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PM Shehbaz talks to Chinese envoy on Middle East

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Afghanistan should not support outlaws

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Lionel Messi's Miami and PSG progress

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No more fights: Trump

Iran-Israel 12-day war ends for now

Trump brokered ceasefire in call with Netanyahu while US team spoke to Iran; Russian cautiously optimistic about ceasefire sustainability; Iran says finger will be on the trigger as Israel cannot be trusted

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump brokered a ceasefire between Israel and Iran through talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday while his team, including Vice President JD Vance, held talks with Tehran, a senior White House official said. The official, providing details of the ceasefire on condition of anonymity, said Israel agreed to it so long as Iran does not launch fresh attacks. Iran signaled that no further attacks would take place, the official said. Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and US special envoy Steve Witkoff were involved in the direct and indirect communications with Iran, the official said. Trump said earlier on Monday that a "complete and total" ceasefire between Israel and Iran would go into force in the coming hours, moments after both sides threatened new attacks. Iran launched missiles against a US air base, causing no casualties, after US bombers dropped 30,000-pound bunker-busters on Iranian underground nuclear facilities over the weekend. The official said Trump called for talks with Israel and Iran soon after the US strikes. "He directed his team on Saturday night: 'Let's get on the phone .. with the Iranians,'" the official said. "Get me Bibi. We're going to make peace," the official said, quoting Trump.

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Israel rescuers say 4 dead in multi-wave Iran missile attacks

APP

BEERSHEBA: At least four people were killed in Israel in a multi-wave Iranian missile attack Tuesday shortly before a staggered ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump was meant to enter force, emergency services and the army said. Writing on X, the Magen David Adom rescue service said three people were pronounced dead at the scene of a strike in southern Beersheba while a fourth was added in an update to its figures. Another two people were "moderately injured" while 20 were treated for minor injuries and anxiety, it said. AFP footage from the scene showed rescue teams combing through the rubble and mangled slabs of concrete looking for survivors. Twisted metal jutted out of the top of the multi-storey block, which was partially collapsed down one side.

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PM speaks to Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this evening. During their most warm and cordial conversation, the Prime Minister conveyed his warm regards and profound respects to The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. He also warmly felicitated His Royal Highness on the successful completion of Hajj this year

Continued on Page 06

Kh. Asif condemns US, Israel

The Pakistani Defense Minister emphasized: Therefore, we must say that Iran's approach, despite the conflicts, has been very constructive and Tehran never sought confrontation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani Defense Minister, criticizing the Western world's double standard towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and stating that the International Atomic Energy Agency's performance is tainted with hypocrisy and selective approach, said: "Unlike Iran, the Westerners have destroyed the opportunity for diplomacy and are the cause of the beginning of the aggressions of the Zionist regime and the United States."

Continued on Page 06

Five dead, 7 injured as bus catches fire

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Six people were killed and seven were injured after a passenger bus caught fire after colliding with a loader rickshaw carrying petrol on the Western Bypass in Quetta, police said on Monday. Fatal road accidents on highways occur frequently in Pakistan, mainly due to overspeeding, hazardous overtaking and disregard for traffic rules. According to Shalkot Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Athar Rashid, "In the tragic

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliki to discuss Middle East situation. – DNA

Talks to Iranian President

PM Shehbaz urges diplomacy to end Mideast crisis

President Pezeshkian thanks Pakistan's consistent and principled stance in support of Iran

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a telephonic conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday, during which both leaders discussed the evolving situation in the Middle East and stressed the need for a peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. According to a statement from the Prime Minister Office (PMO), PM Shehbaz expressed Pakistan's deep concern over the current regional developments and "emphasised the urgent need to restore calm through diplomatic engagement."

During the conversation, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for Iran on all international platforms, including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He also underscored the importance of upholding international law and the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the PMO said.

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PM Shehbaz meets Saudi, Qatari envoys

PM discusses Middle East situation with KSA, Qatari ambassadors; calls for dialogue, peace

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The ambassadors of Saudi Arabia and Qatar on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East, particularly after the Iranian attack on the US military base in Qatar. "Met the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Indian aircrafts defects reported

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: India's aviation regulator said on Tuesday it had found multiple instances of aircraft defects reappearing "many times" at Mumbai and Delhi airports, two of the country's busiest, indicating what it said were inadequate checks on jetliners. The findings were part of a special audit being carried out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to strengthen safety in the wake of a deadly Air India crash that killed 271 people earlier this month. The regulator did not name the airlines where the defects were found or detail the type of defects. The two airports in the world's third-largest aviation market serve major Indian airlines such as IndiGo, Air India and Air India Express, as well as many international carriers.

Gates Foundation to omit \$106 billion

DNA

NEW YORK: The Gates Foundation said on Tuesday it will commit \$1.6 billion over the next five years to support Gavi, a public-private partnership that helps buy vaccines for the world's poorest children. The number of kids dying around the world will likely go up this year because of the massive cuts to foreign aid, foundation chair Bill Gates said in a statement, adding that funding Gavi was the single most powerful step to stop it. "The legacy of our generation cannot be that we looked away as millions of poor children died of preventable causes," said Gates.

11 terrorists also sent to hell

Two army officers martyred in KP's South Waziristan

Security forces determined to wipe out menace of Indian-sponsored terrorism from the country, says ISPR



DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as two army officers were martyred and 11 terrorists killed during an intelligence-based operation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) South Waziristan district, the military's media wing said on Tuesday. According to a press release issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the security forces conducted the IBO in general area Sararogha of the South Waziristan district, on reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian Proxy, "Fina al Khwarij". During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultantly, 11 Indian-sponsored militants were neutralized while seven terrorists sustained injuries, read the

statement. However, during the intense fire exchange, Major Syed Moiz Abbas Shah — a brave officer who was leading his troops from the front — fought gallantly and paid the ultimate sacrifice along with another brave son of soil Lance Naik Jibril Ullah. Major Moiz, 37, was renowned for his courage and daring actions in numerous operations conducted against the terrorists. Sanitization operation was conducted to eliminate any other Indian-sponsored terrorist found in the area, the ISPR said, adding that the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of Indian-sponsored terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave men further strengthen our resolve. Pakistan saw a slight uptick in militant attacks in May 2025, even as heightened military tensions with neighbouring India failed to trigger a significant escalation in violence from extremist groups. Data released by the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) indicates a 5% increase in attacks compared to April, though the overall picture suggests militant

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'I think minus Imran Khan has happened', says Aleema

"We don't know what was hidden from the PTI founder in the [KP] budget," says Khan's sister

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Aleema Khan, sister of incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan, on Tuesday reacted to the claims that her brother was no longer relevant in the country's politics as the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly passed the provincial budget for the fiscal year 2025-26. Speaking to the media outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, Aleema was asked whether 'Imran Khan is minus' — a reference to the claim that the PTI founder has lost relevance in national politics — had happened. "I think, minus Imran Khan has happened," she responded. She made the remarks while reacting to the ruling alliance's claims that Khan has become politically irrelevant. Talking to journalists outside Central Jail Adyala, Rawalpindi, she said: "If the police want to stop us, let them. We are not afraid." She said that the government feared reaching the PTI founder's message to the general public. Expressing her displeasure over the approval of KP's budget without the nod of the PTI founder, she said: "We don't know why [the KP govt] was in a rush to pass the budget."

Continued on Page 06

LHC rejects Imran Khan's bail pleas in May 9 cases

Two-member bench announces reserved verdict

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) rejected on Tuesday bail pleas of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in eight May 9 cases including the one related to the attack on Jinnah House. A two-member bench, headed by Justice Shahbaz Ali Rizvi, announced the reserved verdict after hearing arguments from both the prosecution and the defence. Imran Khan had filed bail applications in connection with multiple cases registered against him following the violent protests that erupted across the country on May 9, 2023, after his arrest.

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Maryam orders foolproof security, public welfare steps for Ashura

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting on Tuesday to review and finalize arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram, with a strong emphasis on ensuring foolproof security, religious harmony, and public welfare. The CM issued clear directives for an emergency preparedness plan and ordered strict implementation of the code of conduct during Muharram. She categorically stated that there will be zero tolerance for any violation of these directives. CM Maryam Nawaz called for the immediate arrest of individuals involved in spreading hate speech or inciting violence through social media. She also imposed a province-wide ban on banners, posters, wall chalking, and unauthorized drone activity, directing law enforcement to take swift action against violators. She instructed provincial ministers, commissioners, deputy commissioners, RPOs, and DPOs to personally supervise local arrangements and to visit religious scholars to promote coordination and community engagement. The CM directed the Punjab Safe Cities Authority to immediately repair all non-functional CCTV cameras and tasked the Special Monitoring Unit with identifying and reporting hate content. She also ordered mock security

drills to test preparedness and directed the installation of standardized 'sabeels' (refreshment stations) along procession routes, with proper monitoring and the provision of lemon water, cold drinks, and bottled water for participants. To mitigate the effects of extreme heat and humidity, CM Maryam Nawaz instructed authorities to install water sprinkling systems along procession routes and to establish mobile clinics and field hospitals. She further directed the implementation of an effective traffic management plan and real-time advisories, while ensuring timely water drainage in case of rainfall. She called for the activation of systems like Hotel Eye and Travel Eye and emphasized the continuation of combing operations. Procurement of anti-drone systems was also discussed to enhance surveillance capabilities. Highlighting the importance of strict SOPs enforcement, she directed WAPDA and related authorities to eliminate dangling power lines and ensure uninterrupted electricity and functioning streetlights throughout Muharram. Expressing concern over recurring infrastructure issues, she censured responsible agencies for negligence, especially in relation to uncovered manholes and potholes on procession routes. She directed private housing societies to immediately fix sewerage covers in their areas. "All stakeholders must stay vigilant

and united. The success of Operation Bayaan-ul-Marsous has disturbed hostile elements, and we must not allow them any opportunity to exploit the situation," she said. She instructed cabinet members to ensure effective implementation in their respective districts and involve all stakeholders in decision-making. She stated, "The public must visibly feel the writ of the state across the province. Public committees should be reactivated and fully engaged. Last year's Muharram arrangements were widely appreciated, even by the Shia community. We must go beyond that this year." Emphasising unity, she said, "It is our foremost duty to protect the nation from hatred, prejudice, and disunity. These are poisons that must be eliminated, especially for the sake of our younger generations." She said that the state must act as a compassionate and protective force "like a mother" and that this sentiment should be evident at every level. "We set a new standard with our Eid arrangements, and I expect nothing less than excellence for Muharram," she added, praising the performance of deputy commissioners, local governments, and all departments involved. During the meeting, the Home Secretary, Inspector General of Police, and heads of other relevant departments briefed the CM on the comprehensive preparations underway for Muharram-ul-Haram.



ISLAMABAD: Former Provincial Minister for Health and Population Welfare Punjab Dr. Jamal Nasir addressing a seminar organized by a Chinese company on the rising infections in Pakistan. Former Surgeon General of the Army Karamat A. Karamat and Shakeel Sheikh also present at the ceremony.

Bus fire leaves 6 dead, 7 injured in Quetta

QUETTA: At least six passengers died and seven others sustained injuries when a fire suddenly engulfed a local bus at Western Bypass area of Quetta on Tuesday. According to police sources, the local bus carrying commuters was on its way as the bus suddenly caught fire at Western Bypass Road. As a result, six people died and seven others received burned injuries on the spot. The bodies and the injured were shifted to Bolan Medical Hospital. The rescue team reached the site and extinguished the fire. Further investigation was underway. Meanwhile, Balochistan government expressed sorrow on loss of precious lives and directed the Health Department to provide best health facilities to the injured. The Balochistan government on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic incident of a passenger bus catching fire on the Western Bypass in Quetta. In a statement spokesperson for the Balochistan government, Shahid Rind, extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. "We are deeply saddened by this tragic incident. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families during this difficult time," said Rind. "All necessary arrangements have been made to ensure the best possible treatment and facilities for those injured in the fire," he added. The spokesperson confirmed that an official investigation has already been launched to determine the cause of the fire.—APP

BISP, HBL to address disbursement challenges

KARACHI: The Additional Secretary Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor held a detailed meeting here at Central Zonal Office with BISP's strategic banking partner Habib Bank Limited (HBL) to address ongoing technical and logistical challenges faced during the Quarter 3 (Q3) disbursement cycle and to review and finalize operational plans for the upcoming Quarter 4 tranche disbursement through the retail network. Director General Sindh, Zulfiqar Ali Shaikh, Akram Bhutto, Director and other officers of Sindh office were part of the meeting. From the Bank Shaikh Umair Asad, Senior Product Manager, Miss Samreen Sham

sheer, Business Head and Allah Nawaz, Cluster Manager attended the meeting. Due to the ongoing heat wave and high humidity across the country, BISP's recent operational shift from the campsite disbursement model to the retail-based disbursement model to minimize crowding and hardship at payment camps. This step has been taken to ensure that beneficiaries receive their payments with dignity and respect, in a safer and more accessible environment. During the meeting, Dr. Tahir Noor emphasized the importance of improving on-ground service delivery in transparent and efficient way and directed HBL to ensure essential facilities such as drinking water,

shaded waiting areas, and seating arrangements are available at retail outlets for BISP beneficiaries. Key areas of discussion included system readiness, cash availability at retail outlets, biometric verification enhancements, grievance redressal mechanisms, and real-time monitoring tools. Dr. Tahir Noor further emphasized the importance of seamless coordination among all stakeholders to uphold service standards and facilitate a smooth disbursement process. Special focus was placed on improving beneficiary experience, minimizing delays, and strengthening transparency and accountability in payment mechanisms.—APP

Tragic road accident claims lives of tourist couple, child survives

KAGHAN: At least two persons on Tuesday lost their lives while a minor survived miraculously in a heart-rending accident in the picturesque Kaghan Valley as a tourist family from Attock met with a tragic accident late when their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged hundreds of feet into a deep ravine. According to the police sources, the husband and wife died on the spot, while their young child miraculously survived the horrific crash, albeit with injuries. The injured child was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital by rescue teams. The eyewitnesses and rescue officials told to the media that the vehicle lost control while navigating a sharp curve on a mountainous road near the Kaghan area. Rescue 1122, along with local volunteers, conducted a challenging operation to retrieve the bodies from the fast-flowing stream below. The scene was deeply distressing, leaving locals and tourists shaken and tearful. This tragic incident is the latest in a series of road accidents that have marred the current tourism season in Kaghan and Naran valleys. Earlier this year, a similar mishap occurred near Batakundi when a van carrying tourists from Karachi veered off the road and tumbled into a gorge, resulting in the death of three people, including a child. Another recent accident near Jalkhad saw a car overturned due to over-speeding on a wet, slippery road, causing multiple injuries. Despite the local administration implementing safety measures including increased patrolling, installation of warning signs, and public awareness campaigns the number of accidents continues to rise.—APP

Punjab's budget testament to good governance

LAHORE: Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the historic Rs. 1,280 billion development budget presented by the Punjab government is not just a financial document, but a practical reflection of the government's performance, vision, and unwavering commitment to public welfare. Addressing a session of Punjab Assembly here on Tuesday, she emphasized that Punjab's development journey has entered a new era under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, with 3,000 new projects launched across various sectors. She noted that the donor loan model has been effectively restructured to just 5.2 percent and debt repayments reduced by 90 percent. Additionally, zero-tax economic models are now operational in 19 districts, signaling major fiscal reforms aimed at sustainable growth. She opened her address by commending Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team for their exemplary leadership in peacefully resolving a recent regional crisis. She lauded the Pakistan Army for its valor and unity, calling

their response a shining example of national solidarity and supreme sacrifice. She also praised Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for her firm leadership during this critical time. Pakistan travel guides Reviewing the government's one-year performance, Marriyum Aurangzeb said CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz has upheld and advanced the values of transparency, merit, and hard work, rooted in the legacy of Mian Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. After years of economic stagnation, Punjab's revival has begun in earnest. She highlighted key budgetary allocations, Rs. 140 billion for education, Rs. 80 billion for healthcare, and an additional Rs. 40 billion to address missing facilities in educational institutions. She underlined CM Maryam Nawaz's focus on higher education, primary education, literacy, and skill development. Over 77,000 scholarships have been awarded, the laptop scheme has been revived, and modern IT labs have been established across Punjab. Marriyum Aurangzeb also shared that a school meal program has been launched in Southern,

Northern, and Central Punjab to address child health and nutrition. In agriculture, 106,000 farmers have benefited from the Kisan Card, 9,500 green tractors have been distributed, and Rs. 30 billion has been allocated for water conservation. Agricultural malls, crop insurance, and R&D in seed technology are also underway, along with Rs. 5 billion to combat livestock diseases. Environmental protection, she said, remains a top priority. Under the "Clean Punjab" initiative, a province-wide waste collection system is operational, and 25,000 machines and 100,000 workers are engaged in sanitation efforts. The Ramadan package was delivered with dignity at people's doorsteps, and the Chief Minister's service delivery package is being implemented across Punjab. Discussing rural development, she said that the "Model Villages" project will provide clean drinking water, paved streets, and proper sanitation. She praised initiatives in forestry, fisheries, and wildlife, including AQI monitoring zones in major cities and the ongoing confiscation of plastic waste.—APP

Bugti directs to expand ongoing cleanliness drive

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday directed that the ongoing cleanliness campaign under the "Safa Quetta Program" should be expanded and be made more effective to further increasing beautification of the Quetta City. He said that the campaign against encroachments in the city and its surroundings should be further accelerated and this process should be completed without any pressure, recommendation or concession. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting at the Chief Minister Secretariat to review the performance of the "Safa Quetta Program". Comprehensive measures were decided for the beautification, cleanliness, drainage and elimination of encroachments of the provincial capital Quetta in the meeting. The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary Development and Planning Hafiz Abdul Basit, Principal Secretary Babar Khan, Secretary Finance Imran Zarkoon, Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqat, Head of Public Private Partnership Authority Dr. Faisal Khan, senior officials of Metropolitan Corporation and related departments. It was decided in the meeting that an effective operation against encroachments would be launched across the city. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also approved the appointment of magistrates to ensure strict implementation of municipal laws. Briefing the meeting, Commissioner Quetta Hamza Shafqat said that all government lands, properties and properties under the control of encroachment mafias, the identification of the encroachments has been completed, and action has been initiated against them. The Chief Minister ordered that the ongoing cleanliness campaign under the "Safa Quetta Program" would be expanded and be made more effective. He said that encroachments are causing difficulties for the citizens in their daily lives and the government would not intend to be lenient in this regard. The CM directed the relevant institutions to solve the problems of cleanliness, drainage, and traffic on a permanent basis and to prioritize practical measures for the beautification of the city. He said that urgent steps are being taken to transform Quetta city into a model city equipped with modern, clean, and organized urban facilities, describing the campaign as impossible to make sustainable without public cooperation in the meeting. The Chief Minister directed that citizens A wide-scale awareness campaign should be launched to create awareness and ensure their participation. He said that "providing facilities to the people is the top priority of our government and with the cooperation of the citizens, we would transform Quetta into an exemplary and beautiful city.—DNA

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of Energy, (Petroleum Division)
Directorate General of Petroleum Concessions



ADDENDUM

EXTENSION IN INVITATION TO BID FOR GRANT OF PETROLEUM EXPLORATION RIGHTS

- Reference is invited to the advertisement published in the Press (PID (I) 5255-D/24) on **February 01, 2025** with respect to invitation of bids for grant of Petroleum Exploration Rights in Pakistan Offshore Basins. Petroleum Division is pleased to announce an extension in the bid submission deadline. Interested Exploration and Production companies are now required to submit the sealed applications to the office of the Director General Petroleum Concessions, 3rd Floor, Petroleum House, G-5/2, Islamabad by **10:00 a.m. (PST) on October 31, 2025**.
- All other terms and conditions remain the same.

PID(I)8902/24

(Kashif Ali)

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE

June 02/Italy National/ Independence Day

June 04/Finland Armed Forces Day

June 06/Sweden National Day

June 10/Portugal Portugal Day (National Day)

June 10/Jordan Arab Revolution& Army Day

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

June 12/Philippines Independence Day

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

June 13/Zambia Armed Forces day

June 17/Iceland National Day

June 18/Seychells National Day

June 25/Croatia National Day

June 25/Mozambique National Day

June 26/Azerbaijan Army Day



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Minister recognizes Uzbek potential in various sectors

Ambassador Tukhtaev highlighted the deep-rooted cultural, religious, and historical ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, and underscored Uzbekistan’s expertise in areas critical to urban development

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev called on Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada at the Ministry of Housing and Works in Islamabad. During the meeting, both sides engaged in constructive dialogue to explore potential avenues for collaboration in housing, communal development, and sustainable urban growth. Minister Pirzada welcomed the Ambassador and appreciated Uzbekistan’s fast-growing economy, acknowledging the potential for mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in view of Pakistan’s rising housing needs and increasing water scarcity. He stressed the importance of adopting innovative and sustainable solutions, such as recycling, green construction practices, and resource-efficient urban development models. Ambassador Tukhtaev highlighted the deep-rooted cultural, religious, and historical ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, and underscored Uzbekistan’s expertise in areas critical to urban development. He noted that one of the key outcomes of the Tashkent meetings held in February 2025 was the establishment of a Joint Working Group on Housing and Communal Services. The Ambassador elaborated on Uzbekistan’s economic reforms,



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan Alisher Tukhtaev called on Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada .

a notable increase in Foreign Direct Investment, and the ongoing transformation of its housing and construction sector. He expressed readiness to cooperate in training and capacity-building initiatives in housing development, water recycling, green housing,

and social infrastructure. He also offered Uzbekistan’s support in sharing models and experiences related to rainwater harvesting, high-rise construction, smart and green housing, and affordable housing for low-income groups. Furthermore, ambassador pro-

posed policy collaboration and knowledge exchange in public procurement, legal and institutional reforms, and emerging construction trends, emphasizing Uzbekistan’s willingness to share its technical expertise during a period of construction sector

growth. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral cooperation, with a shared resolve to translate their longstanding diplomatic relations into practical economic and industrial partnerships in the housing and urban development sectors.

Pak’s animal feed export to China rises 16% from Jan-May

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s export of animal-origin flours and meals to China surged by 16% from January to May 2025, reflecting a growing trade dynamic in agro-based commodities between the two countries. It was reported by China Economic Net on Tuesday quoting General Administration of Customs of China. According to the report, Pakistan exported 21,138,180 kilograms of flours, meals, and pellets made of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, and other meat by-products under commodity code 23012010—mainly used for animal feeding. The export reached a total value of \$19.87 million in the first five months of 2025, compared to \$17.17 million in the same period last year. The average unit price stood at \$0.94 per kilogram. Industry experts say the increase is driven by China’s expanding demand for high-protein animal feed to support its livestock and aquaculture sectors. Pakistani fishmeal, predominantly sourced from marine fish waste, is favored for its cost-effectiveness and stable protein content. Abid Ali an exporter of flours& meals of fish, used in animal feeding said Pakistan continues to enhance the quality of its fishmeal exports, comparisons with domestic Chinese fishmeal indicate a competitive oil yield rate of approximately 8-10%. However, Pakistani exports show slightly lower oil yields, generally ranging from 5-7%, due to differences in raw material composition and processing methods. “In the Chinese market, Pakistani fishmeal is not typically sold through retail channels. Instead, it is absorbed by the food processing and feed manufacturing industries, especially in Guangdong, Shandong, and Fujian provinces, where it is used in formulations for poultry, swine, and aquaculture feed”, he added. Analysts suggest the trend may continue through the year, supported by stable fishing activities in Pakistan’s coastal regions and Beijing’s favorable import policies under the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) Phase-II. With further investments in processing technology and quality assurance, Pakistan could expand its market share in China’s animal feed segment, contributing to both nations’ agricultural and trade cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative. It is to be noted that in 2024, Pakistan exported 22639.95 tons of flours & meals of fish, used in animal feeding, valued at \$24.92 million. Peru, Chile and Russia are the top exporters of this product to China in 2024 with value of \$1.466 billion, \$291 million and \$271 million, respectively.—DNA

ITP delivers doorstep services to citizens

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) is delivering international-standard services directly to citizens through its public facilitation initiatives, including the Facilitation on Wheels mobile van service, Mechanic on Wheels roadside assistance, the Taxi Verification App, and a dedicated Women’s Helpline. An official told APP on Tuesday that the Facilitation on Wheels initiative is enabling citizens to access essential transport and licensing services without visiting traffic offices. Mobile vans are de-

ployed across Islamabad to provide on-the-spot services such as issuing and renewing learner permits, regular driving licenses, duplicate licenses, and foreign license conversions. So far this year, over 713 citizens have benefited from the service, including 370 learner permits, 66 renewals, 71 test sheets, 196 license renewals, and 10 duplicate or conversion cases. He said the mobile units are currently stationed at various locations, including G-9 Markaz, I-8 Markaz, I-10 (King Driving School), Bahria Town Phase-2, Than-

da Pani, E-11, DC Office G-11/4, F-10 Markaz, Khanna Pul, CDA Office, G-8 (ICCI), DHA Phase-I, Naval Complex E-8, and Bari Imam House. He added that the schedule for the mobile vans changes weekly, covering different sectors and communities across Islamabad to ensure broader outreach. To assist motorists in case of vehicle breakdowns, ITP provides the Mechanic on Wheels service, available 24/7 via helpline 1915. The Taxi Verification App allows passengers to verify vehicle and driver details before

boarding. Samia, a government employee who regularly commutes using ride-hailing apps, told APP that the app has made her feel safer. “As a woman, I always had a sense of unease while using taxis,” she said. “But now, the ability to verify drivers in advance has given me peace of mind.” Director General Safe City Shakir Hussain Dawar praised the app development team and directed further improvements. Additionally, the 1815 Women’s Helpline offers 24/7 assistance from female police officers, further improving accessibility and safety for women across Islamabad. Samreen Khan, who works in a private office, told APP that the helpline has strengthened women’s confidence in reaching out for help. “This service has truly increased our trust in the system and made us feel more secure,” she said.—APP

Lack of public hostels adds challenges for working women

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital currently lacks any operational government hostel for working women, a situation that has added to the challenges faced by female professionals in need of safe and affordable accommodation. According to an official source, the Nusrat Hostel in Sector G-6, which previously served as a residence for working women, was converted into a Girls Child Protection Center, which is also not functional at present. Similarly, the Staff Welfare Women Hostel in Sector G-7 was vacated approximately three months ago and has yet to be reopened. Working women posted in various government departments, healthcare institutions, and educational organizations have expressed concern over the lack of residential facilities in Islamabad. “Affordable accommodation is a basic need. Without official hostels, we are left to search for expensive private options which are not always secure,” said Sadia Khan, a schoolteacher from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. “Many of us come from distant areas and do not have relatives here. Every month, a major portion of our salaries is spent on rent, which makes it difficult to manage other expenses”, she said. Talking to APP, Samina Ali, a junior government officer from Punjab, shared her concern saying, “When I was transferred to Islamabad, I assumed there would be hostel support. But despite repeated inquiries, there is no clear response or timeline for reopening these facilities.” She added that staying in private hostels comes with its own set of challenges, including limited facilities, frequent rent hikes.—APP

E-Gates project design finalized for major airports

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) has successfully completed the design phase of its ambitious e-Gates project, marking a major milestone in the modernization of immigration control systems at Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore international airports. This development follows a comprehensive three-day consultation process involving a series of technical workshops with key national and international stakeholders. The consultations brought together representatives from immigration authorities, aviation security agencies, airlines, and global experts to refine the operational and technical aspects of the project. The e-Gates initiative is a flagship component of PAA’s broader strategy to modernize airport infrastructure and enhance the travel experience through the adoption of cutting-edge technology. Once implemented, the system will use biometric-based automated border control to streamline passenger processing, significantly reduce wait times at immigration counters, and bolster security measures at the country’s busiest airports. The design phase was completed in close collaboration with international aviation specialists and relevant Pakistani agencies. The technical groundwork has been laid by German consultancy firm M2P Consulting, which has been engaged by the PAA to provide end-to-end support for the project’s execution. M2P will now proceed with the preparation of detailed technical specifications and international tender documents to attract bids from leading global e-Gate solution providers.—DNA

Around 40pc under 5 kids stunted in Pakistan: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on Population, Senator Sherry Rehman, delivered a compelling call to action at the 13th meeting of the Forum titled “From Consensus to Action: Leveraging Parliamentary Support to Achieve Sustainable Population Growth.” Addressing a room full of lawmakers, experts and development partners, she declared Pakistan’s unchecked population growth “a ticking time bomb that has been consistently placed on the back burner,” said in a press release issued here on Tuesday. “It’s a structural burden — not a dividend,” said Senator Rehman. “We cannot ignore that our population has reached 241 million,

with a fertility rate of 3.6 births per woman — among the highest in South Asia. We are the 5th most populous country in the world, but we’re not investing enough in the people who make up that number.” She warned that the growing crisis is pressing down on every household and every resource. “We have more mouths to feed than families can afford. 40 percent of our children under five are stunted. Every 50 minutes, a woman in Pakistan dies during childbirth. These are not abstract numbers — they are daily tragedies unfolding across the country,” she said. “And yet, this issue is always sidelined, rarely receiving the attention or intervention it demands.”

Senator Rehman underscored how population growth is deeply interlinked with health, education, and economic stability. “Population growth reduces per capita income — a 1% increase in population growth slashes PKR 35,000 annually from the average citizen’s income. If we reduce fertility to 2.1 births per woman by 2030, per capita income could rise by 37%, and GDP growth could increase to 3.9% by 2033.” She underscored the lack of embedded action, both at the national and local levels. “There is a real gap between data and delivery,” she said. “The climate ministry had its budget cut, and we’re seeing similar neglect when it comes to population issues.—APP

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ANF recovers
over 32 kgs of
drugs worth
Rs 6.82m

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), conducting four operations across the country, recovered as many as 32.600 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 6.82 million and arrested four suspects, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that 2.4 kgs of hashish were recovered from the possession of a woman near Haji Camp Terminal GT Road Peshawar. As many as 15 kgs of opium were recovered from a vehicle near Industrial Road, Peshawar and the accused was arrested. In another operation, 13.2 kgs of hashish were recovered from a vehicle near Mandi Mor, Islamabad and the suspect was arrested. As much as 2 kgs of hashish were recovered from the possession of an accused near Sugar Mill in Peshawar. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act, and further investigations are underway.—APP

Pakistan
stands for
peace, not
war: Senator
Bushra

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Senator Bushra said on Tuesday that Pakistan believes in peace and diplomacy, not war. Speaking to a private news channel, she called for global maturity amid Middle East tensions, adding that ego and military muscle only lead to the loss of lives, resources and time. Commenting on Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, she noted that the delegation was tasked with promoting a message of peace globally. "Pakistan wants peace, but peace must not be mistaken for weakness," she asserted. Referring to parallels between Indian and Israeli aggression, she condemned false allegations and unilateral military actions.—APP

Court Notice

In the court of Medum Faiza Riaz Judge Family Court Kharian

Title: Shamsa parveen etc. Versus Sajjawan Naeem Notice to: Sajjawan Naeem S/o. Malik Bashir Ahmad cast Awan R/o. Aach Tehsil Kharian District Gujrat. Suit for Dower, Maintenance, and Living Expenses Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 28-06-2025, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Diabetic Retinopathy rising
amid soaring diabetes burden

The growing number of DR cases is not only impacting individual patients but also straining hospitals, ophthalmologists, and public sector health funding

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Al-Shifa Trust (AST) has expressed profound concern over the escalating threat of Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) in Pakistan, attributing the rise to the country's alarming diabetes prevalence. With an increasing number of people succumbing to diabetes, the risk of vision impairment and related complications is surging at an alarming rate, necessitating immediate attention and action. According to AST, Pakistan now has the highest diabetes prevalence rate in the world. Prolonged exposure to uncontrolled blood sugar levels can severely affect the eyes by damaging the retinal blood vessels, potentially leading to irreversible vision loss if left untreated. Speaking to media representatives, Dr.

Nadeem Qureshi, Head of the Retina Department at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi, noted that a sharp increase in diabetes cases is also driving a parallel rise in associated complications such as diabetic retinopathy, cataracts, glaucoma, and numerous other conditions. He underscored the need for urgent policy-level intervention and public awareness, highlighting the crucial and empowering role each individual can play in preventing and managing diabetes and its complications. Studies show that nearly 25-30 percent of diabetics in Pakistan suffer from some stage of Diabetic Retinopathy, he said, adding that most cases go undiagnosed until significant vision loss has already occurred due to a lack of awareness and routine screening. He highlighted the extensive services offered



at the Retina Department of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, which caters to nearly 250 patients daily. Staffed by 14 retinal surgeons and four trainees, the department performs retinal outpatient services, laser treatments, injections, and surgeries every day of the week. On aver-

age, 215 patients are seen in the outpatient department (OPD); 35 undergo laser procedures, 50 receive intraocular injections, and 25 undergo surgery each day. Dr. Qureshi explained that we are utilizing advanced imaging and diagnostic tools, as well as applying new surgical methods. The cost of a single retinal surgery is approximately Rs 130,000. Still, Al-Shifa provides treatment completely free of charge to 80 percent of its patients. The remaining patients receive heavily subsidized care, often paying only half the cost.

We are also providing highly effective anti-VEGF injections to approximately 60-70 patients at no cost. One injection costs 10,000 to 15,000 rupees, he said. Explaining the critical role of the retina, he said it is the light-sensitive inner layer of the eye, composed of ten specialized neuronal layers.

Damage to this delicate structure, often caused by diabetic complications, can severely compromise vision. The growing number of DR cases is not only impacting individual patients but also straining hospitals, ophthalmologists, and public sector health funding. This underscores the need for better funding, early screening, patient awareness, prevention, and control of blood sugar, and regular eye exams, as well as systemic changes to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of the healthcare system. He further added that nearly 80 percent of all patients at Al-Shifa's hospitals in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Kohat, Sukkur, Muzaffargarh, and Gilgit receive free care. The Trust's new facility in Lahore is expected to begin operations by 2027, expanding its humanitarian outreach across the country.

PM's Hunarmand
Program empowers
thousands

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Hunarmand Program has achieved a remarkable milestone, providing training to over 217,000 young individuals across the country. The initiative, launched under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, aims to equip young people with technical skills in various fields, enhancing their job prospects and contributing to the country's economic growth. According to an official, the Program offers a wide range of courses, including information technology, manufacturing and textiles, electrical and energy, hospitality and tourism, health and life sciences, and banking and finance. These courses are designed to meet national and international benchmarks, ensuring participants' skills are globally competitive. By providing free training to eligible youth, the program has made a significant impact on reducing unemployment and creating a skilled workforce in the country. The training programs are conducted in state-of-the-art facilities, utilizing modern equipment and teaching methodologies. The Program's success can be attributed to its focus on industry-relevant skills, ensuring that participants are well-prepared to meet the demands of the job market. The initiative has also been instrumental in bridging the gap between academia and industry, providing a platform for young individuals to acquire skills that are in high demand. As the program continues to expand, it is expected to empower even more young individuals, enabling them to contribute to the country's economic growth and development. The Prime Minister's Youth Hunarmand Program is a testament to the government's commitment to investing in the country's youth.—DNA

Foolproof Muharram
security to be ensured

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Muhammad Jowad Tariq, held a high-level meeting on Tuesday to finalize comprehensive security arrangements for Muharram to ensure peace and public safety in the city. An official told APP that the meeting was attended by SSP Investigation, SSP Operations, Zonal SPs, SDPOs, and SHOs. The DIG directed that enhanced patrolling and search and combing operations be carried out in sensitive areas, while all Muharram processions should be monitored through Safe City cameras. DIG Tariq said a zero-tolerance policy would be adopted against aerial firing, and departmental action would be taken against any SHO under whose jurisdiction such violations occur.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met the Ambassador of Qatar to express our solidarity with His Highness the Amir and the brotherly people of Qatar following last night's attacks.— DNA

China's partnerships
with regional
countries deepens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As of June 23, a total of 163 trade agreements have been signed at the 9th China-South Asia Expo, with a combined contract value of 8.663 billion yuan. According to the Yunnan Provincial Department of Commerce, 150 of these are formal agreements worth 8.3 billion yuan, 12 are letters of intent totaling 213 million yuan, and one is a framework procurement agreement valued at 150 million yuan. Professor Lin Minwang, Vice Dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University, shared his views in an interview with China Economic Net: "China and South Asian countries share a common vision for the future and the world. We all hope for a stable international order and resilient supply chains. Right now, both sides are working toward deeper interconnection. In today's turbulent global landscape, our shared interests are growing. China is strong in industrialization, while many

South Asian countries excel in agriculture. This complementarity creates significant potential for future economic cooperation." Xu Bu, member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism and President of the Institute of Global Development and Security at Jiangsu University, provided further insight in an exclusive interview with China Economic Net: "When we talk about multilateralism today, it's unfortunate that the global system is not functioning as effectively as it should. However, multilateral cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region is advancing rapidly. China's partnerships with both South and Southeast Asian nations are strengthening regional multilateral frameworks that benefit all parties involved. The China-South Asia Expo is a crucial platform that supports this progress. It has facilitated significant economic cooperation—not just between China and South Asia, but also with Southeast Asia. For instance,

China's bilateral trade with Pakistan has exceeded \$23 billion, and with India, over \$150 billion. Regional economic cooperation is on a constructive path, but we must not take it for granted. Continuous efforts are needed to safeguard and sustain cooperation—whether in economics, security, or politics." Amid a global realignment of trade, regional cooperation is emerging as a key strategy for navigating uncertainty and promoting shared prosperity. In this context, China's deepening ties with South and Southeast Asian countries have gained remarkable traction. Events like the China-South Asia Expo are playing an active role in integrating regional supply chains and enhancing market connectivity. Zhou Mi, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, emphasized Asia's unique strengths: a combined consumer market of 2.8 billion people, representing immense potential, and strong institutional frameworks like the Regional Compre-

hensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). "These factors," he noted, "create ideal conditions for building a more cohesive regional economic community." He added: "In my view, regional collaboration presents a powerful package for long-term development. If we look back at North America—take NAFTA, for example, established in 1994—it was built on the developmental differences between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, which helped foster vertical integration along the supply chain. Similarly, China, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, with their vast populations and diverse development stages, offer immense opportunities. The RCEP negotiations began in November 2012, led by ASEAN and initially involving its six existing FTA partners (China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India). We hope to strengthen these types of mechanism further, ensuring collaboration is grounded in mutual commitments.

National Assembly
approves 69 demands

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Tuesday approved 69 demands for grants worth Rs 1.65 trillion without any cut motions following a voice vote, after their presentation by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb. These approved grants cover a wide range of divisions and sectors including the Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Division, Communications Division along with its miscellaneous expenditures, Pakistan Post Office Department, Defense Production Division, Economic Affairs Division, Federal Education and Professional Training Division, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Additionally, funding was approved for the National Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen Wa

Khatamun Nabiyyin Authority, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC), National Heritage and Culture Division, Foreign Affairs Division and Foreign Missions, Housing and Works Division, Industries and Production Division, and the Information and Broadcasting Division including its miscellaneous expenditures. The grants also cover the Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, Inter-Provincial Coordination Division, Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan, and States and Frontier Regions Division, Law and Justice Division, Federal Judicial Academy, Federal Shariat Court, Council of Islamic Ideology, National Accountability Bureau, District Judiciary, Islamabad Capital Territory, Maritime Affairs

Division, National Assembly, The Senate, and the National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Division. Further approvals were granted for the Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Division, Parliamentary Affairs Division, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division, Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Privatization Division, Railways Division, Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Division, Science and Technology Division, and Water Resources Division. The National Assembly also sanctioned development expenditures across various divisions including Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Communica-

tions, Defense Production, Federal Education and Professional Training, Higher Education Commission, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, National Heritage and Culture, Information and Broadcasting, Information Technology and Telecommunication, Inter-Provincial Coordination, Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and States and Frontier Regions, Law and Justice, and National Health Services. In addition, development expenditures were approved for the Regulations and Coordination Division, Parliamentary Affairs Division, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Division, Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony Division, Science and Technology Division, and Water Resources Division.—APP

Call for
strengthening
academic ties
with Islamic
World

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed has underlined Pakistan's resolve to strengthen academic collaboration across the Islamic world. Chairman HEC was delivering his keynote address at the opening session of the 6th Vice Chancellors' Forum, held at ICESCO headquarters in Rabat, Morocco, said a press release received here on Tuesday. The Forum, co-organized by HEC Pakistan and ICESCO, brought together rectors, presidents, and vice chancellors from across OIC countries to deliberate on pressing educational themes including sustainability, research impact, climate resilience, and future-ready universities.—APP

Training
session on
E-Waste
Management
Plan


ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), under its HEDP project, organised a training session on E-Waste Management Plan for its officials and the representatives of universities. The training was designed specifically for HEC and universities across Pakistan to create awareness, enhance capacity, and foster environmentally responsible practices in managing electronic waste. Executive Director HEC, Dr. Mazhar Saeed, attended the opening session as the chief guest. He emphasised the importance of effective knowledge of e-waste management. Expert trainers engaged for the activity shared detailed presentations on e-waste and its sustainable management, environmental impact, regulations, and international agreements. It also aimed at developing a deliberate collective effort in promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship across the higher education sector. It is pertinent to mention here that ICT equipment forms a major part of electrical and electronic waste, or e-waste, in any modern-day organisation, which needs to be properly handled.—APP

Chairman
HEC meets
Secretary
General of
Science Europe

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed held yesterday a productive meeting with Dr. Lidia Borrell-Damián, Secretary General of Science Europe, alongside Dr. Salim Omar, Director of ICESCO's Regional Office in Sharjah, and Dr. Muhammad Sharif, Director at ICESCO Headquarters. According to official sources, discussions centred on the evolving landscape of higher education and the critical need to embed climate change as a strategic priority within academic and research frameworks—recognising it as a defining global challenge of our time. Dr. Mukhtar explored concrete avenues for collaboration between HEC, Pakistani universities, and Science Europe, focusing on enhancing research capacity, fostering institutional linkages, and promoting international academic cooperation. The Chairman HEC also highlighted that Pakistan has secured the highest number of Erasmus Mundus scholarships for the fourth consecutive year, reaffirming the excellence and global competitiveness of Pakistani students.—APP

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Punjab’s Rs 1 trillion scandal demands answers

THE recent report by the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) revealing an alleged misappropriation of Rs 1 trillion in Punjab government funds is nothing short of staggering. If true, this scandal represents one of the largest financial irregularities in the province’s history and raises serious questions about governance under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who has repeatedly pledged transparency and reform. The AGP’s findings point to massive financial mismanagement, including irregularities in development funds, unauthorized expenditures, and possible embezzlement. For a government that came to power promising accountability and good governance, such revelations are deeply damaging. The sheer scale of the alleged misappropriation—equivalent to nearly a quarter of Punjab’s annual budget—demands immediate clarification from the chief minister. Silence or evasion will only fuel public distrust and opposition criticism. The PML-N claims the said audit paras (2023-2024) belong to Pervez Elahi government therefore the sitting government has nothing to do with it. Unlike, Pervez Elahi says he was not the chief minister during the period mentioned in the audit paras. CM Maryam Nawaz has positioned herself as a progressive leader committed to breaking from the past culture of corruption. Yet, if such colossal irregularities occurred under her watch, her claims of reform ring hollow. She must not only order a high-level probe but also present a detailed rebuttal to the AGP’s report. The public deserves to know whether these funds were lost to incompetence, systemic flaws, or outright graft—and what steps will be taken to recover them. The scandal also puts the PML-N leadership, particularly party president Nawaz Sharif, in a difficult position. The Sharif family has long faced allegations of financial mismanagement, and this report provides fresh ammunition to critics. Nawaz Sharif cannot afford to ignore this issue; he must ensure his party addresses it transparently. Failure to do so will reinforce the perception that the PML-N has not changed its ways. Unsurprisingly, opposition parties, particularly the PTI, are already seizing on this report to attack the government. If the PML-N fails to act decisively, this scandal could dominate political discourse, further eroding public confidence ahead of future elections. The government must either disprove the AGP’s findings or take visible punitive action against those responsible. The Rs 1 trillion question is whether CM Maryam Nawaz will treat this as a genuine crisis or downplay it as bureaucratic oversight. Even if the misappropriation was done during previous government tenure, Punjab’s people deserve answers, and the chief minister is obligated to provide them because she is the boss now. Anything less will confirm fears that her governance is more about rhetoric than real change. The PML-N must act now—before this scandal becomes an indelible stain on its legacy.

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US-Iran Escalation Risks Regional War as Russia Joins the Fray

THE recent US military strike on Iran has dangerously escalated tensions in an already volatile Middle East, pushing the region closer to a wider conflict. With Russia now openly backing Tehran and pledging increased military support, the crisis threatens to spiral beyond control, drawing in regional players and destabilizing neighboring Gulf states. Meanwhile, the United Nations—once seen as a platform for conflict resolution—stands paralyzed, its Secretary-General rendered irrelevant by the world’s refusal to heed his calls for restraint. The US decision to strike Iran marks a significant intensification of hostilities, risking direct confrontation between global powers. Iran’s Supreme Leader has already called for greater Russian assistance, and Moscow has responded by announcing a boost in missile production—a clear signal that it will not remain a passive observer. If Russia deepens its military involvement, the conflict could quickly expand beyond the Middle East, drawing in proxies and allies on both sides. The situation is eerily reminiscent of Cold War-era proxy wars, where superpower rivalries fueled devastating regional conflicts. Russia’s growing alliance with Iran is no coincidence. Moscow sees an opportunity to challenge US influence in the region while strengthening its own strategic partnerships. By supplying advanced weaponry and political backing, the Kremlin not only bolsters Iran but also complicates Washington’s calculations. Should Russia deploy additional military assets or advisors to Iran, the US and its allies may face a dilemma: either escalate further or risk ceding ground to a resurgent Moscow-Tehran axis. Either scenario spells trouble for regional stability. The conflict’s spillover effects are already being felt across the Middle East. Gulf nations, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, fear being caught in the crossfire—whether through retaliatory Iranian strikes, disrupted oil supplies, or heightened militia activity. These countries have long relied on US security guarantees, but with Washington now directly engaged against Iran, they may be forced to recalibrate their strategies. A prolonged standoff could destabilize the entire region, triggering economic shocks and security crises beyond the immediate theater of war. Amid this unfolding disaster, the United Nations has proven utterly ineffective. Secretary-General António Guterres has issued the usual appeals for de-escalation, but no major power is listening. His office, once envisioned as a mediator in global crises, has been reduced to a mere spectator. If the UN cannot even convene meaningful dialogue in such a perilous situation, one must question its continued relevance. Perhaps it is time for Guterres to acknowledge his impotence and step aside, making way for a leader willing to challenge the world’s indifference—if such a leader even exists.

Trump Hailed as Peacemaker for Iran – Israel Ceasefire deal

Qamar Bashir



Perhaps the most striking outcome of this conflict was the global reaction to the ceasefire. Across the United States and beyond, traditional media, social platforms, and everyday conversations erupted in jubilation. Newsrooms broke the story with celebratory headlines, while TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X overflowed with congratulatory messages, reaction videos, and patriotic posts hailing peace. From Chicago and New York to San Francisco and Houston, people took to the streets—not in protest, but in celebration

IN a stunning turn of events, President Donald J. Trump announced the official end of the “12-Day War” between Iran and Israel. The phased ceasefire, declared on Truth Social on June 23, 2025, would see Iran begin de-escalation, followed by Israel, culminating in what Trump called the “Official END” of the war. Behind this terse announcement lay one of the most revealing and consequential geopolitical clashes of recent history. The war, ignited by Israeli airstrikes on Iranian nuclear infrastructure and escalated by U.S. intervention, has exposed not only the raw realities of regional power dynamics but also the shifting sands of global influence, public sentiment, and military doctrine. The ceasefire followed Iran’s retaliatory missile barrage on the U.S. Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, launched in response to one of the most complex aerial operations in U.S. military history. Under the codename “Operation Midnight Hammer,” seven B-2 Spirit stealth bombers flew nonstop from Whiteman AFB in Missouri and dropped 14 GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOPs)—12 on Fordow, 2 on Natanz. In parallel, 30 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from a U.S. submarine struck Isfahan and Natanz. Despite the sheer scale of the operation, no radiation leaks were detected, and no nuclear chain reactions occurred. Iran had removed its enriched uranium and sensitive material in anticipation—preserving the core of its nuclear program. More importantly, what the U.S. and Israel failed to eliminate was Iran’s greatest weapon: its people. Its nuclear scientists, engineers, military technologists, and program strategists remain intact—capable of reconstructing, duplicating, and scaling its entire nuclear infrastructure. This war demonstrated that it is not the bunkers or centrifuges, but the brains behind them that constitute true power. And Iran’s brain trust remains fully functional, resilient, and determined. The war also shifted the center of global deterrence doctrine. Though three nuclear powers were engaged—Israel, the U.S., and Iran—no nuclear weapons were used. The war proved that conventional capabilities, when sufficiently advanced and precise, can inflict comparable strategic damage. Iran demonstrated that with calibrated missile strikes and asymmetric warfare tools, it can render massive psychological and structural impact—without nuclear escalation. This pattern echoes other conflict zones. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has not yet crossed the nuclear threshold, despite nuclear posturing. Pakistan and India, both nuclear states, also engaged in recent hostilities with strictly conventional arms. The world appears to be moving from MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) to a new form of “Minimum Assured Deterrence,” where precision and resilience matter more than nuclear stockpiles. Meanwhile, Israel’s military supremacy was decisively challenged. Despite its reputation as a fortress state, its inability to strike Iran effectively without U.S. support shattered the myth of unilateral invincibility. Its famed Iron Dome failed under volume fire. Israeli cities were hit, citizens panicked, and for the first time, Israelis

experienced the horrors of war on their own soil—something Palestinians have endured for generations. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who once aimed to destroy Iran’s nuclear ambitions, now finds himself in a dramatically weakened position. None of the war’s original goals—regime change, program destruction, or surrender—were achieved. Instead, Iran remained standing. Emboldened. And respected. Yet perhaps one of the most strategically consequential developments was the silence of two global powerhouses—Russia and China. Despite their past support for Iran in regional forums, neither nation intervened militarily. Their inaction raises fundamental questions: Did they lack the appetite for another major conflict? Or was this calculated neutrality a trap to let the United States walk alone into yet another costly, unwinnable war? Either way, their abstention allowed the U.S. to stand isolated, absorb all blame, and risk being drained of prestige, personnel, and power. It was a geopolitical chess move—and Washington played right into it. And yet, amid all this geopolitical maneuvering, one mysterious development may hold critical significance: the unprecedented, closed-door meeting between President Donald Trump and Pakistan’s Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir. While no formal statement was issued, seasoned analysts suspect the meeting’s true purpose may have been to leverage Pakistan’s trusted relationship with Iran. With no formal diplomatic ties between Washington and Tehran, Trump may have relied on Pakistan’s good offices to convey U.S. intentions, de-escalatory signals, and ceasefire proposals to the Iranian leadership. Given Pakistan’s historically close ties with Iran and its strategic standing in the Muslim world, it is plausible that Field Marshal Munir acted as a discreet intermediary, articulating Trump’s vision and helping bridge critical gaps. If so, this diplomatic backchannel may have played a decisive—yet still undisclosed—role in securing the ceasefire. In the coming days, more details may surface, shedding light on Pakistan’s quiet but powerful contribution to peace. Another compelling factor behind Trump’s urgency for de-escalation was Iran’s ability to strike global economic arteries—chief among them, the Strait of Hormuz. With its lethal missiles, fast-attack naval fleets, and proxy militias across the Gulf, Iran was well-positioned to block or severely disrupt this strategic waterway. A closure of Hormuz would have been catastrophic—not only for oil-dependent United States, Europe and China, but for fragile economies such as Pakistan, Lebanon, and much of Africa. A prolonged disruption could have triggered a global recession, skyrocketed energy prices, and collapsed economies. This economic time bomb likely weighed heavily in Trump’s calculus, forcing him to act swiftly to avoid broader international collapse. Meanwhile, the United States stood alone in this war. The European Union did not support the military intervention. Instead, France, Germany, and the UK pursued diplomacy directly with Tehran. NATO remained entirely absent.

This was perhaps the first U.S.-initiated conflict in decades where there was no multinational military backing, no financial burden-sharing, no political cover. Had this war escalated further, the cost—blood, treasure, and international credibility—would have been shouldered solely by the United States. This realization sent shockwaves through Washington and likely catalyzed Trump’s push for immediate de-escalation. Iran, though it could not muster active support from either Russia or China or any Muslim-majority country, walks away with a transformed image. No longer the isolated pariah, it is now the country that stood up to two nuclear powers—absorbed their blows, responded proportionally, and survived. Its regional allies—Hezbollah, Houthis, Hamas, and Iraqi militias—are energized. Its population is united. Its sovereignty is intact. For Israel, the war leaves behind questions. Domestic criticism of Netanyahu has intensified. International confidence in Israeli intelligence and defense has been shaken. And with Gaza still in flames, the question looms: will Israel now finally consider peace, or will it double down on aggression? Perhaps the most striking outcome of this conflict was the global reaction to the ceasefire. Across the United States and beyond, traditional media, social platforms, and everyday conversations erupted in jubilation. Newsrooms broke the story with celebratory headlines, while TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X overflowed with congratulatory messages, reaction videos, and patriotic posts hailing peace. From Chicago and New York to San Francisco and Houston, people took to the streets—not in protest, but in celebration. The American public, who had never fully embraced this war—viewed by many as another foreign entanglement driven by Israel’s geopolitical ambitions—breathed a collective sigh of relief. Now, Iran is celebrating with pomp, pride, and national dignity, its people and leadership united in a sense of historic triumph. In contrast, Israel is reeling. Its aura of invincibility has been shattered, its claim of superiority undermined. Both its leadership and citizens are left licking their wounds, forced to confront the reality of vulnerability and defeat. Around the world, peaceful citizens, intellectuals, and thought leaders are hailing this ceasefire as a welcome reprieve. For many, especially in the U.S., Donald Trump is no longer seen as a warmonger but as a peacemaker—first for diffusing tensions between Pakistan and India, and now for halting the Israel–Iran war. A growing chorus now asks: Has Trump earned his place as a Nobel Peace Prize nominee? This war, though short in days, has altered the trajectory of nations. It shattered illusions, exposed dependencies, challenged assumptions, and—most importantly—proved that a nation’s true power lies not just in bombs, but in brains, unity, and moral courage. And in this war, Iran had all three.

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

Peace through power or power without peace?

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This glaring double standard is not only unjust but dangerous. It signals to the world that power, not principle, governs the nuclear order. That alliances, not adherence, determine legitimacy. In the final analysis, it is not the possession of nuclear weapons that defines responsibility, but the manner in which a state conducts itself

THE history of mankind is, in no small measure, a history of conflict and conquest. From the dawn of human existence, when survival depended upon the hunt and protection from rival tribes, the creation and refinement of weaponry has marched in lockstep with the evolution of civilizations. What began as a crude wooden spear—such as those uncovered in Germany and dating back nearly 400,000 years—gradually transformed into instruments of ever greater precision, lethality, and political consequence. As the tides of history turned and man mastered the elements, so too did his weapons evolve. The Iron Age, commencing around 1200 BCE, introduced the hardened blades and steel-forged tools that defined the military prowess of ancient empires—the Assyrians, with their chariots and swords, and the Celts, known for their formidable metalwork, stand as enduring symbols of that era. With these instruments, wars were waged not only for defence, but for dominion. Yet it was in the East, in ninth-century China, that the next revolution occurred—gunpowder. First used in ceremonial pyrotechnics, it did not take long for its martial applications to be discovered. By the fourteenth century, the knowledge of gunpowder had reached Europe, ushering in the age of muskets, cannons, and artillery. The battlefield was transformed, as was the notion of distance and destruction. War was no longer the intimate affair of blades and shields—it had become a mechanised, impersonal force. The culmination of this technological arc came in the twentieth century, amid the fires of the Second World War. It was then that science, ambition, and fear converged to produce the most devastating weapon yet conceived by man—the atomic bomb. The United States, under the secretive Manhattan Project, succeeded in detonating the world’s first nuclear device on July 16, 1945, in the deserts of New Mexico. That experiment, codenamed “Trinity,” would soon be followed by the infamous bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The cities were obliterated, hundreds of

thousands perished, and the world beheld for the first time the terrifying potential of nuclear force. The war ended, but a new and perilous era began—the Cold War. The Soviet Union, not to be outpaced, conducted its first nuclear test, “RDS-1,” on August 29, 1949, in the steppes of Kazakhstan. Thus began the arms race between the two superpowers, each viewing the other not merely as a rival, but as an existential threat. The balance of terror, precarious yet effective, shaped international politics for decades. Other nations, too, followed suit. The United Kingdom tested its first nuclear weapon in 1952, not in its homeland but on the remote coast of Australia. France, asserting its independence in the wake of the Suez Crisis, conducted its inaugural test in Algeria in 1960. China, isolated and hemmed in by both the Soviet Union and the United States, demonstrated its capability in 1964 at Lop Nur. Each of these powers justified their actions in the name of security, sovereignty, or strategic parity. India joined the nuclear club in 1974 with its so-called “peaceful nuclear explosion”—the Smiling Buddha test. However, by 1998, any pretense of peaceful intent was cast aside with a series of underground tests that clearly indicated full weaponization. Pakistan, under intense internal pressure and geopolitical uncertainty, responded swiftly and decisively. On May 28, 1998, in the Chagai hills of Balochistan, Pakistan conducted its own nuclear tests—marking its entrance into the exclusive group of declared nuclear powers. Pakistan’s action was not one of provocation, but of necessity. It was a message of deterrence, not aggression. As the only Islamic country to formally declare and demonstrate nuclear capability, Pakistan did so with solemn responsibility, mindful of the regional balance of power and its own right to self-preservation. Other nations took divergent paths. North Korea, defiant and isolated, conducted its first test in 2006 and has since used its arsenal as a tool of diplomatic leverage. Israel, on the other hand, maintains a

policy of deliberate ambiguity, refusing to confirm or deny its possession of nuclear weapons, though it is widely accepted that it has been a nuclear power since the late 20th century. What remains deeply troubling, however, is the inconsistency with which the world responds to nuclear aspirations. No state, once having crossed the nuclear threshold, has been forcibly disarmed. Some have been sanctioned, others diplomatically coaxed, but all have retained their arsenals. Except, it seems, when it comes to Iran. Unlike Israel, India, or even North Korea, Iran is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and has repeatedly declared that its nuclear ambitions are peaceful in nature. Yet it has faced years of economic strangulation, cyber-sabotage, diplomatic isolation, and open threats of military action. The Western world, particularly the United States and its allies, has treated Iran’s nuclear programme not with the tools of diplomacy and parity, but with suspicion and hostility. Herein lies the contradiction that undermines the very architecture of international law and equity. Why India’s pursuit accepted, and Israel’s secrecy respected—yet Iran is singled out for punitive treatment? This glaring double standard is not only unjust but dangerous. It signals to the world that power, not principle, governs the nuclear order. That alliances, not adherence, determine legitimacy. In the final analysis, it is not the possession of nuclear weapons that defines responsibility, but the manner in which a state conducts itself. Pakistan has demonstrated restraint, responsibility, and rationality. It has not brandished its nuclear capability for coercion, nor has it used it to threaten regional stability. It seeks only to protect its sovereignty—no more, no less. History may one day judge not only those who built the bomb, but those who imposed the rules of who may hold it. Until the world applies its standards with fairness, the dream of a just and peaceful international order shall remain, like the mushroom cloud itself, a shadow over the conscience of mankind.

Briefs

Iran-Israel
12-day war
ends for now

FROM PAGE 01
Trump's team had negotiated with Iran on five different occasions in the weeks leading up to the conflict but the talks broke down when Iran would not back away from its demand that it continue enriching uranium. Trump announced on Thursday that he would make a decision on American use of force "within two weeks," but by Saturday afternoon he had ordered the United States to bomb the Iranian facilities. Trump's unprecedented decision to bomb Iran's nuclear sites early on Sunday marked a step that he had long vowed to avoid - to intervene militarily in a major foreign war. Moving to join US ally Israel in military strikes stirred up concern within his right-leaning "Make America Great Again" political base, which has clung to his promises to avoid foreign entanglements.

Israel
rescuers say
4 dead...

FROM PAGE 01
Sirens rang out across Israel for around two hours from dawn as Iran fired six waves of missiles according to statements released by Israel's military. At around 8:00 am (0500 GMT), the military said the public could leave areas near shelters. The full extent of damage after 12 days of war is not known due to military censorship rules, but at least 50 impacts have been acknowledged nationwide and the official death toll stood at 24 before Tuesday's attacks.

Two army
officers
martyred...

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groups largely remained contained despite the regional geopolitical climate. According to the PICSS monthly security assessment, May recorded 85 militant attacks, a marginal rise from 81 in April. These incidents resulted in 113 fatalities, including 52 security forces personnel, 46 civilians, 11 militants, and four members of peace committees. The month also saw 182 individuals injured, comprising 130 civilians, 47 security personnel, four militants, and one peace committee member. While the overall number of attacks saw only a modest increase, a deeper dive into the figures reveals some concerning trends.

'I think
minus Imran
Khan has...

FROM PAGE 01
KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur-led government even did not wait for two days, she added. "We don't know what was hidden from the PTI founder in the budget. I am surprised that the KP lawmakers did not even discuss it," she added. Meanwhile, Aleema, along with the PTI workers tried to reach the Adiala jail to meet Khan but the police barred them from entering the jail premises. The 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician has been behind bars since August 2023 after he was booked in multiple cases ranging from corruption to terrorism since his ouster from power via the opposition's no-trust motion in April 2022.

LHC rejects
Imran
Khan's...

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Previously, on November 27, 2024, the ATC had dismissed Imran's bail pleas in these eight cases.

A large number of workers and supporters of PTI staged almost countrywide demonstrations on May 9, 2023 - when the PTI founding chairman was arrested by paramilitary troops on the directions of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in connection with an alleged corruption case.

Pakistan bags gold, bronze
at Al Bareh Sailing Regatta

Muzammil Hassan led the charge by winning the gold medal in the ILCA 7 class

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's sailing team impressed at the 31st Al Bareh Sailing Regatta in Bahrain, clinching gold and bronze medals in a fiercely contested competition. Muzammil Hassan led the charge by winning the gold medal in the ILCA 7 class - formerly known as the Laser Standard - one of the most challenging Olympic sailing categories. His consistent performances and tactical brilliance helped him outpace seasoned rivals and claim the top spot on the podium. Adding to the team's success, Hamza Ejaz earned a bronze medal in the same category, rounding off a memorable campaign for the national contingent. Pakistan's young talent also showed promise. In the Optimist class, designed for sailors under 15, Muhammad Suleman narrowly missed out on a podium finish, placing fourth. Competing against a strong international lineup, Suleman impressed with his calmness and skill under pressure. Meanwhile, in the ILCA 4 category, another emerging sailor, Muzammil Hussain, delivered a commendable performance to finish sixth. Both Suleman and Hussain are part of Pakistan's youth development program, which aims to groom future Olympians and elite-level competitors.

Club World Cup prize money
does not mean more pressure

PHILADELPHIA: Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca has insisted that the club's owners are not putting extra pressure on him to win the Club World Cup as a result of the enormous financial incentives on offer at FIFA's new tournament. World football's governing body has dangled the carrot of a total \$1 billion in prize money to the 32 competing teams in the United States. If Chelsea, as one of the 12 European representatives, go on to win the trophy on July 13, they can take home around \$125 million (£92.4m) as a cash reward. That could give the Stamford Bridge side a considerable advantage over many of their English and European rivals going forward into next season. However, Maresca claims money has not come up in discussions with the club's hierarchy around the ongoing competition. "The owners just want the best for us and for the players game by game and they are not talking about the final prize or the final

reward in terms of money," the Italian told reporters in Philadelphia ahead of Tuesday's match against Esperance of Tunis. "They never put pressure on me or the players in terms of we need to win this tournament because of the money." Chelsea must avoid defeat against the Tunisian four-time African champions in order to qualify for the last 16 from Group D. That is after they were beaten 3-1 by Brazilian giants Flamengo in their last game, when Maresca appeared to prioritise tactical experiments over the need for results. Playing Cole Palmer on the right of a front three was not a success, as the England international struggled to make a big impact on the game. "Off the ball Cole was defending a little more wide, but the position on the ball was exactly the same position as during the season," Maresca explained. "If it is a good moment or not to try new things, I don't know. But we also are here to think about the future, and

to try different systems. "Last year we played three or four different systems during the season. The idea is to continue to evolve and improve, and to try different things." Philadelphia is sweating under a fierce heatwave at the moment, and while the 9:00 pm local time kick-off on Wednesday should mean that is not a huge factor for the game itself, it has made preparations tricky. "It is almost impossible to train because of the weather. Now we are just trying to save energy for the game," said Maresca, who is likely to rotate his squad and make numerous changes to the starting line-up. Striker Nicolas Jackson is suspended after being sent off against Flamengo having come on as a substitute only a few minutes earlier. Chelsea won their opening match at the tournament, defeating Los Angeles FC 2-0 in Atlanta, before the reverse at the hands of Flamengo. Esperance

bounced back from a defeat to the Brazilians as they beat LAFC 1-0 in Nashville in their last outing - that is the only victory so far in six matches at this Club World Cup for a North African team. If Chelsea go through they will head to Charlotte for a last-16 tie on Saturday against the winners of Group C, which could be Bayern Munich. "If we go through we can talk about Bayern," said Maresca. "In this moment it has to be about tomorrow. Football is full of surprises," Maher Kanzari, the coach of the Tunisian champions, said his team were ready for a 'historical' battle against the Blues. "We are prepared and we have to fulfil the expectations of our technical team, of our fans, of the Tunisian public. It will be a historical game," he said. "We will be well prepared, especially mentally. Everyone is waiting for this game and we are really proud of what we have achieved so far. "Hopefully we will do what it takes." - Agencies

Athletics chief Coe
looks to future

PARIS: Sebastian Coe has two years left as World Athletics president and it promises to be lively as he says next year's inaugural World Athletics Ultimate Team Championship will remind the world the sport is "big and punchy and still there." The 68-year-old Englishman has shrugged off the disappointment of finishing third in the International Olympic Committee presidential election in March, telling AFP he is "not one for rear view mirrors." "Concede and move on," he adds. Move on he certainly has. The old brio, dynamism and charm are all to the fore as he addresses the issues that will dominate the final leg of a 12-year tenure that - like his Olympic gold medal-winning track career - has never been dull. The World Championships arrive in September in Tokyo - "a massive moment", Coe says, not least because there will be spectators unlike at the Covid-delayed 2020 Summer Olympics in the same stadium. "Everybody gets the emotional impact" of that, he added. Then attention switches to the World Athletics Ultimate Team Championship, slated for September 11-13, 2026, in Budapest - the city which hosted the 2023 world championships. Each session will last three hours and athletes will represent both themselves and their national teams, wearing national kit. "Next year is unashamedly aimed at TV," Coe told AFP in an interview following Friday's Paris Diamond League meet. "It's unashamedly aimed at unlocking new audiences. "So we go from '24 where we have a big global audience in the Olympic Games to '25 which are world championships. "2026 now gives us, in September, an opportunity for the world to remember we're big and punchy and still there." Another former track great, Michael Johnson, had wanted to make just such an impact with his Grand Slam series this year. However, it failed to sparkle and the fourth and final stop in Los Angeles was cancelled. Coe says just as World Athletics learn from their events, so will Grand Slam. "We want to be enablers. I'm not the 'computer says no' federation," said Coe. - Agencies

PM speaks to Crown
Prince of Saudi Arabia

FROM PAGE 01

and thanked the Kingdom for the gracious hospitality extended to the Pakistani pilgrims. The Prime Minister reiterated profound gratitude for the Kingdom's steadfast support to Pakistan during the recent standoff with India. He stated that Pakistan was ready to engage in a meaningful dialogue with India on all outstanding issues, including Jammu & Kashmir, water, trade and terrorism. The two leaders also exchanged views on the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East. In this regard, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan fully supported the immediate de-escalation of the Iran-Israel conflict, as well as its peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. While referring to last night's attacks, he called for adherence to international law and the UN Charter principles by all sides. In this context, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Prime Minister conveyed deep appreciation to His Royal Highness for his sagacious leadership and commendable efforts to restore peace in the region. This, he added, was reflective of the Kingdom's remarkable status as a peacemaker at the international stage, as well as its leadership of the Ummah. His Royal Highness the Crown Prince thanked the Prime Minister for the telephone call and appreciated Pakistan's expression of solidarity and support for the Kingdom. He acknowledged Pakistan's constructive role in promoting a peaceful resolution to the Iran-Israel conflict. His Royal Highness said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was fully committed to efforts aimed at fostering lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Pakistan
into
semifinals
of Asian
Squash
C'ships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan doubles team of Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal have reached the semifinals of the 2nd Asian Doubles Squash Championships 2025 at Sarawak, Malaysia. According to details, Pakistan beat Korea in the quarterfinals of the championship by 2-1 (11-3, 5-11, 11-4) in 37 minutes. Earlier in the day, Pakistan team of Noor Zaman and Nasir Iqbal stood first in their pool after securing a convincing win over Chinese Taipei by 11-2, 11-9. Pakistan will face Malaysia in the semifinals on Wednesday.

Pak-India camaraderie
shines throughPakistani bowler Abbas
and Indian keeper
Kishan warm hearts
with joyful celebration

LONDON: DPakistan pacer Mohammad Abbas and Indian wicketkeeper Ishan Kishan won over fans with a heartwarming celebration after a wicket during Nottinghamshire's County Championship match against Yorkshire on Monday. A video of the gesture, featuring the duo shaking hands and embracing, quickly went viral, earning widespread praise across both India and Pakistan. The moment came on the second day of play when Abbas removed opener Adam Lyth for a duck, with Kishan taking a sharp catch behind the stumps. Immediately after the dismissal, the two players came together, shook hands, and hugged each other in celebration - a rare and heartwarming sight for fans more accustomed to seeing India and Pakistan players as fierce rivals. Nottinghamshire County's official social media accounts shared the clip, prompting an outpouring of admiration in the com-

ments, with many calling it a beautiful example of the spirit of county cricket. One fan, Khawaja Naeem Akbar, commented, "This is the true beauty of county cricket. I love and admire this game for moments like these." Another fan, Faizan, wrote that seeing Abbas and Kishan play together made him happy and increased his respect for both players. Abdul Razzaq commented, "What a moment!" while Sultan Afridi described it as "a special moment for both Pakistan and India." Another user noted, "It's been so long since we've seen players from both countries playing together like this." Meanwhile, in the match, Kishan impressed with the bat in Nottinghamshire's first innings, scoring a fluent 87 runs off 98 balls, including one six and twelve fours. Abbas bowled economically on the second day, finishing with figures of 1 for 19 from 10 overs, including four maidens. This was not the first time Indian and Pakistani players have shared the field in county cricket. Cheteshwar Pujara and Mohammad Rizwan previously played together for Sussex. - DNA

PM Shehbaz
urges
diplomacy...

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In response, President Pezeshkian thanked PM Shehbaz for the gesture and appreciated Pakistan's consistent and principled stance in support of Iran during the ongoing crisis. "Iranian president also acknowledged Islamabad's constructive efforts to promote a peaceful resolution and avoid further escalation," the statement read. Both leaders agreed on the importance of unity in the Muslim world in addressing current geopolitical challenges. They also pledged to maintain close contact and coordination moving forward. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire between Iran and Israel, expressing hope that the development will pave the way for lasting peace and stability in the region.

PM Shehbaz
meets Saudi,
Qatari envoys

FROM PAGE 01

today and discussed the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East...Pakistan will continue to work closely with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for peace in the region through dialogue and diplomacy," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline after his meeting with Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki. The prime minister conveyed his prayers and good wishes for Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as well as Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Kh. Asif
condemns...

FROM PAGE 01

In an exclusive interview with IRNA Khawaja Muhammad Asif condemned the Zionist regime's terrorist attacks and the US's aggressive crime against Iran's nuclear facilities, and considered these actions to be contrary to international law, the UN Charter, and all humanitarian norms. He said: "I think the situation has escalated to a dangerous level, especially over the past few weeks when Iran has continuously emphasized the need for negotiations and participation in this entire process, and that the Iranians have never left the negotiating table."

Five dead, 7
injured...

FROM PAGE 01

incident, five passengers on the bus were killed and seven others were injured." He said that the bodies of the deceased had become unrecognisable due to the burns. "The injured were taken to the Bolan Medical Complex and Civil Hospital, and two of them are in critical condition," he said. DSP Rashid added that the local bus was going from Nawan area to Hazarganj when the accident occurred at the Raisani area on the Western Bypass, adding that the bus caught fire after colliding with a petrol-laden loader rickshaw.

Messi's Miami and PSG progress to set up Club World Cup reunion

Champions of Europe PSG won the group with a 2-0 victory over Seattle Sounders, paving the way for the clash with Messi and surprise package Miami

MIAMI: Inter Miami's Lionel Messi faces a tantalising reunion with former club Paris Saint-Germain in the Club World Cup last 16 after both sides on Monday progressed to the knockout phase. Miami drew 2-2 with Palmeiras to go through second in Group A, after the Brazilian side fought back from two goals down to seal top spot. They now face an all-Brazil clash against Botafogo, who lost 1-0 to Atletico Madrid but progressed from Group B in second at the expense of the Spaniards. Champions of Europe PSG won the group with a 2-0 victory over Seattle Sounders, paving the way for the clash with Messi and surprise package Miami. Goals from Tadeo Allende and Luis Suarez had Miami on course for a second victory in the tournament after their shock win over Porto. But Palmeiras struck twice in the last 10 minutes at Hard Rock Stadium through Paulinho and Mauricio to ensure they went through. Suarez, Messi, Sergio Busquets, Jordi Alba and Miami coach Javier Mascherano will also face their former coach Luis Enrique, who guided them to the treble when in charge at Barcelona in 2015. "We're talking about the champions of Europe. We know many of their players and their coach, who I was lucky enough to have coach me, and I've always said he is the best in the world," said Alba. "I will connect with good friends there but once the game starts, we will compete, try to beat them, and why can't we do it? This is football." Mascherano said Miami's progress had elevated Major League Soccer. "It's a historic night for MLS, because we are into the best 16 teams in the world. All of the MLS has to be proud of Inter Miami," he said. Portuguese side Porto and Egypt's Al Ahly



were eliminated after a thrilling 4-4 draw which was not enough for either team to overhaul Palmeiras or Miami. European champions PSG bounced back from their surprise defeat

by Botafogo with a comfortable win in Seattle. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Achraf Hakimi scored either side of half-time as the Ligue 1 champions advanced as group winners because of Botafogo's late defeat to Atletico Madrid in Pasadena. "It wasn't easy because the pitch was very different to what we are used to in Europe so we couldn't play with the fluidity that we like, but we adapted," said PSG coach Enrique. PSG top scorer Ousmane Dembele played no part for a third game running after travelling to the tournament with an injury. Atletico's 4-0 defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in their opener left them needing a big win against Botafogo to progress. Former France international Antoine Griezmann scored the game's only goal, lashing home a Julian Alvarez cross in the 87th minute to give Atletico a victory that ultimately was in vain. "We're frustrated that we didn't qualify - we had six points," Atletico coach Simeone said afterwards. "At the end of the day we were punished because it wasn't enough." Atletico needed a two-goal swing and were upset at penalty appeals being turned down. "I've never seen anything like it, to be honest, I think we should have been awarded two penalties," complained winger Giuliano Simeone, the coach's son. On Tuesday, already qualified Bayern Munich face Benfica and eliminated Auckland City take on Boca Juniors in Group C, with one more last 16 spot on the line. The English Premier League's Chelsea later tackle Esperance Tunis with the winners to progress alongside Flamengo, who face Los Angeles FC. - Agencies

Briefs

SAPM, Car dealers importers association discuss Auto Policy

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a meeting with the Car Dealers Importers Association and discussed key feature of the upcoming Auto Policy 2026. During the meeting, they also discussed import and export issues, and additional customs duties, said a news release. Haroon recognized the association as a vital stakeholder in the consultation process for policy formulation.

He reiterated that Prime Minister's vision focuses on promoting a liberalized and competitive import mechanism for vehicles in Pakistan. Pakistan real estate listings "Open competition in car imports will create pressure on local manufacturers to improve and expand into exports," he said adding that in order to ensure the quality of used car imports, the government will implement mandatory registration and certification procedures. Highlighting the shift towards sustainable transportation, Haroon stated that Pakistan is moving away from petrol-based vehicles towards environmentally friendly alternatives.—APP

Rupee gains 10 paisa against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 10 paisa against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 283.76 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.86.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 284.75 and Rs 285.8 respectively Pakistan food delivery services The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.55 to close at Rs 328.95 against the last day's closing of Rs 326.40, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese yen went up by 03 paisa and closed at Rs1.95, whereas an increase of Rs 3.98 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 385.42 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 381.44. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paisa each to close at Rs 77.27 and Rs 75.63.—APP

Gold price decreases by Rs3,800 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.3,800 and was traded at Rs.354,365 on Tuesday as compared to its sale at Rs.358,165 on the last trading day, All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported. Pakistan real estate listings The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs3,258 to Rs.303,810 from Rs.307,068 and for 10 grams of 22 Karat it came down by Rs.2,987 to Rs.278,502 from Rs. 281,489 The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs.9 and Rs.8 to Rs.3,790 and Rs.3,249 respectively.—APP

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 6,079.17 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday gaining 6,079.17 points, a positive change of 5.23 percent, closing at 122,246.64 points as compared to 116,167.47 points on the last trading day A total of 804,779,730 shares were traded during the day as compared to 595,010,639 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 376.14 billion against Rs 23.488 billion on the last trading day. As many as 477 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 407 of them recorded gains and 35 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 35 companies remained unchanged.—APP



GUJRAT: President of the Women Chamber of Commerce, Saima Sarfraz, is addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Gujrat Women Chamber of Commerce, while FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, UBG Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer, UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, Gujrat Chamber Group Leader Haji Nasir Mehmood, Ashfaq Ahmad Razi, FPCCI Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Ahmed Hassan Mattoo, and others are present on stage.—DNA

Japan's rising rice prices spark food security concerns

BERLIN: Rice, a staple in Japanese and other Asian cuisines, is putting pressure on consumers and politicians in Japan due to its rising price amid declining production, prompting the country to evaluate its food security. The average price of a 5-kilogram (11-pound) bag of rice rose by more than 4,000 Japanese yen (\$28) in May, a 98% increase year-on-year, as fewer varieties of rice were available in the markets. Global instability, the climate crisis, and small-scale farming practices pressure the rice market while weakening Japan's bargaining hand against the US in tariff negotiations. Rice is facing a serious supply shortage, as its price has doubled since last summer. Despite the Japanese government's efforts to release emergency reserves to lower prices, rice remains high amid declining production and its perceived scarcity. Japan's traditional cuisine attaches great importance to rice, but its production has been affected by recent climate

events and natural disasters. Low farm yields and the booming tourism sector in the country are the main factors affecting rice prices. Rising rice prices pushed inflation up, and Japan resorted to importing rice from South Korea for the first time in years. Japan has been struggling with disinflation for years; in May, the country's inflation rate was 3.6%, higher than other developed countries and well above the Bank of Japan's 2% target. Rice prices began to rise alongside wheat prices following the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war, which resulted in a supply shortage. Meanwhile, the record-breaking hot summer of 2023 destroyed the harvest, and a major earthquake warning in August last year sparked panic buying and stockpiling of rice, resulting in another scarcity. Rice stocks from the 2024 harvest were sold around two months earlier than scheduled, and the wholesale price of rice increased by more than 40% month-on-month in Sept. 2024, and prices

have only continued to rise since then due to ongoing supply shortages and increased demand. Since 1972, the Japanese government has managed to control rice production in the country, balancing supply and demand and encouraging farmers to produce less when necessary, but the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture underestimated this balance for 2023 and 2024. People resumed their normal routines following the pandemic. Tourists and the domestic population's eating habits boosted rice consumption in the country. Former Japanese Farm Minister Taku Eto resigned in May after much backlash following his statements. Eto stated he has "never bought rice" himself, as his "supporters give quite a lot of rice." "I have so much rice at home that I could sell it," he said amid the rice crisis in the country. Eto apologized for the "extremely inappropriate remark" he made and resigned on May 21. Following these developments, rice became a focal point in the next month's elections. Meanwhile, Shinjiro Koizumi

replaced Eto as the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. The newly appointed 44-year-old is the second son of the popular former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. On June 10, the minister announced that an additional 200,000 tons of rice from the 910,000-ton reserve would be released to help stabilize rising prices, while 100,000 tons from the 2020 and 2021 harvests would be made available in two batches. According to Koizumi, a 5-kilogram bag of rice will cost approximately 2,000 Japanese yen (\$14) in stores. The government decided not to sell rice to wholesalers through an auction, instead selling it directly to retail chains at a fixed price to ensure that consumer rice prices fall, sparking much debate over a taboo decision. The Bank of Japan (BoJ) is closely monitoring rice prices right now, as the decline has prevented the bank from raising its low interest rate and shrinking its balance sheet, which has grown to the size of the Japanese economy. The BoJ maintained its short-term policy rate at 0.5% on

Tuesday, within estimates. The rate has been the same since the last increase in January. Moreover, some experts believe the current rice crisis will encourage the government to make concessions by increasing agricultural imports and lowering non-tariff barriers, reducing the country's bargaining power in trade talks with the US. US President Donald Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs, which hit Japan at a 24% rate, were supplemented by 25% auto, steel, and aluminum tariffs. Rice imports are important in the US-Japan trade negotiations, and if the talks fail, the country could face reciprocal tariffs of more than 24%, while Washington is pressuring Japan to import more US agricultural products, including rice. Trump has been critical of Japan's agricultural tariffs and standards, such as prohibiting genetically modified imports into the country. Trump wants to see tariff negotiations done by July 9, but Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba wants to postpone until the second half of July.—Agencies

France orders Tesla to end 'deceptive commercial practices'

PARIS: French anti-fraud authorities said on Tuesday they have ordered US electric car giant Tesla's local subsidiary to stop "deceptive commercial practices" after an investigation found several violations harmful to consumers and contrary to law. The fraud prevention and consumer protection agency (DGCCRF) said its agents investigated Tesla's French subsidiary between 2023 and 2024 after reports were filed on a consumer complaint platform. The probe revealed "deceptive commercial practices regarding the fully autonomous driving capabilities of Tesla vehicles, the availability of certain options and vehicle trade-in offers," it said. The agency also cited delays in refunding canceled orders, a lack of information on the location of deliveries and incomplete sales contracts, among other violations. Tesla was given four months to comply with regulations. It faces a daily fine of 50,000 euros (\$58,000) if it fails to stop deceptive commercial practices over the fully autonomous driving option of certain Tesla models.—APP

Emirati FM reviews regional crisis with Azerbaijani counterpart

LONDON: UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan discussed several regional issues with his Azerbaijani counterpart, Jeyhun Bayramov, during a phone call on Tuesday. The ministers discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and their impact on regional peace and security. Azerbaijan shares part of its southern border with Iran, which has been locked in conflict with Israel since June 13, before a ceasefire was announced on Tuesday. Sheikh Abdullah and Bayramov said that enhancing diplomacy and dialogue is crucial for tackling the crisis, and fostering the foundations of enduring security in the region and beyond, the Emirates News Agency reported. Both parties also discussed opportunities to enhance collaboration across various sectors and strengthen cooperation between Abu Dhabi and Baku, WAM added.—APP

China, Thailand kick off durian festival, fruit week

BEIJING: The 2025 Thailand Durian Carnival and China-Thailand Fruit Week launched in Beijing over the weekend, aiming to deepen agricultural cooperation between the two countries and inject new vitality into regional fruit trade. Hosted by the Foreign Economic Cooperation Center at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Thai embassy in China, and the Charoen Pokphand Group, the event will last until Sunday to promote the exchange of agricultural practices and facilitate the production and sale of quality fruits. Wei Zhenglin, an official from the ministry's Department of International Cooperation, said at the launching ceremony that China has been Thailand's largest export market for fruit for several years and also its largest source of fruit imports.—APP

UN condemns 'weaponization of food' in Gaza

GENEVA: The United Nations on Tuesday condemned Israel's apparent "weaponization of food" in Gaza, a war crime, and urged Israel's military to "stop shooting at people trying to get food." "Israel's militarised humanitarian assistance mechanism is in contradiction with international standards on aid distribution," the UN human rights office said in written notes provided before a briefing. "Desperate, hungry people in Gaza continue to face the inhumane choice of either starving to death or risk being killed while trying to get food." The US- and Israel-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) began food distribution operations in Gaza on May 26 after Israel completely cut off supplies into the occupied Palestinian territory for more than two months, sparking warnings of mass famine. The UN said in May that "100 percent of the population" of the besieged territory were "at risk of famine." The UN and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF — an officially private effort with opaque funding — over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives. UN rights office spokesman Thameen Al-Kheetan warned in the briefing notes of "scenes of chaos around the food distribution points" of the GHF. Since the organization began operating, "the Israeli military has shelled and shot Palestinians trying to reach the distribution points, leading to many fatalities," he said. He pointed to reports that "over 410 Palestinians have been killed as a result, (while) at least 93 others have also been reportedly killed by the Israeli army while attempting to approach the very few aid convoys of the UN and other humanitarian organizations." "At least 3,000 Palestinians have been injured in these incidents," he said. "Each of these killings must be promptly and impartially investigated, and those responsible must be held to account." Kheetan cautioned that the system "endangers civilians and contributes to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza." "The weaponization of food for civilians, in addition to restricting or preventing their access to life-sustaining services, constitutes a war crime.—DNA

Vietnam aims to sign nuclear power plant deal with Russia

HANOI: Vietnam's government said on Tuesday it aims to sign an agreement with its Russian counterpart in August to build the Southeast Asian country's first nuclear power plant. Site clearance for development of the plant in Ninh Thuan province is to be completed by the end of this year, the government said in a statement. The move follows Vietnam's restart of plans to develop nuclear power plants that were suspended nearly a decade ago, as part of its efforts to ramp up its power generation capacity to support its fast-growing economy. The government has previously said it expected the first nuclear power plants with a combined capacity of up to 6.4 gigawatts to be online between 2030 and 2035. The government said on Tuesday it has told the finance ministry, central bank, state energy firm Petrovietnam and utility firm EVN to work with related parties on loans for the project.—APP



Abu Dhabi: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presented the award of Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam, to . Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD).The Government of Pakistan conferred the award of Hilal-e-Quaid-e-Azam upon Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi in acknowledgment of his exceptional contributions to the promotion of Pakistan-UAE cooperation. Senator Dar presented the award on behalf of the President of Pakistan.

Ceasefire: A Pause or a Strategic Reset by India?

DR NAVEED KHALIQ ANSAREE



THE May 2025 Indian military intimidation of Pakistan that lasted four days, ended in a US-brokered and uncomfortable ceasefire at the request of India. In a volatile region like South Asia, the term ceasefire can be construed not just a diplomatic nicety or delicacy; it can be a chess move too. Following the high-tension clash of military forces, which saw the

Indian Air Force (IAF) not only face setbacks at all levels of the conflict but also ground in the narrative and dialectic of opposing wills. The hasty de-escalation between India and Pakistan has prompted both respite and incredulity. Was this ceasefire a calculated step toward stability in the region, or is it a strategic-pause that IAF needed to regroup, recalibrate, and reclaim the honour that it had lost in the skies of South Asia? The four-day conflict wasn't just a tactical and operational failure, rather it was a dark chapter and symbolic blow to the IAF, a force that had spent almost a decade modernising fleets, integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI), and projecting itself as a modern air power and net-security-provider in the region. It revealed that hardware and media-highlights do not replace doctrinal-tenets, operational-cohesion and battlefield-precision. The military volley

of shock and awe cost India loss of professional pride in the comity of modern air forces. Having lost six of IAF's combat aircraft including three flagship Rafales, the S-400 air defence system, multimillion dollar Israeli drones, and control over the skies, India was unable to withstand the might, discipline and tactical brilliance of PAF's full-spectrum Multi Domain Operations as indoctrinated by the Chief of the Air Staff Pakistan Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Zahoor Ahmed Baber Sidhu. The ceasefire may not hold long. Unfortunately, in its attempt to teach Pakistan a lesson, India ended up introducing an undesired new normal for the application of military instrument, and precariously lowering the threshold of a hot war with Pakistan. A small false-flag, foreign-sponsored or home-grown terrorist incident could act as a trigger point for an all-out war between the two nuclear neighbours. And also, on the pretext of a small terrorist incident, India may get incited to seize the

opportunity to reclaim the lost honour. Against this backdrop, the ceasefire agreement renewed between India and Pakistan in June 2025 is riddled with strategic ambiguity. There were no major peace talks, no back-channel diplomacy, no India's renunciation of unilateral suspension of the Indus Water Treaty that had stood the test of several full-fledged wars and eye-ball to eye-ball military standoffs. For Pakistan, the rationale for accepting the ceasefire is clearer: genuine desire to promote peace, a fragile economy, and securing goodwill in the international community particularly with the key allies like China and the Gulf states. But for India, particularly its military establishment, the motivation to accept discomforting ceasefire from the position of weakness is more layered. Could this ceasefire be less about the peace and more about time; a recuperating space for the IAF to step back, evaluate the lost air battle, fix doctrinal and training fault lines, and silently prepare for the next round with a firmer grip to

reclaim the lost pride? Honour in the military sense isn't only about pride; it includes competence, credibility, and public perception. The IAF, despite being one of the most professionally-skilled air forces in the region, knows the weight of negative perception. The post-Pulwama debacle delivered confusion adding insult to the professional injury. Since then, intelligence and surveillance suggest that the IAF has been working inaudibly on several areas: enhancing real-time battlefield data links, fixing command chain disruptions, hurried induction of military equipment and refining jointness with other services. There is also talk of reassessing doctrinal flexibility, and extending tactical commanders a greater freedom of decision-making in a dynamic battlespace.

In my opinion, the shadow of the next crisis is still looming large over South Asia. That next moment of truth may come in the form of another terror attack, a drone incursion, or a Ukrainian style sabotage action. When the moment arrives, the real test will be whether the IAF's current period of silence was indeed a strategic pause or merely a retreat from embarrassment. Ceasefires are rarely about peace in South Asia; they are about repositioning and silence before the storm. The IAF may have lost a battle for narrative-control in May 2025, it hasn't lost the will. IAF may use the time-out to reflect, reform, or re-strategise; proving this ceasefire wasn't a gesture-surrender, but the prelude to the restoration and reclamation of the pride lost in the skies of South Asia.

—The writer, Dr Air Commodore Naveed Khalique Ansaree (Retd), is a Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore. He can be reached at info@casslhr.com

Briefs

Govt okays
import of
0.5m tonnes
of sugar

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: In a stunning reversal that has sparked fresh criticism of the government's sugar policy, the Sugar Advisory Board — headed by Federal Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain — on Monday approved the import of 500,000 tonnes of sugar, just months after allowing 750,000 tonnes in exports from June 2024 to January 2025. The move comes amid soaring domestic prices and market instability — ironically fueled, in part, by the very export approvals granted earlier. Now, with sugar prices pinching consumers and triggering inflation across food products, the government is scrambling to stabilise the market with imports that critics say could have been avoided. Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said: "Disruption in the supply chain and non-compliance by mill owners have created volatility and contributed to price hikes."

Pakistan
expresses
deep concern
at serious
escalation

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday expressed its deep concern and alarm at the serious escalation in the security situation in the region as a result of attacks against USA's Al Udeid Air base in Qatar. "We strongly condemn the recent violations of the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries," a statement issued by the foreign office spokesperson said. "We urge adherence to fundamental principles of international law and call for exercise of restraint by all sides," it added. Pakistan also reiterated its call for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve all conflicts, and urged immediate steps for de-escalation.

Two tourists
dead as car
plunges
into ravine

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: At least two people were killed in an accident on Tuesday after their car plunged into a ravine in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kaghan area, rescue officials said. Fatal accidents are common on roads in the mountainous regions of the country due to traffic rule violations, treacherous terrain and poor infrastructure. Mansehra Rescue 1122 spokesperson Amir Khadam said, "A car with three family members aboard fell into a ravine, resulting in the death of the couple," adding that the three-year-old son remained safe in the incident. He said that the family had come to Kaghan from Punjab's Attock district for a picnic. "Local people and rescue teams reached the spot as soon as the incident was reported, Khadam said."

Propaganda
by Khawarij
fitna using
quadcopters
exposed

PESHAWAR: In recent months, there has been a surge in terrorist incidents in the tribal districts especially Khyber, Bajaur, Waziristan, and the Tirah Valley. The key reason behind this increase is the banned outfit fitna al-khawarij using modern technology, particularly armed quadcopters, for their terrorist activities. Security experts said this new weapon is being used not only to target innocent civilians but also to spread unrest by blaming these attacks on the state and armed forces of Pakistan. — APP

PM Shehbaz discusses
ME with Chinese envoy

The Prime Minister extended his sincere best wishes for the successful holding of the upcoming SCO Summit. He acknowledged the ongoing consultations between the two sides concerning his visit to China to attend the Summit

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Amb. Jiang Zaidong, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, called on the Prime Minister, this morning. The Prime Minister conveyed his warm regards and good wishes for President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. The Prime Minister extended his sincere best wishes for the successful holding of the upcoming SCO Summit. He acknowledged the ongoing consultations between the two sides concerning his visit to China to attend the Summit. Recalling the historic, deep-rooted and iron-clad "All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership" between Pakistan and China, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan was fully committed to continue working closely with China for the successful implementation of ongoing CPEC projects. In this regard, he highlighted key projects including ML-I, realignment of KKH, operationalization of Gwadar



Port, as well as cooperation in agriculture, industrial and IT sectors. The Prime Minister expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation for China's consistent financial and economic support that had helped to stabilize Pakistan's economy and resulted in the improvement of the macro-economic outlook of the country. This, he added, was vital to the Government's socio-economic development agenda. The regional security situation, particularly recent developments in the Iran-Israel conflict, was also discussed during the meeting. The Ambassador lauded the proactive and positive role being played by Pakistan at every diplomatic forum, including at the UN Security Council, for a peaceful settlement of the crisis through dialogue and diplomacy. Amb. Jiang Zaidong briefed the Prime Minister on various aspects of Pakistan-China bilateral cooperation and said that preparations had already begun to ensure the success of the Prime Minister's upcoming visit to China in the end of August 2025.

Pak resumes flight operations
after Gulf airspace reopens

PIA flights to Gulf restored;
major delays, cancellations
still reported nationwide

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Pakistan has resumed flight operations to the Gulf region following the reopening of airspace over Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, aviation sources confirmed on Tuesday. The development comes after the temporary suspension of operations by national carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) late last night due to escalating tensions in the region. PIA has now restored its Gulf-bound flights; however, delays ranging from five to thirteen hours are still expected in departures. According to flight schedules, a total of 32 flights from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and other airports across the country have been cancelled, including 14 Qatar Airways flights. Airline sources added that 55 flights — both arrivals and departures — have been delayed at airports in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and other cities. While Saudi Arabia and the UAE did not close their air-

space last night, several flights had to be diverted to alternate airports due to the deteriorating situation in the Gulf. Bahrain and Kuwait resumed operations earlier, followed by Qatar later in the night, paving the way for partial restoration of services.

Among the affected flights:

- Eight outbound flights from Karachi to Jeddah, Doha, and Istanbul were cancelled.
- Two foreign airlines' flights from Karachi to Dubai were scrapped.
- Five Lahore-bound flights to Sharjah, Muscat, and Riyadh were cancelled.
- Qatar Airways cancelled two flights from Lahore, four from Islamabad, and four from Peshawar and Sialkot.
- Five inbound flights to Peshawar and Abu Dhabi from Sharjah and Dubai were also cancelled.

Severe delays are being reported across multiple routes. PIA flight PK 747 from Lahore to Madinah is delayed by 13 hours, while PK 247 from Lahore to Dammam faces a 6.5-hour delay. Qatar Airways flight QR 621 from Doha to Karachi and Lahore is delayed by 10 hours. PIA flight PK 233 from Islamabad to Dubai is delayed by a staggering 15 hours. Two incoming flights from Bahrain to Islamabad have also been delayed by 4 hours, aviation sources added.

PSX rebounds
as Iran-Israel
ceasefire lifts
investor sentiment

DNA

KARACHI: DThe equity market surged on Tuesday as news of a ceasefire between Iran and Israel and a sharp drop in oil prices restored investor confidence and triggered widespread buying. The Pakistan Stock Exchange's (PSX) benchmark KSE-100 Index surged to an intraday high of 122,045.62, gaining 5,878.15 points, or 5.06%, and touched a low of 120,369.53, reflecting a rise of 4,202.06 points, or 3.61%. "The ceasefire and the subsequent plunge in oil prices have triggered the rally today," said Afraz Mustafa, CEO of Ismail Iqbal Securities. "The falling oil prices and the ending of the threat of a prolonged conflict in the Mid-

dle East has calmed the markets. They are giving investors the confidence to re-enter the market." Trading was halted at the PSX after the KSE-30 Index surged 5%, triggering a mandatory one-hour cooling-off period. The market is scheduled to re-open at 12:31pm. US President Donald Trump announced late Monday that a ceasefire had been agreed between Iran and Israel. "It has been fully agreed by and between Israel and Iran that there will be a Complete and Total CEASEFIRE... for 12 hours, at which point the War will be considered, ENDED!" Trump wrote on Truth Social. Earlier, Trump had urged Iran to seek peace with Israel, saying he did not expect further retaliation from Tehran after its missile strike on a US base in Qatar. "Congratulations world—it's time for peace," he said, adding that Iran had "gotten it all out of their 'system'" and expressing hope for future "Peace and Harmony in the Region." "Ceasefire news and institutional buying helping stock market to recover yesterday's losses," said Mohammed Sohail, CEO of Topline Securities. The rally came after a steep plunge on Monday, when the KSE-100 Index dropped 3,855.77 points, or 3.21%, to close at 116,167.47. The day's high and low were recorded at 118,798.52 and 115,887.49 points, respectively.

Gaza rescuers say Israeli forces
killed 21 people waiting for aid

Five people were killed and several injured in an Israeli air strike that targeted a house in Gaza City at dawn

GAZA CITY: Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli forces killed 21 people waiting for aid near a distribution site in the centre of the Palestinian territory on Tuesday, the latest deadly incident targeting aid-seekers. Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal told AFP that 21 people were killed and around 150 wounded "as a result of the Israeli occupation forces' targeting of gatherings of citizens waiting for aid... in the central Gaza Strip with bullets and tank shells" in the early hours of Tuesday. AFP has contacted the Israeli military for comment on the incident. Israeli restrictions on media in the Gaza Strip and difficulties in accessing some areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided

by rescuers and authorities in the Palestinian territory. — Bassal added that five people were killed and several injured in an Israeli air strike that targeted a house in Gaza City at dawn. Thousands of Palestinians have gathered daily in the hope of receiving food rations in Gaza, as famine looms across the territory after more than 20 months of war. According to figures issued on Saturday by the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, at least 450 people have been killed and nearly 3,500 injured by Israeli fire while seeking aid since late May. Many of those have been near sites operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, according to rescuers. The privately run foundation's operations in Gaza have been marred by chaotic scenes. — Agencies

Pakistan urges Afghanistan not to
become terrorists' safe haven

Terrorism emanating from Afghanistan remains a serious threat to its neighbours, particularly Pakistan," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in an address

UNITED NATIONS: A senior Pakistani diplomat has told the UN Security Council that the 6,000-strong Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the largest UN-designated terrorist group operating from Afghan soil, posed a direct threat to Pakistan's national security. "Terrorism emanating from Afghanistan remains a serious threat to its neighbours, particularly Pakistan," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in an address to the 15-member Council, pointing out that TTP has safe havens close to the Pakistani border. Speaking in a debate on the situation in Afghanistan, the Pakistani envoy also voiced concern over the potential destabilizing impact of the situation in Iran following unprovoked Israeli attacks. "A refugee exodus into neighbouring countries—including Afghanistan and Pakistan—could pose significant new challenges," he said, adding that it might imperil the already frag-

ile conditions in the war-torn country.. Elaborating on the threat to Pakistan, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar said that terrorist entities—including Al-Qaeda, the TTP, and the Baloch militant groups—continue to operate from ungoverned spaces in Afghanistan. As part of its defensive measures, he said Pakistan has confiscated a significant cache of modern weapons originally left behind by international forces in Afghanistan when they departed after the Taliban captured Kabul four years ago. In April, he said, 54 TTP terrorists attempting to infiltrate Pakistan were neutralized by the Pakistani security forces, an incident underscoring the scale and seriousness of the threat. "We also have credible evidence of collaboration between the TTP and other groups, such as the BLA and its Majeed Brigade, aimed at disrupting strategic infrastructure and economic development projects in Pakistan," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar said. — Agencies

Russian
drone attacks
kill three in
Ukraine

KYIV: Russian drone attacks killed three people in Ukraine's northeastern region of Sumy, including a child, local authorities said on Tuesday. It came a day after Ukraine said Russia carried out dozens of drone and missile strikes on its territory, killing 10 people in the capital Kyiv. Diplomatic efforts to end the three-year war have stalled, with the last direct meeting between Kyiv and Moscow almost three weeks ago and no follow-up talks scheduled. "We have information about three dead. Among them is an eight-year-old boy," said Oleg Grygorov, head of the Sumy region's military administration. The boy's body was pulled from the rubble of a destroyed house, he added. "The strike took the lives of people from different families. They all lived on the same street. They went to sleep in their homes but the Russian drones interrupted their sleep — forever." Russian drone strikes also left five people wounded in Kharkiv, as well as four others in the Dnipropetrovsk region, authorities said on Telegram. — Agencies

Nepra
cuts power
purchase price

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has reduced the national average Power Purchase Price (PPP) to Rs25.98 per unit for the upcoming fiscal year 2025-26. This marks a notable decrease of 3.77%, or Rs1.02 per unit, from the current Rs27 per unit, that is likely to alleviate pressure on electricity prices. According to Nepra's latest determination, the total national Power Purchase Price for FY26 has been set at Rs3.342 trillion. For the ex-Wapda Distribution Companies (XWDiscos), the PPP specifically stands at Rs3.066 trillion, translating to Rs26.34 per unit. The calculation notably excludes K-Electric's share. Of the total projected PPP for XWDiscos, Rs1.125 trillion is allocated to fuel and variable operation and management (O and M) costs, while a hefty Rs1.941 trillion — or 63% — is earmarked for capacity charges, including NTDC, Pak Matari-Lahore Transmission Company (Pvt) Ltd (PMLTC) wheeling costs, and CPPAG's MoF.

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