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Putin says he would only meet Zelensky in 'final phase' of talks

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Faiz Hameed Trial put on Hold for 3 weeks

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Trump denies he approved Iran attack

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21 states slammed aggression Pak defends Iran's right of self-defence

FO spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's long-standing call for the urgent establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear and major weapons of mass destruction

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly condemned Israel's recent "aggression" against Iran, asserting Tehran's right to self-defence under the UN Charter, Foreign Office Spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan said during his weekly briefing to journalists on Thursday. Khan emphasised that the Israeli actions constitute a "violation of Iran's sovereignty and territorial integrity," and urged the international community to "bring the aggressor to justice."

In a significant show of solidarity, Khan highlighted that 21 Muslim countries have jointly rejected Israel's aggression against Iran, calling the actions a breach of international laws and the UN Charter. Furthermore, the FO spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's long-standing call for the urgent establishment of the Middle East as a zone free of nuclear and major weapons of mass destruction.

UN urges ceasefire between Israel, Iran

DNA

NEW YORK: António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has expressed deep concern over the continued military escalation between Iran and Israel. In a statement issued, Guterres renewed his call for an immediate de-escalation leading to a ceasefire. He strongly urged all parties to avoid any further internationalisation of the conflict, saying, "Any additional military interventions could have dire consequences not only for the parties involved, but for the en-

tire region and for international peace and security." Guterres expressed sorrow over the tragic and unjustified loss of civilian lives, injuries, and damage to homes and vital civilian infrastructure. He stressed that diplomacy remains the best and only way to address concerns related to Iran's nuclear programme and regional security issues. He added that the United Nations Charter remains the shared framework to spare humanity from the scourge of war, urging all member states to fully adhere to the Charter and to international law, including international humanitarian law.

Israel-Iran conflict

Donald Trump denies he approved attack plans

Meanwhile, Turkey has stepped up security on its border with Iran since the start of Tehran's conflict with Israel, but has not yet seen any increase in people trying to cross the frontier

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump reacted to a Wall Street Journal report claiming he privately approved attack plans for Iran but delayed a final go-ahead in hopes Iran would abandon its nuclear programme. Taking to the social media platform – Truth Social, Trump said: "The Wall Street Journal has No Idea what my thoughts are concerning Iran!" As of yesterday, Trump said he was still unsure about authorising a strike, Al Jazeera reported. "We'll see what happens. I've been asked about it by everybody, but I haven't made a decision," he told reporters. Meanwhile, Turkey has stepped up security on its border with Iran since the start of Tehran's conflict with Israel, but has not yet seen any increase in people trying to cross the frontier, a Turkish Defence Ministry source said on Thursday. Turkey – a NATO member

Continued on Page 06

Putin to visit China starting Aug 31 for summit

DNA

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit China later this year for a regional summit, talks with leader Xi Jinping and commemorations marking 80 years since the end of World War II in Asia, the Kremlin said Thursday. Putin and Xi – who often refer to each other as "dear friend" – have deepened their relations amid Russia's three-year offensive on Ukraine. The two countries signed a "no-limits" strategic partnership just days before Russia launched its full-scale military

Continued on Page 06

Trump – Asim Munir meeting focuses on regional conflicts and cooperation

Key issues discussed: Iran-Israel war, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and US-Pakistan relations

SHAMIM SHAHID

FORMER US President Donald Trump and Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir held a special and important meeting during a time when tensions are rising in the Asian region. The meeting was held on Trump's invitation and was not open to the media. However, both sides have released official statements afterward, which states that the main topics were discussed. The meeting focused on the ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel, Pakistan-India relations, especially the Kashmir issue, the situation in Afghanistan and future U.S.-Pakistan cooperation. Pakistan has recently improved its strategic position in the region. It has shown strong ties with China and is the only South Asian country openly supporting Iran in its conflict with Israel. Meanwhile, Pakistan remains an important player in Afghanistan. Although Pakistan has an elected civilian government, important decisions—especially related to foreign affairs and security—are often handled by the military. That's why General Asim Munir was invited to meet Trump instead of the Prime Minister. General Munir's influence has grown recently. After tensions with India, he was given the title of Field Marshal. His meeting with Trump is seen as a sign of his importance in both Pakistani and international politics.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Country Director of the World Bank calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

Outgoing WB country director calls on PM

Najy Benhassine lauds PM Shehbaz Sharif leadership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday held a farewell meeting with the outgoing Country Director of the World Bank in Pakistan, Najy Benhassine. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed best wishes for Najy Benhassine and prayed for his health and success. "You played a pivotal role in strengthening the partnership between Pakistan and the World Bank, for which we are grateful," the prime minister said while talking to Benhassine. The prime minister pointed out that the outgoing country director will always be remembered in kind words for his dedication and cooperation with Pakistani authorities in

Continued on Page 06

Pre-monsoon rains expected across Pakistan from June 20-23

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast pre-monsoon rains across various regions of the country from June 20-23 with occasional gaps, subsiding the intense heat wave affecting several parts. The expected wet spell will bring dust storms, rain-wind, and thundershowers, while isolated areas may also experience

Continued on Page 06

Two judges dissent

SC dismisses pleas against IHC judges' transfer

Apex court rules Justice Sarfraz Dogar can continue to work as IHC acting chief justice

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed pleas filed against the transfer of judges from three high courts to the Islamabad High Court and termed them as being constitutional while ruling that Justice Sarfraz Dogar can continue to work as IHC's acting chief justice. The verdict was announced by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, who was heading the five-member constitutional bench hearing petitions filed by five IHC judges, the Karachi Bar Association (KBA) and the IHC Bar Association, among others. The bench also comprises Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmed. In February, five judges of the IHC had moved the apex court under Article 184(3) of the Constitution against the appointment of Justice Sarfraz Dogar

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Achievements

success of 'current hybrid model': Asif

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Referring to the recent Islamabad-New Delhi standoff and improvement in the Pakistan-US ties, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif linked the country's achievements on global, regional and economic fronts to the "current hybrid model of governance". The defence czar was referring to the outcomes of the Pakistan military success during recent clashes with India and the recent rare meeting between President Donald Trump and Army Chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. Terming the meeting a "significant

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

DPM Dar, Uzbek FM talk on phone

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Bakhtiyor Saidov. During the conversation, the two leaders discussed a range of bilateral and regional matters of mutual interest. They exchanged views on the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), scheduled to take place in Istanbul from 21-22 July. The two leaders also agreed to meet on the sidelines of the OIC CFM. – APP

Committee rejects Rs. 2.5 carbon levy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the last session of Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, the committee took exception to certain clauses of "Public Finance Management Act" allowing autonomous bodies to retain money and submit surplus profit into Public account. The Committee called for rationalization of these clauses, as it would only result in financial irregularities. The Committee vehemently rejected the Rs. 2.5 Carbon levy proposed in the Financial bill 2025-26. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla underlined that Petroleum Division has proposed Rs. 2.5 carbon levy without providing sustainable "Emission Reduction" plan for the environment. The Committee was briefed on the exemptions provided to businesses located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and newly merged districts.

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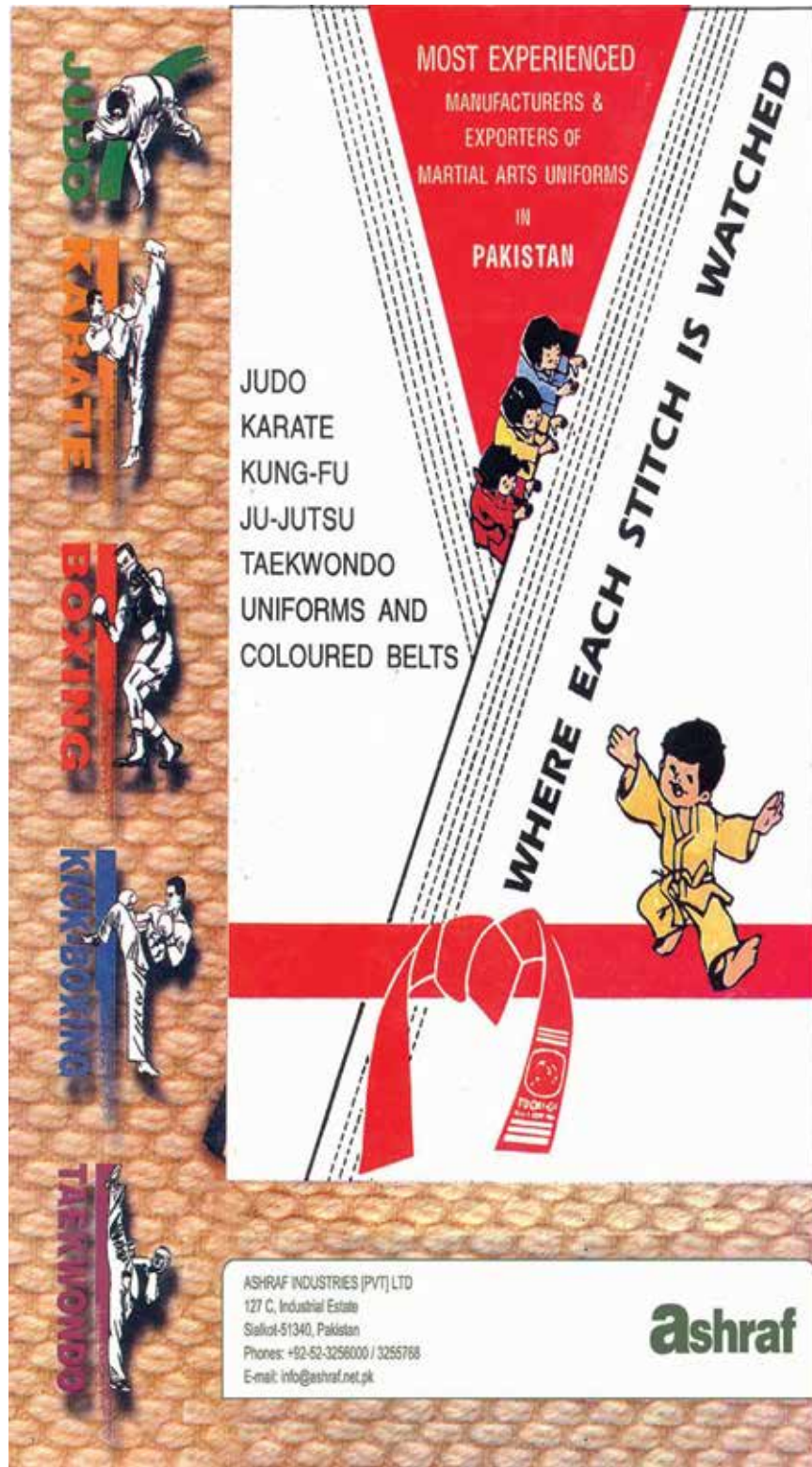
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and bridges - bypasses. Gas supply in rural areas - employment opportunities. In addition, the work of district offices with a population of 1. million will also be at their doorsteps and the residents of rural areas of Kharian will not waste their time and money. The political leadership of Kharian Tehsil, Chaudhry Naseeb Abbas Sidhu MNA - Chaudhry Abid Raza Kotla, former MNA - Malik Hanif Awan, former MNA - Malik Jamil Awan, former MNA - Chaudhry Jafar Iqbal, former Minister of State, Mian Tariq Mahmood, former MPA and former Federal Minister of the coalition party, Qamar Zaman Kaira, are also requested to use their influence and play a role in making Kharian a district.

Professor Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, Dr. Lubna Umar, Dr. Farukh Abbas, and Director of Student Affairs Syed Ghulam Kazim Ali also addressed the students. They provided insightful perspectives on the evolution, future, and modern dimensions of language and literature. At the conclusion of the visit, the students highly appreciated the research and literary initiatives of Allama Iqbal Open University and described the experience as an academic, intellectual, and memorable journey. They noted that it not only enhanced their understanding and insight but also instilled a renewed vision for the preservation and promotion of national languages.—APP



National Days and Armed Forces Days

- JUNE
- June 02/Italy National/ Independence Day
- June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day
- June 06/Sweden National Day
- June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)
- June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution& Army Day
- June 11/United kingdom Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
- June 12/Philippines Independence Day
- June 12/Russian Federation Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)
- June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day
- June 17/Iceland National Day
- June 18/Seychells National Day
- June 25/Croatia National Day
- June 25/Mozambique National Day
- June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day



Turkish Airlines.....8494949



- Emergency
- Rescue (Police).....15
- Bomb Disposal.....15
- Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
- Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
- Motorway Police.....9266044
- Motorway Police.9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
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- Shifa International 4603666



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- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

- Water Tank
- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Secretary lauds creativity of special children at summer camp

The camp is scheduled to conclude on Friday, June 20, 2025, continuing to serve as a platform of empowerment, learning, and delight for visually impaired children of Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, Mr. Nadeem Mahbub, paid a special visit to the ongoing summer camp titled “Dil Say Dekho” at the National Institute of Special Education (NISE), Islamabad. The camp has been organized by the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) as part of a series of initiatives during the summer break for children with special needs across DGSE’s special education centers.

The “Dil Say Dekho” summer camp is a joint collaborative effort by NISE, National Mobility & Independence Training Centre (NM&ITC), National Special Education Centre for Visually Handicapped Children (NSEC for VHC), and National Braille Press, Islamabad. A total of 62 visually impaired children and expert resource persons are participating in the camp. The camp aims to foster confidence, independence, and creativity in children with visual impairments through a range of engaging educational and recreational activities including, Orientation & Mobility Training, Accessible Indoor Sports for Visually Impaired, Music and Instrumental Classes, Braille Storytelling Sessions, Personal Experience Narratives (PENs), Computer Literacy through JAWS (Job Access With Speech) Software. During his visit, the Secretary was warmly received by Director General, DGSE, Captain (R) Asif Iqbal Asif, who briefed him on the camp’s objectives and thematic segments. Mr. Mahbub personally interacted with the participating children, who confidently showcased their newly acquired skills including independent movement with white cane, playing accessible board games, music performance, reading Braille stories, and demonstrating JAWS-based computer navigation. In a heartfelt moment, the children presented a Braille-transcribed poem dedicated to the Secretary, acknowledging his role as a custodian of their rehabilitation, education, training, and happiness. Mr. Nadeem Mahbub appreciated the creative talents and abilities of the special children and lauded the event organizers. He emphasized the importance of utilizing all available resources to enhance service delivery and educational opportunities for children with special needs at the federal level. The camp is scheduled to conclude on Friday, June 20, 2025, continuing to serve as a platform of empowerment, learning, and delight for visually impaired children of Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting a shield to Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf to recognize his services for making best arrangements for Hajj 2025.

Pak launches parliamentary roadmap for GDI

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan marked a historic milestone on Thursday with the official launch of its national engagement with the Global Development Initiative (GDI), becoming the first country to anchor the initiative within its supreme legislative institution. The event, titled “Global Development Initiative in Pakistan: A Parliamentary Roadmap for Shared Prosperity,” that brought together parliamentarians, diplomats, academics, youth leaders, and civil society to celebrate the beginning of a transformative cooperation framework. Romina Khurshid Alam, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, emphasized in her keynote address that Pakistan views the GDI not merely as an international framework, but as an integral part of its national development strategy, driven by equity, public ownership, and democratic legitimacy. “This is not just a ceremonial launch,” she said. “It is the manifestation of a vision I have long nurtured—as a legislator, a development advocate, and a champion of Pakistan-China parliamentary diplomacy. GDI, for us, is not foreign—it is familiar, actionable, and urgently needed.”

Recalling the roots of the initiative, Alam highlighted President Xi Jinping’s 2021 speech at the United Nations General Assembly, in which he called for development to become a universal right rather than a selective privilege. She noted how this message deeply resonated in the Global South, particularly for countries like Pakistan that carry both development challenges and democratic aspirations. Alam, also the Convener of the Pakistan-China Parliamentary Friendship Group, shared that the roadmap was designed after extensive consultations with youth leaders, civil society, experts, and lawmakers. The outcome, she noted, made it clear: the success of GDI in Pakistan must be anchored in Parliament, where policies are debated, reforms are legislated, and accountability is upheld. The newly launched national program aims to integrate the GDI into five core pillars: mainstreaming through policy dialogues, Public awareness campaigns, Youth and academic engagement via GDI university research hubs, Framing GDI as a human security initiative, Strengthening parliamentary cooperation with China’s National People’s Congress (NPC). The ceremony also commemorated 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, with Alam declaring the relationship a “model of solidarity for the Global South.”

She underscored landmark projects like CPEC and the solar-powered Parliament, inaugurated by President Xi and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, as tangible examples of how China has uplifted Pakistan’s institutions. “Today, that friendship evolves from infrastructure to ideas, from roads to rights,” she said. “The GDI represents the next phase of that evolution, one that emphasizes inclusion, sustainability, and institutional strengthening.”

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, who served as Chief Guest, congratulated Romina Khurshid Alam for her visionary leadership in conceptualizing and operationalizing the GDI parliamentary program. “Parliaments are not passive in development—they are powerful enablers,” he said. “And through this initiative, we are embedding development in policy, participation, and public dialogue.”

The Minister also emphasized the strategic role of Gwadar Port under the CPEC framework and how GDI could further enhance port connectivity, coastal community development, and regional integration. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Jiang Zaidong, praised Pakistan’s Parliament for leading the global charge in institutionalizing the GDI, calling it the world’s first GDI Group within a national legislature.

100 scholarships announced for Bangladeshi students

ISLAMABAD: In a major step to strengthen academic ties, Pakistan has announced 100 fully-funded scholarships for Bangladeshi students to pursue higher education in leading Pakistani universities. The announcement was reiterated during the Special Vice Chancellors’ Forum for Bangladesh, hosted by OIC-COMSTTECH at its Secretariat. The forum brought together a seven-member delegation from Bangladesh comprising Vice Chancellors and senior representatives of prominent universities, along with Vice Chancellors from 15 top Pakistani universities, which are part of the COMSTTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE). Coordinator General of OIC-COMSTTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the visiting delegates and underscored the visit as a significant move toward deepening academic and scientific cooperation between two founding member countries of COMSTTECH. He announced the offering of 100 scholarships for Bangladeshi students as a gesture of academic solidarity. Speaking on the occasion, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan lauded COMSTTECH’s initiative for facilitating meaningful academic engagement between higher education institutions of the two countries. He emphasized the importance of partnerships in science, technology, and education for shared progress. During interactive sessions, Vice Chancellors from both sides explored avenues for collaboration, including student and faculty exchanges, joint research ventures, scholarship schemes, and the use of shared academic resources. It was agreed that each university would designate a focal person to ensure continued communication and follow-up on agreed initiatives. The forum featured notable presentations, including a talk by Chancellor of Sir Syed CASE Institute of Technology, Prof. Dr. Shoab A. Khan on the evolution of Artificial Intelligence in Pakistan, and insights by Chairperson of the Private Education Institutions Regulatory Authority, Prof. Dr. Shoab A. Khan on enhancing university rankings.—DNA

Series of online Chinese language courses launched

ISLAMABAD: China’s Hanhua Bowen (Beijing) Education Technology Co., Ltd. and University of Sargodha jointly launched a new series of online HSK Chinese language courses, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The virtual opening ceremony brought together academic leaders and stakeholders in a vibrant display of cross-border collaboration. Zhang Haibo, Chief Representative of the International Chinese Language Teachers Association highlighted the increasing demand for bilingual professionals as China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) investments expand. “Chinese language combined with vocational skills is a key to future development,” he said. Sun Liping, Operation Director of Hanhua Bowen, described the initiative as a strategic bridge fostering people-to-people ties. She noted plans to expand the curriculum into engineering, agriculture, and digital economy fields, building a robust international talent pipeline. Dr. Ahmad Raza Bilal from University of Sargodha emphasized incorporating Pakistani cultural elements into the curriculum, ensuring relevance and applicability for local students. Looking ahead, both institutions plan to establish a China-Pakistan Digital Education Resource Sharing Platform with AI-assisted teaching tools, broadening access to quality education.—DNA

Pakistan-Philippines PFG vow to deepen bilateral coop

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Pakistan-Philippines Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) chaired by Senator Husna Bano was held at Parliament House. Senator Husna Bano, along with Senator Fawzia Arshad, Ms. Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman Senate, and senior officials from the Senate Secretariat, warmly welcomed H.E. Emmanuel R. Fernandez, Ambassador of the Philippines to Pakistan, accompanied by Mr. Jaun Paolo Alex, First Secretary and Consul at the Philippine Embassy. In her opening remarks, Senator Husna Bano emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral ties across multiple sectors, particularly trade and the IT industry. She reaffirmed Pakistan’s interest in deepening economic cooperation and enhancing expertise-sharing in the technology sector. Supporting these views, Ms. Misbah Khar underscored the need for institutional collaboration in bilateral and constitutional policy frameworks. She also highlighted trade, tourism, and cultural exchange as key areas for building long-term partnership. Ambassador Fernandez reiterated the Philippines’ commitment to advancing bilateral relations with Pakistan. He highlighted efforts to balance trade by encouraging greater imports from Pakistan and shared that several Philippine business groups had expressed keen interest in exploring economic opportunities in Pakistan. He acknowledged the historical significance of the Joint Economic Association and expressed confidence in its revival following the pandemic. The Ambassador also discussed visa facilitation, noting that while recommendations had been made to ease access, final decisions rest with immigration authorities. He referenced the growing interest of Pakistani students in pursuing educational opportunities in the Philippines and called for expanded support in this area. Senator Fawzia Arshad highlighted Pakistan’s focus on emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence. She expressed keen interest in vocational training and entrepreneurship, calling it a pressing need for the country. She also proposed exploring maritime cooperation, given Pakistan’s strategic port infrastructure. Building on this, Ambassador Fernandez identified promising areas for future collaboration, including AI, education, labor mobility, culture, tourism, and maritime training. He supported the idea of formalizing cooperation through an MoU in the education sector, particularly in tertiary and vocational training, and expressed hope for concrete progress through continued engagement between both sides.—APP

PM congratulates Pakistani schools shortlisted for world best school prizes

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday congratulated the administration, teachers, and students of three Pakistani schools for securing a place among the world’s top ten community-driven schools in the World’s Best School Prizes 2025. Among the Pakistani schools that earned the distinction are Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust Higher Secondary School, Lahore, Beaconhouse College Program (Juniper Campus), Quetta, and Nordic International School, Lahore. The prime minister, in a statement, said that the said schools had earned recognition for their innovative curriculum, research, technology, environmental efforts, and contributions to the development of underprivileged and rural areas. “These educational institutions have brought pride to the nation on the global stage. Such educational institutions are a role model for us all,” he said. The prime minister also reiterated his government’s commitment to promoting modern education in the country.—APP

ANF recovers over 362 kgs of drugs

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting six operations across the country, recovered as many as 362.182 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 396.7 million and arrested three suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Thursday. He informed that 680 grams of ice were recovered from a suspect travelling to Qatar at Islamabad International Airport. As many as 500 grams of ice were recovered from a parcel sent to Bahrain at Karachi Jinnah International Airport. Similarly, 7,002 kgs of weed were recovered from a parcel arriving from Thailand at a courier office, Multan. As much as 2 kgs of ice were recovered from two suspects, riding a motorcycle near BRB canal in Lahore.—APP

IRSA releases 241,911 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 241,911 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 270,354 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tabela Dam was 1453.60 feet which was 51.60 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 167,100 cusecs and 150,400 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1168.80 feet, which was 118.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 29,064 cusecs and 17,321 cusecs, respectively.—APP

JUNE 2025

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Briefs

China-Pakistan
saline-alkali
cooperation
deepens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) representatives visited the Cold and Arid Agricultural Science and Technology Courtyard in Jingtai, Gansu. The two sides agreed to carry out joint research on new germplasm of saline-alkali land crops and dryland agricultural technologies to enhance the capacity for regional agricultural sustainable development, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday. During the visit, Chinese and Pakistani agricultural experts exchanged experience in saline-alkali land management and dryland agriculture. A China-Pakistan dryland agricultural science and technology cooperation platform will be established through China's S&T innovation mechanisms such as "Haizhi Workstation" in the near future. In 2024, Jingtai County was identified as the only national pilot county for comprehensive management and utilization of saline-alkali cultivated land in Gansu. At present, sub-surface pipe drainage for salt removal, soil improvement with microbial agents, integrated water and fertilizer management, etc. are being applied on the 23,000-mu demonstration land. Sharing similarities in geography, environment, ecology and climate, the agricultural cooperation between northwestern Chinese province Gansu and Pakistan has been mushrooming in recent years in new variety selection and breeding of dryland crops in cold areas, planting technology, plant nutrition and agricultural machinery.—APP

Lasbela
varsity forges
marine
science
partnership

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS) has established a landmark academic partnership with South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) through a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement, recently formalized in Guangzhou by LUAWMS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Abdul Malik and SCSIO Director General Prof. Chaolun Li, marks a step forward in international marine science collaboration, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. This strategic alliance between Balochistan's premier marine science institution and China's leading ocean research center will enable joint research initiatives, faculty exchanges and specialized scholarship programs for Pakistani students. The collaboration is particularly focused on addressing the critical marine environmental challenges faced by coastal areas and Balochistan's 750 km coastline stands to benefit significantly from the knowledge transfer.—APP

62nd death
anniversary
of Ustad
Barkat Ali

ISLAMABAD: The sixty-second death anniversary of renowned classical and semi-classical singer Ustad Barkat Ali Khan is being observed on Thursday. He was born in 1908 in Kasur, Punjab. Barkat Ali Khan belonged to the famed Patiala Gharana and was the younger brother of the legendary Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. He earned immense respect for his soulful renditions of thumri, dadra, ghazal, and kafi and played a major role in popularizing semi-classical music in Pakistan. Ustad Barkat Ali Khan trained several noted singers and influenced the music scene deeply through radio, concerts, and recordings. His command over expression and melody earned him praise both nationally and internationally. He passed away on June 19, 1963, in Lahore.—APP

PM directs transparency in
Jinnah Medical Complex project

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the progress on the project, said that Jinnah Medical Complex would be a state-of-the-art hospital equipped with the best medical facilities and advanced medical research equipment to serve the entire region



ISLAMABAD :Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to ensure transparency in all phases of Jinnah Medical Complex and Research Center to be constructed in the federal capital. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the progress on the project, said that Jinnah Medical Complex would be a state-of-the-art hospital equipped with the best medical facilities and advanced medical research equipment to serve the entire region. During the briefing on the project, it was told that roadshows were held in China, Turkey, South Korea, and Singapore, where the globally renowned companies had expressed interest in the project. It was told that two conferences were held regarding the construction of the Complex, attended by 33 companies from 10 countries. Besides, the process of acquiring 600 kanals of land for the project was progressing swiftly. The participants of the meeting were told that the advertisements for the appointment of experts/consultants had also been published internationally. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema, and Syed Mustafa Kamal, Chairman of Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute Professor Dr. Saeed Akhter, and relevant senior government officials. Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed to finalize the industrial policy at the earliest to increase production and provide sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by industries. He also issued directions to the relevant authorities

that the industrial policy be finalized in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. Describing the industrial sector as the backbone of the country's exports, the Prime Minister stressed that the development of industries is essential to achieving export-led economic growth. Chairing a meeting on the promotion of the Industrial sector, the prime minister underscored that equipping local industries with a skilled workforce and modern technology to inter-

national standards was the government's top priority. "Investment in the country will be promoted through tariff rationalization," the prime minister said, adding that "Uncertain industrial policies have hindered industrial growth. Through an effective policy, we will take industrial development to new heights". The recent economic policies, he said, were formulated keeping in view the development of the country's industrial

sector. During the meeting, recommendations for the development of national industries were presented to the Prime Minister. He was informed that the manufacturing sector of the country will be revived through an effective industrial policy. The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar and other relevant high officials.—DNA

Iran shatters myth of
Israeli military might

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, has stated that Iran has shattered the illusion of Israel's military prowess, technical expertise, and supposedly invincible defense systems. He said that the United States suffered enormous human and financial losses in Afghanistan before retreating, and it must not repeat the mistake of becoming entangled in the complex and volatile Middle East quagmire, which involves a multitude of political, religious, and territorial conflicts. In the current situation, China and Russia will not remain silent observers. If Islamic countries continue to remain shackled by fear and do not unite, they will be eliminated one after the other, he added.

Addressing an emergency meeting of traders and industrialists, he stressed the urgent need for a global response to Israel's military aggression. The lack of such a response and the failure of certain Western nations to act is alarming. At the same time, the inaction of many Muslim rulers has become a stain on the collective conscience of the Ummah. Dr. Butt said that poorly equipped Iran has managed to instill fear in Israel despite its modern defense infrastructure, intelligence networks, and powerful international backers. This fear is a testament to Iran's strategic capabilities and the changing power dynamics in the region. For decades, Israel kept the Muslim world psychologically subdued. Still, the time has come for Islamic countries to break free from this mental prison. It has now been proven that Israel is not invincible. He stated that

after setting Afghanistan ablaze for two decades, the United States barely managed to escape with its battered reputation. Despite sinking billions of dollars and losing thousands of soldiers, defeat was its destiny. Now, the US must avoid plunging into the Iranian swamp to face further humiliation. Dr. Butt warned that if the war in the Middle East expands, China and Russia will not remain passive. A global or cold war could erupt, accelerating the decline of American global dominance. He emphasized that the situation will have a direct impact on Pakistan. If the Iran-Israel conflict intensifies, global markets will be shaken, and Pakistan's developing economy will suffer tremors. Rising oil and gas prices, disrupted export markets, reduced investments, and growing political uncertainty could prove disastrous for the

country. Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt urged the government of Pakistan to realign its foreign policy in accordance with emerging realities and adopt a dignified and farsighted stance. He stressed that Pakistan must present itself on the global stage as a principled, stable, and resolute state to safeguard against the looming threats.

The business leader warned that history is repeating itself with far greater dangers. He said Pakistan must act with prudence and reject neutrality born of weakness. Strategic decisions should reflect national interest and Islamic solidarity. He emphasized the importance of countering psychological and narrative warfare. Any delay in strengthening economic and strategic resilience could prove disastrous, he warned.

Key steps for strategic
transactions approved

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board has approved to initiate the process for appointing Financial Advisers (FAs) to enhance private sector participation in key power sector entities. The decision was made during the 235th meeting of the Privatisation Commission (PC) Board, chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman of the Privatisation Commission Muhammad Ali, said a news release here on Thursday. The power sector entities includes Distribution Companies (DISCOs), Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO), Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO), Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), and Hazara Electric Supply Company (HAZECO), while Generation Companies (GENCOs) includes 747 MW Guddu Power Plant, and 525 MW Nandipur Power Plant. The Board also reviewed and approved the

audited financial statements of the Privatisation Commission for the fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24. In addition, it approved the commission budget estimates for the financial year 2025-26, supporting its continued institutional operations and transactional progress. The Board was further apprised of the latest developments in ongoing transactions which include Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL), Roosevelt Hotel (New York), and three power distribution companies Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO). The Privatisation Commission reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring transparency, investor confidence, and efficient execution of strategic transactions in alignment with national economic goals.—APP

PTA
celebrates
landmark
achievement

FNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) proudly announces a historic milestone—crossing 200 million telecom subscribers nationwide. According to a news release, with 150 million broadband and over 2 million Fiber To The Home (FTTH) subscribers. This achievement reflects Pakistan's accelerated digital growth and PTA's commitment to inclusive connectivity. PTA and CMO's (Jazz, Telenor, Ufone, Zong and SCO), as a celebration to this landmark achievement, are offering free 2GB Data + 200 On-Net Minutes (Valid for 24 Hours) on 20th June, 2025 to all mobile users. Subscribers can avail this offer by dialing short code *2200# (All Mobile Operators). To further digital inclusion, especially for female students, PTA—alongside PTCL, Transworld, NayaTel, Cybernet, and Wateen—are deploying free Wi-Fi hotspots for 6-month at HEC-recognized selected universities including women universities to empower students through improved access to digital resources. As part of the celebrations, mobile manufacturers have contributed 200 locally assembled smartphones to be distributed among female SIM owners through computerized balloting across Pakistan, AJK and GB. PTA remains committed to connecting Pakistan and digital empowering the Nation.

Aseefa Bhutto urges
urgent investment
in education
Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also praised
PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto
Zardari for effectively advocating
Pakistan's interests on the
international stage and lauded the
Sindh government for constructing
2.1 million flood-resistant houses
across the province

ISLAMABAD: Aseefa Bhutto Zardari on Thursday called for a national education emergency, highlighting the critical need for greater investment in health, education, and human capital in light of escalating public hardships. Participating in the ongoing budget debate in the National Assembly, she underscored the importance of a pro-poor and pro-women budget, advocating for meaningful measures to empower women across the country. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari stressed that Pakistan needs a budget that is progressive, centered on the people, and safeguards the most vulnerable segments of society. She voiced strong opposition to the proposed General Sales Tax (GST) on solar panels, warning that it could hamper efforts to tackle the country's worsening energy crisis. Citing statistics, she noted that 56 million Pakistanis still lack access to electricity, while residents in her own constituency endure up to 15 hours of loadshedding daily. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari welcomed the 21% increase in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) budget, calling for its expansion to include female literacy and health insurance. She described BISP as Asia's largest social safety net, supporting nearly half of Pakistan's population. Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also praised PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for effectively advocating Pakistan's interests on the international stage and lauded the Sindh government for constructing 2.1 million flood-resistant houses across the province.—DNA

SHINGLES VACCINE, SHINGRIX

Shingles vaccine, SHINGRIX, is now available at our practices. This is an FDA approved and CDC recommended vaccine designed to help protect patients (above 50 years of age) against the risk of Shingles/ Herpes Zoster.

This vaccine requires two
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Most of us had chickenpox in childhood, although we may not remember it. Once you've had chickenpox, the virus remains dormant in the nerves. You may not be aware of it for most of your life, but occasionally the virus can reactivate and cause shingles, which appears as a painful rash on the skin.

Shingles can be very painful and is more likely to affect older individuals. This is often due to a weakened immune system, which can happen with age, stress, or certain medical conditions and treatments.

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Abbasi holds
open court

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Thursday held a Khuli Kacheri (open court) here at the Muslim League House on Iqbal Road, and issued directives for immediate resolution of public issues. The residents of union councils 15 to 20, along with the UC chairmen, participated in the open court and raised problems mostly about gas, water, electricity, sanitation and sewage. The public specifically demanded that the narrow and dilapidated streets should be paved. Hanif Abbasi listened to the public issues and issued instructions to the relevant institutions for their resolution. He directed that old and worn-out electric wires should be replaced immediately. Similarly, he instructed that narrow streets should be cemented, besides repairing of dilapidated roads. He also ordered urgent measures for improving the sewerage system. The minister said the public had given him the mandate to serve them and directed the officers concerned to resolve the public problems within the stipulated time and submit reports to him in that regard. He said serving the people was the top priority of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. The people on the occasion thanked the minister for issuing directives for the resolution of their issues.—APP

Sherry briefs
President
about party's
active role in
legislations

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) in the Senate, Senator Sherry Rehman, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr. During the meeting, matters pertaining to the ongoing budget session were discussed. Senator Rehman briefed the President on the progress made in the Senate of Pakistan and highlighted the party's active role in legislative business. She also apprised the President of the recent diplomatic efforts undertaken by the Coalition Joint Committee to advance Pakistan's message of peace and responsible strategic maturity in the recent crisis with India, while also garnering international support for Pakistan's position. She thanked him and the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for entrusting the team and its leader Former Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, with all their confidence and support.—APP

Field Marshal Asim Munir meets Trump – symbolism and substance

THE recent meeting between Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir and U.S. President Donald Trump has sparked significant debate across political, diplomatic, and media circles. On one hand, it represents an opportunity for Pakistan to strengthen ties with an influential U.S. figure known for his unpredictable but consequential foreign policy moves. On the other, it has reignited concerns over the role of Pakistan's military establishment in foreign policy and governance – a space traditionally reserved for elected civilian leadership. To begin with, the symbolism of a high-profile meeting between Pakistan's military chief and a U.S. president is unmistakable. In a normal democratic setup, such meetings – especially ones involving foreign leaders – would be spearheaded by the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, or at least someone from the civilian administration. However, in Pakistan's unique political landscape, where the military has historically played a central role in shaping domestic and foreign policy, this development is not entirely surprising. Still, the optics are hard to ignore. The absence of political leadership from such a crucial engagement sends a clear signal: it is the military establishment that continues to call the shots in Pakistan's foreign policy corridors. Critics argue this undermines the credibility of democratic institutions, especially at a time when Pakistan's political stability is already under strain. Yet, pragmatism demands we look beyond symbolism. If this meeting can unlock U.S. investments or initiate high-level diplomatic backchannels to help stabilize Pakistan's fragile economy or improve its international image, then the engagement is worth the effort. In this light, any productive outcome – particularly in the realms of trade, investment, or defense cooperation – should be welcomed by all stakeholders. There are, however, questions surrounding the timing of the meeting. It comes amid a volatile regional situation, with Israel intensifying attacks on Iran, raising fears of a wider Middle East conflict. In such a climate, the optics of Pakistan's top military commander meeting a major U.S. political figure could be misinterpreted, especially by countries like Iran, who may see this as a tilt towards Western bloc interests. Nonetheless, it must be clarified that this meeting had reportedly been planned well before the recent flare-up in the Middle East. Drawing a direct connection between the two events would therefore be misleading and speculative. The field marshal's visit, while sensitive in timing, should be seen within the broader context of Pakistan's ongoing attempts to re-engage diplomatically with global powers. Ultimately, what matters most is the substance of the meeting. If it lays the groundwork for economic cooperation, helps Pakistan navigate the complex geopolitical chessboard, or improves national security coordination, then the old adage applies: all is well that ends well.

IslamabadPOST

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
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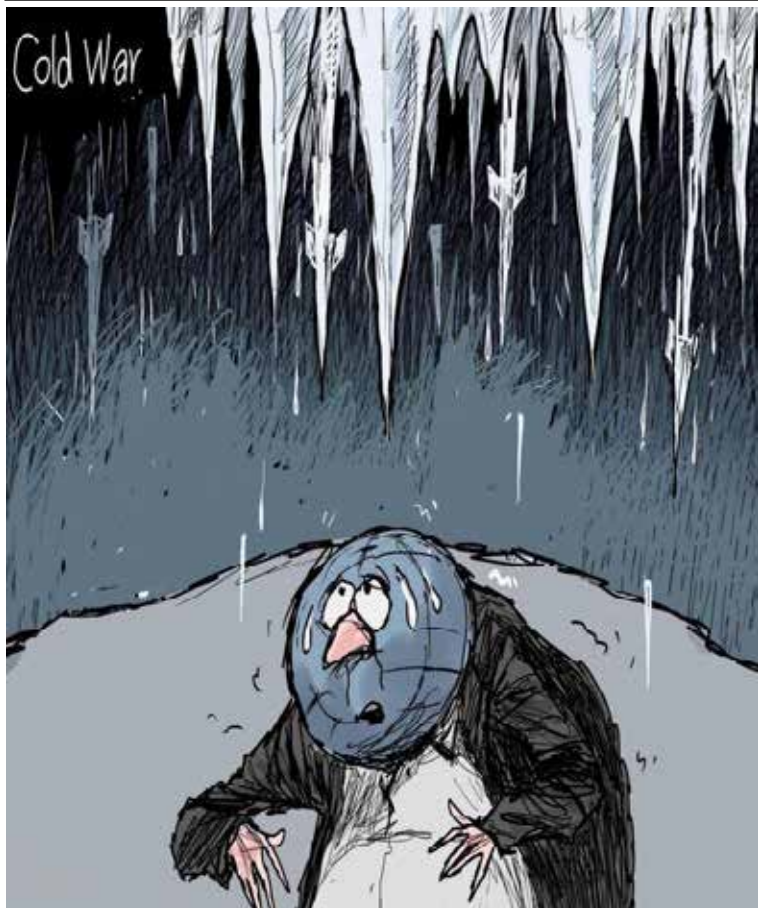
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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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



Gaza crisis needs immediate attention

THE ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza demands more than solemn declarations and symbolic gestures. As the world watches in horror, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League—two of the most prominent political bodies representing Muslim and Arab nations—must reckon with the inadequacy of their response. While both organizations have issued condemnations and called for ceasefires, the time has long passed for mere rhetoric. The suffering in Gaza demands decisive, coordinated, and sustained action. Since the escalation of violence began, thousands of Palestinians have been killed, tens of thousands injured, and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble. Civilian infrastructure—hospitals, schools, places of worship—has been systematically destroyed. Israel's military operations, which it claims are targeted against Hamas, have inflicted disproportionate harm on the civilian population. Human rights organizations across the globe have raised alarm bells, yet the bombardment continues. The OIC and Arab League have convened multiple emergency summits and issued strong-worded statements decrying the violence and calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians. While these statements are important, they fall drastically short of the urgent diplomatic and political action needed. Many in the Arab and Muslim world are beginning to question the relevance and effectiveness of these institutions in moments of profound crisis. What is urgently needed is a shift from passive diplomacy to active engagement. First, the OIC and Arab League must leverage their collective political and economic influence on the global stage. This includes coordinated diplomatic pressure on Western allies of Israel, particularly the United States and European Union, to demand an immediate ceasefire and an end to the blockade of Gaza. Regional powers with direct channels to both Israel and Hamas must act as credible mediators, pushing toward negotiations that include guarantees for humanitarian aid, reconstruction, and long-term political solutions. Second, there must be tangible support for Gaza's beleaguered population. Financial pledges for reconstruction are necessary but insufficient if not followed through with effective delivery. The Arab League and OIC members should urgently organize humanitarian corridors, supply essential medical aid, and provide support to international NGOs working on the ground. It is time for these institutions to lead not just in condemnation but in relief. Finally, the crisis in Gaza cannot be divorced from the broader failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Arab League's 2002 peace initiative, which offered normalization in return for a two-state solution, remains on the table but has been sidelined in recent years. The OIC and Arab League must reignite serious efforts toward a just and lasting solution—one that guarantees the rights, dignity, and sovereignty of the Palestinian people. The people of Gaza are not only victims of bombs and blockades but also of global indifference and political inertia. The OIC and Arab League have a moral obligation and a historic responsibility to act—not tomorrow, not in the next summit, but now.

How Netanyahu's endless wars are making Iran go nuclear

Qamar Bashir



Netanyahu's drive for regime change and military aggression extends far beyond Iran. On September 12, 2002, he told the U.S. Congress that removing Saddam Hussein would bring "positive reverberations" to the region—yet Iraq collapsed, and ironically a Shia-dominated regime supported by Iran was installed, further strengthening Tehran's influence. In 2011–2012, he pushed NATO's intervention in Libya and later in Syria against Assad's government, both now fractured states, leaning toward Iranian-backed Shia coalitions

IN the high-stakes arena of Middle Eastern geopolitics, words carry the weight of war, and decisions shape the fate of nations. On June 17, 2025, President Donald Trump reignited global tensions by publicly contradicting his Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard. While Gabbard, in her Congressional testimony, confirmed that Iran was not actively building a nuclear weapon, Trump dismissed her view, stating on Air Force One: "I don't care what she said. I think they were very close to having one." Trump's sharp rejection of his own intelligence chief's assessment revealed more than a policy disagreement—it underscored his alignment with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had already launched extensive airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities under the pretext of an imminent threat. But this alarmist narrative is not new. It is a script Netanyahu has rehearsed and repeated for decades. Since 1992, Netanyahu has repeatedly claimed that Iran was just a few years away from building a nuclear bomb. In 1995, he warned Iran would have nuclear weapons within three to five years. At the UN in 2012, he famously displayed a cartoon bomb to dramatize the threat. In 2015, while opposing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—a nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers—he again warned it would not stop Iran from going nuclear.

Netanyahu's drive for regime change and military aggression extends far beyond Iran. On September 12, 2002, he told the U.S. Congress that removing Saddam Hussein would bring "positive reverberations" to the region—yet Iraq collapsed, and ironically a Shia-dominated regime supported by Iran was installed, further strengthening Tehran's influence. In 2011–2012, he pushed NATO's intervention in Libya and later in Syria against Assad's government, both now fractured states, leaning toward Iranian-backed Shia coalitions. Under his leadership, Israel launched strikes on Lebanon in October 2024, intensifying conflict with Hezbollah, and waged war against Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen. While Israel bombed Iran's Natanz enrichment facility, the more crucial and fortified Fordow site remains intact, buried deep beneath mountains. U.S. military experts acknowledge that Israel lacks the firepower to destroy it without American bunker-buster bombs and B-2 bombers. Thus, a full dismantling of Iran's nuclear infrastructure would require direct U.S. involvement—a scenario Trump publicly denies but privately appears to be preparing for.

In a chilling development, Western intelligence agencies—allegedly under the guidance of Israeli strategists—have revived the remnants of Iran's former monarchy. A surviving descendant of the deposed Shah has been thrust into the spotlight, being marketed by Western

media and diplomats as a "viable replacement" to Iran's Islamic government. This sinister move evokes the 1953 CIA-orchestrated coup against Prime Minister Mossadeq, when the Shah was restored by foreign intervention. The present scheme appears to follow a similar trajectory: destabilize, delegitimize, and then forcibly replace. Even more alarming is the strategic plan reportedly discussed between Israel and elements within the U.S. security establishment to assassinate Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The operation was said to be nearly greenlit until President Trump vetoed it—at least for the time being. But given Trump's unpredictable nature, his previous reversals, and his shifting allegiances, there is no guarantee he will continue to oppose such a plot. If Trump flips, the assassination could trigger the final act of regime collapse and unleash catastrophic retaliation. Simultaneously, the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the West have been deliberately sabotaged by the inclusion of unrelated and politically charged demands. Every time Iran shows willingness to discuss uranium enrichment limits or international inspections, the United States and Israel derail progress by introducing issues far outside the nuclear realm. They demand that Iran cease all support for the Palestinian cause, abandon Hezbollah and the Shia militias in Syria, cut ties with the Houthis in Yemen, and withdraw influence from Iraq and Lebanon. These are not nuclear issues. These are geopolitical demands designed to hollow out Iran's regional stature. Iran has repeatedly argued that such matters must be discussed separately, if at all. Tying them to the nuclear file is both disingenuous and coercive. Yet the West insists on conflating Iran's right to nuclear technology with its ideological and political alliances. The result is a negotiation framework poisoned by ulterior motives—a trap laid to force Iran to surrender not just its nuclear sovereignty, but its entire foreign policy. In truth, Iran is being cornered—politically, economically, and militarily. The West's endgame is unmistakable: either Iran capitulates entirely or it is annihilated. The recent strikes may have set back Iran's nuclear program by a few months, but the larger goal is to force Tehran into submission through sustained pressure, strategic isolation, and psychological warfare. This naked aggression only strengthens the justification for Iran to pursue nuclear capability as a means of survival. Conversely, if Iran were economically prosperous, industrially strong, and supported by the West in lifting its people out of poverty, it would likely have far less incentive to pursue the bomb. This is the fundamental question the West must ask itself: Are its actions deterring Iran—or driving it deeper into the very path it fears?

Iran is not blind to these realities. Its leadership understands clearly that any use of a nuclear bomb against Israel would provoke immediate and devastating retaliation—possibly wiping Iran off the map. But the reverse is not true: Israel possesses hundreds of nuclear warheads while Iran has none. This strategic imbalance removes the deterrent value for Iran and emboldens Israel to strike preemptively, knowing it faces no comparable consequence. The result is a volatile asymmetry where only one party is fully shielded by the logic of deterrence. Until this imbalance is addressed, Iran will continue to see nuclear capability not as a weapon of aggression, but as a shield of survival. This rational approach, however, is deliberately ignored by Netanyahu and his allies in Washington and Europe. Yet none of this matters to those who have long sought Tehran's collapse. The justification, as always, is Iran's nuclear potential. But the real motive is geopolitical dominance. A strong, independent Iran threatens the hegemony of Israel and the influence of the West in the Muslim world. That is the underlying reason for the calls for regime change, assassinations, sanctions, and sabotage.

For now, diplomacy remains the only peaceful path. Regional actors like Qatar and Oman have made efforts to broker dialogue, but Iran has understandably refused to negotiate while under attack. Israel shows no signs of halting its operations. And Trump, while publicly non-committal, continues to prepare the battlefield. If Iran retaliates too strongly, it risks triggering Western military intervention. If it does not retaliate, it appears weak and further emboldens its enemies. This geopolitical trap leaves Iran with few options and even fewer allies. The only unpredictable variable that could tip the balance is the entry of China and Russia into the fray. Should they choose to support Iran, the conflict would become truly global. In this moment, the world stands on the edge of catastrophe. On one side is a sovereign nation defending its dignity and independence. On the other, a coalition driven by ideological arrogance, military might, and the destructive vision of one man—Netanyahu. The question now is not whether Iran is close to a nuclear weapon, but whether the world is close to repeating the same mistakes that led to the destruction of Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Let history not remember this as the moment when truth was ignored and destruction prevailed. Let it be the moment when reason returned and diplomacy triumphed over war.

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

The Iran–Israel War: from shadows to showdown

Air Vice Marshal M Z Faisal (R)

Israel's military doctrine emphasises quick, high-intensity operations and maintaining technological superiority over its opponents. Its \$46.5 billion annual defence budget, which is three to four times greater than Iran's, gives it a clear technological edge in cyber, space, combat aircraft, and air defence. Sending 200 combat aircraft deep into Iran to hit multiple targets in a single, precision strike with minimal attrition is a manifestation of its air superiority, if not supremacy. Israel's other key performer in the war has been an intelligence network...

FEW rivalries are as deeply rooted, ideologically charged, and dangerously poised for escalation as that between Iran and Israel. What was once a shadow conflict, waged through proxies, cyberattacks, and strategic assassinations, has now erupted into a full-scale war. While relations with the clerical Iranian regime simmered for decades, Israel had been intelligently arranging the chessboard for a final showdown. Abraham Accords signed, Egypt firmly aligned after regime change, Iraq and Syria neutralised, Hamas decimated, Hizbullah deterred, Houthis curtailed, Russia consumed in Ukraine, China focused on South China Sea; the geo-political environment disturbed the balance of power equation, or so Israel believed, and this prompted her to engage Iran militarily.

Israel's military doctrine emphasises quick, high-intensity operations and maintaining technological superiority over its opponents. Its \$46.5 billion annual defence budget, which is three to four times greater than Iran's, gives it a clear technological edge in cyber, space, combat aircraft, and air defence. Sending 200 combat aircraft deep into Iran to hit multiple targets in a single, precision strike with minimal attrition is a manifestation of its air superiority, if not supremacy. Israel's other key performer in the war has been an intelligence network, mainly hired locals, that facilitated early clandestine strikes that killed top military leadership, sending shock waves across all ranks. This early leadership paralysis, much advocated in Col Wardens' 'Five Ring Theory', was exploited to destroy Iran's core nuclear sites in its first offensive. With this trumpeted war objective seemingly accomplished in the initial phase, Israel's subsequent operations appear focused on blunting Iran's retaliatory missile strikes and systematically degrading its economic infrastructure, aiming to weaken Tehran's capacity for a sustained conflict. The contemplated goal of regime change can be objectively assessed only after analysing the evolving air campaign and associated targeting strategy. But how will the Iranians, already united in fury

over Israeli aggression, ever support a regime planted by Israeli hands? Unless it is another Egyptian 'Sisi', meant to rule through strength and borrowed authority. The majority of Iran's over 90 million population is hardened by religious faith, and it has displayed incredible resilience in its war against Iraq. Iran's military strategy compensates for its older equipment by relying on a larger force size and focusing on missile, drone and cyber technology. It also leverages asymmetric warfare tactics, including the use of militant forces present in the Middle East. However, it so far appears that the only credible weapon that can reach Israel is the Iranian supersonic/hypersonic missile. To date, there has been no news of any guerrilla action from aligned militant groups, and the formidable Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is unable to deploy to Israel. There are reports that Iran could have some deadlier weapons up its sleeve to be used for escalation control or trading in the final negotiations. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report of 2025, Israel has approximately 90 nuclear warheads, but Israel maintains deliberate ambiguity as part of its policy. Given the reckless nature of Israel's mindset, one is intrigued to question what the Israeli nuclear threshold could be. By logic, it should lie at a point where there is complete collapse of conventional defences and imminent urban destruction. For a small state of 10 million, large-scale civilian casualties could be intolerable. During the Yom Kippur War, when Israel was caught off guard, reportedly, Golda Meir approved the alerting of nuclear-capable Jericho missiles. Iran, therefore, will be constrained to respond within the perceived allowable conventional space under the nuclear overhang.

There are signs of direct military involvement by the US troops, which is likely to widen the scale and intensity of the war. It is expected that the US, historically averse to body bags, may opt for this option only when the Iranian resistance has significantly weakened. If so, then Iran could decide to widen the scope

of war and attack US/Israeli interests in and beyond the Middle East, like their troop deployments, embassies, shipping in the Gulf/Red Sea, or other business centres. The Russian and Chinese lukewarm reaction to such a scenario will be painful for the Iranians. Israel's air superiority and its ability to conduct precision strikes deep inside Iran provide it with a significant operational advantage. Historically, no nation that enjoyed air superiority has lost a conventional war; the Russian defeat in Afghanistan had different parameters. It remains a puzzle why Iran could not strengthen its Air Force with Chinese or Russian aircraft; the reported Russian SU-35 deal could not become a factor in this war. Yet Israel's advantage is not absolute. Iran's sustained missile attacks threaten Israel's small territory and its civilian centres, putting intense pressure on it to seek direct American military intervention. For Iran, safeguarding its war stamina and its missile arsenal would be important. She may consider inventing an out-of-the-box active role for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and reenergize Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis for asymmetric warfare inside Israel. Ultimately, despite high-intensity exchanges, a negotiated settlement appears more probable than outright victory for either side.

The Iran-Israel war raises concerns about sovereignty, aggression, and realpolitik. Any weakening of the Iranian state is against Pakistan's national interest, as Iran acts as a buffer between nuclear Pakistan and an untamed Israel. The key doctrinal points for Pakistan from this war are: You stand alone in your fight for sovereignty, protect and advance the nuclear program; prioritise airpower and missile capabilities; synchronise covert and overt operations to achieve operational surprise; conduct operations against moles working for foreign agencies; and improve the economy to bolster national security.

– Air Vice Marshal M Z Faisal (Retd)
HI(M) is an independent writer.
He may be reached at mzfaisal65@gmail.com

Briefs

Trump –
Asim Munir
meeting
focuses on...

FROM PAGE 01

This meeting could mark the beginning of a new phase in U.S.–Pakistan relations. In the past, Pakistan helped the U.S. during the Soviet-Afghan War and after 9/11. Now, with tensions involving Iran, India, and Afghanistan—and China expanding its role—the U.S. may again be looking to Pakistan as a key partner in the region. Time will tell whether this leads to a long-term partnership or just another temporary agreement based on short-term goals.

Donald
Trump
denies he...

FROM PAGE 01

which shares a 560-km (350-mile) border with Iran — has condemned Israel's attacks on Iran, saying they violate international law. It has also offered to help arrange a resumption of nuclear talks between Iran and the United States. "Intense security precautions have been taken via additional measures at all our borders including with Iran," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. There were no signs of "a mass immigration wave toward Turkey," the source added. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Thursday to "remove" the nuclear and ballistic missile threat posed by Iran, on the seventh day of war between the arch foes. "We are committed to destroying the nuclear threat, the threat of a nuclear annihilation against Israel," Netanyahu told reporters in the southern city of Beersheba, where a hospital was hit during an Iranian missile attack.

Putin to
visit China
starting...

FROM PAGE 01

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Putin will attend a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tianjin, a Chinese-led regional forum, on August 31-September 1. Putin and Xi will hold bilateral talks on September 2, and then the Russian leader will head to the WWII events scheduled in Beijing for September 3. Xi was guest of honour at a vast military parade in Moscow on May 9, marking 80 years since the defeat of Nazi Germany in Europe. Both Russia and China have been accused by critics of distorting the history of WWII and seeking to use the conflict to justify their expansionist foreign policies. China marks the end of WWII in September, when Japanese forces officially surrendered.

SC
dismisses
pleas
against...

FROM PAGE 01

as the acting chief justice of IHC as well as the transfer of high court judges. The plea was filed by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Aslam Riffat Imtiaz. The IHC judges had urged the apex court to declare that the president does not have unfettered and unbridled discretion to transfer judges from one high court to another, under Article 200(1) of the Constitution, without a manifest public interest, and in a manner that hampers the principles of independence of judiciary and separation of powers. Their petition also prayed the apex court to declare that in line with the settled law pronounced by the highest court in the case of Aslam Awan and Farrukh Irfan, the inter-se seniority of Respondents No 9-11 shall be determined from the date they take oath as justices of the IHC and would consequently be lower in the seniority list to the petitioners. The top court had taken up the matter on April 17 and conducted 19 hearings since then.

Pak faces France in Nations Cup
semifinal on better score average

In the must-win game against New Zealand, Pakistan produced a lackluster performance, losing 4-3 in a match that exposed glaring weaknesses in their defensive line. The Pakistani goalkeepers, Abdullah Ishtiaq and Muneeb, came under heavy criticism for their poor showing, failing to save routine shots and conceding avoidable goals. Observers and former players believe that the duo's performance was far below international standards

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a surprising turn of events, Pakistan has qualified for the semifinal of the FIH Nations Cup Hockey Tournament in Malaysia despite a disappointing defeat at the hands of New Zealand in their last group match. Pakistan will now face France in the semifinal, after edging past Malaysia on goal difference, both teams having finished with four points in the group stage. Pakistan's journey to the semifinal has been a mixed bag. While the national team showed glimpses of brilliance in certain matches, inconsistency and underperformance in crucial areas — particularly goalkeeping — have raised serious concerns for the future.

In the must-win game against New Zealand,

Pakistan produced a lackluster performance, losing 4-3 in a match that exposed glaring weaknesses in their defensive line. The Pakistani goalkeepers, Abdullah Ishtiaq and Muneeb, came under heavy criticism for their poor showing, failing to save routine shots and conceding avoidable goals. Observers and former players believe that the duo's performance was far below international standards.

"The goalkeeping in the match against New Zealand was simply not acceptable," said a former national coach. "If we are serious about competing at the top level, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) must urgently invest in grooming a new generation of goalkeepers." Despite the loss, Pakistan managed to qualify for the semifinal thanks to a better goal average than hosts Malaysia. While both teams finished with four

points, Pakistan's higher number of goals scored across the tournament helped them inch past Malaysia into the final berth. Malaysia will now contest for 5th to 8th place against South Africa, in what will be a disappointing end for the home side, who had hoped to make it to the final on home turf. Meanwhile, France, who remained consistent throughout the group stage, will pose a formidable challenge for Pakistan in the final. The European side has displayed a balanced approach, combining a solid defensive line with sharp, coordinated attacking plays — a stark contrast to Pakistan's unpredictable performances.

Beyond the field, Pakistan's hockey is still reeling from administrative issues that have plagued the sport for years. The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has long been marred by internal politics, factional-

ism, and nepotism, which many believe is stunting the development of the sport. "There's no doubt we have talent, but until we fix the system, we will continue to struggle," said a senior hockey analyst. "Selection should be based on merit, and administrative decisions must be free of political interference."

As Pakistan heads into the semifinal against France, fans remain hopeful for a strong finish. However, the bigger question looms: Will this tournament mark the beginning of reform in Pakistan hockey, or will the same systemic issues continue to hold the sport back? The semifinal between Pakistan and France is expected to be closely contested, with both teams aiming to lift the Nations Cup title. For Pakistan, it is not just a match — it could be a chance to restore some lost pride and start a new chapter.

Real Madrid held by Al-Hilal

PHILADELPHIA: Real Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw by Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal in new coach Xabi Alonso's debut at the Club World Cup on Wednesday, after Manchester City got off to a winning start earlier. Federico Valverde had a stoppage-time penalty saved as Real were forced to settle for a point in the Group H match in Miami having earlier taken the lead. It was a disappointing outcome for the large contingent of fans of the Spanish side in the impressive crowd of 62,415 at the Hard Rock Stadium. "The first half wasn't as good as the second one. In the second half we had better chances, better control. For sure we have the principles to start building something but we could have won," Alonso told broadcaster DAZN. The former Bayern Leverkusen coach gave debuts to new signings Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dean Huijsen in defence but Real

were missing top scorer Kylian Mbappe for the game. Gonzalo Garcia was brought into their attack as a result and the 21-year-old seized his chance as he opened the scoring just after the half-hour mark from a Rodrygo assist. However, Al-Hilal hit back in their new coach Simone Inzaghi's first game on the bench with Ruben Neves levelling before the break from the penalty spot following a Raul Asencio foul. Al-Hilal then held out for a point but Real had the chance to claim the victory in stoppage time after Mohammed Al Qatani was ruled to have put his hand in the face of Fran Garcia in the box. However, Valverde's spot-kick was saved by Yassine Bounou to give the Saudi team a draw after a hugely creditable performance.

In Philadelphia, Phil Foden and Jeremy Doku scored first-half goals as Pep Guardiola's City eased to a 2-0 win against Wydad Casa-

blanca of Morocco in Group G. City gave debuts to new signings Tijjani Reijnders and Rayan Cherki while it was Foden who opened the scoring inside two minutes, sweeping home inside the box after goalkeeper El Mehdi Benabid patted a Savinho centre into his path. Doku converted the second goal from a Foden corner shortly before the interval in a game played in sweaty early afternoon conditions in front of 37,446 fans at Lincoln Financial Field. The afternoon was slightly marred for City as Rico Lewis was sent off for a dangerous tackle late on, but Guardiola was satisfied with the winning start as his side look to turn the page following a difficult last season. "It is so hot. The humidity is not easy. We had good moments, many new players. The first game in this group stage is always really, really important. I saw many, many good things," said Guardi-

ola, who suggested he will make sweeping changes for the next match against Al Ain in Atlanta on Sunday. "The first step is done, it is really important. Now we have recovery, we are going to train well in the next few days and then fresh legs for the next game to try to improve things," Guardiola added. "We have a lot of new players, injured players back, and step by step we will get to the right tempo." The action continues later on Wednesday as City's Group G rivals Al Ain and Juventus meet in Washington. Before that, Mexican outfit Pachuca take on Red Bull Salzburg of Austria in Group H in Cincinnati. The second round of group games begins on Thursday, with matches including Lionel Messi's Inter Miami against Porto and European champions Paris Saint-Germain facing Copa Libertadores winners Botafogo. — **Agencies**

Preparations
underway for ACRES
2026 in Sharjah

SHARJAH: Preparations are in full swing for the Sharjah Real Estate Exhibition, ACRES 2026, which will take place from 21st to 24th January, 2026.

The event is drawing strong interest from government and private sector stakeholders across Sharjah's real estate landscape. In advance of the exhibition, the Sharjah Real Estate Registration Department held a coordination meeting with the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Leaders Events to review proposals and planning updates. The session brought together representatives from key strategic partners, with a shared focus on delivering an enhanced edition that aligns with the emirate's aspirations. The preparations reflect the Department's ongoing digital transformation efforts, which include the rollout of smart, efficient services that streamline operations and improve the experience for exhibitors and visitors.

ACRES 2026 aims to build on the success of its previous edition, which established the event as a premier platform for real estate professionals in the region. It offers a valuable opportunity for developers and investors to present their latest projects, engage in knowledge exchange, and promote confidence in the market. Abdulaziz Rashid Al-Saleh, Director of the Sharjah Real Estate Registration Department, said the exhibition supports Sharjah's position as a regional hub for real estate investment. "We are working to elevate the experience through advanced digital services and strong partnerships, in line with the emirate's commitment to excellence and sustainability," he said. — **Agencies**

Tennis fan at
Halle hit by falling
advertising board

"There has never been anything like this in our 32-year tournament history. We deeply regret the incident," said tournament director Ralf Weber in a statement. Weber promised the spectator a season ticket for next year's edition "as a small gesture of compensation"

BERLIN: A spectator suffered a minor injury at the Halle Open tennis tournament on Wednesday when part of an advertising board fell during a match involving Alexander Zverev. The German world number three was quick to react, handing an ice pack into the stands to help treat the injured woman, who was applauded as she left the stadium. The 62-year-old woman was taken to a local hospital as a precaution, organisers said. "There has never been anything like this in our 32-year tournament history. We deeply regret the incident," said tournament director Ralf Weber in a statement. Weber promised the spectator a season ticket for next year's edition "as a small gesture of compensation". Zverev went on to beat American Marcos Giron 6-2, 6-1 and will play Lorenzo Sonego in the last 16 of the traditional Wimbledon warm-up event. "It was a great match from me," Zverev said. "I felt like I didn't let him play that well, which was important." Daniil Medvedev became the first player to reach the quarter-finals, downing France's Quentin Halys in straight sets. The 2021 US Open champion won 6-2, 7-5. Alex Michelsen overcame Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 while Karen Khachanov beat Zizou Bergs in straight sets. World number one Jannik Sinner is back in action on Thursday when he faces 2023 Halle champion Alexander Bublik for a place in the last eight. — **Agencies**

Thai PM apologises as crisis
threatens to topple govt

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra apologised Thursday for a leaked phone call with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen that has provoked widespread anger and put her government on the brink of collapse. Her main coalition partner has quit and calls are mounting for her to resign or announce an election, throwing the kingdom into a fresh round of political instability as it seeks to boost its spluttering economy and avoid US President Donald Trump's swingeing trade tariffs.

The conservative Bhumjaithai party pulled out on Wednesday saying Paetongtarn's conduct in the leaked call had wounded the country and the army's dignity.

As pressure grew on Thursday Paetongtarn, the daughter of Thaksin Shinawatra — Thailand's most influential but controversial modern politician — apologised at a press conference alongside military chiefs and senior figures from her Pheu Thai party. "I would like to apologise for the leaked audio of my conversation with a Cambodian leader which has caused public resentment," Paetongtarn told reporters.

In the call, Paetongtarn is heard discussing an ongoing border dispute with Hun Sen — who stepped down as Cambodian prime minister in 2023 after four decades but still wields considerable influence.

She addresses the veteran leader as "uncle" and refers to the Thai army commander in the country's northeast as her opponent, a remark that sparked fierce criticism on social media. The loss of Bhumjaithai's 69 MPs left Paetongtarn with barely enough votes to scrape a majority in parliament, and a snap election looks a clear possibility — barely two years after the last one in May 2023.

Two other coalition parties, the United Thai Nation and Democrat Party, will hold meetings to discuss the situation later Thursday. Paetongtarn will be hoping her apology and show of unity with the military are enough to persuade them to stay on board. Losing either would likely mean the end of Paetongtarn's government, and either an election or a bid by other parties to stitch together a new coalition.

"The Chief of Army emphasised that the paramount imperative is for 'Thai people to stand united' in collectively defending national sovereignty," it added. Thailand's armed forces have long played a powerful role in the kingdom's politics, and politicians are usually careful not to antagonise them.

The kingdom has had a dozen coups since the end of absolute monarchy in 1932, and the current crisis has inevitably triggered rumours that another may be in the offing. If Paetongtarn is ousted in a coup she would be the third member of her family, after her aunt Yingluck and father Thaksin Shinawatra, to be kicked out of office by the military. The main opposition People's Party, which won most seats in 2023 but was blocked by conservative senators from forming a government, urged Paetongtarn to call an election. "What happened yesterday was a leadership crisis that destroyed people's trust," People's Party leader Natthaphong Ruengpanyawut said in a statement. The Palang Pracharath party, which led the government up to 2023 and is headed by General Prawit Wongsuwan — who supported a 2014 coup against Paetongtarn's aunt Yingluck — said the leaked recording showed she was weak and inexperienced, incapable of managing the country's security. — **Agencies**

Who are Pakistani players featuring in BBL?

SHAHEEN Afridi, Babar Azam, Haris Rauf, Muhammad Rizwan and Salman Ali Agha are among the 74 Pakistani male cricketers who have signed up for the Big Bash League (BBL) 15 Draft, as announced by Cricket Australia (CA).

Shaheen was selected by Brisbane Heat, Rauf will once again play for Melbourne Stars, Rizwan will play for Melbourne Renegades and Azam will play BBL for Sydney Sixers. Hassan Khan was selected by Melbourne Renegades, Shadab Khan was made part of the team by Sydney Thunder while fast bowler Hasan Ali will play BBL for Adelaide Strikers.

Shaheen, Rizwan and Rauf were also selected in the Platinum category.

The draft, scheduled for June 19, will also include 11 Pakistani women cricketers competing for spots in the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), showcasing a growing interest and presence of Pakistani talent in Australia's premier T20 competitions.

Joining Salman in the men's draft are explosive opener Mohammad Haris and mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed, both of whom have impressed with their recent performances at the domestic and international levels.

These names add to an already star-studded list of Pakistani players previously registered for the BBL 15 Draft, including pace spearhead Shaheen, wicketkeeper-batter Rizwan, leg-spinner Shadab, fast bowler Rauf, spinner Usama Mir and pacer Mohammad Hasnain.

The BBL 15 draft will feature over 600 overseas players, making it one of the most competitive drafts in recent years. The men's draft includes players from England (178), the West Indies (42), Sri Lanka (13), and even one from India. The women's draft pool is headlined by players from England (46), India (15), New Zealand (15) and Pakistan (11).

Brisbane Heat will have the first pick in the men's draft, giving them the opportunity to lead selections from this elite pool of global talent. — **Agencies**

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Achievements
success of
'current...

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milestone", Asif said in an X post: "There has never before been an example of a US president inviting and meeting a Pakistani army chief." He added that this is the most significant turning point in the 78-year history of Pakistan-US relations. commenting on the meeting, Asif said how discussion on international and regional matters during the meeting between Trump and Field Marshal Munir highlighted the importance of Pakistan. He added that Pakistan's role was acknowledged and its significance was recognised for resolving the issues. He added that the revival of the national economy and India's defeat became possible due to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Munir. The defence czar said that the developments helped regain international attention on the Pakistan-India conflicts. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Field Marshal Munir lauded Trump for his "constructive and result-oriented role" in facilitating a ceasefire with India following last month's armed conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. The development came as the two leaders met over lunch at the White House Cabinet Room a day ago with the US president being accompanied by Secretary of State Senator Marco Rubio and US Special Representative for Middle Eastern Affairs Steve Witkoff whereas Field Marshal Munir was joined by Islamabad's national security adviser and interior minister.

Outgoing
WB country
director
calls on PM

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shaping the Country Partnership Framework by the World Bank in Pakistan. "During the 2022 floods, you worked tirelessly for the relief and rehabilitation of the affected people of Pakistan," he said adding that "Wherever in the world you render your services, the people of Pakistan will always remember your contributions to Pakistan positively". The prime minister emphasized that the stability and initiation of Pakistan's journey towards economic development was the result of the hard work of the economic team.

On the occasion, Najy Benhassine said under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the beginning of transformational change, stability, and economic development in Pakistan was commendable.

"Under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, the economic team saved Pakistan from the threat of default and set it on the path to stability", Najy Benhassine added.

He said the prime minister was a hardworking leader who rescued the economy of Pakistan despite challenges. "Pakistan's current economic team skillfully transitioned the country from stability to a path of growth", he added. The meeting was also attended by World Bank's Operations Manager in Pakistan, Giles Dragelis, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Mohammad Aurangzeb, and other senior officials.

Pre-
monsoon
rains...

FROM PAGE 01

heavy rainfall and hailstorms. According to the Met Office, moist currents from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea were entering upper and central parts of the country.

A westerly wave was also likely to approach the upper regions on June 20, which will contribute to the development of unstable weather conditions during this period. From June 20 to 23, rain-wind/thunderstorms with isolated heavy falls and hailstorms are expected in parts of upper and central Punjab, including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Lahore, Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Sargodha, and Mianwali.

Briefs

Rupee sheds 09 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Thursday depreciated by 09 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.55. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 283.7 and Rs 285.7 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs1.23 to close at Rs 325.25 against the last day's closing of Rs 326.48, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.95, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.32 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 380.40 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 381.72. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 and 02 paise to close at Rs 77.23 and Rs 75.59, respectively.—APP

Textile export rises by 7.37% in 11 months

ISLAMABAD: Textile exports witnessed an increase of 7.37 per cent during the first eleven months of the current financial year (July-May) as compared to the corresponding months of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The textile exports from the country were recorded at \$ 16,365.325 million during the July-May (2024-25) against the exports of \$ 15,241.482 million during July-May (2023-24). The textile commodities that contributed in trade growth included knitwear the export of which increased by 14.46 per cent to \$ 4,555.345 million from \$ 3,980.000 million while the export of bed wear surged by 10.56 per cent to \$ 2,839.509 million from \$ 2,568.185 million. The other commodities that witnessed growth in trade included towels, the export of which rose by 2.84 per cent to \$995.423 million from \$ 967.936 million, tents, canvas, and tarpaulin by 9.58 per cent to \$ 177.770 million from \$ 107.476 million; readymade garments up by 16.35 per cent to \$ 3,768.432 million this year compared to the exports of \$ 3,238.818 million last year. Similarly, the export of art, silk and synthetic textile grew by 8.90 per cent to \$ 365.708 million from \$ 335.816 million, made up articles (excl. towels and bed wear) increased by 8.78 per cent to \$ 713.267 million from \$ 655.721 million while the export of other textile materials went up by 2.24 per cent to \$ 673.474 million from \$ 658.702 million. The textile commodities that witnessed negative trade growth included raw cotton the exports of which declined by 98.45 per cent to \$0.871 million from \$56.086 million. Likewise, the exports of cotton yarn declined by 32.04 per cent to \$618.535 million from \$910.193 million whereas the export of cotton carded or combed dipped by 99.28 per cent from \$0.837 million to \$0.006 million during the period under review.—APP

Ukraine fears being sidelined by Iran-Israel war

KYIV: Fighting between Iran and Israel could deflect global attention from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and even bolster Kremlin's war effort, Ukrainian officials say. Israel launched a massive bombing campaign on Iran last week that prompted Tehran — a close ally of Russia — to strike back with missiles and drones. The conflict has pushed up the price of oil — a key revenue stream funding Russia's invasion. "For Ukraine, the challenge is the price of oil, because if prices remain high for a long time, the Russians will earn more," a senior Ukrainian political source told AFP.

Govts scramble to evacuate citizens from Israel, Iran

Over decades of armed conflict at home, about 5 million Afghan refugees and migrant workers settled in neighboring Iran, according to official data. Iran is home to the largest Afghan diaspora in the world. Most of them live in Tehran

HONG KONG: Governments around the world are attempting to evacuate thousands of their nationals caught up in the rapidly spiraling Israel-Iran conflict, organizing buses and planes and in some cases assisting people crossing borders on foot. Foreigners have rushed to leave both countries after Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign last Friday targeting Iran's nuclear and military facilities, sparking retaliation from Tehran. But with Israel's air space closed and the two countries exchanging heavy missile fire, many people are being evacuated from third countries. European countries have already repatriated hundreds of their citizens from Israel. The Czech Republic and Slovakia said Tuesday they had taken 181 people home on government planes. "It was not possible to send the army plane straight to Israel," the Czech defense ministry said in a statement, citing the air space closure. "The evacuees were taken to an airport in a neighboring country by buses. They crossed the border on foot." The German government said flights were scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday via Jordan, while Poland said the first of its citizens

were due to arrive back on Wednesday. Greece said it had repatriated 105 of its citizens plus a number of foreign nationals via Egypt, while a private plane with 148 people landed in the Bulgarian capital Sophia on Tuesday. The US ambassador to Israel on Wednesday announced plans for evacuating Americans by air and sea. The embassy is "working on evacuation flights & cruise ship departures" for "American citizens wanting to leave Israel," Ambassador Mike Huckabee posted on X. Australia has started evacuating around 1,500 citizens from Iran and more than 1,200 from Israel — but missile barrages have made it too risky for civilian aircraft to land in either country, it's foreign minister said. "There's no capacity for people to get civilian aircraft in, it is too risky, and the airspace is closed," Foreign Minister Penny Wong told national broadcaster ABC. "We have taken the opportunity to get a small group of Australians out of Israel through a land border crossing. "We are seeking to try and do more of that over the next 24 hours. Pakistan has shut its border crossings with neighboring Iran, except to Paki-

stanis wanting to return home. Around 1,000 Pakistanis have fled so far, including at least 200 students. The foreign ministry said the families of diplomats and some non-essential staff from Iran had been evacuated. Around 110 Indian students have been evacuated from Iran on a special flight from Armenia, India's foreign ministry said Thursday. New Zealand said Thursday it had closed its embassy in Iran, evacuating two staff members and their family to Azerbaijan by land. "If and when opportunities arise to assist the departure of other New Zealanders in Iran and Israel, we will pursue them with urgency," Foreign Minister Winston Peters said in a statement. Japan has ordered military planes to be on standby for around 1,000 Japanese nationals believed to live in Israel, and around 280 in Iran, according to government ministers. The Japanese embassies in Iran and Israel are preparing to use buses to evacuate citizens to neighboring countries, a government spokesman said, as the war entered its seventh day. Moreover, Abdulsabor Seddighi was in the middle of his mid-term exams at a university in Tehran when Israeli

bombardment started to wreak havoc in the city. He decided to leave as soon as classes were suspended, and traveled 1,200 km to cross to Afghanistan. Israeli airstrikes on Iran began last week, when Tel Aviv hit more than a dozen Iranian sites — including key nuclear facilities and the residences of military leaders and scientists — claiming it was aiming to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Daily attacks have been ongoing for the past seven days after Iran retaliated with ballistic missile strikes against Israel. The Israeli military has since been increasingly targeting civilian infrastructure. "During the last week, we didn't have proper phone and internet connectivity. Power cuts were more frequent," Seddighi, a computer science student, told Arab News. "My family back in Herat was worried for my safety. I decided to leave." He is one of the thousands of Afghans who are now crossing the border every day. At the Islam Qala crossing alone — part of the main route connecting Herat and Iran's Mashhad — the number of people crossing daily has surged from 1,500 to as high as 8,000. "The number of Afghans returning from Iran has drastically increased during the last week.

The majority of the returnees were individuals prior to the conflict, while a lot of families also returned in the last week," said Naser Azimi, a health worker at the Islam Qala health center. "The number of Afghans returning through Islam Qala every day increased to 3,000 and even reached 8,000 people in a day," Abdulbasit Qazizada, who has been working in Tehran for the past two years, arrived in Herat on Monday. "There was an unusual rush at the Islam Qala border crossing when I was coming back," he said. "There's so much fear and anxiety across all cities of Iran, especially Tehran. Many Afghans also work or live there." Over decades of armed conflict at home, about 5 million Afghan refugees and migrant workers settled in neighboring Iran, according to official data. Iran is home to the largest Afghan diaspora in the world. Most of them live in Tehran. Some Afghan families have lost contact with their relatives living in the Iranian capital since the outbreak of violence. "My brother went to Iran a few months ago for work. We heard in the news on Friday that Israel attacked Iran and killed a lot of people," said Mohammad Naser, a resident of Kabul, whose brother and two cousins were in Tehran.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry talking to Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Alisher Tukhtaev who called on him.

Tariff-free solidarity China's silent revolution in global trade

BEIJING: In a world where trade policy is increasingly wielded as a blunt geopolitical weapon, China's decision to offer zero-tariff treatment on all products from the world's least developed countries (LDCs) risks being underappreciated. Effective December 1, 2024, Beijing raised its duty-free coverage for LDCs with which it has diplomatic relations from 98 percent to 100 percent of tariff lines. With this, China became the first major economy — and the first large developing nation — to extend such complete unilateral preferential access. There was no grandstanding. No conditionality. Just a straightforward promise of market access for the world's poorest nations. It's not just a policy shift. It's an ideological counterweight. At the recent WTO meeting in Geneva, China's delegation elaborated further: the policy applies to all 53 African countries that recognize Beijing diplomatically, and is coupled with pledges for deeper trade in goods, expanded technical training, and capacity building for local industries. In other words, tariff relief is just one pillar of a broader developmental partnership. The goal, in China's own phrasing, is to nurture "internal growth momentum." This isn't merely theory. On the ground, African businesses are already responding with cautious optimism. Emma Mutijima, CEO of Phoenix Ventures in Rwanda, sees a path forward: "We have honey, coffee and chili, and all these products have high demand in China. We are trying to promote Rwandese products to the Chinese market." Across the continent, from Rwanda to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the message is similar: finally, someone is opening the gates instead of moving the goalposts. But the implications extend far beyond bilateral trade flows. In granting zero-tariff access unilaterally, China challenges one of the foundational myths of the current global order — that progress for developing nations must come slowly, and only through pathways sanctioned by the dominant economies.—DNA

Subsidy-driven EV policy launched to boost local industry

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday launched the National Electric Vehicle (NEV) Policy 2025–30, calling it a historic and transformative step in Pakistan's journey towards industrial, environmental, and energy reforms. Addressing a press conference along with Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production Saif Anjum and Chief Executive Officer Engineering Development Board (EDB) Engr. Khuda Bukhsh, Haroon said new EV policy is aligned with the Prime Minister's vision of promoting clean, sustainable, and affordable transportation while encouraging local industry and protecting the environment. He stressed that the transport sector is a major contributor to carbon emissions in Pakistan, and reform in this area is imperative. "EV policy supported Pakistan's commitments under the Paris Agreement and reinforces efforts to curb fossil fuel dependence and urban air pollution," he remarked. He said that one of the major targets under the policy is to ensure that 30% of all new vehicles sold in Pakistan by 2030 are electric. This transition is projected to save 2.07 billion liters of fuel annually, amounting to nearly \$ 1 billion in foreign exchange savings. Additionally, the policy is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 4.5 million tons and cut healthcare-related costs by \$405 million per year. He said that currently, sixty one licenses issued from manufacturing on motorbikes and three-wheelers while two licenses have been issued for the manufacturing of electric vehicles. Akhtar announced that an initial subsidy of Rs. 9 billion has been allocated for the fiscal year 2025–26, under which 116,053 electric bikes and 3,171 electric rickshaws will be facilitated. Importantly, 25% of this subsidy is reserved for women to provide them with safe, affordable, and eco-friendly mobility. The government has projected a cumulative subsidy of over Rs. 100 billion for the five year program, with 25% of allocations reserved specifically for women to promote inclusive access. He said a fully digital platform has also been introduced to ensure transparent online application, verification, and disbursement of subsidies. Moreover, the policy outlines the installation of 40 new EV charging stations on motorways, with an average distance of 105 kilometers. The policy also includes the introduction of battery swapping systems, vehicle-to-grid (V2G) schemes, and mandatory integration of EV charging points in new building codes to facilitate wider adoption in urban areas. "To encourage local manufacturing, incentives are being provided to domestic producers. Currently, over 90% of parts for two- and three-wheelers are already manufactured locally. The government will also introduce special support packages for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to further boost localization," he added. The AIDEP tariff facility will continue until 2026 and be phased out gradually by 2030. The special assistant noted that the policy was developed through consultations with over 60 experts, institutions, and industry stakeholders, guided by a steering committee under the Ministry of Industries and Production since September 2024.

Belarus, Kyrgyzstan look to boost cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Kyrgyzstan is a good and reliable partner, friend and kin country for Belarus, Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Natalya Kochanova said as she met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kyrgyzstan to Belarus Erbol Sultanbaev, BelTA has learned. "I am sincerely pleased to welcome you to the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus. This is a great opportunity to once again compare approaches in cooperation between our countries. For us, Kyrgyzstan has always been and remains a good, reliable partner, friend and kin country. We, of course, highly appreciate it," Natalya Kochanova said. "As Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, Minsk and Bishkek have achieved a lot over the past three decades. Our interaction is diverse and deep. Indeed, our heads of state laid a solid foundation for our cooperation, and today we have a good legal framework. These are the agreements that we have today and that have been signed between the governments of our countries." According to the speaker, cooperation between the two countries is vibrant. "You know, I have not seen such contacts with any other country. I've taken notice of it for myself. Of course, we are happy about this, because we can see what results Kyrgyzstan has today in the economy and in what is being done for the country and for the people. This deserves all respect," said the chairwoman of the Council of the Republic.—APP

S Africa declares national disaster as flooding death toll rises to 92

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa was under a declared state of national disaster on Thursday as the death toll from floods caused by severe rains in the Eastern Cape region rose to 92. The Eastern Cape government honored the victims of last week's floods with a provincial Day of Mourning and a memorial service at King Sabatha Dalindyebo Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College in Mthatha, one of the few schools whose infrastructure remained intact. Speaking at the public memorial service, Zolile Williams, a member of the executive council, said the people of the coastal province have not been the same since the disaster hit, and many are now faced with the challenging task of rebuilding.—APP

Philippines passes law designating national day for hijab awareness

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has signed a law recognizing the Muslim headscarf as part of the country's traditional garment culture and designating a special day to increase awareness of it. The new law, signed on Wednesday, declares Feb. 1 each year as the National Day of Awareness on the Hijab and Other Traditional Garments and Attire "to promote diversity, awareness, and tolerance of the various religious and cultural beliefs through the wearing of indigenous and traditional clothing, head garments and coverings." Government institutions, in coordination with the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, will under the law organize events "that promote the cultural values of wearing the hijab and other traditional garments and attire." Muslims constitute about 10 percent of the country's 110 million predominantly Catholic population. Most Philippine Muslims live on the southern island of Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, as well as in the central-western province of Palawan. The move to recognize the Muslim garment was welcomed by the community as a step toward promoting inclusion. "When the government does that, it's a recognition of the importance of hijabs to the Muslims. It's really promoting inclusiveness in society, and it is honoring the Muslim women," Dr. Portre Dunampatan-Diampuan, a Filipino Muslim scholar from the United Religions Initiative, told Arab News. For Samira Gutoc, chairperson of the rights advocacy group Ako Balawit, the new law meant that she was being seen as equal in nation-building.—APP

Thai PM faces growing calls to quit following Cambodia phone row

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra faced mounting calls Thursday to resign after a leaked phone call she had with former Cambodian leader Hun Sen provoked widespread anger and prompted a key coalition partner to quit. The coalition government led by Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai party appears on the brink of collapse, throwing the kingdom into a fresh round of political instability as it seeks to boost its spluttering economy and avoid US President Donald Trump's swinging trade tariffs. The conservative Bhumjaithai party, Pheu Thai's biggest partner, pulled out on Wednesday saying Paetongtarn's conduct in the leaked call had wounded the country and the army's dignity. Thailand's foreign ministry said Cambodia's disclosure of a recording of a private conversation between Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and former Prime Minister Hun Sen were unacceptable. "It is a breach of diplomatic etiquette, a serious violation of trust, and undermines conduct between two neighboring countries," spokesperson Nikorndej Balankura said on Thursday. APP

ICCI organizes awareness session on digital invoicing & FBR integration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), in collaboration with the Regional Tax Office (RTO) Islamabad, organized an awareness and training session titled "Understanding Digital Invoicing & FBR Integration" at the ICCI premises. The event was attended by a large number of ICCI executives, members, and representatives from trade and industry who sought clarity on the new invoicing integration mechanism introduced by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Senior Vice President ICCI Abdul Rehman Siddiqui delivered the welcome address, appreciating the initiative as a timely step towards digitising the tax ecosystem and enhancing transparency in business transactions. He

emphasized the need for continued awareness efforts to ensure smooth compliance and minimize disruptions. He assured the business community that ICCI would continue to play its proactive role

in facilitating reforms that support ease of doing business. Assistant Commissioner Income Tax , RTO Islamabad Osama Abbasi, delivered a detailed presentation explaining that the core

objective of the entire exercise is ease of doing business and provision of level playing field to all the stakeholders for the prosperity of the country. He added that all the corporate entities and companies

involved in importing, manufacturing, or distributing fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) are now required to integrate their hardware and software with the FBR's computerized system. Manager Training PRAL, Mohammad Umair Siddique Khan, briefed the participants on the integration process and addressed practical concerns. A productive Q&A session followed, during which participants' queries were addressed to their satisfaction by the concerned officials. The session was moderated efficiently by Mian Muhammad Ramazan, former Executive Member of ICCI. Those prominent among the participants included executive members Irfan Chaudhry, Sanaulah Khan, Ishaq Sial, Naveed Satti and ICCI President's advisor Naehm Siddiqui. The session reflected ICCI's ongoing commitment to informing,



Briefs

OHCHR
urges de-
escalation
between
Israel, Iran

GENEVA: Nada Al-Nashif, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, has called for urgent de-escalation between Israel and Iran, expressing deep concern over the targeting of populated areas amid the ongoing hostilities. She urged both parties to pursue immediate diplomatic dialogue to end the exchange of missile strikes and to seek a peaceful resolution. Speaking during a session on Iran at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Al-Nashif said the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is closely monitoring the situation. She noted reports of thousands of civilians fleeing parts of Tehran following widespread warnings, and cited the latest figures indicating that more than 200 people have been killed in Iran and 24 in Israel so far. Al-Nashif stressed the need for full adherence to international law by both sides, particularly with respect to protecting civilians in densely populated areas and avoiding attacks on civilian infrastructure. She called on all influential stakeholders to prioritise negotiations. – Agencies

27 killed in
monsoon
rains in India's
Gujarat

NEW DELHI: At least 27 people have died since last Monday due to heavy rain-fall linked to the monsoon season in the north-western Indian state of Gujarat. The state authorities have deployed emergency response teams to assist affected residents. The cities of Palitana and Jesar were reported to be among the worst hit, each recording 867 millimetres of rainfall within 24 hours. – APP

48,394 killed
in conflicts
during 2024

GENEVA: A new international report has revealed a 40 percent surge in civilian deaths resulting from armed conflicts around the world in 2024. Issued today by the United Nations Human Rights Office in Geneva, the report stated that no fewer than 48,394 people – the majority of them civilians – were killed globally due to conflict during 2024. The report highlighted the devastating impact of armed violence on women and children over the past two years, noting that nearly four times as many women and children were killed in conflicts during 2023 and 2024 compared to the years 2021 and 2022. According to the data, 21,480 women and 16,690 children were killed in conflict zones in 2023 and 2024, with 80 percent of child deaths and 70 percent of women's deaths recorded in Gaza alone. – APP

PIA draws
five bids

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: In its efforts to sell its struggling national airline, Pakistan has received expressions of interest from five parties, including business groups, the Privatisation Ministry said on Thursday. The bids were submitted ahead of a June 19 deadline to acquire up to 100% of PIA, which has accumulated over \$2.5 billion in losses in roughly a decade. Still, following a major restructuring, it posted its first operating profit in 21 years in the year through June 2024. The sale is seen as a test of Pakistan's ability to shed loss-making state firms and meet conditions of a \$7 billion International Monetary Fund bailout. It would be the country's first major privatisation in nearly two decades. Eight parties submitted their expression of interest, but only five of them provided documents of qualification, the ministry said in a statement.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, chaired a high-level meeting to discuss challenges facing the power sector. The meeting was attended by Minister of Power, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, and other senior officials from Ministries of Power and Finance. – DNA

Pakistanis among 60 migrants
'feared dead' in shipwrecks

With dozens feared dead and entire families left in anguish, IOM is once again urging the international community to scale up search and rescue operations and guarantee safe, predictable disembarkation for survivors," said Othman Belbeisi, the IOM's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa

DNA

TRIPOLI: At least 60 migrants including Pakistanis are feared dead after a pair of shipwrecks off the coast of Libya over the past week, according to the International Organisation for Migration. The first ship went down on June 12 near a Libyan port in Tripoli, with 21 people, including women and children, reported missing and only five survivors found, the IOM said in a statement. Those lost at sea included Eritrean, Pakistani, Egyptian and Sudanese nationals.

The second wreck took place about 35 kilometres (20 miles) off the port city of Tobruk, with the sole survivor reporting 39 people lost at sea, according to the UN body. "With dozens feared dead and entire families left in anguish, IOM is once again urging the international community to scale up search and rescue operations and guarantee safe, predictable disembarkation for survivors," said Othman Belbeisi, the IOM's regional director for the Middle East and North Africa. According to the statement, at least 743 people have died so far this year trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

The deadly route, it said, is "marked by increasingly dangerous smuggling practices, limited rescue capacity and growing restrictions on humanitarian operations". Earlier in April, a vessel carrying foreign nationals sank near the Harawa coast of Sirte in eastern Libya, the Foreign Office (FO) said, confirming that four Pakistani nationals were among the 11 bodies recovered. The incident added to the list of migrant boat tragedies resulting in the loss of precious lives, with dozens of Pakistanis drowning in multiple incidents in recent months. In view of this, Lahore's Jamia Naeemia also issued a religious

edict against the use of illegal means to travel abroad from Pakistan. The religious decree, issued by Dr Mufti Raghbir Hussain Naeemi and Mufti Imran Hanfi, said that using illegal means to go abroad is not only unlawful but also violates Shariah. It said that committing suicide or taking any step that threatens one's life is against the principles of Islamic Shariah. Anyone who ends his life or takes a step that leads to his death could never be allowed in Islam under any circumstances, the decree said and advised people considering going abroad to use legal and safe means for going to other countries.

Faiz Hamid's trial
on hold for three
weeks, says counsel

Barrister Mian Ali Ashfaq formally requests early completion of process in light of his travel plans next month

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing military trial of former ISI chief Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hamid has been on hold for the past three weeks, his lawyer revealed on Wednesday, expressing the hope that the proceedings may resume any day now. Barrister Mian Ali Ashfaq said that the proceedings have remained paused for the last three weeks. "We expect them to resume soon, possibly any day," he said. Ashfaq, who is leading Gen (R) Faiz's legal team alongside two associates, added that they had formally requested early completion of the process in light of his planned travel abroad next month. "Given my family vacation abroad after about a month, we have requested early conclusion of proceedings," he said. While careful not to speculate on a specific timeline, Ashfaq noted that approximately 65% to 70% of the trial process had already been completed. The military proceedings, conducted under the Official Secrets Act, remain confidential, and no further details have been made public. However, Ashfaq's comments offer a rare insight into the current status of the case that has attracted significant public interest. Last year military's public relations arm, ISPR, announced that Gen (R) Faiz had been formally charged with multiple offences, including engaging in political activities and violating the Official Secrets Act. The ISPR stated these violations have compromised state security and interests. Gen (R) Faiz has been formally arraigned on charges of engaging in political activities, violations of the Official Secrets Act which, according to the ISPR, were detrimental to the safety and interest of the state, misuse of authority and government resources and causing wrongful loss to a person(s). The former spymaster's role with regard to May 9 "in collusion with vested political interests" was also being investigated.

Putin says he would
only meet Zelensky
in 'final phase'
of peace talks

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday he was ready to meet with Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky but only during a "final phase" of negotiations on ending the three-year conflict. He also suggested Zelensky had no right to sign a peace agreement given his five-year mandate had expired under martial law, a notion Kyiv has dismissed as baseless propaganda. "We need to find a solution that would not only put an end to the current conflict, but also create conditions that would prevent similar situations from recurring in the long term," Putin told foreign journalists including AFP in Saint Petersburg. "I am ready to meet with everyone, including Zelensky. That is not the issue – if the Ukrainian state trusts someone in particular to conduct negotiations, for God's sake, it can be Zelensky," the Russian leader said. "We don't care who negotiates, even if it is the current head of the regime," Putin said. – DNA

Pak, Russia energy ministers
advance the energy ties

NEWS DESK



MOSCOW: The Federal Minister for Energy Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, is visiting Russia, leading a delegation to participate in International Economic Forum 2025 being held in St. Petersburg, Russia from 18-21 June 2025. On the sidelines of the forum, the Minister held meetings with his counterpart and Chair of Pakistan-Russia Inter Governmental Commission (IGC) and Minister of Energy Mr. Sergei Tsivilov. During the meeting both sides held detailed discussions on areas of cooperation between two countries including energy, connectivity, trade and investment, banking and insurance, mining and people to people contacts. The Russian side showed keen interest in enhancing cooperation in all areas bilateral interests and looked forward to the holding of cooperation in 10th session of IGC to be held in the second quarter of 2025 in Islamabad. In addition, Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with the First Deputy Director of Rosatom Minerals, Mr. Alexey Shemetov. The Minister invited the corporation to invest in Pakistan, specifically, mining sector, focusing on bringing technology and sharing expertise on safety and efficiency of the sector. In response, Mr. Alexey agreed to explore avenues and bring proposals for investing in mining sector in Pakistan.

European
FMs aim
to meet
Iran today

BRUSSELS: Foreign ministers from key European powers France, Germany and Britain and the EU's top diplomat are aiming to meet their Iranian counterpart for nuclear talks in Geneva on Friday, European diplomats said. The meeting being planned comes as European countries call for de-escalation in the face of Israel's bombing campaign against Iran's nuclear programme.

US President Donald Trump has warned he is weighing military action against Iran's nuclear facilities as Israel pummels the country and Tehran responds with missile fire. Israel says its air campaign is aimed at preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran had been enriching uranium to 60 percent – far above the 3.67 percent limit set by a 2015 deal with international powers, but still short of the 90-percent threshold needed for a nuclear war-head. – Agencies

Govts scramble
to evacuate
citizens from
Israel, Iran

HONG KONG: Governments around the world are evacuating thousands of their nationals caught up in the rapidly spiralling Israel-Iran conflict, organising buses and planes and in some cases assisting people crossing borders on foot. Foreigners have rushed to leave both countries after Israel launched an unprecedented bombing campaign last Friday targeting Iran's nuclear and military facilities, sparking retaliation from Tehran. – Agencies

PSX surges on circular debt
clearance, \$1bn ADB-backed loan

KSE-100 Index surges to an intraday high of 121,745.30, gaining 1,279.37 points, or 1.06%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The equity market rebounded on Thursday as investors reacted positively to the federal cabinet's approval of a record circular debt resolution plan and new foreign financing arrangements. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index climbed to an intraday high of 121,745.30, gaining 1,279.37 points, or 1.06%, and touched a low of 120,661.42, reflecting a rise of 195.49 points, or 0.16%. "Stocks showed recovery led by blue chip scrips as investors weigh federal cabinet

approval of Rs1.275 trillion bank loan under circular debt management plan," said Ahsan Mehanti, Managing Director and CEO of Arif Habib Commodities. "Surging global crude oil prices, and expectations over rationalisation in industrial power tariff played catalyst role in bullish activity at PSX," he added. The federal cabinet on Wednesday approved Pakistan's largest-ever financial scheme aimed at restoring stability in the power sector by addressing Rs1.275 billion in circular debt. The plan, designed to stabilise the energy industry without adding pressure on the national budget, targets the resolution of the entire amount over a six-year period.

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