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Topuria bags first round knockout

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Diplomacy bears fruit

Two fugitives wanted by Pak nabbed in Spain

This development came after Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry's recent visit to Spain where he met his counterpart, Fernando Grande-Marlaska Nawazish Ali, Haroon Iqbal "wanted in high-profile cases of terrorism, murder"

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Spanish authorities have arrested two fugitives wanted by Pakistan in cases related to terrorism, murder, and abduction for ransom following the issuance of Interpol's red notice, interior ministry said on Sunday. The proclaimed offenders will be handed over to Pakistan after formal formalities, the ministry's spokesperson said, adding that one of the accused, Nawazish Ali Hunjra, was wanted in 23 cases of terrorism, murder, abduction for ransom, and others. Furthermore, the second fugitive arrested in Spain was Haroon Iqbal. Iqbal was also wanted by Pakistani authorities in several cases, the statement added. This development came after Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry's recent visit to Spain where he met his counterpart, Fernando Grande-Marlaska. During the visit, Chaudhry sought action on the red notices issued against dozens of suspects. Speaking on the development, Minister Talal Chaudhry thanked the Spanish government and Interior Minister Marlaska for their prompt action and cooperation.

He expressed confidence that this success marks the beginning of a broader crackdown on fugitives who flee Pakistan to avoid legal consequences. "This is a major step forward in our commitment to justice. I am grateful to the Spanish authorities for understanding the gravity of the situation and taking swift action. We hope to see the remaining fugitives arrested and extradited soon," said Chaudhry in a statement. Legal proceedings are now underway to facilitate the extradition of the arrested individuals to Pakistan, where they will face trial under the country's anti-terrorism and criminal laws. Pakistan has long been seeking the arrest and extradition of 38 fugitives from Spain, most of whom are wanted in serious criminal and terrorism-related cases. These individuals had managed to evade justice for years, exploiting legal loopholes and a lack of coordination between international enforcement agencies. The development is being hailed as a milestone in international law enforcement cooperation, and a sign that Pakistan is intensifying efforts to bring back criminals who have found refuge abroad.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets former PML N leader Ch. Nisar Ali Khan, at his residence. – DNA

Iranian army Chief talks to Field Marshal Asim Munir

The two military leaders emphasized strengthening ties between their armed forces

DNA

TEHRAN: The Chief of General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Seyed Abdul Rahim Mousavi, held a telephone conversation with Pakistan's Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, on Sunday to discuss bilateral defense cooperation and regional security. According to Iranian news agency, the two military leaders emphasized strengthening ties between their armed forces and enhancing joint efforts to combat terrorism and ensure stability in the region.

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China 'rolls over' \$3.4bn loans to Pakistan

Foreign loans, particularly from China, vital for stabilising Pakistan's depleted foreign exchange reserves

DNA

BEIJING: China has rolled over \$3.4 billion in loans to Pakistan, which together with other recent commercial and multilateral lending will boost Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves to \$14 billion, a finance ministry source said on Sunday. Beijing rolled over \$2.1 billion, which has been in Pakistan's central bank's reserves for the last three years, and refinanced

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PM Shehbaz launches

'Power Smart App' to curb overbilling, billing transparency

The app enables consumers to take a photograph of their electricity meter on a specified date and upload it to the App. Based on this user-submitted image, monthly electricity bills will be generated

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Power Division has introduced the Power Smart App under the "Apna Meter, Apni Reading" initiative to make electricity consumers directly part of the system and promote transparency in the billing process. The App was formally launched by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday, said the spokesperson of the power division. The app enables consumers to take a photograph of their electricity meter on a specified date and upload it to the App. Based on this user-submitted image, monthly electricity bills will be generated—offering a technological response to long-standing issues such as overbilling, reading

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Shehbaz Sharif woos Ch. Nisar back in PML N

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited senior political leader Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan at his residence on Saturday. During the meeting, the Prime Minister inquired after Chaudhry Nisar's well-being and expressed good wishes for his health. The two leaders also exchanged views on the prevailing national and international political situation.

Continued on Page 06

President issues notification

Justice Sarfraz Dogar IHC senior-most judge

Law Ministry's notification states judges' transfer to IHC was made on "permanent basis"

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: In the latest development in the ongoing legal saga related to the seniority issue and transfer of judges, President Asif Ali Zardari has notified Justice Sarfraz Dogar as the senior-most judge of the Islamabad High Court — who is already serving as the IHC's acting chief justice. The notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, dated June 27, is in line with the Supreme Court's June 19 order wherein a five-member bench had dismissed pleas filed against the transfer of judges from three high

courts to the IHC and termed them as being constitutional while allowing Justice Dogar to continue to work as IHC's acting CJ. The Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar-led bench had announced its verdict in response to petitions filed by five IHC judges, the Karachi Bar Association (KBA), the IHC Bar Association, and others against the transfer of Justice Sarfraz

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Briefs

Crackdown against Swat River side construction

SHAMIM SHAHID

SWAT: The district administration in Swat on Sunday launched a large-scale operation to demolish illegal structures along the Swat River in a bid to restore the river's natural flow. The local administration swung into action following the tragic incident in which 17 people were swept away during a picnic along the Swat River due to a sudden surge in water. The fatalities in the incident on Sunday rose to 12 after the body of a child was recovered from the river in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to Rescue 1122 Swat, the child's body, swept away by floodwaters in the Swat River, was found downstream in another district. Meanwhile, the restaurant owners staged a protest on the Fizatg Bypass Road against the anti-encroachment operation and blocked traffic.

Forces kill two outlaws in Duki Distt

Two security personnel embrace martyrdom in Lakki Marwat blast

DNA

RAWALPINDI: On 28 June 2025, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Duki District of Balochistan, on reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Hindustan. During the conduct of operation, own forces effectively engaged the Indian sponsored terrorists' location, and after an intense fire exchange, two Indian sponsored terrorists were sent to hell, while two terrorists were apprehended. Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the Indian sponsored terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area.

From Proxy to Open War How Israel-Iran's shadow conflict ignited the region

ANALYSIS

ABDUL WAHEEH KHAN

FOR years, Israel and Iran waged a hidden war—a conflict fought through cyberattacks, covert assassinations, and proxy militias across the Middle East. By 2025, that shadow war erupted into direct confrontation. This was no sudden explosion, but the inevitable result of unchecked strategic ambition, critical miscalculations, and diplomatic failure. Both sides overestimated their deterrence capabilities, pushing boundaries until the line between proxy warfare and open conflict vanished entirely. Israel, emboldened by unconditional Western support, escalated extraterritorial strikes—sabotaging nuclear sites, targeting Iranian personnel, and framing its actions as "defensive" while entrenching military dominance. Iran, meanwhile, expanded its proxy networks, leveraging them for influence while evading direct accountability. Its strategy blurred the line between self-defense and destabilization. Gradually, aggression intensified. Israel expanded operations beyond its borders; Iran shifted from covert deterrence to overt retaliation, launching drone strikes and maritime attacks. With diplomacy absent, tit-for-

tat reprisals spiraled into all-out war—likely beyond either side's original intent. Contrary to simplistic narratives, neither was purely reactive. Israel deliberately escalated, confident it could control the fallout—a fatal misjudgment. The region, already fragile from shifting U.S. priorities, Arab-Israeli normalization, and Iran's expanding influence, was pushed to the brink. When rockets struck Tel Aviv, Israel responded with overwhelming force—unleashing its full arsenal on Gaza, one of the world's most densely populated and impoverished territories. Entire neighborhoods were erased. Infrastructure collapsed. Humanitarian corridors were blocked. Tens of thousands perished—mostly women and children—buried under rubble or killed in strikes on homes, shelters, and hospitals. Beirut, too, faced Israeli airstrikes, but Gaza bore the weight of total war. The asymmetry was undeniable: Israel endured disruption; Gaza faced annihilation. Civilians—trapped, besieged, with nowhere to flee—became the primary casualties. The distinction between battlefield and home vanished. As borders dissolved and proxy fronts collapsed, the region descended into chaos. Palestinians suffered most, but Lebanese, Syrians, and Israelis were also swept into the storm.

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Apex court verdict: democracy in the dock

OPINION

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



THE recent Supreme Court decision regarding the distribution of reserved seats in the National Assembly has sent shockwaves across Pakistan's political spectrum. By denying Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) its share of reserved seats and directing that these be distributed among other political parties, the apex court verdict appears to have shifted the balance of parliamentary power. With this verdict, the ruling coalition—comprising PML-N, PPP, and allied parties—is poised to gain a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. This supermajority, made possible not by electoral strength but by judicial endorsement, has been rightly labelled by many as an undemocratic, even unjust, outcome. Whether or not PTI fulfilled the legal prerequisites to claim these seats is beside the point; what matters is that the ruling parties, who themselves did not contest these seats, are now reaping the political dividends.

This manufactured majority is not a reflection of the people's mandate—it is a result of 'judicial engineering', and it will have long-lasting consequences for Pakistan's political landscape. This decision is a glaring example of how state institutions, instead of playing a neutral role, have once again appeared to side with the powers that be. In this case, the ruling elite and the establishment seem to be the ultimate beneficiaries, while democracy lies 'bruised and battered'. Indeed, Pakistan has never enjoyed a fully functional democratic system, but the small semblance of representative governance that did exist has now been severely undermined. Let us be candid. The PTI government during its tenure failed on multiple fronts. Governance was chaotic, corruption reached record levels, and institutional dysfunction grew exponentially. PTI failed to live up to its lofty promises and instead indulged in political vendettas, poor policymaking, and an overall disregard for consensus-building. But does that justify the unprecedented crackdown on the party after its fallout with the establishment? Absolutely not. The way PTI has been marginalized—its leaders jailed, its members coerced into disassociating from the party, and now, its rightful political space usurped—is not just troubling; it is dangerous. This appears to be a punishment not for incompetence, but for disobedience. PTI's

real crime was refusing to toe the line, to continue playing puppet. The current ruling alliance appears powerful on the surface. With the judiciary's decision gifting them enhanced parliamentary strength, they now wield near-absolute authority. But this power is conditional, fragile, and temporary. History tells us that the moment this "same page" narrative with the establishment fades, the very powers that elevated them will become their undoing. We have seen this cycle repeat with the PML-N, PPP, and now PTI. The question is: for how long will this vicious cycle continue? This institutionalized power game is crippling the country. It has distorted the foundations of governance, hollowed out democratic institutions, and left the common citizen disillusioned and disenfranchised. With each passing day, poverty grows, corruption festers, and the gap between the rulers and the ruled widens. The state appears more interested in maintaining its internal power equilibrium than addressing the needs of its people. It is a shameful reality that we continue to celebrate IMF bailouts as achievements, rather than confronting the root causes of our economic dependence. The ruling elite seems disconnected from the ground realities. Inflation is choking the masses, public services are deteriorating, and lawlessness is

spreading. Yet, the corridors of power remain preoccupied with political maneuvering, rather than public welfare. Governance has become a sideshow to the main drama of power consolidation and political survival. This Supreme Court verdict has not just handed over a few parliamentary seats—it has fundamentally altered the political equation of the country. It has given legitimacy to a distorted electoral outcome and has validated the exclusion of one of the largest political parties from the democratic process. The consequences of this will be far-reaching. It may create a short-term political stability for the ruling alliance, but it will do so at the cost of long-term national cohesion and democratic development. Pakistan's democratic journey has always been fraught with interruptions, but never before has the erosion been so systemic, so institutional, and so unapologetic. If the political class does not unite to resist this ongoing decay, the very idea of representative democracy will be rendered meaningless. What is needed now is not just an outcry from civil society and political commentators, but a serious introspection by all stakeholders—including the judiciary and the establishment—on the damage being done to the constitutional order of the country. It is time to ask ourselves: What kind of Pakistan are we building? One where

power is determined not by the ballot but by boardroom deals? One where judicial decisions tilt political fortunes? One where parties that challenge the status quo are decimated through non-political means? If this trajectory continues, then we are hurtling toward authoritarianism, whether civil or military, masked in democratic attire. There is no doubt that PTI made grave mistakes during its tenure. It alienated allies, mishandled the economy, and eroded institutional trust. But political mistakes should be corrected through the democratic process—not by sidelining an entire party through legal, administrative, and coercive tools. Democracy demands inclusion, competition, and accountability. What we are witnessing is exclusion, manipulation, and repression. In conclusion, the Supreme Court decision on reserved seats may have resolved a legal question, but it has opened a moral and political wound. The judiciary may have thought it was interpreting the constitution, but in doing so, it has added fuel to the fire of political polarization. This verdict, rather than being a triumph of law, will be remembered as a setback for democratic ideals. The road ahead for Pakistan appears even more uncertain, and unless corrective steps are taken soon, the dream of a democratic, prosperous Pakistan will remain elusive.

Another child's body of Swat drowning incident recovered

PESHAWAR: The body of another child who was swept away in the Swat flash flood has been recovered from Charsadda, raising the total death toll to 14 with one child still missing. According to rescue sources on Sunday, the body was identified as 11-year-old Daniyal from Mardan, who had been missing since the incident. Due to the condition of the body, identification was initially difficult, but family members later confirmed it after being notified by Swat authorities. Rescue 1122's water rescue teams, under the supervision of the District Emergency Officer of Swat, continue their search operations for the remaining missing child, who is reportedly from Sialkot. Daniyal's funeral prayer was held at 3:00 PM in Nawan Kali.—APP

21 dead, 10 injured in KP in rains, floods incidents so far

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released a report detailing the human and financial losses in the province caused by rains, floods/flash floods, and landslides. According to the report, since June 27 till today, various incidents caused by rains, strong winds, flash floods, and landslides have resulted in the deaths of 21 people and injuries to 10 others in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Among the deceased are 7 men, 5 women, and 9 children. The injured include 6 men, 3 women, and 1 child. The report states that a total of 57 houses were damaged due to the rains. As many as 51 were partially damaged, while 6 were completely destroyed. These incidents occurred across multiple districts, including Swat, Abbottabad, Lower Chitral, Buner, Swabi, Kurram, Charsadda, Malakand, Shangla, Lower Dir, and Torgar. Swat was reported as the most affected district, with 14 deaths and 6 injuries. PDMA has directed the concerned district administrations to immediately provide assistance to the affected families and ensure the best medical treatment for the injured.—APP

No words can describe Swat tragedy: Asif

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that there are no words to describe the Swat tragedy. He expressed these views while talking to the media after offering condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the Swat tragedy, here in Daska today. He said that children drowned in front of their mother. "I have no words to talk about this tragedy, but there is no doubt that this is a breakdown of rescue and this is not the first incident, but before this, such incidents of failure of rescuers have happened there too. The rescuers came there, but they came empty-handed and then left because they did not have any equipment," he added. The victims say that the officers against whom action had been taken should be recalled. "We will not take any action against them. All these people should be reinstated to their jobs.—APP

AG accuses PIA Aviation medical safety standards with non-doctor in key role

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: In a startling revelation, the Auditor General of Pakistan has raised serious concerns over Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) appointment of a senior cargo official to lead its Medical Services Department—bypassing long-standing requirements for medical qualifications and aviation health expertise. According to the official audit report for the period 2022–2024, PIA appointed Mr. Tariq Hussain Khan, formerly General Manager (GM) Cargo, won

the role of GM Medical Services. The position was historically held by a Chief Medical Officer (CMO)—a role requiring a specialized degree in Aviation Medicine and substantial clinical experience. The audit highlights that PIA revised the eligibility criteria for this medically critical role in 2017, removing the condition for a medical degree and instead allowing candidates with a master's or MBA to qualify. This change, the report argues, has diluted the medical integrity of the position and poses a risk to both passengers

and crew. "The decision to appoint a non-medical professional to a post that directly affects health certification, crew medical monitoring, and aviation safety is unjustified," the report stated. The auditors emphasized that such a move compromises international aviation health compliance and liaison with airport and emergency medical facilities. In response, the Auditor General has issued the following recommendations: Restore the original post of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Realign the job description

with international aviation medical standards Re-evaluate Mr. Tariq Hussain's appointment based on relevant medical expertise. Ensure appointment of a qualified senior medical professional without delay PIA Management Silent over the irregularity was officially communicated to PIA management on March 11, 2025. However, no formal response has been received. The audit warns that continued negligence in addressing the issue could damage PIA's operational safety record and credibility at the international level. When con-

tacted, PIA spokesperson Mr. Abdullah Khan told this scribe that "There is no new appointment as such safety or harm passengers technically. The role is administrative only, and Mr. Tariq Hussain will deal solely with internal administrative affairs. He is already serving within the organization." However, the Auditor General's report disputes this explanation, arguing that the role of GM Medical Services directly oversees health-related matters and cannot be reduced to administrative coordination alone.

Decoding Pakistan's Budget

PIDE seminar highlights progress while calling for sharper reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted a high-profile seminar titled "Budget 2025–26: A Blueprint of the Nation's Ambition" to unpack the federal budget's promise, progress, and gaps. The seminar brought together policy experts, economists, and business leaders to evaluate whether the budget aligns with Pakistan's aspirations for inclusive growth, resilience, and a knowledge-driven economy. Applauding Stabilization, Questioning Vision Opening the discussion, Dr. Mahmood Khalid (PIDE) acknowledged the government's efforts to stabilize the macroeconomic environment, control deficits, and improve investment confidence amidst global uncertainty. However, he questioned whether the budget represents a transformative vision or remains an accounting exercise. Dr. Khalid stressed that strategic coherence, fiscal credibility, and transparency are essential to convert the macroeconomic stability into sustained development gains. Revenue Strategy Needs Broadening, Not Burdening Dr. Ali Salman (PRIME Institute) appreciated the government's realistic revenue targets but noted that relying heavily on raising existing tax rates burdens low- and middle-income households while discouraging business expansion. He recommended: • Broad-based tax reforms targeting under-taxated sectors, • Decentralization of fiscal authority to provinces and local governments, • Performance-linked



budget allocations, • Simplified and predictable tax policy to reduce compliance burdens. Toward a Green, Digital Economy Safdar Sohail (SPRC) highlighted renewed attention to economic recovery but found the budget lacking in policy clarity for green growth and technology integration. He emphasized: the economy through green and circular economy policies, Leveraging AI and digitalization for productivity gains, Expanding regional trade to diversify growth, Using the budget as a policy delivery tool for climate, competition, and service sector reforms. IMF Conditions:

Navigating Constraints with Coordination Dr. Hafsa Hina (PIDE) noted that while IMF-backed stabilization has created fiscal discipline, it has constrained long-term development planning. She warned of potential inflation due to global volatility, carbon taxation, and energy price adjustments but remained optimistic if macroeconomic and structural policies are well-coordinated. Business Climate Requires Consistency Mr. Qazi (ICMA Pakistan) emphasized the need for predictable and consistent policies to encourage private investment. Abrupt meas-

ures like e-invoicing, without adequate preparation, add uncertainty and costs. He advocated: Linking tax policy with economic growth objectives, not just revenue targets, Empowering local governments for service delivery, Gender- and wealth-responsive budgeting. Strengthening institutional accountability to build trust. Creating a Free, Competitive Market Environment Representing the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Ramzan highlighted that high corporate and sales tax rates, alongside regulatory unpredictability, hinder investment and job crea-

tion. He urged: Gradual, targeted reforms to expand the tax base through technology, Policy stability to reduce the cost of doing business, A freer, more competitive environment to foster entrepreneurship and exports. Key Takeaways: From Stability to Sustained Reform The seminar acknowledged the government's commitment to macroeconomic stabilization and prudent fiscal management but emphasized that stability is a stepping stone, not the final goal. Pakistan needs to leverage this stability to drive structural reforms and a clear development vision.

CM orders to provide e-buses to South Punjab

LAHORE :Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has issued clear instructions to prioritize the provision of electric buses to the districts of South Punjab, with a special focus on reaching remote and underdeveloped areas. Chairing a meeting to review the Transport Department's progress, here on the other day, she reiterated her commitment to ensuring equitable development across all regions of the province. During the briefing, the Transport Department presented updates on ongoing and upcoming projects, particularly the electric bus initiative. The CM stressed the need to break the long-standing pattern of introducing modern facilities only in major urban centers. She said that the government's aim is to elevate rural areas to the same standard as big cities, ensuring equal access to modern transport services for all. In the first phase, 240 electric buses will be distributed to 24 underdeveloped districts as a matter of priority. Between August and October, an additional 500 e-buses will be provided to Lahore, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur, Multan, and Rawalpindi. Furthermore, 600 more e-buses are scheduled to arrive in Punjab between November and December. Under the Punjab Clean Air Program, 400 electric buses will also be deployed in Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, and Kasur to promote environmentally friendly transportation.—APP

PBM chief vows to empower underprivileged

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Managing Director (MD) Senator Capt (R) Shaheen Khalid Butt reaffirmed the institution's resolve to combat poverty through inclusive policies, emphasizing targeted efforts in education, healthcare and economic empowerment to uplift marginalized communities nationwide. Talking to APP, he reiterated the institution's transformative role in combating poverty and restoring human dignity across the country. Since its inception in 1991—under the vision of then-Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and inspired by Mian Muhammad Sharif—PBM has grown into a

robust welfare institution, extending its reach to all 166 districts of Pakistan. The MD highlighted that PBM's child welfare efforts include operating 160 Child Labor Rehabilitation Schools and 41 Pakistan Sweet Homes. These facilities not only provide education and emotional support but also offer children the opportunity to reclaim their childhood in safe, nurturing environments. The Orphan and Widow Support Program ensures monthly stipends to families of school-going orphans, while free cochlear implant surgeries help children with hearing impairments rediscover the world around them. To uplift women economically and socially,

PBM runs 165 Women Empowerment Centers across the country, providing skill-based vocational training aimed at enabling financial independence. In the health sector, PBM supports critical medical treatments for impoverished patients and offers rehabilitation initiatives for persons with disabilities. For youth advancement, scholarships and sponsorships are provided to deserving students, helping bridge financial barriers to education and technical training. In addition to this, mobile food vans distribute hot meals to the destitute and homeless, while shelters offer safety and support to those in dire circumstances.—APP

Operation against encroachment alongside River Swat started

PESHAWAR: On the instructions of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, an indiscriminate operation has been launched against encroachments along the Swat River. According to the Chief Minister's spokesperson, Faraz Ahmad Mughal, the district administration, police and relevant departments are jointly participating in the operation. No leniency will be shown during the operation, and the actions against encroachments will be completed swiftly, he said. The spokesperson stated that illegal mining along the river has been completely halted, and strict legal action will be taken against all those responsible.—APP

NDMA warns of urban, flash floods

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Sunday urged precautionary measures against potential flash floods in mountainous regions and urban flooding in major cities, from June 29, to July 05, 2025, advising authorities to remain vigilant and the public to follow official guidance. National Emergency Operation Center (NEOC) of NDMA has issued multiple impact-based weather alerts in view of expected widespread rain-wind/thundershowers, accompanied by isolated heavy falls, across various regions of Pakistan from Sunday to Saturday next. Pakistan food delivery services According to NEOC anticipated significant rainfall activity in Kashmir, Northeast Punjab, Potohar region, Islamabad and Upper and Central parts of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa between June 29 to July 03. This may result in urban flooding in low-lying areas of Central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the cities of Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, and Kohat. In the Potohar region, including Attock, Chakwal, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad, there is a high likelihood of urban flooding, especially during the nighttime hours from 9:00 PM to 4:00 AM on June 29. Rain emergencies may also occur in the low-elevation areas of North Eastern Punjab, covering Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Narowal, and Lahore. Similarly, areas within Faisalabad and Sargodha Divisions may experience significant rainfall, increasing the risk of localized flooding and rain-related emergencies.

NEOC has also cautioned against possible flash flooding in the northern parts including Hazara and Malakand Divisions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, lower parts of Jhelum and Poonch Valleys in AJK, and the Pir Panjal range in northeastern Punjab. Low-level flooding is anticipated in River Kabul at Nowshera and its tributaries, along with medium flows in Swat River. Similar low-level flows are expected downstream of Tarbela Dam and in the Chenab River at Khanki and Qadirabad. Additionally, flash floods are likely in tributaries and streams of River Chitral and Hunza, such as Kunjrab, Ghujerab, Kilik, Chapursan, and Shimshal Braldu Rivers. These conditions could lead to disruption of transportation in hilly and mountainous regions, landslides.—DNA



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Briefs

NDMA intensifies awareness campaigns

ISLAMABAD: In light of ongoing rain-related risks, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has urged all local and provincial authorities to remain on high alert and has also activated their disaster response mechanisms to issue warnings in regional languages. The NDMA management was recommending that people in at-risk zones should closely follow official guidance and avoid visiting flood-affected areas, and prepare emergency essentials. In a special message on a local news channel, Syed Muhammad Tayyab Shah, GM Technical (NDMA), stated that the NDMA is intensifying its awareness campaigns while coordinating closely with provincial authorities to ensure a unified and swift response to potential disasters. By aligning efforts across regions, the department aims to enhance community preparedness, improve communication and minimize the impact of emergencies through timely and effective action. He added that the department is maintaining its vigilance in vulnerable areas and has activated emergency response measures. During flood alerts, residents should move valuables and important documents to higher ground and avoid walking or driving through flooded areas, he said. It is also important for families to have a clear evacuation plan and stay connected with local authorities for the latest updates and instructions, he stressed. Furthermore, the tourists and residents were cautioned by the NDMA to avoid areas prone to flooding and landslides, such as riverbanks and steep hillsides, especially where structures appear unstable, to reduce the risk of injury or accidents.—APP

Motorway police issue safety advisory for highway travelers

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has issued a travel advisory in view of ongoing rainfall across the country. The advisory urges travelers to take necessary precautions as wet and slippery roads significantly increase the risk of accidents. Therefore, the drivers were advised to reduce vehicle speed, maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead, ensure headlights and wipers are in proper working condition, avoid sudden braking, avoid using a mobile phone while driving under any circumstances, and keep their full attention on driving. Drivers, particularly tourists heading to hilly areas, were strongly urged to drive with extra caution. During travel, for any assistance, they can contact the NHMP Helpline 130. "Your safety and a secure journey are our top priority.—APP

ISSI concludes partnership MoU with Russia's premier think-tank

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, and Dr. Feodor Voitlovsky, Director of IMEMO-RAS, signed for their respective sides

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to institutionalise and deepen academic collaboration. IMEMO is among Russia's premier think-tanks. The MoU was signed on the side-lines of the prestigious Primakov Readings 2025, an international forum that brings together top policymakers, diplomats, and scholars to deliberate on pressing global and regional issues. The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials and experts from both sides. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, and Dr. Feodor Voitlovsky, Director of IMEMO-RAS, signed for their respective sides. The MoU establishes a framework for long-term collaboration in areas such as joint



research, policy dialogue, academic exchanges, co-publications, and participation in seminars and conferences on regional and global strategic issues of

mutual interest. Expressing his views, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored the significance of enhanced academic and intellectual engagement between Pakistan and Russia, particularly at a time of profound transformations in the global order. He noted that this MoU on forgoing a close partnership would serve as a foundation for sustained cooperation and knowledge-sharing between the two institutions. Dr. Feodor Voitlovsky, in his remarks, welcomed the partnership and expressed IMEMO's commitment to expanding research collaboration with ISSI on a wide range of topics. The ISSI-IMEMO partnership marks an important step in the growing scholarly linkages between Pakistan and Russia and is expected to contribute meaningfully to bilateral understanding and regional dialogue through high-quality research and exchanges. It is also expected to reinforce the positive trajectory of Pakistan-Russia relations, which has been a high priority for both sides in recent years.

Siraj insists on cordial ties between Pak Afghanistan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Former Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, ex-Senator, and former Senior Provincial Minister Siraj ul Haq has said that the Afghan nation has proven its resilience by defeating British imperialism in 1919, Soviet imperialism in 1979, and NATO forces led by the U.S. in 2001, asserting that this region cannot be subjugated. He emphasized that mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan must end, and both countries should become partners in development, trade, education, and health. He made these remarks as the chief guest at a seminar titled "New Dimensions of Pak-Afghan Relations" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) Peshawar. Siraj ul Haq proposed the revival and extension of the Peshawar-Torkham railway line

into Afghanistan, issuance of special identity cards for Afghans, and permission for documented citizens of both countries to move freely across borders. He further stated that Pakistan and Afghanistan are two independent and sovereign neighboring nations deeply linked through religion, culture, language, and geography. Strengthening their friendship is not only in their mutual interest but also crucial for regional development. He added that history bears witness to Pakistan's consistent support for Afghans in difficult times, and stability in Afghanistan equally benefits Pakistan.

Siraj ul Haq asserted that the Pak-Afghan border is a recognized reality and any attempts to create controversy around it should not be supported. He termed the concept of "Pashtunistan" a dead issue and warned that any attempt

to revive it would fail. He also claimed that Afghans defeated American imperialism, Pakistan countered the vision of a united India, and Iran resisted the idea of Greater Israel—together asserting genuine leadership of the Islamic world. He proposed that Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey should form a united front to lead the Muslim world and reshape the future of the region. Afghan Consul General Hafiz Mohibullah, in his address, highlighted that the first bond between Afghanistan and Pakistan is their shared Islamic faith. He expressed gratitude to the Pakistani people for their sacrifices and lamented that the U.S., during its 20-year occupation, did not build hospitals or improve Afghanistan's education and health sectors. He emphasized that, alongside government efforts, political leaders, scholars, traders,

intellectuals, journalists, athletes, poets, writers, and artists from both countries must play a role in enhancing mutual understanding through direct engagement. Deputy Chairman of the Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce, Zia ul Haq Sarhadi, said bilateral trade, once at \$2.5 billion, had plunged to \$800 million due to recent tensions but is now gradually recovering. He urged improvements in transit trade, visa policy, and border management to ease difficulties faced by traders and transporters. Senior journalist and analyst Mehmood Jan Babar and IRS Chairman Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Khalil agreed that both countries must not only strengthen diplomatic ties but also collaborate in education, healthcare, and cultural exchange to ensure lasting peace and development in the region.

CDA seals illegal construction sites in Islamabad's Zone-V

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In pursuance of Islamabad Building Control Regulations-2020 (as amended 2023) and ongoing directives of the Federal Minister for Interior and Norcotics and Chairman, CDA, to eliminate unauthorized construction activities across Islamabad, the Directorate General of Building & Housing Control (B&HC) Capital Development Authority (CDA) carried out a major sealing operation in Zone-V of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) today. The operation was conducted by B & HC in collaboration with Enforcement, ICT administration and Police. As part of the operation: • Wasna Palace Marquee, lo-

cated in Zone-V, was sealed for illegal operation without approval of building plans and violation of building regulations. 14 unapproved and illegal commercial structures under construction in Jinnah Gardens Society (FECHS), particularly in Touseef Commercial and Shaheen Commercial Blocks, were sealed. 02 additional under-construction buildings along Japan Road in Mouza Gagri were also sealed for non-compliance with applicable bylaws. In addition, 03 Stop Work and Regularization Notices were served to violators in the same vicinity along Japan Road. These structures were found to be in violation of regulations due to non-submission of building plans, unauthorized commer-

cial activity, and absence of payment of mandatory fees as well as penalties. The B&HC teams, under security cover from ICT Police and Magisterial cover from Magistrate ICT, ensured lawful enforcement, affixed official sealing and warning notices, and cordoned off active construction sites. The Authority reiterates its zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of unauthorized construction. It also urges the general public, builders, and developers to refrain from initiating construction without obtaining requisite approvals. All stakeholders are advised to verify the approval status of properties prior to making any purchase or investment decisions.

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.—APP

Uncompromising EV transport, motorbike law

ISLAMABAD: Director General of the Punjab Road Safety Authority Manzar Javed Ali said on Sunday that the Punjab Chief Minister is actively taking steps to improve enforcement, raise awareness, and encourage the adoption of electric vehicles in a bid to reduce road accidents, particularly those caused by motorbikes, which account for 70% of fatalities. In a recent conversation with PTV News, DG Manzar Javed Ali emphasized that the Punjab Chief Minister's uncompromising enforcement of EV transport policies and stricter motorbike laws is crucial to ending the alarming rate of road fatalities across the province. He stressed that the CM is committed to cracking down on violations, aiming to improve road safety and reduce the growing number of accidents. The DG highlighted that a significant portion of these fatalities is caused by motorbikes, making it a key focus of the provincial government's efforts. Javed Ali further revealed that out of the 24 million vehicles registered in Punjab, over 20 million are motorbikes, with a concerning 46% of riders lacking proper licenses. This lack of regulation contributes to the rising number of accidents, prompting the CM's strict enforcement measures. The crackdown on unlicensed riders and the promotion of electric vehicles are part of a comprehensive strategy to address road safety issues and reduce the number of deaths on Punjab's roads. In response to a question, DG Manzar Javed Ali stated that underage motorbikers will be dealt with an iron hand, and the CM has ordered full action against their parents for allowing illegal riding. To another question, DG Manzar Javed Ali disclosed that the CM is introducing a new project to deploy electric buses and scooters across Punjab, aiming to reduce reliance on motorbikes, not only in urban areas but also in rural regions. He said that, in collaboration with 1122, the Road Safety Authority has established a data center and is actively enforcing laws for motorbikers to improve road safety across the province. He also mentioned promoting cycling habits among youngsters, encouraging them to adopt healthier and safer modes of transport, which could help reduce the reliance on motorbikes and improve overall road safety.

MNA Bhandara welcomes federal budget's approval

ISLAMABAD: "I congratulate the Prime Minister and the government on the approval of a balanced and realistic federal budget

for 2025-26. At a time of economic strain, maintaining targeted relief for the poor — through BISP, food security, and agricultural support — while scaling back blanket subsidies is a responsible move. The increase in government employees' salaries is a welcome step for salaried households, and the enhanced defense allocation, in light of recent tensions with India, rightly reinforces our national security priorities. This budget reflects both empathy and resolve."



The Five Pullers of Propaganda: A strategic communication perspective

IMRAN GHAZNAVI



WITHIN the confines of strategic communication war rooms, where perception is often a more powerful currency than policy, a fundamental reality is acknowledged by all practitioners: propaganda is no longer a tool of the past. It is alive, sophisticated, and embedded in every platform where public opinion takes shape. Today, the battle for truth and trust is waged not in newspaper columns or public squares but across screens, on social media, through digital influencers, and

often, via invisible actors with precise agendas. At the heart of these operations lie five powerful psychological levers known as the 'pullers of propaganda': Emotion, Identity, Repetition, Simplicity, and Authority. These pullers, drawn from historical precedents but perfected in the digital age, are strategically employed to engineer consent, incite division, and delegitimize institutions. As a strategic communication specialist observing the trends across South Asia and beyond, I have seen these pullers weaponized with chilling effectiveness, particularly in disinformation campaigns targeting state institutions and the establishment of Pakistan. 1. Emotion: The Raw Nerve Emotion is the most direct pathway to influence. Modern propaganda does not begin with facts; it begins with feelings. Whether it's fear, anger, hope, or hatred, emotional appeals override critical thinking. Campaigns that seek to undermine trust in institutions often do so by fueling outrage, highlighting alleged betrayals, injustices, or exis-

tential threats. One need only look at the rise of virally circulated, emotionally charged content which is often misleading or fabricated, to understand how emotion becomes the ignition switch for widespread misinformation. 2. Identity: Us vs. Them Propaganda flourishes when it exploits identity. By emphasizing ethnic, political, or ideological divisions, it cultivates a landscape where polarization is not just accepted but encouraged. Messages are tailored to specific groups, reinforcing internal cohesion while demonizing the perceived 'other.' In Pakistan, identity-based narratives are regularly manipulated to provoke unrest or disillusionment among citizens. These are not organic expressions of sentiment but manufactured campaigns that feed off identity fault lines. 3. Repetition: The Echo Effect What is repeated becomes familiar, and what is familiar is often accepted as truth. That is the logic behind the third puller repetition. Digital platforms enable coordinated repetition at scale.

A malicious claim, once posted, is echoed by bots, influencers, and fake accounts until it appears omnipresent. Repeated disinformation targeting the judiciary, military, and civil bureaucracy of Pakistan has shown how falsehoods can begin to shape perception, especially when fact-checking mechanisms are weak or slow. 4. Simplicity: Flattening Complexity The world is complicated, but propaganda is not. It thrives on simplicity, boiling down complex issues into digestible slogans or catchphrases. This is why nuanced discussions often fail to gain traction in the digital space. During recent crises, false narratives were spread using short, memorable phrases that lacked any factual foundation but succeeded in dominating public discourse. Simplicity, though seductive, is often the enemy of truth. 5. Authority: The Trusted Voice Finally, the pull of authority remains a potent force. When a message is delivered by someone perceived as credible, a celebrity, influencer, or even

an impersonated figure via deepfake technology. It gains immediate legitimacy. The most concerning evolution in this domain has been the use of deepfakes and AI-generated content, impersonating national figures and officials to mislead the public. Combined with malicious social media campaigns, this tactic seeks to erode trust in leadership and fuel societal confusion. The Consequence The strategic use of these five pullers has created an environment where truth competes with falsehood not on evidence, but on engagement. The more sensational, the more it spreads. The more it spreads, the more it is believed. Pakistan, like many nations, has faced sustained digital attacks aimed at undermining its institutions. These campaigns, often orchestrated from abroad or by vested domestic actors, exploit vulnerabilities in digital literacy and platform governance. Deepfakes, fabricated videos, and malicious hashtags are deployed with the intent to erode public confidence.

But these tactics can be countered. The antidote begins with awareness. Strategic communication must pivot toward proactive engagement, using transparency, credible voices, and verified content to inoculate audiences against manipulation. Public media literacy campaigns, timely rebuttals, and coordinated messaging by state institutions are essential. In the face of weaponized information, silence is not neutrality, it is surrender. We must arm our citizens with critical thinking, invest in credible media, and ensure that technology serves truth rather than distortion. Only then can we brush off the malign influence of propaganda and stand firm in defense of institutional integrity and national cohesion. Imran Ghaznavi is a reputation management & strategic communication specialist, public servant, author, and humanist. His recent work explores media manipulation, crisis communication and reputation management in the digital age.

—The writer is can be reached at ighaznavi@gmail.

Naqvi inspects NADRA center, citizens praise improved ID services

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to the 24/7 NADRA Mega Center located in Blue Area here Saturday and reviewed the facilities being provided to citizens at the center. During his visit, the interior minister interacted with citizens who had come to the Center for the processing of their CNICs and other documents. He inquired about the time it takes for the services being provided at the center. The citizens expressed satisfaction with the facilities available at the Mega Center, stating, "We no longer have to wait for long; our turn comes quickly now." They thanked Mohsin Naqvi, saying, "The staff is also very cooperative and conditions have significantly improved since you have started taking personal interest in the matter."

The interior minister appreciated the shift in charge and staff of the NADRA Mega Center and encouraged them to work with even more dedication. He also lauded the performance of NADRA Chairman Lt. General Munir Afzar and his team. He visited the waiting area and various counters, personally speaking to citizens and listening to their concerns. He also issued on the spot instructions to resolve issues related to CNICs of the citizens. The federal minister also inspected the modern self-service machine, entered a CNIC number, and used fingerprint verification to review the automated system. He remarked, "It is heartening to see that citizens no longer face delays here. The system operating without queues is commendable." He added that the government would continue to take steps to create ease for citizens at every level.—DNA

Experts warned tourists to avoid northern areas trips

ISLAMABAD: As the monsoon season approaches, experts are cautioning tourists to exercise extreme caution when planning trips to Pakistan's northern areas. The region's picturesque landscapes and scenic beauty are expected to be shrouded in heavy rainfall, landslides and flash floods, posing significant risks to travelers.

The northern areas, known for their breathtaking scenery and adventure opportunities, are prone to natural disasters during the monsoon season. Heavy rainfall can lead to landslides, flash floods, and disruptions to transportation networks, putting tourists' lives at risk. Dr. Sadique Ali, a weather expert advise tourists to postpone their trips to the northern areas during the monsoon season saying that "We strongly advise tourists to postpone their trips to the northern areas during the monsoon season as the risks associated with traveling during this time far outweigh the benefits. Landslides and flash floods can occur without warning, and tourists may find themselves stranded or worse." He emphasized that by avoiding travel to the northern areas during the monsoon season, tourists can minimize their risk of being affected by landslides and flash floods. Another health expert Muhammad Nazeer said who still plan to visit the northern areas during the monsoon season should take necessary precautions to ensure their safety. "Tourists should stay informed about weather conditions, travel with guides who are familiar with the terrain, and be prepared for unexpected situations", he stated. He added that it is also essential to have a contingency plan in place in case of emergencies. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has also issued warnings for tourists and locals alike, advising them to take necessary precautions and stay informed about weather conditions. According to the NDMA, the northern areas are expected to experience heavy rainfall throughout the monsoon season, which typically lasts from July to September.—APP

The Swat River tragedy – a wake-up call

THE tragic incident in Swat, where 15 people, including 13 members of a single family, lost their lives after being swept away by a sudden surge in the river, is a heart-wrenching reminder of systemic failures in governance, disaster preparedness, and public safety. The victims, standing in the middle of the river to enjoy the water, were caught off guard by a powerful wave, leaving them helpless against the raging currents. Bystanders watched in horror but were unable to intervene, and the authorities failed to mount an effective rescue operation. This catastrophe raises serious questions about the role of the government, the efficiency of disaster management institutions, and the irresponsible politicization of human suffering.

The first and most painful reality is that this tragedy could have been avoided. Rivers, especially in mountainous regions, are unpredictable. A calm waterway can turn deadly within seconds due to upstream rainfall or dam releases. The family's decision to stand in the middle of the river was a grave misjudgment, but the question remains: where were the warning signs, the public awareness campaigns, or the enforcement of safety measures? In developed countries, dangerous water bodies are marked with clear warnings, and authorities actively prevent people from venturing into hazardous zones. In Pakistan, such precautions are either absent or ignored.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government's response to the incident has been shockingly inadequate. Beyond the symbolic removal of a deputy commissioner, there has been no substantial action—no policy review, no safety reforms, and no accountability for the broader administrative lapses. The KP government, like many others in Pakistan, is mired in corruption and inefficiency, with little focus on actual governance. Instead of ensuring public safety, it has allowed negligence to persist, leading to avoidable deaths.

The Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) also failed miserably. The very purpose of such an institution is to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to disasters. Yet, in this case, there was no early warning system, no rapid response team, and no visible effort to prevent such incidents. If the NDMA cannot fulfill its basic mandate, it raises the question: why does it exist at all? The institution

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-8488394 / 051-2261960

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



must either be overhauled with competent leadership and resources or disbanded to save taxpayers' money.

What makes this tragedy even more disgraceful is the political opportunism that followed. Opposition parties, instead of presenting constructive solutions or holding the KP government accountable on merit, resorted to cheap point-scoring. None of them have explained what measures they would have taken to prevent such an incident in their own provinces. The victims were not just statistics—they were Pakistani citizens whose lives were cut short due to collective negligence. Exploiting their deaths for political gains is morally reprehensible.

The Swat tragedy is not an isolated incident but a symptom of Pakistan's chronic governance crisis. From poor urban planning to inadequate disaster preparedness, the state has repeatedly failed its citizens. Floods, heatwaves, and building collapses claim lives every year, yet no long-term solutions are implemented. The lack of enforcement, corruption, and bureaucratic apathy ensure that such tragedies will keep recurring.

To prevent future disasters, the following steps must be taken immediately:

- 1: Strict Enforcement of Safety Measures – Dangerous rivers and tourist spots must have clear warnings, barriers, and patrols to prevent people from entering hazardous areas.
- 2: Revamping Disaster Management Authorities – The NDMA and provincial disaster management agencies must be restructured with professional leadership, proper funding, and real operational capacity.
- 3: Public Awareness Campaigns – Citizens must be educated about the risks of natural water bodies, especially in mountainous and flood-prone regions.
- 4: Political Responsibility Over Point-Scoring – Leaders must prioritize governance over blame games. Constructive criticism is necessary, but exploiting tragedies for political mileage is unacceptable.
- 5: Judicial Inquiry and Accountability – An independent judicial inquiry should investigate the lapses in this incident and hold responsible officials accountable, not just with suspensions but with legal consequences.

The Swat River tragedy is a painful reminder of how negligence, poor governance, and institutional failures cost lives. The victims deserved better—better safety measures, better emergency response, and a government that prioritizes their welfare over political squabbles. If Pakistan is to avoid such disasters in the future, serious reforms must be implemented. Otherwise, we will keep mourning more lives lost to preventable tragedies. The time for action is now—before the next wave comes.

Genocide in Gaza: The end of Israel's Moral Shield

Qamar Bashir



Key Israeli leaders have also broken ranks. Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, writing in Haaretz, called the current Israeli campaign in Gaza “a war of devastation: indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians.” He denounced the Israeli government as a “criminal gang” and labeled the onslaught as amounting to war crimes.

In separate interviews with The Guardian and the BBC, Olmert warned that Israel is committing crimes that could lead to lasting condemnation from the international community. Yair Golan, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, stated...

THE tide is now unmistakably turning against Israel—not merely because of its confrontations with Iran, nor its airstrikes that nearly ignited World War III—but more so due to the unrelenting and now undeniable genocide in Gaza, live-streamed and broadcasted to the world in real time. For decades, Israel successfully cast itself as the perpetual victim, defending its sovereignty from existential threats. But today, that narrative is collapsing under the weight of horrifying images of amputated children, starving families, and entire neighborhoods reduced to rubble. What once were whispers of dissent have become roars of condemnation, not just from Arab nations, but from Israel's staunchest European allies, including Germany, France, and Ireland.

In an extraordinary shift, even mainstream Western commentators have begun to question the moral standing of Israel's conduct. Among them is British journalist Piers Morgan, who directly confronted an Israeli official in a live interview with the damning question: “Do you even know how many children you've killed?” Morgan continued, “You are killing a lot of children on a daily basis—that is indisputable. He exposed Israel's failure to account for the thousands of civilian deaths, particularly children, in contrast with the military's confident estimates of Hamas fighters killed. Morgan concluded: “You're killing a lot of children every day—and that is not propaganda, it's a fact.”

The media silence is beginning to fracture. The Financial Times, a historically conservative and pro-business British newspaper, published an editorial titled “The West's Shameful Silence on Gaza.” It outlined how Israel's escalating offensive has reached a catastrophic point, causing unfathomable suffering to 2.2 million people in Gaza. The editorial concluded that every possible war crime had likely been committed—with many Israeli officials boasting about these actions publicly. More than 179 journalists have been killed in Gaza since the war began, including 171 Palestinians. Some were targeted deliberately. Hundreds of international reporters have signed open letters condemning the deliberate targeting of media professionals, the obstruction of aid, and the genocide of civilians. Even within major Western outlets like the BBC, journalists are expressing outrage at their management's failure to humanize Palestinian suffering.

Medical professionals have echoed this horror. A U.S. surgeon speaking at the United Nations described deliberate shootings of children, as well as appalling injuries such as amputations, burns, and traumatic brain damage. British and American doctors who have worked in Gaza recounted treating endless streams of civilians, especially children, maimed by Israeli weap-

ons. Dr. Mads Gilbert, who served in Gaza during previous assaults, called the volume and brutality of the injuries he saw “almost too large to comprehend.” UN representatives have corroborated these accounts. Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, stated that even though Western media is largely absent from Gaza, Palestinian UN staff have documented genocide in real time. Their reports, replete with evidence, are often sidelined by powerful governments that refuse to act. A former U.S. State Department envoy admitted that his detailed daily dispatches on Gaza's devastation—including images of dead and dismembered children—were ignored. And yet, it is not just journalists, doctors, and diplomats who are speaking out. British lawmakers, once steadfast supporters of Israel, are beginning to distance themselves. Conservative MP Mark Pritchard, a twenty-year supporter of Israel, delivered a moving statement in Parliament. He declared, “I got it wrong. I condemn Israel for what it is doing to the Palestinian people in Gaza and in the West Bank.” He added, “The life of a Palestinian child is as precious as the life of a Jewish child.” His speech reflected a seismic shift within the political elite.

Key Israeli leaders have also broken ranks. Former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, writing in Haaretz, called the current Israeli campaign in Gaza “a war of devastation: indiscriminate, limitless, cruel and criminal killing of civilians.” He denounced the Israeli government as a “criminal gang” and labeled the onslaught as amounting to war crimes. In separate interviews with The Guardian and the BBC, Olmert warned that Israel is committing crimes that could lead to lasting condemnation from the international community. Yair Golan, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, stated, “A sane country does not wage war against civilians, does not kill babies as a pastime, and does not engage in mass population displacement.” These internal voices add even more gravity to the international condemnation Israel now faces.

Even German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a longstanding supporter of Israel, condemned certain Israeli actions. While reiterating Germany's historic solidarity with Israel, he described as “absurd” any notion that Palestinian civilians can be collectively punished. Scholz rebuked Israeli proposals for forced migration of Gazans as “scandalous” and warned that such actions breached international law. His statements represent a growing unease among European powers.

Echoing this, the European Parliament has now pledged to impose sanctions on Israel over what it labeled as “ethnic cleansing” and systemic violations of

international law. Citing collective punishment, indiscriminate bombings, and forced displacement, a resolution passed with overwhelming support demands the suspension of preferential trade terms and immediate accountability for crimes against humanity.

The turning tide was also manifested in one of the most highly contested New York City mayoral elections, where Zohran Kwame Mamdani, a South African-born Muslim progressive, ran against a pro-Israel candidate. Mamdani won by a significant margin, signaling the shift in American public opinion. He has been vocal and unapologetic in defending the Palestinian right to exist peacefully. One of his early moves as mayor-elect was to halt city-level charity funds being funneled—often unknowingly by citizens—toward organizations supporting illegal Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank. In a viral interview, Mamdani referred to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court, pledging that should Netanyahu ever visit New York, “he will be arrested.”

All of these voices—Morgan's, the Financial Times', the doctors', the diplomats', the MPs', the Israeli dissenters', European leaders like Scholz, and now even American voters—form a growing chorus against Israeli impunity. The consistent message is that while Hamas bears responsibility for its own crimes, Israel's response has gone far beyond self-defense. The destruction of Gaza is not just military retaliation; it is the deliberate dismantling of a people's future.

What amplifies this horror is the complicity of the United States. Every attempt at the United Nations to condemn Israel's actions or even call for a ceasefire has been blocked by American vetoes. U.S. financial, military, and diplomatic support gives Israel carte blanche to operate with total impunity. It is for this reason that many critics now blame Washington as much as Jerusalem.

This moment is becoming a defining chapter in modern history. The atrocities are too vast, too documented, too horrific to be buried under propaganda. As one commentator put it: “Every atrocity in history was made possible by the silent.” Silence now is complicity.

The question is no longer whether war crimes have been committed—that is self-evident. The question now is whether the world will summon the courage to hold the perpetrators accountable and give justice to the victims of Gaza. The tide has turned, and history is watching.

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

Grief in the Swat Valley

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



This is not the first time that such helplessness has been documented. This is not the first time that our governance has failed to rise in time. Sympathy replaces swift action, condolence substitutes accountability, and compensation is offered like a balm to a bleeding wound that never heals. Will this be another one of those tragedies that fade into the archives of forgetfulness?

SOME events pierce the heart so deeply that their echoes remain long after the floodwaters recede, the cries die down, and the dust settles. They do not merely pass; they imprint themselves upon our collective conscience—if, indeed, we still possess one. Among such tragedies was the recent incident in Swat, where joy turned into mourning in a matter of moments, and a dream of leisure ended in an irreversible nightmare. On that Friday afternoon, the heavens bore witness to a calamity that no heart could endure. The blue skies of Swat, known for their serenity, suddenly watched helplessly as a savage torrent of water surged through the valley and snatched away human lives in the blink of an eye. The laughter of children turned into frantic screams, the chatter of friends into cries for help, and the calm of nature into a scene of utter devastation.

A group of 35 tourists from Daska had set out in the hope of finding solace in the lap of nature. They were families, friends, brothers and sisters—ordinary people seeking a brief escape from the burdens of life. But some 16 of them never returned. The Swat River, fed by the glacial veins of the north, became their unmarked grave. The final moments of these precious lives were captured by bystanders—cameras recorded the horror, and social media broadcasted the tragedy to the world. But for all the clarity of those visuals, what generally unseen were the figures who should have been there first—the rescuers, the officials, the system. The affected families kept calling for help for hours. Voices cracked with desperation, phones trembled in wet hands, prayers were whispered with every breath—and yet, no one came. The delay was fatal. It was not just a failure of administration; it was a betrayal

of responsibility, a brutal silence in the face of suffering. We often say that only Almighty Allah knows what lies in the hearts, but we must also say—only Allah knows what these people felt as they were swept away, glancing one last time at the shore, hoping someone, somewhere, would arrive.

This is not the first time that such helplessness has been documented. This is not the first time that our governance has failed to rise in time. Sympathy replaces swift action, condolence substitutes accountability, and compensation is offered like a balm to a bleeding wound that never heals. Will this be another one of those tragedies that fade into the archives of forgetfulness? A few officials may be suspended, financial aid may be announced, carefully worded statements will be issued—but will that bring back the lives lost to the river? The real tragedy is not just the drowning—it is the apathy that follows. Didn't such incidents happen before this? Have we not seen tourists lost to flash floods, families perishing in rivers, and roads washed away before? What did we learn then? What did we fix? Or did we just pass the blame to fate, shrugging our shoulders as if human life is so cheap that it can be written off by saying, this was destined? There is a cruel repetition in our response. We will mourn, yes. We will share photos of the deceased with heartbroken captions. We will conduct meetings, prepare reports, and nod solemnly in conferences. But then we will move on. And the bereaved families? They will live with a hollow that no time can ever fill. They will bury not only their loved ones but also a piece of their own souls. There is no compensation for the pain of a mother who waited for her son to return with laughter and instead received his lifeless body; for a father who told his children to be careful, never knowing their smiles were their last. But

unfortunately, this incident is completely different, in which all family members lost their lives. In other nations, when a single child goes missing or an animal facing trouble, entire systems and machinery are activated. Roads are blocked, alerts are issued, and helicopters are dispatched. Here, dozens drown, and the machinery yawns awake only after it is too late. Social media becomes the first responder, and the administration lags behind, watching through the lens of detachment.

If we are to prevent such heartbreaks in the future, we must abandon the ritual of reactive mourning and adopt proactive planning. We need a comprehensive national strategy that includes real-time warning systems, riverbank surveillance, emergency drills, and public awareness campaigns tailored for tourists. It should not be difficult in an age of satellite data and instant communication to monitor water levels and forecast surges. But such tools are useless unless paired with the will to act.

The Swat River will continue to flow, indifferent to the tears it has caused. Tourists will return again, drawn by its beauty, unaware of the history that runs beneath its surface. If we do nothing now, another group of innocents will someday meet the same fate, and we will again be spectators—mute, late, and full of excuses.

Let us not deceive ourselves with poetic fatalism. Let us not cover up our failures with hollow prayers and staged sympathies. The people who died in Swat were not statistics. They were lives—full of love, stories, and dreams—snatched away not just by water, but by neglect. And if we cannot change after this, then perhaps the real flood is not in our rivers—but in our hearts, drowning our sense of duty, compassion, and humanity.

Briefs

'Power Smart App' to curb overbilling, billing transparency

FROM PAGE 01
errors and delay in reading. This is not just a technology feature but a solid reform in governance, which truly empowers consumers. With this system, consumers will not only be able to keep an eye on their bill, but now they will also be the guardians of the reading process. One of the key advantages of the Power Smart App is its potential to protect subsidy-eligible users from losing financial support due to delayed or inaccurate readings. Officials cited the example of users consuming up to 200 units of electricity, whose subsidized bills total approximately Rs 2,330. If usage rises even slightly above that threshold, the subsidy ends and the bill can jump to over Rs 8,000. Through this app, it will be possible to ensure that the beneficiaries benefit from their subsidy by providing timely readings. Another feature included in the app, if the user provides the reading on the due date, the meter reading taken after that day will not be given priority and only the reading provided by the user will be fed. Features like "Apna Meter, Apni Reading" will not only create transparency in the electricity system but will also empower the consumers to the extent that they can monitor their own billing. This will significantly reduce overbilling, unnecessary interference and complaints. This innovative and revolutionary solution was implemented with the efforts of Secretary Power Division Dr. Fakhar Alam and the entire team working on it under the leadership of Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari.

Justice Sarfraz Dogar IHC senior-most judge

FROM PAGE 01
Dogar from the Lahore High Court (LHC), Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro from the Sindh High Court (SHC), and Justice Muhammad Asif from the Balochistan High Court (BHC). All three judges had been transferred to the IHC. The move had been challenged in the apex court by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Riffat Imtiaz who prayed that the court declare that the president lacked unfettered and unbridled discretion to transfer judges from one high court to another, under Article 200(1) of the Constitution, without a manifest public interest, and in a manner that hampers the principles of independence of judiciary and separation of powers. However, dismissing their plea the top court ruled that the "powers of transfer conferred to the president by none other than the framers of the Constitution". Highlighting that the president's powers under Article 200 were regulated and were subjected to his consultation with the CJP, the Supreme Court ruled that they "did not compromise the independence of the judiciary for the discernable reason that the decision to accept or reject is exclusively within the hands of the judiciary". As per the notification issued by the Law Ministry, Justice Kayani has been notified as the second-most senior judge followed by Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Jahangiri in the third and fourth place, respectively. Meanwhile, Justice Sattar is the fifth-most senior judge of the IHC followed by Justice Ishaq and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir at sixth and seventh place. Other judges on the list include Justice Imtiaz (8th), Justice Khalid Hussain Soomro (9th), Justice Muhammad Azam Khan (10th), Justice Muhammad Asif (11th) and Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas (12th). Furthermore, the notification mentions that the transfer of Justice Dogar, Justice Soomro and Justice Asif to the IHC was made on a "permanent basis".

Ilia Topuria bags first-round knockout against Charles

"I represent new generation of mix of martial arts, this is next level of game," says Topuria

DNA

LAS VEGAS: Spain's Ilia Topuria scored a stunning first-round knockout victory over Charles Oliveira to claim the UFC lightweight title at UFC 317. Former featherweight champ Topuria announced in February that he was going to step up to the 155-pound division to fight for the belt vacated by former champ Islam Makhachev's move up to the welterweight division. Standing between him and the title was 35-year-old Brazilian former lightweight champ Oliveira, who briefly brought his vast experience to bear before being defeated. After a dominant run at featherweight that saw him move to 16-0 as a professional, Topuria, who was born in Germany to Georgian parents, looked small in the cage compared to Oliveira, but he defended well against the Brazilian's grappling be-



fore showcasing his striking power. Oliveira, who was stripped of the lightweight belt in May 2022 when he missed weight for a defence against Justin Gaeth-

je, looked good during a brief exchange on the mat, but Topuria disengaged to bring the fight back to the feet, and shortly afterwards Oliveira's evening ended. The 28-year-old stunned Oliveira with a right hook and followed it up with a crunching left that sent Oliveira crashing to the mat, his eyes glazed as his back hit the canvas as Topuria fulfilled his pre-fight prediction of a first-round knockout win. "I already said it – I represent the new generation of the mix of martial arts, this is the next level of the game. This is the next thing, and this is what I represent," Topuria said in a post-fight interview. "I did exactly what we had planned, lot of jabs, right hand, left hook, and boom – his lights were out," he added. In the co-main event, Brazil's Alexandre Pantoja dominated New Zealander Kara-France before taking his back and locking in a rear naked choke 1:55 into the third round.

How Israel-Iran's shadow conflict ignited the region

FROM PAGE 01

What began as calculated proxy warfare had spiraled into a humanitarian catastrophe. Ironically, Israel and Iran mirrored each other's tactics. Israel's security doctrine, once rooted in preemption, increasingly resembled the very strategies it condemned in Tehran: covert strikes, political interference, and the weaponization of deterrence. For both, deterrence became a language of escalation, not restraint. At the core of this breakdown lay mutual miscalculation. Iran overestimated its asymmetric capabilities, underestimating Israel's technological edge and willingness to strike. Israel exaggerated Iran's threat, framing every maneuver as existential while dismissing Tehran's ideological resilience. Each side interpreted the other's moves as provocation, justifying its own aggression as defense—reinforcing a cycle of mistrust and violence. Though a ceasefire now holds, the damage is irreversible. Israel, despite its military superiority, faces internal dissent, regional isolation, and a weakened deterrence posture. Iran, defiant but economically shattered, is diplomatically cornered—its proxy strategy exposed as a path to chaos. The Arab world, once inching toward normalization with Israel, now recoils as public outrage surges against foreign aggression and domestic repression. The U.S.,

abandoning any pretense of mediation, shattered its neutrality by backing Israel's devastation of Gaza and striking Iranian nuclear sites. Its role shifted from peacemaker to belligerent—its credibility in ruins. Donald Trump's ultimatums—demanding Iran's surrender, Tehran's evacuation, and regime change—proved mere political theater. They failed to topple Iran's leadership but succeeded in exposing America's declining strategic influence. Empty threats eroded Washington's deterrence and handed Tehran a propaganda victory. Far from isolating Iran, the spectacle fractured global diplomacy, revealing a superpower that speaks loudly but stands alone. In a grim irony, Pakistan's nomination of Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize—a transparent bid for favor—rings hollow amid the rubble. This war was not inevitable. It was the product of militarism, unaccountable leadership, and global apathy. Both Israel and Iran must confront an uncomfortable truth: security built on domination breeds endless war, not peace. The path forward demands not louder threats or deadlier weapons, but mutual recognition, sovereignty, and the moral imperative to protect civilian lives. If these lessons go unheeded, the next war will be wider, bloodier, and beyond containment. – The views expressed in the article are writer's own

Ramos kicks Toulouse to dramatic Top 14 title after extra-time

PARIS: Full-back Thomas Ramos kicked two dramatic penalty goals in extra-time as Toulouse edged Bordeaux-Begles 39-33 on Saturday to claim a record-extending 24th French Top 14 title. Ramos' ice-cold kicks consolidated Toulouse's place as the giants of French rugby by and denied Bordeaux-Begles a

domestic and continental double after lifting the Champions Cup last month. The 29-year-old slotted 24 points in total as Toulouse secured a third straight Top 14 triumph and an 11th consecutive final victory in all competitions. They were however knocked out of the Champions Cup in the semi-finals

by Bordeaux-Begles last month. "With the massive slip-up we had in the Champions Cup we couldn't let another knock-out game pass us by," Ramos said. "Bordeaux-Begles would have deserved it too... Tonight, we didn't doubt ourselves." Lock Guido Petti and flanker Pierre Bouchon were shown yellow cards for Bordeaux-Begles before scrum-half Maxime Lucu slotted an 80th-minute penalty to send the game to extra-time. Lucu's kick capped an impressive comeback after they had trailed by 10 points with as many minutes to play at the Stade de France. – Agencies

Pakistan down Korea in Asian Youth Girls Netball C'ship

Pakistan will face Japan on June 30, while Pakistan will play its 5th match in its group with Maldives on July 1. Now, Pakistan is on top of Pool-B

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan defeated Korea by 91-6 goals in the 3rd match of Asian Youth Girls Netball Championship 2025, at Jeonju Hwasan Gymnasium, Jeonju-si, South Korea. According to details, Leya Raza Shah, Alisha Naveed, Haleema, Sarina Hussain, Jasmine Farooq, Farah Rasheed, Amani, Parisa, Sumayya Ahmed and Alina were played outstanding during the match from Pakistan. Results: 1st Quarter:PAK-23/KOR-2; 2nd Quarter: PAK-45/KOR-3; 3rd Quarter: PAK- 70/KOR-4; 4th Quarter: PAK- 91/KOR-6. Chairman, Pakistan Netball Federation, Mudasar Arian, President, Sameen Malik, Secretary General, Muhammad Riaz congratulated the Pakistan team on the win against Korea by a heavy margin of 91-6 goals. Pakistan is placed in Pool B of the mega event, and Pakistan will play its next match against Japan on Monday. Pakistan will face Japan on June 30, while Pakistan will play its 5th match in its group with Maldives on July 1. Now, Pakistan is on top of Pool-B. Eleven teams are participating in the championship and are divided into two groups: Group-A, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and India; Group-B, Chinese Taipei, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Maldives and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan will play five league matches in Group B. – Agencies

Chelsea overcome Club World Cup weather delay, set up Palmeiras quarter-final

PHILADELPHIA: Chelsea beat Benfica in a game which went on for close to five hours at the Club World Cup on Saturday to set up a quarter-final showdown with Brazilian side Palmeiras at the tournament in the United States. The London club were grateful to extra-time goals by Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall to give them a 4-1 victory over Benfica. Their late burst of scoring settled a last-16 tie which took four hours, 39 minutes to complete at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium in North Carolina after a near two-hour weather delay. Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca was left satisfied with his team's victory but slammed the delay that turned the tie into a near five-hour marathon. "I think it's a joke, it's not football," Maresca said. "For 85 minutes we were in control of the game. We created enough chances to win the game. Then after the break, the game changed – for me personally, it's not football." Earlier, Chelsea had been seemingly poised for victory after Reece James' opportunistic second-half free-kick had left them 1-0 up with four minutes of regulation time remaining. But just as Chelsea began to think about their quarter-final assignment, the arrival of a storm over Charlotte triggered local safety protocols which required the game to be halted. It marked the sixth occasion during the Club World Cup that a game has been disrupted by a weather warning. When play resumed just under two hours later, a revitalised Benfica grabbed an injury-time equaliser after Chelsea substitute Malo Gusto was adjudged to have handled in the penalty area following an intervention by the Video Assistant Referee. Benfica's Argentine veteran Angel Di Maria stepped up to roll in an ice-cold penalty, sending the game into extra time. An end-to-end first half of extra time



saw Benfica, reduced to 10 men following Gianluca Prestianni's second yellow card at the end of regulation, threaten to take the lead as they chased an improbable victory. But instead it was Nkunku who fired Chelsea back in front, the French international bundling in from close range after Moises Caicedo's low shot squirted underneath Benfica goalkeeper Antolij Trubin. As the game opened up, Benfica were increasingly vulnerable on the counter-attack and Chelsea pounced. Neto made it 3-1 with a nerveless finish after going clean through on goal in the 114th minute, and three minutes later Dewsbury-Hall completed the rout to send Chelsea through to the last eight. They will now return to Philadelphia, where they played two games in the group stage, to play Palmeiras in the quarter-finals on Friday. – Agencies

Ronaldo chooses rest over playing in Club World Cup

"I had some offers to play in World Cup but I think it didn't make sense because I prefer to have good rest," says Ronaldo

DNA

LISBON: The Portuguese football superstar, Cristiano Ronaldo, has said that he turned down offers to play in the Club World Cup so he could take a proper rest and prepare for a long and demanding season. The Portuguese star made the comments after signing a new two-year deal with Al-Nassr that will keep him at the club beyond his 42nd birthday. The Saudi Pro League club announced on Thursday that Ronaldo had signed a two-year contract which would keep him at the club past his 42nd birthday. Speculation over the 40-year-old's plans intensified last month when FIFA President Gianni Infantino said discussions were underway about Ronaldo playing in the Club World Cup, despite Al-Nassr failing to qualify. "I had some offers to play in the World Cup but I think it didn't make sense because I prefer to have a good rest, a good preparation, because this season will be very long as it is the World Cup season at the end of the year," Ronaldo



said in a video posted by Al-Nassr on X. "I want to be ready not only for Al-Nassr but also for the national team. So, this is why I decided to play the last game for the Nations League and not listen to anything," he added. "And of course, to be in this club, which I love." Ronaldo scored for Portugal in the Nations League final against Spain earlier this month, which ended 2-2 before his side went on to beat the European champions on penalties. The Portugal captain said his aim in staying at Al-Nassr was to win a major trophy with the Riyadh-based side. "My goal, it's always to win something important for Al-Nassr. And of course I still believe in that," Ronaldo added. "This is why I renewed the two years more because I believe that I will be a champion in Saudi Arabia." Ronaldo, who joined Al-Nassr in 2022 after leaving Manchester United as a free agent, has scored 93 goals in 105 appearances for them in all competitions. Ronaldo is also eyeing the 1,000-goal milestone in his career. He has scored 794 goals in club football and 138 for Portugal to take his tally to 932.

Shehbaz Sharif woos Ch. Nisar back in PML N

FROM PAGE 01

The meeting took place in a cordial and pleasant atmosphere, with both leaders reminiscing about their past political journey and longstanding association. The prime minister invited Ch. Nisar to rejoin PML N. Ch Nisar said he will take a decision in next few days.

Iranian army Chief talks to Field Marshal Asim Munir

FROM PAGE 01

Gen. Mousavi highlighted the importance of mutual trust and collaboration in addressing common security challenges, including border security and counter-terrorism operations. Field Marshal Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to deepening defense relations with Iran and expressed appreciation for Tehran's role in regional peace. Both sides agreed on the need for continued dialogue and coordinated actions to prevent threats to regional security. This high-level contact follows recent diplomatic engagements between Iran and Pakistan, signaling a renewed focus on security partnership amid evolving geopolitical dynamics. Analysts view the conversation as a step toward greater military coordination between the two neighboring nations.

China 'rolls over' \$3.4bn loans to Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01

another \$1.3 billion commercial loan, which Islamabad had paid back two months ago, the source said. Another \$1 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks and \$500 million from multilateral financing have also been received, he said. "This brings our reserves in line with the IMF target," he said. The loans, especially the Chinese ones, are critical to shoring up Pakistan's low foreign reserves, which the IMF required to be over \$14 billion at the end of the current fiscal year on June 30. Pakistani authorities say that the country's economy has stabilised through ongoing reforms under a \$7 billion IMF bailout.

Heavy rains kill 41 across Paksitan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Heavy rain and flash flooding across Pakistan have killed 45 people in just a few days since the start of the monsoon season, disaster management officials said on Sunday. The highest toll was recorded in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where 10 children were among 21 killed. The disaster management authority said 14 of those victims died in the Swat Valley, where media reported a flash flood swept away families on a riverbank. In Punjab, 13 fatalities have been recorded since Wednesday. Eight of them were children who died when walls or roofs collapsed during heavy rain, while the adults were killed in flash floods. 11 other deaths related to the monsoon downpours were recorded in Sindh and Balochistan provinces. The national meteorological service warned that the risk of heavy rain and possible flash floods will remain high until at least Saturday. Last month, at least 32 people were killed in severe storms in the country, which experienced several extreme weather events in the spring, including strong hailstorms. Pakistan is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, and its 240 million residents are facing extreme weather events with increasing frequency.

Briefs

Israeli security service says 60 Hamas members held in West Bank

HEBRON: Israel's security service said Sunday it had broken up a network of Hamas militants in the occupied West Bank suspected of planning attacks, arresting 60 of the group's members. The Shin Bet internal security agency said in a statement that "a significant, complex, and large-scale Hamas infrastructure was exposed" in the West Bank town of Hebron. It said it broke up 10 militant cells that "operated to carry out attacks in various formats in the immediate time frame." Hamas leaders "worked to recruit, arm, and train additional Hamas operatives from the area to carry out shooting and bombing attacks against Israeli targets," according to the statement. Shin Bet said the three-month joint operation with the military and police was its biggest investigation in the West Bank "in the past decade." It said terrorism charges were being filed against the suspects. Hamas did not immediately comment on the statement.—APP

France offers to help make Gaza food distribution safer

PARIS: France "stands ready, Europe as well, to contribute to the safety of food distribution" in the Palestinian territory of Gaza, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Saturday. His comments came as criticism grew over mounting civilian deaths at Israeli-backed food distribution centers in the territory. Such an initiative, he added, would also deal with Israeli concerns that armed groups such as Hamas were getting hold of the aid Barrot expressed anger over "the 500 people who have lost their life in food distribution" in Gaza in recent weeks. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday denounced as a "blood libel" a report in left-leaning daily Haaretz alleging that military commanders had ordered soldiers to fire at Palestinians seeking humanitarian aid in Gaza Aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on Friday denounced the Israel and US-backed food distribution effort in Gaza as "slaughter masquerading as humanitarian aid.—APP

Bus crash blaze kills 38 in Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM: A collision between a bus and minibus in Tanzania has killed 38 people after both vehicles were set on fire by the crash, the presidency said Sunday. The accident in Sabasaba, in the Kilimanjaro region, on Saturday evening occurred after one of the bus's tires punctured, causing the driver to lose control. "A total of 38 people died in the crash, including two women," a presidency statement said, adding that 28 others were wounded. "However, due to the extent of the burns, 36 bodies remain unidentified," the presidency said. Six of the injured were still in hospital for treatment, it added. Deadly crashes are frequent on Tanzania's roads.—APP

Gaza rescuers say Israeli forces kill 17, including kids

GAZA STRIP: Gaza's civil defense agency said Israeli air strikes and gunfire killed at least 17 people including three children in the war-stricken Palestinian territory on Sunday. Civil defense spokesman Mahmud Bassal said that 16 people died in air strikes at five locations around the Gaza Strip, and another from Israeli fire near an aid distribution center. The Israeli military said it was not able to comment on the reported incidents but said it was fighting "to dismantle Hamas military capabilities" in a campaign launched in 2023 against the Islamist militant group whose attack on Israel triggered the war.—APP

“Royal Metropolitan University: Utopia of Medical Education”

DR IMRAN YOUSAF

BISHKEK: A Journey to Royal Metropolitan University, Bishkek. As I step into the tall, five-story building of Royal Metropolitan University in the heart of Bishkek, I'm met with a sense of pride and resilience. The building, aptly named Alma Mata, stands as a testament to the university's journey from its infancy to its current stature. When I joined the university in its preliminary stages, I witnessed the administration's eagerness to compete with other landmark universities. The energy was palpable, and the commitment to excellence was evident. As a seasoned educator with experience in teaching and diagnostics in Pakistan, I knew that teaching international students would be a challenge. However, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the students had a spark that just needed guidance. In 2024, we took a significant step by establishing the Student Council, a first-of-its-kind initiative in Bishkek. With the help of our consultant partners, Dr. Shahid, Dr. Ferman, and Dr. Deepak Kumar, we appointed Dr. Mohsin Sana as the pioneer president. Dr. Mohsin has been blessed with gem-like qualities that have been instrumental in shaping the council's success. Alongside Dr. Mohsin, our founder team consist-



ed of other gems, including Dr. Usama as Vice-President of Content Creation and Dr. Asad Khokhar as Vice-President of Social Media. Leadership Transition After Dr. Mohsin's tenure, we had another exceptional leader, Dr. Abdullah, who continued to build on the foundation laid by Dr. Mohsin. Both presidents have played a crucial role in shaping the Stu-

dent Council and driving its initiatives forward. What Sets Us Apart Royal Metropolitan University as its own distinction in several ways - Affordable Fee Package: We offer a competitive and affordable fee structure, making quality education accessible to a wider range of students. - One Building, All Facilities: Our state-of-the-art building provides all the neces-

sary facilities under one roof, ensuring a seamless learning experience. - Attached Hospitals and Clinical Skills: Our affiliation with attached hospitals enables our students to develop practical clinical skills, preparing them for real-world challenges. - Global Recognition: We are recognized globally, including by the World Health Organization (WHO), Ed-

ucational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), and National Medical Commission (NMC). - Leading Student Council: Our Student Council is rapidly becoming a leader in student representation and development, focusing on grooming students for success. As a relatively new university in town, we've faced challenges, particularly with PMDC recognition. While we've been issued a list allowing our graduates to take the National Licensing Examination (NLE), our ultimate goal is to be included in the recognized list A of PMDC. We've worked tirelessly to meet the PMDC's criteria and are confident that our qualifications and standards align with their requirements. We're planning something big for our students, including an international conference that will bring together experts and scholars from around the world. Our professors have already been invited by local government universities to participate in international conferences, showcasing their expertise and the university's reputation. Conclusion: Royal Metropolitan University is a beacon of hope for students seeking quality education and a bright future. With its commitment to excellence, innovative approach, and focus on student development, we're confident that our graduates will make a mark in the world of medicine. Join us on this journey and discover the Royal way to success.

UK considers envoy for Britons held abroad

LONDON: Britain is preparing to emulate the United States by appointing an envoy tasked with freeing citizens arbitrarily detained abroad, as it faces calls to do more to bring them home. High-profile cases like jailed Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah and imprisoned Hong Kong media mogul Jimmy Lai have spotlighted the plight of Britons held in jails overseas. The UK foreign ministry insists it continues to press such cases with governments, but relatives of detainees and human rights organisations complain of a lack of urgency and transparency. "The government is committed to strengthening support for British nationals, including through the appointment of a new envoy," a Foreign Office spokesperson told AFP. Middle East Minister Hamish Falconer has said an "Envoy for Complex Consular Detentions" is expected to be appointed "before the summer". The government has not specified the terms of the role but it could be similar to America's Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, a position created in 2015.

Unlike the United States though, Britain does not take part in prisoner exchanges. Professor Carla Ferstman, an expert on arbitrary detentions at the Human Rights Centre at Essex Law School, said appointing someone would be the "clear-est thing that the UK can do that it hasn't done yet".—APP

HCSTSI delegation participates in Pakistan Chemical expo

HYDERABAD: On the special directives of Acting President Ahmed Idrees Chohan, a high-level delegation of the Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI), led by Vice President Shan Sehgal, actively participated in the "Pakistan Chemical Expo 2025 held at Karachi Expo Centre". The delegation visited various stalls at the expo and held detailed meetings with representatives of leading national and international companies from the chemical, packaging, waste management, energy and allied industrial sectors. These industry leaders expressed their keen interest in collaborating with HCSTSI and assured their intention to visit Hyderabad and engage with Chamber in the near future. Speaking on the occasion, Vice President Shan Sehgal stated that international-standard events like the Pakistan Chemical Expo play a vital role in promoting industrial growth, fostering research and development, facilitating technology transfer and creating valuable business linkages. Pakistan tourism packages He emphasized that Hyderabad was the second-largest commercial hub of Sindh, home to thousands of active business units across sectors such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, plastics, cold beverages, food processing and construction. In light of this, such exhibitions and expos are urgently needed in Hyderabad to support local industrial advancement. Shan Sehgal strongly advocated for the organization of dedicated B2B exhibitions and roadshows in Hyderabad, specifically for the chemical and allied industries. He highlighted that such initiatives would provide local manufacturers.—APP

CDA plant nursery works overtime

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) Plant Nursery is striving hard to produce a wide variety of plants and flowers to give the federal capital, Islamabad, a beautiful atmosphere. With a vast collection of tree and fruit plant species, the nursery is working tirelessly to enhance the city's aesthetic appeal. Muhammad Ismail, an official said, the nursery boasts an impressive array of plants, including Kachnar, Amaltas, Arjun, Patagen, Beschufia, Such Chain, Reetha, Jacaranda, Gravillia, Kanak Champa, Gab, Michillia, Sepium, Chir, Deraek, Bakion, Buddha Tree, Siltus Tun, Bottle Brush, Shareen, Black Shareen, White Aritia, Alstonia, Shahtoot, Tabebuia, Sterculia, Acer, Brachychiton, Dhak, Shisham, Moringa, Fiddle wood, Gul-e-Nishtar, Willow, Popular, Chinara, Cazorana, Magnolia Grandiflora, Pilkan, Rubber Plant, and various fruit plants like Gava, Louqat, Jaman, Khatti, Annar, Anjeer, Apricot, Peach and Batangi. In addition to these, the nursery also features a range of flowering plants, including Cassia, Gulacca, Saru Moor, Pankh Parken, Sonia Erithinia, Crystagali, Termenilea, Sophora, Legistromia, Habiscus, Mirch Samocus, Nagra Jatrophia, Chandana Chandni, Home Sokdia, Caryaptus, Rat Ki Rani, and many more. The CDA Nursery is also home to a variety of ornamental plants, such as Yucca, Hemia Hamelia, Patten Suranga, Legestrum, Gardenia, Euphorbia, Gul-e-Chin, Kanair, Lantana, Badliya, Rose creeper, Passiflora, Bouqanvillea, Star Jasmin, Ranqoon Creeper, Wisteri Creeper, Tecoma, Compensation Honey Suckle, Schefflera, Ficus, Juniper, Pittosporum, Eunuymus, and Dracaena. The nursery's efforts are aimed at beautifying the city and providing a pleasant environment for its residents. With its vast collection of plant species, the CDA Nursery is playing a vital role in enhancing Islamabad's natural beauty.—DNA

France offers to help make Gaza food distribution safer

PARIS: France "stands ready, Europe as well, to contribute to the safety of food distribution" in the Palestinian territory of Gaza, Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Saturday. His comments came as criticism grew over mounting civilian deaths at Israeli-backed food distribution centers in the territory. Such an initiative, he added, would also deal with Israeli concerns that armed groups such as Hamas were getting hold of the aid. Barrot expressed anger over "the 500 people who have lost their life in food distribution" in Gaza in recent weeks. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday.—APP

Morocco's Atlantic gambit: linking restive Sahel to ocean

EL ARGOUB: A planned trade corridor linking the landlocked Sahel to the Atlantic is at the heart of an ambitious Moroccan project to tackle regional instability and consolidate its grip on disputed Western Sahara. The "Atlantic Initiative" promises ocean access to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger through a new \$1.3-billion port in the former Spanish colony claimed by the pro-independence Polisario Front but largely controlled by Morocco. But the project remains fraught with challenges at a time when military coups in the Sahel states have brought new leaderships to power, intent on overturning longstanding political alignments following years of militant violence. The Moroccan initiative aims to "substantially transform the economy of these countries" and "the region", said King Mohammed VI when announcing it in late 2023. The "Dakhla Atlantic" port, scheduled for completion at El Argoub by 2028, also serves Rabat's goal of cementing its grip on Western Sahara after US President Donald Trump recognised its sovereignty over the territory in 2020. Morocco's regional rival Algeria backs the Polisario but has seen its relations with Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger fray in recent months after the downing a Malian drone. Military coups over the past five years have seen the three Sahel states pivot towards Russia in a bid to restore their sovereignty.—APP

Around 140,000 rally in Belgrade ratcheting up calls for elections

BELGRADE: Around 140,000 protesters rallied in Belgrade, the largest turnout in recent months, as student-led demonstrations mount pressure on the populist government to call early elections. The rally was one of the largest in over half a year student-led actions, which began in November after the roof of a train station collapsed in the northern city of Novi Sad, killing 16 people – a tragedy widely blamed on entrenched corruption. Earlier on Saturday, a sea of protesters filled Belgrade's largest square and poured into several surrounding streets. The Independent Protest Monitor, Archive of Public Gatherings, estimated the crowd size at around 140,000, significantly higher than the police estimate of 36,000. "We want elections!" the crowd chanted, waving Serbian flags and holding banners bearing the names of cities and towns from around the country. For more than half a year, students have blockaded universities and organised large demonstrations around the country, demanding a transparent investigation into the deaths. But in contrast with previous gatherings, which have remained peaceful, clashes erupted between demonstrators and riot police. AFP journalists witnessed police firing tear gas and stun grenades as protesters hurled flares at rows of police in several clashes following the huge gathering in Serbia's capital. Police director Dragan Vasiljevic said officers had used batons after coming under attack but denied deploying "chemical agents" to disperse the crowd. Dozens were detained, while six officers and two people were injured in the violence, Vasiljevic said. "We will rally as long as it takes" Frustrated by government inaction over the tragedy, students have been calling for elections since May. "We show once again that we will not stop," law student Stefan Ivakovic told AFP. "We will rally as long as it takes until the demands are met.—APP

Pakistan Pavilion inaugurated at Euro-Asia exhibition

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Pavilion was officially inaugurated on June 29 at the Euro-Asia Exhibition in Urumqi, Xinjiang, marking a vibrant step forward in deepening economic ties and cultural exchanges between Pakistan and China. The event highlighted the importance both sides attach to regional cooperation and people-to-people connectivity, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The pavilion drew significant attention from attendees, with premium Pakistani mangoes emerging as the star attraction. Hundreds of visitors flocked to taste and learn about Pakistani mangoes, the "king of fruits," which not only delighted palates but also showcased Pakistan's agricultural strengths and export potential in the Chinese market. This year's exhibition also marked the first-ever participation of the National Logistics Corporation (NLC) and the Pakistan Green Initiative, adding a new dimension to the pavilion.—APP

Egypt to offer Hurghada airport to private sector by end of 2025

RIYADH: Egypt plans to offer Hurghada International Airport to the private sector by the end of 2025 as part of a broader strategy to modernize its aviation sector and attract foreign investment, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi said. The announcement came during a meeting in Al-Alamein City with Minister of Civil Aviation Sameh El-Hefny and EgyptAir In-Flight Services Chairperson Soheir Abdullah, where El-Sisi reviewed the national roadmap for enhancing civil aviation infrastructure and operations. The move forms part of a national strategy designed in partnership with the International Finance Corp., which is advising on a new public-private participation model for the country's airports. The framework is expected to be finalized by summer 2025 and will target 11 major airports while maintaining public ownership. In an official post, Ambassador Mohamed El-Shenawy, spokesman for the presidency, said the meeting reviewed the comprehensive strategic vision for the advancement of the entire civil aviation sector, including air navigation, aircraft fleet development, airport upgrades, and enhancement of human resource capabilities. "These efforts are part of the state's broader plan to improve the efficiency of the aviation sector, increase its capacity, and enhance the quality of services provided to travelers, in support of the national goal to raise the number of tourists to 30 million," the post added. El-Sisi issued directives to proceed with developing Egyptian airports through international partnerships centered on efficiency and sustainability, while ensuring an attractive investment environment that guarantees economic feasibility and long-term growth. The plan supports Egypt Vision 2030, the country's national development blueprint, which includes transforming airports into regional aviation hubs equipped with the latest global systems. El-Sisi also reviewed the "New Republic Air Gateway" project at Terminal 4 of Cairo International Airport. Once completed, the new terminal will increase the airport's capacity by at least 30 million passengers, pushing total throughput beyond 60 million annually. The project is designed in line with international standards for safety, security, and environmental sustainability. The meeting also touched on Egypt's achievements in air navigation, especially during recent regional airspace closures that increased daily traffic to over 1,600 flights. According to the presidential spokesman, organizations including Eurocontrol, the International Civil Aviation Organization, and the International Air Transport Association praised Egypt's air traffic controllers for maintaining operational stability and service continuity. Additionally, the meeting highlighted EgyptAir's recent successes. The national carrier was named "Best Airline Staff in Africa" for 2025 by Skytrax at the Paris Air Show. Other accolades included Best Economy Class Meals, Most Improved Airline in Africa for a second consecutive year, and Best Cabin Crew in Africa. The airline advanced 20 positions in the global ranking to 68th place out of more than 325 carriers. The minister said EgyptAir plans to expand its fleet to 97 aircraft by 2028-29. Efforts are also underway to upgrade in-flight services, infrastructure, and ground operations, as well as enhance lounge amenities and punctuality.—APP

Why designations matter in every career path

Ms. SABAHAT ALI



In today's evolving world of work, changing jobs is no longer viewed as a mark of inconsistency – it is increasingly acknowledged as a sign of professional maturity, self-awareness, and strategic career planning. The rigid linear career ladder has transformed into a flexible career lattice, accommodating cross-functional moves, lateral transitions, and cross-sector roles – all indicative

of a dynamic and progressive career journey. Beyond the Private Sector: Diverse Career Paths and Designation While job mobility is commonly associated with the private sector, it is important to recognize that not all professions operate under the same framework. Many government, public service, civil, defense, and judiciary positions have fixed hierarchies and require service until retirement. Still, even within these structures, designation-based growth is a vital indicator of performance, leadership, and contribution. Here is a broad classification of designations across sectors: 1. Corporate/Private Sector Entry to Senior Roles Intern Associate Executive Senior Executive Assistant Manager General Manager Director Vice President CEO/MD Specialized Tracks (e.g., IT, Finance, Marketing) Developer Team Lead Tech Lead Solutions Architect CTO

Analyst Senior Analyst Finance Manager Head of Finance CFO Marketing Assistant Brand Manager Marketing Director CMO. 2. Government & Civil Service (Administrative) Central/Provincial Bureaucracy (e.g., Pakistan Administrative Service, IAS, CSS Cadres) Assistant Commissioner Deputy Commissioner Additional Secretary Joint Secretary Secretary Federal Secretary Other Civil Departments (e.g., Education, Health, Revenue) Director Deputy Director Director Director General. 3. Judiciary & Law Judicial Cadre Civil Judge Senior Civil Judge Additional District & Sessions Judge District & Sessions Judge High Court Judge Supreme Court Judge Legal Profession (Practice) Junior Advocate Advocate High Court Advocate Supreme Court Senior Counsel Advocate General/Law Secretary 4. Armed Forces & Defense Services Military Designations (e.g., Army, Navy, Air Force)

Lieutenant Lieutenant Captain Major Lieutenant Colonel Colonel Brigadier Major General Lieutenant General General (Note: Similar hierarchies apply in Navy and Air Force with different nomenclature.) 5. Education Sector Teaching/Academic Line School Teacher Senior Teacher Subject Specialist Vice Principal Principal Director Education Higher Education (University Faculty) ector Assistant Professor Associate Professor Professor Dean Vice Chancellor 6. Judiciary-Linked Services (Magistracy, Prosecution, Investigation) Public Prosecutor Deputy Prosecutor Additional Prosecutor General Prosecutor General Judicial Magistrate Sessions Judge Registrar High Court 7. Public Sector Enterprises/Autonomous Bodies Government Corporations/Autorities Junior Officer Assistant Manager Deputy Manager Manager General Manager Executive Director MD/Chairman 8.

Healthcare Sector Doctors/Nurses/Public Health House Officer Medical Officer Senior Medical Officer Consultant Senior Consultant Medical Superintendent Staff Nurse Head Nurse Nursing Superintendent Why Designation Matters In both fluid and fixed-career structures, designations matter greatly. They indicate: Growth in responsibility and leadership Institutional trust and promotion Recognition of skill and service Authority and accountability Even in roles where individuals are expected to serve until retirement – such as in civil service, judiciary, or defense – designation-based progression is a critical marker of achievement and standing. Changing Jobs vs Growing Within a Structure While job-hopping is common in the private and entrepreneurial sectors, many professionals in structured public careers – such as teachers, judges, military officers, or civil servants – serve long tenures in one institution but still progress through

clearly defined designations. The key is not whether a person changes jobs frequently or stays in one – it is whether they are growing in their role, enhancing their competence, and advancing in designation. Recognizing Designation-Based Growth Across All Sectors Professional growth is not always defined by changing employers. In careers with fixed service duration, designation progression plays an equally important role in reflecting development. Whether someone rises from Lecturer to Professor or from Captain to General, the trajectory reflects commitment, performance, and leadership. In all cases – whether through job transitions or internal promotions – the pursuit of excellence, continuous learning, and aligned purpose defines a successful career. Let us reframe job mobility and title progression not as disjointed changes, but as steps in a purposeful and evolving professional journey.

Briefs

Trump tax cut bill clears hurdle

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US Senate advanced President Donald Trump's sweeping tax-cut and spending bill on Saturday, with billionaire Elon Musk warning the draft legislation would "destroy millions of jobs" and "cause immense strategic harm" to the United States. Musk slammed the plan as "utterly insane and destructive," saying it handed subsidies to outdated industries while undermining those of the future.

His remarks came after a key procedural vote passed 51-49, raising the odds that lawmakers will be able to pass Trump's "big, beautiful bill" in the coming days, which is his top legislative priority. The procedural vote, which would start debate on the 940-page megabill to fund Trump's top immigration, border, tax-cut and military priorities, began after hours of delay. It then remained open for more than three hours of standstill as three Republican senators — Thom Tillis, Ron Johnson and Rand Paul — joined Democrats to oppose the legislation.

Russian strikes wounds 7 in Ukraine

KYIV: Fresh Russian strikes targeting Ukrainian regions in the night of Saturday to Sunday wounded at least seven people, according to the war-torn country's authorities, calling on Western allies for increased military support. Since launching its invasion in February 2022 Russia has launched near-nightly bombardments of its neighbour's towns and cities, raining down drones and missiles on military and civilian targets alike. Talks on ending the fighting between the two sides are at an impasse, with Kyiv accusing Moscow, which occupies nearly one-fifth of Ukraine's territory, of wanting the war to drag on. In the night the Russian army launched 477 drones and 60 missiles of various types, according to the Ukrainian air force, which said it had intercepted 475 and 39 of those respectively. —Agencies

Illegal travel agent arrested

LAHORE: FIA Anti-Human Smuggling Circle Lahore arrested an unlicensed travel agent involved in illegal overseas employment schemes. FIA spokesperson told the media on Sunday, that arrested suspect identified as Aftab-ur-Rehman was operating business namely "Legal Migration Consultancy" in Johar Town, Lahore. During the raid, the FIA officials recovered 31 Pakistani passports, various other documents, and Rs 807,000 in cash, along with receipts believed to be collected from victims. Additionally, 25 mobile phones and other relevant records were also seized. Preliminary investigations revealed that the suspect maintained contact with other agents and foreign associates through these mobile devices. —APP

Central Asia offers huge business potential: expert

Russia's influence remains rooted in security frameworks and its North-South Corridor, though newer transport initiatives like the Trans-Caspian route and Middle Corridor

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, held a compelling lecture today under its Eminent Speaker Series, featuring renowned academic Dr. Ahmed Ijaz Malik, Associate Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University and PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. The lecture, titled "Political Economies of Central Asia," offered a comprehensive and analytical look at the dynamic socio-economic and strategic landscape of Central Asia, with a special focus on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

In his opening remarks, President of IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, set the tone by framing Central Asia as a region of growing geopolitical significance. He highlighted the region's geography, bridging Russia, China, and South Asia, positioning it as a vital transit hub for trade and energy across Eurasia. Reflecting on the region's post-Soviet evolution, he noted the varied trajectories in governance and economic reform—from state-led models to market-oriented approaches. He also touched upon the region's reliance on hydrocarbons and the resulting pressure to diversify, especially in the face of global energy shifts.

Dr. Malik's address delved into the complex political and economic contours of the region, noting its landlocked geography but immense natural resource wealth. Kazakhstan, with its oil, gas, and uranium reserves, and Turkmenistan, rich in natural gas, stand out as energy giants. Uzbekistan, with substantial gold and cotton production, is moving towards economic liberalization. He lauded the 2025 Kyrgyz-Tajik border treaty as a promising sign of improving regional diplomacy. Dr. Malik stressed the pivotal role played by major global actors—China, the EU, Russia, and India—in shaping the region's developmental trajectory. China's enhanced role through the BRI, the Digital Silk Road, and strategic partnerships with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan has reshaped infrastructure and digital connectivity. The European Union, meanwhile, is deepening its footprint via the €12 billion Gateway Initiative, a component of the broader Global Gateway strategy, aimed at mobilizing up to €300 billion globally across critical sectors including energy, transport, and technology. Russia's influence remains rooted in security frameworks and its North-South Corridor, though newer transport initiatives like the Trans-Caspian route and Middle Corridor. The EU's first Central Asia Summit in April 2025 signaled a serious commitment to the region, identifying areas of cooperation such as counterterrorism, cybersecurity, border control, and safeguarding against hybrid threats, disinformation, and trafficking. Shared concerns around youth unemployment, labor migration, and environmental degradation—especially the Aral Sea crisis—were also underlined as ongoing regional challenges. Despite these, Dr. Malik pointed to significant opportunities in renewable energy, hydrogen development, rare-earth extraction, and digital innovation. Regarding Pakistan's engagement with Central Asia, Dr. Malik emphasized the importance of deeper economic and strategic partnerships. He highlighted Kazakhstan's agricultural and petroleum sector reforms as a model Pakistan could adapt to revitalize its own economy. Kyrgyzstan offers scope for trade in consumables and tourism, while Uzbekistan's shift toward IT and AI presents an opening for Pakistan's skilled workforce. In Tajikistan, with remittances forming a key part of GDP and significant untapped mineral resources, there exists strong potential for bilateral cooperation. Dr. Malik also touched upon the underutilized potential of the TAPI pipeline, hampered by regional instability, and suggested that with a renewed focus and regional trust-building, such initiatives could still be realized.

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A wave of diplomatic departures: Several envoys did farewell to Pak

Hungarian Ambassador Bela Fazekas holds a unique position in diplomatic history, having served as Hungary's envoy not once, but twice. His first term was in 2007, and he returned years later for a second stint, making him one of the few ambassadors to be appointed to the same country multiple times



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Austria, Denmark, EU and Hungary. — DNA

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: In recent months, Pakistan has witnessed a significant transition in its diplomatic landscape as several foreign ambassadors have either completed their tenures or are preparing to leave. This wave of departures includes long-serving diplomats, retiring envoys, and those leaving due to political changes in their home countries. Among them is Hungary's Ambassador Bela Fazekas, who is set to depart after completing his second term in Pakistan—a rare distinction in the world of diplomacy. Hungarian Ambassador Bela Fazekas holds a unique position in diplomatic history, having served as Hungary's envoy not once, but twice. His first term was in 2007, and he returned years later for a second stint, making him one of the few ambassadors to be appointed to the same country multiple times. His deep understanding of Pakistan's political and cultural dynamics allowed him to strengthen bilateral ties, particularly in trade, education, and cultural exchange.

Fazekas is part of an exclusive group of diplomats who have had the rare opportunity to serve twice in the same country. Another notable example is Aybek Osmanov, the former Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, who also served two separate terms. Such reappointments are uncommon in diplomacy, as ambassadors are typically rotated to different postings after their terms end. Alongside Ambassador Fazekas, several other high-profile envoys are bidding farewell to Pakistan: Austria's Ambassador Andrea Wicke: After a distinguished career, Ambassador Wicke is retiring from foreign service. During her tenure, she worked to enhance Austria-Pakistan relations, particularly in economic cooperation and cultural diplomacy. Iraq's Ambassador Hamid Abbas Lafta has already left Islamabad, marking the end of his diplomatic assignment. His departure follows the completion of his term, with Iraq expected to appoint a new ambassador soon. South Korea's Ambassador is set to leave Pakistan in the coming weeks. His tenure saw significant progress in Pakistan-South Korea relations, especially in technology, automotive industry collaboration, and workforce exchanges.

EU Ambassador Riina Kionka as the head of the European Union delegation to Pakistan, played a pivotal role in shaping EU-Pakistan relations, particularly in trade, governance, and human rights. Her departure marks the end of a dynamic term. Denmark's Ambassador Jakob Linulf, known for his active engagement in development projects and climate advocacy, is also concluding his assignment in Pakistan. In some cases, ambassadors have left before completing their expected tenures, likely due to political shifts in their home countries: Kyrgyzstan's ambassador departure was abrupt, with no official successor named yet. Given recent political developments in Kyrgyzstan, his exit may be linked to changes in government priorities. Sri Lanka's high commissioner left Pakistan earlier than anticipated. Colombo has not yet announced a replacement, suggesting internal political factors may have influenced the decision. The simultaneous departure of multiple ambassadors signals a transitional phase in Pakistan's foreign relations. While some exits are routine (due to retirements or term completions), others—like those of Kyrgyzstan and Sri Lanka—reflect broader geopolitical changes. For now, the country bids farewell to these diplomats, acknowledging their service in strengthening Pakistan's global partnerships. The coming months will be crucial as new envoys take charge, shaping the next chapter of Pakistan's diplomatic relations.

For now, the country bids farewell to these diplomats, acknowledging their service in strengthening Pakistan's global partnerships. The coming months will be crucial as new envoys take charge, shaping the next chapter of Pakistan's diplomatic relations.

Govt scraps Rs35 PTV fee from electricity bills

Move to remove fee may save consumers Rs1.5 billion monthly

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: In a decision expected to offer relief to millions of electricity users, the federal government has scrapped the Rs35 monthly Pakistan Television (PTV) fee currently charged through electricity bills. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made a formal announcement, ending a longstanding levy that affects over 40 million residential, commercial, and industrial power consumers across the country. The fee, long a source of public discontent, has generated around Rs1.5 billion per month

— nearly Rs16 billion a year — for the state-run broadcaster through automatic deductions from utility bills. This step is aimed at reducing the financial burden on the common man and offering real relief in electricity bills, a senior official familiar with the matter said. Earlier this week, in a significant move that could ease electricity pricing pressure, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) slashed the national average Power Purchase Price (PPP) to Rs25.98 per unit for the fiscal year 2025-26 — down 3.77% (or Rs1.02/unit) from the current Rs27/unit. According to Nepra's latest determination, the total national Power Purchase Price has been set at Rs3.342 trillion for FY26. For the ex-Wapda Distribution Companies (XWDisco), the PPP stands at Rs3.066 trillion or Rs26.34 per unit. The calculation excludes K-Electric's share. Nepra's decision sets the stage for downstream tariff decisions at the consumer end in the coming months. Of the total projected PPP for XWDisco, Rs1.125 trillion is allocated to fuel and variable operation and management (O&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 CPAG's MoF. Capacity charges alone are estimated at Rs6.484/unit/month, based on an average monthly Maximum Demand Indicator (MDI) of 24,943MW.

Mohsin Naqvi visits injured soldiers in Bannu



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited CMH Bannu on Saturday to inquire about the health of security personnel injured in a recent terrorist attack in North Waziristan. The attack, carried out by militants associated with "Fitna-e-Hindustan," left several soldiers wounded. Minister Naqvi met with the injured, praised their courage, and offered prayers for their speedy recovery. "Your bravery has further strengthened our resolve in the fight against terrorism," he said. "You are the proud sons of Pakistan, and the entire nation stands with you." He added that no enemy can defeat a country that has such fearless defenders. Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Hameed, also accompanied the minister and expressed solidarity with the injured personnel. —APP

Ogra notifies 50% increase in fixed gas charges

Fixed charges for protected category increased from Rs400 to Rs600

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) on Sunday announced revised gas prices for the fiscal year 2025-26, notifying a 50% increase in fixed gas charges for domestic consumers, effective from July 1. "The federal government, in response to Ogra's determinations of SNG-PL [Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited] and SSGCL [Sui Southern Gas Company Limited] of estimated revenue requirement for FY 2025-26, has advised revised category-wise natural gas sales effective July 01, 2025," stated a notification issued by Ogra. According to the notification, the federal government increased the fixed charges for protected category from Rs400 to Rs600, while those in the non-protected category will now pay Rs1,500, up from Rs1,000. For non-protected consumers whose gas consumption exceeds 1.5 cubic hectometres (hm³), fixed charges have been raised from Rs2,000 to Rs3,000, it stated.

Sunday quake jolts Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 5.3 magnitude earthquake shook central parts of the country in early hours of Sunday morning, where the tremor was recorded at approximately 3:30 am local time (2230 GMT), catching many residents off guard while they slept. According to details, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) reported that the epicenter was pinpointed around 60 kilometres to the north-northeast of Barkhan, a town located in Balochistan province, a private news channel reported. While the quake caused widespread alarm, there were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage. Authorities are continuing to assess the situation and have urged citizens to remain cautious and prepared for potential aftershocks.

Israeli strike on Tehran's Evin prison killed 71

TEHRAN: An Israeli strike on Tehran's Evin prison during this month's 12-day war killed at least 71 people, Iran's judiciary said Sunday, days after a ceasefire ended hostilities between the two arch-foes. The strike on Monday destroyed part of the administrative building at Evin, a large, heavily fortified complex in the north of Tehran, which rights groups say holds political prisoners and foreign nationals. "According to official figures, 71 people were killed in the attack on Evin prison," said judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir of the attack, part of the bombardment campaign Israel launched on June 13.

to Jahangir, the victims at Evin included administrative staff, guards, prisoners and visiting relatives as well as people living nearby. Images shared by the judiciary showed destroyed walls, collapsed ceilings, scattered debris, and broken surfaces across waiting areas at the facility. The judiciary said that Evin's medical centre and visiting rooms had been targeted. On Tuesday, a day after the strike, the judiciary said that the Iranian prison authority had transferred inmates out of Evin prison, without specifying their number or identifying them. The inmates at Evin have included Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi as well as several French nationals and other foreigners. — Agencies

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