering efforts in the arrest of absconders and the completion of investigations based purely on merit.

SSP Shoaib further stated that effective handling of public complaints at the police station level must be ensured and that officers should prioritize resolving citizens' issues. He warned that corruption, misconduct, and misuse of authority would not be tolerated, and any complaints in this regard would be dealt with strictly—APP



ISLAMABAD: A large number of youngsters bathing in Rawal Dam spillway water to get some relief from hot weather in Federal Capital.

Kundi assures support to foreign medical graduates

ISLAMABAD:Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, in a meeting with Dr. Tahir Sikandari, President of the Foreign Medical Young Doctors Association (FMYDA), at Governor House here on Sunday discussed the challenges faced by young doctors who have graduated from foreign medical institutions. During the meeting, Dr. Sikandari highlighted the pressing issues encountered by foreign medical graduates, particularly the lack of honorary house job opportunities provided by the provincial government.

In response, Governor Kundi assured that he would engage with senior officials to address the issue and find a viable solution. Dr. Sikandari also raised concerns about the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council's (PMDC) recent decision to increase the passing marks for the licensing exam from 50% to 70%, calling it an unfair move that would severely impact foreign graduates.

Governor Kundi promptly contacted Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal to convey these concerns and affirmed his commitment to resolving the matter through all available channels. Dr. Sikandari expressed gratitude to Governor Kundi for his swift action and continued support, particularly for immediately engaging with the federal minister to advocate for the rights and welfare of foreign-trained young doctors.

Meanwhile, Former student leader and prominent figure of the Pashtun community in Karachi, Malik Arshad Kundi, met with the Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, at the Governor House in Islamabad.—DNA

PAEC serve over 40,000 new cancer patients each year

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) serve over 40,000 new cancer patients each year, collectively performing an impressive 1 million diagnostic and treatment procedures. PAEC is at the forefront of the nation's battle against cancer, providing critical care through its extensive network of 20 Atomic Energy Cancer Hospitals (AECs). In a statement released on Sunday by its Public Relations Directorate, PAEC underscored its six decades of unwavering commitment to cancer care, stating, “With a legacy built on six decades of expertise, around 80% of Pakistan's all types of cancer patients are treated by PAEC's AECs, offering advanced diagnostic and treatment services at highly subsidised rates.”

The statement further highlighted the advanced technological capabilities within the AEC network: “Equipped with cutting-edge technology, our hospitals deliver comprehensive cancer management through specialized departments in Nuclear Medicine, Radiology, Radiation Oncology, and Medical Oncology. Our facilities boast state-of-the-art equipment, including PET-CT, SPECT-CT, Cyclotrons, Linear Accelerators, Cyber Knife, and Brachytherapy, complemented by modern MRI, CT scan, and digital X-ray systems.”

PAEC also emphasized its commitment to innovation, noting, “We remain dedicated to adopting the latest advancements in cancer treatment, including sophisticated techniques such as Volumetric Modulated Arc Therapy (VMAT), Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT), and the innovative field of Theranostics.”

The statement also acknowledged the crucial role of specialized personnel: “Dedicated Medical Physicists' teams are integral to our operations, ensuring the highest levels of precision in treatment planning and radiation safety protocols. Furthermore, our integrated diagnostic laboratories provide rapid and reliable haematology, pathology, and chemical testing, essential for timely and accurate diagnoses.”

Looking towards the future, PAEC stressed its commitment to professional development: “Capacity-building is a key priority for PAEC.—DNA

Yango's rapid fall further erodes public trust in ride-hailing

ISLAMABAD: Yango, once welcomed as a cheaper, more convenient alternative in Pakistan's crowded ride-hailing scene, the service now faces growing backlash over poor safety standards, unreliable vehicles, and an increasingly frustrating user experience. But Yango's swift fall from grace within two years' time span isn't new. From Careem and Uber to Bykea, InDriver, Swvl and a few more, Pakistan has seen one ride-hailing service after another enter with bold promises, only to repeat the same cycle. Each begins by undercutting the market with low fares and big claims. Then come the price hikes, driver disputes, app glitches, and safety concerns. A ride-hailing user

Raniya Imran while speaking to media sharing her experience said, “Most alarmingly, women continue to face the worst of these issues report being dropped far from their destinations by Yango without explanation. These mid-ride abandonments, paired with run-down vehicles are growing safety threats that demand immediate attention from both the company and regulators.”

“Where I wanted to go was just 10 minutes away,” says regular user Laiba Amjed. “But the driver took wrong turns and got us stuck in traffic for over an hour. He blamed me, demanded extra money, and even after I paid, said it wasn't enough.” Although I was refunded after complaining, no action was

taken against him, leaving him free to repeat this with others,” she remarked. These cases are becoming more common, especially among women, who report being misled, overcharged, or abandoned in unsafe areas. “The app doesn't offer a choice of nearby drivers, instead, it assigns just one and makes you wait, forcing you to accept it. This lack of options, combined with poor communication and slow app response, only adds to the frustration and delays.”

Laiba Amjed talking to this scribe shared an even more troubling experience when a driver ignored her directions and left her at deserted road under construction, far from her destination.—APP

Metro Bus struggles to balance cheaper fares with reliable service

“The fare change came overnight,” said driver Zahid Khan. “We didn't get more pay, and now we're blamed when people are angry about delays or crowded buses

ISLAMABAD: The recent rollback of the Metro Bus fare from Rs. 100 to Rs. 50, following public outcry and the prime minister's intervention, has offered immediate relief to thousands of commuters in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. But behind the applause lies a more complex challenge: how to sustain quality public transport while keeping it affordable for the masses. Initially, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) defended the 100% fare hike as a necessary response to rising fuel and maintenance costs. The aim was to maintain the Metro's standards, cleanliness, punctuality, air conditioning, and consistent service, which many consider superior to other public transport options. However, the sudden doubling of fares triggered backlash from students, daily-wage earners, and elderly citizens who rely on the Metro for their essential travel.

“I spend Rs. 3,000 a month just commuting to work,” said Ghulam Abbas, a construction worker Talking to APP. “That's a major hit to my grocery budget.” Similarly, schoolgirl Asma shared with this scribe how she considered skipping lunch to manage travel costs. With stories like these surfacing widely, the fare hike quickly turned into a flashpoint. The government ultimately reversed the decision on June 5, reinstating the original Rs. 50 fare. Commuters welcomed the move, and for many, it reaffirmed faith in responsive governance. But this solution, while popular, raises an important question: can the Metro sustain quality service on its current fare model? Metro drivers, too, expressed concerns, not just about wages, which remained unchanged, but about increasing frustration from both management and passengers.

“The fare change came overnight,” said driver Zahid Khan. “We didn't get more pay, and now we're blamed when people are angry about delays or crowded buses.”—DNA

Top Police brass visits checkpoints

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's top police officers, including DIGs and SSPs, visited checkpoints across the city and provided cold beverages to on-duty personnel to boost morale amid the ongoing heatwave. An official told APP on Sunday that in line with the IGP Islamabad's directives, cold drinks are being distributed to officers on field duty to protect them from the effects of the weather and to keep them refreshed.

On this occasion, senior police officers stated that the officers safeguarding the lives and property of citizens in extreme heat are our heroes. All officers of the Islamabad Police are committed to protecting the public, regardless of personal discomfort. They further stated that harsh weather conditions cannot become an obstacle to the determination of Islamabad Police officers. Neither intense heat, sunlight, nor other seasonal challenges can weaken their resolve and courage. They added that the officers of the Islamabad Police are ensuring the safety of the city with great spirit and high morale. On this occasion, senior officers also encouraged the police personnel stationed at the checkpoints.—APP

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Briefs

One in three adult Pakistanis affected with diabetes

ISLAMABAD: Diabetic specialist Dr. B.M. Rathore on Sunday said that every third adult in the country is affected by the disease.

Talking to a private news channel, he noted that common symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, excessive thirst, sudden weight loss, constant fatigue, and slow healing of wounds.

If these symptoms are ignored, the condition can worsen and lead to serious health complications such as heart disease, kidney failure, and vision problems, he added.

Explaining the types of diabetes, Dr. Rathore elaborated that there are mainly two types, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

Type 1 is usually diagnosed in childhood and is caused by the body's inability to produce insulin. Type 2, which is more common, often develops in adults and is linked to poor diet, lack of physical activity, and obesity, he elaborated.

As for treatment, he said that while diabetes cannot be completely cured, it can be effectively managed through a combination of medication, regular exercise, and a balanced diet. He emphasized the importance of reducing sugar intake, eating more fibre-rich foods, and monitoring blood sugar levels regularly.

He also encouraged lifestyle changes to prevent the disease, especially among those with a family history of diabetes.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, around 35 million Pakistanis are aged between 20 and 79 are currently suffering from diabetes, he said.—APP

24 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police teams have arrested 24 outlaws and recovered drugs and illegal weapons during various operations conducted in different areas of the capital on Sunday.

An official told that the operations were carried out by teams from Golra, Sumbal, Tarnol, Shams Colony, Khanna, Kirpa, Humak, Lohi Bher, Shahzad Town, and Bani Gala police stations. A total of 17 accused were arrested for their involvement in various criminal activities. He said that police recovered 4,662 grams of heroin, 120 grams of Ice, eight pistols with ammunition, and two daggers from the possession of the arrested individuals. Cases have been registered against the accused and further investigations are underway. He said that in a separate crackdown against proclaimed offenders and absconders, police teams also arrested seven wanted criminals during a special campaign. He said that following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the capital police are continuing their effective crackdown against crime and criminal elements to ensure peace and tranquility in the federal capital. He said the Islamabad Police is committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens.—APP

ICCI, PAF hospital forge strategic partnership

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to forging enduring collaborations between the business and healthcare sectors for the collective good of the community

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and PAF Hospital have agreed to strengthen cooperation for the welfare of the business community, with a focus on enhancing healthcare access and promoting well-being among entrepreneurs and employees. During a meeting at ICCI, President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi welcomed Air Commodore (Retired) Raja Viqar Ali, Executive Director of PAF Hospital, and highlighted ICCI's ongoing efforts to foster business growth, economic resilience, and social responsibility. He stressed the need for strategic alliances with leading healthcare institutions to safeguard the health of those who drive the nation's economy. President Qureshi reiterated ICCI's commitment to supporting the business sector through progressive policy advocacy, capacity building, facilitation services, and health-focused initiatives.



He emphasized that the well-being of business owners and their workforce is integral to sustainable economic

progress. In a detailed discussion, both sides agreed to collaborate on launching health awareness cam-

paigns, organizing medical screenings, and ensuring access to quality healthcare services for ICCI members. The

partnership aims to deliver long-term value through mutual engagement and socially impactful programs.

Parents to be alert about their kids's irresponsible use of social media

ISLAMABAD: Digital IT expert and entrepreneur Kanwal Cheema warned parents to be alert about their children's irresponsible use of social media and be aware of online harassment issues. There are available digital safety measures on their devices to apply in this fast-paced technological age. Talking to a private news channel, she advised them to keep a strict watch on their activity on media platforms. She said, being a Social media influencer herself, she uses many tips and methods available on devices, which parents should adopt to save their children online from getting along with the wrong people. She specifically addresses issues like the time of their children's presence on social media and how to sensibly use social media. What to watch on social media? Who is watching you on these platforms? and who is stopping you? How to check bullying or stalking? Who is threatening you? How to launch complaints? How much information should one share on social media? What should be kept in mind while using social media? She said parents should know when to bring out their children as digitally responsible citizens, adding that they should be in alert mode 24/7. She said there are many ways to adopt social media carefully to avoid incidents like the Sana Yousuf Tik Tokker's murder case that happened recently, and it's alarming for all of us. Keeping in mind such dangerous incidents, parents should advise their kids not to share or expose their location or any related information about their family with their friends, as there are such creepy people who follow you from any part of the world, she said. Cyberspace is not a playground for watching pornography, cyber bullying or online crimes, so efforts should be made to check strictly on their kids, she added. She informed that there have been introduced many apps and softwares that allow users to control their privacy they share with others and who can watch them. She advised them about the safe use of Google Family Links, Microsoft Family Safety and many other safe links by the educational institutions to interact with their children. She said the netizens should create only one account at a time, and this way, online crime cases, harassment online issues can be checked, as on one account, the user is your friend, and on the other account with a changed ID, he can be your foe. She said in order to avoid online misuse of social media, the privacy settings should be strong and timely be set to avoid harassment. She said parents should also be in conversation with their children often. She said the parents should determine how much a kid should spend time or screen time on social media so that he/she should not be cut off from routine life, as it's good for their mental health. She said parents should impart necessary education to their children about online safety, but kids are so fast in using technology that they are even ahead of their parents even the parents have to learn technology use from their kids. She said there are available apps and notification alerts on all social media platforms that parents can use to keep watch on the sensible use of social media by their children, adding that they can be aware of the content they download, as there are permission options in all apps. She informed that on all social media platforms, there is also an option of allowing or disallowing a person or an age limit to download an app or not, adding that one can lock their devices for their children. She also enhanced the viewers' knowledge that there are available apps that guide parents about the right use of an app by their children, i.e. Common Sense Media, where they can know whether the app available online is appropriate for their kids to watch or use. She concluded that the National Cyber Emergency Response Team (NCERT) had already issued an advisory regarding Digital Media safety for parents.—DNA

OIC-COMSTECH, WUACD sign MoU

ISLAMABAD: The Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the World University Association for Community Development (WUACD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Sunday to strengthen cooperation in science, technology, and higher education across OIC member states. WUACD is an initiative of Airlangga University is a growing international network comprising

41 universities from 11 countries, focused on advancing academic collaboration and community development. The signing ceremony took place at the Airlangga University East Java, Indonesia, where Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH, and Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nashih, Rector Airlangga University and President of WUACD, formally signed the MoU on behalf of their organizations. The agreement aims to promote joint research, academic exchange, and innovation in key sci-

entific fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Health Sciences, and Engineering. Special emphasis will be placed on supporting scholars and researchers from underrepresented OIC member countries, particularly in Africa. As part of the MoU, both institutions will offer a range of academic and training opportunities. These include short-term technician training programs of three to four weeks and long-term research fellowships ranging from six to twelve months. Fellows will be hosted at Universitas Airlangga and mentored by its faculty, while OIC-COMSTECH will assist with award issuance and visa facilitation. Airlangga University serving as the WUACD secretariat, will manage academic placements and supervision.—APP

Pakistan's leap into space: Nation poised for historic ascent

ISLAMABAD: In a moment that will redefine the course of Pakistan's scientific journey, the nation is preparing to send its first astronaut into space—a feat that once belonged to the realm of dreams is now moving firmly into the realm of reality. This ambitious step forward follows the signing of a landmark agreement between Pakistan's national space agency, SUPARCO, and the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), setting the stage for Pakistan's participation in human spaceflight for the very first time. Under this collaboration, two Pakistani astronauts will undergo extensive training at China's Astronaut Center. By 2026, one of them will be selected as a scientific payload specialist to join a future mission to China's Tiangong Space Station (also known as the Chinese Space Station, or CSS). But this mission is more than symbolic. The selected astronaut will carry the weight of scientific ambition, conducting advanced research in critical domains such as biology, space medicine, fluid dynamics, materials science, and radiation studies. These experiments, made possible by the unique microgravity environment of Tiangong, hold the potential to impact life on Earth in meaningful ways, from healthcare innovations to technological breakthroughs. SUPARCO Chairman Mohammad Yousuf Khan hailed the agreement as a transformative milestone in Pakistan's space program. "This marks a turning point in our space journey," he stated. "It embodies the progress, resilience, and innovation that Pakistani scientists and engineers have steadily built over the years." He urged youth, academic institutions, and professionals to embrace this momentum by investing in space sciences, research, and technological development. China, already an established space power, has welcomed Pakistan's participation with open arms, reinforcing the two nations' long-standing partnership in science and technology. "Pakistan's inclusion in the Tiangong program reflects the deep strategic trust between our nations," remarked Dr. Lin Xiqiang, Director General of CMSA. "Our collaboration in space exploration serves the greater cause of peaceful scientific discovery for humanity. Pakistan's journey into space began over six decades ago when, on July 7, 1962, it launched the Rehbar-I rocket from the Sonmiani Range, becoming the first Muslim country—and among the earliest globally—to venture into space.—DNA

Efforts afoot to curb harmful emissions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) in a determined effort to tackle the capital's worsening air quality, has resumed its post-Eid vehicle emission testing campaign across the city, in collaboration with the Islamabad Police.

Director General of Pakistan-Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Nazia Zaib Ali told on Sunday that, "We have launched a vehicle emission testing campaign in Islamabad to protect the environment and public health from adverse impacts of growing air pollution levels caused due to vehicular carbon emissions." She said the drive, which restarted on June 12 following the Eid-ul-Azha holidays, is part of a broader initiative to curb harmful vehicular emissions and ensure cleaner air for Islamabad's residents. The vehicle testing activity resumed in different parts of the capital city after Eid holidays from June 12 with inspection teams composed of Pak-EPA and Islamabad Police deployed at two high-traffic locations — Mundi Police Check Post near Metro Mall and Faizabad Interchange on the Islamabad-Lahore route, DG Pak-EPA explained. These checkpoints were strategically chosen for their heavy vehicular flow, making them effective points for monitoring and enforcement," the head of the capital's environmental watchdog added.

Sharing statistical data from the two-day joint vehicle emission testing operations conducted by Pak-EPA and the Islamabad Police, DG Pak-EPA stated that the smoke emission levels of most vehicles inspected fell within the 10%-40% range. However, challan tickets were issued to owners of vehicles whose emissions exceeded the 60% threshold. DG Pak-EPA says this ongoing campaign highlights the unwavering commitment of her organization and the Islamabad Police to uphold environmental regulations and encourage responsible vehicle maintenance for achieving environmental sustainability and protect public health from adverse impacts of air pollution. She also urged all vehicle owners in Islamabad to regularly maintain their vehicles to meet legal emission limits and contribute to a cleaner urban environment as an environmentally-responsible citizen. DG Pak-EPA also pledged to continue the vehicle emission testing drive in other parts of the city in the coming weeks with the goal of enhancing compliance.—APP

Making journey safer for GB tourists during Monsoon

ISLAMABAD: Travelling through mesmerizing terrains of Gilgit-Baltistan is always amusing and heart touching as Nature has showered countless bounties on this region, making it a home to snow covered mountains, tall pines, flora and fauna and diverse wildlife.

Travelling on its zigzagging roads through the green forests and tall peaks, enjoying its weather and landscape, lakes, glaciers, plains and rocks is something leaving pleasant imprints in visitors' minds.

But when the first rain touches the dry land of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), besides beauty, it also brings danger with it. No matter it gives life to valleys, makes rivers flow and covers the mountainsides in green. But at the same time, it can cause landslides, flash floods and road blockages.

Every year more tourists come to see GB's natural beauty and if you also the one planning to travel during the rainy months of July and August, it's important to stay alert and prepare well.

Because, when the ground gets wet, mountain slopes become weak and rocks can fall onto roads. The Karakoram Highway (KKH), which connects Pakistan with China, often gets blocked in areas like Chilas, Raikot Bridge (on the way to Fairy Meadows), and between Sost and Gulmit.

Although the government takes measures for the safety of travellers, yet GB being surrounded by three mountain ranges; Karakoram, Himalayas and Hindu Kush often faces natural risks like landslides and floods during monsoon. Heavy rain and glacial melt-

ing during summer can also flood the rivers like Indus, Gilgit and Hunza. Roads to valleys like Astore, Skardu or Kaghan may also get damaged or blocked. In many places phone and internet services stop working after landslides, making it hard to contact anyone in case of emergency.

Keeping in view these challenges, the GB government takes measures for tourists' safety but it needs well woven teamwork between the government, local communities and the travelers themselves.

"GB is an attractive tourist destination. Last year we received 1.5 million tourists," said Iqbal Husain, Director GB Tourism Department. "We welcome them in all seasons. But, monsoon becomes tricky as we have to take extra measures during

this season."

He acknowledged hard work of authorities to ensure safety of tourists during rainy season as he mentioned to sharing advice through social media, tour companies, and guesthouses. "Visitors are told to check weather forecasts, inform local police if they're going to far-off places and always follow local guides."

He said some important projects are being carried out to improve safety like rerouting parts of the KKH and building new tunnels in different areas.

According to the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), since 2022, more than 80 large landslides blocked the KKH, over 60,000 people in GB were affected by floods and roads and bridges were damaged.—DNA

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OIC's silence on Iran: A grave omission

THE ongoing Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and military infrastructure have sparked global debate and concern—yet from the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), there has been nothing but deafening silence. This lack of response is not just disappointing—it is alarming. As the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, and one that claims to represent the collective voice of the Muslim world, the OIC's continued silence in the face of blatant aggression against a fellow Muslim nation reflects a deep moral and political failure.

The OIC was established to protect the interests and sovereignty of Muslim countries, yet its actions—or rather, its inaction—reveal a disjointed and increasingly irrelevant alliance. Many of its member states today appear more aligned with Western powers and the United States than with their fellow Muslim nations. This growing detachment from its core objectives has rendered the OIC a passive observer in times when bold leadership is most needed.

What is happening to Iran today cannot be viewed in isolation. If Israel, with the tacit support of the U.S. and the silence of Europe, can launch direct military strikes against Iran without facing condemnation or collective resistance, what is to stop similar actions against any other Muslim country tomorrow? As Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif recently warned in his June 14 address to the National Assembly: "If today it is Iran, tomorrow it may be Pakistan or any other Muslim country." These are not mere rhetorical flourishes—they are grounded in historical precedent and strategic realities.

The Muslim Ummah must recognize this moment for what it is: a test of unity, sovereignty, and collective resilience. Iran, regardless of differences in sectarian or political viewpoints, remains a crucial member of the Muslim world. To abandon it at this time sets a dangerous precedent that weakens all Muslim nations collectively. The notion that aligning closely with the West will ensure safety or prosperity is a myth. History has shown that alliances of convenience often turn into instruments of subjugation when national interests clash.

The OIC must urgently convene a special session to address the crisis and send a strong, unified message to the international community. It must unequivocally condemn the Israeli attacks, demand accountability, and extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to Iran. Anything less would be a betrayal of its foundational principles and the trust placed in it by over a billion Muslims around the globe. The time has come for the OIC to rise beyond symbolic statements and routine meetings. It must reclaim its relevance, act decisively, and assert its role as a true representative of the Muslim world. The future security, dignity, and unity of the Ummah may well depend on what the OIC chooses to do—or not do—today.



Iran shatters Israel's invincibility

Qamar Bashir



Israel believed this strike would be the final word, a demonstration of supremacy, and an assertion of impunity. Publicly, President Donald Trump attempted to distance the United States from the operation, claiming that Israel had acted alone. However, credible leaks from within the White House told a different story—this was not a rogue mission, but a meticulously coordinated assault approved at the highest levels of Washington. American satellites, logistical resources, and defense planners had all played their part in enabling what was, in essence, a premeditated act of war, cloaked in the garb of plausible deniability.

IN the early hours of June 13, 2025, Israeli F-35I "Adir" stealth jets thundered across Iranian airspace under the cover of darkness. What followed was one of the most aggressive strikes in the history of the Middle East—targeting over a hundred strategic Iranian sites, including nuclear enrichment facilities at Natanz and Esfahan, as well as high-level command posts and residences of Iran's top military leaders. The Israeli offensive, reportedly backed by U.S. intelligence and long in planning through joint CIA-Mossad coordination, left scores of Iranian personnel dead and hundreds wounded, including prominent IRGC commanders and nuclear scientists.

Iran believed this strike would be the final word, a demonstration of supremacy, and an assertion of impunity. Publicly, President Donald Trump attempted to distance the United States from the operation, claiming that Israel had acted alone. However, credible leaks from within the White House told a different story—this was not a rogue mission, but a meticulously coordinated assault approved at the highest levels of Washington. American satellites, logistical resources, and defense planners had all played their part in enabling what was, in essence, a premeditated act of war, cloaked in the garb of plausible deniability. Iran, caught off guard by the deception that had masked this act of aggression as diplomatic engagement, was shaken but not silenced. Within hours, Tehran launched a blistering retaliation that would rewrite the military equations of the region. Operation True Promise III was not merely a response—it was a message sent in fire and steel. Over 150 ballistic missiles and more than 100 armed drones rained down on Israeli territory, with Tel Aviv and Haifa witnessing explosions that pierced through Israel's once-vaunted multi-layered defense system.

What was thought to be invincible—the Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow-3, and Patriot batteries—was overwhelmed. Iranian missiles, including the newly unveiled Fattah-2 and Qassem Bassir hypersonic variants, reached speeds of up to Mach 15, maneuvered mid-flight, and evaded radar detection with alarming precision. These missiles, equipped with electro-optical guidance, penetrated the very core of Israel's defense network. For a state that prided itself on technological supremacy and unmatched military intelligence, the breach was both tactical and psychological.

This was the first time in its modern history that Israel felt truly vulnerable. The belief that no power in the region could threaten Tel Aviv or breach its airspace had now been shattered. Hypersonic technology changed the rules. According to open-source estimates, Iran's Fattah-2 system can only be intercepted 5 to 10 percent of the time—far below what any defense shield in the world today is capable of reliably neutralizing. In contrast, the Iron Dome interceptors, costing over \$40,000 each, could not match the sheer speed and volume of the incoming Iranian projectiles. The sky over Israel, once guarded by billions of dollars in U.S.-funded defense infrastructure, became porous and unpredictable.

Iran's response was not random. It targeted military installations, intelligence outposts, and symbolic structures like the Mossad headquarters and air defense command centers. Civilian casualties, while inevitable, were not the objective. In fact, Iranian officials went to lengths to stress that their operation was calibrated and proportionate—a response to Israel's indiscriminate bombing of Tehran that killed civilians, including women and children. This retaliation, according to one Iranian academic, was meant to make Israel understand what it meant to live under the fear of sudden annihilation—something Palestinians in Gaza had endured for decades.

This conflict has laid bare not just the vulnerabilities in Israel's military doctrine, but also the hypocrisy of Western political narratives. While Israel's strike was praised in Western capitals as a legitimate act of self-defense, Iran's retaliation was condemned as disproportionate and provocative. The same American lawmakers who struggle to agree on domestic policies like healthcare or education were suddenly unified in their support of Tel Aviv. This bipartisan alliance, fueled by lobbying, campaign contributions, and ideological allegiance, refused to acknowledge the fundamental truth: that Israel had violated Iranian sovereignty, launched an unprovoked attack, and triggered a conflict with dangerous global consequences.

And yet, the global tide is shifting. Public sentiment across Europe, Latin America, Asia, and even within the United States is no longer monolithic. The endless footage of Gaza's ruins, the cries of orphaned Palestinian children, and now the images of Israeli neighborhoods under fire have started to humanize both sides of the equa-

tion. War is no longer a one-way story. Civilians, whether in Tehran or Tel Aviv, suffer the same pain, loss, and trauma. It is this human cost—so often hidden behind the veil of strategic calculus—that is now forcing the world to rethink its allegiance and moral posture.

The repercussions are not confined to Israel and Iran. Iran's influence extends deeply into the Arab world. Through its network of allies and Shia militias in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen, Tehran holds the capacity to ignite a much broader regional war. Meanwhile, Sunni-majority nations like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt, though ideologically distant from Iran, remain cautious. Their reluctance to support Tehran stems from deep-rooted sectarian and geopolitical divisions. And yet, none of them have openly sided with Israel either. They remain paralyzed—watching, calculating, waiting. There are reports—unverified but persistent—that Iranian systems may have downed at least two Israeli F-35 jets. These U.S.-made aircraft, the pride of Israeli air superiority, cost over \$100 million each. The claim, if validated, would be a severe blow to both Israel's military image and the reputation of American defense exports. Israel, which has long relied on technological dominance to deter regional adversaries, now finds its superiority publicly questioned.

But the ultimate lesson of this confrontation is not military—it is moral and political. Iran, a country sanctioned, demonized, and isolated by much of the West, stood alone. And yet it responded not with chaos, but with calculated, disciplined force. Israel, despite its alliances and unmatched resources, underestimated the capacity of its adversary. And in doing so, it may have permanently altered the strategic balance in the Middle East. The path forward is narrow and perilous. Both nations now stand at the edge of an abyss. Escalation could engulf the entire region. The United Nations must intervene decisively, and nations with influence—be it the United States over Israel or Russia and China over Iran—must compel their allies to step back. Dialogue, not drones, must define the next steps.

Iran has made its point. Israel must acknowledge its limits. And the world must choose peace over vengeance. In a world already scarred by war, climate crisis, and division, the Middle East cannot afford another inferno. The time for pride is over. The time for peace is now.

Technology wins battles, humanity loses lives

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This technological shift was exemplified in Pakistan's response to Indian aggression on May 7, 2025. In a matter of minutes, Pakistan deployed advanced air defense systems and targeted Indian installations with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and precision-guided munitions, rendering India's conventional military preparations ineffective.

SINCE the dawn of civilization, mankind has been entangled in the bitter pursuits of war—often to expand territory, subdue enemies, or liberate the oppressed. In those early times, victory depended largely upon the physical strength of warriors and the sharpness of their blades. Swords, spears, and bows defined the battlefield. Armies mounted on horses and elephants clashed with brute force, and the outcome of battle often hinged upon the courage and stamina of individual soldiers. But with the invention of gunpowder in China during the 9th century and its eventual militarization in Europe by the 14th century, the face of warfare began to change.

Gunpowder introduced cannons and firearms into battle, replacing the bow with the musket and reshaping military formations forever. The Napoleonic Wars witnessed the coordination of artillery, infantry, and cavalry in unprecedented ways. In the 20th century, particularly during the World Wars, warfare advanced dramatically. The world saw the emergence of tanks, submarines, fighter aircraft, and eventually, the most devastating invention of all—nuclear weapons. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 demonstrated the terrifying potential of scientific advancement when used destructively. Nearly 200,000 lives were lost, and generations thereafter suffered the consequences. The nature of war had been irreversibly transformed. No longer were wars won by sheer manpower; now, technological superiority could obliterate entire cities in seconds. The Cold War that followed ushered in an arms race driven by technological competition rather than open conflict. Satellites, nuclear submarines, long-range ballistic missiles, and surveillance drones became tools of both deterrence and espionage. The Gulf War of 1991 marked the first televised precision bombing

campaign, with the U.S.-led coalition employing satellite-guided missiles and stealth aircraft to a scale the world had never seen before.

In the 21st century, warfare has reached a level where invisibility, speed, precision, and information supremacy determine the victor. The battleground is no longer just land, air, and sea—but also cyber space and outer space. Drones, artificial intelligence, hypersonic missiles, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons are rewriting the rules of engagement. A drone weighing less than a human can eliminate a high-value target from thousands of miles away with pinpoint accuracy and zero risk to the operator.

This technological shift was exemplified in Pakistan's response to Indian aggression on May 7, 2025. In a matter of minutes, Pakistan deployed advanced air defense systems and targeted Indian installations with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and precision-guided munitions, rendering India's conventional military preparations ineffective. The brief engagement underscored how modern warfare now depends on speed, accuracy, and electronic warfare rather than large troop movements. It was not only a demonstration of national resolve but also a textbook case of asymmetric advantage powered by technology.

Just two days ago, Israel executed a similarly calculated strike against Iranian positions using a combination of cyber-attacks and advanced air-launched munitions. Reports indicate that Israeli fighter jets penetrated Iranian airspace undetected using stealth technology, while cyber units simultaneously disabled communication and radar infrastructure. The operation, though brief, marked another chapter in the evolution of modern conflict, emphasizing the dominance of information warfare, surveillance capabilities, and precision targeting over brute military force.

From these recent episodes, one thing becomes evi-

dent; the classical ideals of valor and physical might have given way to remote-controlled engagement, algorithmic warfare, and sensor-based targeting. The soldier on the ground, though still essential, is now just one component of a much broader and more complex war machine operated by engineers, data scientists, and intelligence analysts.

Yet amid all this evolution, one immutable truth remains—war is destruction. Whether waged with swords or satellites, it results in death, displacement, and devastation. Civilized societies, which aspire to peace, progress, and prosperity, can ill afford its cost. Economies are wrecked, generations are scarred, and social fabrics are torn apart. While technological superiority may ensure military success, it can never heal the wounds of war.

The great paradox of our time lies in the dual-use nature of technological advancement; what can launch a satellite to explore the universe can also guide a missile to destroy a city. The challenge for humanity is not just to win wars more efficiently, but to prevent them altogether. As history has shown, no nation ever emerged unscathed from war, no matter how advanced its arsenal.

In this age of drone strikes and cyber offensives, global powers must recognize that sustainable peace cannot be maintained by force alone. Diplomatic resolve, mutual respect, and international co-operation must accompany scientific advancement. Otherwise, we risk turning our greatest inventions into instruments of our greatest regrets.

The past has given us lessons in blood, and the present offers a mirror to reflect on what we might become. If we fail to heed the warnings of history, then the future, no matter how technologically brilliant, will be shadowed by the same darkness that has plagued humanity since the age of the sword.

Briefs

Israel feels the heat as Iran strikes

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the first time the arch-enemies have traded fire with such intensity, triggering fears of a prolonged conflict that could engulf the Middle East. Israel's operation, which began early Friday, has targeted Iranian nuclear and military sites, killing dozens of people including top army commanders and atomic scientists, according to Tehran. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to hit "every target of the ayatollah regime", while Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian warned further strikes would draw "a more severe and powerful response". In Bat Yam, outside of Tel Aviv, Israeli first responders wearing helmets and headlamps combed through the rubble of a building as dawn broke. Two women, aged 69 and 80, a girl and a 10-year-old boy were killed, while about 100 others were wounded, according to a spokesperson for Magen David Adom (MDA). In Shfela region, west of Jerusalem, another 37 people were wounded, the MDA spokesperson added. In the north of Israel, in the Western Galilee, rescuers said a strike late Saturday destroyed a three-storey building, killing three women.

Will respond with bullets if fired...

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distanced the party from any behind-the-scenes arrangements, stating categorically that "no deal has been made" with any quarters regarding the party's incarcerated founder. Furthermore, last week Gohar announced that Khan had been made the party's patron-in-chief and he will spearhead the proposed countrywide protest movement. Gohar's remarks of a countrywide movement were echoed by KP CM Gandapur in his address yesterday as well who urged PTI supporters across KP to stay prepared, reiterating his call for resistance. "If they shoot at us, they will have to face bullets in return," he said, further intensifying the party's confrontational rhetoric. "We won't just shoot back, we will hit back hard". Other PTI leaders also spoke at the rally, repeating their demand for the release of their party's founder and warning of escalating protests if their demands were not met.

Pakistan denies supplying...

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while warning Tehran not to strike any US targets. Israeli rescue teams combed through the rubble of residential buildings destroyed in strikes, using flashlights and sniffer dogs to look for survivors after at least seven people were killed, including children, authorities said. Tehran has called off nuclear talks that Washington had said were the only way to halt Israel's bombing, while Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the attacks by Israel so far were nothing compared with what Iran would see in the coming days.

Grenade attack...

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Earlier on Saturday, unidentified individuals targeted the residence of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Tribal Affairs MNA Mubarak Zeb with a rocket in the early hours in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur district. Prime Minister Shehbaz strongly condemned the rocket attack on Zeb's residence and reiterated the government's commitment to eliminate terrorism and ensure the safety and security of public representatives and citizens across the country. Pakistan has been grappling with an increase in violent attacks since the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in 2021, particularly in the bordering provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Corps Of Service Attache(COSA) HOSTED FAREWELL GOLF FOR OUTGOING DA's OF South Korea, Czech Republic & Maldives. DA of Malaysia , USA, Japan, Bangladesh Philippines, Kazakhstan, and Diplomats of Vietnam attended the Event. – DNA

Putin tells Trump Russia ready for next round of Ukraine talks

Trump posted on Truth Social to say Putin had called "to very nicely wish me a Happy Birthday" on the day he turned 79, but that "more importantly" the two discussed the Iran-Israel crisis

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin told his US counterpart, Donald Trump, on Saturday that Moscow was ready to hold a fresh round of peace talks with Kyiv after June 22, once the sides complete exchanging prisoners and soldiers' bodies. Ukraine's leader Volodymyr Zelensky meanwhile did not mention whether Ukraine would agree to the next round of talks, only saying that "the exchanges will be completed and the parties will discuss the next step." Putin and Trump held a call for the fifth time since the Republican took office and sought to reset relations with Moscow, in a stark pivot from the approach of his predecessor Joe Biden's administration. Trump's approach has stunned Washington's allies, raising doubts about the future of US aid to Kyiv and leaving Europe scrambling to work out how it can fill any gap in supplies if Trump decides to pull US military, financial and intelligence support. "Both leaders expressed satisfaction with their personal relations" during the call, in which they also discussed the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel, the

Kremlin said. It added that the presidents "communicate in a businesslike manner and seek solutions to pressing issues on the bilateral and international agenda, no matter how complex these issues may be". Trump posted on Truth Social to say Putin had called "to very nicely wish me a Happy Birthday" on the day he turned 79, but that "more importantly" the two discussed the Iran-Israel crisis. "He feels, as do I, this war in Israel-Iran should end, to which I explained, his war should also end," Trump said, referring to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Zelensky urged the United States to "shift tone" in its dialogue with Russia, saying it was "too warm" and would not help to end the fighting. "Any signals of reduced aid, or of treating Ukraine and Russia as equals, are deeply unfair. Russia is the aggressor. They started this war. They do not want to end it," the Ukrainian President said on X. The recent escalation sparked fears Washington might relocate resources at its expense, to beef up the defence of its close ally Israel which unleashed a large-scale attack on Iran Friday. "We would like to

see aid to Ukraine not decrease because of this," he said. "Last time, this was a factor that slowed down aid to Ukraine." Earlier on Saturday, Ukraine and Russia swapped prisoners in the fourth such exchange this week, part of a large-scale plan to bring back 1,000 wounded prisoners from each side and return bodies of killed soldiers. The prisoner agreement was the only visible result of two recent rounds of talks in Istanbul. Photos published by Zelensky on Telegram showed men of various ages, mostly with shaved heads, wearing camouflage and draped in Ukrainian flags. Some were injured, others disembarked from buses and hugged those welcoming them, or were seen calling someone by phone, sometimes covering their faces or smiling. Moscow's defence ministry released its own video showing men in uniforms holding Russian flags, clapping and chanting "Glory to Russia" and "hooray", some raising their fists in the air. As part of the Istanbul agreements, Kyiv also said it had received another 1,200 unidentified bodies from Russia.

It said Moscow had said they were those of "Ukrainian citizens, including military personnel." Ukraine did not say whether it returned any bodies to Russia. Russia has rejected calls to halt its three-year offensive. It has demanded Ukraine cede territory and renounce Western military support if it wants peace. Since Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022, the assault has forced millions of people to flee their homes as towns and cities across eastern Ukraine have been flattened by heavy bombardments. Meanwhile, Russia intensified its advances along the front line, especially on the north-eastern Ukrainian region of Sumy, where it seeks to establish a "buffer zone". By doing it, Moscow seeks to protect its bordering region of Kursk, previously partly occupied by Ukraine. Zelensky said Russia's advance on Sumy was stopped and that Kyiv's forces had managed to retake one village. He also denied Moscow's earlier claims that its troops entered the Dnipropetrovsk region. He said 53,000 Russian soldiers were involved in the Sumy operation. – APP

Trump flexes military might at...

FROM PAGE 01
of the US army. But it formed a stark split screen with turmoil at home and abroad, as police used tear-gas to disperse protesters in Los Angeles and US ally Israel traded missile fire with Iran in a rapidly escalating conflict in the Middle East. Trump's parade on an overcast night in Washington came after hundreds of thousands of "No Kings" demonstrators thronged the streets in cities including New York, Philadelphia, Houston and Atlanta. Trump largely avoided his usual domestic political diatribes in an unusually brief speech, and instead focused on praising the US army, saying that they "fight, fight, fight, and they win, win, win." The display of military might comes as Trump asserts his power domestically and on the international stage. In his address to the parade, Trump sent a warning to Washington's adversaries of "total and complete" defeat, with the United States increasingly at risk of getting tangled up in Israel's conflict with Iran. "Time and again, America's enemies have learned that if you threaten the American people, our soldiers are coming for you," Trump said. Trump had openly dreamed since his first term as president of having a grand military parade, of the type more often seen in Moscow or Pyongyang than Washington.

Field Marshal Asim Munir welcomed in US with

FROM PAGE 01
The billboard at Times Square shows pictures of COAS Munir, who was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal last month, along with Pakistan's flag. The field marshal is also seen in the video with a group of US senators as well as with Pakistani children. The video shows Pakistan as a progressive nation, interested in education, technology and peace. The Times Square campaign will run for a week. It has been launched by the local administration to welcome the Pakistan military leader who has won wide praise over his role in the recent conflict with India. Ahead of COAS Munir's visit to Washington, Commander of the United States Central Command (Centcom) General Michael Kurilla praised Field Marshal Munir and the Pakistan Army. Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, General Kurilla called Pakistan a "phenomenal partner in the counterterrorism world" as he underscored Islamabad's role in the operations against Daesh-Khorasan. Through a phenomenal partnership with Pakistan, they have gone after Daesh-Khorasan, killing dozens of them.

Pakistan, Malaysia Play thrilling 3-3 draw

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: In a high-octane clash at the FIH Nations Hockey Cup on Sunday, Pakistan and Malaysia played out a thrilling 3-3 draw. The match showcased moments of brilliance from both sides, with Pakistan dominating the early phases before Malaysia staged a strong comeback in the final quarter. Pakistan took a solid lead in the first three quarters, with quick passing and aggressive attacks keeping Malaysia on the back foot. The Green Shirts led 3-1 heading into the final stretch, with goals from Arshad Liaqat, Rana Waheed, and Sufyan Khan. However, the momentum shifted dramatically in the fourth quarter. Malaysia launched a fierce counteroffensive, capitalizing on defensive lapses by Pakistan. Two late goals stunned the Pakistani side, exposing weaknesses in the defense and goalkeeping. Pakistan's goalkeeper came under criticism for conceding two soft goals that allowed Malaysia to level the score. Despite the draw, Pakistan showed flashes of promise and attacking flair. The team must now regroup quickly as they prepare to face Japan on Monday at 3:00 PM local time. A win against Japan is crucial if Pakistan hopes to advance in the tournament and keep their title hopes alive.

Nicolas Sarkozy stripped of France's top honour after conviction

PARIS: Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy has been stripped of his Legion of Honour – the country's highest distinction – following a conviction for graft, according to a decree published Sunday. The right-winger has been beset by legal problems since he was defeated in the 2012 presidential election after serving one five-year term. Sarkozy, 70, had been wearing an electronic ankle tag until last month after France's highest appeals court upheld his conviction last December of trying to illegally secure favours from a judge. According to the code of the Legion of Honour, France's top state award, any person definitively sentenced to a term in prison equal to or greater than one year is excluded from the order. But French President Emmanuel Macron had argued against such a move in April, saying that scandal-plagued Sarkozy had been elected and it was "very important that former presidents are respected". Despite his legal problems, Sarkozy remains an influential figure on the right and is known to regularly socialise with the head of state. Sarkozy becomes the second former head of state to be stripped of the award after Nazi collaborator Philippe Petain, who was convicted in August 1945

for high treason and conspiring with the enemy. Others to have been stripped of the honour include former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, drug cheat cyclist Lance Armstrong and movie mogul Harvey Weinstein whose conduct with women sparked the #MeToo movement against sexual violence. Sarkozy, whose electronic tag was removed this month, is using his last remaining legal avenue, an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, to defend himself against the conviction. Sarkozy's lawyer Patrice Spinosi said the former president had "taken note" of the decision to strip him of the Legion of Honour, but stressed that the petition lodged with the ECHR was "still pending". Any ECHR ruling against France would "imply reviewing the criminal conviction against (Sarkozy) as well as his exclusion from the order of the Legion of Honour", Spinosi said. Sarkozy is currently on trial in a separate case on charges of accepting illegal campaign financing in an alleged pact with late Libyan dictator Moamer Kadhafi. The court is to issue a verdict in September with prosecutors asking for a seven-year prison term for Sarkozy, who denies the charges. – Agencies

Balochistan leads Pakistan with top performance in UGPP

Balochistan Forest Department's exceptional performance has transformed skepticism into admiration, setting a precedent for environmental resilience



MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

TO address the escalating challenges of climate change, Pakistan launched the ambitious Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program (TBTP) in 2018, later renamed the Upscaling Green Pakistan Program (UGPP). Spearheaded by the federal government under then-Prime Minister Imran Khan, this initiative spans Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, targeting deforestation, desertification, and the broader impacts of global warming. Balochistan, Pakistan's largest yet least populated province, stands out as a remarkable case study. Despite formidable obstacles—rocky terrain,

scarce rainfall, extreme weather, limited resources, and security concerns—the Balochistan Forest Department has achieved extraordinary success in afforestation and environmental conservation. Pakistan ranks among the top ten countries most vulnerable to climate change, facing rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, glacial melting, and increasing desertification. The TBTP aimed to plant ten billion trees nationwide by 2023, a target later extended under the UGPP to ensure sustained environmental restoration. This initiative aligns with global efforts such as the Bonn Challenge and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). Implementing the UGPP in Balochistan presented unique challenges. Covering nearly 44% of Pakistan's landmass, the province features arid landscapes, minimal vegetation, and extreme climatic conditions. Its rocky soil, with low organic content, coupled with annual rainfall of just 50–200 mm in many areas, posed significant barriers to large-scale afforestation. Chronic shortages of funding, staff, and infrastructure, compounded by security challenges in remote areas, made the task seem nearly impossible. Experts initially doubted the feasibility of meaningful progress in Balochistan, predicting that its harsh

conditions would hinder success. Yet, the Balochistan Forest Department's exceptional performance has transformed skepticism into admiration, setting a precedent for environmental resilience. Balochistan's topography, dominated by rugged mountains, deserts, and plateaus, leaves only 4% of its land suitable for agriculture or forestry. Extreme temperatures, from scorching summers exceeding 45°C to freezing winters in higher altitudes like Ziarat, demand hardy, drought-resistant species and innovative planting techniques. The shortage of trained staff further complicates operations, with a single forest officer often overseeing thousands of hectares, making monitoring and maintenance a logistical challenge. Security concerns, marked by sporadic unrest, limit access to remote areas where much of the afforestation work occurs. Despite these obstacles, the Balochistan Forest Department adopted a multifaceted approach, combining scientific rigor, community engagement, and adaptive management to implement the UGPP effectively. A cornerstone of their strategy is the prioritization of native plant species, exemplified by the preservation and expansion of Ziarat's ancient juniper forest, one of the oldest and largest globally. This effort has enhanced biodiversity while protecting a cultural and ecological treasure. Balochistan is the only

province to implement 100% area monitoring, avoiding sampling methods that might miss critical data. Monitoring officers Balochistan Farooq Khan Kakar, Mansoor Ahmed Jaffar monitoring officer South, and Afrasyab Khan monitoring officer North, use GPS technology and field surveys to track plant survival rates, growth patterns, and environmental impacts, ensuring transparency and accountability. This rigorous monitoring has set a national benchmark, providing accurate data to refine strategies and secure funding. The establishment of nurseries across Balochistan has been transformative, producing healthy, locally adapted saplings better suited to survive transplantation. Coastal areas along the Arabian Sea have seen significant mangrove plantations, which protect against erosion, support marine biodiversity, and sequester carbon. These efforts have bolstered environmental resilience and provided economic benefits to coastal communities through improved fisheries and tourism potential. The UGPP's success in Balochistan owes much to the leadership and dedication of its forest officers and field staff. Secretary Forests and Wildlife Abdul Fateh Bhangar, alongside Chief Conservators Syed Ali Imran and Syed Ghulam Muhammad Shah, provided strategic direction aligned with national objectives. Project Director Fawad Siddiqui and Conservators like Niaz Kakar, Amin Mengal,

and Farid Shah led on-the-ground efforts, navigating logistical and environmental challenges with ingenuity. Monitoring officers and Deputy Conservators of Forests (DFCs) and Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs), including Riaz Dehwar, Khalilur Rehman Khoso, Ghulam Sarwar Pirkani, Ajmal Khan Kakar, Maqbool Dashti, Tariq Shah, Saleem Javed Zehri, Yar Muhammad Dashti, Syed Nadir Shah, Owais Akbar, Sultan Mahmood, Abdul Haseeb, Muhammad Saqib Durrani, Abdul Salam, and Abdul Naeem, worked tirelessly in remote areas. Their collective efforts, marked by coordination and commitment, have transformed Balochistan's afforestation landscape. The UGPP has significantly altered Balochistan's environmental trajectory, contributing to carbon sequestration and supporting Pakistan's commitments under the Paris Agreement. Balochistan's ability to achieve high-quality monitoring and plantation results in adverse conditions has garnered national and international recognition, setting a model for other regions. As Pakistan continues its fight against climate change, Balochistan's achievements under the UGPP stand as an inspiring example, demonstrating that vision, teamwork, and perseverance can overcome even the most daunting challenges. The program's legacy will endure in Balochistan's greener landscapes and the hope it inspires for a sustainable future.

Briefs

Israel's goal might be regime change in Iran

CHICAGO: Israel's military assault against Iran could continue for weeks, with the possible goal of regime change, a panel of experts hosted by the Middle East Institute said on Saturday. Panelists included retired Gen. Joseph L. Votel, former commander of US Central Command; retired Vice Adm. Kevin Donegan, former commander of the US Navy's Fifth Fleet; and Alex Vatanka, MEI senior fellow and Iran specialist who also teaches at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. Vatanka said it is too early to determine if Israel's main goal besides crippling Iran's nuclear program is regime change, but "we might be going in (that) direction." He added: "That's certainly what I think a majority of Iranian officials think that Israel wants. The big unknown in all of this is whether the Israelis somehow can get (US President Donald) Trump to buy into it the way he bought into the initial attack on Iran." Israel has launched attacks against an array of Iranian targets, including its military leadership and nuclear program. Tehran has responded by launching missiles and drones at Israel. The panelists were in agreement in their belief that the conflict would not expand to include other countries. Iran's leadership will define victory as being its "survival," Vatanka said, adding that while Israel has the backing of the US and "most of Europe," Tehran "isn't getting any help from anyone." He said: "I don't think they're getting help from what's left of the axis of resistance ... I question what the axis of resistance members can actually do at this point.—APP

Investors on edge over Israel-Iran conflict, anti-Trump protests

NEW YORK: Dual risks kept investors on edge ahead of markets reopening late on Sunday, from heightened prospects of a broad Middle East war to US-wide protests against US President Donald Trump that threatened more domestic chaos. Israel launched a barrage of strikes across Iran on Friday and Saturday, saying it had attacked nuclear facilities and missile factories and killed a swathe of military commanders in what could be a prolonged operation to prevent Tehran building an atomic weapon. Iran launched retaliatory airstrikes at Israel on Friday night, with explosions heard in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the country's two biggest cities. On Saturday Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israeli strikes would intensify, while Tehran called off nuclear talks that Washington had held out as the only way to halt the bombing. Israel on Saturday also appeared to have hit Iran's oil and gas industry for the first time, with Iranian state media reporting a blaze at a gas field.—APP

KSA reshapes workforce with surge in talent mobility solutions

Mobility providers are essential in helping businesses navigate regulatory frameworks, sector-specific quotas, and compliance obligations

RIYADH: As Saudi Arabia pushes forward with its Vision 2030 transformation agenda, talent mobility services are emerging as a pivotal force in reshaping the Kingdom's employment landscape — streamlining transitions, boosting retention, and aligning workforce development with national diversification goals. From artificial intelligence-powered human resource platforms to targeted upskilling programs and strategic internal marketplaces, both private firms and public initiatives are facilitating dynamic career transitions. These interventions are not only transforming the experience of work in Saudi Arabia but also supporting businesses in building a more agile, tech-enabled, and future-ready workforce. As the labor market evolves, the focus has moved from external recruitment to creating an internally sustainable talent ecosystem. According to Francesco Cotrone, partner at Arthur D. Little, providers are enabling this transformation by deploying tools such as internal job marketplaces, AI-driven role matching systems, and strategic workforce planning platforms. "These technologies not only give employees visibility into inter-

nal opportunities but also match them to roles based on both current capabilities and future potential," he said. The result is a shift away from static, linear career paths toward more flexible, opportunity-rich trajectories. This is particularly critical in fast-growing sectors such as logistics, tourism, and ICT, where the ability to reskill and redeploy talent quickly has become a competitive differentiator. Cotrone cited Taqat, a leading domestic talent mobility service provider, as a prime example. The company's employee transition program assesses individual skills and delivers customized training to support career moves across industries. "As it works to connect skilled workers with employers in high-demand sectors such as technology and healthcare, Taqat facilitates seamless transitions, enhances career opportunities, and addresses critical skill shortages in the evolving job market," he added. Saudi Arabia's workforce is also being shaped by demographic and regulatory dynamics. Abeer Al-Husseini, partner at Fragomen, noted that by the end of 2024, the Kingdom's foreign workforce had grown to over 13.6 million, marking a 13.3 percent year-on-year

increase and a 33.4 percent jump since 2019. "In this environment, mobility providers are essential in helping businesses navigate regulatory frameworks such as Saudization policies under the Nitaqat program, sector-specific quotas, and compliance obligations set by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development," Al-Husseini said. These services often manage in erations with multiple government platforms — such as Qiwa and GOSI — while enabling fast, compliant transitions across functions and sectors. This reduces administrative friction and helps ensure continuity amid shifting business conditions. She emphasized that talent mobility providers not only facilitate expatriate integration but are also playing a vital role in embedding Saudi nationals into the private sector. By supporting strategic workforce planning and Saudization targets, these providers align with national human capital development priorities. Modern mobility is no longer just about hiring — it's about mapping skills, identifying gaps, and supporting long-term workforce evolution. Faisal Al-Sarraj, KSA deputy country leader and consulting clients and markets leader at PwC

Middle East, underscored the value of internal talent marketplaces — digital tools that align employee skills and interests with internal opportunities. "As Saudi Arabia continues to advance under Vision 2030, organizations need to be proactive in building teams with the needed market skills. Talent mobility helps with this by upskilling and cross-training existing employees," Al-Sarraj told Arab News. He acknowledged that while external hiring remains necessary for certain critical roles, internal mobility is gaining ground as a strategy for boosting retention and responsiveness. Mobility providers are essential in helping businesses navigate regulatory frameworks, sector-specific quotas, and compliance obligations. Providers also help organizations shift from reactive hiring to proactive workforce planning. By using advanced tools, they help companies forecast what skills will be needed in the future and develop strategies to reskill employees. Providers like Mercer, Adecco, Bayt, and Naseej are doing an excellent job in this space," he said. Serge Eid, a member of Bain & Co.'s Public Sector practice, noted that providers are extending

their services beyond hiring logistics to include skilling initiatives and regional talent deployment — key factors for scaling in emerging sectors. "This support has become increasingly critical as businesses look to scale quickly, pivot into new sectors, or access regional talent pools," Eid said. "They also support Vision 2030's broader push for a more dynamic and globally integrated labor market." Mobility providers are increasingly focusing on reskilling and internal progression through AI-driven tools that align employee growth with business and national objectives. Cotrone highlighted the growing need for new roles such as AI specialists and data analysts, which are being addressed through targeted training programs. Importantly, these services enhance retention by making career development tangible. "Importantly, these services enhance retention by making career development tangible. Companies that offer clear growth pathways, mentoring, and internal mobility opportunities are not only accelerating role fulfillment. They're also building employee loyalty, engagement, and hence, retention," he said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs a high-level meeting of the Committee for the Development and Management of the Hazrat Bari Imam Shrine.

Gems, jewelry exhibition kicks off to boost local industry

ISLAMABAD: A two-day gems and Jewellery exhibition kicked off here on the other day, showcasing gemstone treasure and finely crafted jewellery aimed at boosting local production and promoting exports. The event was organized by Pakistan Gems and Jewellery Development Company (PGJDC) has officially been inaugurated by the Honorable Provincial Minister Government of Sindh Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi, said a news release. Provincial Minister highlighted that this exhibition would provide a lucrative platform to the local exhibitors to showcase varieties of gems and jewellery products including loose precious, semi-precious gemstones, mineral specimens and fine jewellery (gold, white gold, silver) and gems studded jewellery. He urged the diplomats, foreigners, dignitaries and other participants to capitalize on this exhibition as it will be an excellent window of opportunities for buyers and sellers and will provide an enabling environment for the gems and jewellery traders, exporters and importers to establish linkages with each other. The Chief Executive Officer PGJDC Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry highlighted the true gems and jewellery potential of the country and explained that the objective behind this Exhibition is to develop an understanding between the Pakistani Gems & Jewellery Sector and the Business Community so that B2B linkages could be strengthened. He expressed confidence that the Exhibition would play a vital role in enhancing the business growth. He further submitted that organization of this exhibition is among the key steps which the company is taking towards revival of its initiatives and shows the commitment of the Government towards development of this industry in Pakistan.—DNA

Families hold funerals for Air India crash victims

AHMEDABAD, India :Grieving families held funerals in India on Sunday for their relatives who were among at least 279 killed in one of the world's worst plane crashes in decades. Health officials have begun handing over the first passenger bodies identified through DNA testing, delivering them in white coffins in the western city of Ahmedabad. "My heart is very heavy, how do we give the bodies to the families?" said Tushar Leuva, an NGO worker who has been helping with the recovery efforts. There was just one survivor out of 242 passengers and crew on board the Air India jet when it crashed Thursday into a residential area of Ahmedabad, killing at least 38 people on the ground. "How will they react when they open the gate? But we'll have to do it," Leuva told AFP at the mortuary on Saturday. One victim's relative who did not want to be named told AFP they had been instructed not to open the coffin when they receive it. Witnesses reported seeing badly burnt bodies and scattered remains. Around 20 to 30 mourners gathered at a crematorium in Ahmedabad on Sunday, chanting prayers in a funeral ceremony for Megha Mehta, a passenger who had been working in London. The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner erupted into a fireball when it went down moments after takeoff, smashing into buildings used by medical staff. Mourning relatives have been providing DNA samples to be matched with passengers, with 32 identified as of Sunday. "This is a meticulous and slow process, so it has to be done meticulously only," Rajnish Patel, a doctor at Ahmedabad's civil hospital, said late Saturday. The majority of those injured on the ground have been discharged, he added, with one or two remaining in critical care. Indian authorities are yet to detail the cause of the disaster and have ordered inspections of Air India's Dreamliners. Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said Saturday he hoped decoding the recovered black box, or flight data recorder, would "give an in-depth insight" into what went wrong. Just one person miraculously escaped the wreckage, British citizen Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, whose brother was also on the flight. Air India said there were 169 Indian passengers, 53 British, seven Portuguese and a Canadian on board the flight, as well as 12 crew members. Among the passengers was a father of two young girls, Arjun Patoliya, who had travelled to India to scatter his wife's ashes following her death weeks earlier. "I really hope that those girls will be looked after by all of us," said Anjana Patel, the mayor of London's Harrow borough where some of the victims lived. "We don't have any words to describe how the families and friends must be feeling," she added. While communities were in mourning, one woman recounted how she survived only by arriving late at the airport. "The airline staff had already closed the check-in," said 28-year-old Bhoomi Chauhan. "At that moment, I kept thinking that if only we had left a little earlier, we wouldn't have missed our flight," she told the Press Trust of India news agency.—DNA

LFC resolves over 4,000 cases of missing luggage for Hujjaj

MAKKAH AL-MUKARRAMAH: The Lost and Found Cell (LFC) has successfully resolved 4,193 cases related to lost luggage and personal belongings reported by Hujjaj, with 37 more cases currently under process and expected to be resolved soon in Makkah. Aijaz Ahmed Memon, In-charge of the Lost and Found Cell, informed this while speaking to the media the other day. Memon highlighted the Cell's tireless operations, noting that it functions 24/7 in two shifts morning and night each staffed by dedicated teams. "We have a digitalize system in place to trace and return lost luggage and items to the pilgrims concerned," he added. Team member Amna Kamal also spoke about the use of digital systems that aid in tracing both items and their rightful owners. "We have successfully returned valuable items, including currency and mobile phones, directly to pilgrims' residences," she added.

Amna urged all Pakistani pilgrims to ensure that their luggage is properly tagged. "Always leave a luggage tag in every bag. It helps us easily identify and return lost items," she noted. Memon praised the efforts for working around-the-clock to facilitate Pakistani pilgrims and ensure their comfort during Hajj. The Lost and Found Cell continues to play a vital role in supporting pilgrims during the Hajj season by swiftly resolving issues related to lost items and ensuring the safe return of valuable belongings.—APP

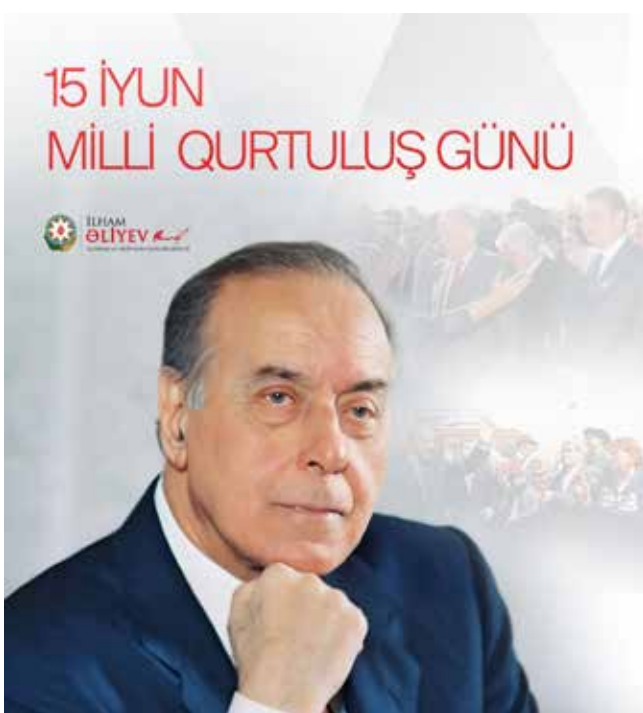
PFC for incentives to enhance furniture exports

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC), Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Sunday urged for a comprehensive package of attractive incentives in the federal budget to boost the exports of Pakistan's high-quality furniture products in international markets. Chairing the board of directors meeting, he said Pakistan has immense potential to become a leading exporter of hand-crafted and modern furniture, but it requires strong policy support and facilitation from the government, says a press release. He urged for reduced duties on raw materials, easier access to financing, and the establishment of modern design and training centers to uplift the industry. He emphasized that the furniture sector can significantly contribute to employment generation and economic growth if given proper facilitation. He also called for increased participation in global furniture exhibitions and trade fairs to enhance the visibility of Pakistani craftsmanship. He expressed hope that the budget will reflect a pro-export approach, enabling the sector to grow and compete internationally.—DNA

JUNE 15 — National Day of Salvation of Azerbaijan

DESPITE the fact that Azerbaijan declared the restoration of its independence in 1991, the political crisis caused by the incompetence of the government, activities of internal and external destructive forces aimed at undermining the foundations of the state, the emergence of separatist tendencies in different regions, and severe socioeconomic situation put the country face-to-face with the threat of civil war and the loss of independence. The situation was further exacerbated by Armenia's aggression and occupation of Azerbaijan's lands. And in such a fateful moment, the Azerbaijani people trusted their future to outstanding statesman Heydar Aliyev. After returning to Baku by popular demand, Heydar Aliyev was elected as chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 15 June 1993 and as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 3 October of the same year. It was thanks to Heydar Aliyev's salvation mission that the pro-

cesses threatening the state independence of Azerbaijan were thwarted and state-building issues were put in the focus of attention. Thus, 15 June went down in the history of Azerbaijan as the National Salvation Day. The key priorities of National Leader Heydar Aliyev's policy included achieving a ceasefire with Armenia, establishing public and political stability, building a democratic system and liberal economy, ensuring national army building and security, implementing a new oil strategy, accelerating Azerbaijan's integration into the international arena, and achieving a fair settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. 1995 marked the launch of drastic reforms in all spheres of public life, a new Constitution was adopted, a multi-party system was built, political pluralism became a norm of society, freedom of speech and press was ensured. In parallel, significant steps were taken to build a market economy, the world's leading companies were involved in exploiting the hydrocarbon resources in the



Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, routes for the transportation of oil to the world market were defined and resources to ensure

Azerbaijan's development were made available in a short period of time. N. Heydar Aliyev pursued a consistent and purposeful pol-

icy to transform Azerbaijan into a reliable partner in the system of international relations, raising the world community's awareness of the material, spiritual and intellectual values of the country, secure the interests of the Azerbaijani state both in the region and in the world by taking into account the key aspects of national security and development. The 1993-2003 time period, when Heydar Aliyev was in power and was elevated to the status of National Leader for his unparalleled services to the Azerbaijani people and state, marked a historic stage when Azerbaijan emerged as a state, formed and transformed into a full-fledged subject of the international community. These 10 years saw the implementation of the national development strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the people of Azerbaijan benefited from a rare historic opportunity and made their independence everlasting and irreversible at the cost of great suffering. Since 2003, Azerbaijan has been implementing the policy of Heydar Aliyev, continuing and enrich-

ing it under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thus, the successful foreign policy of Azerbaijan, conducted under President Ilham Aliyev's leadership, reflects a commitment to the above-mentioned course of the comprehensive development of mutually beneficial relations with members of the world community. This policy is designed to enhance the prosperity and welfare of the Republic of Azerbaijan while ensuring ongoing development and well-being for its citizens. In 2020, under the leadership of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan liberated its internationally recognized territories from the almost 30-years occupation by Armenia, implementing UN Security Council 4 resolutions of 1993. In order to prevent further large-scale provocations by Armenian forces in the Karabakh economic region of Azerbaijan and to restore the constitutional order, the Azerbaijani Army conducted an anti-ter-

ror operation on September 19, 2023, which lasted just 23 hours, forced the enemy to surrender. This victory fully restored Azerbaijan's sovereignty, and today, the Azerbaijani flag flies proudly in all territories where Azerbaijan sovereignty is established. Thus, Azerbaijan has officially declared 2025 as the Year of Constitution and Sovereignty. Over the past years, the Republic of Azerbaijan has successfully chaired several important organizations such as the UN Security Council, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Turkic States, and many others. It should also be highlighted that Azerbaijan's successful hosting of the COP29 conference, which not only underscored the nation's growing leadership in global climate action but also provided a vital platform for international cooperation. All of the points mentioned above reflect Azerbaijan's robust global diplomacy, the foundations of which were laid by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, and its reputable standing as a reliable partner in multilateral negotiations.—DNA

Briefs

Mubarak Zeb thanks PM for support

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State, Mubarak Zeb Khan on Sunday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for his support following the rocket attack on his residence. In a statement issued here, the minister of state said, "Thank you, Prime Minister, for standing with us in these difficult times." He strongly urged authorities to ensure a thorough investigation into the incident, emphasizing the need to swiftly identify and bring the perpetrators to justice. The Prime Minister has also directed a comprehensive inquiry into the rocket attack, which occurred early Saturday, targeting the minister's residence in Bajaur. Fortunately, no injuries were reported in the incident. – APP

Jordan reopens airspace

AMMAN: Jordan announced the reopening of its airspace Sunday morning after a night of attacks by arch-foes Israel and Iran. The civil aviation authority in Jordan, which borders Israel, said in a statement that the country's airspace had been reopened "for civilian flights following a careful risk assessment". The kingdom had closed the airspace late Saturday, its second closure since the start of the most intense direct confrontation between Israel and Iran. – APP

Police file FIR over rape of disabled 14-year-old girl

DNA

HAFAZABAD: Police have registered a first information report (FIR) in the case of a 14-year-old mentally and physically disabled girl being allegedly sexually assaulted in Punjab's Hafizabad district. Sahil's Six Months Cruel Numbers data reveals that a total of 1,630 cases of child abuse were reported from across the country last year. In the first six months of 2024, 862 cases of child sexual abuse, 668 cases of abduction, 82 cases of missing children and 18 cases of child marriages were reported. 48 cases of pornography after sexual abuse were also recorded. The victim was brought to the hospital due to her health condition, where, during a medical check-up, it was discovered that she was six months pregnant.

One 'critically injured' in shooting at US protest

WASHINGTON: A shooting at a protest against President Donald Trump's policies in the western state of Utah left one person with "life-threatening injuries," police said, adding that three others were taken into custody. Police said the incident occurred around 8:00 pm Saturday (0200 GMT Sunday) in Utah's capital Salt Lake City during a protest that drew about 10,000 people – one of several "No Kings" demonstrations across the United States rallying against Trump. "We can confirm the shooting resulted in one person being critically injured. The patient has been taken to a hospital with life-threatening (injuries)," said the Salt Lake City police department in a social media post, adding that they had "a person of interest in custody." Police Chief Brian Redd stressed during a news conference that the events leading up to the shooting "were very peaceful," adding that the first person taken in custody had a gunshot wound and was transported to the hospital. Two other individuals involved in the incident were also taken into custody, he said. "At this time, there is... no ongoing threats to the public," Redd said, adding that it was too early in their investigation to say if the shooting was politically motivated. – Agencies

Pak-Philippines: A friendship forged in shared struggles and aspirations

The ambassador described this shared historical narrative as the foundation of a strong and enduring bilateral relationship between the two countries

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez Ambassador of the Philippines has said that the Philippines was among the first nations to recognize the newly independent Pakistan in 1947. Since then, he said, the two countries have cooperated extensively across sectors including education, culture, trade, and climate change resilience. "Indeed, the Philippines has every reason to consider Pakistan its abiding friend," he stated. In a message brimming with optimism, Ambassador Fernandes conveyed his hope for a future marked by deeper cooperation and shared prosperity. "We have achieved much together during the past 76 years. We can do more together in the coming years to attain the common aspirations of our people – for peace, for prosperity, and for a future marked by inclusivity and innovation," he said. Drawing a meaningful parallel between the histories of the Philippines and Pakistan, Ambassador Fernandes emphasized the shared legacies of resilience and sacrifice. "Like the Philippines, Pakistan also won its freedom and independence at a very high cost. And, like the people of the Philippines, the people of Pakistan know what it means to endure, to struggle, and to triumph – again and again – over all forms of adversities and challenges," he said. The ambassador described this shared historical narrative as the foundation of a strong and enduring bilateral relationship between the two countries. "I believe that it is our common expe-



rience of having to fight long and hard for our freedom that makes Pakistan and the Philippines natural friends," he noted. The ambassador concluded his speech with the traditional Filipino greeting of goodwill, "Mabuhay!" – meaning "Long live!" – before offering a heartfelt tribute to both nations: "Long live the Philippines! Long live Pakistan!"

The evening featured traditional Filipino music, cuisine, and cultural performances, offering guests a vibrant glimpse into the rich heritage of the Southeast Asian nation. The ceremony not only celebrated the independence of the Philippines but also stood as a testament to the strength of bilateral relations and people-to-people connections between the Philippines and Pakistan.

As both countries look to the future, their enduring friendship, shaped by shared histories and strengthened by mutual respect, remains a beacon of diplomatic goodwill in the region.

Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez Ambassador said the historical significance of June 12, 1898 – the day when the Filipino people declared their independence after a prolonged and painful struggle against colonial oppression. "Almost a century and a half ago, the Filipino people asserted their right to be free. It was an assertion that was preceded by a long and bloody struggle against colonial rule," he said. Paying homage to the forefathers of the Philippine independence movement, the ambassador said the occasion was not only to honor their sacrifice but also to renew a national commitment. "More importantly, tonight, we Filipinos renew our commitment to safeguard that freedom and to use it to shape a better future for our country," he remarked.

Guest list for G7 summit tells of global challenges

KANANASKIS: The G7 may be a small, elite club, but when its leaders gather in Canada, several other national heads will attend as guests – highlighting the group's efforts to adapt to a fast-changing world. The leaders of India, Ukraine, Mexico, South Africa and South Korea are among a carefully selected guest list drawn up at a time of global turmoil and a radical new US approach to world affairs. Summit invitations have become part of the G7 routine, and the host nation often likes to make a "welcome-to-this-exclusive-club" gesture, Ananya Kumar, of the Atlantic Council's GeoEconomics Center, told AFP.

"The leaders want to meet each other, and you'll see the guests being a part of most of the work that happens." Some hosts "really want certain guests there to show their significance in the global economy," she added. This year's summit in the Canadian Rockies comes as the G7's share of world GDP has fallen from 63 percent in 1992 to 44 percent today, and as member nations deliberate on troubled relations with China and Russia. "It's important to think of who will be there in the room as they're making these decisions," Kumar said ahead of the three-day event that mixes leadership meetings with "the nitty-gritty ministerial work." Fifty years ago, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States formed the G6, first meeting at a French chateau, before Canada joined the following year. Russia itself was a guest in the early 1990s, becoming a full member of the G8 in 1998 before being expelled in 2014. Notable guests for the summit that starts Sunday include:

President Volodymyr Zelensky's presence in Canada is a sign of continuing broad G7 support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion – despite Donald Trump's skepticism. The US president regularly criticizes Zelensky and has upended the West's supply of vital military, financial and intelligence assistance to Ukraine.

Zelensky aims to use the summit to press for more US sanctions on Moscow, saying last week "I count on having a conversation" with Trump, who wants a quick peace deal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the last G7 summit as India – the most populous nation in the world – takes an evermore important role in geopolitics. But his invitation this year was far from certain.

Relations between India and Canada have turned sour over accusations of New Delhi's involvement in the assassination of a Sikh activist in Canada. Modi and new Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will have a chance to reset ties. India is also a leading member of BRICS – a more fractured bloc that includes Russia and China, but which has growing economic clout and is increasingly seen as a G7 rival. Carney appears keen to expand the event to bring in other partners that hold views generally aligned with core members. South Korea fits the bill and has emerged since the Ukraine war as a major defense exporter to Europe, although it has stopped short of directly sending arms to Kyiv. Newly elected President Lee Jae-myung, who comes from the left, will attend after winning a snap election triggered by his predecessor's disastrous martial law declaration. – Agencies

Aurangzeb urged to review FBR's excessive powers

"We are disappointed that the powers proposed for the FBR will do the exact opposite of encouraging investment," Ehsan informed the finance minister

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) has expressed concern about the excessive powers granted to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), stating that this anti-business decision will further harm the already poor investment climate. PBC Chief Executive Officer Ehsan Malik, in a letter to Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, said the powers do not differentiate between major taxpayers and the informal sector. "We are alarmed at the draconian powers proposed to be granted to the FBR. If past practice is anything to go by, these will most likely be misused to harass the

formal taxpaying sector," he feared. "We are disappointed that the powers proposed for the FBR will do the exact opposite of encouraging investment," Ehsan informed the finance minister. Pointing out excessive powers to FBR, he said Section 11E enables tax assessment and recovery

Editorial on Page 5

based on suspicion without proper investigation, while Section 14AE allows arbitrary seizure of business premises and property without adequate safeguards.

Section 32B empowers private auditors with quasi-legal authority over businesses, while Section 33 introduces 10-year prison terms and Rs10 million fines for broadly defined "tax fraud," which is likely to encompass business errors. Section 37AA authorises arrest without a warrant based on mere suspicion of tax fraud—a power that invites abuse and harassment, followed by Section 37B, which permits a 14-day detention of businesspersons, extendable through magistrates. Overriding the principle of client/advisor relationship, Section 58C will grant the FBR access to the offices of tax advisers and firms where discrepancies in returns are suspected.

Waves of protesters flood US streets against 'king' Trump

"We have a dictator," said Robin Breed, a 56-year-old retired nurse, in Austin, Texas, where thousands demonstrated while surrounded by hundreds of police and state troopers

DNA

NEW YORK: A giant orange balloon depicting Donald Trump in a diaper towered over one "No Kings" protest Saturday, as hundreds of thousands thronged streets across the United States to decry the president's policies. Protest organizers expected rallies in all 50 US states, calling them the largest since

Trump returned to office in January, with the aim of "rejecting authoritarianism, billionaire-first politics, and the militarization of our democracy."

Wielding signs with messages like "No KKKings" and "No crown for the clown," the protests stood in stark contrast to a massive military parade in Washington on Saturday. The parade was meant to commemorate the founding of the US Army, but also fell

on the president's 79th birthday.

As thousands of soldiers marched and tanks rumbled through Washington's streets, protesters across the country slammed Trump as a "fascist."

"We have a dictator," said Robin Breed, a 56-year-old retired nurse, in Austin, Texas, where thousands demonstrated while surrounded by hundreds of police and state troopers. "He is trampling on people's lives, he's militarizing our streets, he is terrorizing our communities," he said, insisting it was important "to push back and say it's our country, not his." In New York, tens of thousands of people, many wearing raincoats and carrying colorful umbrellas, marched down Fifth Avenue in a downpour to the sounds of drums, bells and chants of "Hey hey, ho ho, Donald Trump has got to go!" Actors Susan Sarandon and Mark Ruffalo were seen getting drenched among the protesters.

"I'm miserable and outraged about how this administration is destroying the ideals of the American Constitution," Polly Shulman, a 62-year-old museum employee, told media. – Agencies



FBR chief defends arrest powers

Lawmakers in Senate committee oppose FBR's authority to arrest CEOs, CFOs and directors on alleged tax fraud

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Amid government's efforts to increase the tax revenue, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial has defended proposed powers for the tax body to arrest CEOs, CFOs, and Board of Directors on tax fraud arguing that the FBR assumed the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) powers, The News reported on Sunday. Speaking during a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Langrial backed the proposed changes in the Finance Bill and stated that there was no country in the world where tax officers were not allowed to make arrests for tax fraud. Citing the example of India and Bangladesh which granted powers of arrest, the tax authority's chief said that the country's workforce stood at 67 million and revealed that the top 1% of households evaded Rs1,233 billion. "The top 5% evaded Rs1,611 billion. The remaining 95% of the total workforce evaded just Rs140 billion," he highlighted. The FBR chairman's remarks come against the backdrop of the Rs17.57 trillion budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-26 tabled by the government aiming for a 4.2% GDP growth target. In his budget speech earlier this week, Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb outlaid FBR's tax collection target of Rs14,131 billion – representing an 18.7% increase from the current fiscal year.

Of this amount, Rs8,206 billion will be allocated to provinces as their constitutional share in federal taxes, he added. On the non-tax revenue front, the government has set an ambitious target of Rs5,147 billion, reflecting efforts to optimise income from state-owned enterprises and other non-tax sources. After accounting for provincial transfers, the federal government's net revenue is estimated at Rs11,072 billion. The total federal expenditure has been budgeted at Rs17,573 billion, with Rs8,207 billion earmarked for debt servicing – a critical component that underscores the government's commitment to fiscal responsibility.

Toddler among seven killed in India chopper crash

DEHRADUN: Seven people including a toddler were killed Sunday in India when a helicopter ferrying Hindu pilgrims from a shrine crashed in the Himalayas, officials said. The helicopter crash left the pilot and all six passengers dead when their chopper came down during the flight from Kedarnath temple, in Uttarakhand state, disaster response official Nandan Singh Rajwar told AFP.

It was likely caused by bad weather, according to state tourism official Rahul Chaubey. The incident prompted Indian civil aviation authorities to suspend chopper services to shrines in the Himalayas, Chaubey said. Pilgrims flock to Kedarnath, which stands at an altitude of 3,584 metres (11,759 feet), and other revered Himalayan shrines during the summer when it is possible to access them. Helicopter charter firms serve wealthy pilgrims who want to visit mountainous shrines while avoiding arduous trekking. But there have been multiple mishaps already this season, including a crash last month in which six people were killed. – Agencies



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